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# THE SIX SPHERES OF ZAIHHESS

by Luca "Dusk" Minutillo

A d20 adventure for 4-6 characters of 7th to 10th level



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# The Six Spheres of Zaithess

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To my wonderful wife, for her infinite patience during my long hours at the PC and behind the DM screen. To my friends — scroungers, chips-eaters and cokedrinkers — but above all unaware playtesters of a thousand-and-one adventures.

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# The Six Spheres of Zaihess

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# Introduction

*“Dear beautiful Ladies and noble Gentlemen, let me guide you with my voice and my music through the epic story of a bunch of heroes that saved the world from the forces of Evil. Our story begins in an elegant tavern of a remote region called the Frontier...”*

— Torcaeg, the Gallant

## Adventure Background

Some centuries ago, the wild area today called the Frontier was an even wilder region with only herds of wild buffaloes and a few encampments of colonists who worked hard to make a living out of the woods. Among those people, there was also a man called Gartol, a cleric of Zailhhess, the god of death, who envisioned a great future for him and for the followers of his god in these badlands. He started to make converts among the hunters and the woodcutters and after a while he was able to start the construction of a big temple dedicated to his god.

During the construction of the temple many people disappeared, but almost nobody perceived this event as suspect because many people were lost already before, usually victims of wild animals. Only a certain Kalmoth, a paladin of the Sacred Gold Sword, assigned by his church on a mission of Atonement to oversee and protect the colonists from the wild beasts and monsters, grew suspicious of Gartol and the tenets

of his faith. He investigated and after a while became convinced Gartol was involved with these missing people. He confronted Gartol, who laughed at him saying that he was only a pious follower of the god of the “aftermath” and that people benefited from his clerical powers.

The paladin tried to get more help from his church but with no success, since he had no real evidence to show, and the church hierarchy believed his report to be an attempt to recover from his disgrace. Frustrated, the paladin started to patrol the area in the hope of finding out some tangible clue of the involvement of Gartol in the disappearances.

One day, going home from one of his patrols, Kalmoth was killed by an unknown assassin. The people — too excited by the news that the temple was finished — cared little of his disappearance. The day after, all the colonists were inside the magnificent temple to attend the first celebration. During the ceremony, a portal opened over the altar and an avatar of the god manifested and promised richness and wellness. The colonists were so excited they accepted without a single moment's thought for the god's request: they were to kill and offer to him every stranger to pass through the colony unless he converted to the “true” faith.



Time passed and many people, especially foreigners, disappeared while the colony continued to grow and enrich. However, all good things (or bad, according to a person's philosophy) must end! One day, word of all these disappearances arrived, and the members of the Sacred Gold Sword finally decided to investigate the killing of their old comrade.

A small group of paladins reached the region and started their investigation. Afraid they would discover what was happening, Gartol, now in his eighties but with the appearance of a middle-age man, invited them to the ceremony that was to take place during the night. The paladins — except one who was too tired — joined the celebration and, to their horror, found out what happened to the missing people. The paladin who went to bed suddenly woke up with the clear feeling that something terrible was happening. He furtively entered the temple just in time to see the last of his friends swallowed by the god's avatar. Disgusted and horrified, he screamed in terror and ran out of the temple while the people started to chase him. Maybe by luck, maybe because of a divine intervention, he succeeded in escaping and reached his church in the South.

The indignant behavior of the colonists could not be forgiven and an expedition of more than 200 soldiers, including many paladins and powerful clerics, was sent to exterminate this evil cult. The troop charged in the colony and killed everyone on sight. The few survivors looked for protection inside the temple where Gartol evoked the avatar of his god. However, his luck had abandoned him and his followers and, just after the rite was completed, the paladins burst into the temple and killed everyone. Six followers, thinking that everything was lost, removed the six magic spheres that allowed the portal to be opened from the altar and disappeared in the darkness. The god, now trapped in the prime material plane, was furious and began wreaking havoc. The clerics, though, were ready for such an event and while the paladins sacrificed themselves fighting the avatar, they completed a banishment rite that would have entrapped the god in the outer planes.

The six followers, meanwhile, decided to hide the spheres in secret places in order to use them at a later moment to call back their god and renovate the cult. However, things went awry with them and none survived more than a year from that terrible night. So far, none have heard of the spheres or of Zailhhess again.

So far.

With the passing of time, as a matter of facts, the binding of Zailhhess in his prison has started to deteriorate. He is still not able to escape his prison but he can project his will in the planes and provide clerical

powers — and domain spells from the domains of Evil, Chaos, Destruction and Death — to the ones who follow his tenets. His followers also gain the permanent supernatural ability to resist any death attack as they were under the effect of a *Death Ward* spell.

A few years ago, a woodcutter called Dulluth discovered one of the spheres in a hole in an old dead oak and took it with him as a curiosity. That night Zailhhess visited him in dream and revealed him the power of the sphere. The god also convinced him that once he found all the spheres and opened the portal to free him he would be rewarded him with power and richness beyond imagination. As a sign of his "good will," he offered him powerful clerical powers. Dulluth, who now calls himself "The Chosen One," has started to ally with powerful and evil people — particularly necromancers and clerics who already adored some God of Death or Chaos — giving re-birth to the cult. He has started the construction of a big temple in a hidden valley in the Ashen Hills using only mercenaries and workers recruited outside the area to avoid being discovered. He also sent out his minions with the mission to stealthy recover the spheres, but so far they have found only a few of them. Once he has all the spheres, the High Priest is able to open the portal and free Zailhhess from his prison.

It is at this point that the PCs enter in the game!

### What the PCs know?

The PCs can learn all the information in the adventure background, except those related to Dulluth and the sect, using their Bardic Knowledge, Gathering Information or Knowledge (Local or History) skills, or researching them in the tower library, or by asking the lord of the region or one of his sages. Since these events happened so long ago, though, the oral and the written traditions report them in an imprecise and misleading way. As usual, the final word is for the DM to decide what and what not to reveal to the party at the various stage of the adventure, and the DCs for gathering any information.

## Adventure Summary

The party has to confront the sect of Necromancers and Clerics of Death who are trying to free Zailhhess from his prison on the Outer Plane of Carceri. To do this, the sect needs to recover all the six Spheres of Zailhhess, the powerful magic items that, combined, are able to open the planar gate that allows the god to

send an avatar on the Prime Material Plane. At the beginning of the adventure, the PCs are not aware of the existence of this sect or of that of their god, and learn of it the hard way. In this research, they find help in a paladin, the lord of the Frontier.

## Adventure Timeline

Even if the events described in the adventure summary are sequential, there is little or no importance for the timeline. One event can happen the day or the month after another without any real consequence on the campaign, or the PCs could go in one place before another, differently to what the adventure summary — which only represents the most likely flux of events, not a fixed script — foresees. This is all good since this is a mini-campaign and the players should feel that their characters are part of a world that marches on independently of what they are doing. The only exception is the death of the lord's daughter, which has to happen while the PCs are in the Owl tower. Furthermore, it is quite difficult to find the hidden valley or the stronghold of Ulabius without any clue about their existence and location. The DM may also want to prepare some additional dungeons and encounters in case the PCs are going in places that are not forecast or fully detailed in this setting — you know, players are always unpredictable!

## Chapter One

The party starts the adventure in a tavern in the village of Dreikeng. There, the PCs meet Sir Krilmar Rediron — the lord of the region — who recruits them for a “spy” mission of the local herbalist’s house to verify if rumors about his involvement in a murder are true, and to take with them whatever evidence they find.

The PCs, gambling that the man is not in town, enter the house and, after fighting or disabling the house guardians, discover a lot of strange items and a clearly magical sphere in the cellar of the house. When they take these things to the lord, he is very pleased and invites them for an overnight visit to his tower for a banquet. In the meantime, he assigns to his sages the duty of finding out what the strange items are and, especially, what the sphere is and which powers it holds.

Unbeknownst to the party and the paladin, the “herbalist” Ulabius saw the PCs leaving his house and going to the lord and now tries to find an opportunity to exact vengeance on them. His mission to recover the six spheres, though, momentarily distracts

Ulabius. He knows that one of them is in a secret crypt under the garden of the tower and he plans to recover it at night.

## Chapter Two

During the banquet at the Owl Tower, the PCs have the opportunity to chat with the other guests and, particularly, with Elien, the beautiful young daughter of the lord. Her life in this “wild” area bores her and her only amusement comes from the garden of the tower that she is personally responsible for, with very good results. Most probably, she takes the party to a brief tour of her garden.

When the banquet is over and the various guests are in their rooms, a tragedy occurs. In his research of the crypt entrance, Ulabius accidentally starts a fire in the garden and the flames are burning down everything. Scared by the arrival of the servants and guests, Ulabius runs out of sight and sees from a distance that his vengeance is partially taking place anyway: Elien, in a crisis, runs toward the garden to save her plants and enters it before she can be stopped ... and this is the last time someone sees her alive!

Obviously, this event shocks the lord of the tower as well as all the other guests and the servants. Investigations into the cause of the fire are fruitless. The lord declares three full days of mourning and invites the PCs to join the ceremony. The remains of the young woman were placed in the garden and were not found. A decree declares the garden off limits and no one is allowed to enter it any longer. Ulabius has three guards posted at the entrance to enforce this decree.

To avoid problems, Ulabius decides to leave the sphere in the crypt until things cool down and moves to his hidden stronghold for more mischievous plans.

The day after the mourning period, the lord invites the party to his chambers. He looks battered and it is clear he has not slept well in the past days. With him are his sages, who have found enough clues in some old parchments to believe that they are confronting something more than a simple “mad herbalist.” They found out that the sphere is part of a set of six spheres that are involved in a forgotten cult. The spheres are magic items of dark powers and nobody must use them. The lord assigns the PCs the mission of finding out the missing spheres and suggests they start their research in the tomb of Thajar Darkfrag, the famous arch-mage who lived in the Frontier long ago.

## Chapter Three

The party goes to the tomb of Thajar following the indications of one of the lord’s scouting patrols that recently discovered the tomb entrance but the PCs do not find any sphere. On the way back a group of assassins hired by Ulabius attacks them; this action is in

contrast with the conduct of Dulluth, the real leader of the cult (see the Adventure Background) and alienates Ulabius from his favor. In the pocket of one of the assassins is a letter that directs the party to the nearby hamlet of Gauldark.

## Chapter Four

In Gauldark, the PCs meet the local guild leader, Alberd, and get instructions to reach an orc encampment where human slaves work in a mine until they are given to Ulabius for his dark experiments.

In the encampment, the PCs engage in a fight with the orcs and free the prisoners. From a map in the orc chieftain's tent, or from captured brutes, they learn of the position of a cottage where the prisoners were to be transported. Some mercenaries in the cottage are waiting for the arrival of the slaves and of Ulabius, who will take them with him. The mercenaries do not know the exact position of the hidden stronghold of Ulabius but the party could trick or scare them enough to let them reveal that they are waiting for him. If the PCs stay at the hut long enough, they have the opportunity to confront him. Ulabius, though, has a clone waiting for his soul in his stronghold.

## Chapter Five

At this point, the PCs have no other choice but to return to Sir Krilmar. At the tower, they receive new information that has been gathered by the lord's

sages: the enemy they are fighting is a sect that is trying to free an imprisoned evil god defeated by Sir Krilmar's order in the old days. To do that, the sect needs the six spheres. He also tells the party that an abandoned temple to this god and its location are mentioned in an ancient chronicle his sages have discovered in an old part of the tower library. The book also describes a big part of the story presented in the adventure background.

The temple is not so abandoned at the end, and the party has to fight with several minions of the sect. One of the spheres rests in an underground area of the temple, protected by formidable foes and a very special bridge.

## Chapter Six

When the PCs go back to the Owl Tower to report their progress, they find out that Elien's spirit infests the tower garden. The paladin asks them to take care of this, because he cannot face his own daughter's ghost.

The party enters the garden and fights the spirit of the lord's daughter. There, the PCs discover a hidden opening to an ancient crypt. Inside the crypt, the PCs find the remains of the maiden, a powerful guardian and another sphere.

At the same time, the lord's guards have caught a thief who tried to infiltrate the tower. During an interrogation, he admits Ulabius ordered him to recover those sphere(s) in the possession of the lord and also reveals the location of Ulabius' stronghold.

## Chapter Seven

Things start to turn positive for the PCs, because they can finally confront their enemy. In Ulabius' stronghold, though, they do not find any sphere but only hints to a temple at the exit of an ancient tunnel in the Ashen Hills.

## Chapter Eight

The party needs help to determine the exact position of the ancient tunnel entrance. The PCs find out that the only person who can help them is a certain "Bear" Nhuter, a trapper who lives somewhere in the Ashen Hills, close to the spring of the Aciier River. It takes time to find him but finally the PCs get their information and can go to the tunnel entrance.

While the party is engaged in this quest, though, Dulluth, the leader of the sect, tricks Lord Rediron into delivering him the spheres. When the party exits the tunnel all the spheres are in the hands of the sect, which is preparing the final ritual to call back the god. The tunnel ends in a secret valley where there is a zigzagrat, the temple dedicated to Zailhess. Inside, the sect's members are completing their rites, which also involve the ritual killing of the paladin. The PCs have, in a final crescendo, to stop them before the return of the evil god.

## NPCs of the Frontier

Remember that the NPCs live, as the PCs do! They have their own agendas and the DM has to use them to full effect. That means, among others, that they are not statically waiting for the PCs to come and go. Hostile NPCs call for reinforcements, prepare plans, learn from experience how the PCs fight and modify their tactics accordingly. Neutral and friendly NPCs can change their way of seeing the PCs and become more or less friendly, offer more or less help, share information or hide them. The NPCs Appendix at the end of the module depicts the major NPCs of the Frontier, their background, their agendas and schemes. It can help the DM gain a more complete understanding of the plots of the pivotal NPCs, and the way they probably react in response to the PCs' actions. The DM may even want to speak a dialect when acting as a "Frontiersman" to make them more remarkable characters.

## DM Notes

Even if the adventure is set in a specific place, the Frontier is very easy to adapt to a savage area of any campaign world. Throughout the module, there are many references to places such as "the South." These references are vague on purpose in order to fit easily the module in any existing campaign. The DM can change names and location very easily, including the name of the major NPCs and of the imprisoned god. The DM can also change the adventure background to make it fit into your campaign. The module is flexible enough that these changes do not affect it in any way.

The module uses the keyed encounter style, with the exception of Chapter 2, which is event-based. Do not use these encounters in a static way, though! Non- or low-intelligent creatures behave in a mechanical way but intelligent ones do not and react in a coordinate way. Throughout the module, there are examples of these concerted behaviors but there are definitely other possibilities, and the DM should make full use of them to present the encounters in a lively way.

To stress this point, consider introducing during the adventure some background events to which the PCs do not take part in, but that show them they are part of a bigger world that goes on with or without them. For example, the PCs could hear that while they were fighting in a dungeon, the lord's troops, "bless his soul!" has defeated a hobgoblin raid, or they hear that a charging wild boar killed one of the hunters, and the like. The key point here is to **make the Frontier a live**

### Scaling the Adventure

It is fairly simple to adjust the difficulty of the encounters in order to use the module with lower or higher level PCs. If the DM thinks the encounters are too difficult, reduce the levels or the number of the enemy minions and mercenaries, have some important NPCs help the characters with some extra cure potions or scrolls, have the paladin send some of his soldiers to help the PCs, etc. Do not reduce the power of the spheres guardians! It should be tough for the PCs to gain them. If, on the other hand, the encounters are too easy, increase the levels or the number of the enemy minions and mercenaries, have the PCs left more on their own with reduced availability of cure potions and scrolls, make the undead more resistant to turn and rebuke, and so on. Think twice about increasing the power of the spheres guardians! They are already powerful and the task to recover the spheres should be tough, not deadly.

place, with living people who interact with the PCs but also have their own lives, maybe not so glamorous but still interesting.

### Variety is the spice of adventure!

Suggest to your players to have a varied group. Most of the adventure is designed so that specific classes get to use their abilities in order to achieve the better results in some encounters. The characters will not be stuck and the adventure will go on, but part of the fun for the players will disappear. While spell-slingers and fighters are almost always helpful, thieves and monks come especially handy when things must be done with stealth or without spilling blood, thieves are required to find and disable traps, rangers can track enemies more efficiently than other characters, clerics become very important when confronting the undead, bards can make full use of their getting-the-right information attitude, and so on.

### Traveling in the Frontier

The PCs have to travel a lot to reach the different locations where the adventure takes place. It is up to you to decide how to manage these travels. You can decide that they are completed in a moment notice of real time — one second the PCs are in a village and the second after they are somewhere else, after having traveled hours or days of game time — or you may decide to roleplay them more intensely, with encounters and thorough control of the time. Since the campaign is already dense with events, though, random encounters should be limited. The following pages contain random encounter tables for the benefit of those DMs who like to run encounters during movement from one place to another. Obviously, the DM can decide to use your own encounter tables but avoid particularly odd encounters that create the feeling in the players that they are just that: random encounters! If possible, they should add to the drama of the adventure and be interconnected with the land's nature, more than just another occasion to fight or a way to hamper the PCs in their travels.

### Gearing up!

Lot of actions happen in dungeons poorly or not illuminated at all. This is very important for the DM and players alike since, without a proper light source or the darkvision ability, many PCs will be in trouble. Therefore, the DM should track the consumption of torches and the like, while the PCs would find it handy to have some magical source of light. All the

descriptions in the keyed area assume the PCs have at least one source of good illumination, such as a torch. If this is not the case, adjust descriptions and encounters accordingly.

There are several shops in the Frontier and the PCs, with some effort and “foot work,” can find every item described in the *PHB* — *Equipment* chapter that costs less than 100 gp; crafted items like heavy armors are possible but the time involved should make it impractical for the PCs to buy them. Moreover, when it comes to magic, almost all the available items are in the hands of the most powerful NPCs ... and they are not giving them away so easily! This means that the PCs should be already well geared before they start the adventure. At the minimum, they should have some magic weapons and *cure potions*, or the DM may add some encounters at the beginning of the adventure to have the PCs earn them.

## Assigning Experience Points

Whenever possible, game sessions should finish at the end of the chapters, when a specific thread of the adventure is concluded and new ones are discovered, and XP awards divided by the PCs. This way the PCs progress in levels during the adventure but the players do not see the XP division as an end since they feel the pull of the new threads and look forward to the new gaming session. If you, DM, use a different method for assigning and dividing XP, well, just continue your way. Consider, though, that there are enough encounters in the module to allow the PCs to gain new levels several times, so it would be unfair to wait the end of the whole adventure to assign XP since the PCs could only gain a part of them (in fact, they can gain only one level + next level XP -1).

## The Six Spheres of Zailhess

A full description of the spheres is given in the New Magic Items Appendix at the end of the module. They are powerful magic items and should not be left in the hands of the PCs at the end of the campaign. On top of the pure fact that artifacts in the hands of PCs can easily disrupt any campaign, there are at least two other reasons to avoid it. Primarily, the use of the spheres will transform eventually the PCs in some monsters and this means that those PCs become NPCs ... not really funny for the players! The second reason is that the spheres are a potential danger for the world and the heroes — the PCs — should find a way to get rid of them, maybe permanently, not use them. This task alone could be enough to make a full campaign out of it — DMs are advised!

Assigning XP at any encounter, on the other end, disrupts the flow of events too often and can become boring.

At the end of any chapter, there is the description of additional rewards the PCs can gain for having completed that part of the adventure or for some specific actions they have done during the playing session. These rewards are optional and it is left to the DM discretion to assign them or not.

## Preparation

*The Six Spheres of Zailhess* is an adventure best suited for 4–6 characters of 7th to 10th level. During the adventure, the characters are likely to advance in level more than once. You, the DM, should have at your disposal the core rulebooks, including the *PHB*, *DMG*, and the *MM*.

Before play, read through this module completely more than once, familiarizing yourself with the Frontier, its major areas of interest and its inhabitants.

Regarding monster statistics, the first time an advanced version from the *MM* appears in the text, a complete stat block is presented, with the exception of special attacks and special qualities, which can be found in the *MM*. For all subsequent appearances of such a creature or for creatures directly from the *MM*, an abbreviated stat block is used. Look to the Appendixes at the end of the module for descriptions of new monsters, magic items, new spells and other pertinent information.

## Adventure Hooks

It should not be difficult to involve the PCs in the adventure. Maybe they already knew the paladin, they answered a general call from the lord, they were looking for adventure opportunities, found a reward notice, or they were simply having a great time in the tavern, and heard some rumors about a well-rewarded task. It can also be that they are quite famous in the area because of past heroic gestures and the lord has contacted them. The DM can decide on his/her own how the party is involved based on his/her campaign. Whatever the case, when the adventure begins, they are in the tavern discussing their mission and their reward with Sir Krilmor.

# The Frontier

Welcome to the Frontier, a savage place with few civilized areas. Two things have greatly contributed to this fact: the frequent raids of ogres and goblinoids

from the North and the history of the place (as detailed in the Adventure Background).

All the information in this paragraph is either already known by the PCs — if they are from this area — or could be easily gathered. The only exceptions are the information given in the boxed texts that are only for the DM, and that the PCs can learn during the course of the adventure. As with any other part in this module, the DM may change in part or totally these descriptions to fit them into your own on-going campaign.

The area lacks resources, the only available being the wood from the forests and the fish from the rivers. Due to the rigid climate, it is also extremely difficult to breed animals like cattle and sheep. On the other hand, the country is full of wild life: felines adapted to the climate, wolves and bears being the most represented ones. Therefore, many settlers have made their living hunting these animals and selling their furs and skins, to such extent that buffaloes — once so numerous — have almost disappeared.

Probably due to the climatic condition and the tough life they live, the settlers of the Frontier are quite unfriendly when not outright hostile to newcomers. If the PCs are not locals, start any encounter with NPCs at least in the “unfriendly” category. In the village of Dreikeng, though, because they are a “more developed” community, the initial reaction is “indifferent.”

Bluff checks have a DC modifier of +10 if PCs are not locals. Trying to pass as a local if they are not imposes a -4 penalty on the PCs’ Disguise checks and a +8 bonus on the locals’ Spot checks. Settlers are also quite tough and any attempt to intimidate them receives a penalty of -2 on the relative Intimidate checks.

The climatic conditions in the Frontier are similar to

those of the northern states of the continent of a certain Prime Material World called Europe. The adventure happens in autumn. The outside temperature ranges from the 30s to the 60s °F, with frequent rains and winds that disturb the PCs during their movement from one place to the next. These climatic conditions generate a gothic atmosphere the DM should emphasize. The players should also take into account proper dressing for their characters to avoid problems caused by exposition to the cold weather (see *DMG – Wilderness Adventure* for more details).

Following are some tables to roll random climatic conditions. Note that these tables differ from those offered in the *DMG – Weather* chapter to better simulate the harsh weather of the Frontier. If the DM prefers to stick to the rules of the core rulebook the DM are free to do that. You could also just pick one condition to present the players the prominent daily weather without rolling it randomly. Note that all the effects stack together and with those explained in the *PHB – Movement* paragraph for moving in particular environments. For example, moving on a trackless hill while it’s heavily raining with a strong wind causes the visibility to be reduced to  $\frac{3}{8}$  ( $\frac{1}{2}$  for the heavy rain and  $\frac{3}{4}$  for the strong wind), the movement to  $\frac{3}{8}$  ( $\frac{3}{4}$  for the heavy rain and  $\frac{1}{2}$  for moving on a trackless hill) and the penalty on Listen checks is -6 (-4 for heavy rain plus -2 for strong wind).

**Table 1: Random Weather Conditions and Effects**

| d20   | Weather      | Effects  |
|-------|--------------|--|
| 1–2   | Mist / Fog** | Visibility reduced to $1d6 \times 5$ ft.   |
| 3–6   | Clear        | None   |
| 7–12  | Rain, light  | -2 to Listen checks  |
| 13–15 | Rain, medium | Visibility reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ of normal vision, -4 to Listen checks, -2 on Spot and Search checks  |
| 16–18 | Rain, heavy  | Visibility reduced to half normal vision, overland movement reduced to $\frac{3}{4}$ of normal movement rate, -4 on Listen, Spot and Search checks   |
| 19    | Hail***      | Same as heavy rain plus moving in the hail inflicts $1d4$ points of non-lethal bludgeoning damage every 10 min to unprotected PCs and mounts alike and 1 point of lethal damage  |
| 20    | Snow         | Visibility reduced to $\frac{1}{4}$ normal vision, overland movement reduced to half normal movement rate, moving in the snow inflicts $1d6$ points of non-lethal cold damage every hour to unprotected PCs and mounts alike and $1d3$ points of lethal damage; double the damage during night hours |

\* DMs should also consider additional secondary effects for the weather conditions; for example, it is almost impossible to read a map or a scroll under a heavy rain; the same applies to move trackless under the snow — even if the snow itself will cover the tracks quickly afterwards — ; torches and lanterns are hampered by the rain; and so on.

\*\* Only if wind is Calm or Breeze, otherwise consider as Clear.

\*\*\* Only if wind is at least medium, otherwise consider as Snow or heavy Rain; the hail bursts for  $1d6 \times 10$  min before transforming into medium Rain.

**Table 2: Random Wind Direction**

| d20   | Wind Direction* |
|-------|-----------------|
| 1-5   | North           |
| 6-9   | North-West      |
| 10-13 | North-East      |
| 14-15 | West            |
| 16-17 | East            |
| 18    | South-West      |
| 19    | South-East      |
| 20    | South           |

\* This is the prevalent wind direction for the day, but locally it can change of one degree or more; for example, a North wind could become a North-West wind on a hill because the North direction is protected by the hill face

## Natural Features

This paragraph details the major natural features of the region as they are presented in the DM map at the end of the module. These descriptions are helpful to describe the various areas while the party is moving from one place to another or to sketch the place where an encounter takes place. Of course, this is not valid if the DM have set this module into your existing campaign.

In the north are the Griffon Hills (to the east) and the Ashen Hills (to the west), separated by the North Pass that leads to the Far North where tribes of giants and goblinoids leave and fight with each other when they are not preparing an attack on the human settle-

**Table 3: Random Wind Strength and Effects**

| d20   | Wind Strength        | Effects*  |
|-------|----------------------|---|
| 1-2   | Calm                 | None  |
| 3-4   | Breeze               | None  |
| 5-9   | Gentle / Light       | None  |
| 10-14 | Medium / Moderate    | Very light objects like scrolls and maps and some spell components (e.g.: a feather) can fly away from the hand of the PCs; a DC 5 Strength check is needed to hold these objects (free action)   |
| 15-17 | Strong               | Blinding Dust or snow is thrown in the air: visibility is reduced to 3/4 of normal vision, -2 to Listen checks  |
| 18-19 | Very Strong / Severe | Objects that weigh less than 5 pounds can be blown away from the hands of the owner; a DC 5 Strength check is needed to hold onto objects (free action); for very light objects, including spells components, the DC raises to 10; spells that requires verbal components have a 5% chance of miscast; -4 to Listen checks  |
| 20    | Windstorm / Gale**   | Objects held in the hands risk being taken away by the wind; paper items like scrolls and maps are automatically torn to pieces as are objects made of similar materials; to hold onto other light objects, the DC for the Strength check is 20; a DC 10 Strength check is needed to hold any other object that weighs less than 10 pounds; miscast chance raises to 20%; visibility is reduced to 1/2 normal vision and movement to 3/4 of normal rate; Listen checks are made with a -8 penalty |

\* For effects of wind on creatures, flames and ranged attacks, see *DMG – Wind Effects* table

\*\* Only if the on day before, the wind was at least Strong, a Gale lasts for 1d3 hours; at the end of this period, the DM rolls 1d00: if the result is above 70 the gale transforms into a Hurricane, otherwise the wind reduces its intensity to Strong for the rest of the day. If a Hurricane / Tornado is indicated, no object that weighs less than 15 pounds can be held in the hands, for heavier objects a DC 20 Strength check is needed. Unprotected characters take 2d6 points of piercing and bludgeoning damage every 10 min because of flying objects, protected ones suffer only 1d6 points of damage (half of the damage is non-lethal); characters that weigh, including equipment, less than 100 pounds are blown away from the wind for additional 8d10 points of bludgeoning damage (1/3 is non-lethal) and scattered around in a radius of 0.5 mile unless they pass a DC 20 Strength check. Other characters need to pass a DC 15 Strength check to avoid similar fate, and any spell that requires verbal or material components automatically fails as does any attempt to speak or listen. Untrained mounts are terrified by the hurricane and run away (a Ride check with DC 15 is needed to avoid being thrown to the ground); characters can only take tactical movement during the hurricane and the visibility is reduced to 10ft. A Hurricane bursts for 3d4 x10 min before transforming in a Very Strong wind for the rest of the day



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ments. These hills are quite rocky and empty of vegetation and contain no veins of precious ores; consider them rugged hills with regards to terrain features (see DMG — *Wilderness Adventure*). The grey stones that can be dug out of the hills are used for the construction of some buildings, the more important ones being the Owl and the Eagle Towers (see below). The mine near the Owl Tower has been used to extract all the stone needed to build the two towers and is still used to excavate stones and repair damage to the walls inflicted by the weather or the ogres. Most of the other buildings in the Frontier are made of the reddish wood that comes from the Eisenwood Forest.

The Eagle Tower was razed during a raid of hobgoblins, ogres and hill giants and has not been repaired. Many small animals and birds now use the ruins for their lairs and nests. The hills are well known for caverns inhabited by bears, griffons and large cats that have adapted to the frigid climate. Rumors of manticores and dragons living there abound.

Within the Griffon Hills, in a small valley, there is the hidden entrance to the Tomb of Thajar Darkfrag (see Chapter 3), a hill with a sculpted face of a laughing man whose mouth is a bronze double door. Through the Ashen Hills stretches an ancient complex of tunnels that ends in a secret valley where a

magnificent temple to Zailhess is under completion (see Chapter 8). The complex was dug out in a bygone age and nobody knows who the original builders were. Some monsters are now using this abandoned dungeon for lairs while the cult members use it to reach their temple.

Very recently, a band of trolls has found its way to the cellars beneath the Eagle Tower and started to use them as their lair. It will not take much time before they go out for some raids!

Two forests stretch from the east (the Sternwood Forest) to the west (the Eisenwood Forest). The Eisenwood Forest is heavily utilized to obtain its famous reddish wood. The wood is used to build most of the structures in the area and is sold to the more civilized towns of the South, where it is transported over the Aciier River using rafts. Many animals also call the Eisenwood Forest home: deer, squirrels and the like, with the occasional dire boar falling prey to the hunters, and vice versa.

The Sternwood Forest, on the other hand, has earned a very bad reputation because of the many people that disappeared in its vicinity. The most accepted cause is the presence of a particular ferocious and well-organized pack of wolves. Others believe that a band of thieves and refugees use the forest as a hiding

place, and some even think that some terrible monster inhabits the forest and that "one day I'm going to kill it." The latter is the typical story told to newcomers in a tavern to get some free drinks or coin in exchange for information.

Consider both forests as Dense in the center (about 30 miles radius); Medium in a ring around the center (other 20–25 miles) and then Sparse (refer to DMG – *Wilderness Adventure* for effects of forest features).

The truth about the Sternwood Forest is that Ulabius has built his stronghold over a small hill in the middle of the forest (see Chapter 7) and has freed many of his undead slaves to act as guardians of the forest. When his guardians are not enough, he kills the trespassers in town, luring them into his house using his reputation as a healer. Note that these murderers are the reason for the investigation required by Sir Krilmar at the beginning of the adventure. In the southernmost part of the forest lies the remains of the original temple to Zailhhess (see Chapter 5); some of the horrors from the temple are now wandering in the forest killing everything in sight.

The Wolf Road starts from the North Pass and leads to the South. It has only a two secondary paths, one leading to the Owl Tower, one to the ruins of the Eagle Tower and one exiting the hamlet of Gauldark (and then to the clearings of the Eisenwood Forest).

The murky water of the Aciier River flows parallel to the road. The muddy waters of the first part of the river are not deep enough (in average only 2–3 ft.) to allow normal navigation, apart from the rafts used for transporting the timbers southward. The river becomes partially frozen during winter and is full of edible fish. Some of them, called Bluebones, can be characterized by their tough blue bones. These bones are sometimes used to craft amulets and other knick-knacks. Apart from the danger of thin ice in winter and flooding during spring, the river is quite safe and few monsters are known to swim in its waters.

After a secondary stream joins the Aciier River, the water becomes deeper, but still only a 3–4 ft. average. Where the two water streams join, a foul marsh spreads. This swamp, known as the Wolves' Bog, is avoided by the Settlers that fear its "mysterious inhabitants." Refer to the *Wilderness Adventure* paragraph on the DMG for explanations on the bog's features.

The marsh is indeed a danger, but there is nothing truly mysterious in it, as any good ranger could explain. The bogs are dotted with quicksand, the fumes that waft from the rotting vegetation and mud is poisonous, and many snakes and other perilous animals live within it.



Travel through the bog causes exposure to marsh gas. This requires a DC 13 Fortitude save. Failure causes 1d3 points of both Strength and Constitution damage. The save has to be repeated every 8 hours characters spend in the marsh.

## Major Places of Interest

This section describes the major places of interest in the Frontier, places where the PCs are likely to go and interact with people. There are no maps of the houses, shops and other minor features. DMs are free to sketch their own floor-plans of the taverns, smiths, stables and other constructions, while the others can limit their descriptions to "you enter the tavern and head towards the bar," "while you are sitting at the tavern table a strange-looking dwarf moves towards you," and so forth.

For the same reasons, only the major NPCs with whom the PCs are likely to interact are fully detailed in the NPC's Appendix. For others, small descriptions are provided the first time they appear.

The whole area is dotted with small wooden houses, the huts and cottages of the woodcutters, trappers and hunters that do not like civilization, even that offered in the villages. Occasionally, the PCs also find a small communal farm of visionaries or religious fanatics that believe a day this "chosen" land will be full of fertile and well-cultivated fields.

The taverns of the North are the best place to get all kinds of information, gossip and rumor. People gather in these taverns to find protection from the rigid weather and the cold wind, to rest after a tough day of back-breaking work, or to simply "drink away" their sadness.

## Dreikeng

The village of Dreikeng plays a fundamental role in this adventure. It is here that the PCs meet Sir Krilmar, and it is here they will likely spend most of their time when not in a dungeon or traveling. It is also a very important location since the only temple and market where PCs can buy gear are in Dreikeng. Depending on the background of the PCs, they can be outsiders or natives. In the latter case, the DM should consider assigning the PCs house(s), relatives, friends, etc. and provide — or ask the players to provide — background information and anecdotes on their characters and their early years in the area.

Dreikeng is a village of about 500 souls (95% humans, 1% each dwarves, half-elves and half-orcs, 2% others) for the most part dedicated to woodcutting, hunting, trapping and manufacturing. The limit for the village is of 200 gp, and anything that has a value below 100 gp can be bought in the market or in the shops. The overall alignment for the village is

Chaotic Good, with people very concerned with their own freedom but willing to help each other if doing so does not cause too much pain and effort. A town council of three merchants rules the village. The three merchants are Skaflok, Resnik and Cyrenne that, in turn, receive order from the lord, especially in case of war.

The Aciier River and the Wolf Road cross the village. A wooden wall interspersed with wooden guard towers surrounds it. On the north and the east, the Orc Gate and the Owl Gate give access to the village and open respectively on the road to the North Pass and the Owl Tower. The Wolf Gate allows access in town from the south and at its doors is the market where the annual Spring Fair is held. Outside the walls, in the south-west part, there are the few cultivated fields.

The map at the end of the module shows Dreikeng and the major buildings of interest.

### 1. Orc Gate

This wooden gate reinforced with metal bars protects the most dangerous side of the village, the one that faces the savage north. It takes its name from the ogres' skulls attached to its timbers as a warning for the orcish bands. The gate is always kept closed. During daytime, a guard monitors the road that leads to the North Pass. At night, two guards use a bullseye-lanthorn to monitor the Road and the area around the village. A bronze bell is at hand to raise the alarm.

**Gate Guard:** usually Male Human, Fighter 1; CR 1; SZ Medium; HD 1d10+1; hp 11; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. {20 with armor}; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +1 light wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +1 / +3; ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19-20 x2); AL usually L/N; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Intimidate +4, Ride +5, Survival +2; Endurance, Mounted Combat, Weapon Focus [Longsword]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, Proficient with all armors and shields.

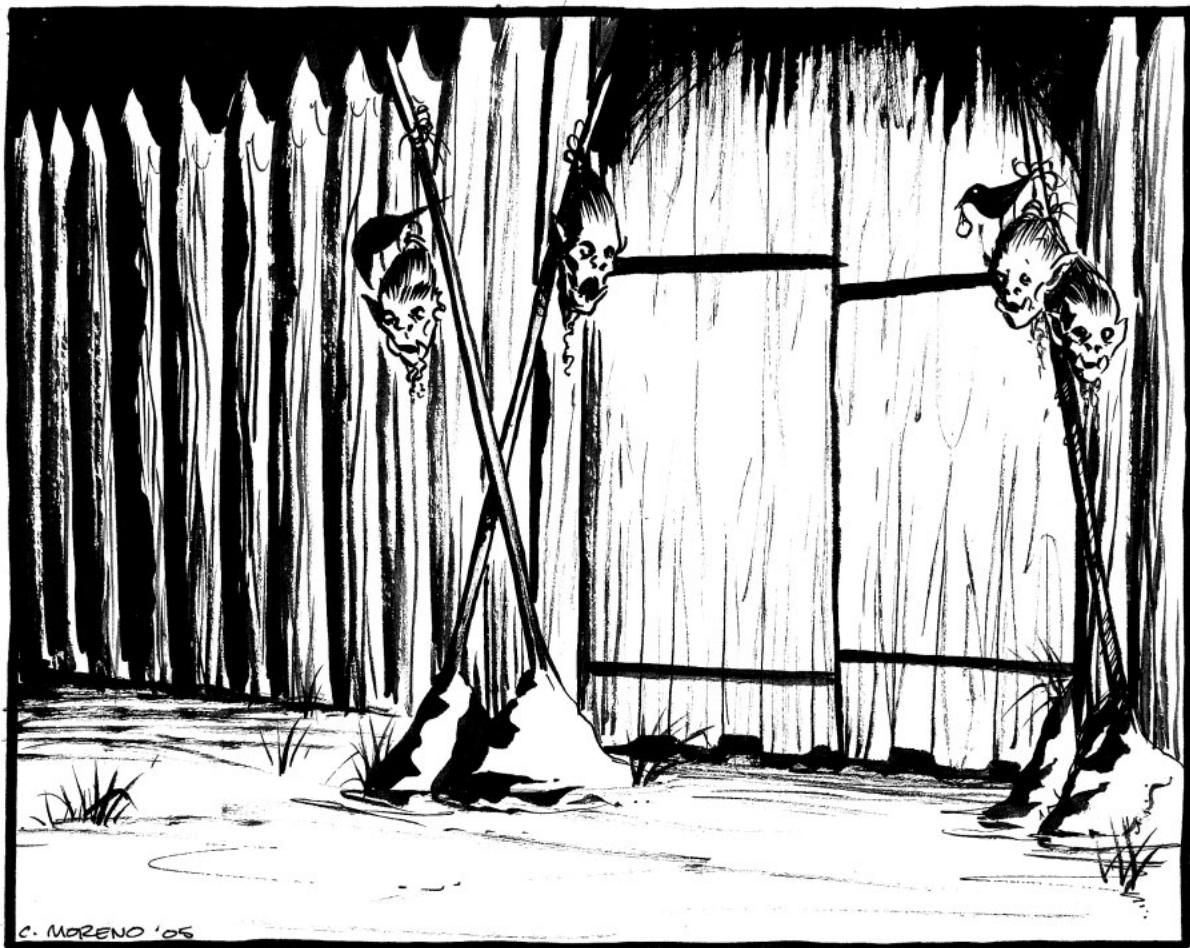
**Possessions:** longsword, scale mail, light wooden shield, 1d10 sp.

### 2. Owl Gate

Through this wooden gate stretches the road that connects the village to the Owl Tower (hence the name of the gate). It is open during the day and unguarded but at night two guards (use same stats as above) keep it closed and secured.

### 3. Wolf Gate

This wooden gate is always open unless an alarm is raised. Two guards (use same stats as above) ensure



peace is kept in the market outside the town walls. At night, the guards ensure that everyone entering the village from the south is registered in a "guest book."

#### 4. Stables

Both stables are wooden construction where travellers can leave their horses. The fee is 1 sp a day. These are also the perfect places to get information on who is coming in or going out of the village.

#### 5. Tavern "The Silver Wolf"

This well-cleaned and simply furnished tavern has 2 single rooms at 12 cp a night, 5 double rooms at 7 cp a night and 10 beds in a common room at 1 cp a night. There are 8 tables in the main taproom and clients are served by Zirk — the tavern owner, a small simple man (Com 3), Maggie — his wife, a brown-haired woman not particularly beauty or intelligent (Com 2) — and Loloc — their stupid stocky son (Com 2). The tavern is not flourishing since few travelers pass through this land, but Zirk's family gets enough to live.

Meals cost an additional 1 sp and consist of chicken, beef, or boar — depending on the availability. For breakfast, cakes are provided, being made of cheese

and fruits. Beers and ales are available for 2 sp ("all you can drink!").

#### 6. Blacksmith "The Iron Fist"

This shop is a very well furnished smithy, with many axes, saws and other woodcutting tools hanging on the walls. A middle-age fat man, with long black hair and a round face where the black eyes seem to shine, owns it. His voice is somehow raspy but clear. His true name is Develin (Exp 5) but everyone in town calls him simply "the Smith." He was born in the Frontier and has never left it. He is very knowledgeable regarding almost everything that has happened in the last 30 years or so. He also knows a lot of legends and rumors. Gather Information checks are at +3 here.

In this shop the PCs can change their horses' shoes, repair their weapons and armor, buy new ones (but only simple weapons are available "in stock") or simply chat. Develin is a very good taleteller and also a patient and acute listener. In a chest in his shop, well locked, there is a magic sword: Kaulias, a +2 longsword that ignores damage reduction abilities up to 10 / —.

**Locked Chest:** HD 8, hp 15, Break DC 23, Open Lock DC 25.

The sword has a very strangely shaped handle, as it was not designed for human hands. Develin will not sell his sword since this was a gift of a mysterious knight he once met (at least, this is what he says if asked), though he may lend it out if the PCs show themselves to be heroes, and a dire need arises. The PCs could get it only if they succeed in three consecutive Diplomacy check with DC 18 and they have proven a need (and good-will towards the town). If convinced, Develin asks no payment for the sword, but he expects to get it back once the PCs have defeated their enemies.

### 7. Weapon-smith “The Shining Sword”

This small shop is the only place in the Frontier where adventurers can find weapons besides simple types. Every simple and martial weapon is available as well as any kind of light and medium armors. Due to the uniqueness in the area of her shop, Lausiana asks at least 50% more than the price in the PHB. The best weapon available in this shop is an adamantine masterwork warhammer.

Lausiana (Brd 3/Exp 4) is an old elf — old even for elven standards — who moved to the Frontier about fifty years ago. People believe that she is a refugee, but no one knows for sure and she is not willing to talk about her past. Lausiana always wears blue clothes and has a dignified aura about her, especially her gold eyes, such that everyone feels a need to be respectful in her presence.

Among her belongings, Lausiana has three magic items: a *ring of animal friendship*, *boots of elvenkind* and a *harp of charming*. They are memories of her past life and she is not willing to give them away. If PCs succeed in convincing her (Diplomacy Check DC 40), she asks for at least triple the normal cost.

### 8. Ulabius’ House

This is the house of the supposed murderer. See chapter 1 for a full description.

### 9. Leather Shop “The Wolf without the Skin”

Matrhuraz (Exp 9), the owner of this shop, spends most of his time trapping and killing beasts for his supply of hides or drinking beer in one of the taverns and contracting with other hunters for additional skins. Everyone knows of his surly attitude, and no one really cares about his latest diatribe about the last person to anger him. People know this emotional status lasts only a short time. This is the reason why he has no enemies, but no real friends as well. It is not strange that he has never married.

Mathruraz is a fat man with a long black curly beard, not properly cured, that is difficult to distinguish from his dirty hair. His eyes are small black

beads that sit on top of his huge nose. In his work, though, Mathruraz has no competition: he is the best one and everyone knows it. Many people are sorry that his competency will be lost since he has no apprentice (“who could bear his behavior?”). The PCs can buy or have made virtually any item made of leather or animal skins in this shop; provided they find the owner, and that he is able to find that item in the incredible mess that is his shop, of course!

### 10. House of Skaflok

This is one of the few houses made entirely of stone. The furnishings are not rich, but they appear luxurious compared to those of the typical house of the other settlers. Skaflok (Exp 6) is one of the three merchant leaders of the village and the richest man in town. He fell in love with gold at an early age, and gold is the only thing he is interested in. It is unlikely that the PCs are invited to enter the house unless they have something of high value they are willing to sell. Most probably, they meet a butler that sends them away since “Skaflok is out for very important business.”

### 11. House of Resnik

Resnik is also one of the three merchant leaders and has built his house entirely of black and rose granite. Dozens of gargoyles surround the roof of this three-story building and pour rainwater into a beautiful garden full of well-trimmed bushes. Resnik and his family — the beautiful wife Zulaha (Com 2) and their three daughters (all Com 1) Uthma, Malma and Bathna — are very popular in town. It is said that many people hope that he becomes mayor of the village. Resnik, though, is not very interested in politics. He prefers pieces of art, curious items from all over the world, strange plants, jewelry, etc. to anything political. Rare or bizarre items interest him. If the PCs found something strange and intend to sell it, this is the place! Resnik is also an invaluable font of information, but his knowledge is restricted to arts and curiosities. He is fully described in the NPC Appendix.

### 12. House of Cyrenne

Together with Skaflok and Resnik, Cyrenne forms the triumvirate that governs the village. Rumors are that she is the real leader of the group and that she has a romance with Lord Krilmar. The people involved strongly deny both things but the gossip continues to spread. Cyrenne is a skillful merchant of wood; she pays the woodcutters fairly, and they always reserve the best timbers for her. These are then sold at a very good price in the markets of the South. Even though

she is likely to be friendly to PCs, the latter have little or nothing to gain in talking with her (unless the PCs decide to hang their swords and wands to the wall and become woodcutters!). She knows that some of her "suppliers" have disappeared but she does not pay too much attention to this fact since "it is quite common in this cruel world." Cyrenne is fully described in the NPC Appendix.

### 13. Temple of the Sacred Gold Sword

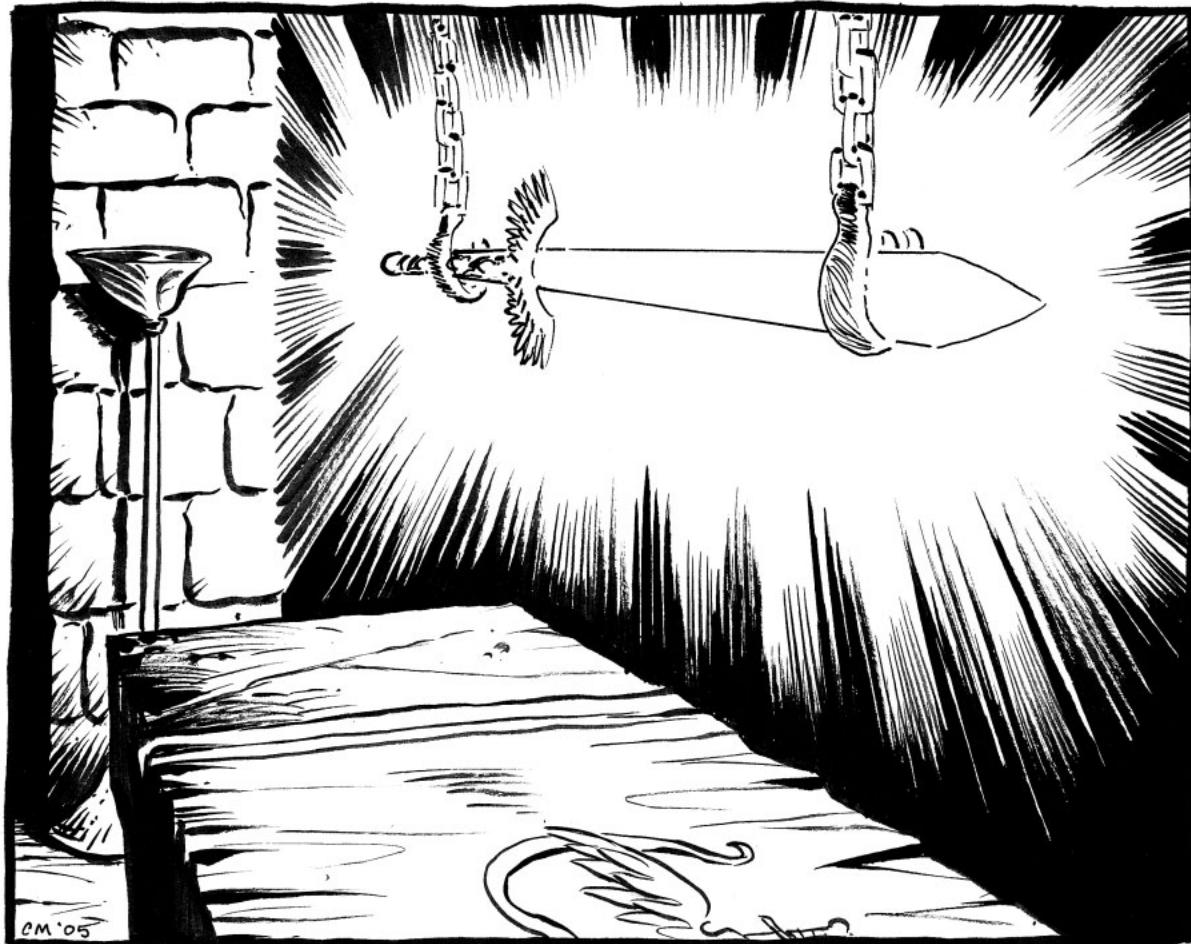
The temple is not as magnificent a structure as the halls of splendors that are present in the South, but it is still impressive compared to the average edifices in the area. The entrance is a double bronze door embossed in its middle with the winged sword, the symbol of the church. The temple is a two-story building, the first made of grey stones and the second of red wood. The first floor is a single room whose vaulted ceiling is sustained by four rows of twelve columns. In the center is the altar with a gold sword suspended by magic above it. Two spiral stairs lead to the second floor to the rooms of the two adepts, Ruhtil and Furth (Clr 2), and the rooms, including a library and a study, of the bishop Lodar Brighthands (see NPC Appendix for details on him). The temple is a very important place in the village and everyone loves Lodar; he has cured many people in the village and his blessing is

### The Religion of Bablukar

The tenets of the followers of Bablukar are quite simple and can be summarized in five points:

- Good is important above everything else, except the life of other good-aligned creatures
- Fight evil but do it causing as few casualties as possible
- Honor in combat is as important as your life
- Protect the weak and respect the leaders if they respect their people
- Respect a good law; try to change a bad one, but avoid political crises in doing that

Clerics of Bablukar have access to the domains of Good, Strength, Law Healing and Protection. On top of gaining domain spells, they are all considered to be specialists with a single type of sword — to be chosen at first level and that cannot be changed afterwards — already at first level, even if they do not have the normal pre-requisites. In addition, if a Clerics of Bablukar is above 9th level, and is fighting any evil-aligned creature with a sword, they ignore any kind of damage resistance.



often requested before starting any activity. He is not interested in politics and spends most of his time reading and praying. The two adepts directly supervise the activities in the temple and Lodar is involved only in special cases.

The temple does not help any evil-aligned creature and, normally, provides half price help to good-aligned creatures. Services are free if they are followers of Bablukar, the neutral-good god whose symbol is the Sacred Gold Sword. The temple does not normally sell potions or scrolls but Lodar could provide some of these items if really impressed by the goodness of the PCs and the importance of their mission.

#### 14. Blacksmith "The Hammer of the Stars"

This blacksmith (Exp 9) is specialized in "everything needed for your horse ... and even if you have a less standard mount, this is the place for you!" Woodcutting tools are also available, of course. Ujjalham is the owner of this shop and is helped by a young female half-orc, Kaulla (Exp 2), whose unknown parents abandoned her at the door of Ujja, as everyone knows him. Ujja, who married twice but never had a son, did not want to leave her to her cruel destiny and decided to raise her. Kaulla has the typical traits of the half-orcs, but two wonderful brown eyes that look like gems peer out from her otherwise ugly face — well, at least ugly for human standards.

Ujja is a well-built old man who is still strong enough to lift his hammer and work the iron, but he is also very happy that his daughter has demonstrated good skill in this work because he feels that his time on this world is about to finish — although he never admits that fact to anyone except his daughter. Ujja is almost bald and the skin of his face and arms is completely covered with scars and burns. The skin of his hands is so thick that it could be mistaken for leather. In the shop, there is nothing of interest but it could become important if the PCs have unusual mounts.

#### 15. Pottery Shop "Mum Ballaka"

This small shop is also the house of Mum Ballaka (Exp 4), an old woman — half-mad and half-crazy, as the other villagers describe her — who never speaks but whose skills with clay are formidable. Sometimes she erupts in hideous laughter, only to go back to her dark silence in a moment. If someone gives her a sketch of something to be manufactured, she shows the price in cp with her fingers. She never mentions how long it will take, but people in the village know that normally you need to wait about one day every 5 cp asked.

#### 16. Tavern "The Rest of the Horseman"

This is the tavern where the PCs start the adventure discussing their mission with Lord Krilmar. The

tavern is clean and a good aroma is always in the air. Being the preferred tavern of the lord, people tend to act more peaceful and orderly than usual. Two young half-elf brothers run the tavern: Thelgar (War 3/Exp 1) and Findol (Exp 4). Their parents died when they were young during an orc raid and since that moment they took care of the tavern with optimum results. Both brothers have long blond hair and blue eyes; their slim builds and pointed ears are clear clues of their half-breed origin.

The tavern has 2 single rooms at 2 sp a night and 7 double rooms at 1 sp per night. The taproom has eight tables of well-polished wood. For 15 cp, guests can enjoy baked beef or a chicken casserole. Sometimes, boar kebabs are also served for 2 sp. Cakes are free for the rooms' guests, otherwise customers can enjoy cheese pie, fruit pudding or pear crumble for 5 cp. Beer and ales are rarely served (at 5 cp per glass) since the elite clientele prefer elven wine (at 5 sp a glass) and dwarven black spirit (at 3 sp a pint). A non-alcoholic cocktail called Winter Surprise is the preferred drink of the women: it is served in long glasses and costs 1 sp.

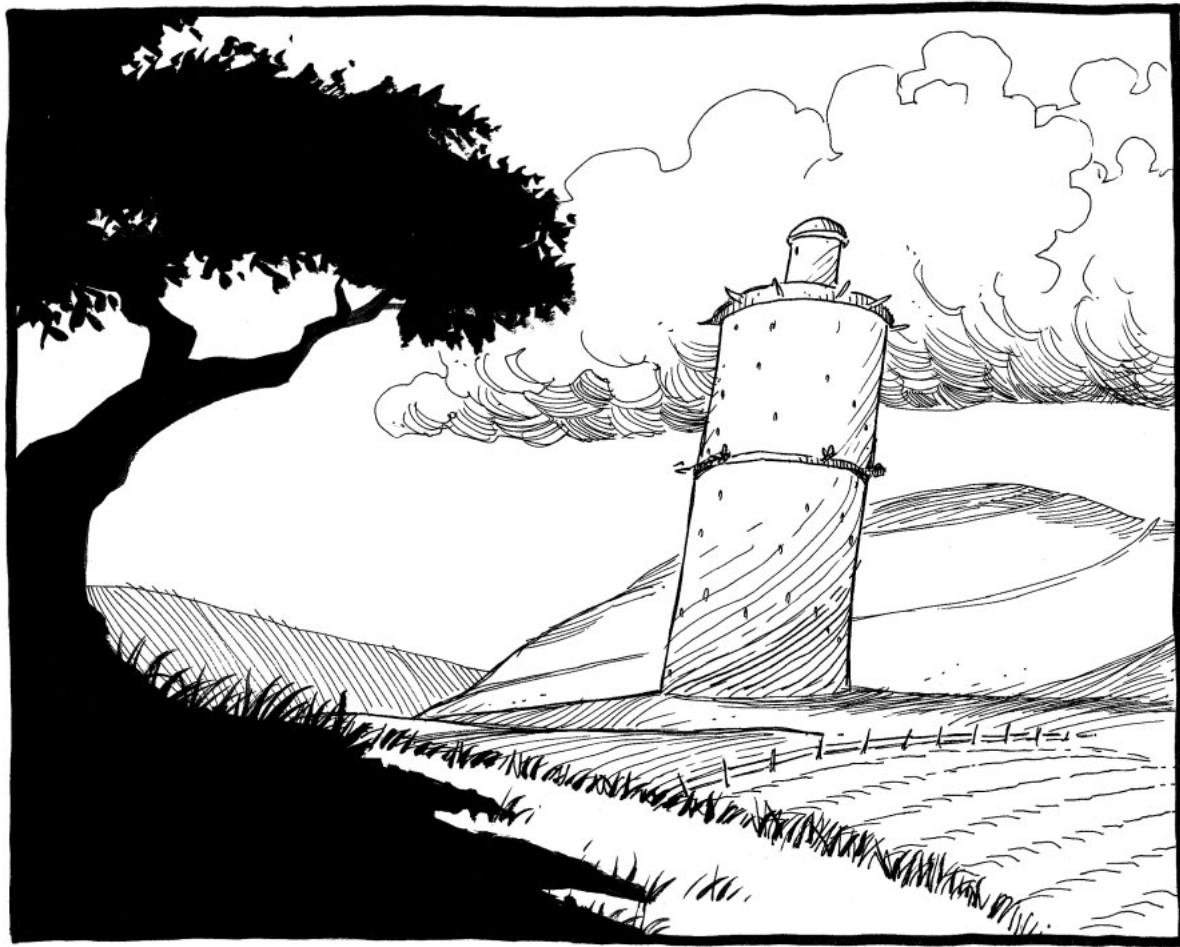
#### 17. Town Guards' Barrack

This edifice is nothing more than a big hut (really big, indeed) where the town guards spend part of their time in training and for the most part, drinking and playing games. The total number of guards is 12 (see stats above), guided by a Sergeant named Jukk. In case the village is under attack, Jukk can count also on 2d10+10 fighters from among the village people. Jukk is detailed in the NPC Appendix.

**Village Fighter:** usually Male Human, Warrior 1; CR 1/2; SZ Medium; HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 padded armor), touch 10, flat-footed 11; Base ATK / GRP +1 / +2; ATK +2 melee (1d6+1, sickle) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +2 melee (1d6+1, shortspear) or +2 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff) OR +1 ranged (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +1 ranged (1d4+1, sling); Full ATK +2 melee (1d6+1, sickle) or +2 melee (1d6+1, club) or +2 melee (1d6+1, shortspear) or +2 melee (1d6+1, quarterstaff) OR +1 ranged (1d6+1, club) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, shortspear) or +1 ranged (1d6+1, javelin) or +1 ranged (1d4+1, sling); AL usually C/G; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +5, Handle Animal +5, Ride +4, Jump +3, Survival +2; Animal Affinity, Athletic; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Possessions:** padded armor, 2d10 sp, one or more of the following weapons: sickle, club, shortspear, quarterstaff, javelin, and sling.



## Owl Tower

The Owl Tower is a semi-circular construction that sits at the base of the Ashen Hills with a full view of the North Pass. It is the last bastion of civilization before the Far North and the only defense of the region against the assaults of the goblinoid gangs that regularly come from there. The tower is solidly constructed of grey stone and surrounded by a perimeter wall 8 ft. high with a single entrance guarded by a barbican. At least twelve soldiers are on duty at any time of the day and the night. In addition, outside the wall there are two patrols of four soldiers each armed with swords and crossbows.

The map at the end of the module shows the layout and the major constructions of this stronghold.

### 1. Tower

In the tower live the lord of the region, Sir Krilmar, his daughter Elien, the majordomo Matgheus, the Captain of the Guard Lutholus, a group of sages and counselors of the lord, and enough servants, maids and cooks to run the tower smoothly. The inner guard consists of six veteran soldiers, or more in case of trouble. The tower itself is about 50 ft. wide and 60 ft. high, divided in 5 aboveground floors and one underground floor that is used as cellar and prison. The

noble paladin, his daughter and the Captain Lutholos live in the uppermost part of the tower where there is also a luxurious ballroom. The fourth floor holds a well-furnished library and the rooms of the sages, as well as the major dining room. The third floor hosts the rooms for the guests and two small sitting rooms. The servants occupy the second floor while the entrance, the majordomo room and the audience rooms are at ground level. The NPCs are detailed in the Appendix.

### 2. Parade Area

This area is used for parties, tournaments, executions and similar public events. Three terracing allow the on-lookers to have a perfect view of what happens inside the arena.

One of the terraces is used by the lord and his daughter and is made out of red-and-white limestone sculpted with images of dragons and mounted knights fighting each other. The others are made of wood.

### 3. Training Area

This area is severely muddied with tracks of hooves and boots. This is where the soldiers train, two hours in the morning and other two hours after lunch. Some targets are placed at different distances for archery

practice. Holes full of mud, suspended trunks and the like are used as a training course. A dwarf sergeant with a single eye called Maldorp "two-ales" (War 7) gives a special training in fighting goblinoids and giants.

#### 4. Barracks

The barracks are three big rooms constructed from colossal timbers cut in the Eisenwood Forest. Each room is simply furnished with bunks, trunks for the personal belongings, stools and some chairs, and can host up to 50 soldiers. The current garrison, though, is made up of only 120 soldiers: 115 humans, 4 half-orcs and Maldorp. The typical soldier is armored with chain shirt and a small wooden shield, fights with battleaxe or longsword and is capable of using a bow or crossbow quite effectively. All the soldiers are well trained and have already fought several times against the ogres of the North. They are also accustomed to the rigid climate and equipped accordingly. Adjacent to the barracks is a common room where the soldiers play games with cards and dice or eat.

**Garrison Soldier:** usually Male Human, Fighter 2; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d10+4; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+4 chain shirt, +1 small wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +4; ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, battleaxe, crit. x3) or +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) OR +3 ranged (1d8, longbow, crit. x3) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20); Full ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, battleaxe, crit. x3) or +4 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) OR +3 ranged (1d8, longbow, crit. x3) or +3 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20); AL any non-evil; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +7 {+4}, Handle Animal +2, Ride +4, Survival +2, Swim +7 {+1}; Mounted Combat, Athletic, Power Attack, Cleave; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, Proficient with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

**Possessions:** chain shirt, 1d10 sp + 1d6 gp, battleaxe or longsword, small wooden shield, longbow or light crossbow.

#### 5. Armory

The armory is a small edifice of stone that is always locked and the two keys are in the hands of Sir Krilmar and Captain Lutholus. Inside it there are 12 sets of chain shirts, 5 bows, 8 crossbows, 10 quivers with 20 arrows each, 8 cases with 10 darts each, 14 battleaxes, 6 longswords and 10 wooden small shields.

#### 6. Tavern "The Flying Giant"

This is a wooden building with a bar and some tables. This is the place where soldiers go when they

are not on duty and the very simple furniture reflects this. The drinks are usually too strong and the food is barely edible, with the only exception being the spiced turkey served with a red chili sauce.

On the upper floor, PCs can find the rooms of the tavern owner, Dangyar, and his sons, and a couple more rooms that are sometimes used by guests who have not found room in the tower. The tavern is probably the best place to hear rumors about the region, but not from its owner (see below).

Dangyar (com 5) is a small man always covered in pig fat, sauces and spilled ales. He has a very big nose and long eye-lashes. He lost his wife in an orc attack and since that moment, his face always shows signs of deep sadness. He speaks in a raspy voice but is very polite with his customers. Strangely, for a tavern owner he is not very interested in gossips and rumors, so he is not the best source of information.

Dorthar (War 1) is the eldest son of Dangyar and was severely injured during the orcish assault that led to the death of his mother. He was saved by Sir Krilmar and since that day, worships him and dreams of joining his troop when he reaches the age of 16 (he is currently 15). He is always chatting about his future enterprises. His long blond hair and blue eyes are a heritage from his mother.

Porfia (Com 1) is the 13-year-old daughter of Dangyar. She looks older than her true age, probably because she had to take care of her father and brother since she was very young. She has a very intriguing smile and is very difficult not to feel charmed by her. She is not an "easy" conquest, however, because she is waiting for the day that a rich and beautiful chevalier will take her from the tavern. Despite this dream, though, she is quite down-to-earth and knows that her life will most probably continue as it is now.

#### 7. Kitchen

The kitchen of the stronghold is always busy preparing the food for the guards on duty and for the other people in the stronghold. It is a big room filled with preparation tables, big fireplaces, clean and dirty pots and dishes, baskets with food and barrels of ale and water. Normally, two or three cooks are on duty at any time. The smell that exits the kitchen pervades the whole stronghold and, especially in the morning when the bread is cooked, relieves the souls of the soldiers.

#### 8. Stables

One or two stable men attend the stables at any time. Thirty horses belonging to the garrison are stabled inside. There is also enough space for ten more horses. Big piles of hay are kept near the stables. The stable men take good care of the beasts and every day give them a short trot to stretch their muscles.

Sometimes the horses are used during the daily training of the soldiers. Hanging from the beams of the stables are the saddles and the harnesses of the horses. When needed, horseshoes are obtained at the smith. No barding is used on the warhorses since Sir Krilmar prefers speed to armor. He knows that speed, good maneuverability and a fast charge are very important when fighting against the orcs and ogres.

### 9. Blacksmith

This building is made of stone and a big chimney exits its roof. Many tools are kept inside, and something is always under construction — on top of weapons and horseshoes there are woodcutting and mining tools. The furnace is usually functioning and the red burning coal illuminates the room with a reddish color. The smoke impregnates everything with its black chocking spires. The smith is a tall man in his early 50s who answers to the name Matulak (Exp 11), his face burnt by the long exposure to the furnace and permanently black with soot. Several scars and burns cover his arms and hands. He is always “too busy” and only an order from the lord can convince him to do something; a generous bribe, sometimes, can also work.

### 10. Warehouse

The warehouse is a wooden construction used to store all sorts of items, most of them already used and not properly functioning. As a rule of thumb, consider that every item that cost less than 20 gp has a 50% chance to be present in the warehouse — excluding weapons and armor. If asked, the lord sells any gear available in the warehouse to the PCs for half the normal price (it is dysfunctional 20% of the time). The building is always locked and the keys are kept by Sir Krilmar and the Captain of the Guards.

### 11. Garden

This garden is the one that Elien is taking care of. There are several evergreen bushes — many of them with long and tough thorns, deciduous trees — some of them with fruit — and wonderful rows of roses of many colors, white being predominant. A path covered with small pebbles runs all the way through the garden.

## Gauldark

The hamlet of Gauldark has about 200 inhabitants and becomes important later in the adventure because it is the location of an outpost of a thieves guild, the Silver Crown Society (see chapter 4). It is here that the PCs meet Alberd, the head of the guild and learn important facts about their enemies. Since the hamlet offers very little to adventurers, it is unlikely the that PCs will spend a lot of time here. People of the village

know that their only bulwarks against the raiding bands of the northern orcs are the Owl Tower and the village of Dreikeng. In case of the defeat of these two strongholds, they have an evacuation plan ready and, given the knowledge they have of the forests, are very likely to succeed. Since they own very little, they will lose almost nothing if they evacuate.

Gauldark is home principally to humans (98%) and a few refugees — often half-orcs. For the most part of the year it is almost vacant, because many inhabitants are not married and spend their time in the forests woodcutting, hunting and trapping. Only during winter, when the inclement weather forces the people to find shelter, the hamlet is full “of suffocating life” as the villagers say. Gauldark’s gold piece limit is 100 gp, and only limited supplies are available. In any case, nothing above 50 gp can be easily found in the village. The overall alignment of the inhabitants is Chaotic Neutral, with people very concerned only with their own freedom; they are more like beasts than civilized people. There is no official ruler of the hamlet, but most people obey — grudgingly — the word of Stariom, an old man who was a valiant fighter in some army of the South and has moved to Gauldark to rest “his old bones” (see NPC Appendix).

The village houses spread along the Wolf Road. On the west side is the Aciier River and the ford that allows the villagers to reach the clearings in the Eisenwood Forest.

The map at the end of the module shows Gauldark and the major buildings of interest.

### 1. Stables

These stables are very simple and are unattended most of the time. People must take care of their own horses unless the occasional child offers to take care of the beasts in exchange for a tip. The hay, anyway, is usually fresh since the villagers want to present their village as friendly as possible.

### 2. Tavern “The Stuffed Bear”

This place is probably the only one in the village where people are always sure to find someone. The tavern is little more than a rough pine timber hovel that functions as a bar and six tables of plain wood surrounded by mismatched chairs and stools of every kind. The tavern’s owner is Corinda, a middle-aged woman who lost her husband due to an accident in the Eisenwood Forest. Corinda (Com 4) is not very polite with her clientele but no one has ever complained about that, either because they are just as unfriendly or because this is the only tavern in the hamlet. Corinda has short black hair and vivid black eyes. She is no beauty but her savage character has made her conquest the secret goal of many villagers.

After the death of her husband, though, Corinda is not willing to marry again.

In the back of the building are three double rooms for rent for 6 cp a night. Corinda does not normally serve meals but she could be convinced to cook something (Diplomacy Check DC 12) for a couple of cp. She offers few drink choices: a glass of beer for 3 cp or one of ale for 5 cp.

In a cupboard in her room, Corinda keeps her husband's gear: a set of chainmail, a small wooden shield and a *+1 longsword*. She will not easily part from these items without a very good reason (Diplomacy Check DC 30 and a compelling reason).

### 3. Blacksmith (no sign)

This building is supposed to be the blacksmith's. In reality, most of the time, the house is empty and the furnace is cold. A few horeshoes are scattered over the two tables together with the shop's tools and a couple of damaged axes. Since the death of the last blacksmith, no one has claimed the property of the shop and now everyone goes in the building and takes what he needs or, not very often, lights the furnace and crafts something.

### 4. Carver "The Fairy Plane"

Like the blacksmith shop, this building is often empty. Hergard, the owner, spends most of his time in the forests looking for good pieces of wood to carve. Hergard (Exp 3) is a tall man who is too wild to think of getting a family. He likes to wander in the forests and sleep under the trees. His hair is dirty and his black eyes never meet others while speaking. If possible, he avoids talking at all and having contact with other people. His shop contains some nice wooden statues and other pieces of art carved from wood. Prices range from 5 gp for a small box to up to 500 gp for an idol 5 ft. high.

### 5. Guildhouse "The Silver Crown"

This house, disguised as a general store, is the headquarter of a small thieves guild that has members in the two villages of the area as well as in the lord's army. The PCs are likely to meet Alberd, the guild leader, after escaping an assassin's attack (see chapters 3 and 4). Alberd is very intelligent (see NPC Appendix for his stats) and cooperates with the PCs "for the right price."

#### The Silver Crown Society

This small thief's guild has influence only in this small region of the world. Apart from Alberd, the guild leader, few other members are relevant in the area. Most probably, the PCs will not interact with them but a brief description of them is given here for

those DMs who will use this setting as an on-going campaign and want to better detail them.

Aimela is a 2nd level Rogue human who has infiltrated the lord's army. She is 29 and very diplomatic. She almost never speaks, and when she does it, she uses as few words as possible. She is CN and has the following abilities: Str 17, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Giantse is a 4th level Rogue human who operates in Dreikeng. He is 26 and always dresses in a military style. He is normally very calm but is also very emotional and bursts of fury are frequent. He is slightly allergic to dust. His gear includes *+2 leather armor*. He is CN and his abilities are: Str 16, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Cedpert is a 4th level Rogue human who operates in Gauldark. He is 28 and dissimulates his real role pretending to be a beggar. Cedpert is profoundly atheist. He owns a *+1 short sword*. He is N and his abilities are: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 13.

Aimill is the cohort of Alberd and is a 1st level Rogue. She is 20 and self-sufficient. Alberd surprised her while she was stealing in his house. He liked her and her style and convinced her to join him. They are also lovers but try to avoid being seen together. She is LE and has the following abilities: Str 13, Dex 17, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 17.

### 6. Shrine

This shrine, dedicated to Bablukar, is unattended but every year the adepts that live in the temple in Dreikeng come to the village to clean it.

### 7. House of Stariom

This is the simple house where Stariom lives (see NPC Appendix for his stats).

## Random Encounters

This section details different random encounter tables to be used depending on the PCs location. The General table should be used whenever none of the others apply. Roll 1d20 to check for random encounters once every 12 hours: basically a daily encounter and a nightly one.

Some of the encounters are unique and are indicated with a U. If a random roll presents them more than once, the DM can re-roll or choose one different encounter.

Monsters descriptions and NPCs stats are presented hereafter.

## Random Encounters NPCs and Monsters Stats

**Bugbear (1d4):** CR 2; hp 18, 17, 15, 15; see the MM.

**Ettercap (1d2):** CR 3; hp 28, 27; see the MM.

**Troglodyte (1d4+1):** CR 1; hp 16, 16, 15, 13, 11; see the MM.

**Assassin, type I (1):** Female Human, Rogue 4; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 4d6-4; hp 17; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+4 +1 studded leather armor, +1 ring of protection +1, +4 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 15; Base ATK/GRP +3 / +3; ATK +7 melee (1d6 + poison\*, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, +1 shortbow, crit. x3); Full ATK +7 melee (1d6 + poison\*, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, +1 shortbow, crit. x3); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; AL N/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +8, Will +1; Str 11, Dex 18, Con 8, Int 17, Wis 11, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +10, Bluff +7, Climb +3\*\*, Diplomacy +7, Disable Device +11, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +10, Gather Information +6, Hide +10,

Intimidate +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +9, Search +7, Spot +5, Survival +3, Tumble +8, Use Rope +7; Weapon Finesse, Combat Reflexes, Nimble Fingers; Trap finding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1, Uncanny Dodge; Proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow and short sword, Proficient with light armor.

\* Small monstrous centipede poison, DC 10 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Dex / 1d2 Dex.

\*\* +5 to climb a rope.

*Possessions:* poisoned short sword, pouch with 300 gp, 2 silver ear-rings (20 gp each), +1 shortbow, +1 studded leather armor, ring of protection +1.

**Assassin, type II (2):** Male Human, Rogue 1; CR 1; SZ Medium; HD 1d6+1; hp 7; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 16 (+3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +0 / +2; ATK +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow, crit. x3); Full ATK +3 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +3 ranged (1d6, shortbow, crit. x3); SA Sneak Attack +1d6; AL C/E; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will -2; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 7, Cha 8.

Table 4: General Random Encounter

| d20 roll | EL     | Type of Encounter   |
|----------|--------|---|
| 1-10     | -      | None  |
| 11-12    | -      | Empty Cottage. This is an empty cottage. Someone lives in it, at least part of the year, since the cottage is clearly not abandoned and there are some provisions inside. No one shows up, though, in the next 10 days.   |
| 13-15    | -      | Hut. Either a woodcutter (70% of the time) or a hunter (30%) inhabits this hut. He/she is not happy of any intrusion and tries to politely send people away. In any case, these people can provide only relatively useless information on the area.   |
| 16-18    | varies | Abandoned House. This house has been abandoned long ago and is now used as a lair by 1d4 Bugbears (50% of the time), 1d2 Ettercaps (25%) or 1d4+1 Troglodytes (25%). There is normally nothing of value in the house.   |
| 19 U     | 5      | Assassins. The PCs are attacked by a group of five mercenaries (1 assassin type I, 2 assassins type II and 2 assassins type III, see below for stats) sent by Ulabius to exact revenge on the PCs. They are skilled assassins and wait to attack with ranged attacks until they are in an advantageous position (such as on the top of a hill, concealed by trees, etc.). This encounter can take place only after the events of chapter 1! |
| 20       | -      | Natural Event. This one is a catchall encounter for any special natural event that the PCs experience. It should not be dangerous but uncommon, something that really shocks them. For example, it could be a solar/lunar eclipse, an asteroid fall, a green sparkling fog, a rain of frogs, a red hail, etc.   |

Table 5: Villages Random Encounter

| d20 roll | EL | Type of Encounter   |
|----------|----|---|
| 1-6      | -  | None  |
| 7-9      | -  | Woodcutter. The PCs meet a woodcutter either in a tavern or in the street. The woodcutter could have been harmed by a wild animal, have "something important to say" in exchange for a good drink, etc.   |
| 10-15    | -  | Commoner. The PCs meet an inhabitant of the village, either drinking ale in a tavern or rushing through the streets. The encounter could be used to present the PCs with some rumors, some news on the area, etc.                                       |
| 16-19    | -  | Hunter. As the woodcutter encounter above. The only difference is that the hunter's initial reaction with the PCs is unfriendly.  |
| 20 U     | 1  | Bully. The PCs are provoked and insulted by a bully. No one protests if the PCs kill him, but probably the best course of action would be to offer some drinks to all (including the bully) or find some other solution that does not rely on violence. |

Table 6: Hills Random Encounter

| d20 roll        | EL     | Type of Encounter   |
|-----------------|--------|---|
| 1-8             | —      | None  |
| 9-11            | —      | Hut. A woodcutter (20% of the time), a hunter (50%) or a hermit (30%) inhabits this hut. He/she is not happy of the intrusion and tries to politely send people away. In any case, they can only provide relatively useless information on the area.  |
| 12-14           | varies | Feline. This encounter can be with a cheetah (30% of the time), a leopard (25%), a lion (25%) or a tiger (20%). The feline is a mutated form of the original animal that has adapted to the rigid climate (often changing its hair color to white and eyes to blue) but otherwise is identical to that described in the MM core rulebook. The lair of the feline (and maybe the rest of its family) is 1d4 miles away and requires a DC 25 Survival check to locate.  |
| 15-17           | varies | Bear. This encounter could be with a black bear (50% of the time), a brown bear (30%) or a polar bear (20%). The animal has adapted to the rigid climate but, otherwise, is identical to those described in the MM core rulebook. The lair of the bear is 1d4-1 miles away and requires a DC 15 Survival check to locate (or a DC 15 Spot check if the rolled distance is 0). In the lair can be found (50% of the time) the remnants of some unfortunates and their belongings (gear worth 4d20 x10gp).  |
| 18 <sup>U</sup> | 6      | Griffons. There is a lair of two griffons in the area (1d3 miles away). The griffons attack the PCs if they have mounts; otherwise, one of the PCs notices them on the top of a hill. This encounter does not have to end in a fight: if the PCs offer some food to the griffons they return to their lair satisfied. In the lair (it requires a DC 20 Survival check to locate), the PCs can find the remnants of horses and other mounts and the belongings that were strapped on them (gear worth 6d10 x10gp) and 1d4-1 eggs.  |
| 19 <sup>U</sup> | 5      | Manticore. There is a manticore lair in the vicinity. The PCs can spot (DC 10) some tracks and follow them (DC 20 Survival check) to the lair where they can confront the beast. The only treasure in the lair is a pouch (DC 15 Spot check to notice it) with 500 gp in gems.  |
| 20 <sup>U</sup> | 8      | Dragon. One of the PCs notices a big figure on the top of a hill. A juvenile green dragon is observing them and has decided to "play" with the PCs. The dragon attacks flying and using all its spells (starting with <i>grease</i> or <i>obscuring mist</i> ) from a distance before closing for melee. The dragon does not fight to death; if seriously harmed it retreats to its lair where he readied itself for a fight by drinking a <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i> and casting <i>obscuring mist</i> if not yet done so. The PCs can easily follow the dragon to the lair, a cavern in a hill covered with trees (it requires a DC 12 Survival check to locate it). Fighting in its lair, the dragon takes full advantage of its knowledge trying to ambush the PCs, uses its breath attack from a concealed spot, etc. If defeated in its lair (less than 20% hp remaining or clearly overwhelmed), the dragon tries to bargain with the PCs to save its life. In the lair there is the treasure trove consisting of 1800 cp, 3000 sp, 2700 gp, 9 gems [3x Malachite (10 gp), 4x Carnelian (50 gp), 2x Black Pearl (500 gp)], a <i>potion of cure moderate wounds</i> (CL 10), a <i>potion of remove paralysis</i> (CL 8), a <i>wand of magic missiles</i> (CL 5) [19 charges] and a <i>wand of fox's cunning</i> (CL 7) [22 charges]. |

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +7 {+6}, Bluff +3, Climb +5 {+4}, Disable Device +3, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +5 {+4}, Hide +7 {+6}, Move Silently +7 {+6}, Survival +2, Use Rope +7; Point Blank Shot, Dodge;

Proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow and short sword, Proficient with light armor.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* short sword, short bow, pouch with 50 gp, studded leather armor.

**Assassin, type III (2):** Female Human, Rogue 1; CR 1; SZ Medium; HD 1d6; hp 6; Init +2; Spd 30ft.; AC 15 (+3 Studded Leather Armor, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +0 / +2; ATK +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +2 ranged (1d4, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +2 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +2 ranged (1d4, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); SA Sneak Attack +1d6; AL N/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +4, Will -1; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +7 {+6}, Bluff +4, Climb +5 {+4}, Disguise +5, Forgery +4, Hide +6 {+5}, Spot +2,

Survival +2, Tumble +6 {+5}, Use Rope +6; Point Blank Shot, Far Shot; Proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow and short sword, Proficient with light armor.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* short sword, hand crossbow, a pouch with 50 gp, studded leather armor.

**Bully (1):** Male Human, Warrior 2; CR 1; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+4; hp 14; Init +2; Spd 30ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +5; ATK +5 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2); AL C/N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will -2; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 6, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +6, Ride +5, Survival +1, proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields, quick draw, mounted combat.

*Possessions:* short sword, 6 gp, 1 silver earring (30 gp).

Table 7: Eisenwood Forest Random Encounter

| d20 roll | EL     | Type of Encounter   |
|----------|--------|---|
| 1-9      | —      | None  |
| 10-13    | —      | <b>Woodcutter.</b> The PCs meet one or more woodcutters (working if during the day or close to camp during the night). The woodcutters are normally quite unhappy to receive visits, so their initial reaction is always unfriendly. The best the PCs can obtain from this encounter is some information on the woods.  |
| 14-18    | varies | <b>Wild Animal.</b> The PCs face a wild animal (or a group). The encounter does not necessarily have to be a fight: the animal(s) can be avoided, fed, calmed by a ranger or a druid, etc. The lair of the animal (and maybe the rest of its family) is 1d4 miles away and requires a DC 10 Survival check to locate. In the lair, there is no treasure. The animal(s) encountered are a boar (20%), 1d6 dogs (20%), 1d6 wolves (30%) or a wolverine (30%).   |
| 19-20    | 3      | <b>Trap.</b> The PCs fall prey to a trap set by a hunter. Any rogue, ranger or druid can make a DC 15 Spot check to notice that something strange is ahead on the track or path they are following (this does not detect the trap, just makes them suspicious). Possible kinds of traps are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Camouflaged Pit Trap:</b> CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 30 ft. deep (3d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent squares); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 18.</li> <li>• <b>Spiked Pit Trap:</b> CR 3; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 20.</li> </ul> (see the <i>DMG</i> for additional examples) |

Table 8: Sternwood Forest Random Encounter

| d20 roll | EL     | Type of Encounter  |
|----------|--------|--|
| 1-5      | —      | None   |
| 6-14     | varies | <b>Undead.</b> The PCs are attacked by one or more undead. These undead are from the abandoned temple and roam the forest since months (it is not possible, so, to track them back to the temple). The undead encountered are 1d4 Ghouls (40% of the time), 1d3 Shadows (30%), 1 Mohrg (10%) or 1 Ghast and 1d4 Ghouls (20%).  |
| 15-18    | varies | <b>Wild Animal.</b> The PCs face a wild animal (or a group). The encounter does not necessarily have to be a fight: the animal(s) can be avoided, fed, calmed by a ranger or a druid, etc. The lair of the animal (and maybe the rest of its family) is 1d4 miles away and requires a DC 10 Survival check to locate. In the lair, there is no treasure. The animal(s) encountered are a boar (20%), 1d6 dogs (20%), 1d6 wolves (30%) or a wolverine (30%).  |
| 19       | varies | <b>Ulabius' Undead.</b> These undead are the nefarious creations of Ulabius that he has left roaming the forest to protect his stronghold. Tracking the undead to the stronghold is very difficult and requires a DC 25 Survival check for every hour of tracking; if one of these checks fails, the party needs to spend additional 4 hours searching in the area before another DC 25 Survival check is made to find some traces again. The undead have no treasure with them. The undead encountered are one Ulabius' human warrior skeleton (30% of the time), one Ulabius' wolf skeleton (20%), one Ulabius' chimera skeleton (10%), one Ulabius' bugbear zombie (30%) or one Ulabius' ogre zombie (10%).   |
| 20 U     | —      | <b>Spirit.</b> This encounter is best played in the evening, just before or after sundown. The PC's see a translucent figure in front of them, it appears to be human but they cannot tell the sex or the race. As they approach, the figure turns to them and the party notices that its neck is bent at an impossible angle. The spirit starts speaking very softly in a barely audible voice: "I have been killed by the herbalist ... the crazy man ... he called me after I came back from the forest ... saying that I have contracted a sickness ... but when I entered his house ... he killed me! ... he awaits you here ... somewhere ... I can feel it!"<br>This encounter is not intended to be a fight. It has the scope to provide the players with a very important clue about Ulabius – even if by this time the players have probably already discovered the truth about him, and to give them a sense of horror about him. The spirit, unless attacked, remains visible (manifested) for 1d10 rounds and answers PCs' questions to the best of its knowledge. If attacked, the spirit simply disappears. |

Table 9: Wolves' Bog Random Encounter

| d20 roll | EL     | Type of Encounter  |
|----------|--------|--|
| 1-12     | —      | None   |
| 13-16    | varies | <b>Snake.</b> This snake is out of his nest hunting. It attacks the PCs only 20% of the time, ignoring them otherwise. Of course, if the PCs attack it, it fights at the best of its possibility. The snake encountered is a constrictor (30% of the time), a giant constrictor (20%), a small viper (30%) or a large viper (20%).   |
| 17-18    | varies | <b>Lizard.</b> These lizards are out of their nest for hunting or monitoring their territory. They do not normally attack the PCs, ignoring them most of the time. The lizards encountered are 3d4 lizards (80% of the time) or a monitor lizard (20%).  |
| 19       | hazard | <b>Poisonous Fumes.</b> The PCs enter an area where poisonous fumes are off-gassed from the murky waters. These fumes are even more dangerous than the normal poisonous atmosphere of the marsh and exposure to them requires a Fortitude save (DC 15). Initial damage is 1 point of permanent Constitution drain, secondary damage is a temporary loss of 1d6 points of both Strength and Constitution.   |
| 20       | hazard | <b>Quicksand.</b> The PCs step into an area of quicksand. Each has a 50% chance at any round to enter a patch of quicksand. Approaching a patch of quicksand at a normal pace allows a DC 8 Survival check to spot the danger before stepping in, but charging or running characters do not have a chance to detect a hidden bog before blundering in. For effects of quicksand, how to rescue a victim, and for any other information on how to run this encounter, refer to the <i>DMG – Wilderness Adventures</i> . |

**Cheetah (1):** CR 2; hp 20; see the MM.

**Leopard (1):** CR 2; hp 20; see the MM.

**Lion (1):** CR 3; hp 30; see the MM.

**Tiger (1):** CR 4; hp 40; see the MM.

**Bear, Black (1):** CR 2; hp 20; see the MM.

**Bear, Brown (1):** CR 4; hp 50; see the MM.

**Griffon (2):** CR 4; hp 64, 55; see the MM.

**Manticore (1):** CR 5; hp 60; see the MM.

**Juvenile Green Dragon (1):** CR 8; SZ Large; Dragon (Air); HD 14d12+42; hp 140; Init +0; SPD 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft; AC 22 (-1 size, +13 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 22; Base ATK / GRP +14 / +22; ATK Bite +17 melee (3d6+4); Full ATK Bite +17 melee (3d6+4) and 2 Claws +15 melee (1d8+2) and 2 Wings +15 melee (1d6+2) and 1 Tail Slap +15 melee (1d8+6); Space / Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA Breath Weapon, Spells; SQ Immunity to sleep and paralysis, Immunity to acid, Blindsight, Keen Senses, Dark-vision 120ft., Water breathing; AL L/E; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +11; Str19, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Bluff +17, Diplomacy +12, Hide +15, Intimidate +14, Knowledge (arcane) +7, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +14, Move Silently +16, Search +8, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +7, Spot +16, Survival +4 (+6 following tracks), Swim +10 Alertness, Cleave, Hover, Multi-attack, Improved Natural Attack (bite).

**Sorcerer Spells Known**

(base save DC 12 + spell level): 3 / 2

0—*daze, detect magic, read magic, resistance*

1st—*charm person, identify, obscuring mist*

See also the MM for more about dragons.

**Boar (1):** CR 2; hp 25; see the MM.

**Dog (1d6):** CR 1/3; hp 9, 8, 8, 7, 6, 5; see the MM.

**Wolf (1d6):** CR 1; hp 15, 14, 12, 11, 11, 9; see the MM.

**Wolverine (1):** CR 2; hp 30; see the MM.

**Ghoul (1d4):** CR 1; hp 14, 13, 11, 10; see the MM.

**Shadow (1d3):** CR 3; hp 20, 18, 17; see the MM.

**Mohrg (1):** CR 8; hp 100; see the MM.

**Ghast (1):** CR 3; hp 30; see the MM.

**Ularius' Human Warrior Skeleton (1):** CR 1; SZ Medium; Undead (augmented); HD 1d12; hp 8; Init +5; SPD 30 ft.; AC 15 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 heavy steel shield), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +0 / +1; ATK Scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18–20 x2) or claw +1 melee (1d4+1); Full ATK Scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18–20 x2) or 2 claws +1 melee (1d4+1); Space / Reach 5ft / 5ft; SA Acid arrow (Sp); SQ Damage reduction 5 / bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, *protection from good* (Sp); AL C/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

**Skills and Feats:** Improved Initiative.

This Human Skeleton has been augmented by the *Ularius' Imbuement* Spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the Spell-like abilities *protection from good* and *acid arrow*, all at 10th Caster Level.

**Ularius' Wolf Skeleton (1):** CR 2; SZ Medium; Undead (augmented); HD 2d12; hp 15; Init +7; SPD 50 ft.; AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +1 / +2; ATK Bite +2 melee (1d6+1); Full ATK Bite +2 melee (1d6+1); Space / Reach 5ft / 5ft; SA *Flame arrow* (Sp); SQ Damage reduction 5 / bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, *protection from arrows* (Sp); AL C/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 13, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

**Skills and Feats:** Improved Initiative.

This Wolf Skeleton has been augmented by the *Uladius' Imbuement* Spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the Spell-like abilities *protection from arrows* and *flame arrow*, all at 10th Caster Level.

**Uladius' Chimera Skeleton (1):** CR 5; SZ Large; Undead (augmented); HD 9d12; hp 60; Init +6; SPD 30 ft., Fly 60 ft. (good); AC 17 (+2 Dex., -1 size, +2 natural, +4 mage armor), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +12; ATK Bite +7 melee (2d6+4); Full ATK Bite +7 melee (2d6+4) and bite+7 melee (1d8+4) and gore +7 melee (1d8+4) and 2 claws +2 melee (1d6+2); Space / Reach 10ft / 5ft; SA *lightning bolt* (Sp); SQ Damage reduction 5 / bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, *mage armor* (Sp); AL C/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +6; Str 19, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Improved Initiative.

This Chimera Skeleton has been augmented by the *Uladius' Imbuement* Spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the Spell-like abilities *fly*, *mage armor* and *lightning bolt*, all at 10th Caster Level.

**Uladius' Bugbear Zombie (1):** CR 2; SZ Medium; Undead (augmented); HD 6d12+3; hp 45; Init +0; SPD 30 ft. (can't run); AC 16 (+5 natural, +1 light wooden shield), touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +6; ATK Morningstar +6 melee (1d8+3) or slam +6 melee (1d6+3) or javelin +3 ranged (1d6+2); Full ATK Morningstar +6 melee (1d8+3) or slam +6 melee (1d6+3) or javelin +3 ranged (1d6+2); Space / Reach 5ft / 5ft; SA *magic missile* (Sp); SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5 / slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits; AL C/E; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 17, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Toughness.

This Bugbear Zombie has been augmented by the *Uladius' Imbuement* Spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the Spell-like ability *magic missile* at 10th Caster Level.

**Uladius' Ogre Zombie (1):** CR 4; SZ Large; Undead (augmented); HD 8d12+3; hp 60; Init -2; SPD 40 ft. (can't run); AC 15 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +8 natural) touch 7, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +14; ATK Greatclub +9 melee (2d8+9) or slam +9 melee (1d8+9) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+6); Full ATK Greatclub +9 melee (2d8+9) or slam +9 melee (1d8+9) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+6); Space / Reach 10ft / 10ft; SA *fireball* (Sp); SQ Single actions only, damage reduction 5 / slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, *levitate* (Sp); AL C/E; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 23, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1.

*Skills and Feats:* Toughness.

This Ogre Zombie has been augmented by the *Uladius' Imbuement* Spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the Spell-like abilities *fireball* and *levitate* at 10th Caster Level.

**Snake, Constrictor (1):** CR 2; hp 20; see the MM.

**Snake, Giant Constrictor (1):** CR 5; hp 70; see the MM.

**Snake, Small Viper (1):** CR 1/2; hp 5; see the MM.

**Snake, Large Viper (1):** CR 2; hp 16; see the MM.

**Lizard (3d4):** CR 1/6; hp 3 (each); see the MM.

**Monitor Lizard (1):** CR 2; hp 30; see the MM.

# Chapter One: Ulabius Duskation's House

*In which the heroes, obeying the order of the lord of the region, discover strange crafted items in the house of a suspected murderer and among them a mysterious magic sphere.*

The chapter, and the adventure, starts with the PCs in Dreikeng. They are sitting in the "The Rest of the Horseman," the best tavern in the village, and are conversing with Sir Krilmar, the Lord of the Frontier. It is early afternoon and they sit comfortably at a table drinking beer and ale. All around them are empty tables: it would be unusual for the rest of the villagers to be in the tavern so early since they are hard-workers and often spend the whole day in the nearby forests. A big fireplace is lit in one corner of the tap-room and a reddish light shades the room.

According to the method chosen to involve the PCs in the adventure, the DM should modify this encounter (see also the lord's description in the NPCs Appendix):

- If the PCs answered a call from the lord, he questions them about their past experiences, their motivation, their ideals, etc. before actually talking about the mission.
- If the PCs are already well known, the lord encourages them to take on this mission since "they are the right people!"
- If the PCs were just having a good time in the tavern, then the lord presents himself and then questions them about their past experiences, their motivation, their ideals, etc. before presenting them with the mission.

At the end, the lord looks nervously around and whispers his mission to the PCs. He explains that the mission is quite simple but requires stealth and discretion. They need to enter the house of a man in the village and try to find any clue that can pinpoint him as the killer of some people who recently disappeared after having been seen talking with him or going to his house. The party needs to be cautious because this man, Ulabius, is very popular in the village as a skilled



Table 1-1: Rumors about Ulabius

| DC | Rumor   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Ulabius is a very skilled herbalist. He has saved the lives of many people in the village. He is here since a very long time.   |
| 10 | Ulabius is not only a healer but also a magic user and he uses his skills to help the people in the village.  |
| 15 | Ulabius is often out of his house and comes back after 2-3 days. He started this routine only a couple of years ago.  |
| 20 | Strange hooded people come to his house in the night. They are not locals, as the two guards he has recently hired, "and by the way, why do you think he needs guards?" |
| 25 | Ulabius' house is very old, and it was said to be haunted. Ulabius has always shunted these speeches as superstition.   |
| 30 | At night, you can hear strange noises coming from his house. Sounds like people that cry and scream.  |

herbalist and healer. The PCs must not be caught inside his house and that the lord will deny any knowledge about this action. If the PCs find any clues, they are to see him at the Owl Tower. Sir Krilmar also promises a reward of 500 gp if they are successful.

At this point, the PCs have to decide whether they accept the mission or not. In the latter case, the DM needs to find another way of involving the PCs, maybe offering more money or a different, more palatable reward, have a group of mercenaries paid by Ulabius attack the lord while he is going out of the tavern, or even have the PCs attacked.

Once the PCs accept the mission, they probably still have many questions. The lord spends the rest of the evening talking with them, looking worried whenever some new guests enter the tavern, and answering any question to the best of his knowledge (read carefully the adventure introduction and background to see what Sir Krilmar knows).

Sir Krilmar tells the PCs that he received information (he does not say from whom even if asked for) that something is strange about Ulabius's movements. Recently he began to leave the village for extensive periods, always coming back in the middle of the night, sometimes with a sack on his shoulder full of something that "definitely does not look like herbs." A couple of hard-looking men have also been seen going in and out of the house as if they live there. These men are not locals.

If questioned about the missing people, he explains that they were woodcutters — without a family, that disappeared after having been seen talking with Ulabius. He knows nothing more, and he is not even certain of this information, therefore he needs to secretly acquire more clues before he confronts a beloved old man.

Sometime before the tavern closes, the Sir Krilmar takes his leave, talking in a tone of voice slightly louder than normal (just enough to be heard by anyone in the room); he thanks them for the pleasure of their company and says that he hopes to have more opportunities to enjoy their presence, maybe at the Owl Tower.

While he is saying these words, he slips a small piece of paper under one of the mugs on the table, and then he turns and rapidly exits the tavern. The DM could actually prepare in advance a piece of paper with the message and then slip it under a glass on the players' table.

The message reads:

*"He has been out of the village two days. Come to my tower when you're done."*

The players have two basic questions to answer:

- When and how do the PCs enter the house?
- How do they treat with NPCs within it?

Breaking into a private home is a crime. At least nobody should see the PCs doing that. Killing everyone inside the house is also not a good idea since from "the law's" point of view the PCs are intruders. The best way to proceed is to disable the guards before they can raise an alarm, and even better if they have not seen the PCs' faces. One other possibility could also be to enter the house disguised, maybe pretending to be friends or patients of Ulabius.

The DM should reward stealthy and cunning plans over straightforward assault and brutality, assigning up to 100 XP for very inventive ideas.

The players might also think to have their characters get more information on Ulabius before doing any action. The DM should allow this course of action but also remind the players of the sense of urgency their characters have: they need to enter the house before Ulabius returns, and they do not know when this will happen. Through use of the Gather Information skill the players can attempt to obtain information — not always perfectly true — provided they rolled high enough. See Table 1-1 for results.

Ulabius' house has a stone basement with a flagstone pavement and two floors made of polished wood. All the doors are of light wood and not locked unless otherwise noted in the room description.

**Doors:** Hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 13.

The windows are furnished with wooden shutters and the ones at ground floor are protected with iron grates.

**Iron Grates:** Hardness 10, hp 25, Break DC 24.

The house's rooms are usually not illuminated when they are empty.

The following is the description of the rooms of the house as they are likely to be when the PCs enter. The descriptions assume, for example, that the PCs are inside during the day or with a proper source of illumination, and that all events happen in the same day. If things are different, adjust the descriptions according to the actions of the PCs.

## Key Areas of the House

See the map at the end of the module for an overview of the house.

### Ground Level

#### 1. Entrance (EL 2)

The entrance door is made of strong wood and is reinforced with iron bars.

**Reinforced Door:** Hardness 8, hp 20, Break DC 25, Open Lock DC 25.

Carved over the door are winged snakes and ivy plants. Behind the door, one of the guards is always on duty (with shifts of 8 hours) while the other three are resting in room 12 or playing cards in room 4.

The guard shouts an alarm if someone tries to force the door open or if he hears any strange noise outside the house. During the day, the three guards off duty arrive from room 4 in 1d3 rounds. During the night, make a DC 5 Listen check (-10 circumstance penalty since they are sleeping) to see if the guards in room 12 hear the alarm; if the guards hear the alarm, they rush and arrive downstairs in 2d4+2 rounds. In both cases, the off-duty guards are armed but unarmored.

**Guard on duty (1):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Fighter 1; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+1d10+3; hp 19; Init +2; Spd 30ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +4; ATK +6 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will –1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Intimidate +4, Jump +4 {+3}, Swim +4 {+2}, Ride +5, Survival +3, proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields, weapon finesse, weapon focus [short sword], quick draw.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

**Possessions:** studded leather armor, short sword, 80 gp, 1 golden ring (50 gp).

**Guards off duty (3):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Fighter 1; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+1d10+6; hp 22, 20, 19; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 10; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +5; ATK +6 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Intimidate +4, Jump +5, Swim +5, Ride +4, Survival +3, proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields, toughness, weapon focus [short sword], mounted combat.

**Possessions:** short sword, 30 gp, 1 silver ear-ring (30 gp) / short sword, 25 gp, 1 golden necklace (75 gp) / short sword, 20 gp, 1 moss agate (10 gp).

During the night, the guards do not allow anyone to enter the house. During the day, they could be tricked (but they get a +5 bonus on their Sense Motive check to avoid being bluffed since they are extremely suspicious) to let "some friends" of Ulabius in.

#### 2. Kitchen (EL —)

Entrance to this room is through a small wooden door. The room smells of smoke and food. A fireplace dominates the southern wall while a stove is on the northern wall, surrounded by pans, baskets, a bucket with fresh water and an amphora with red wine. The fireplace is unlit and no food is on the stove.

This is only a kitchen and no danger awaits here. At the foot of the window is a trap door that leads to the subterranean level. The trap door is well disguised and a DC 15 Search check is required to notice it. The trap door is made of heavy wood and is locked.

**Trap door:** Hardness 7, hp 40, Break DC 25, Open Lock DC 25.

Only Ulabius has the key for the lock.

#### 3. Bathroom (EL —)

This room smells vaguely of soap and perfumes. White spots of dried water and soap spatter the floor. The furniture of what is clearly a bathroom includes a wooden bath, a toilette table and a wooden bucket filled with water.

There is no danger in this room and nothing special to be found. The toilette table has three drawers: two contain clean bathrobes and the other different combs and toiletries. The only valuables are a set of perfume vials worth 30 gp.

#### 4. Waiting Room (EL 3 or —)

During the day, this is the room where the guards described at area 1 stay most of their time when they are off duty, normally playing cards or dice. After the guards are defeated, or at night, the PCs can explore the room.

It has two doors, one on the southern wall and one on the eastern one, and is very simply furnished with a rough square table and four chairs. The air is stale and smells of sweat and ale. An unlocked closed chest rests in a corner.

The chest holds spare weapons, 2 short swords and a knife, along with mugs and clothes.

#### 5. Library (EL 1)

This room is a library. On the southern wall, opposite the door and just below a window, is a desk and chair. On both sides are shelves full of books. A pot with a plant full of red flowers sits in a corner.

A Krenshar is sleeping under the desk. It is quite small compared to the standard of its race and weighs only about 80 pounds, but it has otherwise the same statistics of others of its kind.

Ulabius treats this magical beast as a pet and feeds it the flesh of the overly-curious and intruders. For this reason, the Krenshar has developed a particular

taste for human flesh and it attacks intruders (such as the PCs) on sight. It can be noticed with a DC 8 Spot check. This avoids being surprised by its attack. The Krenshar fights to the death.

**Krenshar (1):** CR 1; hp 13; see the MM.

After the PCs dispatch the beast, they can look at the library. On the shelves, they can find many books on herbalism and anthropology, many of them handwritten by the same hand, that of Ulabius, of course! Among them are descriptions of very rare herbs and venoms, and notes on how to perform autopsies and dissections. The books have no value but are indeed very detailed and well written. If someone spends at least three months studying them, he/she learns valuable knowledge giving him/her a +1 bonus on Heal checks.

With a DC 12 Search check, the PCs find a small book, with a gray cover, containing information about a number of forgotten gods — one of them is Zailhhess, but at this time of the adventure the PCs have no idea about him and the other gods of this long-forgotten pantheon. The book looks ancient and the language is archaic and requires a DC 18 Decipher Script check to comprehend its writing.



## 6. Dining Room (EL —)

This room contains a long, worn rectangular table and six chairs. Another smaller round table is in a corner and holds pottery, glasses and knives. Over the rectangular table hangs an opaque crystal chandelier. There is nothing of real interest in this room.

## 7. Laboratory (EL 5)

As soon as the PCs enter the room, their nostrils are assailed by a foul mixture of herbs, drugs, alcohol, acidic and caustic substances. A table under a window is covered with alchemical equipment and many jars and vials. Three winged creatures hover in the room, staring at any intruders with malicious human-like faces.

The three creatures are mephits. They attack anyone entering the room but do not fight to the death; if severely hurt, they try to escape to Ulabius' Room (area 11).

**Air Mephit (1):** CR 3; hp 16; see the MM.

**Dust Mephit (2):** CR 3; hp 16, 15; see the MM.

After the mephits are defeated, the PCs can explore the room. The floor is covered with dust, powders, dried pieces of plants and many human footprints. The bookshelf contains a few books on herb preservation and many jars and vials full of plant, flower and spore samples, sometimes immersed in a transparent fluid (alcohol). Other flasks contain colored plant extracts (non-magical).

The table holds alchemical equipment (worth 1,000 gp) and other vials and jars. None of them contains anything magical, but some of them could be used to alleviate the pain of stomach diseases, burns, headaches and the like. These ointments are used by Ulabius as medicine for his patients.

## 8. Stairs (EL —)

These wooden stairs look very old and in need maintenance. The stained glass window over the stairs depicts an old man under a tree. In the distance, the entrance to a cavern peers out from between two hills. The stairs lead to level one of the house and there is no risk associated with them or with the window.

## Level One

### 9. Relaxation Room (EL —)

A big fireplace on the eastern wall dominates this room. On the floor lies a carpet with an intricate geometrical pattern and several feather cushions. They look quite worn from long use. The fireplace is full of soot and piles of wood are aligned along its sides.

There is nothing of interest in this room, which is normally used by the guards described in area 1 when they are off duty and prefer to relax instead of playing cards in the room 4.

## 10. Library (EL 5)

The door of this room is a locked good wooden door and only Ulabius owns the key to the lock.

**Good Wooden Door:** Hardness 6, hp 15, Break DC 18, Open Lock 25.

If the PCs open the door, they see a desk with a leather armchair in front of it and two bookshelves to the sides. Two tall humanoid skeletons with very long arms and legs stand before the bookshelves. The skeletons attack anyone entering the room. These skeletons are the animated remains of two trolls. They always fight to the death.

It is worth noting that Ulabius has not protected his house with his special undead, reserving them for the protection of his secret stronghold (see chapter 7 for more details).

**Troll (Huge) Skeleton (2):** CR 3; hp 46, 42; see the MM.

After the PCs eliminate the skeletons, they can inspect the room. The books are non-magical and their subjects vary from arcane to more mundane ones as geography and history.

In a secret compartment of the western shelf the PCs can find one of Ulabius's traveling spellbooks with the following spells: *shield*, *detect undead*, *summon monster I*, *acid arrow*, *daze monster*, *summon monster III*. A *sepia snake sigil* cast at 11th level protects the book.

Also inside this niche is a small black book that contains notes from Ulabius on his activities, the name of his victims, and other clues about his illegal business. The book's pages are disguised by means of a *secret page* spell as a treatise on flowers. The spell is cast at 11th level. This book is indeed an important clue to take to Sir Krilmar, assuming the players realize its importance.

The hidden compartment can be found with a DC 23 Search check; a *Phantom Trap* cast at 11th level has been placed on it.

In a drawer of the desk are a few sheets of parchment, ink, quills and other writing tools of superior quality worth up to 250 gp and perfect to write spell scrolls.

## 11. Ulabius' Room (EL 8)

This room has a strong wooden door, arcane locked at 11th level.

**Wooden Door:** Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 35.

When the PCs enter the room, they see a huge fireplace with a comfortable armchair that occupies the western wall. On the other side is a plushy bed and a

sturdy cupboard. The light that filters through the window on the northern wall delineates the shadowy outline of a huge construct that is slowly moving.

The construct is a shield guardian that Ulabius commissioned from a powerful wizard from the South. The controlling amulet is a golden necklace with a drop pendant set with a ruby, and Ulabius wears it at all times. The construct has received the order to kill anyone entering the room not accompanied by Ulabius and always fights to the death. Its first action is to release its stored *stinking cloud* (CL 10) spell, targeting the middle of the room. Then, it moves to kill anyone on sight.

**Shield Guardian (1):** CR 8; hp 100; see the MM.

After they dispatch the guardian, the PCs can search the room. The cupboard is filled with many vests and clothes, boots, gloves and scarves. None of these items is magical.

In addition, the cupboard contains spare bed clothing. A strange obsidian idol of a hooded humanoid figure with a skull for head is wound into a gray robe. This is one of the forms that Zailhess takes as an avatar.

A locked chest at the foot of the bed contains: 75 gp, 150 sp, a pouch with 5 moonstones (worth 50 gp each), 2 ambers (100 gp), 2 amethysts (100 gp), 1 emerald (1,000 gp) and 1 white opal (1,000 gp), a sapphire pendant on a golden necklace (2,000 gp) with the sapphire crafted as a skull, a scroll of grease (CL 5) and a *wand of magic missile* (CL 7) [12 charges left].

**Locked Chest:**  
Hardness 5, hp 10,  
Break DC 18, Open  
Lock DC 20.

## 12. Guards' Room (EL 3 or —)

This is the sleeping room for the guards described at area 1. At night, the three off-duty guards sleep here.

According to the time of day and the actions of the PCs there could be many different situations: during the day the room is empty, as it is if the guards have been called downstairs to answer an alarm; at night, the guards could be still sleeping if they have not heard any suspicious noise. In the latter case, the three men are in their beds.

The room contains two bed bunks with cheap clothing, a fireplace completely black with soot, a couple of chairs and a pair of stools. There are also two chests, one at the foot of a bed and one between the two beds. The room has a single window on the southern wall, whose blinds are closed. The room smells of sweat and leather.

In the chests are some spare clothes, a dented short sword and three complete sets of leather armor. Apart from that, nothing interesting can be found in the room.



## Underground Level

### 13. Larder (EL —)

The steep stairway leads to a big room filled with many things: sacks, crates, barrels, baskets and amphorae. The walls, the floor and the ceiling are of hewn stone and show clear signs of humidity. The floor is covered with dust and pebbles. A vague smell of food and wine mixed with that of mushrooms and mold lingers in the air. In the corner opposite the stairs is a huge crate.

The sacks contain wheat, sugar, grains and other edibles. The amphorae are used to store oil, beer and wine, and the barrels are filled with water and ales. The crate is empty and its only function is to conceal the passage to the dungeon.

A successful DC 10 Spot check allows PCs to see signs in the dust on the floor that indicate the crate has been moved recently. The same clues are automatically detected (DC 0) if the PCs search the area.

Moving the crate is easy since it is empty and only weighs about 30 pounds. The passage behind the crate is 2 feet wide and 4 feet high. It leads to an unlit corridor of hewn stone about 3 feet wide and 10 feet high.

### 14. Carved Arch (EL 2)

The passage is hewn directly from stone and soil. The smell of mold and the stench of death hang in the air. An arch in the middle of the passage made of obsidian and carved to depict horrible faces of horned demons, skulls, bats and gargoyles reduces the width of the route further.

If the PCs are brave enough to get closer to the arch, they notice the floor is full of bones. Most of them are of small animals like mice and bats but some are humanoids. There is nothing special about the arch apart from its inhabitant.

A choker lurks over the arch. The PCs notice it with a successful Spot check opposed by the monster's Hide roll. If the monster is not noticed, it waits for the PCs to pass through the arch and tries to grab the last PC in the line without raising an alarm. If noticed, it moans and tries to avoid a fight as long as possible. If severely wounded, it escapes to area 16 where it hides on the ceiling and hopes to lure the PCs into the pit trap.

**Chocker (1):** CR 2; hp 18; see the MM.

### 15. Acid Trap (EL 7)

Whenever someone gets close enough (less than 5 ft.) to the wall of this dead-end, a magic trap goes off and a cloud of acid forms in the passageway at a distance of 15 ft. from the wall (see spell description for major details on how this trap works).

**Acid Fog Trap:** CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (alarm); automatic reset; spell effect (*acid fog*, 11th-level wizard, 2d6 / round acid for 11 rounds); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

### 16. Trapped Stairs (EL 6)

When a weight of 200 pounds is placed on the second half of the stairs (no matter on which step or steps the weight is distributed), the whole stairs become a sliding chute that ends in a pit 40 ft. deep.

**Stairs Pit Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger, manual reset; DC 25 Reflex save avoids; 40 ft. deep (4d6, fall); multiple targets (all targets on the stairs); Search DC 26; Disable Device DC 25.

The Reflex save allows a character to hold onto the sliding surface and stay in place. A second save (DC 18) is needed to move up or down 5 ft. as a full-round action. A successful Disable Device check after the trap goes off allows the PC to reset the trap. Note that this means closing the pit trap and restoring the stairs to its original position.

### 17. Cavern of the Sphere (EL 10)

The entrance to this cavern is well concealed as a dead-end path. It requires a DC 20 Search check to find it. A section of the wall 4 ft. wide and 5 ft. high can be easily pivoted — it requires a DC 15 Strength check — and opens into the cavern.

The secret door opens into a roughly round cavern with a diameter of about 25 ft. The ceiling is only 7 ft. high. Two braziers burn with a red light just in front of what appears to be a pool and dimly light the cavern. Massive granite columns line the way from the door to the pool. In the middle of the pool rests what appears to be a pedestal with a black sphere on it. On the left rests a slab of gray stone dotted with reddish brown stains. The skeletons of two humanoids hang on the walls by manacles. The smoke of the braziers has an extremely sweet fragrance and do not obscure sight, dissipating almost immediately in the air. The sound of dripping water echoes softly in the vault.

Ulabi has placed two bodaks, the poor remains of two of his victims, as guardians of the sphere. They lurk in the shadows, moving silently to catch intruders by surprise. Once all the PCs are into the cavern they attack relentlessly, starting with their death gaze attack.

**Bodak (2):** CR 8; hp 70, 66; see the MM.

When the monsters are defeated, the PCs can explore the cavern.

The sphere on the pedestal is, of course, one of the Six Spheres of Zaihhezz. The sphere can be easily removed from the pedestal and weighs only 2 pounds (see the New Items Appendix for more details). The pool is only a foot deep and contains clear water.

The stains over the slab are dried blood, clues to the terrible experiments Ulabius conducts in secrecy. The skeletons are of a female and a male humans. Ulabius used a stone knife to separate the flesh from the bones, and if inspected the PCs find many small cuts on the bones.

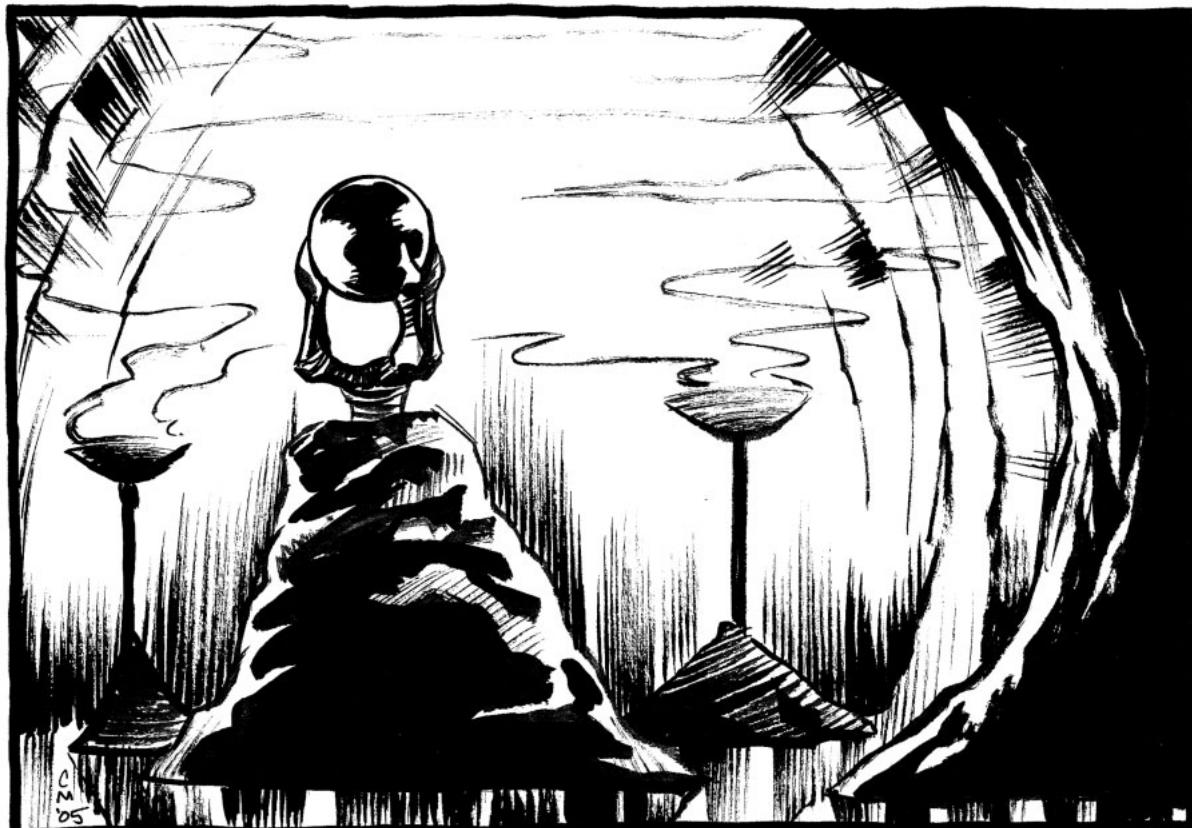
The two braziers contain a strange gray dust that burns very slowly and emanates the sweet aroma. It is not magic and provides no special effect. Ulabius obtains the dust from a plant that grows in the Sternwood Forest. A character with at least 12 ranks in the Survival skill can identify the dust and trace its origin to the Sternwood Forest.

In the south-west corner of the cavern is a niche that contains several objects: an idol of obsidian crafted in the fashion of a skeleton with six arms, a stone knife, an empty ceramic jar, a dark blue cloth stained with blood, an iron key that opens the manacles on the wall and a clear black stone crafted as a pendant. None of these objects are magical or has any special properties. The pendant, though, was worn by a woman, one of Ulabius's victims, and is worth 10 gp. More important, everyone in the village could recognize it, and can link the jewel to the missing woman. This is the most relevant clue the PCs can discover in the house about Ulabius's involvement in the murders.

## Chapter Awards

The players can gain up to 100 XP (individual award) for a very inventive idea on how to enter the house without hacking the door to pieces or other similar showy actions.

For taking the black small book with the notes on Ulabius's activities and uncovering the secrets inside it, or for taking the black pendant and discovering the truth about it, the players gain a total of 500 XP along with the agreed-upon reward from Sir Krilmar (this actually happens in Chapter 2), as well as his gratitude.



# Chapter Two: Owl Tower-Part I

*In which the heroes enjoy the recognition of their lord and witness a mysterious and shocking death.*

This chapter, contrary to the others, is designed as event-based. Most of the time the PCs are only witnesses to the major events and their actions can change nothing in this sequence. The DM must keep this fact from the players, so as not to frustrate them. To properly play this role, you should allow the players to have their characters take actions and to try to change things, but the overall results have to remain the same as detailed in the descriptions.

The sequence of events starts with the PCs going to the Owl Tower after they have finished with their "mission" inside Ulabius' house. In the paragraph "Places of Major Interest" at the beginning of the module you can find a description of the Owl Tower. Familiarize yourself with its areas and inhabitants before running this part of the adventure.

## 1. The Lord's Gratitude

Once the PCs approach the tower, the garrison soldiers notice them. At the gate, they are questioned about their motives and intentions. Lord Krilmar has informed the guards that a group of adventurers could come, so the guards can be convinced without major effort to let the PCs in. The PCs are asked to wait at the gate while one of the guards goes to the tower to inform Lutholus, the captain of the guards. He comes after about 30 minutes and again questions the PCs. He is more suspicious than his guards but he can be easily convinced, too. He assigns an escort of four soldiers to the PCs to accompany them to the tower.

At the tower entrance, the majordomo, Matgheus, dismisses the soldiers and invites the PCs inside. He asks if they would like a bath and a chance to change their clothes, or something to eat and drink. When he thinks the PCs are ready to meet the lord, he takes them to a library where Sir Krilmar is waiting for them.

The room is comfortable, well furnished with two full bookshelves, a round table with eight chairs around it and two plushy armchairs in front of a lit fireplace. Sitting at the table are two old men, counselors of the lord. The light of the fire shades everything in the room with a warm red color and a vague fragrance of apple emanates with the smoke. In front of the two armchairs stands Lord Krilmar, elegantly dressed but in informal attire. He smiles to the PCs

and dismisses the majordomo before asking them if they succeeded in their task.

At this point, the PCs have to show what they have found, say what they have seen and answer the many questions the lord and the two sages ask. At the end, the lord should be convinced that Ulabius is indeed a trickster and a murderer, especially if the PCs have the black pendant with them.

He takes the clues provided by the PCs, including and especially the sphere, and hands them over to his sages for research. They promise to get results within one week. Lord Rediron thanks the PCs and gives them the agreed reward, inviting them to stay for the night and participate in a party. The majordomo returns and shows them to their assigned rooms on the third floor of the tower.

## 2. The Party

The party takes place during the evening in the tower ballroom. All the guests — a dozen in total, plus the Captain of the Guard, who sits at the same table of the PCs — wear formal attire and precious jewels. Excepting the PCs, who sit at a bigger table, they eat and drink at small tables. A bard sings a heroic poem accompanied by a harp. When all the guests, including the PCs, have arrived, Sir Krilmar shows up with his beautiful daughter Elien.

The lord enters the room dressed in an elegant blue shirt with golden buttons, red trousers and a golden sword hanging at his belt. He has his daughter — a beautiful young woman — under his arm. She has very long blond hair combed in complicated braids and entwined with silver hairpins and green ribbons. She has deep blue eyes, the same color as the rich blouse she wears. Everyone stops what they're doing and admires her beauty when she arrives.

At a certain point during the party, Elien asks her father for permission to show the PCs her garden. The lord tries to convince her it's too dark, but she insists enough to convince him. Properly role-play this discussion in order to show them how much Sir Krilmar loves Elien and how easily it is for her to force her father to her will.

After a tour of the splendid garden — even if it was effectively too late to completely appreciate its beauty — the PCs come back to the ballroom where the party goes on for another hour before it ends. All the guests go to their rooms and a big silence covers the



tower with its mantle. Once the PCs are in their rooms, the unexpected happens!

### 3. On Fire!

While the PCs are in their rooms, they hear noises outside their rooms, people who cry and shout, people who run ... If the PCs exit their rooms they hear people shouting: "Fire! Fire!" Everyone they see is screaming and running toward the stairs. They do not see any fire on this floor, nor do they smell any smoke. If they turn toward one of the windows, they see a reddish halo outside, similar to a sunset. The PCs should easily understand that the fire must be outside, probably in the garden.

At this point, allow the players to make up their minds and decide what their characters do next, while continuing to describe the people who rush and scream, maybe even pulling and bumping against the PCs.

If they decide to return to their rooms, one of the servant or the majordomo tells them what happened: the events described in the following paragraph. If they are curious enough, they witness the events and can try to change them ... but to no effect!

### 4. Tragedy

Every person who was in the tower and all the soldiers stand in front of the tower main entrance to watch as fire burns Elien's once-beautiful garden. Nobody is taking any action, too scared or surprised to react promptly. Finally, a group of soldiers start to throw buckets of water onto it, but it is immediately apparent that the fire will complete its destruction before it can be extinguished.

Let the PCs take some actions — helplessly and uselessly — before continuing with the next act in the tragedy.

Suddenly, over the roar of the fire, everyone hears a high-pitched scream. It is Elien. The crowd parts to let her move through. Her father, Lord Krilmar, accompanies her. Copious tears pour from her eyes and spill their salty contents over the ground. Then she breaks loose from her father and runs toward the fire, screaming in pain and delusion as she steps into the fire and disappears!

Enhance the dramatic effect of this scene by pausing for a while. Before the PCs can take any action, the other on-lookers start screaming, giving orders, running back and forth — everyone with the same look of impotency in his eyes. Lord Krilmar lies pros-

trate, crying, his body shuddering. Nobody is brave enough to go console him.

At this point, the PCs can take any actions they like before the lord recovers and the next chapter starts. No matter what the PCs do, though, Elien is dead and her remains cannot be found, even with magical means.

## 5. Garden of Sorrow

Finally, when the fire is tamed, the lord recovers and starts to give orders. His first order is to enter the garden to recover the remains of his daughter and to discover clues about how the fire started. The PCs could join these searches, but they will learn the results from a servant or the majordomo nonetheless. Both of these searches, anyway, end up being fruitless.

If the PCs enter the garden, describe the black night, the smoking ashes, the burnt trees that look like fingers pointing at the sad moon, the screeches of the night animals in the distance, the lights of the lanterns of the searchers that look like St. Elmo's fires, the cold mist that grows on the horizon, and the growing frustration of the people involved and their sad silence.

Elien remains cannot be found because after she ran into the burning garden, she fell into a hidden hole in the ground and ended up in a buried crypt (see chapter 6 for more details). The hole is now again hidden by the ashes of burnt trees and could not be found (DC 40 Spot or Search check). A magical search for her body is also fruitless since the crypt has a non-detection shield protection always active.

Ulabius used a *fly* spell to pass over the tower's external walls, so no traces of him can be found outside the garden.

The search goes on for the whole night and next morning until the lord stops them and proclaims the next orders regarding the garden.

## 6. The Mourning

Sir Krilmar gathers all his guests and soldiers in the Parade Area (see the Owl Tower map at the end of the module) and declares that the next three days will be a period of mourning in honor of his daughter. The garden is from this moment on considered Elien's tomb and nobody can enter for any reason. Three guards (use the same statistics of the garrison soldiers) will enforce this proclamation.

Afterward, the lord goes to his quarters and nobody can disturb him.

The PCs can join the tower people in their sorrow, praying and crying, or using the time in whatever fashion they like, maybe exploring the tower and its vicinity. After the period of mourning is over, the lord invites them to his quarters to discuss of the results of the sages' research.

## 7. Revelations

The majordomo leads the PCs to the uppermost part of the tower to the paladin's quarters and shows them a door, saying the lord and his sages are waiting for them inside.

The majordomo waits until all the PCs enter the rooms and then goes away.

The room is richly furnished and dimly illuminated by a suffused light that enters through the windows



and is filtered by heavy curtains. The air is stale, as the room has not been open for a long time. Sir Krilmar and two old men, his sages, wait for the party around a table full of old parchments and ancient tomes. The face of Lord Rediron, illuminated by the light of a candelabra on the table, looks battered, as he has not slept for days. He gives the PCs a tired nod and invites them to the table.

When the PCs sit, the lord invites the two sages, Lukot and Gerthel, to talk about what they have found. The sages explain they have found enough clues in some of the old parchments to believe they confront someone more than a simple murderer. The sphere, in fact, is part of a set of six spheres that once belonged to a forgotten cult that spread terror in the Frontier a long time ago — the DM can present as many facts from the adventure background paragraph as he sees fit.

Have the PCs question the lord and the sages about this revelation and lead the discussion to the point that it becomes clear that this cult must be stopped and the six spheres recovered. The lord suggests that the PCs embark on this mission since he cannot spare any troops, that this is a mission for skilled heroes, and not for common soldiers. He offers up to 2,000 gp for every sphere recovered.

If the PCs agree, the lord dismisses the sages and discusses the situation in greater detail.

## 8. A New Mission

The lord shows the PCs a map of the Frontier on which is marked the location of the tomb of Thajar one of his scouts discovered some weeks before. The tomb is located in an area of the Gryphon Hills where the face of one hill is sculpted to resemble a laughing man whose mouth is closed by heavy bronze doors. A sigil is carved onto the doors, that of the infamous Thajar Darkfrag, the mage and thief that lived in the Frontier some fifty years ago.

The paladin tells the party there is a good chance that one of the spheres is among the mage's treasure — which he is sure is buried with him. Thajar, in fact, was very keen on magic items and could well have gathered a powerful artifact like one of the spheres.

Give the players an opportunity for the PCs to discuss more on this mission with the lord, agree on a reward and get more information about Thajar (see the following chapter for details). If the PCs talk about the eventual treasure they could find in the tomb, the lord has no interest in anything apart from the spheres, but he recommends they avoid robbing the tomb and, especially, avoid stealing personal belongings since this would be an evil act and could curse them.

Once the PCs agree to this mission, the lord thanks them avidly and calls the majordomo and the captain

to ensure they receive the proper support in terms of food and equipment before they leave the tower. The PCs can remain in the tower as long as they like, but after a couple of days they receive subtle suggestions that "maybe it is time to proceed with their mission."

Before the PCs leave the tower, one of the sages, Lukot, approaches them and warns them that the spheres are magic items of dark powers and must not be used. He suggests that once they find one, they put it in a bag and take it to the paladin as soon as possible. He also hints that they should not play with what they do not understand.

If questioned, the sage only repeats his suggestions and specifies that they need to do more research on the spheres, that they know too little, that it emanates waves of horror, etc. When the PCs leave the tower they notice the sage watches them until they are almost out of sight.

## Chapter Awards

There is no specific award for this chapter.

# Chapter Three:

# The Tomb of Thajar Darkfrag

*In which the heroes go in a fruitless mission but gain valuable information after an assassination attempt.*

## Adding Spice to the Meal

This part of the module is an example of how to incorporate additional dungeons and adventures into the main threads of the campaign. In fact, the mission to recover the sphere is destined to fail — there is no sphere inside the tomb — but this way you can present more information about the Frontier, show the players that their characters can fail, change the pace of the adventure and prepare for the future.

If you feel this adventure is redundant, cut it out and only present the players with the assassins' killing attempt (see below) during their characters' trips out of the tower to whatever place they have decided to go (obviously, you need to also cut paragraphs 7 and 8 of the preceding chapter).

Instead, you can add additional dungeons in which the PCs are about to recover a sphere but are beaten to it by the sect's members, discovering the dungeon empty and some clues that a sphere was there, and the like.

For example, you can use chapter 6 in this way: you need only change it to have Ulabius enter the crypt before the party and recover the sphere inside it before them. Maybe the party arrives just as Ulabius is launching a *teleport* spell with the sphere in his hands.

These events will add spice to the campaign and a strong desire in the players to have their characters complete their mission and destroy this malignant sect.

## Thajar Darkfrag

The PCs might already know the following information about Thajar, or they can obtain it with a Gather Information check (DC 15).

Thajar Darkfrag was a famous arch-mage of the South. He is also well known in the Frontier since he spent a lot of time researching magic items he was sure were hidden there. Nobody knows what these items were or what functions they had, but they were an obsession for him and he spent his last decade in the Frontier in research — to what results, no one knows.

He did not have many friends, and during the last part of his life, he lost all of them, remaining alone in his desperate hunt. Thajar was well known for his quizzes and riddles and his passion for good wine, and he was justly feared for his tremendous magical pow-

ers. What is not so well known is that Thajar was also quite skilled in another art, the one that requires very nimble fingers. He was quite an expert on both magical and mechanic traps.

Thajar died a natural death some fifty years before the events of this campaign. He somehow arranged to build his tomb in secret and to be buried there with his treasure — what little he had left after all the expenses for his research — without the help of anyone. In fact, he used golems to build his tomb. His tomb's location remained unknown until Sir Krilmar's scout found its entrance and nobody has violated the tomb so far.

With the use of the map given to them by Lord Krilmar, the PCs should easily find the tomb, perhaps after a few encounters in the hills.

When the PCs are in the proximity of the tomb they see a small rugged hill whose face has been sculpted to resemble the face of a laughing man. The mouth is wide open but where the throat should be are two tightly-shut, massive bronze doors. When the PCs approach, they hear the faint echo of a laugh.

In reality, there is nothing special about the "statue" of the laughing man, but this is a clue that the mage was probably quite insane in his last years and, in fact, the tomb is designed like a testing labyrinth for would-be robbers.

Unless otherwise noted, the tomb's rooms are unlit, the walls are of hewn stone and the floors are covered with flagstones. There are no door inside the tomb except the "riddled doors" of rooms 8, 10, 11 and 13. Unless the description says differently, these doors are invisible and are magically reinforced; they cannot be forced or destroyed; they can only be opened by answering the riddles.

Inside the labyrinth no divination and teleport spells, effects and abilities work since an *antimagic field* fills the whole dungeon and negates these effects.

## Key Areas of the Tomb

See the map at the end of the module for an overview of the tomb.



### 1. Entrance (EL —)

The doors are of massive bronze and are magically stuck.

**Magic Bronze Door:** Hardness 9, hp 200, Break DC 35.

Over the doors, there is an inscription that says: *"You are welcome to visit my remains, thou who know me!"*

One way to enter the doors is to hack them to pieces: quite long work, indeed. An easier way is to "answer" the riddle inscribed on the door. If someone loudly pronounces the full name of Thajar Darkfrag, the doors silently open moving on their perfect mechanism.

### 2. Bats' Room (EL 1)

This otherwise empty room is used by a small colony of bats as their lair. They reach the outside by means of a small crevice on the western wall of the room at about 5 ft. of height. The crevice can be noted with a DC 12 Spot check or is automatically detected if someone is actively searching the wall. The crevice is too small for anything bigger than a diminutive animal to squeeze through it.

Once the PCs enter the room, have the players make a Spot check roll (DC 13) to see if the PCs

notice the guano on the floor and one other check against the bats' Hide check result to see if the party notices the bats hanging from the ceiling. If both checks fail, the PCs are surprised by the bats.

If any source of light enters the room, the bats panic and swarm around the source of light. There is a 50% chance that the attack is directed on the illumination source and 50% that the target is the holder. In the first case, the holder needs to make a DC 10 Reflex save to avoid letting the light source fall; in the other case, a DC 12 Will save is needed.

After the initial attack, it takes 1d4 rounds before the bats fly out of the room through the hole on the wall.

**Bats Swarm:** CR 2; hp 13; see the MM.

The PCs see many bones on the floor, many of them the remains of the bats themselves. These are the remains of the ochre jelly's (room 3) meals and could be a clue for the party that a predator of the bats lives here.

### 3. Jelly Room (EL 5)

This room seems completely empty and with only a single entrance. A vaguely acrid smell fills the air.

An ochre jelly hides on the ceiling of the room. This monster usually feeds on the bats it can capture

in room 2 but it sees anything that moves as a possible prey. Therefore, it attacks anyone entering its lair. It can be spotted with a DC 15 Spot check; otherwise it surprises the first character entering the room.

**Ochre Jelly (1):** CR 5; hp 73; see the MM.

There is nothing of interest in this room apart from more bat bones on the floor.

#### 4. Obstructed Passage (EL —)

The corridor here comes to an abrupt stop since the ceiling and walls have partially collapsed and totally obstructed the passage. It is not possible to proceed on this path since tons of debris has fallen down. In addition, any attempt to clean the passage causes more debris to fall if no special systems are put in place — like supporting the walls and the ceiling with timbers. A character with at least 5 ranks in Profession [mining] or Knowledge [dungeoneering] or similar skills can lead a group of 5 people, equipped with shovels, picks and other proper instruments, as well as timbers for supports, to free the passage in 1d6+6 days. Magic, of course, could be very helpful as well, if it worked!

Clearing the passage is not relevant for the adventure since characters can get access to the other side of the fall via a different path but the DM should allow the party to take any step they like to free the passage.

#### 5. Fungi Room (EL 5)

This room is rectangular and has a single opening. The air is humid and smells of mold and carrion. A patch of mold and fungi of many dull colors, gray and dark green being predominant, covers one side of the room. Some of the fungi are big, up to 4 ft. high and 5 ft. wide. A mist hangs in the air and rolls around the room, giving a translucent quality to the light; it does not create any impediment to sight, though. The ceiling in front of the entrance is wet and small stalactites hang from it.

The patch of mold contains many non-sentient fungi that do not pose any threat. Among them, though, there are 3 shriekers and 2 violet fungi. They do not attack until a possible victim is close enough (10 ft.) to let the shriekers emit their typical noise. At that time, the violet fungi try to take advantage of the distraction created by their companions to attack with surprise. Within the mold are the decayed remains of many tiny animals, but nothing of value.

**Shrieker (3):** CR 1; hp 12, 12, 10; see the MM.

**Violet Fungus (2):** CR 3; hp 17, 16; see the MM.

Shriekers and violet fungi often work together to attract and kill prey. When the shriekers' hellish racket attracts a curious creature, the violet fungus tries to kill it. Both creatures enjoy the fruits of a successful hunt.

Something interesting can be found if the wet stains on the ceiling are investigated. Over the room, a small stream of underground water has excavated a small passage that leads, downwards, to the lair of a dragon (see area 7). Here it forms a rock formation with water basins and colored calcareous minerals before it flows out of the cavern.

Water completely impregnates the ceiling, which could easily collapse if it were hit.

**One 5 ft. by 5 ft. square of Collapsing Ceiling:** Hardness 5, hp 5, Break DC 10.

Once the ceiling collapses, water slowly streams into the room. Since the dungeon is level, the water spreads to any room and corridor up to a 2-inch height before exiting the main entrance. This does not hamper the dungeon explorers in any way.

#### 6. The Water Passage (EL 1)

The passage is big enough to allow a single small creature to walk into it, although with curved shoulders. Medium creatures can crawl along it while larger creatures simply do not fit. Refer to the DMG to see how the reduced space hampers movement and other abilities.

The passage is slightly sloped toward room 7 and the water flows in that direction. Sometimes, small ponds form where the passage widens or the slope becomes slighter. The water level is no more than a few inches, though, and no life is sustained apart from algae, molds and diminutive white crustaceans.

The only exception is a 6 ft. radius pond that has formed at a curve in the passage. The pond 11 ft. deep in the middle. A squid, similar to the animal in the MM except that it is completely white and has dark-vision instead of low-light vision, lives within the pond. Even though it normally feeds on the white crustaceans, it attacks anyone getting into the water, using its grapple attack and ink cloud to full effect and dragging the victim into the depth and obscuring the vision of would-be rescuers.

**White Squid (1):** CR 1; hp 15; see the MM.

#### 7. Dragon's Lair (EL II)

This cavern has a hidden entrance on the top of the hill that the green dragon uses to access its lair. This cavern was not part of Thajar mausoleum construction and it is now connected to it just by chance. The dragon is unaware that the nice waterfall in the north-east part of the cavern is in fact another way to reach its lair. The dragon spends most of its time in the cavern — PCs have a 95% chance of finding it here. Otherwise it is out preying on the local fauna.

The dragon does not immediately attack someone entering its lair from the passage behind the waterfall, unless threatened or attacked. It is, in fact, surprised and impressed by this event and spends some time

talking with its “guests” to find out as much as possible about this unexpected visit, especially about the way its guests found its lair and entered it. After 2d10 minutes, though, it grows bored and decides to have lunch with its visitors, or better yet, to use its visitors as lunch!

It attacks what it thinks is the strongest opponent first while using its tail sweep at any targets at its back. During the fight, it uses the spell *true strike* for a power attack as often as possible and, if seriously wounded, *obscuring mist* to conceal itself while it reaches its trove and to use the *staff of healing*. If it thinks the fight is lost, it flies through the hole out of the hill and escapes at maximum flying speed.

**Young Adult Green Dragon (1), see also the MM:**  
 CR 11; SZ Large; Dragon (Air); HD 17d12+68; hp 190; Init +0; SPD 40 ft., fly 150 ft. (poor), swim 40 ft.; AC 25 (-1 size, +16 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 25; Base ATK / GRP +17 / +27; ATK Bite +22 melee (2d6+6); Full ATK Bite +22 melee (2d6+6) and 2 Claws +20 melee (2d6+3) and 2 Wings +20 melee (1d8+3) and 1 Tail Slap +20 melee (2d6+9); Space / Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft. (10 ft. with bite); SA Breath Weapon, Frightful Presence, Spells; SQ Immunity to sleep and paralysis, Immunity to acid, Blindsight, Keen Senses, Dark-vision 120ft., Water breathing, DR 5 / magic, SR 19; AL L/E; SV Fort +14, Ref +10, Will +12; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 14; Skills: Bluff +22, Diplomacy +14, Hide +15, Intimidate +24, Knowledge (arcane) +17, Knowledge (geography) +7, Knowledge (local) +7, Knowledge (nature) +17, Listen +24, Move Silently +15, Search +22, Sense Motive +22, Spot +24, Use Magic Device +22; Feats: Alertness, Cleave, Fly-by Attack, Hover, Multi-attack, Power Attack.

Sorcerer Spells Known (save DC 12 + spell level): 6 / 6

0— *acid splash, detect magic, flare, ray of frost, read magic*

1st— *identify, obscuring mist, true strike*.

The dragon's trove contains:

2,800 gp, 4,400 sp, a silver chalice worth 80 gp, 15 gems worth in total 2,251 gp [emerald (worth 800 gp), banded agate (12 gp), amber (120 gp), azurite (11 gp), amethyst (120 gp), blue quartz (8 gp), bloodstone (40 gp), lapis lazuli (9 gp), rhodocrosite (12 gp), pink pearl (110 gp), obsidian (7 gp), malachite (11 gp), jade (80 gp), hematite (11 gp), blue star sapphire (900 gp)], masterwork heavy steel shield, masterwork greatsword, +1 short sword, +1 light hammer, staff of healing [with 12 charges], potion of cure light wounds (CL 5), potion of bear's endurance (CL 6), ring of protection +2, scroll of detect magic (CL 5), scroll of delay poison (CL 6).

### No wonder if you wander...

The encounter with the dragon is provided to show to the players that it is not always a good idea to explore every single room in a dungeon. In fact, exploration gives the PCs the opportunity to accumulate more treasures and to fight with more monsters, but it also increases the chance that they find something, or someone, they would rather not.

### 8. Quiz Room (EL —)

This room is built with good masonry walls and the floor and ceiling are made of well-polished stones. The main figure of this room is a golden statue of an old man holding a scroll case in his hands. The scroll case is real. Carved on the wall on the left side of the statue are three hourglasses of different dimensions.

The statue does not depict anyone in particular; in Thajar's mind, it only represents a wise old man. The scroll inside the case contains a riddle that reads:

*Wise comes with the passing of time  
 As sand that flows through a small hole  
 Nine, five, and four is all I possess  
 But seven is what I need and search  
 Touch in couples the glass cones  
 Until the solution find and probe!*

The DM could prepare a nice parchment with the riddle written on it and give it to the players to enhance this encounter.

Characters can press the three hourglasses on the wall. They have different dimensions representing 9, 5 and 4-minutes counts, and the “sand” is all in the upper cone. The hourglasses must be pressed in pairs otherwise nothing happens. When two are pressed, the action triggers a small “click” noise before the knobs return to their original position. The only visible difference is that the hourglass that contained less sand is now empty, with all the sand in the lower cone, while the other one has sand in both cones. In the lower cone it has “flown” the same amount of sand that has flown from the upper cone to the lower one in the first hourglass, while in the upper cone is the difference between the initial amount and the one poured down. Basically, pressing two hourglasses simulates the action of turning them upside down and waiting until one is empty before stopping the flow of sand in the other one.

The riddle asks to achieve the proper sequence in order to “count” 7. Therefore, the hourglasses must be pushed in the following order: 5 and 4, 9 and 5 (that now contains 1 minute of sand), 9 (8) and 5, 9 (3) and 5, 9 and 5 (2).

After the last passage, the 9-minute hourglass contains the requested 7 minutes of sand and starts to glow with a red light. This hourglass needs to be pushed a final time to answer the riddle.

Nothing happens unless the proper sequence is completed or a wrong pair of hourglasses are pressed. In the former case, the section of the wall behind the hourglasses disappears and gives access to the rest of the labyrinth; otherwise, the section of wall on the right side of the statue vanishes and frees the golem in room 9. No magical or mundane means can open these sections of the walls other than pressing the hourglasses. Magic simply fails and the wall is considered to have hardness 60 in respect to any physical and energy attack. *Teleport* magic and similar effects, as already noted, do not work inside the dungeon so they are of no help in this situation.

## 9. Golem Room (EL 10)

This room is only intended to contain a clay golem that activates to “punish” a wrong answer to the riddle of room 8 and is absolutely empty apart from the automaton. The golem relentlessly attacks anyone on sight.

**Clay Golem (1): CR 10; hp 95; see the MM.**

## 10. Quiz Room (EL 11)

This room is identical to room 8. The statue, this time, is of granite and represents a sturdy dwarf in full plate armor with a warhammer held in his right hand and a medium shield strapped to his left one. A riddle is carved onto the shield:

*I have an Elf friend who runs  
In the undergrowth of dark forests  
And her name is Ihj  
I know a Man with powerful magic  
And glorious richness and majesty  
And his name is Qwr  
And here comes my old Gnome friend  
With a red big nose  
Whose name is Kjsii  
I am a Dwarf who lives and fight  
In unlit dark undergrounds  
And my name is ...*

If somebody pushes the proper sequence of letters carved into the rectangular areas on either side of the statue, two doors open in the wall behind the statue. All the letters of the alphabet are available.

The correct sequence is H-S-E-N-B. In fact, the solution of the riddle is in the names of the known friends. ELF becomes IHJ because I and J occupy, in the alphabet, 4 positions after the letter E and F, while L becomes H because H is 4 positions before L in the alphabet; the same applies to the words MAN and

GNOME, with the letters changed alternatively with those 4 positions after or before in the alphabet. If the wrong sequence is entered, the statue animates as a stone golem and attacks anyone on sight.

**Stone Golem (1): CR 11; hp 110; see the MM.**

## II. Quiz Room (EL 4)

In the center of this circular room sits a bronze statue of a juggler. He wears a jester’s motley, and three rings of balls “spin” from one hand to the other. The balls are actually connected by metallic rings. There are five doors on the curved walls of the room.

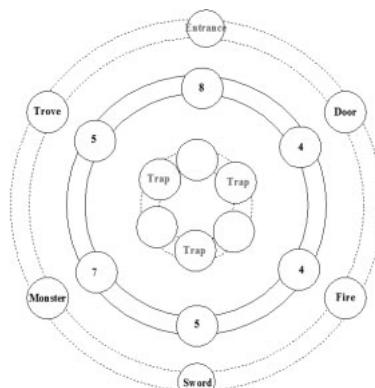
As soon as someone gets close to the statue, it speaks with a metallic voice: “I juggle the balls until the letters are hidden by the numbers and then the right way is shown.”

The riddle is repeated every minute that someone stands close enough (less than 10 ft.) to the statue. Photocopy the handout on page 126 and give it to your players. This illustration depicts the three circles of balls in the positions they are when the party enters the room.

The outer and inner circles can move clockwise and they are connected so that moving one of them also moves the other; they do not trigger any mechanism but using them and solving the riddle spoken by the statue allows the PCs to identify the trapped doors and, then, to avoid them by choosing the right doors.

The riddle is solved thusly: each ball with a word should correspond with the ball with the number of letters it contains (e.g., the word “monster” is formed of 7 letters while “door” is a 4). Once the words and the numbers correspond to each other, the position of the traps will be clear as shown in the illustration on the following page.

The five stone doors can be rotated with a DC 25 Strength check and up to two characters can aid the one attempting this action, each giving him a bonus of +2. Two doors connect to the next area of the dungeon while the other three activate a trap. All the



*Proper positioning of the circles to solve the riddle.*

doors have the same trap that is triggered by rotating the door itself.

**Lightning Bolt Trapped Door (x3):** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

### 12. The Tomb (EL 8)

A trapped portcullis blocks the entrance to the tomb, with the trap automatically triggering whenever someone is within 5 ft. of the portcullis. The portcullis bars are magically reinforced strong steel.

**Portcullis:** Hardness 15, hp 90, Break/Lift DC 30.

**Prismatic Spray Trapped Portcullis:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*prismatic spray*, 13th-level wizard, DC 20 Reflex, Fortitude, or Will save, depending on effect); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32.

Note that the walls are standard hewn stones and can be, therefore, dug through; teleportation and other similar effects, however, do not work. The room behind the portcullis is strangely shaped and its walls are covered with mosaics depicting geometrical forms and strange runes. The room is amazingly silent and the only thing inside it is a stone sarcophagus in the center of the north niche.

The whole room is under the effect of a *permanent silence* effect as cast at 20th level. The sarcophagus contains the remains of Thajar, dressed with a *robe of blending*. He holds a *rod of splendor* in his left hand, and wears a *ring of protection +3* and a *ring of wizardry (I)* on his right.

The robe and the rod are protected by a *bestow curse* spell cast at 20th level that diminishes the target's intelligence by 6 points (no saving throw) and forces him/her to talk in silly rhymes whenever a stressful situation happens. For reference, consider as stressful any situation that requires a full round action to be completed.

### 13. Quiz Room (EL —)

This room is identical to room 8 except that the golden statue is that of a simply dressed woman with her hands cupped before her, as she is waiting for something to be placed on them.

As soon as someone gets close enough (5 ft.) to the statue, the mouth of the woman opens and harp music fills the room for 1 minute; then the statue "speaks" a riddle:

A bar you get no beer from  
On a dish you cannot eat  
You put it on to take things off  
From hair down to your feet

The solution to the riddle is "(a bar of) soap" and soap is what needs to be placed into the woman's hands. If this action is done, the soap disappears and the western passage opens. If something else is placed there, the item vanishes and the passage to the east opens.

### 14. Treasure Room (EL 10)

This room contains the treasure of Thajar, stored in three metal caskets, locked, magically reinforced and protected by an *arcane lock* launched at 20th caster level.

**Caskets:** Hardness 30, PF 40, Break DC 35, Open Lock DC 33.

Whenever someone touches any of the caskets, a trap (Search and Disable Device DC 40) is set that summons four girallons that appear in the four corners of the room and immediately attack anyone inside the room.

**Girallon (4):** CR 6; hp 70, 65, 62, 60; see the MM.

The caskets contain:

**Casket 1:** 3,000 gp and 5,000 sp.

**Casket 2:** 10 black pearls (each worth 500 gp), 10 violet garnets (each worth 400 gp), 10 golden pearls (each worth 150 gp), 10 amethysts (each worth 100 gp) and 10 onyxes (each worth 50 gp).

**Casket 3:** an ivory statuette of a dancing woman (worth 80 gp), a small golden chalice (120 gp), a golden statuette of a roaring tiger (700 gp), a ceremonial golden dagger encrusted with topazes and sapphires (1,500 gp) and a golden bracelet encrusted with black and golden pearls (3,000 gp).

### 15. Trapped Passage (EL 8)

This passage is heavily trapped. One of the flagstones is connected to a pressure plate. Once a weight of more than 50 pounds is placed onto it, the trap activates and two iron portcullises fall down and trap anyone between them. The Search DC for the activation plate is 25 and the Disable Device DC is 30 because of the difficulty in accessing the mechanical trigger under the flagstone. The flagstone, though, could be avoided by jumping (DC 5) over it.

**Iron Portcullises:** Hardness 15, hp 80, Break/Lift DC 32.

In addition, the portcullises are covered with magical runes and, if touched, activate another trap.

North Portcullis:

**Black Tentacles Trap:** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*black tentacles*, 7th-level wizard, 1d4+7 tentacles, Atk +7 melee [1d6+4, tentacle]); multiple targets (up to six tentacles per target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

South portcullis:

**Chain Lightning Trap:** CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning*, 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest center of trigger area plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, DC 19 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

**What's next?**

At a certain point, it becomes clear that the sphere is not inside the tomb and the PCs need to abandon their research. On their return, and while they are in the hills, a group of Silver Crown Guild mercenaries hired by Ulabius ambush them. You can use map 7 at the end of the module as a reference or as the fighting grid. It also shows the disposition of the mercenaries at the beginning of the attack and their probable movements.

**The Ambush (EL 8)**

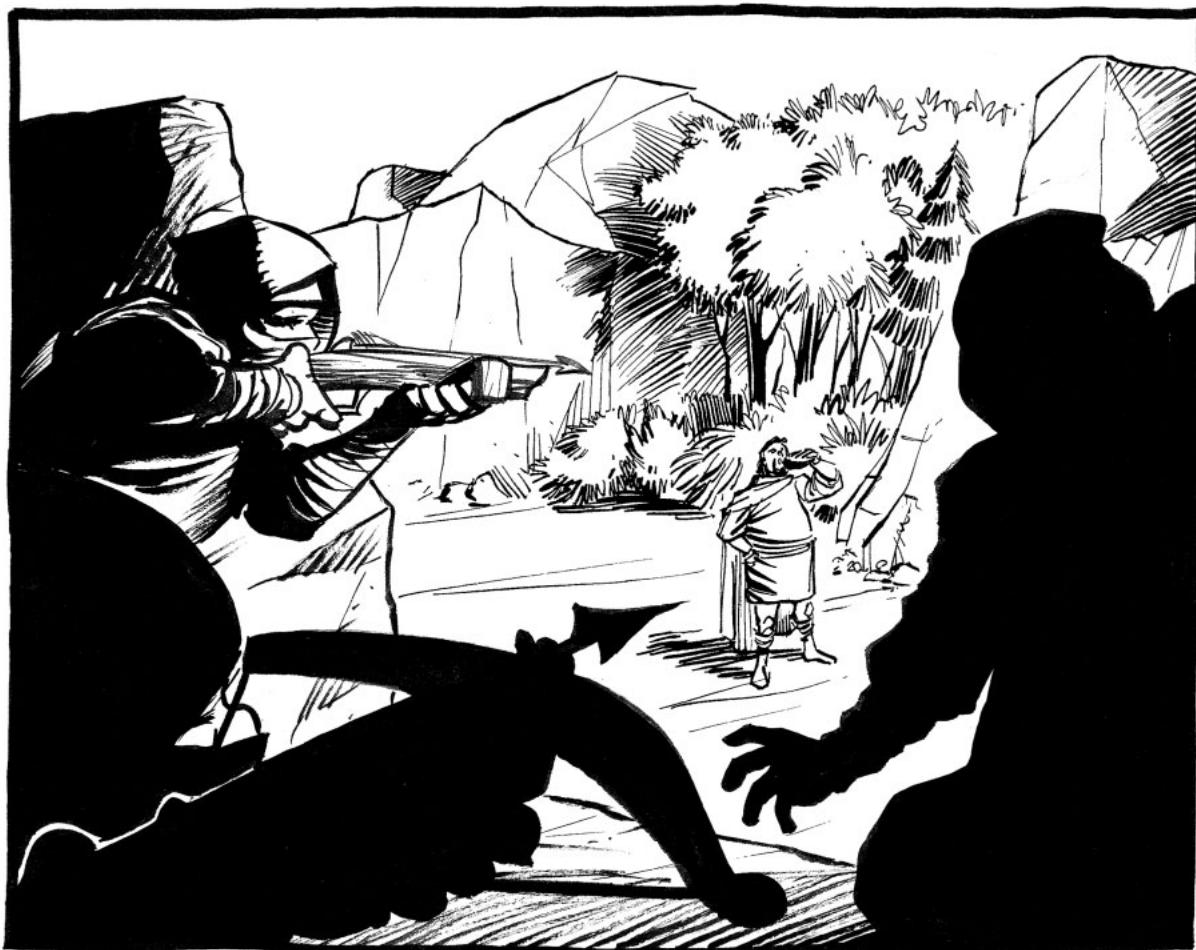
The mercenaries wait until the PCs are forced to pass into a narrow passage between two hills before attacking. The PCs can notice the mercenaries hiding on the hills' slopes with a successful DC 20 Spot check, otherwise they are caught by surprise.

The mercenaries' leader uses a charge of his wand to launch a *web* spell centered on the PCs while the other mercenaries fire with their crossbows. After an initial volley of bolts, four of the mercenaries attempt to block the only two access points — staying out of the spell's area of effect — to trap the PCs inside the passageway. Their allies continue to fire volleys at exposed characters trapped by the *web* or who are not in melee with their comrades.

If the PCs force the block, the mercenaries follow and try to stop them again by using another of the wand's charges.

**Mercenaries' Leader (1):** Male Human, Rogue 4 / Fighter 2; CR 6; SZ Medium; HD 4d6+2d10+6; hp 32; Init +6; Spd 30ft.; AC 15 (+3 +1 leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +6; ATK +8 melee (1d6+2, +1 short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +8 melee (1d6+2, +1 short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); SA Sneak Attack +2d6; AL L/E; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +9, Diplomacy +9, Disable Device +9, Escape Artist +9, Hide +9, Intimidate +5,



Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Ride +6, Search +9, Spellcraft +6, Use Magic Device +8, Use Rope +9; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields; Trap Finding, Evasion, Trap Sense +1; Blind Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus [short sword].

Possessions: 320 gp, 2 golden rings (100 gp each), +1 leather armor, +1 short sword, light crossbow, *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 5), *potion of invisibility* (CL 7), *wand of web* (CL 7) [15 charges].

**Mercenary (9):** Male Human, Warrior 2; CR 1; SZ Medium; HD 2d8; hp 10 each; Init +0; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 16 (+6 splint mail), touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +4; ATK +5 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +2 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will –1; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Intimidate +4, Ride +3, Spot +1, Swim +5 {–9}; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields; Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus [longsword].

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: 2d10 gp, splint mail, longsword, light crossbow, *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 3).

Once their enemies are beaten, the PCs can look at their possessions. In the leader's pocket, they find a note:

*Meet me at the Stuffed Bear when you've done it!*

A.

The Stuffed Bear is a tavern in the hamlet of Gauldark and the PCs, unless they are local and already know it, can easily get this information from almost anyone in Dreikeng or at the Owl Tower. This tavern is, then, the next "station" for the heroes! This conduct is also recommended by Sir Krilmar if the PCs ask his counsel.

Note that even if almost everyone suspects the "A" in the message stands for Alberd, nobody openly gives this information to the PCs.

Note also that this message does not give enough clues to obtain the name of Alberd through divination magic.

## Chapter Awards

For every riddle solved, assign 150 XP to the player that solved it.

# Chapter Four: The Necromancer's Sect

*In which the heroes discover the atrocity behind a terrible pact and free many innocents destined for a terrible death.*

This chapter is structured into three acts. In Act I, the PCs go to the village of Gauldark to meet Alberd, the guild leader, and learn the position of an orc encampment where people are being kept captive. In the second act, the PCs fight the orcs, who are under orders from Ulabius, and discover the captives' final destination is a cottage of bandits. In the last act, they trace the group of bandits who are supposed to deliver the imprisoned humans to Ulabius for his dark experiments and could confront Ulabius himself.

## ACT I

After the ambush, the PCs follow the clue found in the mercenary leader's note to Gauldark. Once in Gauldark, they find the village is almost empty, as usual at this time of the year, since the villagers try to

do as much work as possible before the cruel winter comes and all activities must be stopped. For this reason the Stuffed Boar tavern is nearly empty during the day, and only a few customers are present at night since everybody is too tired to do anything but sleep.

Anyone the PCs meet in the village can show or tell them the location of the tavern (see the Gauldark map at the end of the module). Remember, though, that if the PCs are not local, the villagers' initial reactions are unfriendly.

The tavern is nothing but a wooden structure bigger than the other wooden buildings in its vicinity. The windows are dirty and the overall structure is in desperate need of maintenance. Over the swinging doors leading into the tavern hangs a stuffed head of a huge wild boar. Stuffing pokes out from holes in the animal's leather, as if someone attacked the beast with a sword or dagger. Axe marks scar the tavern's timbers.

If the PCs visit the tavern after sunset, they notice on their approach that only a few voices drift outside.



A fire in the fireplace provides a dim trembling illumination of the building.

When the PCs enter, all activities stop and everyone looks at them askance. Corinda welcomes them and leads them to a separate table while she asks for their drink order. Anyone entering the tavern after the PCs gives them a disgusted look but, otherwise, does nothing to bother them.

At this point, the PCs can start their investigation to find out who Mr. "A." is. In the beginning nobody seems willing to give them any information about this mysterious person; their search seems fruitless. If the PCs stay the night in the tavern, someone knocks on their door that night. The person is gone before they can discover his identity. On the door, affixed by a knife, is a piece of paper on which is written:

*Meet me in two hours at the shrine  
A.*

One of the guild members was in the tavern when the PCs started their investigation and has referred their activities to Alberd. Alberd realized the ambush failed and wants to meet the PCs and hopes to get something good out of it.

Corinda can give the PCs directions to Bablukar's shrines. Since she has grown up in this wild area and has learned the importance of being cautious, she is smart enough not to ask them questions, like why they want to visit an unattended shrine in the middle of the night.

The area around the shrine is completely dark when the PCs arrive and they cannot see anyone. After about half an hour, they hear a voice calling them from the empty area among the houses of this part of the village — on the map this is the area between the shrine and the carver's house. There, they see a hooded man standing, his face impossible to see. This is Alberd. He welcomes the PCs and apologizes for the uncomfortable meeting point, but he claims that "secrecy is important in this business." He tells the PCs he has hidden guards should they make any threatening gestures.

In reality, Alberd is alone. He believes he has a strong position with the PCs and does not expect any trouble. If the PCs threaten his life or force him to reveal his true identity (using magic, for example), he drinks his potion of invisibility and disappears. This means the PCs do not get the vital information they need, this chapter concludes in this way, and the PCs are forced to go to the Owl Tower to get new information. The same applies if the PCs do not follow Alberd's instructions.

Alberd won't give his name, nor will he admit that he organized the ambush on Ulabius's behalf. He

always keeps at least 30 ft. of distance from the PCs so they cannot see his face and speaks in a fake voice to avoid being recognized. These precautions give him a +10 bonus on his Disguise checks if the PCs are local, or otherwise grant that nobody could recognize him from the description the PCs give, on top of the fact that nobody would likely reveal his name anyway for fear of the possible consequences.

If the PCs agree to listen to him, he apologizes for the ambush. Simple a business transaction, he explains. To show his good will, he offers the PCs an important piece of information ... for the right price, of course! For a pouch of 2,000 gp (or gems worth at least 2,500 gp) left in the shrine the following night, he promises they will receive the information they need at the tavern. Alberd won't specify the way the PCs get the information but reassures them that this is vital for their quest and that they will not be disappointed. He will not reduce the price of his services in any way.

If they strike an agreement, the next night, Alberd sends one of his low-level guilders to retrieve the payment.

If the PCs follow Alberd's instructions and do not try to catch the man sent to take the pouch from the shrine, a few minutes before dawn they hear a knock at their door. Corinda hands them a parchment, explaining that she received it from a boy. The rolled parchment is sealed with a black sigil of a crown. This is the guild's symbol. A few people can recognize the symbol, but nobody willingly gives this information to the PCs, other than Sir Krilmor, who might have many questions about the parchment and how the PCs got it.

The parchment shows a map of the area to the North of the Owl tower. A cross is drawn on the hills south of the Eagle Tower remains. On the backside of the map, a note says:

*There you'll find an orc camp where people are held captive*

*Free them and your enemy will be revealed  
A.*

The cross indicates the position of the orcs' encampment where eight humans are kept in a pen. This is marked as area 2 on the map of the Frontier.

The next act of the chapter is about fighting the orcs and freeing the captives.

## ACT 2

The PCs can easily find the orcs' encampment since there are many traces in the area. The encampment is in a small valley at the foot of a hill. All the huts, except those described below, contain crude furniture,

a small chest with 3d10 gp and 5d6 sp, dirty bedding and clothes, the remains of disgusting food and mud. 1d3 orc soldiers live in every hut. The number fluctuates since some of the orcs might be in a mission or scouting around. Therefore, a typical hut has an EL of 2 (1 orc) or 4 (2 or 3 orcs).

**Orc Soldier (1d3 x7);** see also the MM for more details on orcs: Warrior 4; CR 2; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 4d8+4; hp 24; Init +0; SPD 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 padded armor, +1 light wooden shield), touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +7 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe OR warhammer, crit. x3) or +4 ranged (1d6+3, javelin, crit. x2); Full ATK +7 melee (1d8+3, battleaxe OR warhammer, crit. x3) or +4 ranged (1d6+3, javelin, crit. x2); SQ Orc Traits; AL L/E; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 17, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 4; Skills: Climb +7 {+6}, Jump +5 {+4}, Swim +4 {+2}; Feats: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all armors and shields; Power Attack, Cleave.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: 1d8 gp, 1d3 javelin, padded armor, light wooden shield, battleaxe (70% chance) or warhammer (30%).

## Orcish Tactics

The orcs brutally attack anyone entering their encampment. If the fight goes badly for them, the Orc Chieftain and the survivors retreat to the pen (area 4) after dusk or to the cave (area 5) during the day and threaten to kill the captives if the PCs do not surrender.

If the PCs do not surrender, the Orc Chieftain kills one captive per round — while all the other prisoners scream in horror — until he is stopped. The surviving captives might not consider their rescuers favorably if several are killed.

If the PCs surrender, they are thrown in the pen after the orcs remove their armor, arms and magic devices — including divine symbols and musical instruments — and send them to the Chieftain's Hut (area 3 of the map). The PCs share the same fate as the other captives and are forced to work in the mine every day for 14 hours, eating and drinking polluted water and rotting food. For every day of this treatment, the PCs temporarily lose 1d2 points of Constitution, Strength and Dexterity (to a minimum of 3) that can only be recovered after their imprisonment is over with proper food and rest. After 1d4+2 days of imprisonment, if the PCs have not yet found a way to free them and the other prisoners, they are all tied together in a queue and forced to march to the mercenaries hut (see act 3).

## Key Areas of the Orc Encampment

The following descriptions assume the orcs are engaged in their usual occupations inside the camp. Of course, once a fight starts or an alarm is raised, they react promptly. The DM should adjust descriptions according to the events. See the map at the end of the module for an overview of the orc camp and the mine.

### 1. Orc Guards' Hut (EL 2)

This hut is not inhabited and is used as a guard post. Inside, three orcs keep watch and observe activities on the only path leading into the valley. The orcs are not very diligent and anyone cautiously approaching their hut receives a +5 circumstance bonus on her Hide and Move Silently checks. If they notice someone, two of them leave the hut to attack while the third orc rushes to the encampment to alert his comrades. If not stopped, he alerts the whole camp, and all the other orcs arrive at the hut to fight, at different times according to their locations when the alarm is raised.

**Orc Guards (3):** Warrior 2; CR 1; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 2d8; hp 14, 13, 13; Init +0; SPD 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 leather armor), touch 10, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +6; ATK +6 melee (1d8+6, longspear, crit. x3) or +2 ranged (1d6+4, javelin, crit. x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d8+6, longspear, crit. x3) or +2 ranged (1d6+4, javelin, crit. x2); SQ Orc Traits; AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 4; Skills: Climb +7, Jump +5, Swim +5; Feats: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with all armors and shields; Power Attack.

Possessions: 2d6 gp, 1d3 javelin, leather armor, longspear.

If the PCs are not spotted, or if they use some other means of entering the encampment (for example *flying* or *levitating* from the hillside), they can try to dispatch the orcs and free the prisoners without raising an alarm. Make a Listen check for every fight or other noisy action to see if the orcs are alerted by the noise.

### 2. Orc Shaman's Hut (EL 3)

This is the hut of the tribe's shaman. Skulls, necklaces of finger bones, feathers of many common birds, and strange stones inscribed with runes are among the items lying about the room. Hidden among the piles of trash are two small emeralds worth 100 gp each and a potion of *cure light wounds* (CL 3).

The shaman is a very vile and cowardly orc. During the fight, he casts his spells from behind the other orcs. He starts with *bless* and *cause fear*; then he casts *bull's strength* on the Chieftain or one of his lieutenants; finally, he attacks a first-line party member with his scroll of *ray of exhaustion*. If the fight is going



badly and the Orc Chieftain is killed, he casts *mirror image* and retreats to the cave (area 5) to hide behind a big stone. He surrenders if discovered and throws himself at the feet of one of the PCs imploring mercy and licking his/her feet. If the PCs promise to spare his life, he tells them of the chest inside the Orc Chieftain's hut and says the key is in the Chieftain's hands. If asked about the slaves, he says they were donated by a human wizard, that their final destination is a cottage of humans to the east and that a map should be in the Chieftain hut. If forced to fight, he tries to escape before he is killed.

**Gruach, Orc Shaman (1):** Adept 6; CR 3; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 6d6-6; hp 19; Init +6; SPD 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 10; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +5; ATK +7 melee (1d4+4, +2 dagger, crit. 19-20 x2) or +6 ranged (1d4+3, +1 sling, crit. x2); Full ATK +7 melee (1d4+4, +2 dagger, crit. 19-20 x2) or +6 ranged (1d4+3, +1 sling, crit. x2); SQ Orc Traits; AL C/E; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 15; Skills: Handle Animal +5, Knowledge [arcana] +1, Ride +3, Spellcraft +2; Feats: Proficient with all simple weapons; got Animal Empathy instead of the standard Summon Familiar; Improved Initiative, Combat Casting, Dodge.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 12 + spell level):  
3 / 3 / 2

0 — Detect Magic, Guidance, Touch of Fatigue

1st — Bless, Cause Fear, Cure Light Wounds

2nd — Bull's Strength, Mirror Image.

Possessions: +2 dagger, +1 sling, a golden necklace worth 300 gp, 2 silver rings worth 20 gp each, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 7), oil of magic vestment +2, scroll of ray of exhaustion (CL 5).

### 3. Orc Chieftain's Hut (EL 9)

This hut is the biggest one and the least dirty of all the other huts. The Orc Chieftain lives here, protected by his two lieutenants. A locked chest inside the hut holds 250 gp, 400 sp and a suit of human-sized +2 leather armor. The chieftain has the key.

**Wooden Chest:** Hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 18, Open Lock DC 20.

If the PCs surrendered, their gear is also here. A scroll case lies in the corner of the hut (Search DC 10). It contains a parchment showing the location of the bandits' cottage (see act 3).

**Dagoth, Orc Chieftain (1):** Barbarian 8; CR 8; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 8d12+24; hp 84; Init +1; SPD 40 ft. {30 ft.}; AC 18 (+7 +2 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base ATK / GRP +8 /

+14; ATK +17 {+19} melee (2d6+9 {+12}, +2 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +17 / +12 {+19} / +14} melee (2d6+9 {+12}, +2 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2); SA Rage 3 / day; SQ Orc Traits, DR 1 / — ; AL C/E; SV Fort +12, Ref +6, Will +3 {+2}; Str 22 {26}, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 6 {4}, Wis 6 {4}, Cha 12 {10}; Skills: Climb +11 {+10}, Intimidate +6 {+5}, Jump +11 {+10}, Ride +5, Swim +9 {+5}; Feats: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armors and with all shields; Fast Movement, Improved Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus [greatsword].

{stat} are the stats when the talisman of the orc blood is donned (see New Items appendix) and considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: *talisman of the orc blood*, +2 greatsword, +2 chainmail, 2 golden necklace worth 300 and 200 gp respectively, 2 golden bracelet worth 150 gp each, *cloak of resistance* +3 (stats already consider it worn), *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 7), *potion of haste* (CL 5).

Dagoth is a colossal orc, incredibly muscled and completely covered with scars. He was once the leader of a powerful tribe of orcs in the North. In his desire of conquest, he stepped on the feet of many other orc leaders and was finally defeated by a coalition of three armies. His power collapsed and only a few orcs followed him after this defeat, among them, his two lieutenants and the shaman. Dagoth now seeks a way to exact revenge and he knows that if he needs to raise an army he needs a lot of money. For this reason, he sees the alliance with Ulabius and the excavation in the mine (see below) favorably.

**Kraznak and Kralisaar, Orc Lieutenants (2):** Barbarian 4; CR 4; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 4d12+12; hp 48, 44; Init +0; SPD 40 ft.; AC 16 (+4 +1 studded leather armor, +2 heavy wooden shield), touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +8 melee (1d8+4, +1 battleaxe, crit. x3); Full ATK +8 melee (1d8+4, +1 battleaxe, crit. x3); SQ Orc Traits; SA Rage 2 / day; AL N/E; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 10; Skills: Climb +7 {+5}, Intimidate +6, Jump +7 {+5}, Ride +4, Survival +6, Swim +7 {+3}; Feats: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armors and with all shields; Fast Movement, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; Power Attack, Cleave.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: 3d10 gp, a golden necklace worth 150 gp, +1 studded leather armor, +1 battleaxe, heavy wooden shield.

During a fight, the Lieutenants move forward to stop any menace for the first couple of rounds during which the Chieftain drinks his *potion of haste*, rages

and then enter melee at full speed, using Power Attack on anyone on his path.

If the Chieftain is caught alive, he does not willingly reveal anything to the PCs and threatens them to free him otherwise “the wizard will kill them all.” The lieutenants and the other orcs (except the shaman) do not speak Common. If PCs find a way to communicate with them, they do not give out much information unless the PCs threaten to kill them. They are not aware of the whole agreement between their chieftain and Ulabius, but they know the position of the bandits’ cottage and can tell the PCs that other people have been conducted there before.

#### 4. Pen of the Slaves (EL —)

This is the pen where the captives are held when they are not working in the cave. There are a few muddy straw piles used as mattresses, a wooden bucket that contains muddy water to drink and a steel bucket with rotting food, the remains of the orcs’ meals. The pen is surrounded by a barrier of trunks tied together with ropes and long nails

**5 ft. Length of Wooden Barrier:** Hardness 5, hp 30, Break DC 20.

Normally the orcs do not keep guards at the pen since the “weak humans have no way to escape.” Therefore, there is only a 1-in-6 chance every turn that an orc notices attempts to hamper, break or otherwise damage the barrier. Digging is not feasible without magical means because the soil is hardened by the freezing temperature.

The prisoners are exhausted and not much help to the PCs. They have never seen Ulabius before and have only heard that they will soon be transferred to another place, but they do not know why. If freed, the prisoners thank the PCs and try to arrange an expedition to reach the Owl Tower, plundering the orcs’ encampment of everything they think could be helpful during their travel. Any help from the PCs, for example an escort to the tower, is gratefully accepted.

#### 5. The Cave (EL 1)

During the day, the prisoners work in this cave harshly spurred by two orc guards. The guards have received the order of controlling the prisoners and not to leave the cave if not ordered so from the chieftain himself. At night, the two guards sleep inside the cave and all the tools are orderly aligned on one of the cave walls. The guards’ possessions are hidden on their bodies to avoid someone stealing them.

**Orc Cave Guards (2):** Barbarian 1; CR 1; SZ Medium; Humanoid (Orc); HD 1d12+1; hp 13, 13; Init -2; SPD 40 ft.; AC 9 (+1 padded armor, -2 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 9; Base ATK / GRP +1 / +6; ATK +6 melee (1d10+7, Halberd, crit. x3) OR +6 melee (1d8+5, battleaxe, crit. x3); Full ATK +6 melee

(1d10+7, Halberd, crit. x3) OR +6 melee (1d8+5, battleaxe, crit. x3); SQ Orc Traits; SA Rage 1 / day; AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref -2, Will +0; Str 20, Dex 6, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6; Skills: Climb +9, Jump +9, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +9; Feats: Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armors and with all shields; Fast Movement; Power Attack.

Possessions: 1d6 gp, padded armor, halberd, battleaxe.

### The Secret of the Cave

The orcs believe they can find emeralds inside the cave. Ulabiush tricked the orcs by hiding several small emeralds inside the cave and then donating the "rich mine" to them in exchange for all the workers too exhausted to continue their work. The orcs, after finding the first gems, set their camp and started the exchange on a regular basis. The orcs enslave their human victims in the nearby hills and forest but many of their workers are usually hobgoblins or captured orcs from other bands. One of Ulabiush's bandits bought the current group of humans in a slave market to the South and donated them to the orcs, who were growing suspicious after no more emeralds were found after the first ones.

## ACT 3

One way or another, the PCs have learned of the bandits' cottage and its location and, unless they end up there as captives, now it is time to confront them. Note that even if Sir Krilmar is informed of these criminals, he has no soldiers to spare after reports of increased orc activity in the hills reach his ears. He needs all his people to patrol them. He would be very pleased, though, if the PCs take care of it!

Once the PCs know of the cottage, they can find it easily enough. About a half mile from the cottage, a path of hardened soil leads to the hills and the bandits' refuge. The following descriptions assume the PCs approach the cottage from the path.

### Key Areas of the Cottage

See the Bandits' Cottage Map at the end of the module for an overview of the bandits' hut.

#### 1. Sentry (EL 4)

Two sentinels are always on the lookout in this area. During the night, they use a bullseye lanthorn to spot approaching people.

If the orcs escorted the PCs here with the other prisoners, the two sentinels take them and tie them to the surrounding fence with a rope. The rope has a Break DC of 16 or can be untied with an Escape Artist check opposed by the Use Rope skill result of the bandits. If the PCs get free, they can try to surprise the sentinels before they can raise an alarm or try to sneak inside the house to "take care" of the other bandits.

If the PCs are not arriving as prisoners, the sentinels are normally quite bored and inattentive, giving a +4 circumstance bonus on the Hide and Move Silently checks of cautious people approaching them. The DM should keep in mind bonuses and penalties to the sentries' Listen and Spot checks according to the actions and noises of the PCs. If the PCs are spotted or heard, the sentinels run into the house shouting an alarm. All the bandits fire volleys of bolts from the windows. This way, they get 3/4 of the usual total cover bonus (+6 to AC and +3 to Reflex saves); the PCs can find cover behind the fence to gain the usual cover bonus (+4 to AC and +2 to Reflex saves).

**Menwyn and Arendel, Sentinels (2):** Female Half-elf, Warrior 2 / Rogue 1; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+1d6-3; hp 15, 13; Init +1; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 16 (+5 elven chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +3; ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, +1 longsword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +3 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +4 melee (1d8+2, +1 longsword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +3 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); SQ Half-elf traits; SA Sneak Attack +1d6; AL C/N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will -2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills and Feats: Climb +4 {+2}, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +5, Jump +4 {+2}, Listen +5, Search +3, Spot +5; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields; Trap finding; Alertness, Quick Draw.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: 2d10 gp, elven chainmail, +1 longsword, heavy crossbow, potion of cure light wounds (CL 3).

The two half-elf sisters are incredibly beautiful, with long black hair and blue eyes. They have a strange spark in their icy eyes that causes anybody who sees it to feel a tremor in his legs. They come from an elven village in one of the widest forests in the South. Their elven parents raised them, but they always felt like they were out of place at home. Once they reached maturity, they escaped from the village, stealing two sets of armor. They became mercenaries, fighting with many armies until they met Shem (see below); for the first time they felt like they found their true home...

## 2. Trough (EL —)

There are two horses tied to the fence and two complete sets of saddles and harnesses are ready in case of need. The water inside the trough is clear and fresh, showing that it is changed frequently.

Inside the trough, covered by the algae that grows on the bottom (Spot DC 25, Search DC 15), there is a golden ring with a black sapphire crafted to resemble a skull. Uladius lost the ring during a previous visit. It is worth 800 gp. The two horses can be readied in three rounds to be ridden.

## 3. Waiting Room (EL 8 or — at night)

This room is simply furnished with a table, six chairs and a huge fireplace. The room has two doors that open to the outside and two that give access to the other cottage rooms.

During the day, the bandits sit here to play cards and dice, drink and chat. See area 4 and 5 for the bandits' stats. The doors are of simple wood and have no lock.

**Doors:** Hardness 5, hp 10.

There is nothing of interest in the room.

## 4. Bandits' Room (EL — or 4 at night)

There are two bunk beds in this room and two chests at the feet of them. Two windows provide illumination during the day and a suspended oil lantern does it at night. If the party enters the room during the day or the PCs have already dispatched the bandits, they find that the beds are not made and the covers are twisted and thrown on a side. Otherwise, two bandits are sleeping here. The door is not properly oiled and makes noise if opened. Check if the bandits hear the PCs if they try to enter the room assigning bonus or penalty according to their actions. In the chests, not locked, there are changes and 3d10 sp each.

**Bandits (2):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Fighter 1; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+1d10; hp 18, 16; Init +1; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 18 (+6 banded mail, +1 light wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +6; ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 4, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +6 {–1}, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +6 {–1}, Ride +5; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields; Power Attack, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Mounted Combat.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

**Possessions:** 2d8 gp, banded mail, light wooden shield, short sword, light crossbow.

## 5. Bandits' Leader Room (EL — or 7 at night)

This room is almost identical to that of area 4 with a few minor differences. The leader uses this room together with some of his companions. A dirty white bear skin is laid behind one of the window but it is too damaged to have any value. One of the two chests is locked and the key is carried by the group leader. It contains changes of clothes, a +1 longsword, 180 gp and a silver necklace worth 50 gp. The chest has also a hidden compartment that can be found with a DC 20 Search check. Inside the compartment, there is a potion of fly (CL 5) and a pouch with two emeralds worth 250 gp each and two rubies worth 500 gp each.

**Locked Chest:** Hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18 and Open Lock DC 25.

The other chest is open and contains only dirty clothes.

**Shem, Bandits' Leader (1):** Male Human, Rogue 6; CR 6; SZ Medium; HD 6d6–6; hp 18; Init +7; Spd 30ft.; AC 17 (+4 +2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +3; ATK +4 melee (1d6, +1 short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, +1 shortbow, crit. x3) OR 1d6+2 non lethal damage + sleep with sleep arrows, DC 11 Will save negates; Full ATK +4 melee (1d6, +1 short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d6+1, +1 shortbow, crit. x3) OR 1d6+2 non lethal damage + sleep with sleep arrows, DC 11 Will save negates; SA Sneak Attack +3d6; AL N/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +8, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 16.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +13, Bluff +9, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +11, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +10, Move Silently +9, Open Lock +9, Sleight of Hand +13, Tumble +9, Use Rope +11, Use Magic Device +10; Agile, Deceitful, Deft Hands, Improved Initiative; Trap finding, Evasion, Trap Sense +2, Uncanny Dodge; Proficient with all simple weapons, with hand crossbow, rapier and shortbow, and with light armors.

**Possessions:** 300 gp, two ear-rings worth 300 gp, +1 short sword, +2 leather armor, +1 shortbow, potion of cure light wounds (CL 5), 4 arrows of sleep, potion of eagle's splendor (CL 5), scroll of command undead (CL 5).

Shem is a short slender man, with long brown hair and black beady eyes. He is a member of the local guild, the Silver Crown. He lusts for power and has arranged an agreement with Uladius regarding Alberd, the guild leader. He hopes to gain enough gold and power to organize a revolt and depose Alberd and become the new guild leader. Unbeknownst to him, Alberd has been informed of this by one of his spies. Alberd has decided not to intervene immediately hoping to better utilize this information. That is

why he revealed the position of the orcish camp to the party: he enrolled the PCs to dispose of Shem! When Shem sees the party he immediately realizes that he has been betrayed and, even if he cannot be sure that Alberd is behind it, he never goes back to the guild if he survives the fight.

**Bandits (3):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Fighter 1; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+1d10; hp 18, 16, 16; Init +1; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 18 (+6 banded mail, +1 light wooden shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +6; ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will –2; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 4, Cha 14.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +6 {–1}, Handle Animal +6, Intimidate +6, Jump +6 {–1}, Ride +5; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields; Power Attack, Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Mounted Combat.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

**Possessions:** 2d8 gp, banded mail, light wooden shield, short sword, light crossbow.

If the fight is going bad for the bandits, Shem tries to escape using the horses tied in the back of the house. If he succeeds to escape, he tries to alert Ulabius before he goes to the hut. He is not going to Ulabius' stronghold, though, since he is not aware of its exact position. He tries to intercept Ulabius on the path along the river. If the party finds a way to follow him, the PCs can catch him while meeting Ulabius (see below for his tactics in the fight if this occurs).

## What now?

If any of the bandits — except the leader — is caught alive, he can be convinced to collaborate in exchange for his life. He tells the party all he knows about the agreement with the orcs and the dark, crazy experiments that Ulabius is doing. The bandits are not aware of the existence of Ulabius' stronghold and they only know that he and their leader transport the prisoners to the entrance of the forest and then Ulabius continues alone. He has threatened to torture to death anyone that would dare following him and the bandits are afraid of him. If one of the PCs succeeds in an Intimidate check (DC 23), the bandits reveal that Ulabius is supposed to arrive at the cottage in the next days, though they are not sure of the precise time. If the bandits' leader is caught alive, he will not willingly say anything to the party and, instead, he spits obscure threats of revenge that will be exacted by Ulabius and the God of Death. If magically forced or tortured, he reveals that Ulabius is a member of a sect that is trying to revive a death god but he

does not know more since he is not part of this sect. If forced to reveal where they take the prisoners, a fire trap symbol painted on his torso explodes killing him instantly but otherwise not inflicting any damage to other targets around him. If the PCs learned of the coming of Ulabius, they can wait for him and try to ambush him once he arrives. The ambush must be really well prepared since Ulabius is a very smart man and may easily notice that something is not as it should be at the cottage.

Ulabius arrives in 1d4 days (without his familiar bat) and is not afraid to fight because he knows that his clone is waiting for his soul in the lab (see Chapter 7 for more information about the clone). Ulabius' full description is presented in the NPC Appendix but during this encounter his stats are the following:

**Ulabius:** Male Human, Wizard 11; CR 11; SZ Medium; HD 11d4+11; hp 44; Init +6; Spd 30ft.; AC 16 (+2 bracers of armor +2, +2 ring of protection +2, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +5; ATK +6 melee (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); AL C/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 17.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +11, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge [arcana] +18, Knowledge [local] +10, Knowledge [religion] +9, Knowledge [the planes] +15, Listen +9, Search +7, Spellcraft +20, Spot +9; Brew Potion, Alertness, Improved Initiative, Craft Wondrous Items, Silent Spell, Summon Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Craft Wands, Craft Rods; Proficient with club, dagger heavy and light crossbow and quarterstaff.

### Spells Prepared

(save DC 15 + spell level) 4 / 6 / 5 / 5 / 4 / 3 / 1

0 — *Disrupt Undead, Resistance, Detect Magic, Read Magic*

1st — *Shield, Detect Secret Doors, Hypnotism, Shocking Grasp (x2), Chill Touch*

2nd — *Protection from Arrows, See Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Ghoul Touch, Mirror Image*

3rd — *Phantom Steed, Summon Monster III, Mirror Image<sup>s</sup>, Invisibility<sup>s</sup>, Vampiric Touch*

4th — *Lesser Globe of Invulnerability, Wall of Fire, Animate Dead, Fear*

5th — *Enervation<sup>s</sup>, Waves of Fatigue, Seeming*

6th — *Circle of Death*

<sup>s</sup> stands for Silent Spell.

**Possessions:** medallion of the shield guardian, +1 dagger, potion of haste (CL 9), potion of fly (CL 11), ring of protection +2, bracers of armor +2, scroll of hold person (CL 8), scroll of ghoul touch (CL 5), a pouch with 500 gp that were intended to be given to the bandits as

salary, a silver belt crafted in a very intricate pattern (worth 250 gp) and 2 golden rings with a topaz inset (worth 300 gp each).

Unless caught completely by surprise, Ulabius casts *resistance*, *shield*, *protection from arrows*, *mirror image* and *lesser globe of invulnerability*, then *summon monster III* and readies himself for the battle. During the fight he sends forth his summoned monsters (just in case, he can also *animate dead*) and casts *fear* and *waves of fatigue*; from a distance. Then he uses *spectral hand* to deliver his touch attacks before closing for melee. If Ulabius is killed, his soul is immediately transported to his lab and the clone becomes alive. Ulabius should not be caught alive! This is vital for the rest of the campaign so it is important that the DM avoid this event in any way.

Ulabius could also decide to “escape” if things are getting tough for the party: he is happy of having tested their power and does not want to risk his own life; this makes for a perfect escape hatch. In any case, the fight must be concluded with either the death of Ulabius or his escape (maybe using *invisibility* and his *potion of fly*). At this point, there is not much left for the PCs; they have but a few choices:

- First, if they arrived with the other prisoners, they can escort them to the Owl Tower or Dreikeng. And if they have not killed all the bandits, they can deliver them to Sir Krilmar for judgment.
- They can go to Alberd hoping to get more information but they do not receive any.
- They can try to find the stronghold or other members of the cult, a desperate attempt in the best case.
- The best course of action is to go back to the Owl Tower and report their findings to the lord. There, they learn of the abandoned temple and chapter 5 starts.

## Chapter Awards

For every captive freed assign an award of 50 XP to the players. If the PCs did their best to free them all and at least five have been saved, the news spread and the reaction towards the party in the Frontier shifts of one step towards friendly. The same applies if the party escorted them to a village or to the Owl Tower. In the latter case, the lord also compensates them with 500 gp. For any bandit delivered to justice assign 50 XP to the players. To learn of Ulabius’ arrival at the cottage assign 500 XP.

# Chapter Five: The Abandoned Temple

*In which the heroes find the location of other enemies and recover another magic sphere.*

After having dealt with the orcs and the bandits, and maybe even fought with Ulabius, the party finds itself in a dead-end. The PCs know that Ulabius has a stronghold somewhere but they do not know its exact location. They also need to recover the other spheres but they have no clue where to begin looking.

At this point, the PCs might want to research information about Ulabius' stronghold or the missing spheres. Unless they are very lucky, though, this research leads nowhere. The best course of action is to go back to the Owl Tower and report their results so far to Sir Krilmar (see also the chapter awards paragraph of previous chapter).

At the tower, the party can get the following information from the sages:

- The lord's sages have discovered in some very old tomes and parchments clues that indicate the enemy they are fighting is possibly a secret sect that is trying to free an imprisoned evil god defeated by the Sacred Gold Sword Order long ago.
- To free their god, the sect needs all six spheres. This will allow them to open a portal to the planar prison where the god is bound.
- In an ancient chronicle, an old map is found that shows the location of an abandoned temple to this god.

The DM may also want to prepare a handout of the map with the location of the temple. Of course, the PCs could simply find the old temple by chance, but that is highly unlikely.

Eventually the PCs will travel to the Sternwood forest in the vicinity (about 10 miles away) of the temple. During day and night, the area is patrolled by two drow patrol groups. Check every hour if one of these patrols notices the party (40% chance). Include any appropriate modifiers based on the actions of the PCs and the precautions they take. If the PCs come at night and they start a fire or use torches, they are automatically spotted.

If the party is spotted, the patrol follows the PCs for a while to study their strengths, but tries to avoid contact. The PCs can attempt a Spot check opposed by the Hide check result of the drow once per 10 minutes. If the drow are not noticed, one goes back to the temple alerting the high priestess while the others try to pick off stragglers. If noticed, the drow engage while one blows a horn to alert the temple.

**Drow patroller (2 x4):** Male Elf (Drow), Warrior 2; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+2; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 17 (+5 chainmail, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +4; ATK +5 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d6+2, short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +4 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); SQ: Drow traits; AL N/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 11.

**Skills and Feats:** Listen +4, Spot +4, Search +5, Jump +5 {1}; Weapon Focus [short sword]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with hand crossbow, and with all armors and shields.

\* Drow venom: DC 13 Fortitude save or unconscious for 1 minute; afterwards another save or unconscious for 2d4 hours.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

**Possessions:** short sword, hunting horn, hand crossbow, 2 doses of venom, masterwork chainmail, 1d3 gp.

Once the party arrives in front of the temple, a vaguely hexagonal structure that dominates an elevated cleared area of the forest can be seen. The structure is about 15 ft. high with pinnacles that reach at least 40 ft. A double door made of a strange black metal is the only entrance to the construction. Carved over the door are many glyphs. On one-half of the building, the one opposite the doors, there are two windows, all of them composed of smoked glass in strange geometric patterns.

The pinnacles are composed of a dark red stone that contrasts with the gray stone used for the rest of the building. They look like bloody fingers that point towards the sky. At the top of the pinnacles are glass domes to allow the light to enter the temple. In the center of the structure there is a bigger dome, about 50 ft. in diameter and 30 ft. high.

The air around the temple is silent, still, and no leaf moves. No animal noises can be heard. The windows, including the glass domes, have no handles, so they cannot be normally opened, they are however made of non-magical (e.g. fragile) glass. The geometric patterns on them are only decorations, with no particular function.

**Windows:** Hardness 3, hp 10, Break DC 16.

Unless otherwise noted, all the doors inside the temple are made of light wood and are not locked.

**Temple Doors:** Hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18.

The walls of the temple are of masonry and the floor is made of flagstone, the underground level is roughly cut stones and the floor is uneven. Exceptions are the magic wooden bridge (see area 11) and the sphere room (area 12).

## Key Areas of the Temple

See the Forgotten Temple Map at the end of the module for a map of the temple. The following descriptions are given assuming no alarm was raised. If the temple is expecting attack, all the inhabitants join the fight, and the DM needs to adjust the descriptions accordingly.

### Ground Level

#### 1. Entrance (EL —)

These double doors are made of a meteoritic black iron, donated to its followers by the god Zailhess.

**Meteoritic Doors:** Hardness 15, hp 50, Break DC 35, Push Open DC 28.

The glyphs on the doors have since long lost their magical powers and do not present any threat. The doors are magically locked to anyone that is not a priest of Zailhess. This magic cannot be overcome by any mortal means, but the doors can be pushed open with a DC 28 Strength check; up to 4 characters can help each other, with a +2 aid bonus (or the Strength

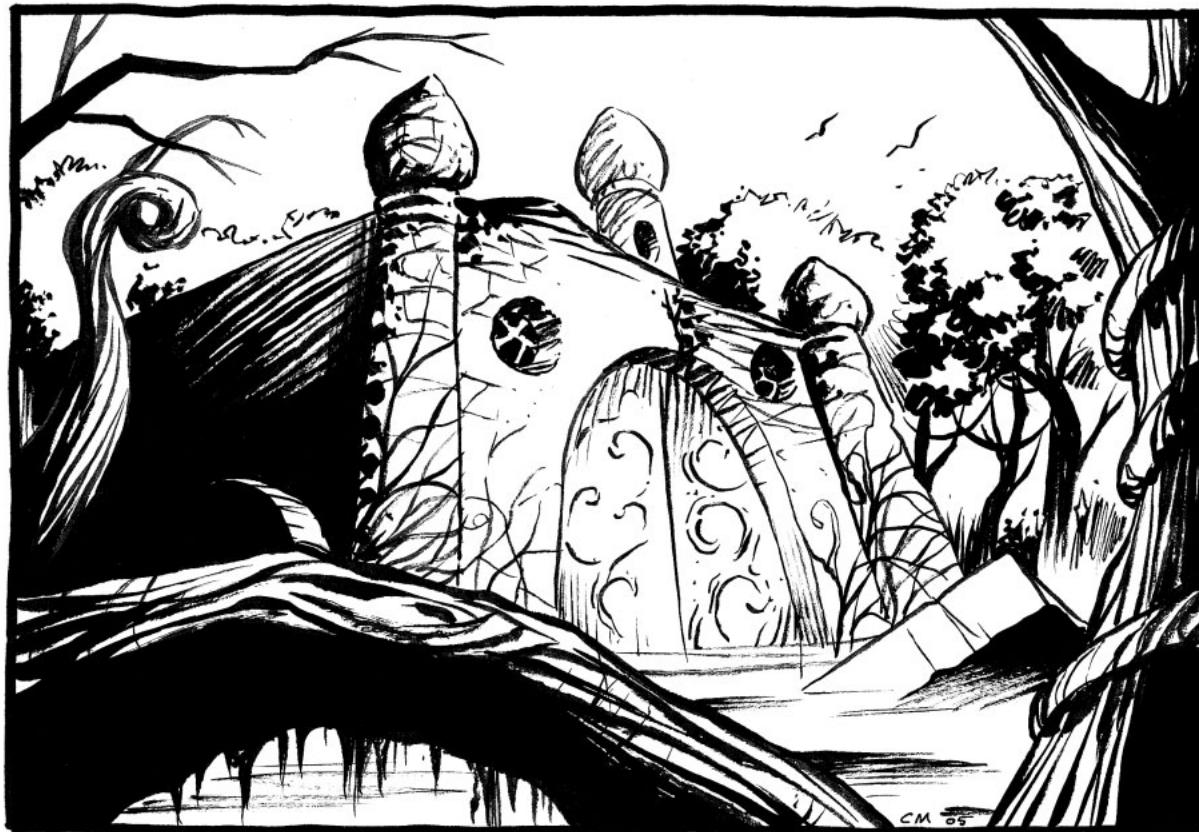
bonus, if higher) added for every helper to the roll of the one with the highest Strength.

Note that opening the doors does not automatically alert the drow unless the patrols have already alerted them. In normal conditions there is only a 20% chance that someone is in the area 2 (see below) and notices the opening of the doors.

#### 2. Unhallowed Room (usually EL 8)

This huge room is hexagonal and under the effect of an *unhallow* spell cast by Falthasala, the high priestess. The spell is centered on the altar. The additional spell effects that she chose for the current year are *invisibility purge* on the statue and *bless* on the altar; this way, anyone entering the temple from the doors is subject to the *invisibility purge* effect while drow fighting close to the altar benefit from the *bless* effect. The area of effect for the spell is a 40 ft. radius, meaning that two narrow corridors on both the west and east sides of the room are not affected by the spell.

Unless the temple is alarmed, this room is likely empty. During the day the room is almost always unoccupied, except for the occasional drow using it to pray, to go to another area of the temple, or to exit the temple for their missions (5% chance of each, 1d4 drow present). At night, the room is only used on special occasions to celebrate a particular rite to Zailhess (5% chance of almost everyone living here present).



The room is covered in shadows, and four braziers emit a faint illumination and fill the room with an acrid smell. Twelve black pillars, disposed in a sort of V-shape, support the roof. A colossal statue stands on the altar, its head inside one of the domes. Because of the low illumination and of its position, it is difficult to properly discern the details of the statue. It appears as an obese humanoid with a horned skull in the place of the head. The statue is made of a red stone with black lines that resemble veins.

Under the biggest dome, more or less in the center of the room, there is a huge altar of black and silver stone covered with horrible gargoyle carvings. Over the altar, there are two massive golden chandeliers with nine black candles each that emit a dim purple light. There are also wooden doors on the east, north and west sides.

If the temple is alerted, in front of the altar there are the Captain and the adepts while 1d4-1 patrols (use same stats as above) have taken place on the sides of it. Behind the altar stands the High Priestess.

The dimness of this room creates a -4 penalty to Spot checks for anyone but the drow and characters with the darkvision or low-light vision ability.

The drow soldiers start the fight with volleys of poisoned bolts before closing for melee. The Captain casts *mage armor* and *true strike* before attacking in melee. The adepts remain in front of the altar casting their spells and protecting the High Priestess as necessary. The High Priestess casts *animate dead* followed by *mass enlarge undead*, to protect herself while casting her other spells. Typical sequence (modified by the party's actions) would be: *cause fear* (x2) and *hold person* on the first line of the party, then *flame strike* and *slay living* on spell-users, finally *mass inflict light wounds*, on any survivors.

The statistics of the drow are given in their respective areas while those of the High Priestess are in the NPC appendix.

Note the position of the two traps. The drow know the locations and avoid them. An attentive character is allowed a DC 15 Wisdom check to notice their peculiar movements understand that they are avoiding certain areas of the room. Anyone stepping on one of the tiles connected to one of the traps triggers it and a volley of twelve poisoned darts from hidden holes in the six columns on the same side of the trap. The columns, in fact, have hollow parts where two crossbows are set, loaded with poisoned darts. A wire connects all the crossbows and the floor tiles that trigger the trap. A DC 28 Search check reveals the hidden holes on the columns while another one against DC 17 allows noticing the hidden doors behind any pillar that are used to re-load the crossbows.

**Hidden Crossbows Trap:** CR 6; mechanical device; touch trigger; manual reset; 12x Atk +10 ranged (1d8 + poison\*, dart); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 20.

\* Drow Venom: DC 13 Fortitude save or unconscious for 1 minute; afterwards another save or unconscious for 2d4 hours.

### 3. Adepts Room (EL 6)

This room is furnished with two beds, two cupboards that contain spare clothes, two chests containing other personal belongings of the adepts (including 2d20 gp), two chairs and a small library with only a few books written in drow (of no value).

The two adepts that live in this room spend their time here when they are not busy with various other activities in the temple. Their lizard familiars follow them most of the time, otherwise these sleep over the shelves of the library.

**Drow Adept (2):** Female Elf (Drow), Adept 2 / Cleric 2; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 2d6+2d8; hp 23,20; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 18 (+4 chain shirt, +1 light wooden shield, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +2 / +1; ATK +6 melee (1d8, +1 heavy mace, crit. x2) or +5 ranged (1d4-1, sling, crit. x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d8, +1 heavy mace, crit. x2) or +5 ranged (1d4-1, sling, crit. x2); SQ: Drow traits; AL C/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +2 {+0}, Concentration +7, Heal +7, Knowledge [religion] +5, Listen +4, Spot +4, Search +3, Spellcraft +7; Aura, Summon Familiar, Rebuke Undead; Proficient with all simple weapons, rapier, short sword and hand crossbow, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Adept Spells Prepared

(save DC 12 + spell level): 3 / 2

0 — *Ghost Sound, Touch of Fatigue* (x2)

1st — *Cause Fear, Sleep*

Cleric Spells Prepared

(save DC 12 + spell level): 4 / 3+1

0 — *Guidance, Inflict Minor Wounds* (x2), *Resistance*

1st — *Bane, Cause Fear, Cause Fear<sup>D</sup>, Summon Monster I*

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell.

Possessions: chain shirt, +1 heavy mace, light wooden shield, *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 5), and a sling with 20 bullets.

**Familiar Lizard (2):** CR 1/3; SZ Tiny; Animal (magical beast); HD 2; hp 11; Init +2; SPD 20ft., Climb 20ft.; AC 15 (+2 size, +1 natural, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +2 / -10; ATK Bite +4 melee (1d4-4); Full ATK Bite +4 melee (1d4-4); Space / Reach 2 1/2 ft./0 ft.; SA — ; SQ

Low-light vision, Alertness, Improved Evasion, Share Spells, Empathic Link; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 2; Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +10, Listen +3, Spot +3; Feats: Weapon Finesse.

See the MM and the PHB for more on lizards and familiars.

#### 4. High Priestess Room (EL II)

This room is luxurious compared to the rest of the temple. The bed is oversized for drow standards and covered with black satin. At the foot of the bed there is a locked chest that contains two changes of clean robes and two silver necklaces worth 300 and 400 sp respectively. The pendants on these necklaces are of black stones and resemble a spider and a skull.

**Wooden Chest:** Hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 22, Open Lock DC 25.

The cupboard is also locked and contains simple cookware and clothing. Among them, there are two spider silk robes worth 50 gp and a leather pouch containing two small emeralds worth 300 gp each.

**Wooden Cupboard:** Hardness 5, hp 20, Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 20.

The other half of the room contains a library with religion treatises written in drow and with no special value, a workbench with alchemical equipment and substances (the equipment is worth 500 gp), a wooden desk and a leather armchair.

The high priestess spends most of her time here when she is not busy celebrating some rituals or is meditating in the Silence Room (see area 8).

The stats of the priestess are in the NPC Appendix.

#### 5a. and 5b. Stairs Rooms (EL 5)

These two round rooms contain stone spiral stairs that lead to the temple underground level. The windows are painted with images of spiders, and the chests below them are completely empty (but trapped!). The traps activate when at least a weight of 60 pounds is placed over the floor stones. The fireball explodes in the middle of the room.

**Fireball Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

#### 6. Dining Room (EL —)

In the middle of this room, there is a long rectangular table and chairs. On one side of room is a window that lights the room and an empty bookshelf. The room is otherwise empty. This is the room used by the temple inhabitants to consume their meals. There is nothing of interest in it.

#### 7. Sleeping Room (EL varies)

The drow soldiers use this room to sleep and cook their meals. This is where they spend their free time and train. When not patrolling, they are likely here. At all times, 1d4–1 patrols are present in the room (see above for the drow soldiers stats), and the Drow Captain is here 50% of the time, unless an alarm has been raised, or if a celebration is in progress.

There are bunks with chests at their feet, a fireplace and stools all around the room.

In the chests at the feet of the beds, there are some changes of clothes and the modest possessions of the soldiers. All the chests are locked and contain valueless gear and 1d6 gp each.

**Wooden Chests:** Hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 18, Open Lock DC 20.

The bed in front of the fireplace is that of the captain. The chest contains a spellbook with all the spells he knows, 75 gp, a warhammer, a hand crossbow, a silver ring worth 25 gp and a leather pouch containing 5 small rubies worth 100 gp.

**Wooden Chest:** Hardness 6, hp 13, Break DC 23, Open Lock DC 25.

The captain's familiar, a black cat called Amoden, is lying on top of the bed (90% of the time).

**Drow Captain (1):** Male Elf (Drow), Fighter 3 / Wizard 2; CR 6; SZ Medium; HD 3d10+2d4+5; hp 26; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 16 (+3 +1 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +9 melee (1d8+4, +1 warhammer, crit. x3) or +7 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +9 melee (1d8+4, +1 warhammer, crit. x3) or +7 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); SQ: Drow traits; AL N/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 6, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +8, Concentration +6, Decipher Script +9, Intimidate +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +8, Search +8, Spellcraft +9, Spot +2; Summon Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Weapon Focus [warhammer]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

\* Drow venom: DC 13 Fortitude save or unconscious for 1 minute; afterwards another save or unconscious for 2d4 hours.

##### Spells Known

0 — Resistance, Acid splash, Detect poison, Detect magic, Read magic, Dancing lights, Light, Touch of fatigue

1st — Shocking grasp, Color spray, Shield, Mage armor, Identify, True strike, Burning hands

##### Typical Spells Prepared

(save DC 14 + spell level): 4 / 3

0 — Acid splash, Light, Detect magic, Touch of fatigue

1st — Mage armor, True strike, Shocking grasp.

Possessions: +1 leather armor, +1 warhammer, hand crossbow with 6 poisoned darts, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 5), a silver medallion with a black stone pendant crafted as a spider (worth 200 gp).

**Amoden, Familiar Black Cat (1):** CR 1/6; SZ Tiny; Animal (magical beast); HD 2; hp 13; Init +2; SPD 30ft.; AC 15 (+2 size, +1 natural, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +4 / -8; ATK Claw +6 melee (1d2-4); Full ATK 2 claws +6 melee (1d2-4) and bite +1 melee (1d3-4); Space / Reach 2 1/2 ft. / 0 ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, Scent, Alertness, Improved Evasion, Share Spells, Empathic Link; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 7; Skills: Balance +10, Climb +6, Hide +14\*, Intimidate +4, Jump +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Search +2, Spot +3; Feats: Weapon Finesse.

See the MM and the PHB for more on cats and familiars.

### 8. Silence Room (EL —)

This room is completely dark. There are no windows nor other source of illumination. On the floor, there is a black carpet and some silky cushions, also black.

The temple inhabitants, especially the priests, use this room to meditate and to pray. There is nothing special in this room. Hidden in two cushions are two

black sapphire worth 500 gp. The priests believe that these precious stones help them connect to their god.

### 9. Storeroom (EL 4)

This dusty room receives light from two windows. It is full of refuse, crates, amphorae, barrels and sacks. In this area, the drow pile all their refuse together with their stores of food and drinks. All the equipment abandoned in this area is broken and useless. There is enough food and drink in the area to sustain twenty people for at least two weeks.

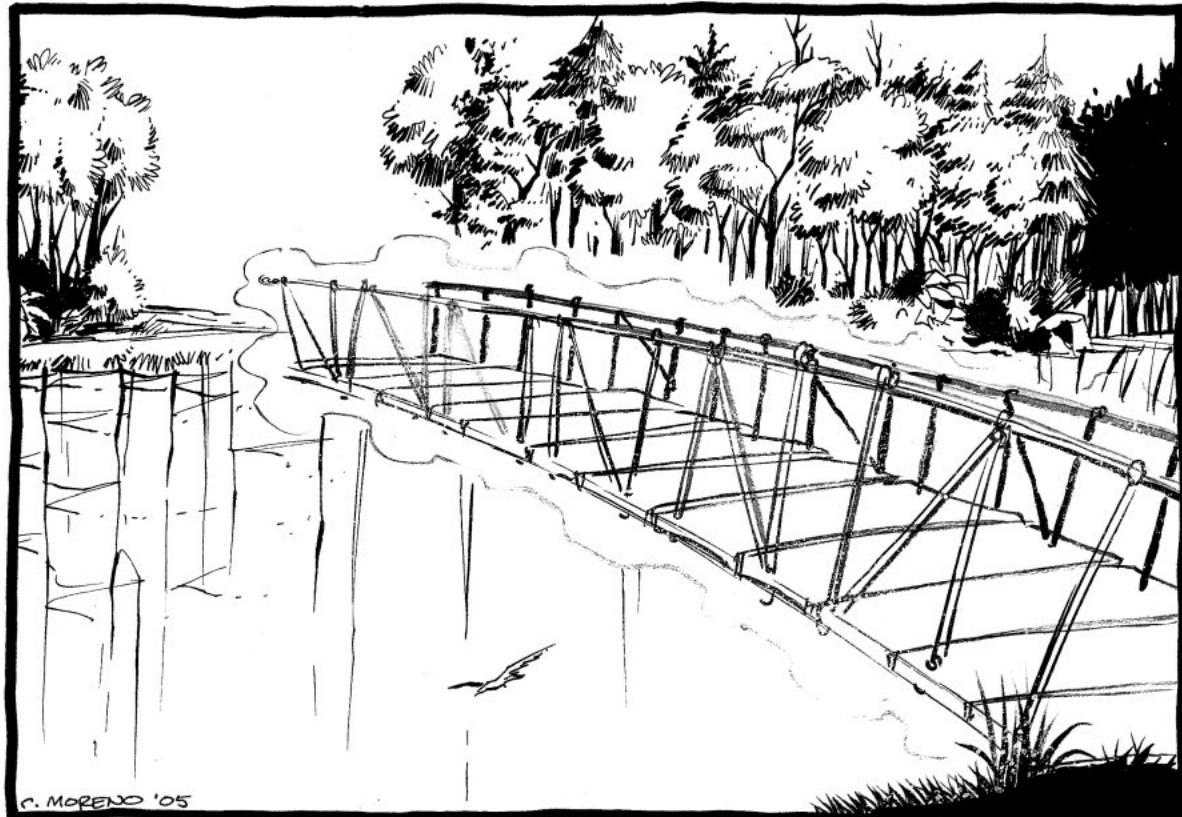
A Spot check (DC 15) reveals that the ceiling is full of webs. Waiting on their webs ready to attack, are three large spiders. If the party does not spot them, they attack by surprise as soon as someone is under the dome.

**Large Monstrous Spider, Web-spinning (3):** CR 2; hp 29, 26, 22; see the MM.

## Underground Area

### 10. Cave (EL 2)

The spiral stairs that start from the ground level seem to go on forever, step after step, into a pit of pitch-blackness. The only noise heard during the descent is the pitter-patter of feet of those on the stairs. The stairs go down for about 250 ft. before ending in a huge cavern. The cavern is more than a hundred feet high. The cavern is totally silent and still. A



vague, acrid and sweet smell is in the air but it is not possible to pinpoint its source.

The foul smell comes from the putrescent bodies hanged at the walls all around the cavern walls. These are the victims of the patrols that have been tortured to death by the high priestess.

On the floor of the cavern is a torture table covered with dried blood and a lectern. Over the lectern, there is a sort of diary written by the high priestess that summarizes the — so far fruitless — attempts of the drow to pass the bridge (see area 11). If a PC can read drow, or if a Decipher Script check (DC 18) is made, read to the players the following parts of the notes, or give them a pre-prepared handout:

*Come and go  
In pair or alone  
Bring with you  
The magic light  
However, be fast  
Or meet your fate  
There was also a stick in a secret compartment. It looks magic.*

...

*Everyone getting close to the bridge receives a bracelet on which a rune is inscribed. Four different runes for four different people. If a fifth goes close, he is pushed back by an invisible force. There is no way to beat this force.*

...

*I deciphered the runes. They are four numbers: 1, 2, 5 and 10.*

...

*When Koloth tried to cross the bridge, he has been blocked by an invisible force.*

...

*The stick illuminates when the word "tilch" is spoken. Maybe this is the light needed.*

...

*Shenlor, with the stick and bracelet number "1" crossed the bridge with no problem. Then he came back, also with no problem. Then, it was the turn of Gleptelin, with bracelet number "2." She was also able to go and come back. And also Lydis, with bracelet "5" had no problem. Strangely enough, it looked like she was much slower than the others were. With Lochlann, the disaster happened: he was only since one minute or two over the bridge when a shower of acid rain poured over him consuming his body completely; and the other three with the bracelets have been struck by lightning bolts and ice darts. They all died. A modest sacrifice, anyway, for the glory of Zailhess.*

...

*We have made another attempt. This is the last one before we better understand. We have lost four people. Oh Zailhess, accept the souls of your faithful servants!*

*"1" and "2" crossed the bridge easily, but "1" had to slow down because "2" was running slower than he could. "5" and "10" tried to cross the bridge afterwards, but the usual force has blocked them. So, "1" came back with the stick. "1" and "5" crossed the bridge easily. Also in this case, "1" could have walked faster. Also, they were much slower than before "1" and "2." At this point "1" came back another time to get "10." They were almost at the end of the bridge...*

The bridge looks like a normal wooden bridge over a bottomless chasm. The other side of the bridge ends in a azure cloud that obscures vision completely.

## II. The Magic Bridge (EL 12)

The bridge is magic and the only way to cross it is to solve its riddle. No other magical or mundane way is possible. An anti-magic field is present over the bridge area. Physical means of crossing are consumed by acid rains, pushed back by invisible forces and the like.

The solution to the riddle can be found in the rhyme and in the notes left by the high priestess in the diary. Only four people can cross the bridge. Once they get close to it, they receive a magic bracelet with a numerical rune on it. A DC 15 Decipher Script or a DC 17 Knowledge [arcana] check is needed to read the runes properly.

The number on every bracelet indicates the minutes it takes for that person to cross the bridge, no matter what his normal land speed is. The bridge can be crossed by a single person or by a pair if at least one of the two is holding the light stick in his hands. If someone tries to cross the bridge without the stick or not in the company of someone holding the stick, she is simply pushed back. If more than two people try to cross the bridge, one of them, randomly chosen, is pushed back by an invisible force.

The four people need to reach the other side of the bridge in the fastest way (17 minutes, see below) or suffer the consequences. The minutes are counted only when someone is moving over the bridge. At the end of the 17 minutes, if the four people have not completed the bridge crossing, they are each struck by one of the following four magical effects (randomly, no saving throw):

- an acid rain that inflicts 12d6 points of damage on the first round and 3d6 points of damage in the following 4 rounds, and drains permanently the Charisma score by 3 points to those surviving,
- a fire shower that inflicts 20d6 points of damage and ignites everything flammable, including magic items made from wood or other flammable materials,

- a lightning bolt that inflicts 15d6 points of damage — or 20d8 to those wearing metallic armor — and does 5 points of Dexterity damage,
- a volley of icy darts that inflicts 20d4 points of damage — or 20d6 to those wearing no or light armor — and destroys everything made of glass or similar brittle materials on the person.

Those surviving find themselves back at the starting point, without the bracelet. The same result occurs if the people with the bracelets move more than 50 feet from the bridge.

The proper sequence of movements to cross the bridge is:

|                               |                 |
|-------------------------------|-----------------|
| “1” and “2” cross the bridge  | (2 min)         |
| “1” [or “2”] goes back        | (1 min) [2 min] |
| “5” and “10” cross the bridge | (10 min)        |
| “2” [or “1”] goes back        | (2 min) [1 min] |
| “1” and “2” cross the bridge  | (2 min).        |

Once all the four people have crossed the bridge, they are freed from the bracelets and can cross the misty cloud to reach the room of the sphere (area 12). Note that the magic bridge limits the number of people that can fight the sphere guardian to four.

If four people successfully crossed the bridge, nobody can cross it again in either direction until the guardian is destroyed. The cloud has no effect whatsoever apart from blocking the line of sight behind the bridge, and it cannot be dispelled or dispersed in any way, magical or mundane.

## 12. The Room of the Sphere (EL 11)

The room looks like it is suspended over the chasm. It is octagonal in shape, with very smooth walls of black stones. The same polished stones are used also for the floor and the ceiling, about 40 ft. high. In the middle of the room, there is a stone statue of a demon with a monkey face and a long tail. A medallion of a human skull is carved around the neck of the statue. The statue seems in the act of offering a dark gray sphere with its protruding hands.

When someone that is not a priest of Zailhhess removes the sphere from the statue, the statue shatters into many pieces inflicting 2d6 damage to anyone in the room (DC 15 Reflex save to halve). Then, a portal to the Elemental Plane of Fire opens for a short period and an elder elemental is summoned. The elemental fights to death.

**Elder Fire Elemental (1):** CR 11; hp 224; see the MM.

## Chapter Awards

The Town Counsel is very happy to hear of the success of the party in freeing the temple from the drow menace and assigns them a prize of 2,000 gp during an impressive ceremony; you can also assign a bonus of 100 XP to the players.

Recovering the sphere is worth 1,000 XP.

Assign 300 XP to the player that solves the riddle of the bridge.

# Chapter Six:

## Owl Tower - Part II

*In which the heroes' help is requested once again by their lord to free the imprisoned spirit of his daughter and in which they fight other wondrous enemies to recover another magic sphere.*

After the PCs have dispatched the drow of the abandoned temple and recovered the sphere, they probably go back to the Owl Tower to inform Sir Krilmar of their successes. Once they arrive at the tower, they notice an air of melancholy and sadness, but nobody will tell them what has happened. They are told to talk with Sir Krilmar.

With a successful Wisdom check (DC 15), the PCs notice that the guards of the burnt garden look tremendously nervous.

The majordomo waits for the PCs at the entrance of the tower and leads them to the lord's chamber. He waits outside while they enter. Sir Krilmar listens to their tale with a mixture of sadness and joy. At a certain point, he tells the PCs what is going on in the garden, with a broken voice:

*"My dear friends, as you have already probably noticed, there is something terrible that is weighing over my heart. The spirit of my daughter has appeared in the garden ... every night she appears and screams ... she has terrorized anyone that has come close to her ... luckily, nobody has fallen victim of her ... so far.*

*I know what it is right to do ... but I cannot do it! ... I cannot! ... How can I kill her again? ... Do you understand me?"*

The lord then sits on a chair and throws his face into his hands, sobbing desperately. At this point, the majordomo enters the room and tries to comfort Sir Krilmar. After a while, he turns to the PCs and begs them for their help.

If the party agrees, the guards at the garden are informed and let the PCs enter the garden. Otherwise, the lord recovers after some minutes and dismisses the party.

If they agree to help, the adventure continues as detailed below in "The Infested Garden"; in the latter case, the crypt in the garden remains a mystery for the party and later, a thief from the evil sect tries to recover the sphere in secrecy. The guards catch the thief, (see the end of the chapter) and the adventure goes on with chapter 7.

### The Infested Garden

The pickets in front of the garden entrance let the PCs enter only if they have been authorized. Once inside, the party sees that nothing remains of the beautiful garden. Everything is burnt down and only scorched branches and blackened pebbles remind them of its magnificence. A layer of ash covers everything interrupted by thousands of footprints: those of the people that tried in vain to find the remains of Elien.

A terrible silence entwines the garden that looks more like a horrible cemetery, with dead plants instead of tombstones, and black soil instead of flowers. There is a gentle breeze blowing ash around, but no noise can be heard because there are no leaves to be moved.

If the party entered the garden with daylight, nothing happens. However, if the PCs entered at night, they meet Elien's spirit at midnight. At a distance of about 50 ft., they see a dim light with a vaguely humanoid shape, a grotesque image of the beautiful woman. The figure moves slowly towards them with red eyes shining with fear and hate.

The spectre of Elien attacks relentlessly. If killed, she reappears the next night until her bones are recovered, blessed in a proper ceremony and then buried in an appropriate tomb. She cannot leave the garden area.

**Elien, Spectre (1):** CR 7; hp 50; see the MM.

When the spectre is reduced to 0 hit points or less it vanishes, but a moving dim light can be seen (Spot check DC 10). The light has the dimension of a will 'o wisp and moves randomly in the garden before sinking into the ground.

Someone looking in the area where the light has been seen "sinking" into the ground can notice a small hole (Spot check DC 18 or Search check DC 12). The hole is what remains of the bigger hole in which Elien fell when she was ran into the fire. Her fall caused the soil to collapse over the hole and almost completely close it. This is the reason why nobody was able to recover her body.

The hole can be easily enlarged with the proper tools and gives access to area 1 of the Crypt (see below).



The crypt was built in a remote age as the tomb for a powerful warrior. It was discovered during the “golden period” of the cult of Zailhhess described in the adventure background. One of the fugitives used it to hide one of the spheres.

Shortly after the destruction of the cult, an earthquake shook the land and the crypt sank into the soil: after that, its location remained unknown until Ulabius recovered a cryptic note in an old diary that described it.

## Key Areas of the Crypt

See the Crypt map at the end of the module for an overview of the ancient tomb.

Unless otherwise noted, all the walls and ceilings of the crypt are of superior masonry while the floors are paved with white marble with black veins. There are no doors inside the crypt.

### 1. Old Entrance (EL —)

The doors that once provided access to the crypt are blocked by the soil and are out of their hinges, making them impossible to open. The only access is from the partially collapsed ceiling.

On the marble floor of this room, almost completely covered with soil, dust and rubbles, there are the

remains of Elien. Her neck was broken in the fall, causing her death. Even if the body has started to rot and the clothes are damaged and dirty, it is not difficult for the party to recognize her. Until someone recovers the body and provides a funeral to the young woman, her spectre reappears every night over her remains to spread terror around.

If a *resurrection* or a similar spell is attempted, the spirit of Elien finds the peace she is looking for but she is not willing to reincarnate. If the party takes these remains to Sir Krilmar, he immediately arranges for a burial ceremony (see below).

### 2. Old Trap (EL —)

This corridor is trapped. Any living being that reaches its central portion without speaking aloud “Agarth,” the name of the old warrior that is here entombed, activates it. Two incredibly heavy and thick portcullises fall on both sides of the corridor. These portcullises, in the original plan of the trap builders, should have trapped trespassers inside the corridor and destined them to death by starvation. With the passing of the ages, though, the iron bars have been almost completely destroyed by the rust and, now, when the portcullises fall down, the bars bend and break and the trap no longer works.

**Old Trap:** CR —; mechanical device; proximity trigger; no reset; currently, no dangerous effect; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 20.

### 3. The Tomb (EL 15)

This large room contains a huge stone sarcophagus. Over it, there is a suit of rusted armor whose size and shape suggest that it was worn by a humanoid as tall as 8 ft. There is no light in this room. A sort of soft humming comes from behind the sarcophagus.

The armor was only placed on the stone cover for a dramatic effect; in reality, the warrior buried in this tomb was a normal-sized human male. The armor is now valueless. Behind the sarcophagus, a spiral stair connects to the underground level, from where the humming comes (see below).

Carved on the sides of the sarcophagus there are images of fights and battles. On one of the narrow sides, there is an inscription in an old language (Decipher Script check (DC 17) ) that says: "Here lies the mortal body of the great Agarth, woe to those that disturb his rest."

If someone opens the stone cover of the sarcophagus, requiring a successful Strength check (DC 25), or destroys it (the stone cover has Hardness 7 and 25 hp), the mummified remains within it animate and attack anyone on sight. The defiler(s), on top, is (are) cursed as under the effect of a *slow* spell for the duration of 2 hours (DC 21 Will save negates).

**Agarth, Mummy Lord 10th-level Fighter (1):** CR 15; SZ Medium; Undead; HD 8d12+10d10+3; hp 115; Init +4; SPD 20ft. {15 ft.}; AC 28 (+10 natural, +8 +1 banded mail), touch 10, flat-footed 28; Base ATK / GRP +14 / +24; ATK +28 melee (1d10+19+1d6 cold damage, +2 heavy flail [icy burst], crit. 18–20, x2+1d10 cold damage) OR Slam +24 (1d6+15 plus mummy rot); Full ATK +28 / +23 melee (1d10+19+1d6 cold damage, +2 heavy flail [icy burst], crit. 17–20, x2+1d10 cold damage) OR Slam +24 (1d6+15 plus mummy rot); Space / Reach 5 ft. / 5 ft.; SA Despair, mummy rot; SQ Damage reduction 10 / —, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, vulnerability to fire, Resistance to Fire 10; AL L/E; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +13; Str 30, Dex 10, Con —, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 24; Skills: Bluff +17, Climb +13 {+8}, Diplomacy +13, Hide +8 {+3}, Intimidate +21, Jump +13 {+8}, Knowledge [arcana] +2, Listen +14, Sense Motive +4, Spot +14; Feats: Alertness, Great Fortitude, Toughness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Persuasive, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Weapon Focus [Heavy Flail], Greater Weapon Focus [Heavy Flail], Weapon Specialization [Heavy Flail], Improved Critical [Heavy Flail], Improved Sunder.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties

Possessions: +1 banded mail, +2 heavy flail [icy burst]

See also the MM for more on mummies.

Inside the tomb, there is the treasure of the old warrior: 5,000 sp, 10 golden pearls worth 120 gp each, 6 golden



yellow topazes worth 500 gp each, other 50 minor gems worth 10 gp each, a golden buckle crafted as a dragon head with rubies inlaid as eyes worth 2,000 gp, a partially rotten leather scabbard reinforced with golden stripes and semi-precious stones (gold and stones are worth 250 gp), a golden ring crafted as a snake with an emerald as head (worth 1,500 gp) and a massive silver ring encrusted with tiny red spinels (worth 800 gp).

#### 4. Stairs (EL —)

After a descent of about 300 ft., the spiral stair ends in a small circular room, 10 ft. of radius. In the center of the room is a crystal the size of a fist that vibrates and emits a reddish dim light. These vibrations are the cause of the humming that is heard throughout the tomb. If the crystal is magically inspected, it emanates an aura of enchantment but it has no special powers.

From this room, a tunnel of hewn stones starts, 5 ft. wide and almost as high. The floor of the tunnel is another stair, with a very low slope and stone steps 3-inches high and 5 ft. long. The tunnel runs almost half a mile and ends in another corridor, cut in polished red stone with masonry walls and ceiling (see area 5).

The DM should emphasize the sense of claustrophobia that the characters — excluding dwarfs, gnomes and other small or underground-dwelling creatures — feel during the descent, describing the reduced dimensions of the tunnel, the stillness of the air, the dust that is lifted by their passage, etc.

#### 5. Trap of the Elemental Arena (EL 8)

On the sides of this corridor, there are four openings. The openings are covered by *illusory* walls and can be noticed only with a DC 30 Spot check. Obviously, the walls have no consistency, so anyone “touching” them immediately discovers the figment. The openings are short passages that end in small rooms that contain four simple statues with vaguely humanoid shapes. In reality, these statues are four different imprisoned elementals and are part of a complex trap.

**Elemental Summoning Trap:** CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger; no reset; summoning effect (see above); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 35.

Whenever a living being reaches the center of the corridor without speaking aloud the sentence “Glory to thee, Zailhhess!” the statues shatter and the four elementals are freed. They run through the illusory walls, possibly blocking any way of escape, and attack.

**Medium Air Elemental (1):** CR 3; hp 32; see the MM.

**Medium Earth Elemental (2):** CR 3; hp 35, 33; see the MM.

**Medium Fire Elemental (1):** CR 3; hp 30; see the MM.

#### 6. The Room of the Sphere (EL 10)

This room is octagonal, with very smooth red stones set in the floor, walls and ceiling. The ceiling is vaulted and the highest part of it is about 100 ft. high. In the middle of the room, there is a stone statue of a demon with a lupine face and a long forked tail. Over its forehead, a human skull is carved out. The statue holds a dark gray sphere in its clawed hands.

The sphere can be easily removed from the statue and secured. This act, if performed by anyone that is not a priest of Zailhhess, causes a one-way portal onto the vaulted ceiling to open. From it, at a rate of two every round, six barghests enter. They attack anyone on sight. After all the barghests have entered, the portal closes.

**Barghest (6):** CR 4; hp 30, 32, 35, 38, 40, 40, 45; see the MM.

### The Burial Ceremony

If the party found the body of Elien and gives it to Sir Krilmar or someone of his court, the lord thanks them profusely and then arranges for a burial ceremony. Paladin characters and clerics of good alignment are asked to join him in the celebration that is held in a small crypt inside the tower. During the celebration, lasting a whole day, gardeners and volunteers work hard to prepare the burial area, just outside the tower.

Once the celebration is over, the body is buried in the new garden at the presence of all the tower inhabitants and many people from the villages as well. A pedestal is placed over the tomb with the inscription “Elien, beloved daughter.” The future plan is to place a statue of Elien over the pedestal.

### The Thief

During the inspection of the ancient crypt, or during the burial ceremony, or at another period chosen by the DM, the tower guards capture a suspicious figure while he is climbing the tower. During the fight that ensues, he kills three guards and wounds other six.

The thief is called Barkhul (see below for his stats). Apart from his other personal belongings, a silver necklace with a black skull pendant was found. Sir Krilmar immediately recognized this symbol and realized the importance to question the thief before putting him to death. Since the PCs are so involved in this story, asks them to assist.

The DM could decide to role-play the questioning or simply to give the relevant information to the party. In any case, this is the information they can

obtain (you may also want to assign Intimidate check DCs to get the information):

- Barkhul has been sent to the tower by Ulabius to steal the sphere(s) in the lord possession (DC 10).
- He does not know all the details about the ceremony to free Zailhess but knows that the spheres are important (DC 15).
- He knows that Ulabius receives orders from someone else but he does not know who (DC 20).

Barkhul knows the exact position of Ulabius stronghold and barter this information with the PCs in exchange for his freedom or, at least, for his life. Of course, the thief can also be magically forced to reveal what he knows.

**Barkhul:** Male Halfling, Rogue 6; CR 6; SZ Small; HD 6d6; hp 24; Init +4; Spd 20ft.; AC 17 (+1 size, +2 leather armor, +4 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +1; ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, +2 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+2, +1 sling, crit. x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d6+3, +2 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+2, +1 sling, crit. x2); SQ: +2 morale bonus on saves against fear; SA: Sneak Attack +3d6; AL L/E; SV Fort +3, Ref +10,

Will +4; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 10, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 15.

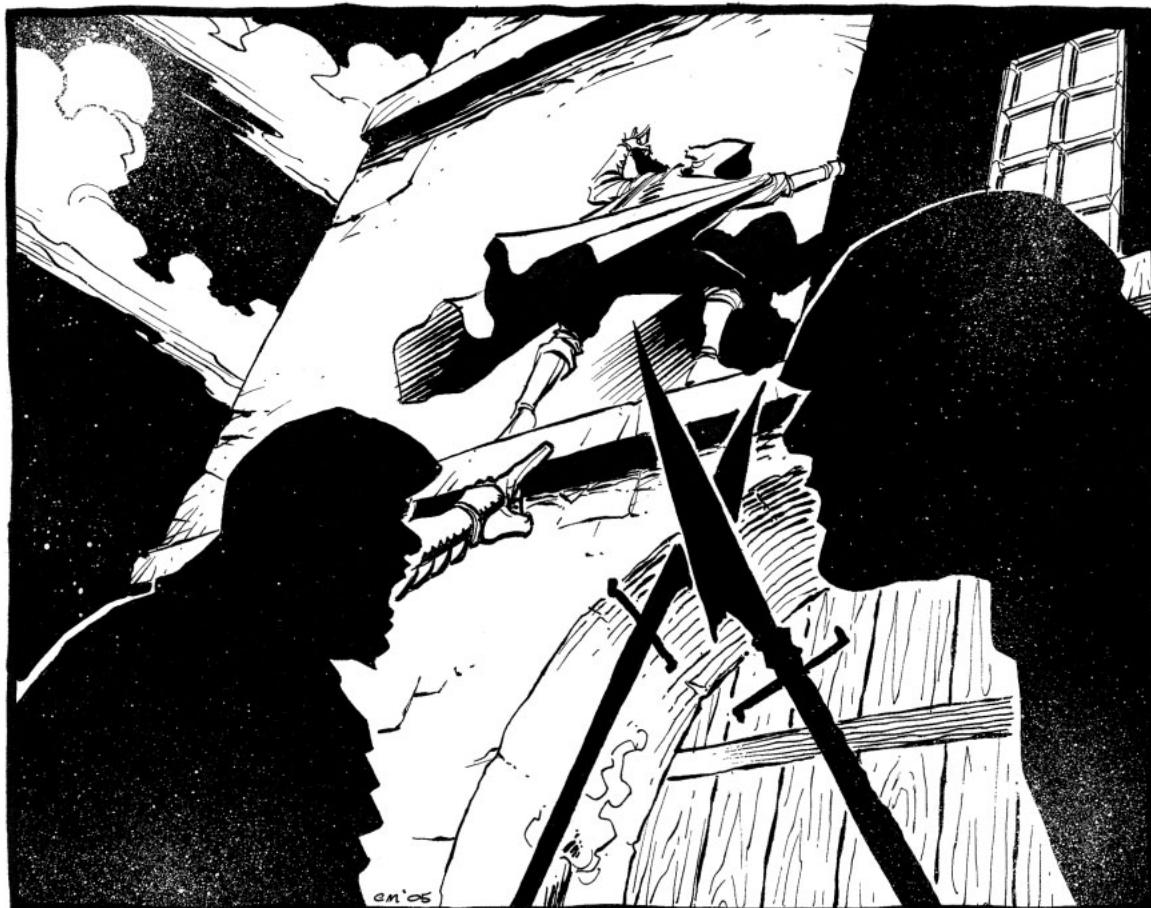
*Skills and Feats:* Balance +14, Bluff +7, Climb +8, Disable Device +8, Disguise +7, Escape Artist +12, Hide +13, Jump +8, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +11, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +6, Tumble +12, Use Rope +12; Trap finding, Sneak Attack, Evasion, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +2; Acrobatic, Agile, Alertness; Proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow and short sword, and with light armors.

*Possessions:* leather armor, +2 short sword, +1 sling, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 5), slippers of spider climbing.

## Chapter Awards

Finding the bones of Elien and giving them back to Sir Krilmar ensure eternal gratitude from the lord and his entourage to the party. For this, the players earn a group award of 500 XP. The initial reaction towards the party of anyone faithful to Sir Krilmar is always favorable from this point on.

Recovering the sphere is worth 2,000 XP.



# Chapter Seven: Ulabius' Stronghold

*In which the heroes defeat their enemy in his own stronghold only to discover that there are many more perils to overcome before the word “end” can be said.*

After having learned the position of their enemies stronghold, the party can finally confront him. The task is not easy, given that Ulabius has realized that his thief minion has been captured. He is ready and well prepared to confront with the PCs.

Unless the party has some special means of movement, the PCs need to cross the forest to reach the fortress. Ulabius sends some undead minions to delay their arrival (roll 3x on the encounter table). The stronghold was built by Ulabius assisted by a powerful arch-mage from the South that wishes to utilize Ulabius as a spy in the North. The fortress is built on a small hill, a heel of stone that sprouts from the ground with very steep, nearly vertical walls. There is only one “easy” way to reach the stronghold: a wiggling path that crosses the forest and slowly climbs the hill until it reaches the main entrance (see area 1 below).

The first time the party sees the stronghold, the DM should describe it with emphasis on its sense of toughness and unassailability. The powerful walls that tower over the hill's steep faces give a sense of foreboding.

Trying to climb the vertical walls is extremely dangerous not only for their steepness but also because this action triggers an attack by the gargoyles that are placed all around the stronghold (see area 3 below).

Note that all the descriptions of the fortress areas are given assuming that the stronghold has been alerted. If the party finds it by chance or before Barkhul is caught, then the DM needs to adjust the encounters accordingly.

This scenario also assumes that the party enters the stronghold and defeats Ulabius in a single attack. If subsequent forays are performed, the DM must consider how the forces inside the stronghold react and change their tactics. For example, they could place a ballista on the terrace (area 21) or prepare barricades. Ulabius would summon more undead minions or try to evoke a demon. If not severely weakened, Ulabius or his minions could track the party. Other modifications can be made as the DM sees fit.

## Key Areas of the Stronghold

Familiarize yourself with the stronghold map at the end of the module before running this chapter as it is

complex. Ulabius and his minions use its layout to their advantage—they know the best areas for attack and defense.

Unless otherwise noted, all the walls and ceiling are of superior masonry while the floors are paved with polished flagstones. The doors are normally not locked.

**Good Wooden Doors:** Hardness 5, hp 15, Break DC 18.

If warned of the PCs approach, the stronghold is under the effect of a guards and wards spell cast by Ulabius at the beginning of the day. Among other effects, all the doors are arcane locked. Specific effects are noted down in the individual area descriptions. The DM should carefully read the spell description on the PHB before running this part of the adventure.

The few windows cannot be opened and are protected by iron bars on the outside.

**Iron Bars:** Hardness 11, hp 18, Break DC 23.

**Window:** Hardness 2, hp 6, Break DC 15.

### 1. Ambush (EL 9)

Ulabius' minions wait for the party at the bend of the path to the stronghold. One of Ulabius' half-fiend offspring leads them. They hide behind the trees hoping to attack by surprise. They gain a +10 circumstance bonus on their Hide checks to avoid being spotted by the PCs. They also get 50% cover once the fight starts until they are engaged.

The half-fiend starts the attack throwing vials of Asabi Mist, an alchemical compound that exposed to air generates toxic fumes. The fumes are quite dense and heavy and cover an area with a 5-ft. radius for 1d6 rounds. Everyone in the area must succeed on a DC 12 Fortitude save (initial damage 1d4 Con / secondary damage 1d4 Con). The visibility in this area is also obscured (as an obscuring mist spell). The other mercenaries fire poisoned arrows with their bows.

After the initial attack, the mercenaries and their leader close for melee. The half-fiend uses her chain-and-dagger to disarm or trip the PCs. The weapon gives her +2 bonus to disarm and +2 bonus on trip attempts.

The noise of the fight is heard by the people in the stronghold. They ready for a fight in case their friends fail to stop the party.

**Jama:** Female Half-fiend (augmented humanoid) (native outsider), Ranger 5; CR 7; SZ Medium; HD 5d8+15; hp 45; Init +3; Spd 30ft., fly 30ft. (average);

AC 18 (+1 Natural, +4 +2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +9; ATK +9 melee (1d4+4, chain-and-dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +9 ranged (1d8+4, composite longbow [Str. +4], crit. x3) or claw +9 melee (1d4+4); Full ATK +9 melee (1d4+4, ahain-and-dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +9 ranged (1d8+4, composite longbow [Str. +4], crit. x3) or 2 claws +9 melee (1d4+4) and 1 bite +4 melee (1d6+2); SQ: Half-fiend traits; SA: 1 / day Smite Good (5 points extra damage); spell-like abilities: 3 / day darkness, 1 / day desecrate, 1 / day unholy blight; AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3 {+4}; Str 18, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 15 {17}, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +8, Handle Animal +6, Heal +6 {+7}, Hide +7, Jump +8, Knowledge [Nature] +4, Listen +6 {+7}, Move Silently +7, Spot +6 {+7}, Survival +6 {+7}, Swim +8, Use Rope +7; Favored Enemy [Humanoid (Human)], Favored Enemy [Humanoid (Elf)], Track, Wild Empathy, Combat Style (Archery), Endurance, Animal Companion; Weapon Focus [longbow], Exotic Weapon Proficiency [chain-and-dagger]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with light armors and shields.

#### Typical Spells Prepared

(save DC 12 {13} + spell level): 1

1st – *delay poison*.

{stat} are stats considering the periapt of wisdom +2 is donned.

*Possessions:* +2 leather armor, chain-and-dagger, composite longbow [+4 Str], periapt of wisdom +2, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 5), 2 vials of Asabi mist, 3d10 gp, a silver necklace (worth 50 gp), a golden ring with 2 small diamonds (500 gp), a golden ring with an emerald (1000 gp), a pair of silver ear-rings crafted as shells (worth 250 gp).

#### Half-fiend Traits (Ex)

As described in the MM, half-fiends possess the following racial traits:

- Darkvision 60ft.
- Immunity to poison
- Resistance to acid, cold, electricity and fire 10
- Damage reduction 5 / magic
- Spell Resistance HD+10

**Laughert, Jama's animal companion (a wolf):** CR 1; SZ Medium; Animal (augmented); HD 2d8+4; hp 18; Init +2; SPD 50ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +1 / +2; ATK Bite +3 melee (1d6+1); Full ATK Bite +3 melee (1d6+1); Space / Reach 5 ft. / 5 ft.; SA Trip; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6; Skills: Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3,

Survival +1\*; Feats: Track<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Focus (bite), Link, Share Spells.

See the MM and the PHB for more about wolves and animal companions.

**Mercenaries (4):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Ranger 2; CR 3; SZ Medium; HD 4d8+7; hp 33, 31, 30, 27; Init +2; Spd 30ft. {20}; AC 17 (+5 chainmail, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +8 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +7 ranged (1d8 plus poison\*, longbow, crit. x3); Full ATK 8 melee (1d8+3, Longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +7 ranged (1d8 plus poison\*, longbow, crit. x3); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* +6 {+1}, Hide +5 {+0}, Knowledge [nature] +4, Spot +5, Survival +5; Favored Enemy [humanoid (goblinoid)], Track, Wild Empathy, Combat Style (archery); Weapon Focus [longsword], Weapon Focus [longbow], Point Blank Shot, Toughness; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

\* Giant wasp venom: DC 18 Fortitude save to avoid damage (1d6 Dex / 1d6 Dex).

*Possessions:* chainmail, longsword, longbow, 6 poisoned arrows, 2d10 gp.

## 2. Dried Troughs (EL —)

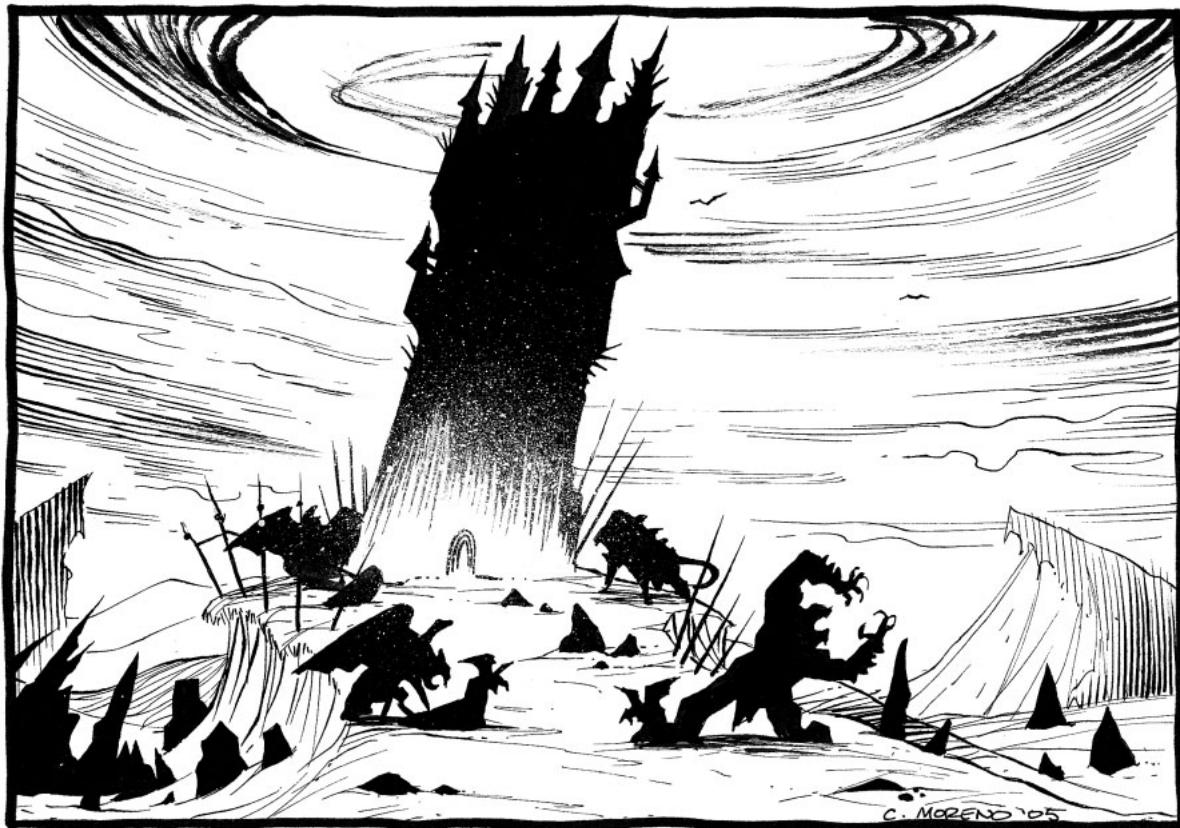
These two troughs are completely dried and show no sign of use for months or even years. The piles of hay next to the troughs are rotten and cannot be used as forage by animals.

## 3. Gargoyles (EL 12)

On the three sides of the stronghold that face the steep cliffs, there are six large, demonic statues, with grotesque horned monkey faces, bat-like wings and long forked tails. These statues are animated gargoyles that attack anyone trying to climb, fly or levitate the cliff walls. Their preferred tactic is to cause intruders to fall.

**Gargoyle, advanced (6):** CR 7; SZ Large; Monstrous Humanoid; HD 10d8+63; hp 115 (all); Init +1; SPD 40ft., fly 60ft. (average); AC 16 (+1 Dex, +6 natural, -1 size), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +10 / +20; ATK Claw +16 melee (1d8+6); Full ATK 2 claws +16 melee (1d8+6) and bite +12 melee (1d8+3) and gore +12 melee (1d8+3) and tail +12 melee (1d6+3); Space / Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 10 / magic, darkvision 60 ft., freeze; AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +11, Will +10; Str 23, Dex 12, Con 22, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 7; Skills: Hide +9\*, Listen +6, Spot +6; Feats: Multiattack, Toughness, Hover, Improved Natural Attack [claw].

See the MM for more about gargoyles.



## Ground Level

The wiggling path eventually ends in front of the double doors that access the fortress. The bronze doors are sculpted with the images of a wizard killing a dragon (left door) and blasting an army (right door) with his magical powers. These doors are not under the effect of the guards and wards spell and are left unlocked on purpose. This is a trick that Gwedda, one of Ulabius' half-fiend daughters, has arranged in case the party would have defeated her sister in the ambush.

**Heavy Double Bronze Doors:** Hardness 8, hp 80, Break DC 26.

On each the door is a stained glass window depicting a humanoid with skeletal hands and a skull face. It wears a long mantle and holds a huge black falchion in its hands. These windows are magically reinforced and cannot be normally opened.

**Magically Reinforced Windows:** Hardness 3, Damage Reduction 10 / sonic, hp 20, Break DC 30.

## 4. Throne Room (EL 9)

This room is the epitome of luxury. A long red woolen carpet stretches from the entrance to the far end of the room where two huge stone thrones encrusted with bright gems stand. On the sides of the carpet are six silver candelabras with three lit black candles each. Illuminated by the candelabras, there are four marble statues of Ulabius in different poses.

Behind the thrones, there is a mezzanine illuminated by two other candelabras. Two stairs, one on each side of the room, provide access to the mezzanine. Due to the low illumination the mezzanine is woven in shadow.

Partially hidden in the shadow, standing before the two thrones, is a beautiful woman dressed with a rich robe and a long mantle and ... Sir Krilmar! He smiles to the PCs while talking: "Welcome my friends! What are you doing here? Can I present you my friend, Gwedda?"

The half-fiend Gwedda has arranged this trap. "Sir Krilmar" is in reality a doppelganger. Gwedda hopes to draw the PCs closer to the thrones to better observe her and the false lord. If this happens, mercenaries hidden on the mezzanine and undead in the corners of the room attack.

The mercenaries have a +10 circumstance bonus on their Hide check. The undead have a +20 bonus. Halve these bonuses against characters with the low-light vision or darkvision abilities.

The mercenaries fire poisoned bolts while the undead block the retreat of the party. Gwedda casts *mage armor*, and then uses her *wand of hold person* before closing and using *color spray* and *acid splash* on the closest enemy.

Since the undead and the half-fiend are immune to poison, the mercenaries continue to use their ranged attacks as long as possible. The doppelganger remains on the throne enjoying the scene unless threatened. If

he is forced to fight, he does so only if he sees a chance of victory, otherwise he tries to escape or surrenders to the PCs.

**Mercenaries (4):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Fighter 2; CR 3; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+2d10+12; hp 36, 35, 32, 30; Init +1; Spd 30ft. {20}; AC 16 (+5 chainmail, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 15; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +8 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +5 ranged (1d8 plus poison\*, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +8 melee (1d8+3, longsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +5 ranged (1d8 plus poison\*, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); AL LE; SV Fort +11, Ref +1, Will –1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 8, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7 {+2}, Hide +1 {-4}, Intimidate +6, Jump +7 {+2}, Knowledge [geography] +3, Listen +1, Move Silently +3 {-2}, Spot +1, Swim +6; Weapon Focus [Longsword], Combat Expertise, Blind Fight, Great Fortitude, Power Attack; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

\* Hedek vine extract: DC 17 Fortitude save (2d6 Dex / — ).

**Possessions:** chainmail, longsword, light crossbow, 6 poisoned bolts, 2d10 gp.

**Doppelganger (1):** CR 3; hp 27; see the MM.

**Gweddha:** Female Half-fiend (augmented humanoid) (native outsider), Sorcerer 3 / Fighter 2; CR 7; SZ Medium; HD 3d4+2d10+8; hp 30; Init +6; Spd 30ft., fly 30ft. (average); AC 16 (+1 Natural, +3 bracers of armor +3, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +3; ATK +5 melee (1d4+1, +1 *punching dagger*, crit. x3) or claw +4 melee (1d4); Full ATK +5 melee (1d4+2, +1 *punching dagger*, crit. x3) or 2 claws +4 melee (1d4) and 1 bite –2 melee (1d6); SQ: Half-fiend traits; SA: 1 / day Smite Good (5 points extra damage); spell-like abilities: 3 / day *Darkness*, 1 / day *Desecrate*, 1 / day *unholy blight*; AL L/E; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 20.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +7, Handle Animal +8, Intimidate +9, Knowledge [arcana] +6, Spellcraft +9; Summon Familiar, Weapon Focus [*punching dagger*], Weapon Focus [claws], Improved Initiative, Toughness; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Spells Known**

0 — Acid Splash, Daze, Detect Magic, Mage Hand, Read Magic

1st — Color Spray, Mage Armor, True Strike.

Spells Slots (save DC 15 + spell level): 6 / 7.

**Possessions:** bracers of armor +3, +1 *punching dagger*, potion of cat's grace (CL 5), scroll of mage armor (CL 3), wand of hold person (CL 6) [33 charges], 25 gp, a

en necklace worth 300 gp, a rich robe worth 100 gp, a golden ring with a ruby worth 2,000 gp.

**Groark, Gweddha's Familiar Toad (1):** CR 1/10; SZ Diminutive; Magical Beast; HD 5; hp 16; Init +1; SPD 5ft.; AC 17 (+4 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +3 / –14; ATK —; Full ATK —; Space / Reach 1 ft. / 0 ft.; SA —; SQ Amphibious, low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +5; Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 7, Wis 14, Cha 4; Skills: Hide +21, Listen +4, Spot +4; Feats: Alertness, Improved Evasion, Share Spells, Empathic Link, Deliver Touch Spells.

See the MM and the PHB for more about toads and familiars.

**Ulabius' Human Warrior Skeleton (4):** CR 1; SZ Medium; Undead (augmented); HD 1d12; hp 10, 8, 8, 7; Init +5; SPD 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +4 shield), touch 11, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +0 / +1; ATK scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18–20 x2) or claw +1 melee (1d4+1); Full ATK scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18–20 x2) or 2 claws +1 melee (1d4+1); Space / Reach 5ft / 5ft; SA —; SQ Damage reduction 5 / bludgeoning, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits, shield (Sp), blur (Sp); AL C/E; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1; Skills: —; Feats: Improved Initiative.

These human skeletons have been augmented by the *ulabius' imbuement* spell (see New Spell Appendix) with the spell-like abilities *shield* and *blur*, all at 10th Caster Level. This gives these skeletons, among other benefits, concealment (20% miss chance) a +4 dodge bonus and immunity to magic missiles.

Two stairs lead to the first floor from the mezzanine. Behind the throne and at the sides of the main entrance are three secret doors that look like normal wall sections because of the guards and wards spell. The doors are also arcane locked. These doors give access to secret corridors and areas of the stronghold known only to Ulabius and his "family."

The semi-precious gems of the thrones are worth 10 gp each (there are about fifty per throne). The silver candelabras have a market value of 200 gp each.

## 5. Trapped Corridor (EL 6)

This area contains two pit traps. The traps are triggered when a weight of at least 70 pounds is placed over them. The traps can be activated or deactivated by means of the levers that are close to the secret door behind the thrones and at the two sides of the secret corridors intersection. The levers have two positions: up and down. Moving any of the levers changes the status of the traps, activating them if they were deactivated and vice versa. The levers can be noticed with a DC 5 Spot check or are automatically detected (DC

0 Search check) if someone is actively searching the area.

The traps are active when the party enters the secret passages.

**Wide-Mouth Spiked Pit Trap (x2):** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; DC 20 Reflex save avoids; 20 ft. deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (Atk +10 melee, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+2 each); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 25.

## 6. Secret Stairs (EL 8)

These stairs connect the underground area with the tower. Every ramp that leads from one floor to the next is trapped. The trapped step (one per ramp) is marked with a small rune (an *arcane mark*) that can be noticed with a DC 25 Spot check or a DC 20 Search check. The use of *detect magic* automatically detects the *arcane mark*. The trap is activated as soon as someone steps over the trapped stair.

**Ghoul Touch Trap (x6):** CR 3; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*ghoul touch*, 3rd-level wizard, DC 13 Fortitude save negates); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

## Underground Level

Ulabius uses the underground cavern for his final stand in case of complete defeat. See area 13 for more details.

### The Chain Devil (EL 6)

As soon as the PCs enter the cavern, they are attacked by a Kyton (a chain devil) that controls the many chains that are hanged to the vault of the cavern.

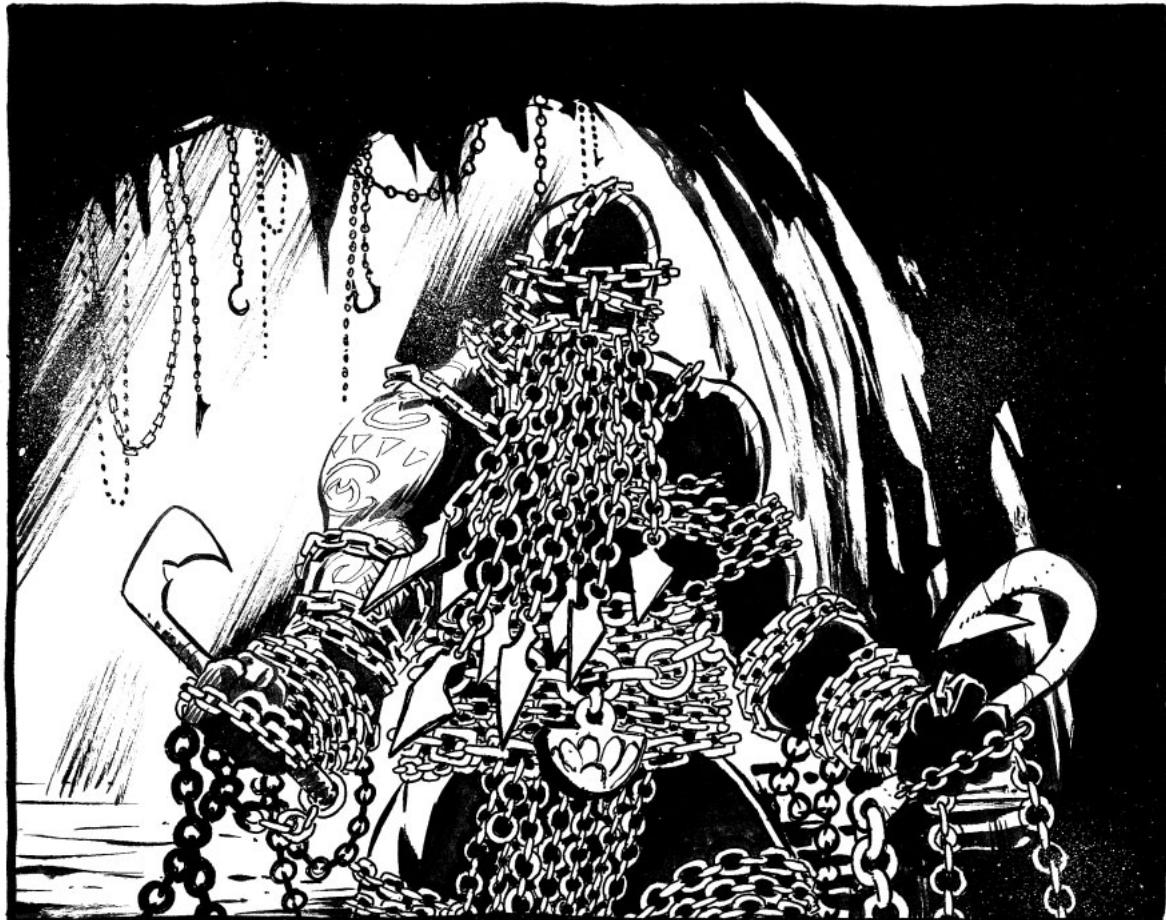
In the cavern are two torture tables and some crates in the southeast section. Four cages also dot the room. The passage at area 13 is hidden by a cloth curtain and cannot be seen from the stairs at first glance.

The kyton has its body completely wrapped in chains and emits a raspy high-pitched laugh before attacking the PCs. This monster is the mate of Ulabius, the mother of the half-fiends.

**Kyton (1):** CR 6; hp 61; see the MM.

### 7. Torture Tables (EL —)

The torture tables are stained with blood. Hanging from the ceiling throughout the cave are many chains of various shapes and designs. Some of them end with spikes or iron spheres, others with daggers, and others with manacles.



The tables have been used by the devil and Ulabius for their foul experiments. There is nothing else of interest in this part of the cavern.

### 8. Necromantic Laboratory (EL —)

In this part of the cavern, there is an iron table covered with vials, bottles, alchemical equipment and surgical tools. Some of the bottles and vials are filled with strangely colored fluids. A few bottles contain what look like parts of humanoids. The surgical tools are bloodstained. Beside the table are three chests.

The chests are made of wood and are not locked. Inside them are bottles, desiccated bodies and body parts of humanoids.

### 9. Empty Cage (EL —)

This cage is empty but shows the signs of use in the recent past. The cage is composed of iron bars and is connected via a chain and pulley on the cavern ceiling. From there, the chain enters a hole in the ceiling.

The iron bars of this cage, as well as those of all the others (area 10, 11 and 12), have the following characteristics:

**Cage Iron Bars:** Hardness 12, hp 15, Break/Bend DC 23.

The doors of the cages are all attached to the chain system described above. The chains, in turn, are all part of a mechanism that allows opening the cages by pushing a lever (see area 13).

### 10. Cage of the Owlbear (EL 4)

Inside this cage there is a starving owlbear. It attacks anyone in its reach.

**Owlbear (1):** CR 4; hp 28 (50 at full strength); see the MM.

### 11. Cage of the Grey Render (EL 8)

Inside this cage is gray render. It attacks anyone in its reach. It has been captured only recently and, therefore, it is not yet debilitated by food privation like the other caged monsters.

**Gray Render (1):** CR 8; SZ hp 130; see the MM.

### 12. Cage of the Grick (EL 3)

Inside this cage is a starving Grick. It is so hungry it attacks anyone in its reach.

**Grick (1):** CR 3; hp 5 (12 at full strength); see the MM.

### 13. Escape Tunnel (EL —)

This tunnel is full of bends, turns, uphill and downhill sections, with a total length of about 0.5 mile. It ends in a well-disguised opening on the flank of the hill near the stronghold.

A lever on the wall can be used to open all the cages of the underground cavern at once. Ulabius uses the delay caused by the trapped monsters to make his escape, if possible.

## Level One

### 14. Golem Feint (EL 14)

The stairs on the ground level lead to this area, where there are two large statues of naked well-built men. The statues look somehow unfinished.

As soon as a humanoid is in this area, the two statues open their mouths and speak aloud "Welcome to the house of Ulabius Duskation, prince of the forest and lord of death!"

If the proper answer, "glory to thee, Ulabius!", is not promptly shouted, the two statues seem to move towards the intruder(s). In reality, this is only a *programmed illusion*. Ulabius has also used *guards and wards* to set a *magic mouth* spell to have the statues say to the trespassers: "Death to the intruders!"

While the statues distract the characters, the half-fiend Molorchus gives the agreed signal to the mercenaries that have readied their crossbows behind the arrow slits that dot the walls on the other side of the stairs. The slits provide 90% cover and can be seen only with a successful DC 25 Spot check because of the poor illumination of the room.

The mercenaries fire their crossbows until the party closes for melee or runs away. When the party closes for melee, the mercenaries drink *potions of haste* and along with Molorchus engage the PCs while the other half-fiend, Subius, having drunk *potions of bull's strength* and *haste*, charges into the fight with a group of bugbears from the east side of the room.

**Mercenaries (4):** Male Human, Warrior 2 / Rogue 3; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+3d6+5; hp 26, 24, 22, 21; Init +7; Spd 30ft.; AC 15 (+2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +5; ATK +7 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +7 melee (1d6+1, short sword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +8 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit. 19–20 x2); SA: Sneak Attack +2d6; AL LE; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 12.

**Skills and Feats:** Balance +7, Climb +5, Escape Artist +7, Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6, Sense Motive +3, Spot +4, Swim +4, Tumble +5; Trap finding, Evasion, Trap sense +1; Weapon Finesse, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus [light crossbow]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

Possessions: leather armor, short sword, light crossbow, *potion of cure light wounds* (CL 5), *potion of haste* (CL 5), 2d10 gp.

**Molorchus:** Male Half-fiend (augmented humanoid) (native outsider), Fighter 8; CR 10; SZ Medium; HD 8d10+8; hp 50; Init +2; Spd 30ft. {20}, fly 30ft. (average); AC 22 (+1 Natural, +10 +2 *full plate* [improved fire resistance], +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 21; Base ATK / GRP +8 / +13; ATK +15 melee (1d12+10, green steel greataxe, crit. 19–20 x3) or claw +13 melee (1d4+5); Full ATK +15 / +10 melee (1d12+10, green steel greataxe, crit. 19–20 x3) or 2 claws +13 melee (1d4+5) and 1 bite +8 melee (1d6+2); SQ: Half-fiend traits; SA: 1 / day Smite Good (8 points extra damage); spell-like abilities: 3 / day *darkness*, 1 / day *desecrate*, 1 / day *unholy blight*, 3 / day *Poison*; AL N/E; SV Fort +7 {+8}, Ref +4 {+5}, Will +3 {+4}; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 13, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +15 {+9}, Intimidate +13, Jump +15 {+9}, Listen +3, Spot +3, Sense Motive +4; Improved Critical [greataxe], Weapon Focus [greataxe], Weapon Specialization [greataxe], Combat Expertise, Power Attack, Cleave, Great Cleave, Combat Reflexes; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering that the armor and the magic cloak are donned.

Possessions: +2 *full plate* [improved fire resistance], masterwork green steel\* greataxe, *potion of eagle's splendor* (CL 5), *potion of resist energy [cold]* 20 (CL 10), *cloak of resistance* +1, 15 gp, a pouch with several gems worth 1,800 gp in total.

\* Hellish green steel confers a special keen to slashing and piercing weapons, providing an attack bonus of +1. This bonus does not stack with other enhancement bonuses.

**Subius:** Male Half-fiend (augmented humanoid) (native outsider), Barbarian 5; CR 7; SZ Medium; HD 5d12+20; hp 60; Init +3; Spd 40ft., fly 30ft. (average); AC 17 (+1 Natural, +3 studded leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +11; ATK +13 melee (1d10+11, +2 *maul*, crit. x3) or claw +11 melee (1d4+6); Full ATK +13 melee (1d10+11, +2 *maul*, crit. x3) or 2 claws +11 melee (1d4+6) and 1 bite +6 melee (1d6+3); SQ: Half-fiend traits; SA: 1 / day Smite Good (5 points extra damage); spell-like abilities: 3 / day *Darkness*, 1 / day *Desecrate*, 1 / day *Unholy Blight*; AL C/E; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 22, Dex 16, Con 19, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9 {+8}, Intimidate +5, Jump +9 {+8}, Swim +9 {+7}, Survival +4; Fast movement, Rage 2 / day, Uncanny dodge, Trap sense +1, Improved uncanny dodge, Endurance, Die hard;

Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, with light and medium armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

Possessions: +2 *maul*, studded leather armor, *horn of fog*, boots of the winterlands, *potion of haste* (CL 5), *potion of bull's strength* (CL 6), 10 gp.

**Bugbear (4):** CR 2; hp 20, 18, 18, 17; see the MM.

On the north side of the room are 3 amphorae and 8 barrels full of alcoholic beverages (worth 25 gp per container). On the east side are three complete suits of medium-sized platemail armor.

Note that all the doors on this floor are *arcane locked* and disguised as wall sections by the *guards and wards* spell.

## 15. Armory (EL —)

This room is full of weapons of every kind, most of them randomly strewn about on the floor. Among them is a +1 *heavy crossbow*. Other nonmagical weapons include 2 daggers, 1 light mace, 2 heavy maces, 1 morning star, 3 longspears, 2 spears, 2 light crossbows and 3 bolt cases with 20 bolts within, 2 javelins, 1 light hammer, 1 hand axe, 2 light wooden shield, 1 heavy steel shield, 1 light steel spiked shield, 2 short swords, 1 battleaxe, 2 longswords, 1 scimitar, 2 warhammers, 1 halberd, 1 ranseur, 2 longbows and 2 quivers with 25 arrows.

## 16. Cleric Room (EL —)

Dulluth, the leader of the sect, uses this room during his (rare) visits to Ulabius. If inspected, it is clear that this room has not been used recently.

A veil of dust covers the floor and the furniture. The bed is made and the clothing is of the finest silk and wool (worth 100 gp). The room contains also an altar depicting Zailhess.

In the cupboard, there are some clothes and other valueless personal belongings. The chest is locked and contains an obsidian idol depicting Zailhess, an obese humanoid with a skull face, 4 thick black candles, 2 sticks of nonmagical incense, a *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 6), a violet piece of cloth that enfolds a golden spoon (worth 15 gp) and a ceremonial knife with a silver blade, its ivory handle crafted to resemble the head of a dragon (worth 75 gp).

**Reinforced Wooden Chest:** Hardness 11, hp 35, Break DC 24, Open Lock DC 27

In a drawer of the desk there is a short note written by Dulluth.

*Luopold,*

*You have chosen a very good location for the temple. It appears that nobody knows of the ancient tunnels. Moreover, the valley is simply too hidden to be discovered by chance. Even if someone discovers the old temple of the*

drow, nobody will think that we are building a new temple on the other side of the road. I am satisfied and ...

The note has never been completed and delivered because Dulluth was afraid that someone could have intercepted it and reveal the existence of the new temple to Zailhess in the secret valley in the Ashen Hills (see chapter 8).

### 17. Mercenaries Rooms (EL —)

The mercenaries use these two rooms as sleeping quarters. Twelve chests are present. The chests are locked and contain, along with clothes and other personal effects, 1d20 sp and 1d4 gp each. In one of the chests is a *+1 dagger*. In another chest there is a leather pouch containing three red spinels worth 15 gp each and a *potion of heal*.

**Wooden Chests:** Hardness 6, hp 13, Break DC 18, Open Lock DC 20.

The secret doors are concealed by the tapestry.

### 18. Kitchen (EL —)

This room is used as a kitchen to prepare the meals for the stronghold inhabitants. There is nothing of interest here apart from cooking implements, a barrel with fresh water and an amphora half-full of red wine.

## Guard Towers

### 19. Mercenaries' Rooms (EL —)

This room (as well as number 22) is used by higher-level mercenaries. The bedding is of good cotton and the covers are of heavy wool. The cushions in the middle of the room are filled with down. Near the beds are two chests containing personal belongings, 2 spare suits of chainmail, 2 short swords, a *potion of haste* (CL 5), a *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 5), 2d10 gp and 3d12 sp. The chests are locked.

**Heavy Wooden Chest:** Hardness 8, hp 25, Break DC 22, Open Lock DC 26.

### 20. Guard Room (EL —)

This room contains a wooden table, four chairs and two benches. Three windows allow a good view of the area in front of the fortress. There is nothing of interest here.

### 21. Terrace (EL —)

This terrace offers a perfect view of the stronghold surroundings. It is equipped with five heavy ballistae. The ballistae are not functional though, since the strings are still missing. The missing strings and 40 heavy bolts are stored on the terrace in a large unlocked chest. These weapons were recent acquired by Ulabius and have not been completely installed, yet.

### 22. Mercenaries' Room (EL —)

This room is practically identical to room 19. In the chests are 1d4 pp, 2d10 gp, 2d8 sp, 2 potions of *cure light wounds* (CL 3), 2 light crossbows and 2 suits of leather armor.

### 23. Guard Room (EL —)

This room is identical to room 20. On the table is a set of ivory dice worth 10 gp.

## Mage Tower

### 24. Evocation Room (EL 5)

This room is completely empty except for a large brazier in the corner. On the floor is a painted pentagram, a five-pointed star symbol inscribed into a circle. The symbol has been traced using blood. A vague smell of smoke lingers in the air.

If someone lights the brazier and a devil's true name is spoken, the powerful summoning spell is evoked in the pentagram as if a *greater planar binding* has been cast. The evoker is also protected by a *circle of protection from evil*. If no name is spoken when the brazier is lit, a fire elemental exits the brazier and attacks anyone on sight.

**Large Fire Elemental (1):** CR 5; hp 65; see the MM.

### 25. Relaxation Room (EL 6)

A huge corner fireplace dominates this room. Two comfortable leather armchairs are in front of it. On the opposite corner, there is a desk with a chair. In another corner, there is a small library and bookshelf.

Inside the fireplace is a salamander with Tourette's syndrome that produces a peculiar sound while jutting its tongue in and out of its jaws. The sound is heard by anyone succeeding a DC 13 Listen check.

The half-fiends keep the magical beast as a pet. The salamander is happy with its status, since it can enjoy the comfort of the stronghold fireplaces and often can feed on the meat of humanoids offered to it by its "masters." The salamander attacks anyone disturbing its rest that it does not recognize as a member of its "family."

**Average Salamander (1):** CR 6; hp 61; see the MM.

The books of the library are texts of history, geography and of more mundane sort. They can be sold as a whole for 100 gp.

### 26. Ulabius' Room (EL 11)

Ulabius waits for the party in this room (his stats are given in the NPC Appendix; note that if he was

defeated at the end of chapter 4, he does not have the *medallion of the shield guardian*).

Ulabius has already cast *shield*, *protection from arrows*, *see invisibility*, *minor globe of invulnerability* and *animate dead*. When the summoned undead occupy the PCs in melee in the close quarters of the room, he attacks them with *waves of fatigue*, *dominate person* and *fear*. Then he uses the scrolls of *contagion* and *interposing hand*, and finally his *wand of summon monster* (earlier if the undead are destroyed). He does not fear to fight in melee knowing that his clone, a new one in case he was defeated during the fight at the end of chapter 4, is waiting upstairs. In melee, he uses his *wand of vampiric touch* and *rod of cancellation*.

There is a comfortable king-sized bed with soft bedding and a fireplace decorated with tiny gargoyles with many feather-filled cushions in front of it. A cupboard with soap, flavored powders, bath clothing, and other personal belongings is in the northeast corner. Inside the pouch of one robe is a scroll case containing a scroll of *alarm* (CL 5). Beneath the eastern window, there is a bathtub crafted from sandalwood (300 gp).

At the foot of the bed is a locked, reinforced chest. The chest is trapped with a *sepia snake sigil*.

**Reinforced Heavy Wooden Chest:** Hardness 9, hp 35, Break DC 28, Open Lock DC 31.

**Sepia Snake Sigil Trap:** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*sepia snake sigil*, 5th-level wizard, DC 14 Reflex save negates); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Inside the chest, there is a *bag of holding* type IV and a *crystal ball with telepathy*. There is also a small piece of paper with a hand-written note, written after Ulabius' first visit to the hidden valley (see chapter 8):

There is the temple of Dulluth  
In the forest after the wolves  
The three fingers is the path  
Go straight into the tunnel  
Do not take supply  
Do not wander for wonders

## 27. Ulabius' Library (EL 15)

This room is the library of Ulabius and his "sancta sanctorum." Here, the wizard studies his spells and performs his magical research. In this room, in two heavily trapped chests, is his treasure. In addition, his clone is here, waiting for his soul when he dies.

If the party defeats Ulabius in the room downstairs, his soul is immediately transported here inside the clone body. Ulabius then readies himself again for the fight by casting *mirror image*, *summon monster III* and *spectral hand*. Once the party enters the room, he attacks with a *spectral hand* from behind the summoned creatures using *chill touch*, *shocking grasp*, *ghoul touch* and *vampiric touch*.

If things are going bad for him, Ulabius casts *circle of death* and *wall of fire*. Then, he becomes *invisible* and tries to reach the underground cavern where he frees the imprisoned monsters hoping to cover his retreat.

The bookcases are trapped with powerful glyphs. They are triggered whenever someone gets within 5 feet without Ulabius being in the room. Those in the northeast corner have a glyph that simulates the effect of a *power word kill* (DC 23). The one in the southeast corner, near the glass cylinder that contained Ulabius clone, blasts as a *cone of cold* spell (caster level 17, DC 19). The last one is in front of the two chests on the western wall and operates as a *flesh to stone* spell (DC 20).

The bookshelves contain many non-magical treatises on geography, history, natural science, necromancy, anatomy, heraldry and prestidigitation. The complete collection has a value of at least 10,000 gp. Disguised among them are six spellbooks containing all the spells known by Ulabius. The spellbook's pages are disguised by means of various *secret page* spells as tomes about flowers and other aromatic herbs. The illusion spells are all cast at 11th level.

The two chests are metallic and contain what remains of Ulabius' treasure. They are trapped with two mechanical traps.

**Metallic Chests:** Hardness 12, hp 28, Break DC 33, Open Lock DC 31.

**Lock smeared with contact poison:** CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (nitharit, DC 13 Fortitude save resists, — / 3d6 Con); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 19.

**Poisoned dart trap:** CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +15 ranged (1d4+4 plus poison, dart); multiple targets (1 dart per target in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. area); poison (Small monstrous centipede poison, DC 10 Fortitude save resists, 1d2 Dex / 1d2 Dex); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 22.

In the first chest are 5,000 gp and various small gems for a total value of 5,000 gp.

The second chest contains a *wand of summon monster III* (CL 5) [18 charges], a *wand of lightning bolt* (CL 8) [24 charges], a *rod of lesser metamagic* (maximize) [11 charges], a *potion of mage armor* (CL 5), a *potion of blur* (CL 5) and a *ring of water walking*.

## Central Tower

### 28. Dining Room (EL 7)

A long rectangular table and ten chairs almost completely fill this room. The pottery and the cutlery do not look expensive. Behind the table is a large fireplace decorated with small statues of demonic aspect.

On the sides of the room are four ogres sitting on stools. Ulabius has only recently recruited these mon-

sters and they have not yet received quarters in the stronghold. For the moment, they are using rooms 34 and 35. The half-fiends use the ogres as lesser guards and openly despise them. Therefore, the ogres do not fight to death and, will attempt to parley with the PCs. If seriously threatened, they surrender.

During a fight, at the start of every round, have the two ogres in room 34 make a Listen check (DC 20) to see if they hear the noises of the fight and join their comrades.

**Ogre (4):** CR 3; hp 35, 33, 30, 28; see the MM.

Possessions: greatclub, 1d4 gp.

### 29. Subius' Room (EL —)

This room is furnished with a large bed with a red woolen cover, a small cupboard and a massive fireplace. This is the room used by the half-fiend Subius. In the cupboard are some clothes and a well-worn nonmagical maul. In a corner of the cupboard, half-hidden (Spot check DC 15), there is a vial with a reddish liquid inside. This is a *contaminated potion of haste*. If drunk, it reduces the intelligence of the imbibier by two points for 1d4 hours if a DC 17 Fortitude save is failed.

### 30. Jama's Room (EL —)

This room is impregnated of a stinging smell of musk. Hanging from the walls, all around a fireplace, there are stuffed heads of many wild animals, including boars, tigers and bears. The room contains also a bed, a desk and a cupboard.

The cupboard contains some worn-out leather clothes, a broken belt, and the tools and straw necessary to stuff animals. The desk is empty but in a drawer there is a pouch with two diamonds (worth 500 gp each) and a golden ring that is, in reality, a *ring of delusion (invisibility)*.

### 31. Explosive Traps (EL 5)

The light that filters through a stained glass window illuminates this room. The window has a geometric pattern that resembles a red flower. On both sides of the window are statues of a woman in the act of offering a cup. The statues are made from a strange bluish stone and are 8-feet high.

The room is trapped. If someone walks over the designated area (see the map), two fire bursts explode.

**Fire Burst Trap:** CR 3; mechanical device; location trigger; automatic reset; 5d4 fire (DC 12 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 21; Disable Device DC 23.

The cups of the statues function like *bags of devouring* that the stronghold inhabitants use them to get rid of refuse.

### 32. Molorchus' Room (EL 8)

The room is simple and functional. The bed is large and has a woolen cover with an intricate pattern of red and green geometric figures. At the side of the bed there is a fireplace. It is amazingly clean. Opposite the bed, there is a big wooden desk and a chest.

On the west side of the room there is also a toilette, with a bath and a cupboard with soap and fresh clothes.

In the desk drawer is a flexible stick about 3-feet long. Molorchus likes to fustigate his victims to death and use the desk to this end. He forces his victims to bend over it, then he ties them to the desk feet and finally beats them to death. A successful DC 18 Search check discovers some small stains of dried blood on the desk.

The chest is locked and trapped. It contains the personal belongings of Molorchus. Hidden among them are two pouches contain 1,000 gp each.

**Wooden Chest:** Hardness 8, hp 15, Break DC 23, Open Lock DC 26.

**Insanity Mist Vapor Trap:** CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (insanity mist, DC 15 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Wis / 2d6 Wis); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

Under the bed is another chest that contains a spiked suite of chainmail.

### 33. Gwedda's Room (EL —)

This room is simply furnished with a soft bed with laced silky clothing, a bookcase and a wooden chest. Opposite the bed is a fireplace with a fire burning.

Inside the fireplace is a *magic log* burns without being consumed by the fire. If the log is taken out of the fire, the fire goes out. The chest is unlocked and contains many beautiful women's clothes, woven from precious fabrics (three robes are worth 200 gp each). The bookshelves contain books of geography and treatises on the lower planes, especially Gehenna and the Abyss. The books have no special value except to those interested in these subjects.

### 34. Guard Post (EL 5)

Two ogres sit on a bench in this room unless they have joined a fight in another part of the stronghold. These ogres are part of the same group of the ogres of room 28. They fight anyone they do not recognize but they do so without much gusto, and if seriously threatened, they surrender.

**Ogre (2):** CR 3; hp 35, 33, see the MM.

Possessions: greatclub, 1d3 gp.

### 35. Relaxation Room (EL —)

This room is currently used by the ogres in areas 28 and 34. In the library between the two rooms are many books of legends and lore. Having access to the books of the library provides a +2 circumstance bonus on Gather Information rolls, Bardic Knowledge checks for all local legends.

### 36. Room of the High Sorcery (EL 8)

This room is realized in order to be used by powerful magic-users to enhance their skills. Traced on the ground there are perfect circles for evocation, teleportation, and thaumaturgy. Any spell cast in this room is considered powered by a spell-caster two levels above her actual level with respect to any variable effect like duration, area of effect, etc.

One part of the room is trapped with a dimensional pit trap. When the trap is triggered by someone stepping over it, the victim is sent in a dimensional pocket (as with the *maze* spell) where he falls into a pit. If the victim survives, he is still under the normal effect of the *maze* spell.

**Dimensional Pit Trap:** CR 8; magical and mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; never miss; 60 ft. deep (6d6, fall); DC 20 Intelligence check; Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

## Ulabius' Fate

If Ulabius succeeds in escaping from the stronghold, he realizes that he has been defeated and that the sect is doomed to disaster. He leaves the Frontier and flees to his arch-mage friend in the South to contemplate his defeat and to plan his revenge. This is a good opportunity for the DM to create a recurring enemy in an on-going campaign!

## Chapter Awards

Defeating Ulabius in his own stronghold is worth an additional 1,000 XP bonus.

Once freed, the stronghold could be used by the party as an operational base. This is suggested by Sir Krilmar who would be happy to have some help in ruling the region. Any character of lawful good, neutral good or lawful neutral alignment is seen favorable to become the owner of the fortress.

# Chapter Eight: The Enemy Revealed

*In which the heroes save the world from the re-birth of an evil god after having crossed shadowy tunnels, fought powerful minions and rescued their lord.*

In the stronghold of Ulabius, the party has discovered the existence of a temple in a mysterious valley. It is here they must seek the evil sect. As is clear from the clues, the valley is located somewhere in the Ashen Hills. Access is provided by an ancient tunnel whose exact location, unfortunately, is not known.

In the valley, the sect has built a new temple to Zailhess and is preparing to celebrate the final rites to free their god from its prison. While the party is questing for the ancient tunnel, Dulluth, the leader of the sect, tricks Lord Rediron in delivering the spheres to him. He invites the lord to an isolated farm near the Owl Tower to discuss the spheres. He pretends to be an important sage from the South who may be able to resurrect his daughter.

At the farm, the paladin and his escort are attacked. All the soldiers are killed and Lord Rediron is captured. The sect plans to kill him in the ceremony to free the god.

When the party finds the tunnel and reaches the secret valley, Dulluth and all his minions are inside the temple. The party must hurry to stop the paladin's sacrifice and to prevent the return Zailhess.

## The Research of the Bear

Finding the tunnel is difficult, and the PCs will likely need some help. They learn that the best person to ask is a man called "Bear" Nhuter, a lonely and surly trapper that has been seen the last time somewhere in the Ashen Hills, close to the spring of the Aciier River.

Finding him is not easy, and it takes the party 1d4+3 days of travel in the area to meet him, maybe after several random encounters.

Once they find him, a huge muscled man dressed only with bad-smelling furs, they realize that the sudden company does not at all please the trapper. His initial reaction is unfriendly. The man has lived many years in complete solitude, walking the hills and forests with only company of his dog. The party needs to convince him to cooperate.

**"Bear" Nhuter:** Male Human, Warrior 4 / Ranger 4; CR 6; SZ Medium; HD 8d8; hp 41; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 12 (+1 padded armor, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 11; Base ATK / GRP +8 / +9; ATK +9

melee (1d6+1, club, crit. x2) or +12 ranged (1d8+2, +2 longbow, crit. x3); Full ATK +9 / +4 melee (1d6+1, club, crit. x2) or +12 / +7 ranged (1d8+2, +2 longbow, crit. x3); AL C/N; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

**Skills and Feats:** Climb +4, Handle Animal +9, Hide +4, Intimidate +3, Jump +4, Knowledge (geography) +4, Knowledge (nature) +6, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spot +3, Survival +7, Swim +4; Animal Affinity, Skill Focus [Handle Animal], Skill Focus [Survival], Weapon Focus [Longbow]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Possessions:** +2 longbow, padded armor, 3 sp, club.

**Dougyy, Nhuter's animal companion (a dog):** CR 1/3; SZ Small; Animal (augmented); HD 1d8+2; hp 8; Init +3; SPD 40ft.; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural), touch 14, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +0 / -3; ATK Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); Full ATK Bite +2 melee (1d4+1); Space / Reach 5 ft. / 5 ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6; Skills: Jump +7, Listen +5, Spot +5, Survival +1\*; Feats: Alertness, Track<sup>B</sup>, Link, Share Spells.

See the MM and the PHB for more about dogs and animal companions.

In the end, if the PCs convince the trapper to help them. He listens or looks at the clues gathered by the party and after a minute or two of grunts and mumbling, says: "I am pretty sure I know this place. You need to cross the forest at the point where there is the secondary branch of the river ... you know ... at the Wolves Bog. After the forest, you see the hills. There is a valley there ... and a hill that looks like a hand with only three fingers ... find that hill ... and you'll find the tunnel! ... and now ... can I ask you to leave me alone?"

With this information, it takes only 1d3 days of searching in the mentioned area of the hills to find the tunnel entrance. If they fail, it takes 2d4 days.

## The Ancient Tunnel

The tunnel was built long-ago by an ancient race. Its entrance is disguised into the hill face under a rock formation, and it is difficult to notice its existence is unknown (Spot DC 40, Search DC 18). The original tunnel was connected to many secondary branches. Most of them are now obstructed by cave-ins, collapsed ceilings and the like.

The principal tunnel, as well as the secondary branches, were excavated from the crude stone. The walls and ceiling are of hewn stone reinforced with stone arches. The floor is of rubble. The tunnel is about 20 feet wide and 10 feet high, but the actual dimensions vary frequently from one place to another. About every 2 miles, a narrow chimney connects to the outside and provides ventilation. Water seeps, earthquakes and the like have damaged the original structure. However, it is perfectly stable and does not present any hazard.

Inside this tunnel are many wonders, vestiges of the ancient civilization and extraordinary natural features. In this module there are some sample descriptions of some areas.

## Key Areas of the Tunnels

See the map at the end of the module for an overview of the tunnels.

### 1. Tunnel Entrance (EL —)

The tunnel entrance is simply a hole in the hill, about 25 feet wide and 12 feet high. Inside the tunnel, there is no light and all the sounds are somewhat softened. When walking, a faint echo can be heard.

## Rest Area

### 2. Rest Area (EL —)

Every about 15 miles there is a rest area. The corridors of this area are easily distinguished by the hewn passages of the other areas since their floors are paved with heavy flagstones and the walls and ceiling are of carved masonry.

### 3. Dining Room (EL —)

This cavern looks like a luxury dining room, with a long table for up to twenty people. The table is so big that there is almost no other space in the room. The room and the table are here since ages, but no dust accumulates in the. The table is magic. If anyone sits at a chair, the plates and glasses in front of her become full of food and drink. Consuming the meal has the same effect of a heroes' feast spell. The table cannot be used more than once in a day.

Taking the table or a chair out of the room suppresses the magical effect until the table and all the chairs are back in the room. If either the table or any of the chairs are destroyed or sent to another plane, the magical effect is disrupted forever.

### 4. Storeroom (EL —)

The ancient builders of the tunnel used this cavern as a storeroom for supplies and more mundane food and drinks. The room is empty.

## 5. Sleeping Rooms (EL —)

These rooms are filled with beds. They are made of wood and clearly signs of age. Nevertheless, they are still solid and comfortable, with fresh bedding changed magically every day. In every room, there is a magic brazier that emits a sweet soothing smoke. These braziers burns forever and cannot be extinguished in any way. If anything is taken out of the rooms, the magical effect is suppressed until they are returned.

Everyone sleeping in these rooms heals at twice the normal speed. This effect stacks with other benefits like being under the cure of a character with the Heal ability. In addition, every cure spell cast here acts as if has been enhanced by the *maximize* metamagic feat.

## Eye Tyrant's Lair

This area is not part of the original construction. A Eye Tyrant "patrol" has found its way into the tunnel. They came from the Underdark about ten years ago, when their disintegration beams completed a vertical circular tunnel. They discovered a series of natural caverns that the hive mother decided to acquire as lair. Then they started to disintegrate the rocks to create a tunnel to connect to the outside world. At a certain point, about two years ago, their tunnel merged with the one built in the ancient age.

The Eye Tyrants understood the potential of this discovery and began to explore the ancient tunnels. So far, they have not encountered the minions of the sect, but they have found clues that humanoids are using the tunnel. The group leader intends to find these humanoids and enslave them.

The tunnel excavated by the Eye Tyrants is almost circular, and its walls look like vitrified stones. A spell-user can realize with a successful Spellcraft check (DC 16) that the tunnel has been *disintegrated*.

### Wandering off in the Tunnels

At this point, the party should feel a sense of urgency complete the adventure and confront with the sect leader. Therefore, the PCs are probably going to go straight through the primary tunnel until its end and reach the hidden valley. If they spend time exploring the secondary tunnels, though, here are some examples of what they could find. DMs could expand this area to include many new adventures, including the Underdark or even connections to other planes of existence.

These tunnels could be used also after the sect is defeated as a massive dungeon to be explored, with marvels and secrets to be discovered, tremendous monsters to be defeated and hordes of treasure to be found.



## 6. Inner Lair (EL 15)

The major feature of this cavern is a vertical tunnel, roughly circular with a diameter of about 10 feet, which seems to go down in the earth depth without an end. In fact, the tunnel is almost a mile deep and exits into a huge cavern of the Underdark.

Four gauths and one Eye Tyrant, levitate in the darkness and are hardly visible. They get a +10 circumstance bonus on their Hide check against the party Spot check in the rolls for determining surprise (halve this bonus against characters with the darkvision feat). The beholders attack anyone entering their lair relentlessly and pitiless.

**Gauth (4):** CR 6; hp 54, 50, 48, 44; see the MM.

**Eye Tyrant (1):** CR 13; hp 110; see the MM.

## 7. The Lonely Orb (EL 6)

A Gauth levitates in this cavern. It has a +10 circumstance bonus on its Hide check (halve this bonus against characters with the darkvision feat). If the party does not spot the monster, it attacks by surprise.

**Gauth (1):** CR 6; hp 48; see the MM.

## 8. Treasure Cavern (EL 8)

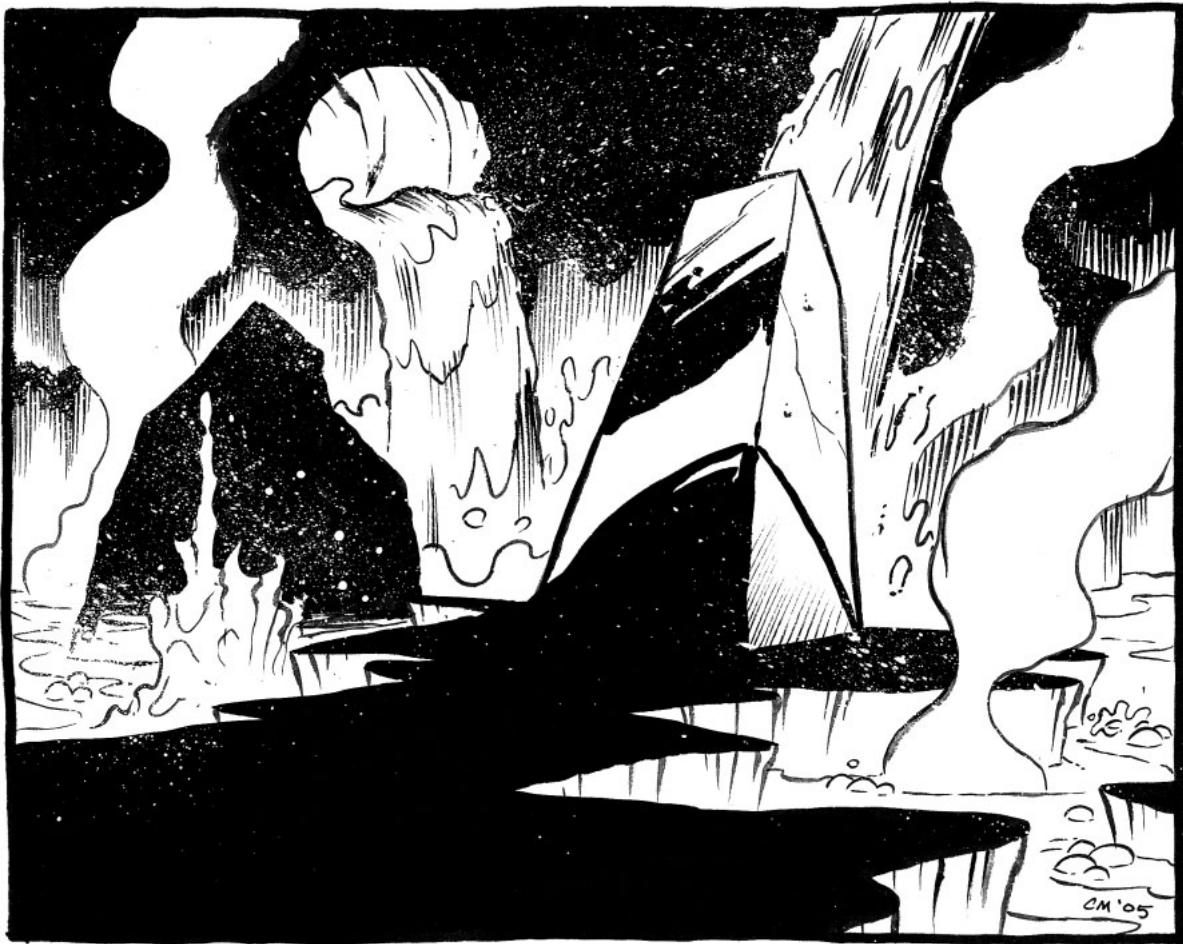
This cavern contains the treasure pile of the hive that is guarded by two gauths.

**Gauth (2):** CR 6; hp 51, 44 see the MM.

The pile consists of 1,200 gp, 20 pieces of rhodocrosite (10 gp each), a golden topaz (600 gp), a black opal (800 gp), a brown diamond (4,500 gp), a silver mask with emerald insets (2,500 gp), a golden necklace (300 gp), 2 golden earrings with gray pearls (300 gp the pair), a 5-minute silver hourglass with golden sand (500 gp), +4 scale mail, +3 halberd, ring of improved climbing, rod of metal and mineral detection.

## Lava Pits

This part of the ancient complex has been almost completely filled with molten rock. The temperature in the few points of this area where it is possible to walk is barely bearable, ranging from 120° to 140°F, and there is the risk (at DM discretion) for PCs to fall into the lava pits or to be hit by jets of molten stones that erupt out of the lava rivers. The DMG details the effects of contact with lava and of walking in a very hot environment. A hit by a lava jet inflicts 1d8 points of bludgeoning damage and 2d6 points of heat



damage (Reflex save DC 16 avoids). Many creatures with the fire subtype now call the area home.

### 9. Cavern of the Monolith (EL —)

This cavern is a high vault that reaches 60 ft. in its highest point. The cavern is empty except for a huge black monolith, about 50 ft. high. The base of the monolith is heptagonal with a side width of about 7 ft. The surface of the monolith is translucent and well polished. At about two third of its height, there is a ring made of red stone, 20 ft. of diameter and 1 ft. of thickness, perfectly fitted within the black pyramid.

The monolith immediately absorbs any spell or spell-like ability cast within 30 feet, spoiling its effect. There is no clue of the initial function of this structure but any attempt to damage or move it causes the immediate death (Fort save (DC 35)) of the one attempting it.

### 10. The Efreeti (EL 8)

There is an Efreeti resting in this area. He is not an inhabitant of the area but the lava complex has attracted him to this peaceful place. He is not immediately aggressive and prefers to talk rather than to fight. He could even grant wishes in exchange for precious information and magic items.

If a fight occurs, the DM should referee possible tactics include pushing or tripping the PCs into the lava.

**Efreeti (1): CR 8; hp 80; see the MM.**

### 11. The Rast (EL 5)

A rast has been captured by a plane vortex in the elemental plane of fire and thrown into this area where it is now trapped. It is furious and attacks anyone on sight.

**Rast (1): CR 5; hp 25; see the MM.**

### 12. The Hellish Pack (EL 5)

A group of three hell hounds has found their way into this area. They attack anyone on sight, since they are quite hungry.

**Hell Hound (3): CR 3; hp 28, 26, 22; see the MM.**

## The Submerged Temple

After a few secondary branches that wiggle, turn, bend, split, and rejoin, a section with a straight corridor starts. The corridor has a very slight slope. The ceiling (8 ft. high) and the walls (6 ft. wide) are of good masonry. The floor is of polished flagstones and presents a repetitive geometric pattern of squares and circles. Three sets stairs go down about 60 ft. Just

before the third stair, the corridor ends in an underground lake.

The water has submerged the final part of the complex and almost completely filled a huge cavern. In the cavern, ancient inhabitants built a temple that is now under the water. It is almost perfectly preserved. The cavern is 200 ft. wide and 100 ft. high. A stream of water fills the cavern from the North side and another stream keeps the level constant at about 80 ft. by emptying the cavern from the southern wall.

### 13. The Underwater Temple (EL 6)

If someone gets close to the lake for at least a few rounds, they attract the attention of a hydra that makes this lake its lair. The monster attacks any intruders but retreats to the temple under the water to recover if seriously hurt.

**Seven-headed Hydra (1):** CR 6; SZ Huge Magical Beast; HD 7d10+38; hp 75; Init +1; SPD 20ft., swim 20ft.; AC 17 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +8 natural), touch 9, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +7 / +19; ATK 7 bites +10 melee (1d10+4); Full ATK 7 bites +10 melee (1d10+4); Space / Reach 15 ft. / 10 ft.; SA —; SQ Darkvision 60 ft., fast healing 17, low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +10, Ref +6, Will +4; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 20, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 9; Skills: Listen +7, Spot +7, Swim +12; Feats: Combat Reflexes<sup>B</sup>, Iron Will, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite).

See the MM for more about hydras.

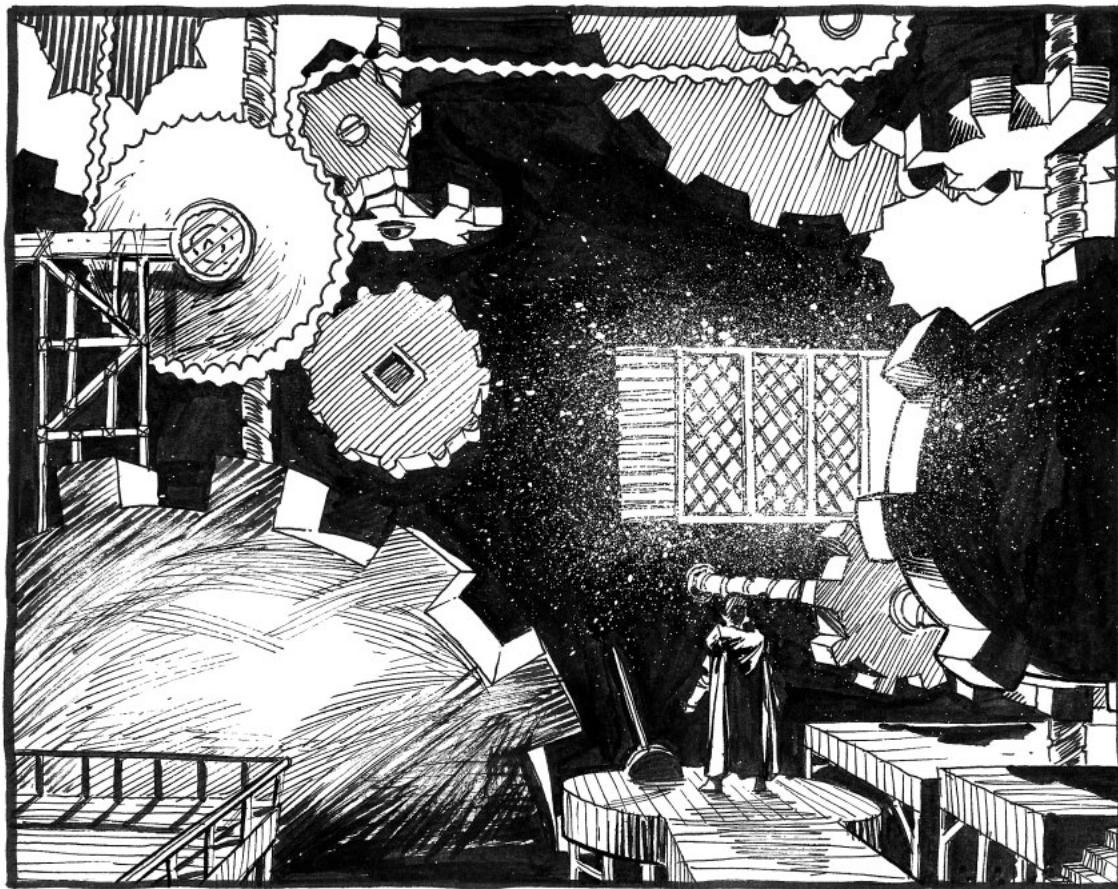
The temple can be reached by anyone brave enough and properly equipped to explore the lake. Of course, the explorer must have a magical source of illumination. Characters with darkvision are only able to see the basic outline of the temple and the hydra moving among its columns.

The floor of the cavern was raised about 3 ft. and leveled in its center to provide the base of the temple. It is an open structure with two rows of five massive columns at each side of what looks like a central isle. The corridor from the main tunnel ends in front of this isle where there are two large statues of armored fighters with two greataxes, one on each hand. The statues seem to look towards a stone slab, perhaps an altar, on the other side of the temple. There are also two basins at the two eastern sides and two stone sarcophagi on the northern and southern sides of the structure.

The two statues were part of a trap that is no longer functioning. Their greataxes would hit anyone stepping on the floor between the two statues. The water and the passing of time have damaged the trap mechanism that now is completely disabled.

The sarcophagi have been also damaged and are filled with water. Inside there are a few bones. In the northern sarcophagus, there is also a +3 short sword, with the handle encrusted with many gems. The southern sarcophagus looks empty and requires a DC 25 Spot check to notice a small iron ring in one corner. It is a ring of force shield.





## The Clockwork Area

These secondary tunnels look exactly like the others. Once someone walks into them, they hear a mechanical ticking. The clatter becomes louder when getting close to area 15 (see below).

### 14. The Burrowing Monster (EL 3)

A wandering ankheg, lured here by the ticking, has found its way into this tunnel, and is now in front of the party. If seriously hurt the ankheg retreats into its burrow.

**Ankheg (1):** CR 3; hp 28; see the MM.

### 15. The Clockwork Room (EL —)

Everyone getting closer to this room hears an increasingly noisy clattering. The room is completely full of gears and other clockwork mechanisms. They turn and move with indefinable patterns and sequences. The room walls, ceiling and floor are covered with shiny steel. A buzzing noise is in the background of all the other louder ticks and tocks. Sometimes, a spark is emitted from the gears and springs. On the wall to the right of the passage, there are five big levers.

The real function of this room is now lost in memory. Interacting with the levers make the gears, springs and noises change slightly, but nothing special hap-

pens. Trying to stop any of the clockwork mechanism is dangerous and can result in serious injury if someone gets caught into the moving gears or hit by a spring. If someone attempts to disable the clockworks, they must roll a Reflex save (DC 21). Each point the save is failed by causes 1d6 damage.

### Tunnel Exit

### 16. Exit (EL 8)

The tunnel ends in a terrace that faces the hidden valley and the temple within (see below). On the terrace, four guards immediately raise an alarm by hitting a huge gong if they see someone unknown to them. The noise of the gong echoes in the whole valley. The guards then drink their *potions of haste* and fight to death. No reinforcements arrive.

**Sect Guard (4):** Male half-orc, Warrior 2 / Barbarian 3; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+3d12+15; hp 55, 52, 50, 47; Init +2; Spd 40ft.; AC 15 (+3 studded leather armor, +2 Dex), touch 12, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +10; ATK +10 melee (2d4+7, falchion, crit. 18-20, x2) or +10 melee (1d12+7, greataxe, crit. x2); Full ATK +10 / +5 melee (2d4+7, falchion, crit. 18-20, x2) or +10 / +5 melee (1d12+7, greataxe, crit. x2); SQ Darkvision 60ft., Orc Blood; AL C/E; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 20, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +7 {+6}, Jump +7 {+6}, Listen +4, Spot +3, Survival +4; Fast movement, Rage 1 / day, Uncanny Dodge, Trap Sense +1; Power Attack, Cleave; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* falchion or greataxe, studded leather armor, 3d10 gp, *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 7), *potion of haste* (CL 6).

## The Hidden Valley

The tunnel ends in a natural terrace about 500 ft. above ground. From the terrace is a magnificent view of a small valley about 200 x 500 ft. surrounded by cliffs. The sky above the valley is visible through a shimmering dome of clear azure light.

Inside the valley, on the west side, are ruins that have fallen prey to time. On the other side, there is a more recent construction. A huge pyramid-like structure made of three steps with a glass dome on its top is present. Two stairs start from the ground and reach the top level of this ziggurat. On the side of the ziggurat facing the terrace there is the entrance--a huge black and crimson stone skull with open jaws.

On the terrace is a stone stair without banisters that reaches the ground level of the valley. Every 100 ft., PCs descending the stairs above half movement must

make a DC 13 Balance check (or a Dex check) to avoid falling. If they start falling, a DC 12 Tumble check (or another Dex check) is needed to avoid falling and taking falling damage.

Between the pyramid and the ancient ruins, there is a circle of black statues, six in total, all facing outwards. People on the terrace are too distant to distinguish any details of these statues.

The ruins are the remains of an ancient small settlement. There is nothing of interest here, as the sect members have already ransacked it.

The statues of the stone circle are 12 feet high and look like humanoids with animal faces. A lion, bear, eagle, owl, snake and a dog are all present. They were placed here by the ancient race as representations of their gods.

The shimmering dome is magic and has the functions to prevent any scrying attempt inside the valley and to block dimensional travel into and out of the valley itself.

## The Dead God Temple (EL 13)

Over the stairs of the ziggurat, waiting for the intruders that caused the alarm to be raised, are four hill giants and a mercenary group. The giants attack by throwing huge stones they have accumulated on the pyramid. While they are doing so, the mercenar-



ies fight from their elevated positions with ranged weapons. Then they all close for melee or to pursue enemies. This is the only line of defense for the cultists since the rest are inside the ziggurat preparing the final rites for the “resurrection” of the god.

**Hill Giant (4):** CR 7; hp 122, 116, 108, 104; see the MM.

**Luopold, Mercenaries' Leader (1):** Male Human, Warrior 8 / Fighter 3; CR 7; SZ Medium; HD 8d8+3d10+25; hp 88; Init -1; Spd 30ft. {20ft.}; AC 18 (+9 +2 *half plate*, -1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base ATK / GRP +11 / +15; ATK +18 melee (1d12+10, +2 *greataxe*, crit. x2) or +11 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow [+3 Str], crit. x3); Full ATK +18 / +13 / +8 melee (1d12+10, +2 *greataxe*, crit. x2) or +11 / +6 / +1 ranged (1d8+3, composite longbow [+3 Str], crit. x3); AL L/E; SV Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 8, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 8, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9 {+3}, Handle Animal +7, Intimidate +10, Jump +8 {+2}, Ride +5, Swim +11 {-1}, Spot +4; Toughness, Blind Fight, Weapon Focus [longbow], Weapon Focus [greataxe], Weapon Specialization [greataxe], Combat Expertise; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* composite longbow [+3 Str], +2 *greataxe*, +2 *half plate*, 3d10 gp, two golden earrings (worth 150 gp each), 2 potions of *cure moderate wounds* (CL 7), potion of *haste* (CL 8), potion of *bull's strength* (CL 5).

**Mercenary (6):** Male Human, Warrior 4; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 4d8+7; hp 33, 31, 28, 27, 25, 22; Init +1; Spd 30ft. {20ft.}; AC 15 (+4 scale mail, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +6; ATK +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20, x2) or +6 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, 19–20, crit. x2); Full ATK +7 melee (1d8+2, longsword, crit. 19–20, x2) or +6 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, 19–20, crit. x2); AL L/E; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +0; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 8, Cha 9.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +6 {+2}, Jump +5 {+1}, Ride +5, Swim +5 {-3}, Spot +1; Toughness, Weapon Focus [heavy crossbow], Weapon Focus [longsword]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* scale mail, longsword, heavy crossbow, 1d10 gp, potion of *cure moderate wounds* (CL 6).

**Ex-Guild's Mercenary (2):** Male Halfling, Rogue 3; CR 3; SZ Small; HD 3d6; hp 15, 13; Init +7; Spd 20ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +4; ATK +4 melee (1d4+1, short sword, crit. 19–20, x2) or +6 ranged (1d4, shortbow, crit. x3); Full ATK +4

melee (1d4+1, short sword, crit. 19–20, x2) or +6 ranged (1d4, shortbow, crit. x3); SQ +2 on saves against fear effects; SA sneak attack +2d6; AL N/E; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Balance +6, Climb +5, Disable Device +3, Escape Artist +6, Hide +10, Jump +6, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +6, Search +2, Sleight of Hand +6, Spot +3, Tumble +6, Use Rope +5; Trap Sense +1, Trap Finding, Evasion; Improved Initiative, Quick Draw; Proficient with all simple weapons plus hand crossbow, rapier, shortbow and short sword, and with light armors.

*Possessions:* leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 2d6 gp, potion of *cure light wounds* (CL 4).

## Key Areas of the Temple

See the temple map at the end of the module for an overview of the temple structure.

Unless otherwise noted, all the walls and ceiling are of superior masonry, carved in black stone. The floors are paved with polished red marble. The doors are normally not locked and are all carved with the symbol of Zailhhess, a humanoid skull with open mouth.

**Wooden Doors:** Hardness 5, hp 17, Break DC 19.

## Underground Level

### I. The Ritual Chamber (EL 17)

Access to this room is possible only through the two stairs from the ground level. The room has a hexagonal shape with a low ceiling not higher than 6 ft. A kind of black light emanates from six small rooms, placed at the vertexes of the hexagon. In the center of the room there is a stone altar where Sir Krilmar is lying helpless. In front of the altar is a hooded man with a long knife in his hand, praying in an unknown language. At his side are two shadowy figures.

Sir Krilmar has been forced to drink a sedative poison and is now unconscious. He cannot be awakened in any way before the sedative effect fades, 10 minutes after the PCs enter the room. The man with the knife is Dulluth, the leader of the sect (see the NPC appendix for his full description). He is entranced while completing the rituals to awaken Zailhhess. After the party enters the room, he spends another round mumbling and shouting in a sort of invocation before cutting the wrists and ankles veins of the lord. The flowing blood is slowly transported by the stone channels to the minor altars placed in the six small rooms. Set into these altars are the six spheres of Zailhhess that glow and pulse with a crimson-black light. When the blood reaches the spheres, after three full rounds, the light becomes more and more crimson and a sort of humming can be heard.

## THE SIX SPHERES OF ZAIHHESS

In the small rooms, also entranced, six clerics of the sect have had the honor to witness the rebirth of the god. Two of these clerics are woman and are very well dressed (see below). Dulluth and the six clerics are unaware of what is happening around them while entranced. The trance is broken if they are hurt. If the trance is broken, the person leaving the trance is dazed for the next round.

The two shadowy figures, two Marracsheim (see the New Monster Appendix), are the "bodyguards" of Dulluth and react immediately to anyone getting close to Dulluth.

After ten rounds, if the blasphemous rite is not stopped, Sir Krilmar dies and a portal opens over the altar with a high-pitched screech. The avatar of Zailhess is transported to the Prime Material Plane in six rounds if the portal is not closed. When the portal opens, if not already awakened by the party actions, Dulluth and the clerics leave their trance. They attack any intruders without any fear because with the re-birth of their god, they believe they will obtain immortality.

Dulluth immediately casts *blasphemy*, *create undead*, *invisibility purge* and *magic circle against good*; then *insect plague* and *silence* on any spell-casters and *cause fear*, *greater command* and *hold person* on more muscled enemies. From a distance, using his creatures to distract the enemies — in case he needs more cannon fodder he can also cast *giant vermin* and *summon monster IV* — he harasses the party with *flame strike*, *dark-*

ness and obscuring mist. If in melee, he casts *destruction*, *inflict critical wounds* and *slay living*.

The minor clerics try to avoid melee combat unless they run out of spells or if Dulluth or the completion of the rite is in danger.

If the avatar (a CR 40 monster) enters the Prime Material Plane, it immediately kills the PCs (go ahead and roll dice...but really...) and a period of terror starts like one never seen before in the Frontier...

**Male Minor Clerics (4):** Male Human, Expert 2 / Cleric 3; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 2d6+3d8+5; hp 31, 29, 28, 28; Init +0; Spd 30ft. {20ft. with armor}; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +2 heavy wooden shield), touch 10, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +5; ATK +6 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace, crit. x2); Full ATK +6 melee (1d8+2, heavy mace, crit. x2); SA: Rebuke Undead; AL N/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 6.

**Skills and Feats:** Concentration +5, Craft [masonry] +6, Diplomacy +2, Heal +7, Knowledge [arcana] +3, Knowledge [religion] +3, Profession [house builder] +7, Spellcraft +3; Combat Casting, Skill Focus (Craft [masonry]), Weapon Focus [heavy mace]; Proficient with all simple weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Death Ward (Su):** A worshipper of Zailhess gains a permanent protection from death attacks as if always under the effect of the spell *death ward*.



## Typical Spells Prepared

(save DC 13 + spell level): 4 / 3+1 / 2+1

0 — *Guidance* (x2), *Light*, *Virtue*  
 1st — *Bless*, *Cause Fear*<sup>D</sup>, *Command*, *Doom*  
 2nd — *Death Knell*<sup>D</sup>, *Enthrall*, *Silence*.

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell

Possessions: heavy mace, heavy wooden shield, scale mail, potion of *cure moderate wounds* (CL 5), scroll of *shield of faith* (CL 5), 3d6 gp, a golden ring (worth 50 gp).

These clerics have been chosen by Dulluth because of their knowledge in masonry and architecture and have helped building the temple.

**Female Minor Clerics (2):** Female Human, Aristocrat 2 / Cleric 3; CR 4; SZ Medium; HD 5d8-5; hp 25, 22; Init +0; Spd 30ft. {20ft. with armor}; AC 17 (+6 banded mail, +1 light steel shield), touch 10, flat-footed 17; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +4; ATK +5 melee (1d8+1, morning star, crit. x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d8+1, morning star, crit. x2); SA: Rebuke Undead; AL C/E; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +9; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +6, Forgery +3, Heal +7, Intimidate +2, Knowledge [religion] +4, Knowledge [nobility and royalty] +4, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +4; Combat Casting, Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Weapon Focus [morning star]; Proficient with all simple weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Death Ward (Su):** A worshipper of Zailhess gains a permanent protection from death attacks as if always under the effect of the spell death ward.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 13 + spell level): 4 / 3+1 / 2+1

0 — *Light* (x2), *Resistance*, *Virtue*  
 1st — *Bane*, *Cause Fear*<sup>D</sup>, *Magic Weapon*, *Shield of Faith*

2nd — *Darkness*, *Death Knell*<sup>D</sup>, *Hold Person*

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell.

Possessions: morningstar, light steel shield, banded mail, 2 potions of *cure light wounds* (CL 3), scroll of *heat metal* (CL 5), 2d10 gp, a golden necklace (worth 80 gp).

These women were aristocrats that lived in the South and have been enthralled and charmed by Dulluth and his sect. They are his secret lovers but he is not showing any special treatment of favor to them, apart from some gifts as jewels and fine clothes.

**Marracsheim (2):** CR 6; SZ Medium Undead (incorporeal); HD 6d12; hp 44, 38; Init +7; SPD fly 80ft. (good); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 12; Base ATK / GRP +3 / —; ATK incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 Con drain); Full ATK incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 Con drain); Space / Reach 5ft. / 5ft.; SA Constitution

drain, Paralyzing gaze; SQ darkvision 90ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura; AL C/E; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5; Str —, Dex 17, Con —, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16; Skills: Diplomacy +8, Hide +12, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Search +11, Sense Motive +8, Spot +13; Feats: Ability Focus [Constitution drain], Alertness<sup>B</sup>, Blind-fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative<sup>B</sup>.

## Stopping the Rite

The rite can be stopped by interrupting the bloody flow, either by curing Sir Krilmar or by destroying a section of the stone channels.

**One 5-ft. Section of the Channel:** AC 2, hp 12, Hardness 8, Break DC 28.

Another possibility, that is also the only one if the portal already opened, is to remove at least one of the spheres from the minor altars. To dislodge one of the spheres it is necessary to damage its lodging.

**Sphere Lodging:** AC 10, hp 10, Hardness 8, Break DC 26.

## Ground Level

The entrance doors are huge bronze doors, not locked, and can be pushed open.

**Heavy Bronze Doors:** Hardness 8, hp 120, Push Open (Str check) DC 20.

### 2. Temple Entrance (EL 9)

This is an oddly shaped room with two rows of columns on its sides and a colossal statue of a humanoid with a horned skull face in its middle. On each side of the room, there is a corridor.

This room is very large and is designed to impress the visitors and to show the power of Zailhess. The 40ft. high columns sustain the ceiling that is frescoed with intricate geometric patterns, with the prevalent color being red. In the middle of the room there is the colossal statue of Zailhess.

Two mechanical traps in the room are activated once a weight of at least 90 lbs. is placed over the floor tiles connected to the trap. Once this happens, a section in the four columns around the floor tiles opens and fires darts. Everyone in the effect area is targeted by 2d4 darts. The darts are covered with a magic poison, a gift from Zailhess to Dulluth, that causes the victims failing a DC 17 Fortitude save to die in 1d4 hours and become ghouls.

**Fusillade of Darts:** CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Atk +22 ranged (1d4 + poison, darts);

multiple targets (2d4 darts per target in a 15 ft.-by-15 ft. area); Search DC 24; Disable Device DC 24.

### 3. Giants' Rooms (EL —)

These rooms, used by the hill giants, are dirty and full of refuse. A mattress of rotten hay and foul smelling old clothes and skins serves as bed. The "furniture" is completed by a big crate, unlocked, with the giants food (nothing of value, of course).

#### 3.b It Moves in the Bed (EL 2)

In this room a bombardier beetle is sharing the giant bed and attacks anyone disturbing it.

**Giant Bombardier Beetle (1):** CR 2; hp 14; see the MM.

### 4. Small Dining Room (EL —)

This room is simply furnished with two wooden tables and many chairs. They are all oversized. Between the two tables, there is a round smaller table on which many pieces of raw meat is accumulated. On the walls, some consumed torches hang. The room has a revolting smell. There is nothing of interest in this room and nothing of value. The hill giants usually use the room and everything is proportionate to their sizes.

### 5. Storeroom (EL 1)

The door to this room is locked and the two keys are in the hands of Dulluth and Luopold.

**Wooden Door:** Hardness 5, hp 10, Break DC 26, Open Lock DC 20

The room contains many supplies, including meat, wheat, beer and the like. Of course, it is also a "dining room" for many rats. If disturbed, they try to escape through small holes in the walls. If cornered or otherwise prevented from escape, they react by biting.

Rat (10): CR 1/8; hp 1 (each); see the MM.

### 6. Kitchen (EL 4)

This small room is a kitchen, fully equipped with preparation tables, buckets of water and a stove. On the eastern wall, there is a square hole about 1 ft. of side. The room does not look to have been used in the last few days.

Most of the time it is empty since the giants prefer raw meat and the clerics are too busy with their rites really to care about a good meal. Therefore, this room is mostly used by the mercenaries. The chute in the eastern wall connects to an almost-dry well where an Otyugh lives. The monster was captured by Luopold and thrown into the chute when it was still very small. It is now grown up and is happy with its current arrangement, since it receives enough food from the temple inhabitants. It rarely tries to send its tentacles

in the kitchen since last time it tried two of them where almost severed by the mercenaries.

It attacks (and eats, possibly) anyone and anything that moves into the chute.

**Otyugh (1):** CR 4; hp 44; see the MM.

In the well, there is only rubbish and polluted water. The water is contaminated with the discharges of the toilette (room 8).

### 7. Mercenaries' Room (EL —)

The mercenaries use these two rooms. The smaller one (a) is used by the two halflings. In the bigger room (b), there is also a circular table and an elevated platform with a small statue of Zailhess. At the feet of the beds there are six chests containing spare equipment. The chests are of reinforced wood and are locked.

**Reinforced Wooden Chests:** Hardness 7, hp 14, Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 26.

All the chests contain valueless clothes and some minor items plus 2d4 gp and 3d6 sp. In one of the halflings' chests, then, there is a set of masterwork blacksmith tools.

### 8. Toilette (EL —)

This is the temple toilette, mostly used but not cleaned by the mercenaries ... and that says everything about this smelly room!

### 9. Big Dining Room (EL —)

A huge table dominates the room where twenty people can easily sit. On the table, there are many pieces of pottery and glasses, as well as knives and trays. Two side tables are covered with empty trays.

The mercenaries and the minor clerics use the room to eat their meals. There is nothing of value in the room.

### 10. Treasure Room (EL 7)

The corridor leading to the treasure room is heavily trapped. Secret doors detectable (DC 30 Spot check or a DC 20 Search check) disguise the safe path. A first trap is activated as soon as a proximity sensor detects movement in a 5 ft.-radius area. Iron spikes push out from holes in three 10 ft. sections of the walls and hit anyone standing in their path. People in the two external sections of the trap receive a Reflex save to avoid the spikes while those standing in the middle of the trap are hit without save.

**Spiked Walls:** CR 5; mechanical; proximity trigger (alarm); repair reset; multiple targets; 2d4 spikes for target (30ft.-long corridor section) for 1d8+2 points of damage; DC 20 Reflex save avoids or no save (middle section); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 26.

The second trap is triggered by a weight of at least 60 pounds. An iron bars portcullis falls behind the trap while the last section of the wall at the end of the corridor opens and a spring-loaded spiked log is released. It rolls towards the trapped people and, unless they can open the portcullis, levitate or climb on the wall, hits them at a speed of 10 ft. / round. The log is not blocked by hitting something as small as PCs.

**Iron Bars Portcullis:** Hardness 10, hp 60, Break / Lift DC 25.

**Rolling Spiked Log Trap:** CR 6; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; no miss; multiple targets (everyone in the path); 6d6 bludgeoning damage / 10 ft. of run plus 2d6+8 piercing damage; Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 16.

The treasure room is filled with 10,000 sp, 1,200 gp, 200 pp, 6 diamonds (worth 500 gp each), a set of two golden chalices encrusted with rubies and emeralds (worth 3,000 gp each, 8,000 gp together), a decorative silver lance with intricate leaves pattern (not functional but worth 2,500 gp), scroll of *delay poison* (CL 5), scroll of *ice storm* (CL 9), scroll of *spike stones* (CL 10), wand of *charm animal* (CL 8)[27 charges], candle of invocation.

## II. Spare Rooms (EL —)

These rooms are empty and available for new followers. The furniture is simple and in the chests there are only spare gray robes, like those used by the sect members.

### 12. Refuse Room (EL 3)

This small room is used as a sort of storeroom. There are many items jumbled about, most of them are broken and nonfunctional.

This room, on top of being used as a storeroom for useless equipment, has also become the lair of some dire rats. They attack anyone disturbing them.

**Dire Rat (12):** CR 1/3; hp 6 (each); see the MM.

Hidden among the pile of refuse (Spot check DC 25), there is a silver ring worth 20 gp, lost here by one of the member of the sect.

### 13. Armory (EL —)

This hidden room contains the spare armor and weapons of the sect. Nothing is magical, but any simple and martial weapons can be found here (up to three of any kind), as well as several suits of armor. Up to one of any type can be found up to banded mail (nothing better). A successful Search check (DC 25) is needed to find the secret door.

## 14. Prison (EL 7)

The air is unnaturally cold and causes the breath to condense. This supernatural cold is due to the presence of a spectre in one of the cells. Normally, prisoners are held captive until it is the "right moment" for a sacrifice to Zailhhess. The first portcullis can be activated only by means of a lever from the inner side of the prison. In front of any of the three cages, there is a stool that is used during interrogation.

**Iron Portcullis:** Hardness 10, hp 60, Break/Lift DC 25.

**Iron Cages (5 ft. section or door):** Hardness 10, hp 70, Break DC 26, Open Lock DC 27.

Currently the cages are empty but Sir Krilmar used one of them, the middle one, in the last few days. Hidden in the cell (Spot check DC 22), under the straw mattress, is a note from Lord Rediron that explains how he was caught and what are the plans of the the.

A damned spirit infests the third cell from the entrance. It attacks anyone getting close to the cell. It cannot leave the cell, but if killed, it reforms in 1d3 weeks unless the cell is blessed and a *remove curse* spell is cast upon it. The sect members are aware of the presence of the spectre and are wise enough to leave it alone.

**Spectre (1):** CR 7; hp 49; see the MM.

## Level One

### 15. Guest Rooms (EL —)

These rooms are simple but elegant. They are empty most of the time but are ready to accommodate up to six guests. The central room (a) is furnished with a wide wooden table with six chairs and a curtain that allows privacy to those willing to wash in the bath behind it. Close to the bath, there is a cupboard with clean white towels, nice smelling soaps and balsamic oils.

The other rooms (b to d) contain two beds, and chests and cupboards for personal belongings. These containers are all open and empty now since there is no guest in the temple. There is nothing of value in these rooms.

### 16. Luxury Dining Room (EL —)

This room is filled with a long table and eight chairs on both sides of it. The table is decked with laced cloth and covered with fine pottery, including many empty trays. Silver knives and crystal glasses and flutes complete the table set.

Only Dulluth and his rare guests use this dining room. The pottery is a set of more than a hundred pieces and is worth 500 gp. The 8 chalices are worth

120 gp together and the silver knives, 18 in total, are worth 5 gp each.

### 17. Male Clerics Rooms (EL —)

These rooms are used by the male clerics. There are five beds, but only four are occupied since one of the clerics has disappeared recently. He has been secretly sacrificed to Zailhhess by Dulluth after he discovered the priest was having doubts on his plans to give rebirth to their god.

#### 17a. First Room

This room contains a bed, a desk with a chair, a small bookcase, a cupboard and a chest. Over the desk are parchments written in an ancient language that requires a successful Decipher Script check (DC 30) to be read. These parchments are religious treatises about an ancient pantheon of forgotten gods of which Zailhhess is one. The other books and parchments in the bookcase are religious treatises of modern religions. The cupboard contains clothes and other valueless personal belongings. The chest is locked and contains 50 gp, 35 sp, a golden bracelet (worth 35 gp) and a silver earring with an inset for a missing precious stone (in this condition, it is worth 10 gp).

**Wooden Chest:** Hardness 6, hp 11, Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 24.

#### 17b. Second Room

This room has two beds, but only one is normally used. There is also a bookcase with several books, many of them about religious subjects, and two chests, one locked and the other one empty.

**Locked Wooden Chest:** Hardness 6, hp 11, Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 24.

In the locked chest, there are 25 gp, 55 sp, valueless clothes, a flawed heavy mace (breaks on a natural 1) and a small wooden shield, and a *tome of clear thought*+1, disguised as a book of fairy tales.

#### 17c. Third Room

The room is furnished with a bed, a chair, a cupboard with valueless clothes and a chest, unlocked, with 12 gp, 35 sp and a small black pearl worth 250 gp.

#### 17d. Fourth Room

In the room, there is another bed, a round table with a chair, two unlocked chests with clothes and other valueless belongings, 50 gp and a pearl necklace worth 500 gp, and a bookcase with a few religious books.

### 18. Female Clerics Rooms (EL 8)

This section of the pyramid is occupied by the two female clerics. The rooms are more refined than almost any other area of the temple, excluding Dulluth's room.

In the first room (a), there is a hexagonal ebony table with chairs carved out from cherry wood. Over the table, there is a wonderfully detailed map of the Frontier. The map is magic and allows anyone sitting on the chairs to scry every place visible in the map as with a *clairaudience* and *clairvoyance* spell. The table is also magically protected: if someone that is not a cleric of Zailhhess tries to use it, a behir is summoned in the room and attacks anyone on sight.

**Behir (1):** CR 8; hp 100; see the MM.

In the room there is also a big crate containing, clay, moss, hay, and small stones. The crate is unlocked. On the walls, there are two bookcases with many books on religious subjects, heraldry tomes and manuals of nobility. None of these books is really valuable.

The other two rooms are the bedrooms of the two women. Each of them has a soft and plushy bed with laced clothing and plume-filled cushions, one cupboard with expensive clothes (3x 100 gp), one locked chest with silver combs (2x 20 gp), silver mirrors (2x 50 gp), balms and oils (2d20 gp), 15 gp, a golden necklace (worth 75 gp), two silver earrings with black pearls (220 gp each) and a *potion of cure moderate wounds* (CL 5).

**Locked Wooden Chest:** Hardness 6, hp 11, Break DC 20, Open Lock DC 24.

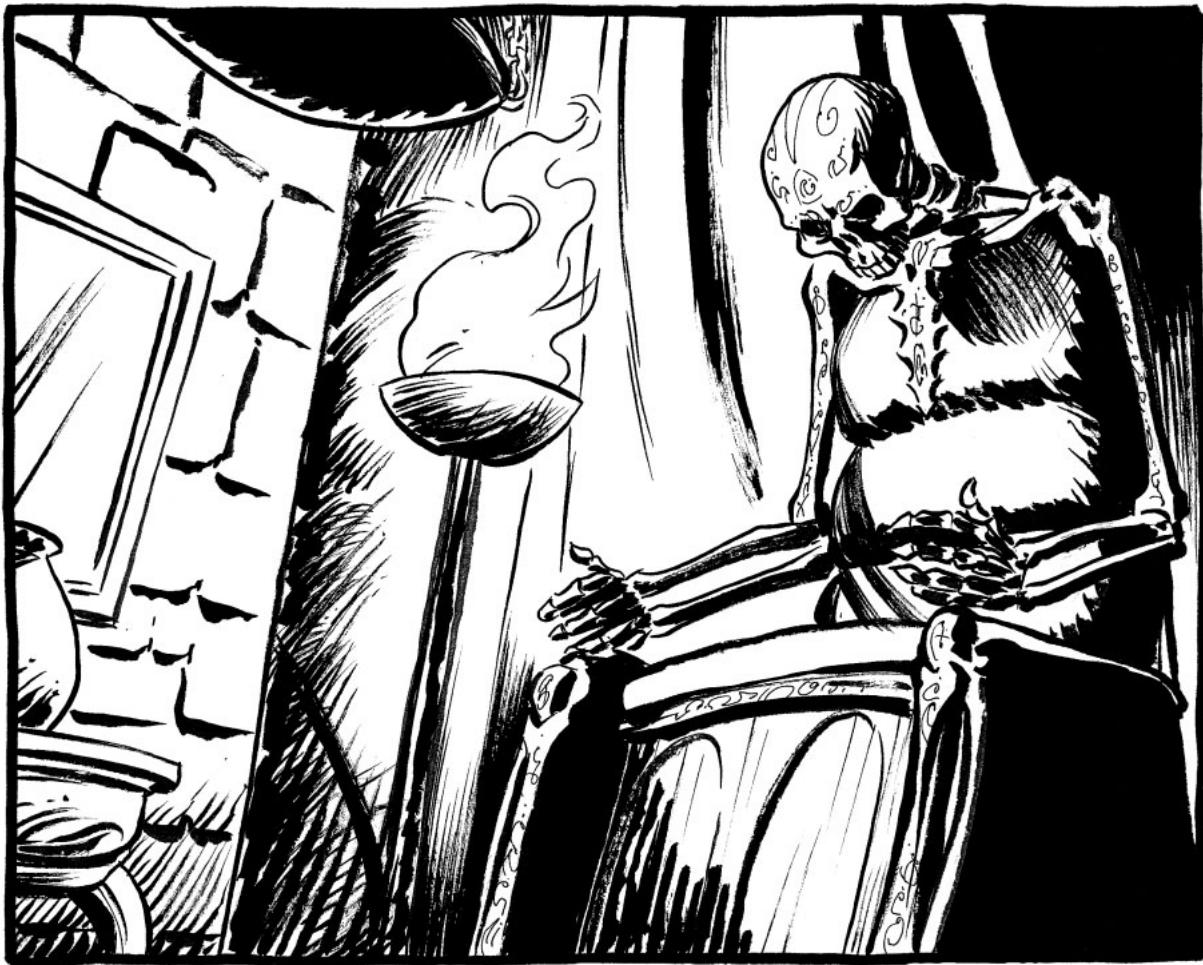
At the side of the two beds, there are two amphorae with fresh and clean water, lightly scented with a rose extract.

### 19. Mercenaries' Leader Room (EL 4)

This is a comfortable sitting room. Hanging on one wall of the room are two bookcases filled with many books. A round table in front of two armchairs, and another round table surrounded by comfortable chairs complete the furniture of the room. In the southern part, a narrow passage leads to another area hidden by a red velvet curtain.

This is the quarters of the mercenaries' leader, Luopold. At the sides of the tables, there are small amphorae and barrels full of water and alcoholic beverages. Over the bookcases are empty crystal chalices. The books on the shelves are treatises on the art of war, the history of the major mercenaries groups, etc. None of them has a special value.

Behind the curtain, there is Luopold's bedroom with a soft bed and two chests. One of them is unlocked and contains his clothes and other valueless personal belongings. The other chest is locked and



trapped and contains 150 gp, 37 sp, 5 pp, 2 garnets (20 gp each), a golden bracelet (worth 50 gp), a golden chalice (75 gp) and a damaged golden scabbard encrusted with semi-precious stones, most of them missing; the actual value of the scabbard is about 200 gp; if repaired, it is worth 1,000 gp. The trap is triggered as soon as someone tries to open the chest without first pushing a small lever on the backside of the chest (Spot DC 33, Search DC 20).

**Reinforced Wooden Chest:** Hardness 7, hp 18, Break DC 22, Open Lock DC 26.

**Poisoned Darts Trap:** CR 4; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; lever bypass; Atk +17 ranged (3d6 plus poison, darts); poison (Large monstrous scorpion venom, DC 14 Fortitude save resists, 1d4 Con / 1d4 Con); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 15.

## 20. Corridors Traps (EL varies)

The corridors of this floor are heavily trapped.

- T1: the trap is set as soon as at least 50 pounds of weight are placed over the floor tile that activates the spring that releases the blade.

**Wall Blade Trap:** CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +20 melee (2d8+4, crit. x4, large blade); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 24.

- T2: these traps are active against any non-follower of Zailhess. They look like pictograms of gray smoke that vaguely resemble a skull.

**Glyph of Warding (Blast):** CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding [blast]*, 5th-level cleric, 2d8 acid, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

- T3: a location trigger activates the trap. Since this is a dead-end corridor, nobody inside the temple ever gets close enough to activate it.

**Fireball Trap:** CR 5; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*fireball*, 8th-level wizard, 8d6 fire, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

## 21. Chapel (EL 9)

This room is a small chapel dedicated to Zailhess. There are five benches in front of a black stone statue. On the eastern side, a passage leads to an altar completely covered with golden items and gems.

The treasure over the altar is only an illusion — treat it as a persistent image cast by a 12th-level wizard — to attract would-be robbers. As soon as someone steps into the passage that leads to the altar, two traps activate. The first one releases a lightning bolt that hits

everyone in the passage. The second trap causes the statue of Zailhess to explode; anyone in the chapel runs the risk to be hit by the stone fragments caused by the explosion. In addition, a powerful group of outsiders is summoned in the room attacking anyone in sight.

**Lightning Bolt Trap:** CR 4; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*lightning bolt*, 5th-level wizard, 5d6 electricity, DC 14 Reflex save half damage); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**Explosive Statue:** CR 6; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); no reset; 1d6 stone fragments per target (2d6 bludgeoning damage, DC 25 Reflex save to avoid); multiple targets (all targets in the chapel); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

**Howler (3):** CR 3; hp 48, 44, 39; see the MM.

## Level Two

### 22. Guard Post (EL 6)

At the end of the spiral stair there is a niche with a round table and a chest. A corridor starts from it going west. A Marracsheim guards this area. It attacks anyone that is not Dulluth or is accompanied by him on sight. It always fights to death but will not leave this floor unless commanded to do so by Dulluth himself.

**Marracsheim (1):** CR 6; hp 40; see new monster appendix.

The room furniture, a table with four chairs and a big chest, has never been used. The chest is empty.

### 23. Dulluth's Room (EL —)

This room has a single door and is simply furnished with a soft bed surrounded by a curtain, a desk, a bookcase, a cupboard and two chests.

The desk has two empty drawers. In the bookcase are many mysterious books written in ancient languages; the Decipher Script check DCs to read these books range from 15 to 40. Most of these tomes describe ancient pantheons, evil pacts with demons, abominable rites and the like. One of the tomes is a *tome of understanding +3*. Dulluth has not yet found the time to read it completely.

In the cupboard, there are many expensive clothes and two gray robes. There is a belt with a golden buckle (worth 100 gp), a silver mantel pin worked as a skull with black sapphires as eyes (worth 700 gp) and a pair of boot of levitation.

The two chests are locked and contain the personal treasure of Dulluth — what is left after the expenses for the temple construction, at least!

**Reinforced Wooden Chests:** Hardness 7, hp 20, Break DC 23, Open Lock DC 27.

**Chest 1:** 2,000 gp, 150 pp, 1,000 sp, 100 different gems with a total value of 6,000 gp.

**Chest 2:** half plate, +1 heavy mace, +1 light wooden shield, potion of lesser restoration (CL 5), ring of sustenance, scroll of obscure object (CL 5).

### 24. Throne Room (EL 15)

This room has no door and a velvet green carpet with an intricate geometric pattern covers its floor. At the end of the carpet, there is a magnificent throne of sculpted ebony wood that resembles the upper part of a skeletal body. The arms of the skeleton are the arms of the throne and the skull is over the back of the throne. In the eye-sockets of the skull, two big rubies emit a dim red glowing light. At the sides of the throne, there are two huge golden suits of full-plate armor. In front, on the carpet, are four stools.

The rubies of the throne are worth 7,000 gp each while the carpet could be sold for 200 gp.

The two suits of armor are iron golems. When Dulluth is in the room, they stand motionless resembling artistic armor and act only if ordered by Dulluth. When Dulluth leaves the room, he always orders the golem to kill anyone entering the room while he is out. The golems attack relentlessly and follow their prey throughout this floor, without leaving it. If a trespasser escapes, they return to the throne room and freeze back in the original position.

**Iron Golem (2):** CR 13; hp 142, 131; see the MM.

### 25. Planning Room (EL —)

This room contains a table with four chairs. A faint smell of food is in the air.

This room is usually used by Dulluth to discuss with his clerics or Luopold about the strategies to fulfill the will of Zailhess. He also uses this room to eat his meals when he likes to be alone — most of the time, in fact!

There is nothing of special interest in this room and nothing of value.

### 26. Observatory (EL —)

The central part of this room is occupied by a strange mechanism made of wooden bars, wheels and ropes that is used to maneuver a series of suspended magnifying glasses. The ceiling of this room is almost entirely a glass dome. In the portion of the room not under the dome, there is a table completely full of parchment and measuring devices. Opposite to this table there are two small bookcases.

This room is very peculiar but there is nothing of real value in it. The magnifying glasses are suspended with a complicated system of ropes and are a sort of primitive telescope. Dulluth has used this room rarely since his interest in the skies is limited to determining

the right moment to celebrate the evil rite that calls back Zailhhess back to the Prime Material Plane. The books in the shelves are all treatises of astronomy and provide a +2 circumstance bonus on any skill check that relates to astronomy.

On the table, there are some spare parts for the telescope, star diagrams with many handwriting and notes on them, and some primitive devices to calculate the movement of the stars.

## Adventure Awards

Stopping the evil rite of the sect is worth a story award of 10,000 XP.

The party members are now the heroes of the land, celebrations in their honor last for days, and songs are written and sung to remember their heroism. The village council awards them 5,000 gp and nobody in the Frontier will ask the PCs to pay for anything that costs less than 5 gp, including but not limited to meals and rooms.

Saving Sir Krilmar from death is worth another 1,000 XP and the lifelong friendship of the lord. Sir Krilmar gives them a golden scepter with ten rubies (worth 15,000 gp), the “Scepter of the Frontier,” to symbolize eternal gratitude.

## What now?

There are many other adventures that await: the party needs to find a way to destroy the six spheres; the lord gives them knighthood and ask them to help him defeating the goblinoid tribes; the PCs have become the heroes of the land and are asked to free the Sternwood Forest of its dangers (maybe there is a druid not very happy about it?); a were-boar has attacked and infected some woodcutters and now the party needs to find the “patient zero” to eradicate the infection without killing everyone; an egress from the Underdark is hidden in the hills and the Drow that have made plans for so long are finally ready to attack the land and the only hope for the Frontier is in an alliance with the ogres; etc. etc.

*But that is another story ...*

*From the tale “The Heroes of the Frontier”*

*By Torcaeg, the Gallant*



# Appendix One: NPCs

This appendix presents the major NPCs of the Frontier, with their stats, backgrounds and agendas.

## NPCs in Dreikeng

### Resnik, Town Counselee and Merchant

Male Human, Expert 4 / Aristocrat 2; CR 3; SZ Medium; HD 4d6+2d8-6; hp 19; Init -2; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 14 (+6 +1 chainmail, -2 Dex), touch 8, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +4 /+5; ATK +5 melee (1d6+1, rapier, crit. 18-20 x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d6+1, rapier, crit. 18-20 x2); AL N/B; SV Fort +2, Ref -1, Will +8; Str 12, Dex 7, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +10, Bluff +10, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +11, Gather Information +10, Intimidate +8, Knowledge (Geography) +4, Knowledge (Local) +5, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +2 {-2}; Diligent, Great Fortitude, Negotiator, Persuasive; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, proficient with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties

*Possessions:* +1 chainmail, rapier, up to 1,000 gp in coins, gems and jewels

Resnik is one of the three merchant-rulers of Dreikeng. He is a handsome man in his late 40's with long black hair that has only recently started to whiten. He is a very curious man and likes extravagances, including art, curious items from all over the world, strange plants, jewelry, and everything that is uncommon. He has built his house entirely of black and rose granite with dozens of gargoyles surrounding the roof.

Resnik was born in a city to the South, the only male son of a family of artisans and merchants. He and his wife realized that they could not live in the city any longer as they had married against their family's will, so one day, they left the city and headed to the Frontier. There, they started a small business selling curiosities from the North in the southern markets. After ten years, they earned a small fortune and gave birth to their three daughters.

Resnik is popular in the village and has been asked several times to take the place of mayor. Disliking political intrigues and the like, he has always refused, preferring to continue in his role of mediator between the two extreme characters of Cyrenne and Skaflok.

The Resnik family consists of his beautiful wife Zulaha and three daughters; Uthma, Malma and Bathna. Zulaha is a beautiful woman that abandoned her life of privilege and wealth to follow Resnik before he became a wealthy and influent man. She supports her husband in his passion for "beautiful things." The three daughters all look like their mother and have many suitors (but no one that, so far, has satisfied their parents).

### Cyrenne, Town Counselee and Merchant

Female Human, Warrior 1 / Expert 5; CR 3; SZ Medium; HD 1d8+5d6+12; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 30ft.; AC 13 (+3 +1 leather armor), touch 10, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +4 /+4; ATK +5 melee (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +5 melee (1d4+1, +1 dagger, crit. 19-20 x2); AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +8, Bluff +9, Decipher Script +2, Diplomacy +4, Disguise +8, Forgery +2, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +2; Deceitful, Diligent, Persuasive, Skill Focus [gather information]; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons, proficient with all armors and shields.

*Possessions:* +1 leather armor, +1 dagger, up to 1,000 gp in coins, gems and jewels

Cyrenne was born in Dreikeng 34 years ago to a family of woodcutters. Her father was out of the house most of the time because of his job and when her two brothers became old enough, they followed his path. Her mother was always too busy to give her too much attention and, she is not close to any member of her family. The two brothers, Jamer and Farler, have married and live in the hamlet of Gauldark. Her father and mother have moved ago to a city in the South, hoping to open a tavern. No one knows what their destiny has is, and Cyrenne claims the she does not care. In reality, during her travels in the South, she always inquires about her parents.

Cyrenne did not become a woodcutter, because her father wanted her to stay at home and help her mother. But she was not content with that life. She realized the possibility of building a business selling the red timbers to the southern markets, and when she was old enough to leave her parents' house, she started a timber business. Now, she earns a huge amount of

money. She is very fair in dealing with her suppliers and pays reasonable prices. She is therefore very popular among the woodcutters, but many people in Dreikeng are jealous of her success. It is probably for this reason that many rumors about a supposed romance with Lord Krilmor have spread. So far, no one has proven these rumors true.

Inside the triumvirate, she is the real decision-maker. This is not creating any friction with Resnik who is happy to have someone that can make decisions on his behalf. The feelings of Skaflok, on the other hand, are definitely of a different kind, but he hides them very well.

### Lodar Brighthands, Bishop of the Sacred Gold Sword Temple

Male Human, Cleric 12; CR 12; SZ Medium; HD 12d8+36; hp 98; Init +5; Spd 30ft. {20 with armor}; AC 20 (+7 +1 banded mail, +2 ring of protection +2, +1 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 19; Base ATK / GRP +9 / +10; ATK +13 melee (1d10+6, +2 bastard sword used with two hands, crit. 19–20 x2); Full +13 / +8 melee (1d10+5, +2 bastard sword used with two hands, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/G; SV Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +12; Str 12, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 19, Cha 11.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +14, Diplomacy +5, Heal +14, Knowledge (Arcana) +7, Knowledge (Religion) +7, Knowledge (the Planes) +2, Spellcraft +5; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Extra Turning, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll, Leadership, Weapon Focus [Bastard Sword]<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Proficiency [Bastard Sword]<sup>B</sup>, Weapon Specialization [Bastard Sword]<sup>B</sup>; Turn Undead, Aura; Proficient with all simple weapons and with all armors and shields.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 14 + spell level): 6 / 6+1 / 5+1 / 5+1 / 4+1 / 4+1 / 3+1

0 — Detect Magic, Detect poison, Light, Mending, Read Magic, Resistance

1st — Bless (2x), Detect Undead, Divine Favor, Endure Elements, Protection from Evil<sup>D</sup>, Shield of Faith

2nd — Aid, Augury, Consecrate, Gentle Repose, Remove Paralysis, Shield Other<sup>D</sup>

3rd — Dispel Magic, Locate Object, Magic Circle against Evil, Protection from Energy<sup>D</sup>, Remove Curse, Remove Disease

4th — Death Ward, Holy Smite<sup>D</sup>, Neutralize Poison, Restoration, Tongues

5th — Break Enchantment, Dispel Evil<sup>D</sup>, Flame Strike, Raise Dead, True Seeing

6th — Antimagic Field<sup>D</sup>, Banishment, Heal, Undeath to Death

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell.

Possessions: +2 bastard sword, healer's kit, +1 banded mail, ring of the ram, ring of protection +2, gem of brightness, potion of non-detection (CL 8), potion of cat's grace

(CL 5), potion of water breathing (CL 5), potion of neutralize poison (CL 10), scroll of heal (CL 12), scroll of cure light wounds (CL 5), up to 5,000 gp in coins and jewels.

Lodar Brighthands was born about fifty years ago in a village to the South. He is very sensitive about his past and not willing to share much information about it.

Among the few things known by everyone, is that at the age of ten he went to one of the major cities in the South with his family as part of a caravan of merchants. When entered the town he disappeared and was found, after more than ten hours of desperate search, asleep in an abandoned shrine of the god Bablukar. When he recovered, he said that he had heard a voice calling him inside and then he saw a luminous sword flying towards him ... and then he was in darkness.

Word of this arrived to the high priest of the church of Bablukar who summoned him for an interview. After having heard the story, the priest asked his family to leave him at the temple, as this was a clear sign of the will of the god. Of his days as an adept, nothing is known but some rumors have spread that many portents occurred during his stay.

When he reached the level of priest, he was sent to the North to revitalize the church in that region. He was 25 by that time and accepted that duty. Since then, he has worked in Dreikeng to renovate the old temple and to spread the "word of the god." He did this so well that he received many promotions until now that he is the Frontier Bishop. Someone thinks this title is more a trick used by the high hierarchy in the South to keep him in the Frontier and not have him compete with them in the South. Even so, he does not seem to mind.

He is loved by the people of the Frontier who consider him as "one of them," and he has helped them on many occasions with his powers and knowledge. He is also teaching the young children of the settlers to read and write.

He is becoming a bit senile, and has delegated most of his duties to his two adepts (former orphans of war): Ruhtil and Furth. Despite this, he is still one of the most important figures in town, and his powers are respected.

### Jukk, Sergeant of the Town Guards

Male Half-orc, Warrior 2 / Fighter 2; CR 3; SZ Medium; HD 2d8+2d10+8; hp 32; Init +1; Spd 30ft.; AC 14 (+3 studded leather armor, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 13; Base ATK / GRP +4 / +7; ATK +8 melee (2d6+5, +1 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +5 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow); Full ATK+8 melee (2d6+5, +1 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +5 ranged

(1d10, heavy crossbow); AL L/N; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will -3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 5, Cha 8.

SQ: Darkvision 60ft., Orc Blood.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +5 {+4}, Jump +5 {+4}, Ride +3, Swim +4 {+2}; Power Attack, Cleave, Endurance, Diehard; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties

*Possessions:* +1 greatsword, studded leather armor, heavy crossbow, 5 ear-rings (250 gp), 3 rings (30 gp), a golden necklace (100 gp).

Jukk is a sturdy half-orc with brown eyes, long black hair and thick eyebrows. He adorns himself with many earrings, rings and necklace. He used to obey orders without thinking when he was in the army, and now he pretends the same blind obedience from the Town Guards he commands, though in reality he thinks for himself.

Some years ago, Jukk was guiding a small group of soldiers on a mission. The order was to go on the top of a hill and keep the position until the arrival of the rest of the army. They reached the top, and from there Jukk and his soldiers watched a group of orcs that were marching towards them. The orcs did not engage the soldiers and continued their way around the hill. Some of the soldiers suggested Jukk to order a retreat in order to go back to the rest of the army and alert them of the approaching danger. Nevertheless, Jukk said that the orders were clear: "stay on the hill," and that is what they did. The army was taken unprepared by the attack of the orcs and many people died. This caused Jukk to be "promoted" to Guard Town Sergeant.

Jukk is very proud and single-minded. Nevertheless, he is doing a good job with the town guards and the people in town feel safe. Some of them, though, are not sure of what would happen if the village were facing a serious treat. Should someone break any law while in the village, he can be sure to get a harsh greeting from Jukk.

## NPCs at the Owl Tower

### Sir Krilmar Rediron, Paladin of the Sacred Gold Sword, Lord of the Frontier, Knight of the Owl

Male Human, Paladin 14; CR 14; SZ Medium; HD 14d10; hp 104; Init +0; Spd 30ft. {20 with armor}; AC 29 (+12 +4 full plate [acid resistance], +4 +2 heavy steel shield, +3 ring of protection +3), touch 13, flat-footed 29; Base ATK / GRP +14 / +16; ATK +18 melee (1d8+5, +3 longsword, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +18 / +13 / +8 melee (1d8+5, +3 longsword, crit. 19-20 x2); SA: Smite Evil 3 / day; AL L/G; SV Fort +11, Ref

+8, Will +10; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +6, Diplomacy +14, Handle Animal +12, Heal +12, Knowledge [nobility and royalty] +9, Knowledge [religion] +9, Ride +10, Sense Motive +10; Aura of good, Detect evil, Divine Grace, Lay on hands, Aura of Courage, Divine Health, Turn Undead, Special Mount, Remove Disease 3 / week; Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus [Longsword], Leadership, Mounted Combat, Ride-by Attack; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 12 + spell level): 3 / 2 / 1

1st — Bless, Divine Favor, Protection from Evil

2nd — Bull's Strength, Eagle's Splendor

3rd — Heal Mount

*Possessions:* up to 15,000 gp in coins, gems and jewels, +4 full plate [acid resistance], +3 longsword, +2 heavy steel shield, eyes of the eagle, potion of heroism (CL 5), potion of fly (CL 5), potion of neutralize poison (CL 10), ring of protection +3, scroll of flaming sphere (CL 5), scroll of flame blade (CL 7).

Krilmar Rediron is the epitome of goodness and chivalry. He was born to a family of poor nobles. He was sent to a military academy to study and showed great promise. He distinguished himself in his first battle, and was soon promoted to knight. His kindness, fighting and commanding abilities, as well as his purity of soul gained him the admiration of his troops.

After some years he fell in love with a young, beautiful woman, Kalama, the daughter of a noble. The marriage was celebrated and the two lovers moved to a small palace the father of the bride given them. Their happiness increased a few months after, when Kalama realized she was pregnant. Then Kalama died giving birth to Elien.

Krilmar felt a tremendous void, and only his friendship with a high priest of the church of Bablukar saved him from losing his mind. He converted to the faith of Bablukar and slowly recovered. His life was changed forever, and he could no longer live in the city where he had so many memories and, in agreement with his superiors and the church hierarchy, he moved to the Frontier.

In the Frontier, he learned how to fight orcs and goblins and has had many chances to demonstrate his prowess. His work on the northern border has secured the area, and the people of the Frontier have learned first to accept him and later to love him. He fears for his beloved daughter, and in his attempt to protect her from the cruelty of the world, he is suffocating her and her aspirations.

Sir Krilmar is a tall, slender man, with black hair and dark eyes. His smile is attractive and friendly, and people cannot but feel an attraction to this gentle man. He is the legal leader of the region and everything he says is law.

### White Star, celestial mount of Sir Krilmar

Heavy War Horse: SZ Large; Magical Beast; HD 10d8+30; hp 80; Init +1; SPD 60 ft.; AC 22 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +12 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 21; Base ATK / GRP +3 / +12; ATK Hoof +7 melee (1d6+5); Full ATK 2 hooves +7 melee (1d6+5) and bite +2 melee (1d4+2); Space / Reach 10 ft. / 5 ft.; SA —; SQ Low-light vision, scent; AL N; SV Fort +7, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 21, Dex 13, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 13, Cha 6; Skills: Listen +5, Spot +4; Feats: Endurance, Run, Empathic Link, Improved Evasion, Share Spells, Share saving throws, Improved Speed, Command Creatures.

### Elien, daughter of Sir Krilmar

Female Human, Aristocrat 1; CR 1/2; SZ Medium; HD 1d8; hp 8; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 9; Base ATK / GRP +0 / +0; ATK +0 melee (1d4, dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); Full +0 melee (1d4, dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); AL N/G; SV Fort +0, Ref -1, Will +3; Str 10, Dex 8, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +7, Knowledge [geography] +4, Perform [dance] +7, Perform [sing] +7, Profession [gardening] +1; Improved initiative, Iron will; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields.

Elien is the daughter of Sir Krilmar. She is 15 years old. She feels somehow responsible for her mother's death, and believes that her father has not forgiven her. Actually, Sir Krilmar considers her as his most precious jewel, and her beauty is a soothing vision for everyone in the tower. She has long blond hair that she combs and puts up in complicated braids. Her blue eyes reflect a joyous soul.

Her father is overprotective. He forces her to learn singing and dancing to make her a good noble woman, but she wishes to be trained in the art of the war. She is bored by her life in the tower and her only amusement is the garden she tends. She likes to chat, and when foreigners come to the tower, she monopolizes their time asking as many questions as possible about "real life." She loves to hear stories and can be very friendly to a bard or a storyteller.

### Matgheus, majordomo of Sir Krilmar

Male Human, Expert 4; CR 2; SZ Medium; HD 4d6-8; hp 8; Init -1; Spd 30ft.; AC 10 (+1 ring of protection +1, -1 Dex), touch 10, flat-footed 10; Base

ATK / GRP +3 / +3; ATK +3 melee (1d4, dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +3 melee (1d4, dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); AL L/G; SV Fort -1, Ref +0, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 8, Con 6, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 13.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +9, Gather Information +9, Handle Animal +9, Knowledge [nobility and royalty] +7, Knowledge [local] +7, Knowledge [history] +7, Listen +7, Profession [majordomo] +8, Ride +6, Sense Motive +10; Skill Focus [Diplomacy], Negotiator, Animal Affinity; Proficient with all simple weapons and with light armors.

*Possessions:* 2d10 gp and 3d4 sp, dagger, ring of protection +1.

Matgheus is the majordomo of Sir Krilmar. He is the only one that knows his lord's history and he is not going to tell it to anyone. He is tall and dark-skinned, with short black hair and brown eyes. His face is disfigured by acne.

When someone is knocking at the doors of the Owl tower, they will always be received by Matgheus. He is very efficient and Lord Rediron considers him more as a friend than a subordinate.

### Lutholus, Captain of the Guards of Sir Krilmar

Male Half-elf, Fighter 6; CR 6; SZ Medium; HD 6d10+18; hp 68; Init -1; Spd 30ft. {20 with armor}; AC 18 (+9 +2 half plate, -1 Dex), touch 9, flat-footed 18; Base ATK / GRP +6 / +8; ATK +10 melee (2d6+4, +1 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +6 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow [Str. +2], crit. x3); Full ATK +10 / +5 melee (2d6+4, +1 greatsword, crit. 19–20 x2) or +6 / +1 ranged (1d8+2, composite longbow [Str. +2], crit. x3); SQ: Half-elf traits; AL L/G; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +1; Str 15, Dex 9, Con 17, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Diplomacy +3, Gather Information +3, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +4, Listen +0, Ride +2, Search +0, Spot +0; Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus [Greatsword], Weapon Focus [Longbow], Mounted Combat, Mounted Archery, Ride-by Attack; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields.

*Possessions:* 3d10gp and 5d12 sp, +2 half plate, +1 greatsword, composite longbow [Str. +2], potion of jump (CL 4), potion of cure light wounds (CL 5).

Lutholus is a big half-elf, in every sense of the word: about 7' tall, he weighs 230 pounds, but he is never angry nor violent ... "he has a big heart, too!" He is respectful of his lord and obeys his orders. He is very good at military strategy and Sir Krilmar eagerly accepts his advice. Many soldiers believe that he will

take the place of Sir Krilmar when he dies. Lutholus is not ambitious, and his main interest is in keeping his land safe.

Lutholus was born 32 years ago in the Frontier, in a small wooden hut in the Gryphon Hills. At the age of 13, he lost his mother to illness. His father (an elf), going to Dreikeng to buy some medicine, was killed by a raid of ogres. After his mother died, he tracked his father to the place where he was killed and found his remains half-eaten. Disgusted, terrified and angered, he ran away and wandered on the hills for weeks. Finally, Lord Krilmar took him in. The next year, Lutholus swore his loyalty to the lord and swore to defend his land.

With the passing of time, Lutholus has come up from the ranks and six months ago, was made the Captain of the Guards. He is respected and admired by his fellows. He has long fair hair and blue eyes that shine like ice on a sunny day. It is a surprise to many that he has not yet married but he always says that he has a bigger purpose in his life: eliminating the threat of ogres ... and this is the only moment you can see his eyes turning to red and darting around.

## NPCs in Gauldark

### Stariom, ex-soldier

Male Human, Fighter 8; CR 8; SZ Medium; HD 8d10+24; hp 82; Init +5; Spd 30ft. {20 ft.}; AC 18 (+5 +1 scale mail, +2 heavy steel shield, +1 Dex), touch 11, flat-footed 17; Base ATK / GRP +8 / +11; ATK +14 melee (1d6+5, +2 scimitar, crit. 18-20 x2); Full ATK +14 / +9 melee (1d6+5, +2 scimitar, crit. 18-20 x2); AL C/G; SV Fort +9, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 14.

*Skills and Feats:* Climb +9 {+4}, Craft [Weapons] +5, Intimidate +10, Jump +12 {+7}, Swim +6 {-4}; Improved Initiative, Blind-fight, Power Attack, Cleave, Weapon Focus [Scimitar], Combat Reflexes, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder; Proficient with all simple and martial weapons and with all armors and shields.

{stat} are stats considering armor check penalties.

*Possessions:* 2d10 gp and 3d8 sp, +1 scale mail, +2 scimitar, heavy steel shield, potion of hide from undead (CL 5), potion of cure light wounds (CL 5), ring of animal friendship, bag of holding type III.

Stariom is a veteran of a thousand battles who moved to the North to rest and to escape from the chaotic life of the South. He is now in his 60's and enjoys the quiet of the Frontier. He often leaves the hamlet for several days, sometimes even weeks, riding in the plains or walking in the forests or the hills. He is a valiant fighter and he is still a good deterrent for

any bully. In Gauldark, many people just do what Stariom says, the few times he has had something to say and publicly says it, they listen!

Stariom does not like to be interrupted during his "rest" and has quite a temper. His house is full of and war equipment (well worn) and trophies, as well as beer. If someone is lucky enough to find him in a good mood and is invited inside, they will enjoy an afternoon of good food, lots of drinks and speeches about the "good old times."

### Alberd, the Guild Leader

Male Human, Rogue 8; CR 8; SZ Medium; HD 8d6; hp 36; Init +3; Spd 30ft.; AC 17 (+4 +2 leather armor, +3 Dex), touch 13, flat-footed 14; Base ATK / GRP +6 / +8; ATK +10 melee (1d6+4, +2 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +11 ranged (1d6+2, +2 shortbow, crit. x3); Full ATK +10 / +5 melee (1d6+4, +2 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +11 / +6 ranged (1d6+2, +2 shortbow, crit. x3); SA Sneak Attack +4d6; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 16.

*Skills and Feats:* Appraise +10, Balance +11, Bluff +12, Decipher Script +9, Disable Device +9, Disguise +12, Escape Artist +9, Forgery +13, Gather Information +13, Intimidate +15, Knowledge [local] +11, Listen +8, Open Lock +9, Search +9, Sense Motive +12, Spot +8, Tumble +9, Use Magic Device +11; Deceitful, Persuasive, Negotiator, Leadership; Trap finding, Evasion, Trap Sense +2, Improved Uncanny Dodge; Proficient with all simple weapons, with hand crossbow, rapier and shortbow, and with light armors.

*Possessions:* 3d10 gp, gems and jewels worth 3,000 gp, +2 short sword, +2 leather armor, +2 shortbow, 2 potions of invisibility (CL 7).

The Guild of the Silver Crown functions as a sort of "hidden government" in the Frontier. Officially, the guild is a congregation of merchants, but everyone knows that unofficial business is also conducted.

Alberd is the appointed leader of the guild. He is a very talented man and he knows about everything that happens in area. Alberd was born in to modest family in the South. His youth was not an easy one, and he promised himself to become rich at any cost. He is 31 years old, with black eyes and hair, and wears simple but elegant clothes. Sometimes people ask him "favors" that he usually grants in exchange of money, information and other favors.

Sir Krilmar does not like him, but so far, he has found nothing to hold against him legally. Alberd returns the feeling but has the common sense to not step on Krilmar's toes.

## The Bad Guys

### Dulluth, the “Chosen One,” Leader of the Sect

Male Human, Cleric 14; CR 14; SZ Medium; HD 14d8+14; hp 98; Init +6; Spd 30ft. {20ft. with armor}; AC 24 (+9 +1 full plate [SR 15], +5 +4 Light steel shield), touch 10, flat-footed 24; Base ATK / GRP +10 / +10; ATK +12 melee (1d8+2, *mace of terror*, crit. x2); Full ATK +12 / +7 melee (1d8+2, *mace of terror*, crit. x2); SA: Rebuke Undead; AL N/E; SV Fort +10, Ref +4, Will +13; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 12, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 15.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +11, Diplomacy +10, Heal +14, Knowledge [arcana] +12, Knowledge [religion] +12, knowledge [the planes] +12, Spellcraft +14; Improved Initiative, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extra Turning; Proficient with all simple weapons, and with all armors and shields.

**Death Ward (Su):** A worshipper of Zailhess gains a permanent protection from death attacks as if always under the effect of the spell death ward.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 14 + spell level): 6 / 6+1 / 6+1 / 5+1 / 5+1 / 3+1 / 3+1 / 2+1

0 — Light, Resistance (x5)

1st — Bane, Bless, Cause Fear, Cause Fear<sup>D</sup>, Divine Favor, Obscuring Mist, Summon Monster I

2nd — Aid (x2), Darkness, Death Knell<sup>D</sup>, Desecrate, Hold Person, Silence

3rd — Animate Dead, Animate Dead, Dispel Magic, Invisibility Purge, Magic Circle against Good, Prayer

4th — Death Ward, Giant Vermin, Mass Enlarge undead<sup>D</sup>, Poison, Summon Monster IV (x2)

5th — Greater Command, Flame Strike, Insect Plague, Slay Living<sup>D</sup>

6th — Banishment, Create Undead<sup>D</sup>, Greater Dispel Magic, Inflict Critical Wounds<sup>E</sup>

7th — Blasphemy, Destruction<sup>D</sup>, Flame Strike<sup>E</sup>

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell; <sup>E</sup> denotes Enlarged Spell.

*Possessions:* a golden necklace with a black meteoritic stone carved to resemble a skull (worth 3,000 gp), two silver bracelets carved with intricate geometrical patterns (2x 1,000 gp), a golden ring with an emerald (1,500 gp), +1 full plate [SR 15], +4 light steel shield, *mace of terror*, *ring of greater fire resistance*, *cloak of arachnida*, 3 potions of cure serious wounds (CL 10), potion of fly (CL 6), potion of neutralize poison (CL 10), potion of haste (CL 7), scroll of cure serious wounds (CL 8), scroll of prayer (CL 5), scroll of freedom of movement (CL 7), scroll of flame strike (CL 12).

Dulluth was born in the Frontier, the son of a woodcutter. He worked as a woodcutter until a few years

ago, when he discovered a strange sphere in a hole in an old dead oak. Even though he was illiterate, he understood that the object held some magic. That night, Zailhess visited him in dream and offered him power beyond imagination if he would swear loyalty to the god. Dulluth was convinced and pleased to receive the powerful clerical powers the god offered him.

Dulluth started to research the location of other spheres while continuing his work as a woodcutter. His fear grew that others would discover his new powers. One night sacrificed all his family to his new god.

Dulluth, that now calls himself “The Chosen One,” and has allied himself with powerful and evil people to create a cult completely dedicated to the research of the spheres in order to free the god. He began construction of a temple, that when complete, will be used to free the god from its prison.

Dulluth is a tall, strong man with very long, black hair that is always dirty and uncombed. His black eyes have a red shade that often scares people that see him. He is completely driven by the obsession of restoring Zailhess and will destroy anything and anyone that is an obstacle to his plans.

### Ulabius Duskation, the Necromantic Herbalist

Male Human, Wizard 11; CR 11; SZ Medium; HD 11d4+11; hp 44; Init +6; Spd 30ft.; AC 18 (+3 ring of protection +3, +3 amulet of natural armor +3, +2 Dex), touch 15, flat-footed 16; Base ATK / GRP +5 / +5; ATK +8 melee (1d4+3, +3 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+3, +3 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); Full ATK +8 melee (1d4+3, +3 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2) or +10 ranged (1d4+3, +3 dagger, crit. 19–20 x2); AL C/E; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 17.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +11, Decipher Script +15, Diplomacy +7, Knowledge [arcana] +18, Knowledge [local] +10, Knowledge [religion] +9, Knowledge [the planes] +15, Listen +9, Search +7, Spellcraft +20, Spot +9; Brew Potion, Alertness, Improved Initiative, Craft Wondrous Items, Silent Spell, Summon Familiar, Scribe Scroll, Craft Wands, Craft Rods; Proficient with club, dagger heavy and light crossbow and quarterstaff.

#### Spells Known

0 — Resistance, Acid Splash, Detect Poison, Detect Magic, Read Magic, Daze, Dancing Lights, Flare, Light, Ray of Frost, Ghost Sound, Disrupt Undead, Touch of Fatigue, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Arcane Mark, Prestidigitation

1st — Alarm, Shield, Detect Secret Doors, Hypnotism, Shocking Grasp, Chill Touch, Hold Portal, Summon

Monster I, Identify, Sleep, Magic Missile, Burning Hands, Cause Fear, Ray of Enfeeblement, Feather Fall, Magic Weapon

2nd — Arcane Lock, Protection from Arrows, See Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Ghoul Touch, Mirror Image, Invisibility, Summon Monster II, Continual Flame, Blur, Minor Image, Scare, Blindness / Deafness, Command Undead, Alter Self, Darkvision, Knock, Phantom Trap

3rd — Phantom Steed, Summon Monster III, Vampiric Touch, Dispel Magic, Sepia Snake Sigil, Arcane Sight, Hold Person, Fireball, Lightning Bolt, Halt Undead, Ray of Exhaustion, Haste, Stinking Cloud

4th — Lesser Globe of Invulnerability, Wall of Fire, Animate Dead, Fear, Enervation, Secure Shelter, Wall of Ice, Phantasmal Killer, Bestow Curse, Contagion, Polymorph

5th — Waves of Fatigue, Seeming, Major Creation, Dominate Person, Interposing Hand, Blight, Symbol of Pain, Telekinesis

6th — Circle of Death, Guards and Wards, Legend Lore, Create Undead, Undeath to Death, Wall of Iron

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 15 + spell level): 4 / 6 / 5 / 5 / 4 / 3 / 1

0 — Disrupt Undead, Resistance, Daze, Flare

1st — Shield, Burning Hands, Magic Missile (x2), Shocking Grasp, Chill Touch

2nd — Protection from Arrows, See Invisibility, Spectral Hand, Ghoul Touch, Mirror Image

3rd — Hold Person, Summon Monster III, Mirror Image<sup>S</sup>, Invisibility<sup>S</sup>, Vampiric Touch

4th — Lesser Globe of Invulnerability, Wall of Fire, Animate Dead, Fear

5th — Waves of Fatigue, Interposing Hand, Dominate Person

6th — Circle of Death

<sup>S</sup> stands for Silent Spell.

Possessions: medallion of the shield guardian, +3 dagger, potion of cure moderate wounds (CL 7), potion of fly (CL 10), ring of protection +3, amulet of natural armor +3, scroll of ray of enfeeblement (CL 5), scroll of continual flame (CL 5), scroll of silence (CL 5), scroll of interposing hand (CL 10), scroll of contagion (CL 7), necklace of fireballs type II, wand of vampiric touch (CL 5) [16 charges], rod of cancellation, a golden belt buckle with lapis lazuli insets (worth 1,500 gp) and a golden ring with a topaz crafted as a skull (worth 500 gp).

The first thing someone notices about Ulabius is black, thick hair that covers his tall and muscled body. After the hair, his glowing red eyes and long ears (this is probably due to his allegiance with demons) are notable. Ulabius' mother was an herbalist who lived in the South. She was intrigued by necromancy and had a good skill in anatomy. One day, a handsome

man visited her and she fell in love. After a few days of romance, they spent the night together. The result of that night of passion was Ulabius, and the man was never seen again.

To improve her skills, she dissected many small animals. Ulabius learned all she knew about herbs, drugs, venoms and anatomy. However, what really attracted Ulabius was the study of necromancy. One day, Ulabius discovered he could create magical effects. His mother realized that her son had the potential to become a sorcerer and sent him to a wizard school in town.

In this school, he learned how to control and develop his skills, but he was growing bored because necromancy was not studied and was instead considered taboo. After a few years, his mother died and he left the school. He moved to the Frontier and acted as an herbalist and a doctor. He saved many lives and became an accepted member of the community.

However, to further his studies he needs books, tools, components and artifacts that cannot be found easily in so remote a place. Therefore, he travels frequently, especially in the South, to buy, steal or otherwise acquire what he needs. He also makes frequent expeditions in the forests to kill monsters and animals to further his studies and to take parts of them for his spells.

A few years ago Dulluth asked him to join his sect. Ulabius immediately recognized the potential of this allegiance and eagerly agreed. He asked for support to build a secret stronghold where he could continue his studies, and some mercenaries to protect him. From that moment, Ulabius has grown in importance in the sect, even though he has little interest in the return of Zailhhess.

Recently, Ulabius has arranged a pact with a female devil and has mated with her. The offspring of this horrible relation have been four half-fiends, faithful servants of their parents.

## Graach, Bat familiar of Ulabius Duskation

**Bat:** SZ Diminutive; Magical Beast; HD 11; hp 22; Init +2; SPD 5 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 22 (+4 size, +2 Dex, +6 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 20; Base ATK / GRP +5 / -12; ATK —; Full ATK —; Space / Reach 1 ft. / 0 ft.; SA —; SQ Blindsight 20 ft., low-light vision; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +9; Str 1, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 4; Skills: Hide +14, Listen +8\*, Move Silently +6, Spot +8\*; Feats: Alertness, Improved Evasion, Share Spells, Empathic Link, Deliver Touch Spells, Speak with Master, Speak with Animals of its kind, Spell Resistance 16.

### Falthasala Frearer, the High Priestess of the Abandoned Temple

Female Elf (Drow), Cleric 10; CR 11; SZ Medium; HD 10d8-10; hp 48; Init +4; Spd 30ft. {20 with armor}; AC 24 (+7 +3 chain shirt, +3 ring of protection +3, +4 Dex), touch 17, flat-footed 20; Base ATK / GRP +7 / +8; ATK +14 melee (1d6+4, +3 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +11 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); Full ATK +12 / +7 melee (1d6+4, +3 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) and +12 melee (1d6+1, +1 short sword, crit. 19-20 x2) or +11 / +6 ranged (1d4 + venom\*, hand crossbow, crit. 19-20 x2); SQ: Drow traits; AL N/E; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +11; Str 13, Dex 18, Con 8, Int 8, Wis 16, Cha 12.

*Skills and Feats:* Concentration +3, Heal +6, Listen +7, Search +3, Spot +7; Death Ward, Rebuke Undead; Aura of Evil, Two-weapon fighting, Weapon Finesse, Combat Reflexes, Combat Casting; Proficient with all simple weapons, with hand crossbow, rapier and short sword, and with all armors and shields.

\* Drow Venom: DC 13 Fortitude save or unconscious for 1 minute; afterwards another save or unconscious for 2d4 hours.

**Death Ward (Su):** A worshipper of Zailhess gains a permanent protection from death attacks as if always under the effect of the spell death ward.

Typical Spells Prepared (save DC 13 + spell level):  
6 / 5+1 / 5+1 / 4+1 / 3+1 / 2+1

0 — Guidance, Light (x2), Read magic, Resistance (x2)

1st — Bane, Cause fear, Cause fear<sup>D</sup>, Doom, Obscuring mist (x2)

2nd — Darkness, Death knell, Desecrate, Enlarge Undead<sup>D</sup>, Hold person, Summon monster II

3rd — Animate dead (x2), Bestow curse, Contagion<sup>D</sup>, Dispel magic

4th — Dismissal, Mass enlarge undead<sup>D</sup>, Summon monster IV (x2)

5th — Flame strike, Mass inflict light wounds<sup>D</sup>, Slay living

<sup>D</sup> denotes Domain Spell.

Possessions: 50 gp, 2 black pearls (worth 1,000 gp each), a golden hair pin designed as a spider with a black pearl as head and a sapphire as body (5,000 gp), 2 golden rings (100 gp each), 2 heavy silver necklace ending with pendants of sapphire worked to resemble a skull (1,500 gp each), 4 golden ear rings with small diamonds (150 gp each), +3 chain shirt, +3 short sword, +1 short sword, hand crossbow with 6 poisoned ammunitions, ring of protection +3, scroll of desecrate (CL 5), scroll of animate dead (CL 7), potion of cat's grace (CL 5), potion of heroism (CL 5), potion of tongues (CL 7).

Falthasala is a drow renegade that escaped from the Underdark long ago together with a small group of followers. After a period of adaptation, she became used to the above-ground life. Dulluth met her some years ago, and the possibility of becoming a leader of this new sect immediately intrigued her. She converted to the new faith and she has been assigned, together with her followers, the duty of renovating the old temple and recovering the sphere inside.

# Appendix Two: New Monsters

Some new creatures appear for the first time in this adventure and are detailed in this appendix.

## Marracsheim

Medium Undead (Incorporeal)

**Hit Dice:** 6d12 (39 hp)

Initiative: +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:**

AC:

Fly 80 ft. (good)

15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection), touch 15, flat-footed 12

+3 / –

Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 Constitution drain)

Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d6 plus 1d6 Constitution drain)

5 ft. / 5 ft.

**Space / Reach:**

**Special Attacks:**

Constitution Drain,

Paralyzing Gaze

Darkvision 90 ft., daylight powerlessness, incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, undead traits, unnatural aura

Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +5

**Saves:**

**Abilities:**

Str –, Dex 17, Con –, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 16

**Skills:**

Diplomacy +8, Hide +12, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Search +11, Sense Motive +8,

Spot +13

**Feats:**

Ability Focus [Constitution Drain], AlertnessB, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved InitiativeB

Any

**Climate / Terrain:**

Solitary

**Organization:**

6

**Challenge Rating:**

None

**Treasure:**

Always Chaotic Evil

**Alignment:**

–

**Advancement:**

–

**Level Adjustment:**

–

Marracsheim — meaning the beloved of Zailhhess — are incorporeal creatures born of evil and chaos. They can be a “gift” of Zailhhess to worthy followers or the results of prolonged use of one of the Spheres of Zailhhess (see New Items Appendix). In any case, these monsters blindly obey any order received from a true follower of Zailhhess and fight to the best of their ability against enemies of the god. Marracsheim are as tall as humans and are shadowy figures with two glowing eyes of yellow or green. They are incorporeal.

They speak the languages they knew in their lives (if of the transformed type) or infernal plus one other language (at DM discretion, usually common).

## Combat

A Marracsheim's first attack is always with its paralyzing gaze. Then, it moves to the next victim, trying to suck his/her life energy out. When used as bodyguards, Marracsheims do their best to protect their charge, never going over than 5ft away from her (they remain on a square adjacent to that of the character they are protecting).

**Unnatural Aura (Su):** Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of undead at a distance of 30 feet. They will not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

**Daylight Powerlessness (Ex):** Marracsheim are utterly powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it.

**Constitution Drain (Su):** Living creatures hit by a Marracsheim's incorporeal touch attack must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or take 1d6 points of Constitution drain. The save DC is Charisma-based. On each such successful attack, the Marracsheim gains 5 temporary hit points.

**Paralyzing Gaze (Su):** Creatures that looks into the glowing points that are Marracsheim's eyes needs to succeed a DC 16 Fortitude save or remain frozen in place for 1d6 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based. The ability works in an area of 30 ft.



## Ulabius' Undead (template)

This template applies to mindless undead and requires the use of the *Ulabius' Magic Imbuement* spell (see New Spells Appendix).

**Size and Type:** The creature retains type and subtypes of the original undead and gains the augmented subtype.

**Hit Dice:** The undead keeps the original HD.

**Speed:** Faster speed or new movement type(s) could be gained according to the spell-like abilities gained by means of the *Ulabius' Magic Imbuement* spell. Otherwise, it retained whatever speed it had before.

**Armor Class:** The AC could vary according to the spell-like abilities gained by means of the *Ulabius' Magic Imbuement* spell. Otherwise, it retained whatever AC it had before.

**Attacks:** The undead retains all the stats he had before, except Con, which drops to 0.

**Damage:** No change respects to the standard creature.

**Special Attacks:** The undead could gain "retributive" attacks by means of the *Ulabius' Magic Imbuement* spell.

**Special Qualities:** No modification respect to the standard undead description.

**Saves:** as standard undead.

**Abilities:** No modification.

**Skills:** No new skill is added to those already existing (if any).

**Feats:** No new feat is added to those already existing (if any).

**Environment:** Ulabius' Stronghold and the Sternwood Forest.

**Organization:** Any.

**Challenge Rating:** Depends on original undead CR and number of Spell-like Abilities added, as follows:

| Original CR | 1 Sp | 2 Sp | 3 Sp |
|-------------|------|------|------|
| Less than 1 | 1    | 1    | 2    |
| 1           | 2    | 2    | 3    |
| 2           | 2    | 3    | 4    |
| 3           | 3    | 4    | 4    |
| 4 to 8      | same | +1   | +1   |
| 8+          | same | same | +1   |

**Treasure:** None.

**Alignment:** As base creature.

**Advancement:** As base creature.

**Level Adjustment:** —.

Two examples of augmented undead are given below.

### Ulabius' Human Warrior Skeleton

Medium Undead (augmented)

**Hit Dice:** 1d12 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)

**Speed:** 30 ft. (6 squares), Fly 60 ft. (good)

**AC:** 15 (+1 Dex, +2 natural, +2 heavy steel shield), touch 11, flat-footed 14

**BAB / Grapple:** +0 / +1

**Attack:** Scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18-20 x2) or claw +1 melee (1d4+1)

**Full Attack:** Scimitar +1 melee (1d6+1, crit. 18-20 x2) or 2 claws +1 melee (1d4+1)

**Space / Reach:** 5 ft. / 5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Fireball (Sp)

**Special Qualities:** Damage reduction 5 / bludgeoning darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, undead traits

**Saves:** Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2

**Abilities:** Str 13, Dex 13, Con —, Int —,

Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** Improved Initiative

**Climate / Terrain:** Ulabius' Stronghold and Sternwood Forest

**Organization:** Any

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral Evil

**Advancement:** —

**Level Adjustment:** —

### Ulabius' Ogre Zombie

Large Undead (augmented)

**Hit Dice:** 8d12+3 (55 hp)

**Initiative:** -2 (-2 Dex)

**Speed:** 40 ft. (8 squares; can't run)

**AC:** 15 (-1 size, -2 Dex, +8 natural)

touch 7, flat-footed 15

**BAB / Grapple:** +4 / +14

**Attack:** Greatclub +9 melee (2d8+9) or slam +9 melee (1d8+9) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+6)

**Full Attack:** Greatclub +9 melee (2d8+9) or slam +9 melee (1d8+9) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+6)

**Space / Reach:** 10 ft. / 10 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Color Spray (Sp)

**Special Qualities:** Single actions only, damage reduction 5 / slashing, darkvision 60 ft., undead traits, Mirror Image (Sp)

**Saves:** Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +6

**Abilities:** Str 23, Dex 6, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

**Skills:** —

**Feats:** Toughness

**Climate / Terrain:** Ulabius' Stronghold and Sternwood Forest

**Organization:** Any

**Challenge Rating:** 4

**Treasure:** None

**Alignment:** Always Neutral Evil

**Advancement:** —

**Level Adjustment:** —

# Appendix Three: New Spells

Several new spells appear within these pages and are explained in this appendix.

## Control Zailhhess's Sphere<sup>F</sup>

Abjuration

**Level:** Clr 5, Death 4

**Components:** V, S, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** one creature

**Duration:** 3 rounds + 1 round / level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates; see text

**Spell Resistance:** yes

This spell allows the targeted creature to better control the Spheres of Zailhhess (see New Items Appendix). A character under the protection of this spell runs only a 5% chance of being killed by the divine energy release associated with invoking any of the sphere's powers, instead of the normal cumulative 10%.

The spell focus is the unholy symbol of Zailhhess.

## Zailhhess Might<sup>F</sup>

Transmutation

**Level:** Clr 6, Death 5

**Components:** V, S, DF

**Casting Time:** 1 round

**Range:** Personal

**Target:** You

**Duration:** 1 round / level (D)

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** No

This spell channels the divine energy of the god Zailhhess and transforms the cleric into a minor avatar. Their body changes into a giant skeleton, whose height is double original, and that weighs four times more. This transmutation changes size category to the next larger one, and the cleric gains a +8 bonus to Strength, a -2 penalty to Dexterity and a +4 bonus to Constitution. The cleric gains damage reduction 10 / good and bludgeoning and can control undead as a cleric 6 levels higher than their current level. No undead creature can willingly attack them. The target can still speak and utter spells normally.

All equipment worn or carried is similarly transformed by the spell but otherwise does not change its function, as per *enlarge person*. The subject gains a SR

40 to transmutation spells and effects (which cannot be "turned off" by the cleric). When the spell ends or is dismissed, the cleric is dazed for one minute while their body recovers from the metamorphosis.

The spell focus is the unholy symbol of Zailhhess.

## Enlarge Undead

Necromancy

**Level:** Clr 3, Death 2, Sor / Wiz 3

**Components:** V, S, M

**Casting Time:** 1 standard action

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** one undead

**Duration:** 1 min. / level (D)

**Saving Throw:** Will negates (harmless); see text

**Spell Resistance:** Yes; see text

This spell causes the instant growth of a medium undead, doubling its height and multiplying its weight by 8. This increase changes the creature's size category to large. The target gains a +2 size bonus to Strength, a -2 size penalty to Dexterity (to a minimum of 1), and a -1 penalty on attack rolls and AC due to its increased size. The target undead cannot have more HD than half the caster level (rounded up).

If the target is intelligent undead, it can decide to negate the effect with a successful will save. It can also decide to lower its spell resistance in order to benefit from the spell effect.

The enlarged undead has now a space of 10 feet and a natural reach of 10 feet. This spell does not change the target's speed.

Multiple magical effects that increase size do not stack.

The material component is a black gem valued at least 50gp that needs to be crushed and the dust sprinkled over the undead.

## Enlarge Undead, Mass

Necromancy

**Level:** Clr 5, Death 4, Sor / Wiz 5

**Casting Time:** 1 round every three affected undead, max 6 rounds (see text)

**Target:** One undead creature / caster level

This spell functions like *enlarge undead*, except that it affects multiple targets. The caster needs to actually touch the desired undead and cover it with the black gem dust; therefore, no more than three

undead per round can be affected. The caster has a total of 6 rounds to touch all the desired undead before the spell vanishes.

### Ulabius' Magic Imbuement<sup>X M</sup>

Transmutation

**Level:** Sor / Wiz 5

**Components:** V, S, M, XP

**Casting Time:** 1 hour+ (see text)

**Range:** Touch

**Target:** one mindless undead

**Duration:** Instantaneous

**Saving Throw:** None

**Spell Resistance:** None

The caster of this spell imbues mindless undead (typically a skeleton or a zombie) with 1–3 spell-like abilities. To do so, the caster needs to cover the undead with the dust of a Black Pearl (500 gp) for every spell-like ability to be added. Then, the caster spends 1 hour painting strange runes of powers over the undead. The undead is then ready to receive the spell-like abilities: the caster targets it with 1 to 3 spells of spell levels 1 to 3 that become its new abilities (Sp) at caster level as the one of the caster. These spells need to be actually cast (so the total casting time of the spell is 1 hour plus the time to cast the additional spells) and any material component or XP cost has to be paid. The caster pays a number of XP equal to  $50 \times$  level of the spell for every added spell (so, two spells of 2nd level will cost  $50 \times 2 \times 2 = 200$  XP).

The following limitation applies to the spells that can be added to the undead as spell-like abilities:

- The spell level is 3rd or lower and cannot be modified by meta-magic feats
- The spell is known by the caster and has been prepared (the spell-like abilities is not added from reading a scroll or using a magic item power)
- The same spell cannot be cast more than once on the same undead

All spells can be cast by the undead creature 1/day, at the level of the caster that created them.

No more than one undead / caster level can be subjected to this spell per year. If the monster is not destroyed before the end of the year, a new one can be created in that will add to those already existing (that, therefore, do not count for the maximum number of modified undead for the year).

The spell cannot be used on any creature other than a mindless undead, and a creature that is not an undead cannot become undead by means of this spell.

# Appendix Four: New Magic Items

This appendix contains the descriptions of a magic item and an artifact that appears for the first time in this book.

## Talisman of the Orc Blood

This talisman is a silver pendant worked to resemble an ogre head with four bright red eyes. The four eyes are four bloodstones worth 50gp each. The pendant is fixed to a leather necklace made of boiled bull's skin.

The jewel looks like a horrible orc ornament, but when the pendant is worn by a character with orcish blood (such as an orc or a half-orc), the four gems

shimmer with a bright red light, providing light as that of a candle in a radius of 10 ft. Moreover, the pendant enhances the orcish blood of the wearer doubling her bonus and penalty depending on her race. For example, a half-orc would get an additional +2 to Strength and -2 to Charisma and Intelligence scores in addition to the ones already applied.

The talisman has an aura of moderate transmutation. CL 8th; Craft Wondrous Item; *bull's strength, make whole*; Price 5,400 gp.



## The Spheres of Zailhess

These six spheres are a major artifact that when placed on an altar and bathed in the blood of a pure man, allows opening a portal through which the god Zailhess can manifest on the Prime Material Plane. The spheres contain the essence of the god and have powers of their own. Using these powers exacts a tremendous price from the user. Every time a power is invoked, there is a 10% cumulative chance that the user is killed by the divine energy release involved in the use of the sphere. A character killed is transformed in 1d4 rounds into a Marracsheim (see the Monster Appendix for a full description of this monster). The only way to prevent this is the use of a specifically designed spell (*Control Zailhess's Sphere*, see the Spell Appendix for more info). Even so protected, the user has a 5% chance (not cumulative) to die. Once killed, only a *miracle* or a *wish* can save the PC.

The spheres are dark gray, almost black in color, and are indistinguishable from one another. They all share the same powers, and can be invoked a total of 3 times per day. It makes no difference which power is used, so, a user could invoke Spiritual Vortex twice and Unhallow Protection once, or the Summoning Power 3 times, or any three different powers once, as desired. The powers are as follows:

**Spiritual Vortex:** when this power is invoked every living being in a circular area of 30 ft. radius from the

user gains one negative level (see DMG—*Negative Levels*) and the lost hit points are immediately transferred to the current hit points of the user, even above his maximum level. Every hp that exceeds his maximum level are temporary and last a maximum of 24 hours.

**Unhallow Protection:** the sphere provides the user with a magical shield of negative energy that gives him a +6 shield bonus to AC and total immunity to normal projectiles.

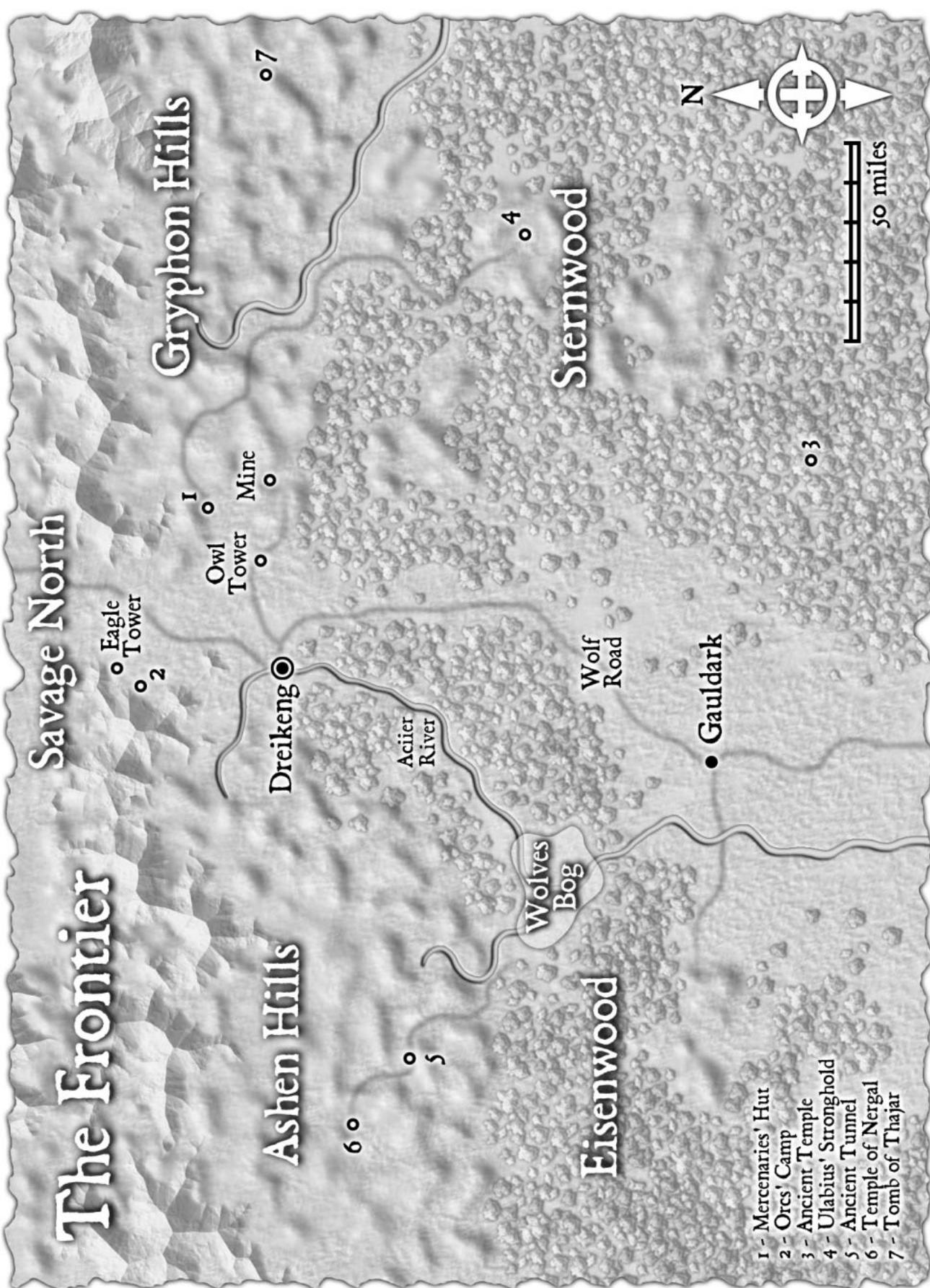
**Circle of Protection from Good, 10 ft.:** as per the spell with the same name.

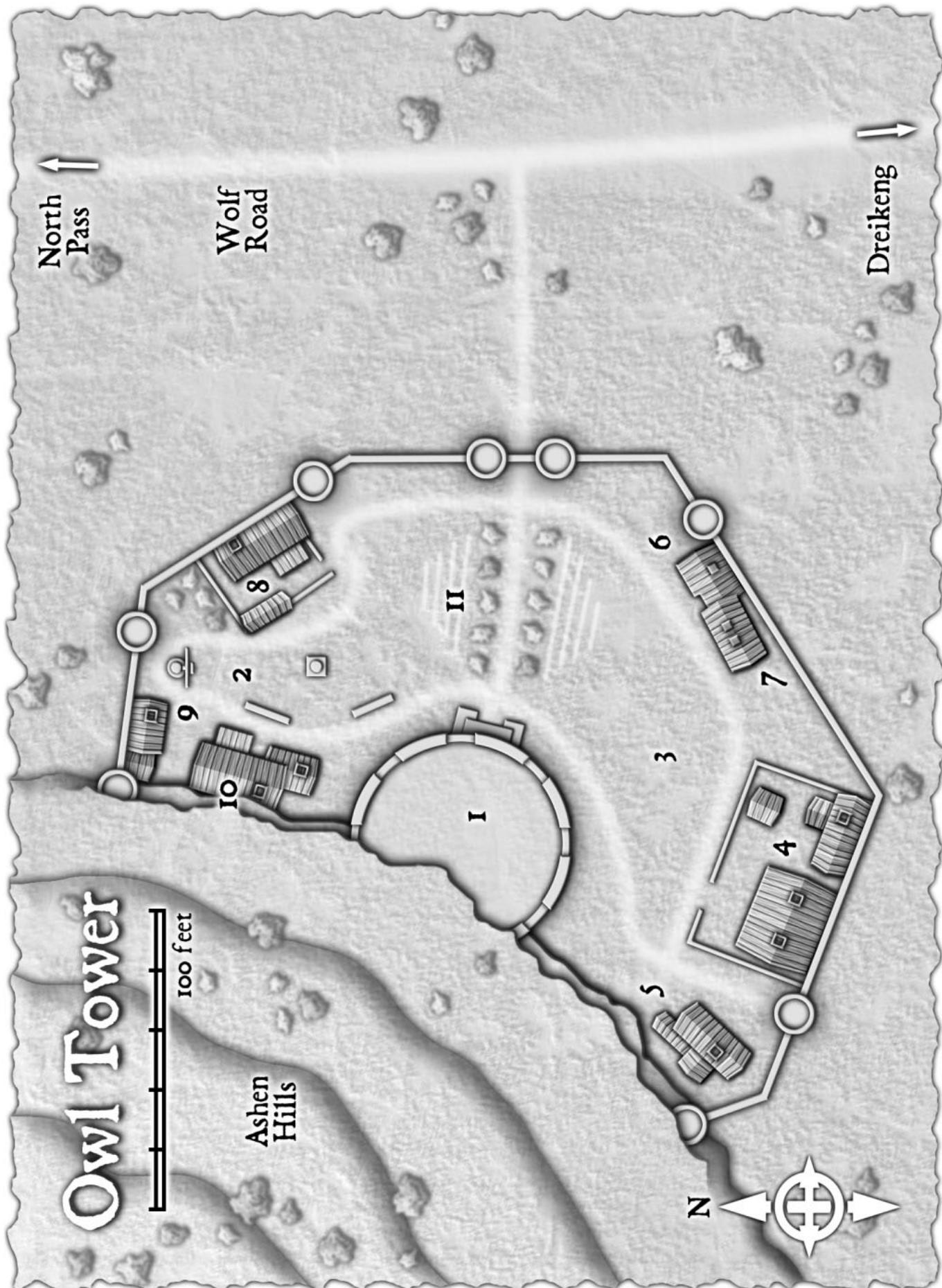
**Summon Undead Ally:** the sphere allows summoning one or more undead that protect the sphere-user and obey his commands. The number and type of undead summoned are randomly generated according to the following table:

| d20   | Type of Undead                  | Number of Undead |
|-------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| 1-5   | Human Warrior Skeleton (CR 1/3) | 4d6              |
| 6-9   | Human Commoner Zombie (CR 1/2)  | 4d4              |
| 10-13 | Ghoul (CR 1)                    | 2d6              |
| 14-16 | Ghast (CR 3)                    | 1d4              |
| 17-18 | Shadow (CR 3)                   | 1d4              |
| 19    | Wight (CR 3)                    | 1d4              |
| 20    | Wraith (CR 5)                   | 1d2              |

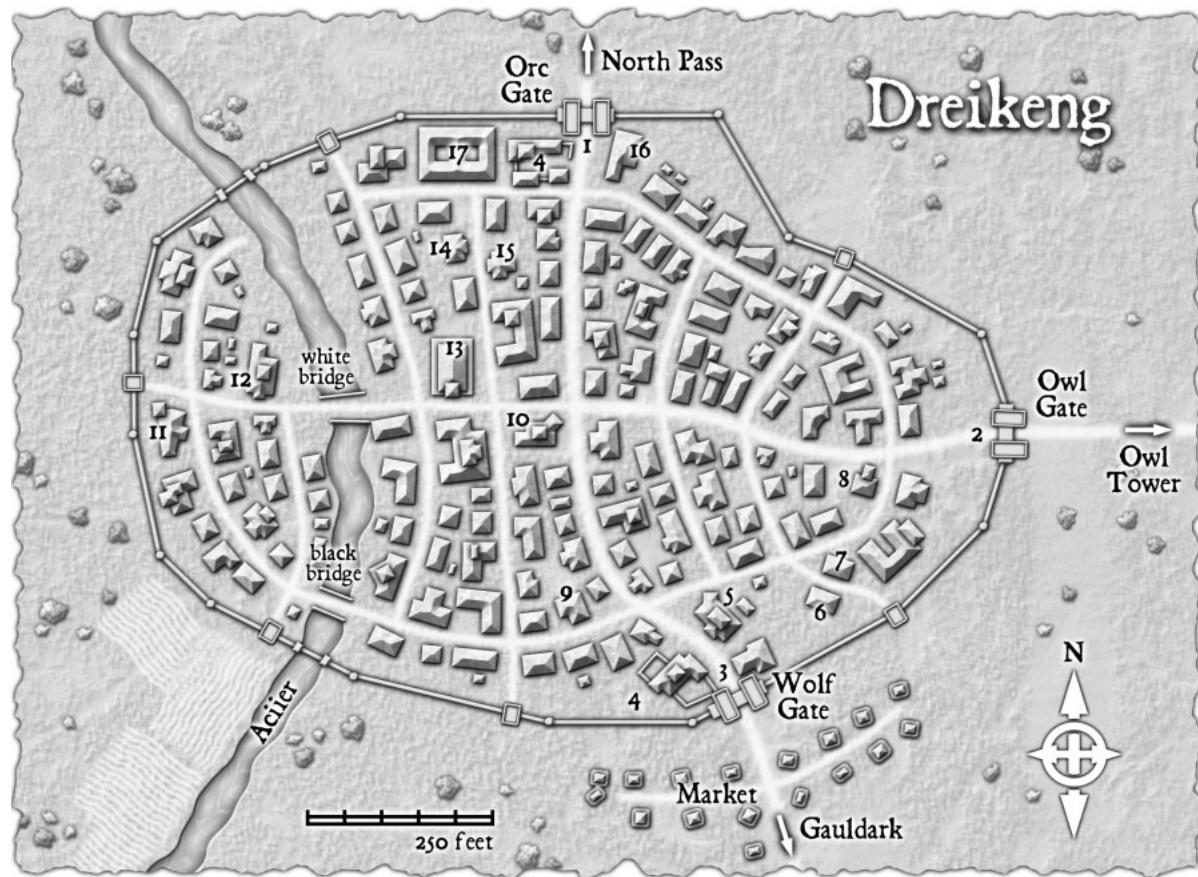


# Appendix Five: Maps

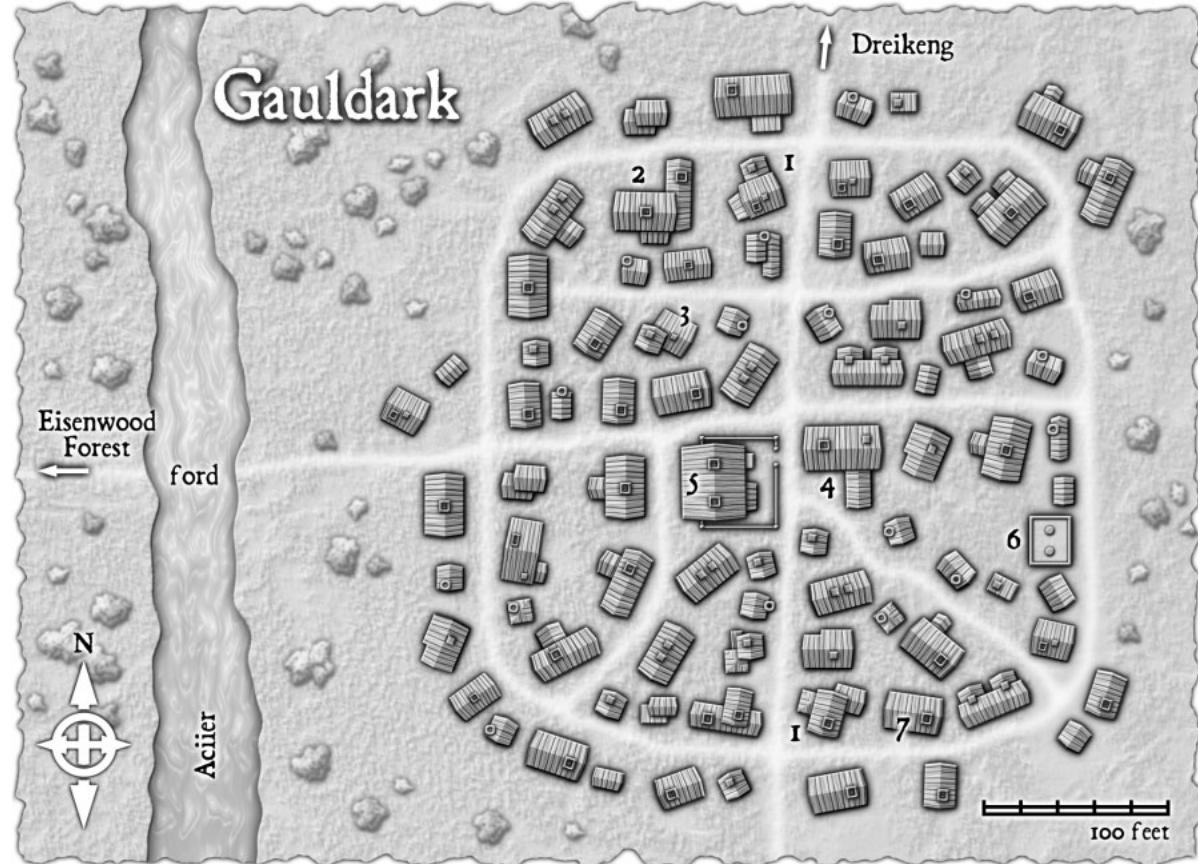




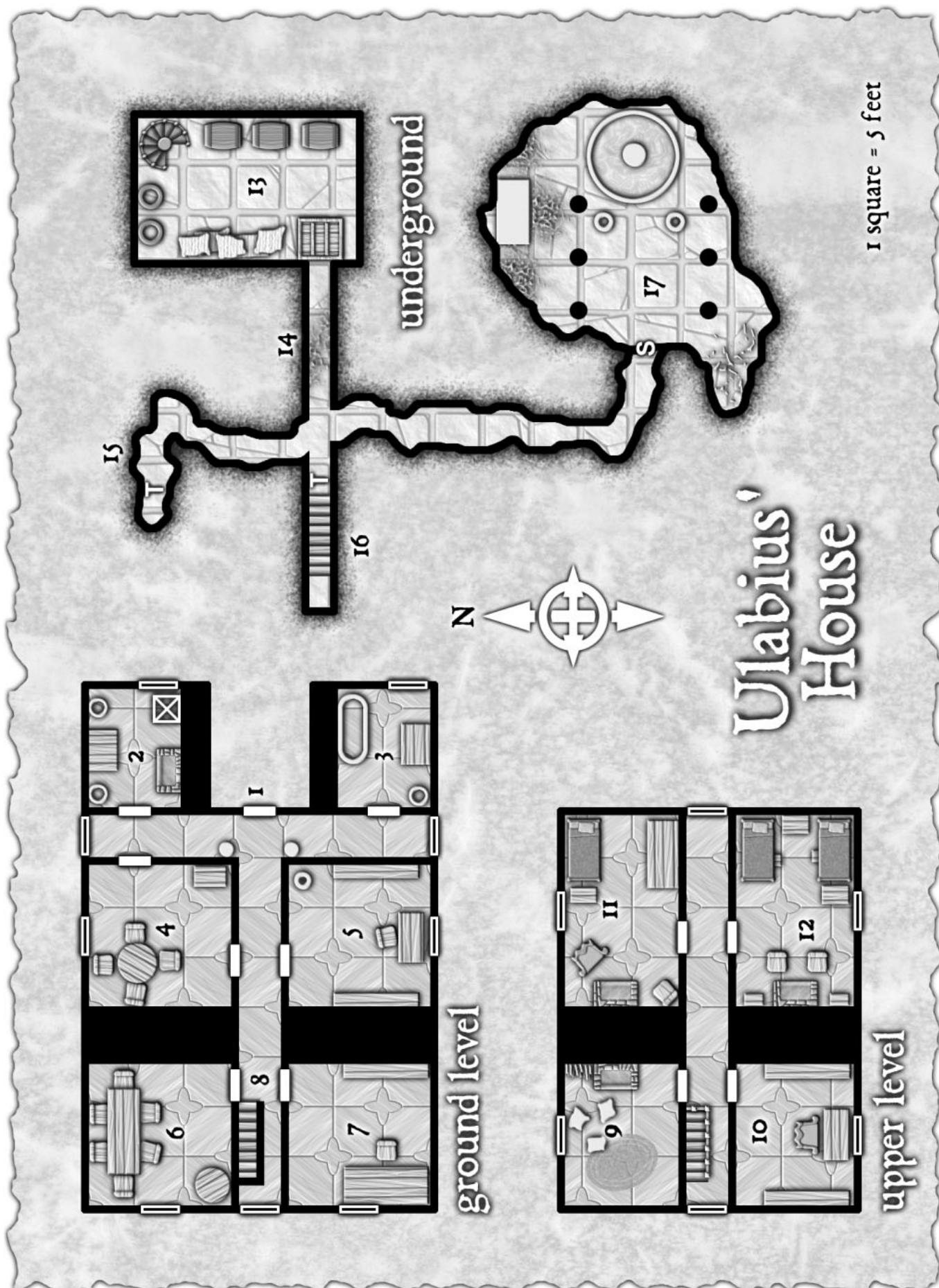
*The Owl Tower is described on pages 18-20*



Dreikeng is described on pages 13-18

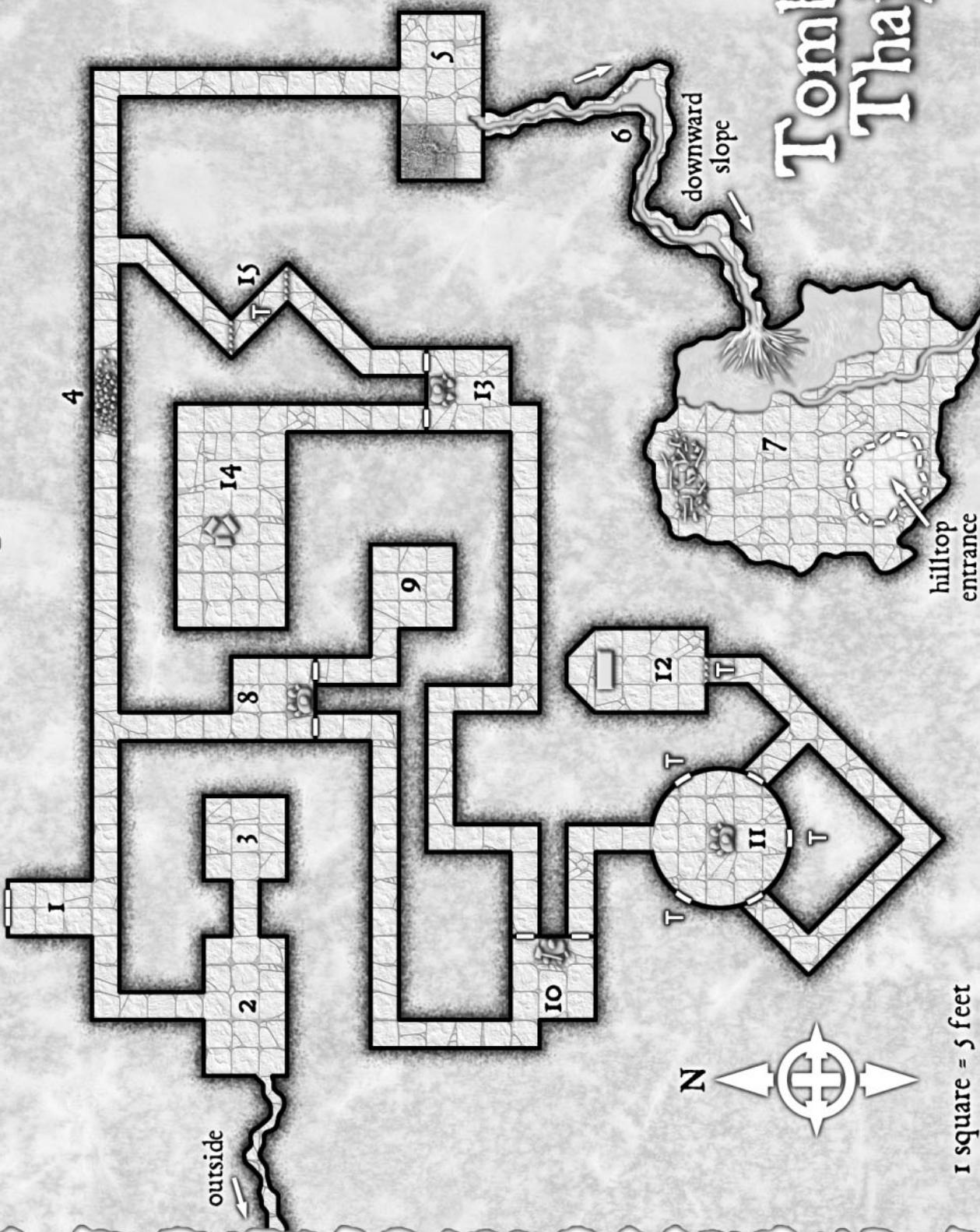


Gauldark is described on pages 20-21



This map is used for Chapter One. Ulabius Duskation's house is keyed on pages 29-34.

# Tomb of Thajar

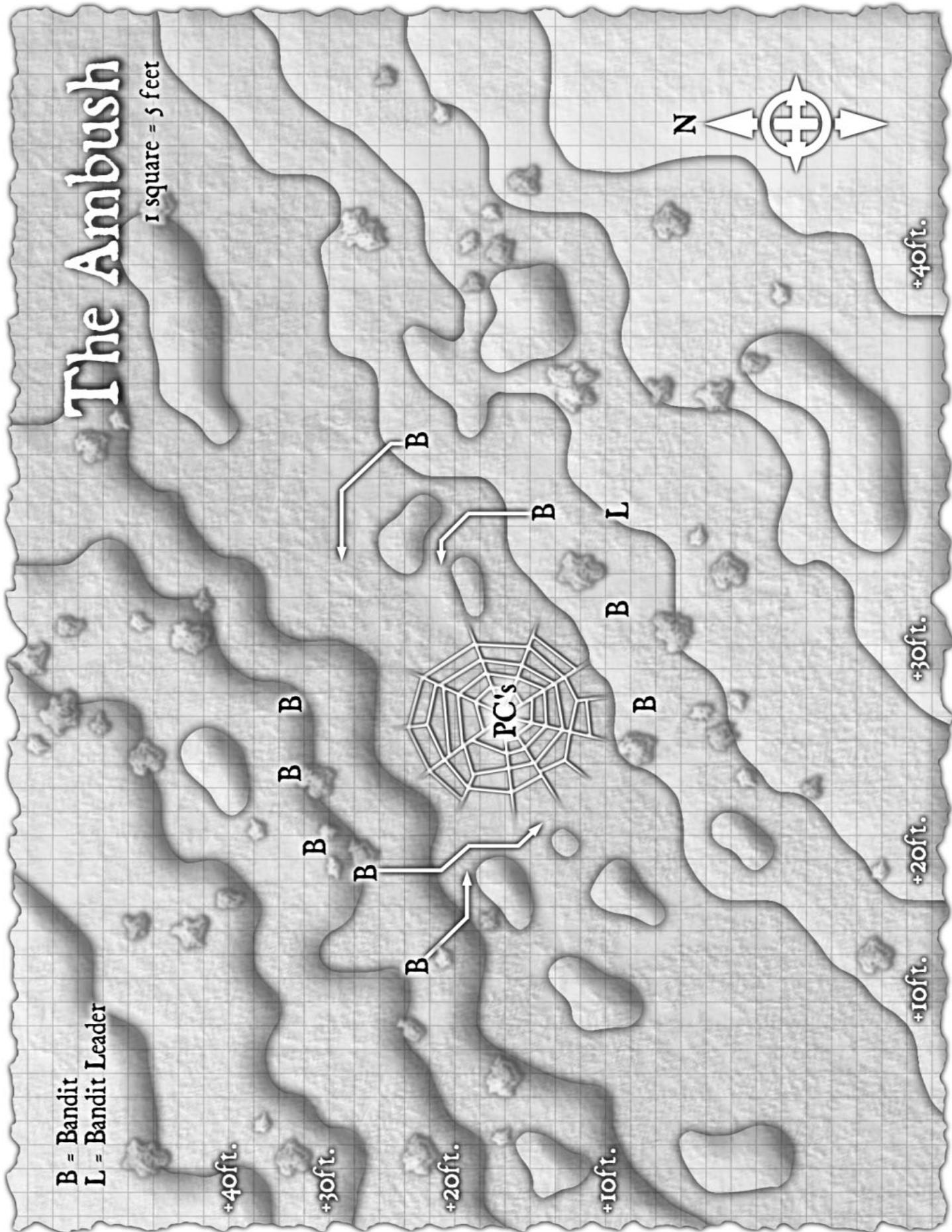


This map is used for Chapter Three. The Tomb of Thajar Darkfrag is keyed on pages 40-45.

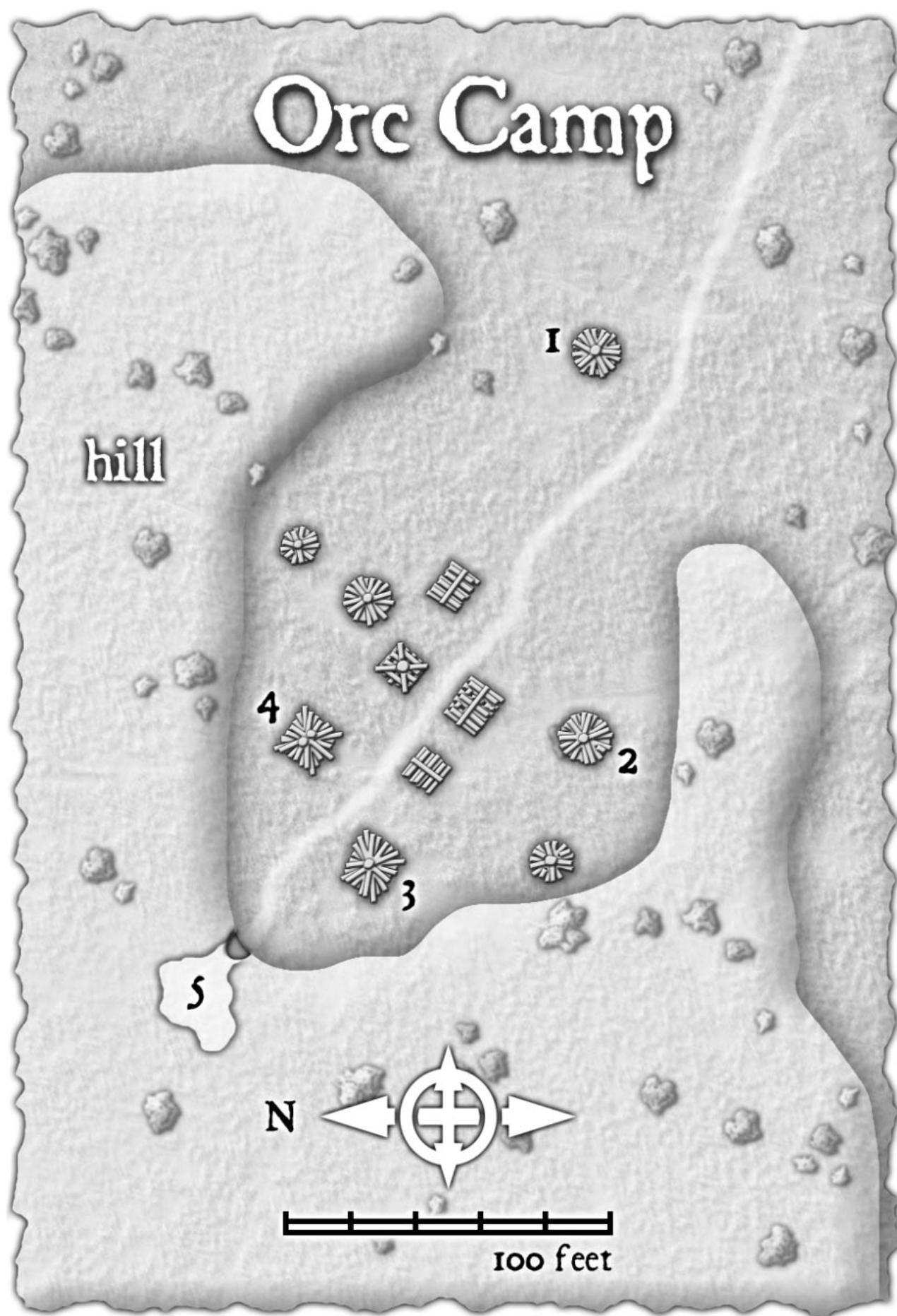
# The Ambush

1 square = 5 feet

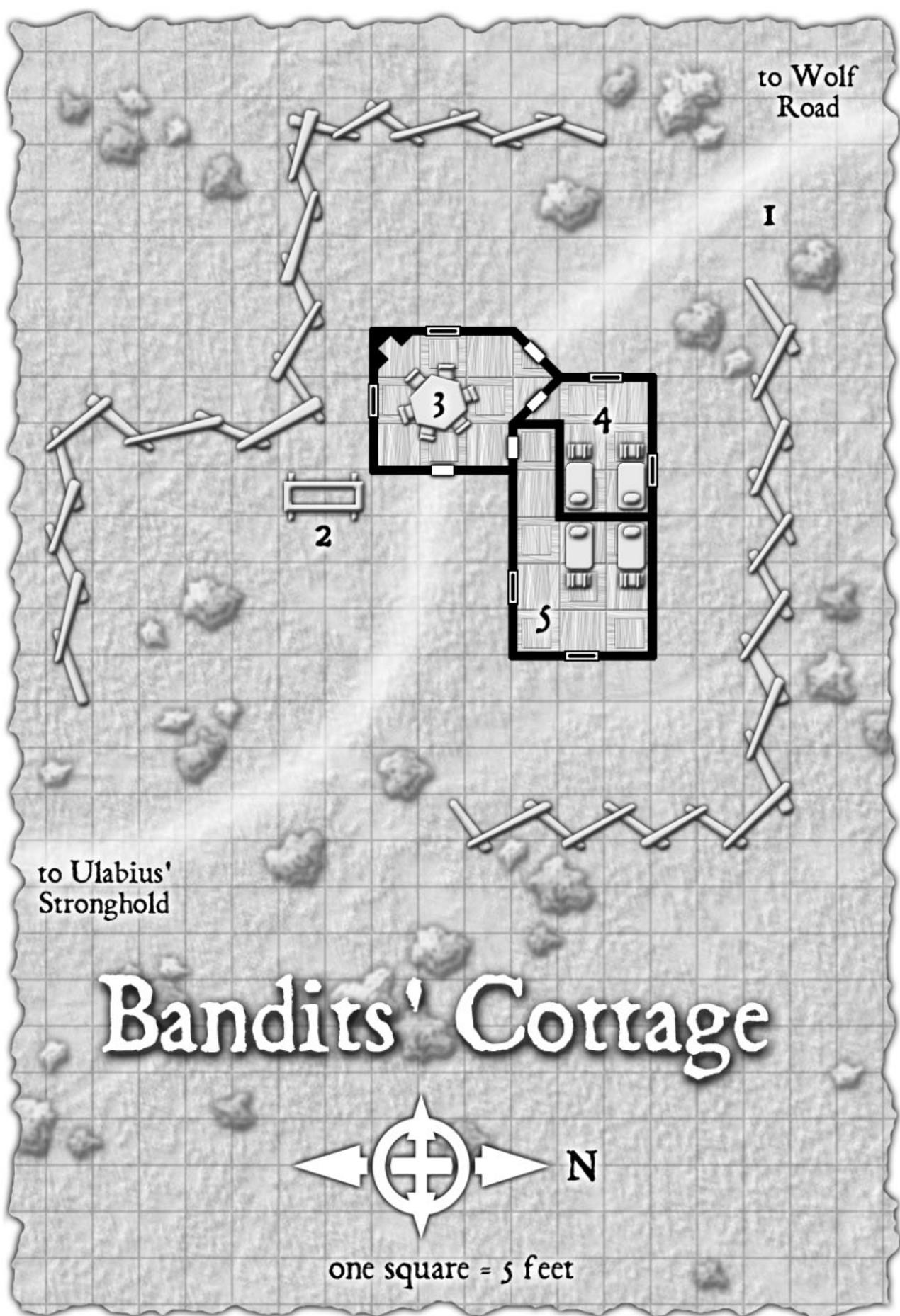
B = Bandit  
L = Bandit Leader



This map is used for the conclusion of Chapter Three. See pages 45-46 for encounter.

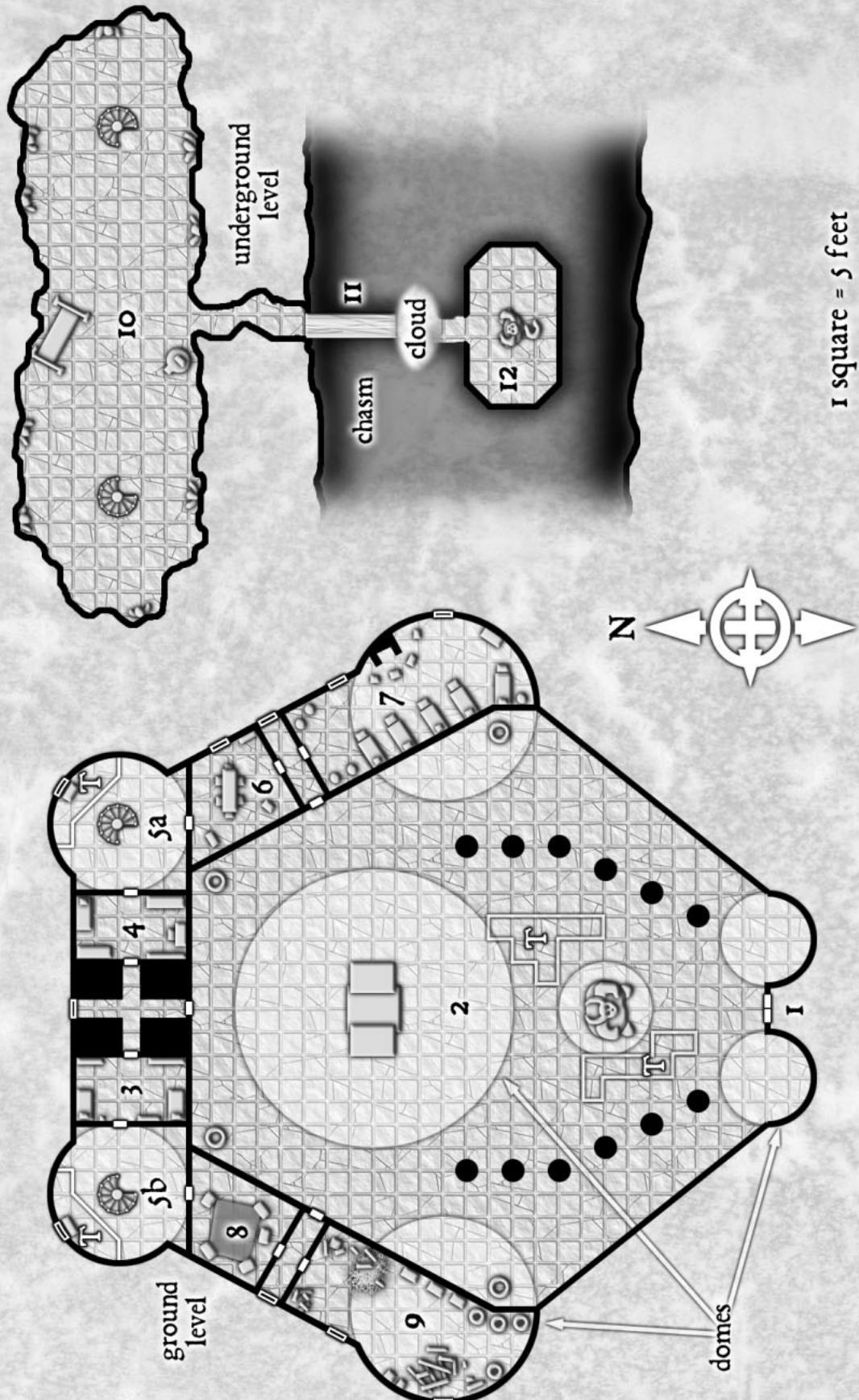


This map is used for Chapter Four. See pages 49-52 for area descriptions.



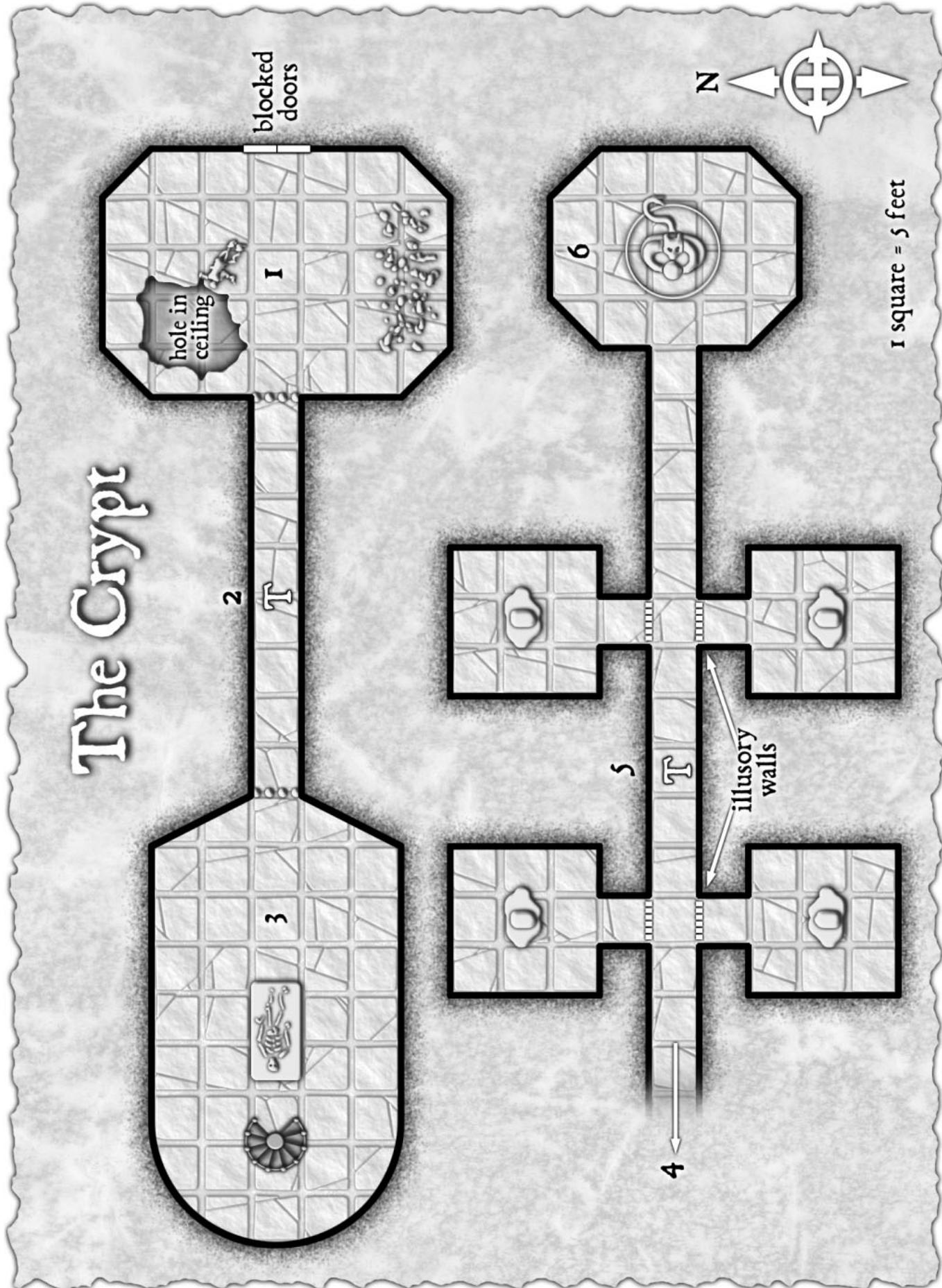
*This map is used for Chapter Four. See pages 52-54 for area descriptions.*

# The Forgotten Temple

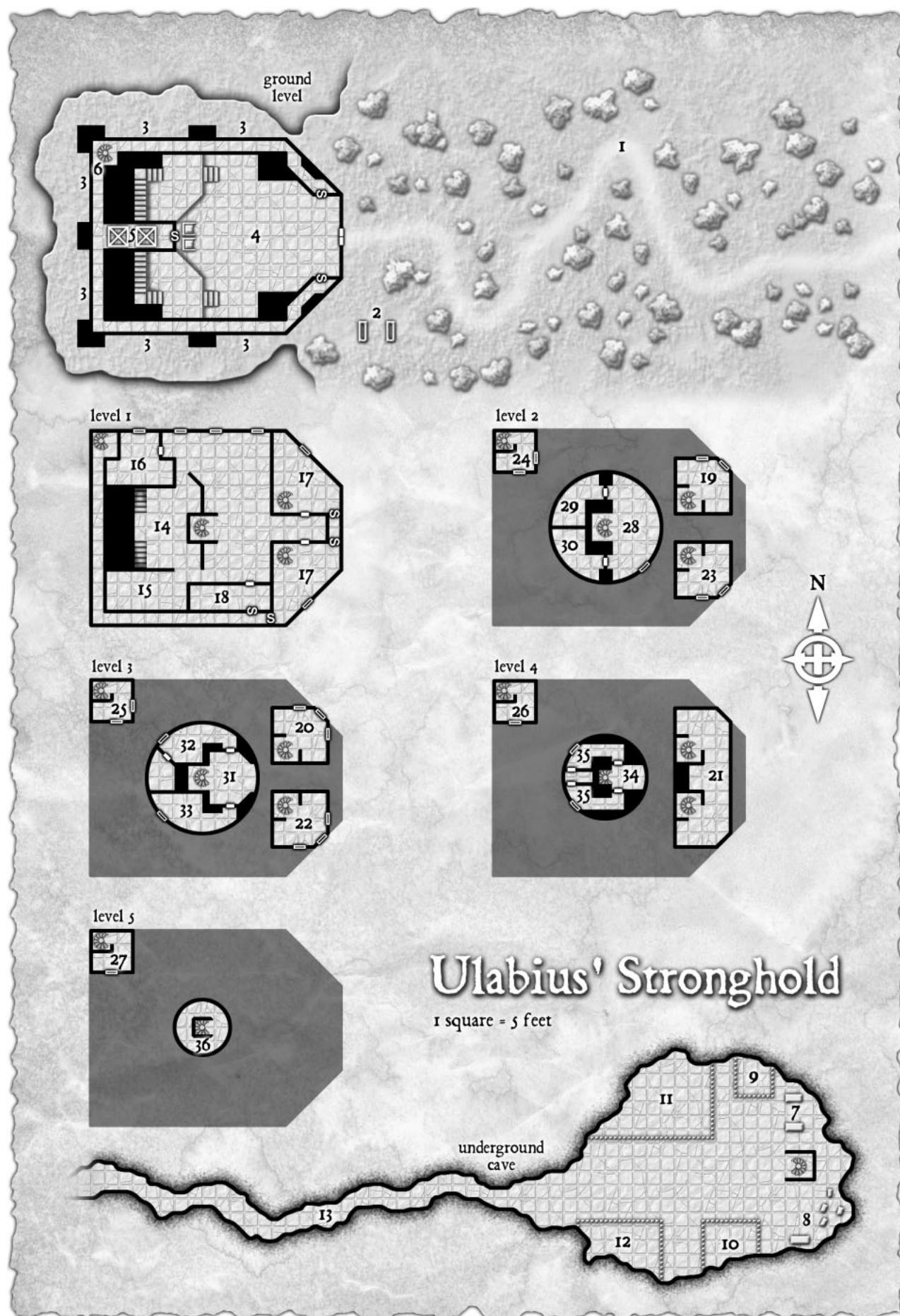


*This map is used for Chapter Five. The Forgotten Temple is keyed on pages 57-62.*

# The Crypt



This map is used for Chapter Six. The Crypt is keyed on pages 64-66.

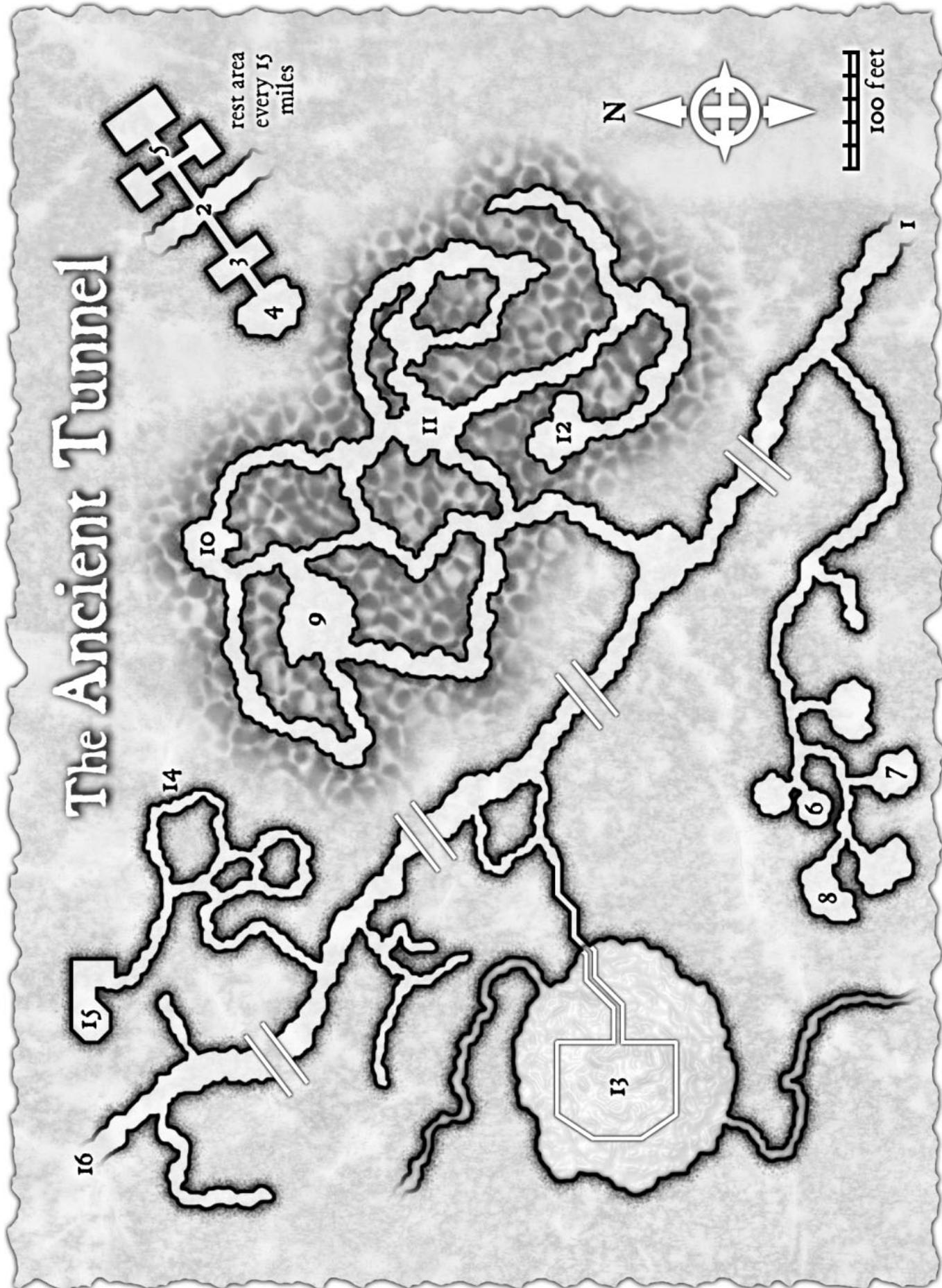


## Ulabius' Stronghold

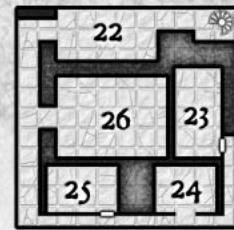
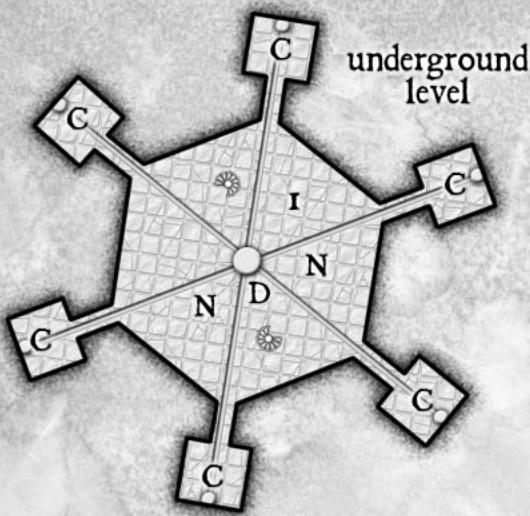
1 square = 5 feet

*This map is used for Chapter Seven. Ulabius' stronghold is keyed on pages 68-78.*

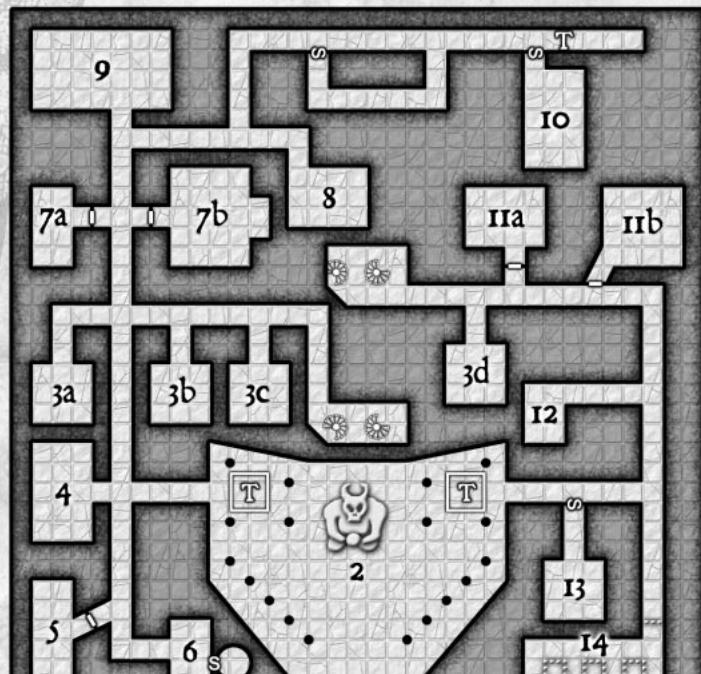
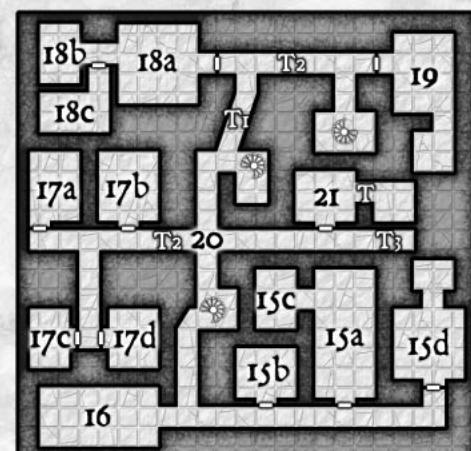
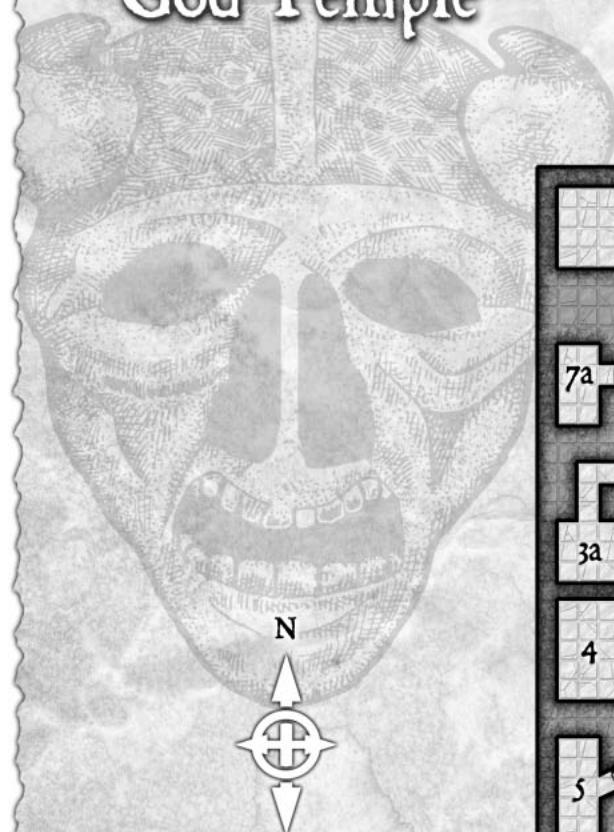
## The Ancient Tunnel



This map is used for Chapter Eight. The Ancient Tunnel is keyed on pages 80-85.



## The Dead God Temple



This map is used for Chapter Eight. The Dead God Temple is keyed on pages 86-94.

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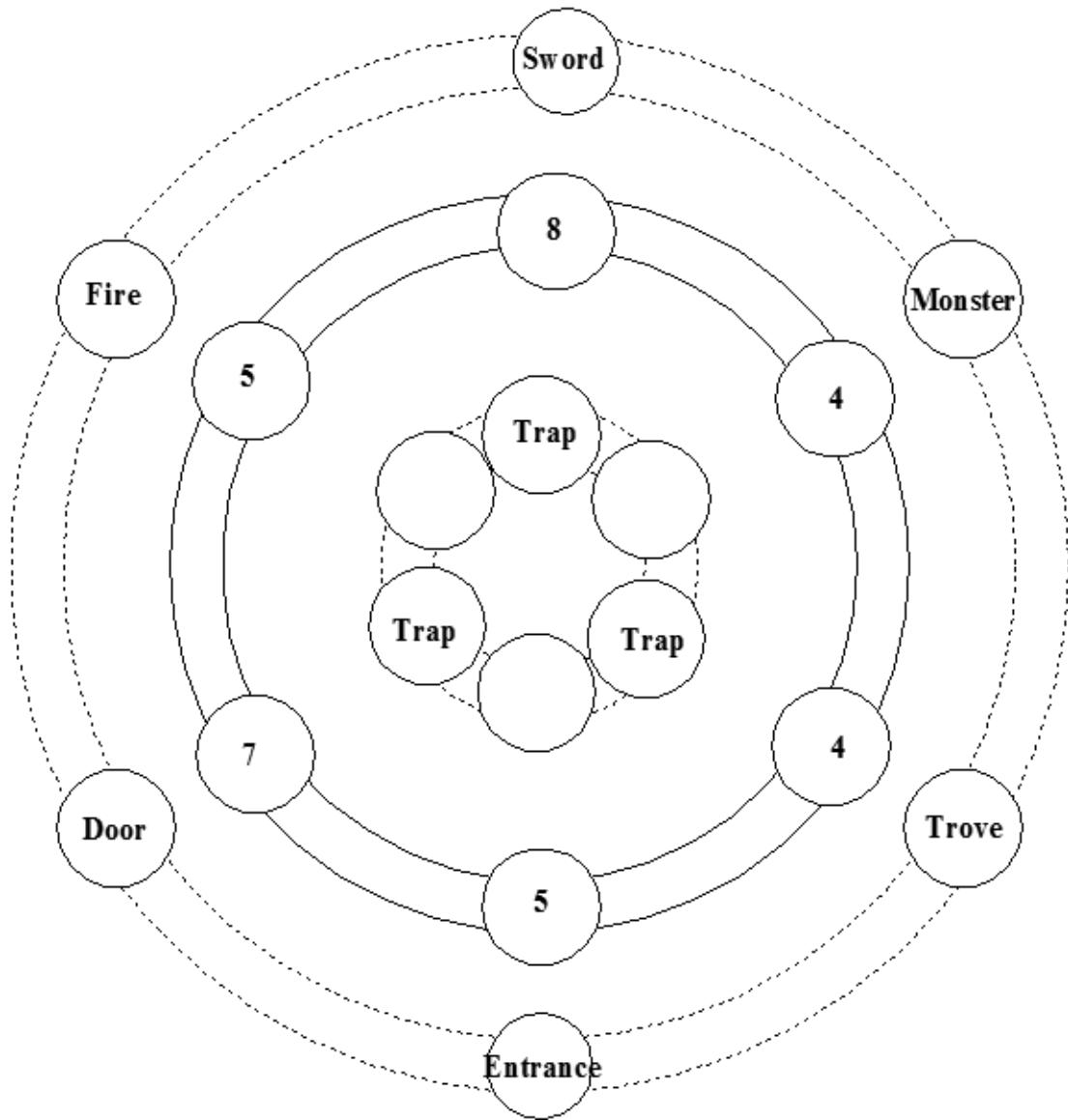
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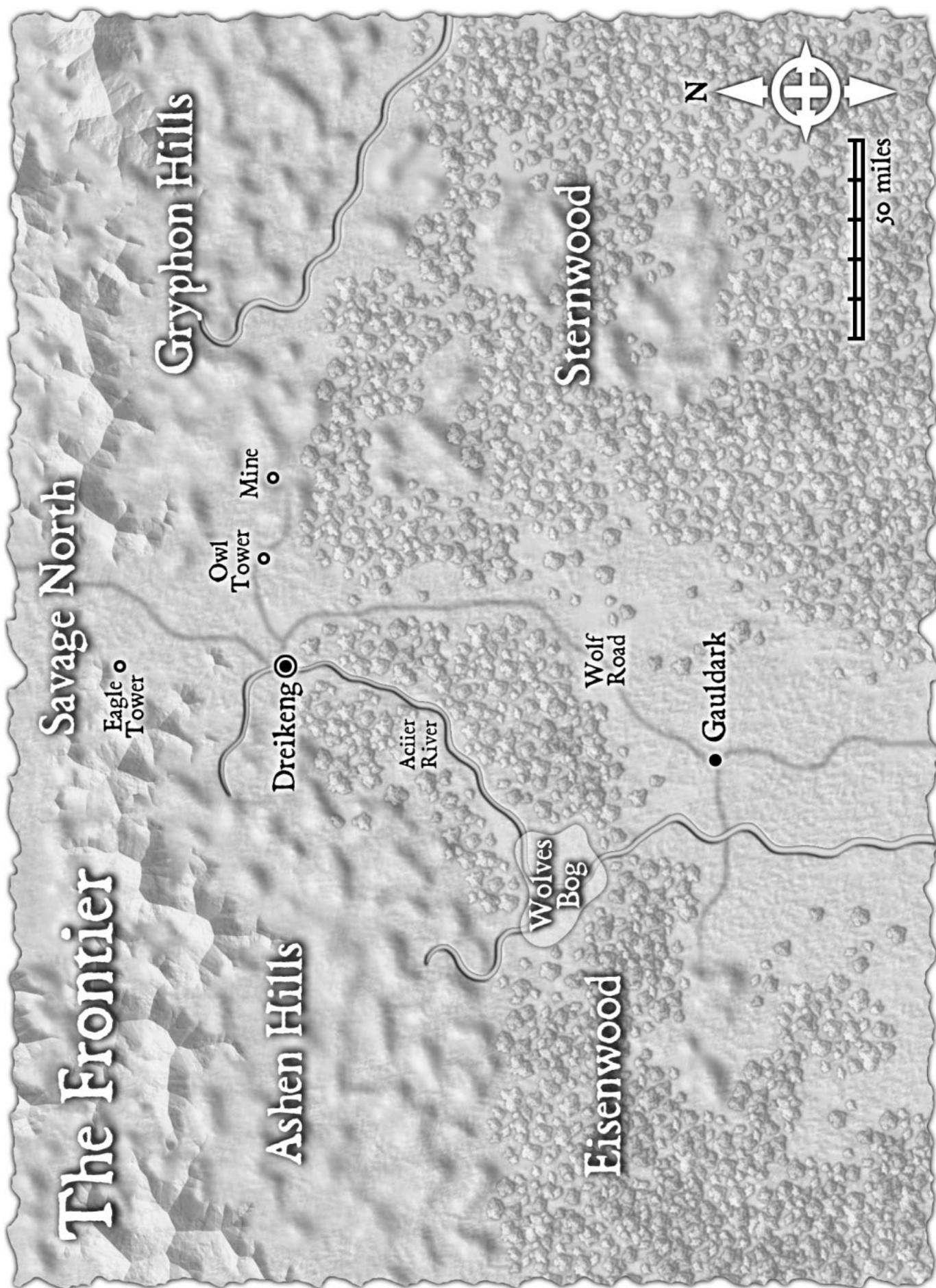
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Distribute this aid to the players when they enter room #11 of The Tomb of Thajar Darkfrag (page 43).





*This is the players' map of the frontier.*



# THE SIX SPHERES OF ZAIHHESS

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