

The background is a dark, atmospheric illustration of a ruined ancient city. In the foreground, a figure in dark, ornate armor stands on a stone ledge, holding a long spear. Below them, another figure in similar armor is seen from behind, walking up a wide stone staircase. The architecture is made of dark, weathered stone. In the upper right, a large, gnarled tree branch reaches into the frame. The sky is filled with many small, dark birds flying. The overall mood is mysterious and foreboding.

Tomb of Dying Dreams

THE THIRD AND FINAL CHAPTER IN THE CHRONICLE OF THE COPPER CROWN

AN ADVENTURE FOR **Symbaroun**

Introduction

WELCOME TO TOMB OF DYING DREAMS, an adventure for the roleplaying game Symbaroum. This is the third part of a loosely cohesive trilogy, meant to introduce players and Game Masters to Symbaroum's rule set and game world. The first part (*The Promised Land*) mainly focused on the core mechanics and the thematic conflicts characterizing the setting, while part two (*The Mark of the Beast*) touched on more advanced methods for problem-solving and gave the player characters a chance to visit the town of Thistle Hold. In this final episode, the Game Master is introduced to an example of how an adventure landscape can be arranged and the players finally get a chance to head out into the forest of Davokar. It will most certainly be a journey to remember.

THIS BOOK IS divided into three chapters. The first accounts for the adventure's background and central figures, and also provides some suggestions on how the player characters may get involved in the story. Chapter 2 describes the adventure landscape, consisting of Ordo Magica's outpost and the ruins being explored. Finally there is a chapter introducing a number of mystical artifacts and additional rules.

The GM's Preface

RUINS FROM THE LOST empire of Symbaroum can be found everywhere in Davokar. One such site has gained the attention of Ordo Magica, and the excavation and investigations are facilitated by the river Malgomor which runs right past the site. The ruins are spread across a vast area, but hardworking wizards have mapped and explored most of it. Only the mausoleum remains – the area's centerpiece and its greatest challenge. A whole group of explorers has vanished into the tomb, including the leader of the expedition, Magister Senia.



Connection to previous adventures

Tomb of Dying Dreams is an independent sequel to the adventures *The Promised Land* and *The Mark of the Beast*. It should be fully enjoyable for those who have not played the earlier adventures, but playing all three as a continuous campaign will undoubtedly add to the experience.



However, the deathblow to Ordo Magica's presence on the scene was something altogether different – a creeping darkness swept through the headquarters, leaving it empty of life. All that remains is a small outpost by the river, where a couple of terrified novices are trying to get in touch with civilization.

Central to the adventure is an artifact that can be found in the mausoleum, the Vile Water. This potent power source of almost pure corruption has awakened the hunger of three mighty monstrosities: the already mentioned Creeping Darkness, the ancient Thorn Queen Fangafa down in the tomb and the white spider Xanathâ. The player characters will have to tread carefully not to end up in combat with these, or at least not with more than one of them, since they are very powerful opponents.

Luckily, it is possible to forge alliances instead, for instance with Xanathâ who is more cunning and reasonable than the others. A pact can also be made with the group of cultists that has found the place, led by the charismatic leader Odako (or Landela if Odako died when your group played *The Mark of*

the Beast). In short: this adventure is a landscape, consisting of a perilous setting where several different agents are on the hunt for the Vile Water. It is the players and their characters who are meant to determine how to tackle the many challenges of the ruins, not some outside force or pre-determined chain of events. As Game Master you should study the Core Book's sections on adventure landscapes (page 190), and try your best to subtly guide the players through *Tomb of Dying Dreams*.

Player Preface

AS IT IS written, the adventure assumes that the player characters are recruited by Ordo Magica for a rescue operation, since communication between the chapter in Thistle Hold and the expedition has been lost. The characters may, however, have other reasons for journeying to the location, depending on previous adventures or what type of incentives that suit them best. The following suggestions may function as a point of departure:

TREASURE HUNT

Rumors about the Tomb of Dreams are circulating in Thistle Hold. The player characters are approached by a nervous novice of Ordo Magica, who is either offering to sell them information about the tomb's location or trying to persuade them to accompany her there (to share in any treasures). The novice says nothing of what has happened to the order's expedition; if asked she claims they have left the tomb to "re-organize and re-supply".

A WORRIED SIBLING

A relative (or friend) of a member of Ordo Magica's expedition has sold everything he owns to fund a secret rescue operation headed for the tomb. The sibling only knows that the chapter has lost contact with the expedition but has a feeling that something bad has happened.

Regarding the location, he says that he "forced a novice of the order to disclose it". If the GM wishes, the town watch may find the novice dead the next morning, meaning that a squad of Queen's Rangers will come after the characters, accusing them of being involved ...

A CHANCE ENCOUNTER

The player characters may happen upon the location on their way to or from other adventures. For example, they can be travelling on or along Malgomor when they unexpectedly are hailed by the desperate novices in the outpost. Another option is to have them encounter a survivor on the route between

Adventure Time Line

About 10 months ago

An expedition led by the treasure hunter Gorak stumble upon the tomb. The plunderers successfully salvage some of its treasures, including the mummified cranium of a King, before they are chased away by the wardens of the tomb.

Between 8–5 months ago

The members of the expedition start to transform into raving abominations that run amok until they are slain, the final two by the elves of the Iron Pact high up in the Titans (see the adventure *The Promised Land*).

About 4 months ago

Fangafa comes crawling towards the tomb, enticed by the irresistible Vile Water.

Little more than 2 months ago

The changeling Alahara, Gorak's friend, starts killing people in Thistle Hold, hunting for glands which might stop Gorak from becoming Blight Born (see the adventure *The Mark of the Beast*).

Less than 2 months ago

By interviewing a friend of Alahara, Ordo Magica manages to find the tomb from which the King's skull was taken.

6 weeks ago

Ordo Magica establishes the outpost on Malgomor's shore and starts mapping the area.

24 days ago

Xanathâ arrives and makes herself at home in the sinkhole.

20 days ago

The cultists find their way to the area, by following a boat headed from Kurun to the outpost with extra supplies.

16 days ago

Magister Senia enters the tomb along with her entourage

14 days ago

The creeping darkness overruns the headquarters of Ordo Magica and Xanathâ corrupts its Magic Circle – contact between the expedition and Thistle Hold is lost.

10 days ago

The tribe Urrbukktur comes fleeing up through the sinkhole and takes over the headquarters, after a bloody meeting with Xanathâ.

TOMB OF DYING DREAMS

Thistle Hold and Karvosti. The stranger dies in their arms slurring something vague about “creeping darkness”, “ancient treasures” and “follow the river west ...”.

THE PREVIOUS ADVENTURES

Player characters who have played *The Promised Land* and/or *The Mark of the Beast* are already acquainted with the Tomb of Dreams – they know it as the resting place of the now headless King Hurian Lo-Apak. Depending on what happened during those adventures, not least on how *The Mark of the Beast* ended, the characters can have lots of different reasons for wanting to find the tomb.

If they are in possession of the King’s Skull they may want to return it, because of the horrific dreams tormenting them all. And should the cranium have ended up in the hands of the Black Cloaks, the monks may want to hire the player characters to head out into the forest and find the rest of the mummy. Finally, it is also possible that the skull ended up with the cultist Odako, and in that case it is highly likely that someone (maybe Lasifor Nightpitch himself) is prepared to promise the characters a sizable reward to hunt down the cult and reclaim the artifact.

Journey to the Outpost

IT IS HARD to predict exactly how the player characters will choose to travel to the area surrounding the tomb, which is why the Game Master must be prepared to improvise or gently guide them in a direction of his/her choice. From Thistle Hold it will take them about ten days to hike through the forest – five days through the Bright outskirts and four or five more through the darker and wilder parts. Another option is to ride for Kurun and seek passage on a river boat like the one described in Adventure Pack I.

Irrespective of what means of transportation they choose, the journey is a perilous one. In addition to the following suggestions, the Game Master should take a closer look at page 184 in the Core Book for further inspiration.

TINY BUT LETHAL

Because of their intense curiosity, the spring elf Renn and his friends (PCs +1 in total) have become outcasts and during recent expeditions deeply corrupted by the darkness of Davokar. Now, the blight born fairies have the characters in their sights.

Initially they act with caution, trying to determine the strength of their prey – lurking around the camp site at night, peering with shiny black eyes





from behind twigs and shrubberies. Later on, they will try their best to make the characters split up so they can be attacked one by one. And they will not give up until they have managed to drain at least one of the intended victims off life and blood.

Blight Born Fairy

Giggles slyly, hisses, then giggles again.

Tiny, crooked, totally naked creatures with shiny black eyes and long claws instead of nails. Their bodies are covered by thin fur and the leader Renn is surrounded by a pungent sulfur-like stench.

Manner	Giggles, squints		
Race	Fairy (Spring elf)		
Resistance	Weak		
Traits	<i>Corrupting Attack (I), Long-lived, Natural Weapon (I)</i>		
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 15 (–5), Persuasive 9 (+1), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 5 (+5), Vigilant 11 (–1)			
Abilities	None		
Weapons	Claws 3 (short)		
Armor	None		
Defense	–3		
Toughness	10	Pain Threshold	3
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Black with greenish brown spots, like decaying leaves floating on a pond at night (corruption: thoroughly corrupt)		

Tactics: Renn and his friends will not attack more than one or two persons at a time. They wait for the opportunity to arise before fearlessly assaulting the prey.

Adventure Pack 1

There are countless ruins in the forest, from different stages in the region's long history. The Game Master is welcome to let the characters stumble upon more such remnants on their journey. Inspiration on how to design these can be found in Adventure Pack 1 (more specifically the text Treasure Hunts in Davokar), available for purchase in various download stores.

THE HUNTERS AND THE REBEL

A squad of Queen's Rangers (see page 212 in the Core Book) are moving through the woods or riding a boat along the river. In the latter case the encounter is unavoidable, and the rangers will board the characters vessel and ask to see their licenses.

If the encounter takes place in the forest, the characters will be discovered if the one who is the least *Discreet* fails a [*Discreet*←*Vigilant*] test – in that case the rangers prepare an ambush. If successful the players may roll again, against [*Vigilant*←*Discreet*]. A second success means that the characters detect the rangers from afar, so they can avoid them or sneak up to them and listen to their conversation.

The leader of the squad, Edran, is not out to hurt the player characters but will request to see their treasure-hunting licenses. If everything is in order he will invite them to share a campfire for the night and later tell them about the squad's mission – to hunt down an armed and rebellious group of Odavs who disapprove of the chieftain's friendship with Ambria.

The rebel leader (tentatively a young witch) may very well cross paths with the characters later on, as a potential adversary or future friend and contact among the barbarians.

HOMeward BOUND

The characters bump into a group of fortune hunters headed back towards Thistle Hold. One of them is badly injured and must be carried by the others, who in turn are famished, ragged and exhausted. The leader of the group says that they managed to break into an unexplored chamber in the western earth tower of the Black Leech Rift. He will not talk about what was in there but claims they had to return empty handed since one of them was severely hurt by an ancient trap.

If they player characters invite the group to sleep at their camp site two things will happen. First, the guests decide to expand their meager catch by attacking the characters; second, once the fight is on the next guest arrives at the camp: the necromage Omalkun (for stats, see page 232 in the Core Book) who wants to reclaim his stolen sickle, now hidden in the backpack of one of the fortune hunters. Omalkun attacks the plunderers and they focus their attention on the undead, while the characters are free to choose sides. The necromage will leave as soon as the thieves are dead and he has retrieved the artifact.

See page 215 in the Core Book for stats on Fortune-hunters and Plunderers, then give them all –1D4 in *Toughness*.

The Adventure Landscape

WHEN THE PLAYER CHARACTERS have made it to the adventure landscape, the chain of future events should be governed by their decisions, based on what goals they have as individuals and as a group. Of course, the Game Master can make use of other agents in the landscape if the players have a hard time taking the initiative, and in some cases it is intended that they should be contacted by persons and creatures offering alliances or asking for help.

THE FIELD OF RUINS they arrive at spans from the river a couple of kilometers to the South. Thanks to Malgomor the area is extra vibrant. The vegetation is dense and lush, dominated by tall hardwood trees with extensive canopies that do not let much sunlight through to the shimmering, moist ground-level air.

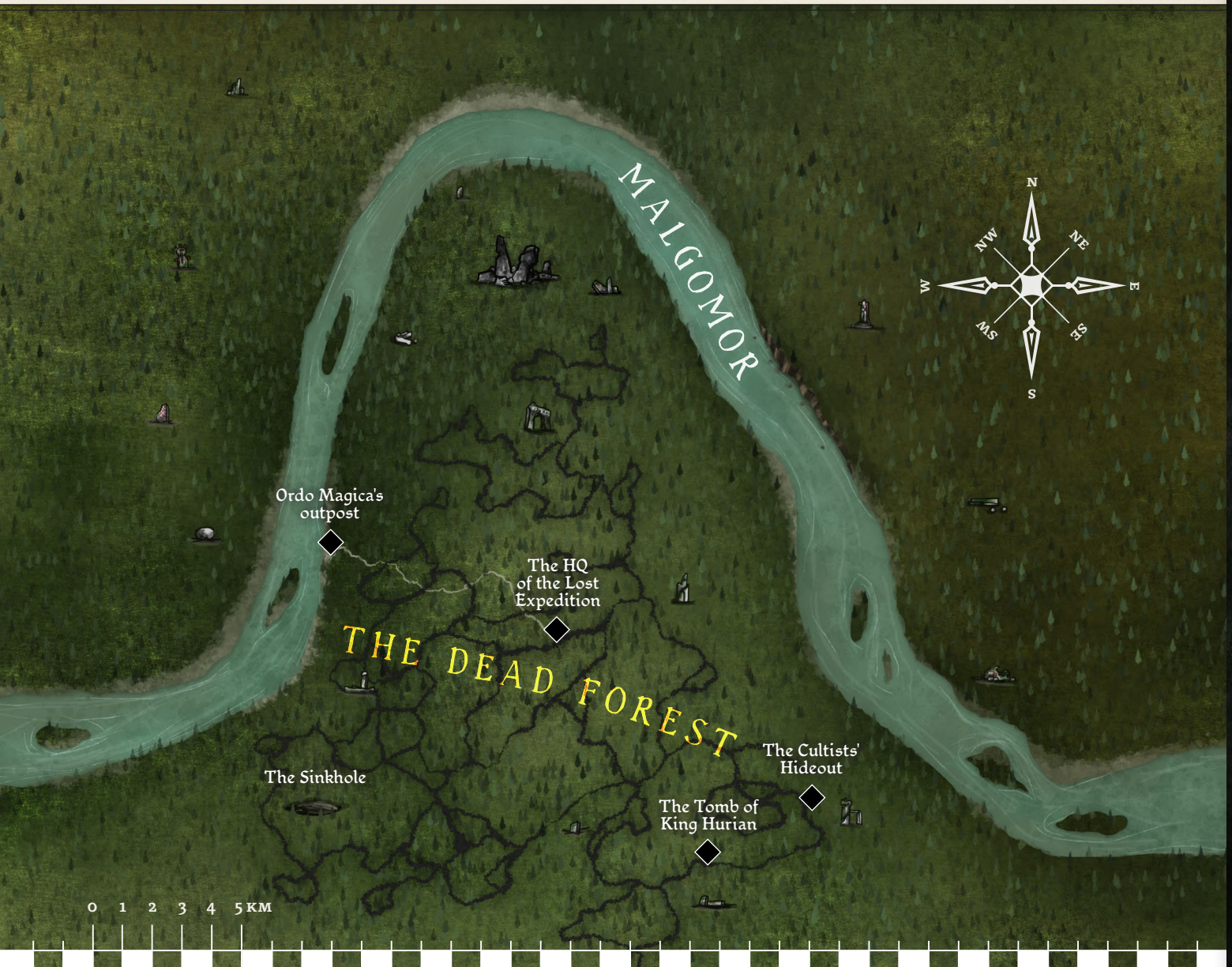
The ruins are in most cases totally crumbled and overgrown with moss and vines, but here and there broken stone walls rise from the undergrowth. Further in the distance, half an arch can be seen struggling against winding plants and a few empty towers challenge the surrounding trees as to who is the tallest.

The biggest ruin in the area is the old palace located on the northernmost part of the peninsula created by Malgomor's U-shaped bend. The once magnificent stone building is completely demolished. All that remain are a handful of monolithic structures and a ruined stairwell (see the cover image). Especially curious is that the area closest to the palace lacks any kind of vegetation and that the dead streaks which otherwise run crisscross through the region cannot be seen in the vicinity of the palace.

If the Game Master wishes, the grand structure can be used to expand the adventure and provide the players with further opportunities for exploration. If not, a quick survey will show that the ruin has already been visited by plunderers, most likely on numerous occasions. In this case the palace ruin is nothing more than a sad reminder of the lost splendor of the once great Symbarian civilization.

The disposition of this chapter is based on a number of locations or creatures that the characters are likely to meet. First, the outpost on the shore of Malgomor is described, followed by the ruin that until two weeks ago was Ordo Magica's headquarters. After that you will find some sections describing plausible allies and/or antagonists, along with the places where these can be found.

The chapter ends with a description of King Hurian-Lo Apaks mausoleum. Aside from the headless mummy king, the tomb contains the Vile Water, some glimpses of Symbaroum's early days and a whole lot of treasure. Unfortunately, there are also several difficult challenges to be overcome for the one who wishes to get in and out of the mausoleum alive ...



The Value of Overwhelming Opposition

Some of the creatures featured in this adventure (Xanathâ, the Creeping Darkness and the Thorn Queen Fangafa) are extremely powerful, likely too mighty to function as adversaries for the characters. This is fully intentional, in the hope of triggering dramatic roleplaying scenes with negotiations and awkward alliances, or at any rate forcing the players to try other strategies besides combat. There is

no scene in this adventure where combat against any of these is required, at least not without a possible escape.

In other words, it is expected that the players will feel small in the landscape, as if they have walked right into an older and grander world, a world which once was and which threatens to rise again. As Game Master you should try to describe how massive, dark-minded and power-

ful the creatures are. Also, a successful *Cunning* test with the ability *Beast Lore* will provide the stats of the creatures – on condition that they are in sight.

When the Game Master has done his or her best to portray the danger it is up to the players to make their choice, whether that means running away, trying to negotiate or engaging the enemy in brave (foolhardy?) combat.



ORDO MAGICA'S OUTPOST

1. Pier and Boat
2. Palisade and Gateway
3. Main Building
4. Warehouse

The Outpost of Ordo Magica

ON THE SHORE of Malgomor is a walled-in outpost with a pier out into the stream. This was the point of departure when Ordo Magica sent an expedition deeper into the woods. Now it is like a prison for two terrified novices who have locked themselves in the main building, hoping to be safe from the pack of mare cats lurking outside.

The outpost is intended to be the characters first stop when reaching the area; a stop which preferably takes place after nightfall and in pouring rain. If they arrive by boat this is more or less a given, but even if they travel by foot the Game Master is advised to guide them to the outpost. For instance, it is likely that they (or their guide) have the river as a first waypoint; upon reaching Malgomor they then have to follow it up or down stream to make contact with what is left of the expedition.

Whichever way the characters close in on the outpost, they will have to deal with the mare cats before getting a chance to hear the novices' tale about what awaits them in the landscape.

1. Pier and boat

A small river boat is tied to the pier. Onboard are dry rations enough to feed five player characters for a week.

2. Palisade and Gateway

A pack of tenacious mare cats have caught the scent of the novices and are sniffing around inside the enclosure. The famished beasts (as many as the PCs) form the overly eager welcoming party for arriving player characters. For a description and the stats of the mare cats, see page 220 in the Core Book.

3. Main Building

The novices Marla and Plendel have been locked inside the house for little less than a week and cannot provide much information besides what is detailed below:

- They are happy to come along to the headquarters if they are invited. If not, they will remain in the outpost, hoping that the rescue operation will be successful. If stats are needed for the novices, use Queen's Ranger on page 212 in the Core Book, but without any abilities.
- The novices know the location of the headquarters and that it contains a magic circle: if the expedition cannot be contacted from the Hold something bad must have happened ...
- The main focus of the expedition was a mausoleum. Last they heard, a group of explorers led by Magister Senia was about to enter the

tomb. That was about two weeks ago and what has transpired since then they do not know.

- They have no map of the area (that can be found at the HQ), but they can make a sketch and pin-point the approximate position of the headquarters, the sinkhole and the tomb.

4. Warehouse

A building consisting of a single large room, filled with tools (equivalent to three sets of Artisan's Tools) and some weapons: two swords, an axe,

a spear, two bows with 20 arrows and a crossbow with 20 bolts. There are also three suits of leather armor (light) and one suit of scale mail armor (medium) in the shed. The novices do not mind if the player characters help themselves to the stash; they have their own survival to worry about.

If someone actively searches the building for hidden valuables and succeeds with a test against *Vigilant*, he or she will find a buried wooden box containing the expedition's emergency funds: 12 thaler, 61 shillings and 14 ortegs.

The Dead Woods

AS SOON AS the player characters leave the outpost, likely headed for Ordo Magica's headquarters, they will come across broad streaks of gray death running through the rich undergrowth. The region of dead vegetation is spread out like a web over the area, with streaks between fifty and a hundred paces wide – literally everything touched by the web is lifeless and shriveled. The trees are dead but with all leaves still attached, the moss on the

ground has turned a blackish grey and the spiders hang dead in their own webs, not unlike their prey. The only exception is a small flower, a purple Lily of the Valley, which can be seen sprouting here and there – apparently resistant to whatever has caused the devastation.

The player character will pass four of these streaks on their way through the landscape, caused by the Creeping Darkness (see page 22).

The Headquarters of the Lost Expedition

ORDO MAGICA ESTABLISHED their headquarters in one of the area's best preserved buildings and fortified it with a palisade. The old stone keep lays at the edge of a dead streak and the building's facade is covered in blackened ivy and gray moss. Everything is dead inside the keep too, aside from in the chamber where the clerk Tonsel sits on the ground (see below).

Ordo Magica is no longer the ruler of this castle. The largest part of the expedition vanished down the tomb and never came back, and as the remaining members were planning a rescue attempt the Creeping Darkness swept right through the headquarters. What little survived that encounter was later found by Urrbukktur, a goblin tribe on the run from an abysmal enemy in the Underworld. The tribe reached the surface through the sinkhole where they met the white spider Xanathâ who decimated the tribe even more.

Now Urrbukktur are the owners of the keep, at least until the Creeping Darkness returns. All that remain of Ordo Magica's expedition are seven freeze dried corpses and Tonsel, the crazy clerk. The goblins have not listened very closely to the madness-stricken scholar (whom they find amusing) and they cannot read the journal found in the broken circle (which they are afraid of) – the exception being the shaman Njegg, who senses a warning in the ravings of the crazed human.

1. Palisade and Gatehouse

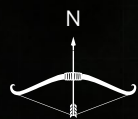
The palisade surrounding the shed, the keep's entrance and extensions is made from rough logs that do not go very deep into the ground and is held together by nothing more than twined leather cords. It is about the height of a sturdy human and will not deter Davokar's larger beasts; it does however function as protection against packs of smaller predators and may also convince plunderers to think twice.

The twin-gates are three paces wide and can be bolted from inside with two sturdy beams.

2. Keep

The upper levels of the nowadays four stories high keep have long since caved in and been replaced by a flat roof made from the same type of logs as the palisade. The overgrown facade is weathered and the mortar keeping the stones in place is in many places so deteriorated that holes show between the blocks.

The only element up to standard is the newly built, iron-framed hardwood door covering the entrance. It is bolted from inside and strong enough to stop most anything. To wreck it or kick it open the characters have to inflict a total of 20 damage upon it (no test is required to successfully hit it, but only two persons may deal damage each turn) and in the meantime two bow-equipped goblin



2×2 m

THE HEADQUARTERS

1. Palissade and Gatehouse

2. Keep

a. The Antechamber

b. The Hall

c. Side Chamber

3. The Shed

☠ The Troll Trap



warriors can attack them through the windows in the Antechamber. The easiest way to get in is probably to lure the tribe to open the gate or to move in with speed when they open it for other reasons. With the help of various abilities and mystical powers, other options are possible too; let the players be creative and reward any good ideas.

2a. The Antechamber: Past the door is a guard room, about two fathoms high, six paces wide and three paces deep. Two patrols totaling four goblin warriors (see page 13) take turns watching through the tall, narrow windows and resting their legs on the two rough log benches in the room.

2b. The Hall: The floors inside the keep were made of wood and are long since gone. Ordo Magica restored parts of the first two stories, to serve as sleeping quarters and workspaces. But aside from that, the keep consists of only one tall hall, open all the way up to the log roof more than six fathoms up.

2c. Side Chamber: A single room, about three paces wide and deep, and with a ceiling height equivalent to the one in the guard room. In days long past the chamber was used to store weapons and equipment, but Ordo Magica made it the place for their Magic Circle. The large opening high up on the eastern wall (one meter high and more than that in width, caused by natural erosion) is provisionally covered by a curtain made from thick hides.

This room is the only one in the keep that has living vegetation, in the form of moss and vines on the floor and walls. It seems like the grayish black streak of death for some reason never touched the Magic Circle.

3. The Shed

By the keep stands a newly constructed house, built by Ordo Magica and filled with spoiled goods. Everything organic – bread, meat, fish and fruits – looks gray and freeze dried.

But to the right inside the door the characters can find a lot of usable items. Even if much was lost in the tomb there is a great deal of exploration equipment lying on the shelves. There are several bundles of rope, a handful of lanterns and lots of lamp oil. Furthermore, the characters can piece together two complete sets of Field Equipment and get their hands on three grappling hooks, two pick axes and four shovels.

NEGOTIATING WITH THE GOBLIN TRIBE

Characters who wish to negotiate and demonstrates peaceful intentions can be successful. The Chief, Gabba Bigpaw, knows that “tallings” (humans) can be very dangerous, and the shaman Njegg would

welcome the chance to speak to humans and learn more about what has happened in the keep.

In a negotiation Gabba will consider giving the player characters access to the Side Chamber in exchange for tools and/or weapons of a total value of at least 10 thaler (he is not interested in coin or jewelry). In other words, parts of the equipment found in the storage area at Ordo Magica’s outpost will suffice as payment.

Gabba Bigpaw, goblin chief

“You are welcome, to Bigpaw’s kingdom.”

Gabba is not large or strong for being a goblin, but very sly – therein lays his greatness. He led his tribe up from the Underworld, away from the trolls that terrorized them. Doing that, he earned the trust of the tribe, even if he has a hard time feeling comfortable in his role as a ruler; sure, he has always dreamed of becoming chief of the tribe but the responsibilities that come with the position are nothing he cares for.

Manner	Smiles nervously, pats his belly		
Race	Goblin		
Resistance	Ordinary		
Traits	<i>Pariah, Short-lived, Survival Instinct (II)</i>		
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 16 (−6), Discreet 13 (−3), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 11 (−1), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 5 (+5)			
Abilities	<i>Exceptionally Cunning (novice), Leader (adept)</i>		
Weapons	Spiked club 4		
Armor	Leather armor 2 (+2 for Survival Instinct)		
Defense	+1		
Toughness	10	Pain Threshold	5
Equipment	A pouch with Lucky Dirt, a leather braid made by his diseased crone		
Shadow	Brown like musty humus (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: Gabba will try to learn as much as he can about the opposition before taking any risks. If the player characters are hostile he will try to lure them to stand on the troll trap in front of his throne, and then activate it. After that he will send his bodyguards to attack while adopting a defensive stance himself. Note that Gabba’s leadership ability makes his subjects deal +2 in damage when attacking targets appointed by their chief (namely the character who looks most dangerous.

Speaking to the goblins

The Urrbukktur tribe has never been in contact with humans and cannot speak either Ambrian or the barbarian tongue. Conversations with the goblins must be held in the rough speech that they share with the trolls (understandable with the ability *Loremaster* at adept level) or with sign language. There is, however, one exception: the shaman Njegg who has done some trading with barbarians, enough to communicate reasonably well (requires the ability *Loremaster* at novice level for Ambrians).

It should also be noted that having had no contact with humans, the members of the tribe show no sign of striving to adapt to human behavior. The goblins of Urrbukktur are beastly in their ways and share the pack mentality and shyness of other small predators, as well as their tendency to act fearlessly aggressive when cornered.

Njegg, goblin shaman

*"In a dream sight I saw our salvation;
was that you in the mist?"*

Njegg is Gabba's psychic sister and fiercely loyal to her brother. However, they have different views on the situation at hand. Gabba believes he has found the tribes future in the ruin, while Njegg is worried about the muttering human in the Side Chamber. What little she understands of his mumblings, together with the freeze dried bodies inside the keep, gives her the creeps – that which sucked the life out of the previous owners may yet return.

Njegg wants to know more and is prepared to encourage her brother to trust the characters, provided that they do not storm in weapons in hand.

Manner	Speaks pensively, head tilted to the side
Race	Goblin
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	<i>Pariah, Short-lived</i>
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 13 (–3), Discreet 11 (–1), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 5 (+5), Resolute 15 (–5), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 7 (+3)	
Abilities	<i>Inherit Wound (novice), Nature's Embrace (master), Ritualist (novice: Fortune-telling), Witchcraft (adept)</i>
Weapons	Wooden staff 3 (long, blunt)
Armor	None
Defense	+5
Toughness	10 Pain Threshold 5
Equipment	<i>Rattle-wand made from a bird cranium, 1 dose Concentrated Magic, 1 Ghost Candle</i>
Shadow	Emerald green like mildew-covered moss, tainted with single dark spots (corruption: 1)

Tactics: Njegg hates to fight, it makes her stomach ache. But if her brother is in danger she will do all in her power to keep him safe. As soon as the fight is on she sinks into the ground (*Nature's Embrace*) and helps Gabba by alleviating some of the damage he suffers (*Inherit Wound*).

THE TROLL TRAP

In the floor of the hall there is a hatch, leading to what was once a basement pantry. Now the hatch has been converted into a trapdoor and the pantry is housing a famished rage troll. The trap is triggered from Gabba's throne (free action); hostile player characters are at risk of falling towards a tough fight if they are not perceptive.

When the characters enter the main hall, they may all make a test against *Vigilant*. A success means that they hear muffled grunting and rooting sounds from somewhere below, deep under the wooden floor.

Additionally, a successful roll against [*Vigilant* –3] makes them notice that the chief is fingering a detail on the throne's armrest.

Provided that the characters close in on the throne to talk or negotiate (rather than with weapons drawn), the chief and his sister engage in a whispered conversation. With *Loremaster* (adept) and a successful *Vigilant* test a character can make out the words:

Gabba: Straight down the hatch, right?

Njegg: You sure? They may know about the creeping horror, stuff we need to know.

Gabba: You're afraid of the dark, I'm scared of their weapons.

Njegg: You know best, brother Bigpaw.

If the trap is sprung, characters standing in front of the throne must make a *Quick* test or fall into the basement. If they are aware that something may be about to happen, the test is made against [*Quick* +5] instead.

The fall to the cellar floor is 8 meters, then the rage troll attacks. The player characters who remain upstairs in the great hall will have to fight the goblin warriors and the chief's bodyguard. The monster in the basement is a Famished Rage Troll, page 207 in the Core Book.

ATTACKING THE GOBLINS

It is fully possible to attack the keep but it may prove to be a grave mistake. If possible, all members of the tribe will amass in defense of their newly found home, and together they may prove a challenge even for experienced characters.

If the characters choose to storm the ruin, Gabba will do his best to lure them to make a halt in the Hall. When they get there, Gabba sits on the throne with raised hands while his bodyguards fall to their knees and puts their weapons on the ground. Of course, the chief's hope is that the characters will abort the attack and end up on the trapdoor. If that happens, Chief Bigpaw will spring the trap and order his subjects to slay the intruders.

If the player characters are not fooled and continue their attack, Gabba will spring the trap on his initiative. In that case, the characters who have stated that they are running towards the bodyguards, the Chief or the shaman will be affected by the trap.

The Chief's Bodyguard

"To die is to serve."

These unusually capable goblins (as many as the PCs) are Chief Gabba's personal guard and they never leave his side. They are fiercely loyal and will fight to the death in order to keep Gabba and Njegg alive.

Manner	Stands at attention, only the eyes move
Race	Goblin
Resistance	Weak
Traits	<i>Pariah, Short-lived</i>
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 9 (+1), Discreet 11 (–1), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 15 (–5), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 13 (–3), Vigilant 5 (+5)	
Abilities	<i>Iron Fist (novice)</i>
Weapons	Axe 4
Armor	Leather armor 2 (impeding)
Defense	–4 (shield)
Toughness	13 Pain Threshold 7
Equipment	None
Shadow	Mossy green with specks of yellow and brown, like fallen autumn leaves (corruption: 2)

Tactics: The bodyguards fight in a half-circle between the enemy and their Chief, and they will fight till they drop.

Goblin Warriors

"Die? No ... What!?"

These eight goblins (4 patrols with two warriors in each) are not very skilled in combat and not as loyal as the bodyguards. What speaks in their favor is their *Survival Instinct*, which they make good use of when fighting.

Usually, two patrols are in the Antechamber (#2a), while one guards the gate in the palisade and the final one patrols the forest around the keep.

Manner	Eager to come off as brave and aggressive, in truth real scaredy-cats
Race	Goblin
Resistance	Weak
Traits	<i>Pariah, Short-lived, Survival Instinct (II)</i>
Accurate 11 (–1), Cunning 9 (+1), Discreet 15 (–5), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 10 (0), Strong 10 (0), Vigilant 7 (+3)	

Abilities	None
Weapons	Spear 4 (long), Bow 4
Armor	Leather armor 2 (+2 for <i>Survival Instinct</i>)
Defense	–1
Toughness	10 Pain Threshold 5
Equipment	None
Shadow	Moss-green and dark brown, like an overgrown tree stump (corruption: 1)

Tactics: Gabba's warriors obey commands. They will use the extra movement action and the extra protection that comes from the *Survival Instinct* in order to benefit from having Long weapons. Should three of four patrols or Gabba himself fall, the remaining goblin warriors will turn and make a run for it.

Generic Urrbukk

"Gabba is our champion! I've heard ..."

With a few exceptions the twenty goblins of the tribe – the youths, the elderly, the berry and mushroom gatherers, the weaklings and so on – keep to the second floor of the tribes new home. They will not enter combat if they are not rallied by the warriors or the Chief, for instance in response to a siege.

Manner	Huddles together or flees in wild panic
Race	Goblin
Resistance	Weak
Traits	<i>Pariah, Short-lived</i>
Accurate 9 (+1), Cunning 11 (–1), Discreet 15 (–5), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 10 (0), Resolute 5 (+5), Strong 7 (+3), Vigilant 13 (–3)	
Abilities	None
Weapons	Unarmed 2
Armor	None
Defense	0
Toughness	10 Pain Threshold 4
Equipment	None
Shadow	Streaky green, like mossy forest grounds beset by pale green weeds (corruption: 1)

Tactics: The goblins of the tribe fights as best they can, in other words poorly. If not expressly ordered to fight they do what they have always done – flee and hope to find safer lodgings somewhere else.

Using the Magic Circle

For player characters who master the right abilities it is of course possible to reestablish the link between the circle in the keep and its counterpart in Thistle Hold. To do that, one first has to terminate Xanathâ's influence with the ritual *Break Link*. After that, the ritual *Magic Circle* is needed in order to initiate a conversation with the Hold, or someone may stay with the circle waiting to be contacted – a task that can be given to Marla or Plendel (the Chapter in Thistle Hold has not abandoned hope and makes new contact attempts every other hour). It should also be noted that once the circle is reestablished, a character who knows the ritual Seven-League Stride can use it as a place of landing when using the ritual.

THE CHAMBER OF THE MAGIC CIRCLE

This small chamber (3×3 paces wide and two fathoms high) is completely bare, save the hides covering the hole near the ceiling and a hacked circle in the moss-covered stone floor, filled with silvery dust. Well, there is also the pile of neatly stacked human bodies close to one of the walls and the insane clerk Tonsel who all but never leaves his place in the middle of the circle.

The circle is now corrupted by Xanathâ, the white spider in the sinkhole. If anyone besides Tonsel stands inside the circle for more than a few heartbeats, the spider will contact him or her telepathically. And provided that the intended interlocutor does not run away screaming, Xanathâ has a proposition ... (for more information see The Sinkhole on the next page)

The seven corpses stashed in a corner are in five cases robed in Ordo Magica's cloaks, in two cases dressed like your average fortune hunter. The bodies are the remains of people who happened to be inside the headquarters when the Creeping Darkness passed through. Three of the cloaks can be salvaged; the rest are ruined.

A successful test against *Vigilant* reveals that the bodies are intact but dehydrated. Freeze marks can also be detected, almost as if the bodies have been there a long time, year after year in excruciatingly cold conditions.

A character with the ability *Medicus* who succeeds with a *Cunning* test comes to the conclusion that some life-draining force has killed the members of the expedition and left the remains almost completely dry.

A character with the ability *Beast Lore* who succeeds with a test against *Cunning* recalls having heard vague stories about similar afflictions,

witnessed by explorers and treasure hunters in Davokar. The renowned explorer Lukresia has mentioned a case where "the darkness of Davokar came alive and crawled into a barbarian settlement, leaving a mass of dead bodies behind, freeze dried and crumpled like crowberries after a winter in the Titans."

Tonsel, clerk

Persists in trying to whistle, even though he cannot make a sound

The crazed clerk Tonsel is the sole member of Ordo Magica's expedition to survive the Creeping Darkness' visit in the keep. The clerk was saved at the last minute, by the white spider Xanathâ who squeezed through the hole in the camber's wall, hoping that Tonsel could assist her in the hunt for the Vile Water.

Unfortunately, the clerk's psyche did not survive the encounter with the darkness. He rambles on about his "shining protector" and how she "climbed down from the heavens on simmering threads to save me with her holy bite".

As an expression of his eternal appreciation and devotion, he performs various obscure rites of gratitude to the protector's and Prios' glory, painting the sun of Prios as something which looks very much like a spider ...

Manner	Whistles soundlessly, gazes towards the ceiling		
Race	Human (Ambrian)		
Resistance	Weak		
Traits	<i>Contacts (Ordo Magica)</i>		
Accurate 9 (+1), Cunning 15 (−5), Discreet 11 (−1), Persuasive 10 (0), Quick 10 (0), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 5 (+5), Vigilant 13 (−3)			
Abilities	<i>Loremaster (adept)</i>		
Weapons	Unarmed 2		
Armor	None		
Defense	0		
Toughness	10	Pain Threshold	3
Equipment	None		
Shadow	Silver with a green undertone, like a glittering ocean (corruption: 0)		

Tactics: If Tonsel is taunted into attacking, he will launch at what he perceives as the biggest villain and punch, punch, punch until he goes down himself. Should he then be healed and regain consciousness he will start over again: the villain must be punished.

Tonsel is terrified of the dark and stays in or very close to the softly glowing Magic Circle. He is proud to flaunt the bite mark at the back of his neck, where "the Goddess gave me her blessing". Moreover, he hands out self-made spider/sun symbols to whoever wants one. He regards spiders as holy and considers every aggression against the eight-legged creatures in the keep as blasphemous – sending him into a murderous frenzy.

Finally, the leather bound journal of the expedition is in the chamber, usually lying beside Tonsel inside the circle. The book contains a sketchy map of the area and accounts of the time from the arrival of the expedition up to Tonsel's encounter with the Creeping Darkness and Xanathâ. If one finds the right buyer, the small notebook could be worth quite a lot. Ordo Magica in Thistle Hold are willing to pay 30 thaler for it; other collectors of curiosities can pay about half that sum.

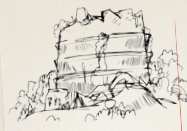
Some excerpts from the journal can be found below and as handouts at the back of the book. The rest of the text consists of less dramatic observations of life in the headquarters and long lists of inventory and equipment. Meticulousness was a virtue that the notary Tonsel truly embodied.

"Just like the scouts foretold, we found the overgrown ruin satisfactory and established our base camp there. During the hike from the outpost we had to be ever diligent, hacking a path through the dense greenery which rules the area. Everyone took to the knife to help clearing out the ruined keep. Outside we left everything untouched, hoping to mask our presence – who knows what famished creatures lurk hereabout?"

(To the GM: Note that the clerk does not mention any gray streaks of death, since the Creeping Darkness was yet to arrive in the area.)

"At the morning assembly, Magister Senia told us that she has established a circle here at the keep and completed a first report to Thistle Hold. I notice that others besides me find this reassuring, even if all of us know that the feeling of security was an illusion: we are a long way from safety and the circle will not save us if threats arise. But we can get advice, and that is a very precious thing in an exposed situation like ours.

The investigation of the ruins has afforded both joy and some exasperation. Our scouts have located the tomb from which the plunderer Gorak stole his tainted artifact. The ancient writings on the mausoleum indicate that it contains the remains of a person of stature, likely one of the local kings who ruled the area during Symbaroum's early days. That the tomb has already been breached is evident, but hopefully the robbers did not manage to empty it or destroy it completely."



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After mapping the whole area, Magister Senia found the tomb more promising. She also warned us about the sinkhole. This is hardly necessary since we all know that two patrols have vanished in its vicinity, but it demonstrates the greatness of her heart and her care for all members of the expedition. The mutterings and curses of the scouts and servants are evidently misdirected: Magister Senia is far from a "coldhearted slave driver" and the ruins much more than some "overgrown meat-grinder"!

On another note, the scouts have reported seeing streaks of grayish, black death spreading throughout the area, radiating out from the sinkhole if the reports are correct. What this is and if it will affect our work is hard to know but very easy to have nightmares about.

Magister Senia has ordered the whole expedition to start preparing for entering the mausoleum, and she has deciphered the text on the entry vault, hunting for clues as to what awaits us inside. If the streaks of dead nature keeps spreading our time here may soon come to its end, so we have every reason to hurry."

(To the GM: One of the scout patrols fell victim to the spider Xanathâ, the other deserted and ran off to search for treasures elsewhere.)

"The ground quivers in pain, screams echo through the ruin. I dare not go outside. A deeper kind of darkness roams the night. I am nearly paralyzed, the cold eats at my soul. By Prios, the darkness is bleeding through the walls!"

From the heavens a light, like a descending sun of simmering limbs, she embraces me. The savior is here, Prios be praised."

(To the GM: here the clerk Tonsel recapitulates what happened when the Creeping Darkness passed through the keep, and his salvation in the form of the white spider Xanathâ.)

The excerpts from Ordo Magica's journal, as well as Tonsel's map of the area can be found at the back of this book.

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(To the GM: The "plunderer Gorak" is of course the blight stricken treasure hunter featured in the adventure *The Mark of the Beast*).

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The Sinkhole

THE SINKHOLE CAN be found about a thousand paces southwest of the ruined keep. It came about less than a year ago, namely in conjunction with Gorak and Alahara entering the tomb, thereby disturbing its long slumber. At the surface, the hole has an irregular circumference of about 100 paces and it reaches straight down into the Underworld. The sinkhole is connected to King Hurian-Lo Apaks tomb through a series of cracks (see The Monument Chamber, page 27).

For less than a month, the spider Xanathâ has made herself a home in the sinkhole – something that the goblins of Urrbukktur can confirm. They fled the Underworld through the sinkhole and encountered Xanathâ, who took the opportunity to fill her belly with parts of the tribe.

1. The Sinkhole

The sinkhole is about a hundred paces across and slightly more than that in depth. The walls plunge steeply into darkness and very little vegetation has gained a hold on the newly exposed rock. The bottom is filled with sharp-edged boulders and near the walls it slopes in a way which makes the ground unstable.

All who scale down the slopes and who do not have the *Acrobatics* ability must succeed with a test against [*Quick +5*] or get caught in a slide, dealing damage as a fall from five meters.

2. Pathway

He or she who spends some time studying the walls of the sinkhole and rolls a successful *Cunning* test can identify a natural path down into the dark. Moving slowly and carefully up or down the path takes about five minutes; if rushing you can make it in one minute but that requires a test against *Quick*. A failure means that the character slips or stumbles and falls 1D10 meters, risking damage (see page 177 in the Core Book). The pathway passes in front of Xanathâ's cavern.

3. Climbing Route

The character who studies the walls and succeeds with a *Cunning* test as above detects not only the pathway but also a place where it seems possible to climb up and down.

The climb requires a successful *Quick* test every twenty paces; if the climber has *Acrobatics* the test is [*Quick +5*]. It is fully possible to abort the climb at any time and make it back up or down, without rolling a die. A failed test means that the character falls or tumbles ten meters and takes damage accordingly. The climbing route does not pass in front of the spider's cave.

4. The Spider's Cave

The opening to Xanathâ's cavern cannot be seen from the surface or from the bottom of the sinkhole. The white spider rests behind a dense web woven over a hollow in the rock. The threads sway from her movements where they are not weighed down by cocooned bodies.

If the characters get a chance to examine the victims they find both members of one of Ordo Magica's lost patrols and also half a dozen goblins of the Urrbukktur tribe.

5. Tunnel to the Underworld

A wandering path leads down into the Underworld where dark adventures await. For more information, see *Through the Underworld* below.

AN ODD ALLY

The white spider Xanathâ wants to gain access to the tomb of the beheaded king, in the hunt for the dark and primal power she has dreamed is hidden within – and can smell all the way to her cavern. To reach her goal she needs the assistance of creatures with hands who can read cuneiform writing: she has been inside the tomb but could not pass the King's Gate. On the other path through the tomb Fangafa lies in wait, the primal blight beast who is Xanathâ's rival in the hunt for the artifact.

Xanathâ will try to contact the player characters, preferably through the Magic Circle in the keep's side chamber, otherwise by searching them out in the wilderness or waiting for them to climb down into the sinkhole. Her offer is plain and simple:

The characters get her help and can keep everything they find in the tomb, save the Vile Water. To aid them, she can describe the outer chambers of the tomb (rooms #2, #3 and #4) and the two entryways: the westernmost leading to the King's Gate and the other leading to the Monument Chamber and the rift in the bedrock – possible to cross if it was not for the deeply corrupted creature Fangafa.

The Underworld

The Underworld, among barbarians also known as Underhill or the Abyss, is a dark realm which spreads out below Davokar. Contrary to Ambrian belief it is not totally black down there; in many places florescent fungi and algae give off a soft glow to guide the creatures living and hunting in the deep: trolls of course, but also even more abominable creatures than that.

The part of the Underworld directly below the sinkhole is not very corrupted but dangerous none the less. If the players get the urge to explore the deep, the Game Master can either stop them with the help of ravines and collapsed tunnels, or prepare for the detour. In the latter case the characters may journey through shimmering crystal caves, navigate a network of underground lakes, get lost in a forest of massive roots and possibly stumble upon a sunken Symbarian castle – all the while forced to face the creatures of the Abyss (trolls, predators, maleficent spirits and spider beasts). If they travel far enough, they soon end up below Davokar's darker parts, where primal blight beasts crawl out of puddles boiling with corruption and acidified magic.

THE SINKHOLE

1. The Sinkhole
2. Pathway
3. Climbing Route
4. The Spider's Cave
5. Tunnel to the Underworld





The spider recommends that the characters take the path through the King's Gate or to close in on Fangafa through the tunnels leading from the sinkhole – that way they can gain an advantage by surprising the abomination. Xanathâ herself would prefer not to fight, which is why she stresses that the westernmost path through the tomb is preferable, especially since she has an idea on how to get the King's Gate open: she saw Magister Senia study the text by the tomb's outer entrance and heard her speak of it as “a key to unlock the path to the burial chamber”.

Aside from that, Xanathâ offers to bite the player characters, thereby granting them protection against the Creeping Darkness – just like she did with the clerk Tonsel. Characters who agree take no damage and will forthwith be immune to the Darkness' passive, gnawing power (the monstrous trait *Gravely Cold*). On the other hand, with the bite Xanathâ has established a mystic link to the character. If this link is broken (for instance with the ritual *Break Link*), the protective powers of the bite also disappears.

The White Spider Xanathâ

“The threads of fate tremble as I weave the future.”

Manner	Hisses, stands absolutely still
Race	Spider
Resistance	Strong
Traits	<i>Fleet-footed</i> , <i>Natural Weapon (II)</i> , <i>Armored (III)</i> , <i>Poisonous (III)</i> , <i>Poison Spit (III)</i> , <i>Web (III)</i>
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 17 (–7), Discreet 11 (–1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 13 (–3), Resolute 7 (+3), Strong 9 (+1), Vigilant 10 (0)	
Abilities	<i>Acrobatics (novice)</i> , <i>Exceptionally Cunning (adept)</i>
Weapons	Bite 4 (+ poison 4 for 4 turns)
Armor	Chitin shields 4
Defense	–3
Toughness	10 Pain Threshold 5
Equipment	None
Shadow	Radiant with blinding light (corruption: 0)

Tactics: Xanathâ is sly and plans many steps ahead. Her goal is to claim the Vile Water. If she has to fight, she uses her almost living webs to catch her enemies and then she attacks them with poisonous spit. If that is not enough she will fall back and alter her strategy. She only uses her bite as a last resort, if she gets backed into a corner.

When Symbaroum was young Xanathâ was already old and the venerable spider beast found herself hunted for sports by Symbar's powerful princes. She fled down into the Underworld but not even there was she left in peace, which is why she used mystical powers to cross over into the Spirit World where she remained until recently.

Most things in the Davokar region are new to her. The forest is much larger and denser than she remembers and the Ambrians are of course a new acquaintance. But much has remained the same and her webs tremble from largescale events which she means to control.

Xanathâ has a playful character and loves to speak in riddles to confuse and amuse. Regarding herself she is secretive but says (true or false) that she is the daughter of the spider god Oroke and mother to the infamous Spider King.

In appearance, she is a bone-pale spider with a body as large as an ogre, covered in even paler scars from countless battles. Normally, her compound eyes are positioned about a meter above ground, but her long legs make it possible to lift the body so high that she can look down on even the tallest adventurer. She speaks telepathically, in images, meaning that she disregards any language barriers. She can also express herself verbally, but only in the form of piercing hisses and at best in a long forgotten barbarian dialect.

THROUGH THE UNDERWORLD

The bottom of the sinkhole is covered in rubble that completely buries the cave which once was there. If one wants to gain access to the tunnels that previously led in and out of the cave, one would have to spend several hard-working days moving boulders and shoveling dirt – given that you actually have an idea of where the openings were located. It is not likely that the player characters will take on such an endeavor, especially since there is already one passable way into the depths.

The quake that created the sinkhole also gave rise to lots of cracks in the bedrock of the area. One of these connects the sinkhole to the Monument Chamber in the tomb (room #4). Following the crack from the sinkhole to the tomb or the other way around is not difficult, even if the ground and walls are rough and the path is dark. However, it is not free from risks.

In a couple of places the crack runs through or intersects with tunnels and caves belonging to the ancient Underworld. It was through such openings that Gabba and his subjects came fleeing and that Fangafa closed in on the muffled heartbeats of the Vile Water.

Whether the characters are traveling to or from the mausoleum, the Game Master can use the following suggestions to spice up the experience:

1. The Hunting Party

The crack runs straight through a natural tunnel. As the characters reach the intersection, two goblins stand as if paralyzed at the edge of the light from their lantern. They are holding a handful of throwing spears each and are carrying a dead beast (*Beast Lore*: Jakaar, see *The Promised Land*) between them. One of them flings a spear towards the characters before they turn and flee into the darkness. If the characters chase after them, the tunnel soon forks and there are no traces indicating which way the goblins went. Should the players persist, the Game Master decides what happens.

2. The Underground Lake

For some time, the characters must travel along a very narrow ledge between the wall and an underground lake whose scale is impossible to determine. However, what is evident in the glow of their torches or lanterns is that something huge is moving in the water – all that can be seen is a

bony spine and the surface bulging where the shape moves. Characters with *Acrobatics* do not have to roll to traverse the ledge. All others must make a test against *Quick* if they are in a hurry, or against [*Quick* +5] if they can afford to take it slow and easy. As a suggestion nothing dramatic happens if anyone fails the test and falls into the water, besides the character becoming wet and that the hearts leap up in the players' throats.

3. The Mare Cat Cave

The crack leads into a vast underground hall, with the ground covered in stalagmites and a ceiling so distant it cannot be seen. The characters must find the place where the crack hopefully continues, on the other side of the cave. They walk through complete darkness, sliding in-between stalagmites up to three fathoms high. There is also a pack of mare cats in the cave, numbering twice as many as the PCs. The beasts have recently killed a huge reptile and are not on the hunt. They will, however, defend their quarry if the characters for some (ill-advised) reason decide to disturb their feast.

For the stats of the Mare Cats, see page 220 in the Core Book.

The Cult Hideout

IN AN OVERGROWN and partly submerged ruin is the hideout of the cultists who trailed *Ordo Magica* to the area, hoping to obtain the tomb's treasures. They were just about ready to follow Magister Senia into the mausoleum when the Creeping Darkness

passed through the headquarters. Now they are hoping for another chance to follow someone into the tomb, and maybe the player characters are what they have waited for.

Besides the leader, who is described below, the cult is made up of a number of cultists equal to the number of player characters. For the cultists, use the stats of the Cult Follower (page 211 in the Core Book) and/or Baumelo's Henchmen from *the Mark of the Beast*.

Depending on what the characters have and have not done before they arrive at the outpost (see the text box *The Cultists and Previous Adventures*) the cult members can have a hostile, neutral or even friendly attitude towards them. If the attitude is neutral or friendly (for instance if the characters decided to hand over the King's Skull to Odako during the adventure *The Mark of the Beast*) a temporary alliance between the groups is fully achievable – it is even plausible that the leader of the cult recognizes the player characters from afar and seeks them out with such a proposal.

But even if there is cause for hostility (maybe the player characters killed Odako and stole Mal-Rogan's amulet) a coalition may be possible to achieve. After all, the cultists and the characters have a common goal and know that the road before

The Cultists and Previous Adventures

If the gaming group has played *The Promised Land* and/or *The Mark of the Beast*, the Game Master can use the cultists to tie the adventures together. We recommend that the false witch hunter Odako from *The Mark of the Beast* reappear as the cult leader. And if the undead robber baron Mal-Rogan has survived from *The Promised Land*, he will also resurface as an ally of Odako. Mal-Rogan can for example be after the Sun Stone (if the characters have it) or his amulet (if the characters took it). Or maybe the cultists and the robber baron simply have teamed up in the hunt for Davokars treasures and artifacts?

If Odako was killed during *The Mark of the Beast*, or if the Game Master prefers to have someone else in charge, he is replaced by his apprentice and heir, the ruthless Landela.

And should Mal-Rogan have met his demise, or the Game Master wishes to see him replaced, he is swapped for the undead Tanfalls, Odako's master, now killed by Odako and in his former pupil's service.

them is riddled with powerful competitors. Maybe the cultists initially ambush the characters, but call off the attack when they find that the enemies can defend themselves – after which a tense negotiation about joining their forces can commence.

No matter how a potential alliance is achieved, with or without complications, it is suggested that the cultists never intend to honor the agreement. As soon as the treasures are harvested and the danger has passed they will turn their swords on the player characters, demanding that they hand over everything taken from the tomb, along with all other valuables they may possess.

Odako/Landela

“Why fear the dark? It is power!”

Odako spearheads a group of cultists from the village Glimmervann on the threshold of Davokar. In *The Mark of the Beast* he came to Thistle Hold disguised as the Black Cloak Baumelo, hunting the ancient cranium that Gorak and Alahara boasted about. Depending on what happened during the adventure, Odako can have different reasons for having traveled to the area (see The Cultists and Previous Adventures).

If the characters have not played *The Mark of the Beast* or if Odako died, the suggestion is that Odako/Landela has heard gossip about Ordo Magica’s expedition and connected them to rumors about the King’s Skull. In that case they are in the area hoping to lay their hands on other dark treasures from within the tomb.

Manner	Points aggressively at the one he is speaking to
Race	Human (Ambrian)
Resistance	Ordinärt
Traits	<i>Contacts (cultists)</i>
Accurate 7 (+3), Cunning 11 (–1), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 15 (–5), Quick 9 (+1), Resolute 13 (–3), Strong 5 (+5), Vigilant 10 (0)	
Abilities	<i>Curse (novice), Leader (novice), Ritualist (adept, Exchange Shadow, Heretic’s Trail)</i>
Weapons	Sword 4
Armor	Scale mail 3 (Impeding)
Defense	+3 (shield)
Toughness	10 Smärtgräns 3
Equipment	Shackles and chains, interrogation tools, 12 thaler, (maybe also the King’s Skull).

Shadow

Warm blackness like the inside of a velvet cape (corruption: 6)

Tactics: Odako/Landela is no stranger to exploiting others, through false promises of alliances and favors. In the end he cares about nothing other than himself. When in combat he/she tries to *Curse* the enemy from a distance or identify weak opponents as targets for his/her attacks with the sword.

Mal-Rogan/Tanfalls

“Try dying – it’s larger than life!”

The Queen’s Pansar Rogan Gorinder died in battle during The Great War. He got his arm chopped off in combat, the wound started to rot and the healers were powerless against the black infection spreading through his body. But instead of dying Rogan woke up as undead, with an arm stump dripping pus and blackened veins fanning across his throat and temples.

The nobleman has turned into a true robber baron. Previously he ran a band of brigands in the Titans but has now headed north – possibly hunting the Sun Stone or his macabre talisman, otherwise in the hope to find more worthy companions.

If Mal-Rogan is out of the picture the former cult leader Tanfalls replaces him at Odako’s/Landela’s side – murdered by his apprentice and since then the servant of his murderer.

Manner

Speaks in a croaking voice, tilting his head back and forth

Race

Undead

Resistance

Challenging

Traits

Long-lived, Undead (I)

Accurate 7 (+3), **Cunning** 5 (+5), **Discreet** 9 (+1), **Persuasive** 10 (0), **Quick** 11 (–1), **Resolute** 13 (–3), **Strong** 17 (–7), **Vigilant** 10 (0)

Abilities

Curse (master), Exceptionally Strong (adept), Iron Fist (adept), Man-at-arms (adept)

Weapons

Spiked club 6

Armor

Fortified chainmail 5 (Impeding)

Defense

–1

Toughness

17

Pain Threshold

9

Equipment

12 thaler

Shadow

Black as pitch (corruption: thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: Rogan lets his followers attack first, while he puts a curse on what he believes to be the toughest enemy. When the curse has taken effect he moves in with his spiked club.

THE CULTISTS IN THE TOMB

If an alliance is out of the question – or if the Game Master would rather use them as pure opponents – the cultists will try to sneak into the tomb behind the player characters. In that case, their strategy is to attack as soon as the characters have opened the King's Gate.

If that fails, the cultists will try the path over the rift, leading to a very unpleasant encounter with Fangafa. It is recommended that half of the remaining cultists survive that encounter and that the leaders (Odako/Landela and Mal-Rogan/Tanfalls) make it back out alive.

After meeting Fangafa, the cultists position themselves outside the tomb, waiting for a new chance to attack. But maybe they have not met

their final abomination for the day? If the characters manage to break the seal of the treasure chamber, the tomb's protective powers disperse and the Creeping Darkness can get in. If so, the Darkness will make its deadly approach over the place where the cult is hiding, with the effect that none other than Odako/Landela and Mal-Rogan/Tanfalls survive.

The duo will still try to usurp the player character's treasures. If they are vastly outnumbered they will not attack them right away; instead they turn into importunate archenemies that the characters will have to deal with again and again – directly as well as in the form of hired thugs or sellswords, poisoning attempts, the spreading of malicious rumors and so on.

The Creeping Darkness

THE DARKNESS HAS been lured to the area by the Vile Water and all it wants is to unite with the pure corruption of the artifact. Unfortunately the runes on the tomb prevent spirits from entering – at least for now. Until an opportunity arises (for instance if the characters, willingly or not, disarm the runes) it roams the area, consuming the life force from nature and creatures. In contrast to Xanathâ, the Darkness cannot be communicated or reasoned with; it does what it does according to the laws of its black world.

The Game Master can use the Creeping Darkness in a number of ways – as anything from an evocative effect to a very real enemy.

follows then is closely detailed under the header The Treasure Chamber (see page 31).

The Creeping Darkness

A silent darkness in motion accompanied by a bone-freezing cold

Race	Unique
Resistance	Strong
Traits	Gravely Cold (III), Manifestation (III), Natural Weapon (III), Slow (see page 39), Spirit Form (III)
Accurate 10 (0), Cunning 11 (–1), Discreet 7 (+3), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 9 (+1), Resolute 18 (–8), Strong 13 (–3), Vigilant 10 (0)	
Abilities	Exceptionally Resolute (master)
Weapons	Gravely Cold 2, Black Spikes 5 (with the trait Manifestation)
Armor	None, can only be hurt by mystical powers and magical weapons, which deal half damage
Defense	+1
Toughness	13
Pain Threshold	–
Equipment	None
Shadow	Black against the blackness of the world (corruption: thoroughly corrupt)

Tactics: The Creeping Darkness relies on its paralyzing and life-consuming powers (the monstrous trait *Gravely Cold*). Its only goal is to unite with the Vile Water, all else is secondary. If the cold is not enough to get to the artifact, it manifests locally and thrusts at its enemies with spikes of physical darkness.

Magic Weapons

Spiritual beings, like for instance the Creeping Darkness, are more sensitive to magic weapons than other instruments of combat. Simply put, for a weapon to be regarded as magical it must be an artifact that deals damage – in other words, an item which can be bound to a specific individual and used for attacks. Such an item counts as a magic weapon even if the one wielding it is not bound to it.

THE DARKNESS AS A THREAT

The tracks and presence of the Creeping Darkness are dramatic tools to use if the Game Master wishes to, for instance, force the characters into motion or action. It is also an ominous threat that can inspire cooperation and alliances that would otherwise be inconceivable – with the goblins of Urrbukktur, the cultists and/or the white spider Xanathâ.

Tomb of Dying Dreams is a challenging adventure even if the characters do not have to fight the Darkness, and for some groups the mere knowledge of its existence is enough to instill a sense of urgency.

THE DARKNESS AS AN ADVERSARY

If the Game Master wishes to use the Darkness as a very real threat, we suggest that it is done in the way described on page 32, in short:

If/when the characters break the protective runes in the tomb, the Darkness will be able to pass through the walls and head for the Vile Water. What

The Creeping Darkness is a living entity, made manifest as a moving field of darkness. It is abysmally cold and thirsty for life – as witnessed by what remains of Ordo Magica's headquarters. Where the Darkness moves forth, a fifty paces wide streak of death appears in its wake, as if everything just died. And since even the smallest microbe perishes the streaks do not start to decompose until new

spores and bacteria arrive, for example with the winds or carried by wandering animals.

Note that if the characters have been bitten by Xanathâ, they are protected from the passive damage of the Darkness, but not from its active attacks. Also, engaging the spirit creature in melee is similar to fighting blindly as described on page 161 of the Core Book).

The Tomb of the Beheaded King

THE TOMB OF the Symbarian king Hurian-Lo Apak is the primary locus of the landscape. This is where the Vile Water can be found and where the agents in the area are striving toward. Down in the tomb Fangafa, the Thorn Queen, is frustratingly tearing at the rock to reach the artifact. And in the burial chamber sits the beheaded king himself, dead since long years past and dreaming grandiose dreams of revenge.

The mausoleum itself lies inside a nowadays asymmetrical mound and has sunken somewhat compared to the surrounding ground surface. The mound is covered in trees, bushes and undergrowth, as if it is a natural element of the terrain.

The only exception is the wall around the tomb's gated entrance, which Gorak and his expedition exposed when searching for clues on how to deal with the traps inside.

There are two main entrances/exits in the tomb, one of them being the Main Gate. If the player characters enter that way the cultists will see it, which can cause some serious problems if the characters have not met them and either sent them running or agreed to a partnership.

The other entryway is through the cracks leading from the sinkhole to the Monument Chamber, a path most likely involving an encounter with the Thorn Queen Fangafa.

Signs in the Dark

When the player characters arrive at the entrance of the tomb two groups have already been there – first Gorak and his followers, later Magister Senia with colleagues.

Gorak and Alahara's visit took place about eight months ago. It was they who unearthed the outer façade and who managed to pry open the main gate. At the King's Gate two of their companions died before they succeeded in disarming the trap. They forced the gate open and stopped it from slamming shut with a sword stuck in the gap. They emptied the Forechamber of all valuables before proceeding into the Burial Chamber. Just as Gorak laid eyes on the crown of the mummified king, the Glowing Guards came to life and the rocky ground was hit by a powerful tremor. All other expedition members fled and since Gorak did not want to be left alone against an overwhelming opposition he cut the head off the mummy and bolted towards the exit. Only one of the expedition's members was slain by the swords of the Glowing Guards (see room #2, The Entry Hall).

The Ordo Magica expedition entered the tomb sixteen days prior to the start of this adventure. Early on, Magister Senia made the unfortunate decision to take the path over the rift, through the Monument Chamber and the Hall of the Glowing Guards. A temporary bridge was put in place, but as soon as the first two explorers were half way across Fangafa made her entrance. She smashed the bridge from below, sent one novice tumbling down the rift and squeezed the life out of the other. Senia retreated and returned to study the cuneiform writings outside, trying to find another way in. Finally she solved the riddle of the King's Gate, and she could press onwards with her two remaining companions. When the Glowing Guards were activated, one companion fled towards the exit where he bested one of the guards before getting killed. The other companion ran the wrong way and fell down the rift to his death. Senia never made it out of the Forechamber, slain by five guards and only able to fire off one *Brimstone Cascade* before entering the eternal sleep.

Lacking a Skilled Loremaster

If none of the characters have the ability *Loremaster* at master level they will be unable to decipher the writings on the façade. If so, the Game Master can let the dead novice carry a notebook in his knapsack. There the mosaics in the Supplicant Chamber (room #2) are depicted along with texts describing the novice's interpretation of both motifs and writings.

It is also possible that the notebook contains a translation of the verses needed to open the King's Gate, but the suggestion is to leave that detail out – in essence, the players who have spent hard-earned experience on the ability *Loremaster* should be rewarded by getting an easier journey through the tomb!

1. THE MAIN GATE

The twin-gate to the mausoleum is ajar. Actually, it is impossible to close it after the seismic event that also created the sinkhole and the rift in the Monument Chamber, caused by Gorak's expedition entering the Burial Chamber and thereby activating the ancient protective runes of the tomb.

Even if the outer defenses of the tomb are penetrated, its mystic protection is intact and bound to the runes on the door to the Treasure Chamber. The runes have the power to keep spirits (including the Creeping Darkness) out and also make the tomb impossible to perceive from outside with the help of rituals (*Clairvoyance*), even if one has been inside at an earlier point.

Around the main gate are cuneiform symbols, as old as the tomb itself. He or she who has the ability *Loremaster* realizes that they form ancient Symbaric words, and if the scholar has risen to the level of master the text is fully readable:

- a. **The symbols speak of the greatness and wisdom of King Hurian-Lo Apak**, of how he earned his throne after having outsmarted the Spider Goddess Oroke and bested the Toad Drott Arraka. From Oroke the King claimed the source of his power, a chalice filled with divine nectar. Aided by the powerful essence he became immortal, conquered all land between the corners of the world (here follows a long list of other local, Symbarian rulers that Hurian-Lo Apak dethroned and forced to kneel before him) to finally govern his realm with equal amounts of force and fairness. If one is to believe the writings, that is ...
- b. **The grandiose language** and epic deeds are typical for accounts from Symbaroum's early days, when numerous local kings fought each other in endless battles. This period is assumed to have taken place between 2000 and 1500 years ago, long before Symbar was built and a more cohesive empire was founded. In short: much of the statements are probably baseless boasting, the rest exaggerations.
- c. **The Spider Goddess Oroke** is still worshipped among several barbarian tribes and is in some aspects similar to the old Ambrian deity the Executioner.
- d. **Toad Drott** is an unknown, likely amphibian, monster, possibly related to the skeleton exhibited at the Toad's Square in Thistle Hold.
- e. **The "divine nectar"** mentioned in the text recurs in many myths of both Ambrian and barbarian origin. Most likely it does not refer to one and the same item, but is a narrative simplification referring to different kinds of potent artifacts and elixirs.

If the master *Loremaster* also succeeds with a *Cunning* test, he or she can decipher the very weather-beaten symbols that seem to provide clues about how to open the King's Gate, further into the tomb (see the Supplicant Chamber, next page). The symbols roughly translate to:

*"When the steadfast at the gate of the King
signs a prayer for salvation
and bends his knee in adoration
the illumined path is opened
to tearfilled pleasure and joy."*

2. THE ENTRY HALL

Inside the gate is a chamber with openings left and right. Aside from the crack which runs through the mosaic on the northern wall, the room itself is insignificant. The only things of real interest are the three shapes on the floor:

- a. **A newly dead novice of Ordo Magica.** A successful *Vigilant* test with the ability *Medicus* reveals that she was killed by multiple thrusts with a short sword.
- b. **An empty, archaic and scorched metal armor.** There is no body to wear it but two short swords, dark with dried blood, lay next to it. A successful *Vigilant* test reveals that the armor is primarily scorched on the inside. A successful *Cunning* test with *Wizardry* or *Ritualist* discloses that the carvings on the breast plate are incantations, similar to that of the ritual *Flaming Servant* but much older and presumably more powerful.
- c. **A long since decomposed corpse**, probably a grave plunderer if judging by the equipment. With the ability *Medicus* and a successful *Vigilant* test one can conclude that the robber died more than half a year ago, from a dozen stabs made with short swords from many directions – the robber must have been totally surrounded by enemies.

Aside from the bodies, the character who succeeds with a *Vigilant* test notices a faint draft and hears scraping sounds from the right, while all is still and quiet in the tunnel to the left.

Using the ability *Witchsight* gives rise to a vision of a black heart beating deeper inside the tomb; with each pulse it sends black blood flowing out over the region. If the psychic also makes a successful *Vigilant* test, the following vision is received: along the streaks of black blood abominations and monsters close in on the tomb – a roaring blight beast claws a path from the Underworld, a shining spider descends along glittering threads and a shapeless darkness closes in from all directions.



2x2 m

TOMB OF HURIAN-LO APAK

1. Main Gate
2. Entry Hall
3. Supplicant Chamber
4. Monument Chamber
5. The Forechamber
6. The Hall of the Glowing Guards
7. Burial Chamber
8. Treasure Chamber



3. THE SUPPLICANT CHAMBER

The mosaic walls of the Suppliant Chamber are in a surprisingly good condition. The road ahead is blocked by a low copper gate, green from verdigris and bordered by archaic runes. Human remains lay scattered over the floor, heavily decayed after having been cut apart many months ago.

Among the body parts are two short swords, a dagger, 1D10 shillings and a leaflet promising the carrier two free tankards of the beer type Stut at the Salons of Symbaroum in Thistle Hold. A successful *Vigilant* test with the ability *Medicus* reveals that the parts belonged to two bodies, cut lengthwise and crosswise by mighty slashes.

If the characters make a [*Vigilant -5*] test they may also conclude that the parts were scattered from a place in front of the copper door, as if they were hit there and then thrown against the walls. And should a character roll a second successful *Vigilant* test another revelation is made: there are almost invisible notches in the stone floor and ceiling near the gate (see below).

The Mosaics

There are two noteworthy mosaic motifs in the chamber. The character who succeeds with a *Vigilant* test realizes that the image on the right wall shows a stylized map of the area around the tomb – apparently there were scarcely any trees in the region when it was made. A *Loremaster* can add to the interpretation: the map depicts the location as it looked during the early days of Symbaroum, before it became a unified empire. According to legends, Davokar was planted by the elves of the Iron Pact after the fall of Symbar, as a protective layer against the tainted grounds.

The mosaic on the left wall describes a macabre scene, shown against a blood red background. A shape in golden armor has impaled another being on a spear and hoisted it into the air, the latter dressed in black robes and carrying a black crown. To the right of the two is something resembling a freshwater well, and it seems like the golden one is about to heave his enemy therein. Further to the right, the artist has depicted a monstrous, toad-like creature as if it was rushing towards the humanoid beings.

A successful test against [*Vigilant -3*] reveals that there are small cuneiform writings on the mosaic, on the shaft of the spear and along the rim of the well. With the ability *Loremaster* at master level the text “Ramaran’s bane” can be read on the spear. The text on the well consists of unintelligible character combinations, but *Loremaster* at novice level and a *Cunning* test are enough to recognize the phrase – from the Bronze Well of Thistle Hold!

The King’s Gate

The ability *Loremaster* lets a character see that the runes around the King’s Gate are written in the same language as the markings outside the main entrance. If the scholar is at Master level, he or she understands that the texts left and right of the gate account for Hurian-Lo Apaks foremost vassals and that the phrase over it is a prayer for the King’s help and protection.

If examined more closely, with a successful test against *Vigilant* or *Cunning*, the character also notices that the runes over the gate are strangely free from dust (as if someone has cleaned them with a finger), while the texts on the sides are filled with dirt.

The thing is, the King’s Gate is fitted with a vicious, magic trap which will hit anyone trying to push the door open without first a) dragging a finger through the prayer over the gate, and 2) kneeling directly after. If one does that, the door opens by itself with a scraping sound. If the trap is sprung the one responsible must roll [*Defense -5*] against four attacks, as four long blades spring out of the floor and ceiling. Each blade deals 8 in weapon damage.

The one who detects the notches in the floor and ceiling (through a *Vigilant* test or having seen the trap in action) can try to block the blades with a successful *Cunning* test and suitable tools (the weapons laying on the floor, for example). If successful the trap is disarmed, but the door must be forced open. This is done as follows:

- A maximum of six individuals can join together and try to pry open the gate.
- To triumph, three of them must make a successful *Strong* test during the same turn.
- At the end of each turn there is a risk that the disarming of the trap comes to naught, a risk that increases for each failed attempt.
- Each failure, including the first, adds 20% to the risk that the trap is sprung. Let one of the players roll the dice, for instance a d10 – the trap is sprung on 1-2 after the first failed attempt, on 1-4 after the second, and so on.
- After a fifth failure the trap is sprung. A new attempt to block it can be made.

When the gate has been passed it will close by itself and cannot be opened from the inside. Player Characters who do not think to put a wedge in place will have to take the other path out, past the rift where Fangafa impatiently waits. Note that it takes a sturdy material to keep the door ajar – a sword or a log will do; a wooden spear shaft or a thinner branch will not.

4. THE MONUMENT CHAMBER AND THE RIFT

When the mausoleum was built this chamber was filled with sculptures and statues, made to emphasize King Hurian's many feats. All but one lie smashed at the bottom of the rift that now runs through the chamber, caused by Gorak and Alahara entering the Burial Chamber.

The rift is nearly seven paces wide and the bottom cannot be seen. A soft breeze is felt when standing next to it, like the breathing of some enormous creature down in the dark. Five sturdy, newly cut logs lay scattered around the gap – three on the northern side, two on the southern – as if a provisional bridge had been in place but was demolished, most likely from a forceful thrust from underneath.

Below one of the logs on the south side is the corpse of a wizard; at first glance he appears to have been crushed to death. However, a successful *Vigilant* test or the ability *Medicus* reveals that the cause of death is something else. The skin on the young man's arms, chest and back is perforated from something like a knife tip or robust thorns. Also, the damage suggests that he has been squeezed to death, possibly by a very strong serpent.

A second successful *Vigilant* test, with attention directed towards the rift, leads to the conclusion that something is moving around down there – something giving off shuffling, rustling, clicking sounds.

The monument left standing is a statue in the northwestern corner and depicts King Hurian-Lo Apak fighting a toad monster as huge as a bull. Closer inspection reveals that the monster is mummified and that only the King driving his spear through the toad's crackling dry skull is made of stone.

The characters can reach this chamber from three different directions – from south (the Main Gate), west (the Hall of the Glowing Guards) or east (the sinkhole). However, no matter which way they enter, an encounter with Fangafa is difficult to avoid for those who find themselves in or are crossing over the rift.

Fangafa, the Thorn Queen

The clicking and scraping of bone hard spikes on stone is all one hears as she approaches

Fangafa is an ancient being that has lived most of its life in the dark of the Underworld. She has been dormant for long periods but lately she has been kept awake by the corruption that seeps out of Symbaroum's ruins at an ever increasing pace. The corruption has also poisoned her and transformed her previous hunger for flesh into a deeper and deeper thirst for power.

When she heard the distant beating of a black heart (the Vile Water) she was lured toward it. The solid bedrock stopped her from reaching the heart, but it does not hinder her from trying to claw her way in while waiting for some smaller creature to bring it out.

Fangafa looks like a bare, enormous thorn bush with slithering, branch-like outgrowths attached to a lumpy root-body the size of an ox. Eight of the outgrowths are much sturdier than the rest, like the arms of an octopus but bark-covered and with thorn spikes where the suction cups would have been. At the far end of these longer arms are narrow cracks that, if opened, reveal huge cat-like eyeballs. And close to each of these eyes is a small, dark and malicious brain.

Not even Fangafa herself knows who she is and where she comes from. But since cultural beings tend to attach names and origins to all evil they encounter, the Thorn Queen has inspired numerous legends over the years. Some say she was given consciousness, soul and hunger as a reaction to the corrupt, magical waste one of Symbaroum's arch mages deposited in his own back yard. At other times, it has been said that she was created by mistake, by the same morphantics who gave life to the colossi. Other sources have called her a demented nature god, a thoroughly corrupt arch troll and a black tumor on Davokar's soul.

Avoiding Combat

In Davokar it is not uncommon to come across adversaries which are so powerful that even the most hardened Pansar would find it hard to handle. But in almost all such cases there are ways to avoid a bloody confrontation. In the case of Fangafa, the Game Master should keep the following in mind:

First, the Thorn Queen is after the Vile Water and nothing else – if she gets the artifact, the characters are quite safe. And should the players forget this in the heat of the moment, they could be reminded if one of them has the ability *Loremaster* or if someone succeeds with a *Cunning* test.

Secondly, Fangafa is slow. By converting a combat action into an additional movement action, the characters can sprint past her. Of course, this means that she gets to make a free attack on each of them, but after that they should have a good chance to get to safety (according to the rules on Flight & Hunt on page 33).

Finally, the Game Master is encouraged to reward other possible solutions that the players may come up with. Maybe Fangafa can be lured to hunt one (quick) character down the rift, while the rest can cross the Monument Chamber without fear? It should be costly and/or difficult to avoid the old Thorn Queen, but it cannot be totally impossible!

Fangafa herself does not care; she only lives to still the thirst for power that now screams in her eight minds. Nothing else matters.

She does not eat anymore; if she kills she does so out of frustration or on instinct, not to satisfy some craving. All she desires is power and if she is not allowed to consume the Vile Water she will ultimately starve to death, leaving nothing behind but a fermenting and rotting carcass – truly a sad monument to the once free and mighty Thorn Queen who was revered by the troll kings, feared by the princes of Symbaroum and considered holy by each and every winter elf.

Manner	Moves with swaying motions, emits clicking sounds
Race	Unique
Resistance	Mighty
Traits	<i>Armored (III), Crushing Embrace (III, see page 39), Many-headed (III, see page 39), Natural Weapon (III), Regeneration (I), Robust (III), Slow (see page 39)</i>
Accurate 7 (+3), Cunning 10 (0), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 9 (+1), Resolute 18 (–8), Strong 16 (–6), Vigilant 11 (–1)	
Abilities	<i>Exceptionally Strong (master), Exceptionally Resolute (master), Iron Fist (master), Witchsight (master)</i>
Weapons	Eight unarmed attacks 8 (Long), and when grabbing: Crushing Embrace 4
Armor	Rough bark-like skin 2+2 (Armored+Robust modified by Many-headed)
Defense	+5
Toughness	16* Pain Threshold 8*
* Per tentacle. These must be fought one by one; when all are vanquished Fangafa dies.	
Equipment	None
Shadow	Purple, so deep in nuance that it just as well could be pitch black (corruption: 17)

Tactics: Fangafa has eight tentacles but uses four to cling on to the rock and only attacks with the remaining four. If the latter are incapacitated she withdraws until they are fully healed (the trait *Regeneration*). When she returns, she does so in full force: she leaves the rift and attacks with all eight arms. However, if four of them are disabled she will try to make a run for it and recuperate in a safe place. Also note that the Thorn Queen instinctively follows the Vile Water. One way to get away from her is consequently to throw the artifact in one direction and then run in the opposite.

5. THE FORECHAMBER

The Forechamber was where the relatives and friends left their personal gifts, for the deceased to bring along on his final voyage. The tapestries and other fabrics that once decorated the walls are long since destroyed. And the four stone tables that were covered by urns, vases, small chests and similar objects are empty. All that remains after the visit by Gorak's expedition are shards and splinters of the smashed vessels.

The only things left after Ordo Magica's explorers are Magister Senia's body and the black scorching on the wall where her final *Brimstone Cascade* hit. The character who succeeds with a *Vigilant* test and has the ability *Medicus* makes a conclusion: just like the corpse in the Entry Hall, Senia has been cut numerous times with short swords – if someone bothers to count, there are twenty three individual wounds.

On the floor close to the corpse lays the Magister's equipment in a knapsack. No notebook is found, because all notes were taken by her assistant, but the characters can find a rolled up paper describing the recipe for making Purple Sap along with two small vials containing medium strong doses of the elixir (see page 39). Aside from that, the knapsack contains a leather case filled with first class exploration tools. He or she who uses Senia's brushes, wire brushes, chisels, magnifying glass, etc. gains a +1 bonus on tests where the ability *Loremaster* is used in order to explore or examine anything.

In the northern wall there is a wide, arched opening that leads through a short corridor into the Burial Chamber. There is no door but the red stone tablet placed above the archway can hardly be misread. Carved into the tablet are cuneiform symbols flanked by armored warriors with swords raised. The text can be read by someone who is a master at the ability *Loremaster*: "You who enter here, will be cut to pieces".

The smaller opening to the south leads to the Hall of the Glowing Guards. A successful *Vigilant* test makes a character aware of a warm breeze coming from the chamber, a breeze carrying a faint sent of soot.

6. THE GLOWING GUARDS

The characters can enter this soot-smelling chamber from the Forechamber or through the narrow passage found in the west wall of the Monument's Chamber. The room is completely bare except for twelve empty, full suits of plate armor, with two short swords attached to the steel gloves. They stand in a formation indicating that there once were thirteen of them.

Passing through the chamber is possible, but if the player characters so much as touch the suits, the Glowing Guards will activate. 1D4-1 guards awaken each turn until eight have been activated (one of the players should roll the dice).

But even if no one initially touches the suits of armors they will most likely be activated, namely when the characters set foot in the short corridor between the Forechamber and the Burial Chamber. If they have not awoken before they will then, in the manner described above: 1D4-1 per turn until eight has been activated.

The remaining four will come alive in a similar fashion when the characters start to interact with the runes on the gate to the Treasure Chamber (see page 31).

Glowing Guards

A muffled roaring is heard, as from a blazing fire in an iron stove

The guards are waiting to serve their King. They do not react to movements around them – only to someone entering the corridor to the Burial Chamber, tampering with the gate to the Treasure Chamber or if touched.

When they wake, the runes on their armor, the swords in their hands and the eyes behind the face guards start to glow. The short swords become red hot, dealing +2 in damage (only if wielded by the Glowing Guards).

Manner	Unyielding, mechanical movements
Resistance	Weak
Accurate 13 (–3), Cunning 7 (+3), Discreet 9 (+1), Persuasive 5 (+5), Quick 10 (0), Resolute 15 (–5), Strong 11 (–1), Vigilant 10 (0)	
Abilities	<i>Twin Attack (novice)</i>
Weapons	Two glowing short swords 5 (short), two attacks on the same target
Armor	Full plate with a rune covered breast plate 4
Defense	+3
Toughness 11	Pain Threshold 6
Equipment	None
Shadow	Glowing like lava, with layers of black soot and ash over the burning stone (corruption: 6)

Tactics: The Glowing Guards move towards the closest intruder and attack until it is dead. They divide between the enemies, but aside from that they have no common strategy.

Dawdling energies

The mystical power infused in the suits of armor has not lost any of its potency. However, it is afflicted by a phenomenon also observed at other locations in Davokar – it seems as if the power has become unpredictable, some might even say indolent or lazy. In short: if someone would have entered the burial chamber shortly after the Glowing Guards were posted there, they would have reacted immediately and moved to attack. Now, over a thousand years later, they are not as quick to respond to trespassers.

7. THE BURIAL CHAMBER

The corridor opens into a short colonnade that leads up to a podium, three feet high. On a partly crumbled throne of stone, once beautifully sculpted, sits the beheaded remains of King Hurian-Lo Apak with his hands on a spear lying over the throne's armrests (see the textbox Ramaran's Bane). And on a pedestal next to the throne is a small carafe made from translucent, volcanic glass, containing something that literally radiates blackness.

Exactly what happens when the player characters meet the King partly depends on if they have played the adventure *The Mark of the Beast* and, if so, what transpired during its course (see the textbox The King's Skull in the Tomb). But past events aside, it is clear that King Hurian-Lo Apak will initiate his attempt to possess one of them as soon as they enter his chamber.

The spirit's possession attempts will be made on one player character at a time. He starts with whoever has the highest *Strong* value, and that player must roll a test against [*Resolute* -5]. If the roll fails, the King displaces the victim's own spirit and assumes control over the body; if successful, the spirit makes a move on the second strongest character, and so on.

If the King does not succeed in possessing any of the characters his spirit returns to the mummy, waiting for new trespassers to ensnare. In that case, the characters can move freely through the chamber and secure the Vile Water. But should any of the attempts succeed, things take a turn for the worse.

As a suggestion, the Game Master takes the possessed character's player aside, telling him or her that it is time to portray the ancient King, "speechless" since Hurian-Lo cannot communicate in either Ambrian or the barbarian tongue. The King's goal is to drink the Vile Water, thereby strengthening his new body with its powers. Now, that may sound like a simple task, if it were not for the narrow neck

The Rune Covered Breast Plates

A ritualist who manages to get away with the breast plate from one of the Glowing Guards can study it and learn an older version of the ritual *Flaming Servant*. This type of *Flaming Servant* has the values described on page 142 in the Core Book, but is created with one optional ability at novice level. If one tries to sell a rune plate, it is worth about 100 thaler to other ritualists, or 50 thaler to an antique dealer.

RAMARAN'S BANE

The spear held by the dead King is Ramaran's Bane, depicted in the mosaic in the Supplicant's Chamber. It is not a mystical artifact but a masterwork weapon, crafted by the legendary trollsmith Ogaloum, he who also made troll mother Vouax' fabled cauldron. Ramaran's bane is a weapon that besides the quality Long also has the qualities Deep Impact and Precise. Hence, it gives a damage bonus of +1 and also adds +1 to the attack roll when used in combat.

The King's Skull in the Tomb

It is possible that player characters who have played *The Mark of the Beast* arrive to the tomb carrying the skull of Hurian-Lo Apak – or even that one of them is already possessed by the vengeful King's spirit. In that case, the events will unfold in roughly the same way as described in this section, with the possible exception that someone is already possessed, or that the possession attempt sequence starts when the the character carrying the King's Skull enters the Burial Chamber.

If the cranium was destroyed earlier, it is revealed that this did not mean the end of King Hurian's spirit. Instead of perishing, the spirit returned to the beheaded mummy, and has been waiting there for a new chance to possess a living body.

of the carafe and the viscous, slow-running liquid within. What happens depends on how many drops fall down the possessed character's throat before the other characters can come to the rescue. But it should be noted that when the Vile Water comes in contact with a body possessed by the King, it has even grimmer consequences than if it is consumed by a normal human being ...

Starting with the turn in which the victim grabs the carafe, he or she can consume a maximum of one drop per turn, and the effect becomes stronger for each drop swallowed, according to Table 1 on the next page. The victim has a chance to avoid the drops and can also be assisted by up to four people trying to make sure the drops land elsewhere than down its throat, alternatively trying to pry the flask from its grip.

This is handled as follows:



Table 1: The Effect of the Vile Water

NUMBER OF DROPS AND CUMULATIVE EFFECT	
1	+1 permanent corruption
2	+1 permanent corruption, +1 permanent <i>Strong</i> , -1 permanent <i>Cunning</i>
3	One week's dormancy during which a permanent bodily stigma evolves (the player's choice)
4	+1 permanent corruption, +1 permanent <i>Strong</i> , -1 permanent <i>Cunning</i>
5	One month's dormancy during which a permanent bodily stigma evolves (the player's choice)
6	+1 permanent <i>Strong</i> , -1 permanent <i>Cunning</i> , make a <i>Strong</i> test or become blight born
7	The victim dies and the King's spirit passes on to its eternal rest

An Alternate Challenge

Under normal circumstances, the character possessed should not have time to consume more than 1-3 drops before the situation has passed. But if the Game Master for some reason believes that what is described here does not suit the gaming group, or if the characters would have a hard time dealing with the challenge (for instance, if they are few or if one character has a very low value in *Resolute* but a *Strong* value which is much higher than that of the other characters) it may be an idea to modify the design of the challenge somewhat.

One option is to leave the spirit of the King be, in the firm belief that the other challenges of the tomb are enough to make it interesting; another alternative is to let onrushing characters automatically succeed with prying the flask from the victim (who in that case only has time to swallow the drops falling before the aid arrives).

1. The spirit of the victim is displaced but not destroyed. The character may roll against *Resolute* once each turn. If successful he or she manages to turn his head enough to avoid swallowing the drop which always falls at the very end of the turn.
2. Up to four other people can try to help the victim avoid the black drops, which is done with a test against *Strong*, modified by the victims *Strong*. It is enough that one of the companions succeed with its test for the Vile Water to end up somewhere else than in the victim's mouth.
3. The attempt to pry the flask from the victim's hand may only be performed by one person per turn. To succeed a) someone must pass the [*Strong*←*Strong*] test described above, b) while the one trying to take the flask also triumphs over the King's desperate resolve [*Resolute* -5].

If the victim loses its grip on the carafe or if it is emptied of Vile Water (10 drops), the King's spirit gives up and flees back to its mummified body. If the body is burnt, King Hurian-Lo Apak is finally annihilated.

But it is highly questionable if the characters come to think of that before they have opened the gate to the Treasure Chamber, thereby earning themselves a new set of problems to handle ... (see below) In any case, if table 1 does not state differently, the victim will soon come around and be ready to press onwards.

8. THE TREASURE CHAMBER

The gate blocking the way to the Treasure Chamber is protected by powerful runes that must be neutralized if one wishes to enter. Note that when the energy of the runes is dispersed, the runic

protection disappears and the Creeping Darkness starts bleeding through the walls. When that happens, the situation quickly grows critical and the characters will have very little time to handle an almost unmanageable situation.

The challenge is handled in three steps:

Step 1: The gate is opened

The sturdy bronze door is opened by destroying the runes keeping it shut. This can be done in three main ways: a) by using the mystical power *Anathema*, performed by someone having learnt it to the master level; b) by using the ritual *Break Link*; or c) by simply using sharp tools to destroy the physical representation of the runes on the bronze door.

It should be noted that the two latter options take about one hour to finish and must be done while the company is attacked by the remaining Glowing Guards.

Step 2: Entering the Treasury

As soon as the gate slides open, the character who succeeds with a *Vigilant* test or who has the ability *Witchsight* can sense an increasing cold falling from the ceiling. It also seems as if all sources of light grow dim, or as if the darkness grows deeper.

The ability *Witchsight* and a successful test against *Vigilant* give the character a sudden vision: a living darkness comes bleeding into the mound, seeps downwards through the tomb, towards the carafe of the Vile Water.

And as the vision fades away, it starts to come true. The Creeping Darkness descends into the Burial Chamber, like streaks of black smoke that

flow right through ceiling and walls – the characters must decide if they should run their legs off or make a foolhardy stand!

The rough room behind the bronze gate contains a lot of cloth, skin and wooden items that probably had a sentimental value to the King but which with time have been destroyed beyond recognition. However, left among the debris are eight treasures/artifacts of real interest (see below). The characters have one turn to decide if they will try to grab one of the alluring objects; a turn later the chamber is ruled by darkness.

THE TREASURES:

A warhammer covered in verdigris (The Souleater, see page 37)

A carved wooden box with a bowing dwarf statue on the lid (Fullangra, see page 36)

A throwing axe with a glowing, oozing head (The Burnreaper, see page 37)

A hypnotic green-glittering cape (The Haganor Skin, see page 38)

A buckler, engraved with a troll cross (The Troll Cross of Ella, see page 38)

A ritual codex (Covers the rituals *Possess* and *Break Link*)

A silver chest with Symbarian gold coins (value 700 thaler)

A portable laboratory in a practical, somewhat parched leather bag (+1 for rolls against *Cunning* when making elixirs)

Panic in the Treasure Chamber!

To keep the tension high and give the players a chance to make their choice, it is suggested that the Treasure Chamber is handled as follows:

1. Describe the situation, the Darkness seeping in, the evil amassing. The chamber is full of debris but a few attractive items can be seen.
2. Give a quick description of the items standing out as interesting.
3. Then ask the players to, without coordinating, write down on a piece of paper what item their character tries to grab.
4. If two or more characters go for the same item, it falls to the one who has the highest *Quick* value. If *Quick* is not decisive, move on to the value in *Strong* and if that is also a tie, let a simple dice roll decide (lowest on a D20 wins).

Step 3: The Creeping Darkness Becomes Manifest

The Creeping Darkness comes from above, pouring into the Treasure Chamber. The next turn it also rules the Burial Chamber, and one turn later it envelopes the Forechamber. From the fourth turn (five turns after the rune gate was opened) the whole tomb is shrouded in darkness, except that it does not descend down the rift to the Underworld.

All characters who at the start of a turn are in a room ruled by darkness will be affected. Those who have not been bitten by Xanathâ are victimized

Movement and Combat in the Dark

Of course, a character finding itself enclosed by the Creeping Darkness will have some troubles moving and fighting. If carrying a lantern or torch it feels like being in a dense black mist, but as long as the character moves in fairly familiar environments he or she has full movement and combat capacity. However, without a light source the character fights blindly (page 161 in the Core Book) and can only move at half pace – that is, five meters per movement action.

We would also like to make a couple of suggestions on how to make the encounter with the

Creeping Darkness extra thrilling for the players, not only for their characters. If possible it can be very effective to black out the room where you are playing, and have no source of light except a single candle. Sure, it can be a bit awkward when the players have to pass the candle between them to make dice rolls, but this is most likely outweighed by the tense atmosphere created by the blackened room.

Another tip is to use music. Scores from movies are a sure bet – in this case from movies which are both thrilling and dark ...

by the passive power, namely the monstrous trait *Gravely Cold* (III). Secondly, the maleficent abomination will manifest close to one of the characters each turn and strike at him or her with its spike attack – most likely against whomever is carrying the Vile Water, if anyone. The character who is attacked can of course choose between retaliating or using both of its actions for movement, in the hope of getting away from danger.

Now, if the characters realize that the Darkness is out to get the Vile Water, they can use this to escape. One way is to hurl the carafe down into the rift and let the Creeping Darkness battle it out with the Thorn Queen over who gets to consume the remaining drops in the flask. In that case there is still the risk that some characters are affected by the passive power when the Dark creeps past them, but the abomination will not attack them in any other way.

The characters chance to get away with the Vile Water is slim but exists. Both Fangafa and the Creeping Darkness have the trait *Slow* and can be outrun, while the white spider Xanathâ is hesitant to attack the player characters if they come off as dangerous prey.

But it should also be mentioned, that as long as the Vile Water exists, these three creatures will continue their hunt for it and all of them can track the artifact with their *Witchsight*. Sure, Fangafa has a hard time reaching locations not connected to the Underworld, but both the spider and the Creeping Darkness can enter any place not protected by magical means. And while the white spider is cautious about taking risks, the Darkness can appear just

about anywhere, even if the characters get the idea to hide the artifact in populated areas like Thistle Hold or Yndaros!

NEW RULE: FLIGHT & HUNT

When the player characters are trying to escape anyone or anything hunting them, it is suggested that the Game Master handles it based on the attribute *Quick*.

If the characters decide to stick together, he or she who has the lowest value in *Quick* must make a test, modified by the *Quick* of the fastest among the hunters. Should they split up, all of them need to make a test, again modified by the *Quick* of the fastest hunter. And if it is the other way around, if the characters are on the hunt, the same formula is used but instead with a modification based on the slowest prey.

During the hunt, one test is made each turn – if the prey succeeds it pulls away one step, if the prey fails the hunter comes one step closer. To finally get away, the hunted must reach an advantage of 3 steps, in other words, he or she must succeed at three rolls more than he or she fails. And the prey who fails at three rolls more than he or she succeeds will of course get caught up with.

Example: *The barbarian thief Hoska almost got away free after a burglary in Thistle Hold when a lone watchman saw him exiting the building – the hunt is afoot! Hoska has Quick 13 and the guard Quick 9 (+1), meaning that Hoska's player must roll against 13+1=14 in the attempt to escape the hunter. In the first turn the player rolls a 7 – Hoska pulls away and has advan-*



The Spider Xanathâ as Deus Ex Machina

If the characters have not entered into a pact with Xanathâ, the Game Master may still choose to offer them her help inside the tomb. If so, the spider appears like a shining, eight-legged sun in the darkness, offering to bite them in exchange for the artifact. If the players accept the deal, Xanathâ's bite will protect them as she dashes away with the artifact, closely trailed by the Creeping Darkness.



tage 1. The luck holds and the second roll lands on 13: advantage 2. One more successful roll and Hoska is free. But unfortunately, the third roll is 17; the guard comes closer and the advantage is 1. Hoska's player sighs nervously. The hunt goes on!

Farewell to the Adventure Landscape

SINCE TOMB OF DYING DREAMS is an adventure landscape it is hard to know exactly what will happen as the characters deal with its challenges, and also what the outcome will be. There is, however, one question of great importance to which one can foresee a limited number of answers: who or what will be in possession of the Vile Water? In this section you will find the most likely answers to this question described, along with a few hints on what they can mean for the future.

THE PLAYER CHARACTERS

What the characters do with the highly corrupted artifact is up to them. Will they use it to their own benefit, at the cost of attracting corruption? Will they take it to Ordo Magica or the monastery of the Black Cloaks? Or will they make use of their contacts within the Iron Pact to have the elves deal with the evil? No matter what they choose, it is no doubt an adventure in itself.

They will be hunted from the get go, by the creatures and persons who survived this adventure. And should all of them have perished, you can be sure that other monstrosities and dark-minded cultists will feel drawn to the black might of the Vile Water.

THE CULTISTS

If the cultists end up with the artifact they will bring it back to civilized areas, trying to hide it behind skillfully crafted magical veils (for instance

the ritual Sanctum). Protected from the watchful senses of player characters, other cult followers and hunting abominations they will use the might of the Vile Water to gain power and influence. It is not unlikely that their doings will become known to the characters, and in that case they are probably in for a whole series of adventures trying to bring them down.

THE SPIDER XANATHÂ

If Xanathâ ends up as the one in possession of the Vile Water it may take a while before the effects start to show. Initially, she disappears into the depths of Davokar, and from there she makes the leap to the Spirit World.

Whether she takes this action to protect the world from the artifact or in the hope of being able to use it herself the Game Master has to decide, but the latter option should appear appealing: the thought of a black-striped Xanathâ who has fused with the Vile Water in the hope of gaining strength enough to fight the evil of Davokar but has become blight born in the process. That certainly has a both tragic and epic ring to it.

THE CREEPING DARKNESS

If the Creeping Darkness consumes the Vile Water it almost instantly grows from spanning about fifty paces to ten times as much. The Dark sets root in the tomb and starts to infect the entire area, soon known as the Nightmire.

In time, the Nightmire will expand over and beyond Malgomor, meaning that all transports on or along the river are made next to impossible. Maybe it will take an unholy alliance of witches, theurgs and even sorcerers to deal with the situation? In that case, who would be more suited to arrange and lead such a motley crew of agents than the player characters?

THE THORN QUEEN FANGAFA

If Fangafa merges with the artifact, the outcome will be similar to what happens with the Creeping Darkness as the winner. The abomination is filled by the corruptive powers and starts to pull the mausoleum and its surroundings down into the dark of the Underworld.

At the bottom of this expanding cavity she makes herself a nest worthy of the Queen of the Abyss. She and her offspring will reach out into the river, making it very risky to travel the waters. And it does not take long for the stories to reach civilization – stories about creatures looking like slithering thorn bushes that attack boats on Malgomor, pulling them down to the bottom.

Affect the Future

If you wish, you are welcome to visit our forum at Reddit and look up the post named "The fate of the Vile Water [Spoilers]". We would very much like to see what you (and others) tell us about how your players handled the *Tomb of Dying Dreams* and, not least, what became of the Vile Water. We will definitely have the content of this thread in mind when creating future adventures.

Appendix

IN THIS CHAPTER you can read about the additional rules introduced in *Tomb of Dying Dreams*. But first comes a more in-depth description of all the artifacts featured in the adventure.

Artifacts

TOMB OF DYING DREAMS is the first official Symbaroum adventure to take the characters on a journey to the depths of Davokar. As a result of this, the Game Master will get several new examples of how mystical artifacts may be designed.

With these new finds, the players who have already bound one artifact or another to their characters will start to realize that one should not be too hasty to enter into such covenants. Each time an artifact is bound to the character he or she must pay with one Experience or suffer permanent corruption, which can lead to problems. The character who is too quick in grabbing the treasures of Symbaroum will soon end up in a situation where additional items must be passed up – for he or she who later down the road finds a very potent artifact, this conclusion may be downright depressing ...

THE VILE WATER

The Vile Water consists of pure corruption, like an inverted Water of the Dusk (page 186 in the Core Book). It looks like black mercury and gives off dark fumes of corruption if not contained in a vial. In King Hurian's tomb the liquid is collected in a small carafe wrought from translucent, volcanic glass.

To bind yourself to this particular artifact requires you to accept one point in permanent corruption. The Vile Water has the following attributes:

Black-Light

In the hands of one who has accepted Darkness,

the carafe can radiate with the dark of the Abyss, thereby blackening an area even if the sun is high in the sky. This means that a place (for instance a room indoors or a forest grove) goes dark for the remainder of the scene, dark like a night without stars or moonlight.

Action: Free

Corruption: None

Revelations of the Night

The flask contains 10 drops of Vile Water, which can be dripped on living tissue. Each drop grants 1D12 Experience to be used however the receiver wishes, at the cost of one permanent corruption. When all drops are used the vial is empty and the artifact spent.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1 permanent corruption/drop

Black Synergy

He who bows before the supremacy of the Dark can use its blackness to enhance the powers of *Sorcery*. Once per scene the synergy can add +1 tier to the effect die.

Action: Reactive

Corruption: None

Salvation of Darkness

The master of the artifact can crush the vial with a thought, thereby releasing its darkness. All creatures present with at least 1 corruption (temporary or permanent) immediately suffer 1D12



*"Wisdom like ashes
dust on the path of fate
death will wash you black"*

The Symbarian writings on the carafe can be read by a master *Lore-master*. The learned one also recognizes the style and rhythm of the poem, clearly the hallmark of he who is called the first court poet of Symbar, Marulu Dako-Fei.

in permanent corruption. Beings that already have permanent corruption are only affected if the outcome is higher than their current corruption – if so they suffer the difference. If the outcome is equal to or lower than the current corruption value, nothing happens. The effect affects the master himself if he has any corruption; only creatures with zero corruption are safe from harm.

Action: Free

Corruption: 1D12 (see description)

FULLANGRA

The crooked dwarf Fullangra – or Longenuff, as she calls herself – was caught by sorcerers long ago and bound to the carved wooden chest which carries her image. She has served many masters over the centuries, warlords and local kings, always loyally but never without whining and complaining. Her bad temper made the latest owner, King Hurian-Lo Apak, grow tired and put the chest in his treasury instead of making use of her services. Centuries of lonely sulking in the box have made Fullangra soften a bit and she will serve her next master with more mutterings and whispered complaints than loud disapprovals.

Fullangra speaks in an ancient Symbarian dialect and can neither read nor write. When someone binds to the artifact, a mystical bond appears between him and the dwarf, meaning that they can communicate telepathically. For anyone else it takes the ability *Loresmaster* at the Master level, and a successful *Cunning* test to converse. It must

also be noted that she never uses her true name, not even with her master; instead she always calls herself Longenuff.

Fullangra has the following characteristics and powers, to be employed by her master:

Faithful Servant

Fullangra can be ordered to act as bodyguard, guard a place, fetch and deliver, handle a lever or be sent to the nearest town to sell or buy something. She performs the task dutifully and needs no sleep or food. She takes no initiatives of her own – when the task is completed and she has no orders, she mystically teleports back to the chest to await the next command.

Fullangra always moves at Death March speed, without rest. Consequently, each longer journey requires a D20 roll: the outcome 20 means she is caught by a monster or dies some other way. If so she teleports back to the box and refuses to leave it for a week. If the ordered task puts Fullangra close to the chest, she can be played like a second character by the master's player.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1

Fullangra, the King's Servant

"Bury me standing, I've lived on my knees."

Manner	Mutters to herself and looks at the world with a dark gaze
Race	Dwarf
Resistance	Ordinary
Traits	<i>Absolute Memory</i> (see page 39), <i>Earth Bound</i> (see page 39)
Accurate 5 (+5), Cunning 13 (–3), Discreet 10 (0), Persuasive 7 (+3), Quick 10 (0), Resolute 9 (+1), Strong 15 (–5), Vigilant 11 (–1)	
Abilities	<i>Iron Fist</i> (novice), <i>Natural Warrior</i> (adept), <i>Strangler</i> (novice)
Weapons	Unarmed 1D6+1D4 (two attacks at the same target), strangulation 1D6 per turn
Armor	None
Defense	10
Toughness	15
Pain Threshold	6
Equipment	None
Shadow	Like fog over Davokar's ponds, with lonely soot flakes dancing in the mist (corruption: 3)

Tactics: Fullangra obeys orders, to the point. If she is killed (reaches 0 in Toughness, no death rolls are made) she returns to the box where she licks her wounds for seven days.

Fullangra and dwarven history

Player characters who treat Fullangra with respect can get the otherwise taciturn dwarf to share her view on the history of her people – as she remembers it after centuries in the chest. According to her, the dwarves' lot in life has been a long journey through misery, repression and forced assimilation.

"We were born as worms in the rotting flesh of the Worldserpent, and were granted wit by Symbar's princes to make us better slaves," she says about her people. But there was pride and a longing for liberty too: "We devised a language of our own, with codes and secret double-meanings, so complex that not even the masters could comprehend. We never wrote, because what's written can be read, interpreted, deciphered. Our dreams were our own, no one else's." About their home beneath the city of Dakovak she says: "We built nothing, created nothing, owned nothing so nothing could be taken from us. The masters could kill us, but with each corpse yet another secret was lost to them. Not even their death magic could touch us and for that they hated us – and with time they came to fear us as well." What has happened to the dwarven people after Symbaroum's fall she knows absolutely nothing about.

Table 2: Fullangra's chance to successfully assassinate

RESISTANCE	CHANCE TO SUCCEED
Weak	Roll 1D20, Fullangra succeeds on all but 20
Ordinary	Roll 1D20, Fullangra succeeds if the outcome is equal to or lower than 10
Challenging	Roll 1D20, Fullangra succeeds if the outcome is equal to or lower than 5
Strong	Roll 1D20, Fullangra succeeds if the outcome is 1

Elimination

It is also possible to ask Fullangra to perform grimmer deeds, but only in exchange for her freedom. If her master agrees to free her, she can make an assassination attempt as her final service – seeking out and trying to kill an enemy appointed by the master. The time it takes for her to do this is the same as it would take for the character to do it. And her chance to succeed depends on the victim, according to table 2.

If Fullangra fails her mission she is killed or captured, and being free she will not teleport back to the chest. Should she survive she will immediately seek out the closest dwarven community, most likely in Yndaros or the small one in Thistle Hold.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1D4, one of them permanent

A Gift in Return

For the master who releases Fullangra from her service without asking anything in return the dwarf will call upon the ancient powers she remembers by name and through them bestow one of the following gifts in return:

Inherit corruption: Fullangra takes on 1D6 of the characters permanent corruption, as thanks for her freedom.

Supernatural protection: Fullangra's prayer to the old powers protects the character. The protection comes in the form of 1D6 Experience that can only be used with the optional rule called "Re-roll for Experience", as described on page 179 in the Core Rulebook.

What Fullangra does with her freedom is up to the Game Master. If the characters have treated her well and with respect she may stay with them for a while. But sooner or later she will likely leave to seek out her present-day relatives, probably starting in Yndaros.

THE SOULEATER

The Souleater is a warhammer that according to legend was made in the lands east of the Ravens, with the aim of satisfying an anonymous warlord's thirst for power. If the chronicles are to be believed, the weapon was ill-famed already in the days of

Symbaroum, often described as being "forged in envy and hardened in jealousy".

All of its owners in old Symbaroum are said to have met with especially grim fates. When the Souleater is found in the mausoleum it has one mystical power from an earlier victim in store: *Holy Aura* (novice).

Corpse Raider

The Souleater can "soak in" a mystical power involving the attribute *Resolute* from a creature it kills and then store the power in its rune covered head. For that to happen, the warhammer must strike the killing blow and its master must decide to replace the power already stored with one from the newest victim.

Action: Reactive

Corruption: 1D4

Abusing the Dead

The master of the weapon can use the mystical power in storage as if it was his or her own. The master's *Resolute* counts as 15 in everything having to do with making use of that power, except that it does not affect the basis for calculating his or her corruption threshold.

Action: Same as the stored power

Corruption: 1D4

BURNREAPER

The throwing axe aptly called Burnreaper holds wild spirits of fire and ash, allowing it to burst into flames and also fly through the air back to its masters hand. The legends are strangely quiet about its lineage, but it is probable that the weapon is the same as the one wielded by the monster hunter Ksandukha, he who is said to be the slayer of Davokar's last dragon.

The head of the weapon glows and fumes and deals +1D4 in damage. The master of the axe is unaffected by the heat and can use it as a regular throwing axe.

The fiery weapon always returns to its master's hand, if he or she wishes it to. If thrown or dropped it comes flying through the air as a Free Action, without any additional cost in corruption.

Wrong kind of Weapon?

Do the characters have abilities or a style demanding other weapons than the ones described here? If so, you should alter the artifacts to something they can use. The Souleater is described as a warhammer but can easily be any other kind of one-handed weapon, just like Brunreaper can be a throwing spear as well as a throwing axe – provided that the effects of the weapons stay the same. Davokar is dark and dangerous enough even if you as Game Master assist the players in order for them to be able to portray their characters the way they want.

Lava Knife

When the weapon is thrown, its edge glows and fumes like the burning blood of the mountains and will easily pass through any materials – the attack ignores armor.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1D4

Fire Rain

Burnreaper strikes out against several enemies in a chain. If it hits the first designated target it flies on to the next and so on, until one attack test fails. When that happens, the axe returns to its master's hand.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1D6

THE TROLL CROSS OF ELLA

A troll cross engraved on a shield of meteorite iron, worn by the troll hag Ella to aid her against her nemesis, the blight born barbarian warlord Odalbagar. Either the cross did not help her, or maybe she fell to her death in later battles. Irrespective of which, her protective talisman has wandered on to new owners.

The shield is of suitable size for being a pendant hanging from the neck of a fully grown arch troll, consequently more like a buckler shield for a human – it can be used like that, following the rules described in the Core Book (page 150). Using it as a shield does not require that one bind to the artifact, but in order to use its powers binding to it is a must.

Mind Shield

The master of the cross can use Ella's ancient blessings as protection against powers affecting the mind. Each turn the carrier can gain a second chance to succeed against a power involving *Resolute*. If the power acts over time, the master may also make a re-roll to abort an ongoing effect – this also counts as a usage of the artifact's power.

Action: Reactive

Corruption: 1

Mirror of Vengeance

The master calls on the support of Ella's deepest wisdom to try to turn incoming powers against the caster. All offensive spells targeting the master of the cross are affected.

The Mirror of Vengeance works as if the master of the artifact attacked the caster instead, with the same power. For instance, if the power requires a roll against *Resolute*, the attribute value of the master is used to decide if the mirroring turns out

successful, modified by some attribute of the caster if modifications must be made.

It is worth mentioning that using this power is risky. A failure attracts even more corruption to the master.

Action: Reactive

Corruption: 1D4 if successful attempt, 1D6 if failed

THE HAGANOR SKIN

This rainbow-shimmering cloak of lindworm skin is said to come from a serpent slain near the Columns of Haganor, at the time when the columns still sparkled with gold and silver. The cloak still holds some mystical powers – it can lend the master a voice which enthralls the listener like the hypnotic powers of a lindworm; or a commanding, thundering voice turning even the most resilient of warriors into an obedient slave.

Aside from that the cloak provides its carrier a +1D4 bonus in Armor and can easily be worn on top of other protection without being extra impeding. This protective effect does not require the player character to bind to the artifact, but the powers described below do.

The Haganor Skin also comes with a negative effect: if a living lindworm sees the cloak it will remember the humiliating times when Symbaroum's princes hunted its ancestors for amusement, and immediately – on behalf of all proud lindworms – choose the master of the skin as its personal nemesis. In this context it should be mentioned that all lindworms are immune to the powers of the skin.

Dragon Whisper

The skin's master can let its voice play at the strings of the soul and enthrall all listeners with a roll of [*Persuasive*←*Resolute*]. Enemies within earshot who are affected will use one of their upcoming actions to do nothing – during the current turn if they have not acted, otherwise during the turn to come.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1

Commanding Voice

With a successful [*Persuasive*←*Resolute*] test the master of the Haganor Skin may assume control of a creature. The control is maintained until the master fails a [*Persuasive*←*Resolute*] test (rolled on the master's initiative) or until concentration is lost [*Resolute* – damage]. The controlled being has only one action/turn and cannot use Active abilities or powers while being controlled.

Action: Active

Corruption: 1D4

New Rules

ABSOLUTE MEMORY, TRAIT

The individual belongs to a race that traditionally does not use writing but instead has developed memory techniques to preserve important knowledge. Hence, the person remembers all it has seen and heard, technically meaning that the player may ask the Game Master about details experienced by the character during previous adventures. The Game Master must answer as thoroughly and honestly as possible.

CRUSHING EMBRACE, MONSTROUS TRAIT

The creature's natural weapons allow it to grip, hold on to and crush its enemies.

- I **Action:** Reactive. When the creature makes a damaging hit with its natural weapon, it may try to take hold of the enemy. To not get caught, the target must successfully roll a [Quick←Accurate] test. If the target fails it must succeed with a [Strong←Strong] test to get loose, or take 2 damage each turn as the grip tightens (ignores armor). A held creature may not act, but on the other hand the monster is unable to use the natural weapons for additional attacks while maintaining the grip.
- II **Action:** Reactive. As level I but the damage is 3 per turn.
- III **Action:** Reactive. As level I but the damage is 4 per turn.

EARTH BOUND, TRAIT

The spirit of the creature is bound to the flesh, rather than to the mind, which is why it does not suffer from corruption like others. Instead of becoming tainted and corrupt, all corrupting effects affect *Toughness* instead of *Resolute*. Temporary corruption strikes directly at *Toughness* as if the creature suffered a physical injury, and it is normal for such damage to result in internal bleeding or even open wounds on its body.

Permanent corruption causes a permanent reduction to the base of calculating the creature's *Pain Threshold*. The actual *Toughness* is not reduced when the creature suffers a point in permanent corruption, but the *Pain Threshold* is affected as if its *Toughness* had suffered a -1 penalty. Practically, this means that the character's *Pain Threshold* value is lowered by 1 for every other point gained in permanent corruption.

If the *Pain Threshold* reaches 0, the creature dies a painful death because of internal bleeding and failing organs.

FLEET-FOOTED, TRAIT

The creature moves at an unusually high speed. In situations where precision counts, the movement is 13 meters per turn. And in connection to the rule on Flight & Hunt, the trait gives a +3 *Quick* bonus.

MANY-HEADED, MONSTROUS TRAIT

The creature has multiple heads or limbs governed by separate brains/minds, and can use them independently of each other. Damage is suffered separately by each part, so they have to be taken out one by one. When all are eliminated the creature dies.

A drawback is that the traits *Armored* and *Robust* are weakened at the higher levels of Many-headed: such a massive and simultaneously limber body cannot fully use all its protection and strength in all directions at once.

- I **Action:** Passive. The creature has two limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has two combat actions per turn.
- II **Action:** Passive. The creature has four limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has four combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* work as if one level lower for the creature.
- III **Action:** Action: Passive. The creature has eight limbs or heads and may act with them separately; the creature has eight combat actions per turn. The traits *Armored* and *Robust* work as if two levels lower for the creature.

PURPLE SAP, ELIXIR

The Purple Sap is made from a decoction of a purple Lily of the Valley, a flower whose cleansing properties and resistance to corruption were discovered by the witches of Davokar long ago. Brewing the elixir is hard and only a true master can make the most of the flower's potential.

A novice alchemist can brew a potion which immediately removes 1D4 of temporary corruption from the user, while the potion of an adept heals 1D6 and that of a master 1D8. To purchase the elixir is expensive, because of the rare ingredient. A dose of weak Purple Sap costs 4 thaler, the medium formula 8 thaler and a dose of strong elixir 12 thaler.

SLOW, TRAIT

The creature moves at an unusually low speed. In situations where precision counts, the movement is 7 meters per turn. And in connection to the rule on Flight & Hunt, the trait gives a -3 *Quick* penalty.

At

the morning assembly, Magister Senia told us that she has established a circle here at the keep and completed a first report to Thistle Hold. I notice that others besides me find this reassuring, even if all of us know that the feeling of security was an illusion: we are a long way from safety and the circle will not save us if threats arise. But we can get advice, and that is a very precious thing in an exposed situation like ours.

The investigation of the ruins has afforded both joy and some exasperation. Our scouts have located the tomb from which the plunderer Gorak stole his tainted artifact. The ancient writings on the mausoleum indicate that it contains the remains of a person of stature, likely one of the local kings who ruled the area during Symbaroum's early days. That the tomb has already been breached is evident, but hopefully the robbers did not manage to empty it or destroy it completely.

王國



Just like the scouts foretold, we found the overgrown ruin satisfactory and established our base camp there. During the hike from the outpost we had to be ever diligent, hacking a path through the dense greenery which rules the area. Everyone took to the knife to help clearing out the ruined keep. Outside we left everything untouched, hoping to mask our presence – who knows what famished creatures lurk hereabout?

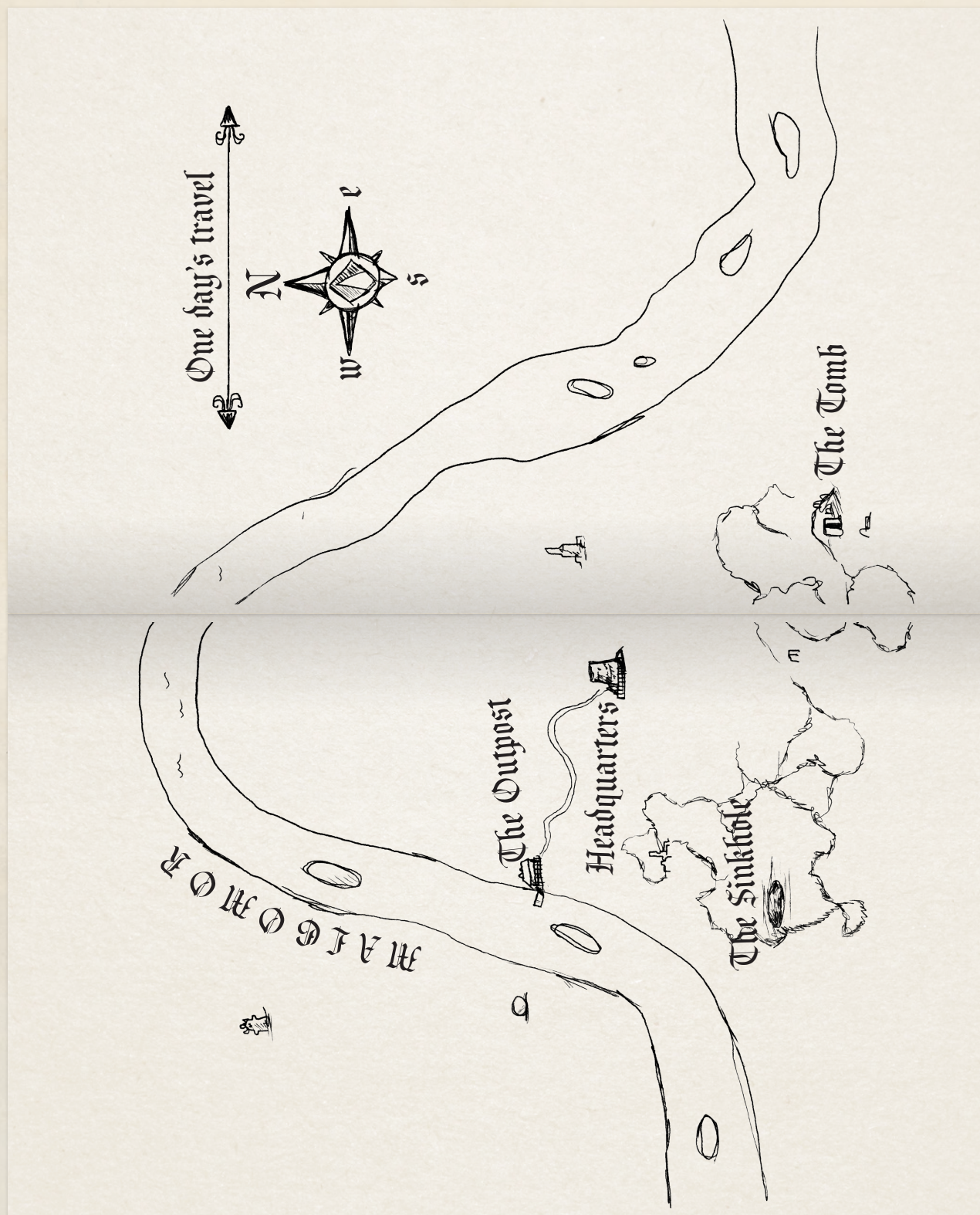
After mapping the whole area, Magister Senia found the tomb most promising. She also warned us about the sinkhole. This is hardly necessary since we all know that two patrols have vanished in its vicinity, but it demonstrates the greatness of her heart and her care for all members of the expedition. The mutterings and curses of the scouts and servants are evidently misdirected: Magister Senia is far from a "coldhearted slave driver" and the ruins much more than some "overgrown meat-grinder"!

On another note, the scouts have reported seeing streaks of grayish, black death spreading throughout the area, radiating out from the sinkhole if the reports are correct. What this is and if it will affect our work is hard to know but very easy to have nightmares about.

Magister Senia has ordered the whole expedition to start preparing for entering the mausoleum, and she has deciphered the text on the entry vault, hunting for clues as to what awaits us inside. If the streaks of dead nature keeps spreading our time here may soon come to its end, so we have every reason to hurry.

The ground quivers in pain, screams echo through the ruin. I dare not go outside. A deeper kind of darkness roams the night I am nearly paralyzed, the cold eats at my soul. By Prios, the darkness is bleeding through the walls!

From the heavens a light, like a descending sun of simmering limbs, she embraces me. The savior is here, Prios be praised.





In the shadowy halls of Davokar Grandiose treasures lay

side-by-side with items that should not be touched. Unfortunately, it can be hard to tell one from the other without touching, and by then it is often too late. Can that simple truth explain why master Cornelio, Ordo Magica's Chapter Master in Thistle Hold, has looked so grim lately? Is his troubled state of mind somehow connected to the reputed Tomb of Dreams, where his disciples have uncovered a mausoleum riddled with markings from the early days of Symbaroum?

Rumors are circling among fortune hunters and free explorers. Some attribute the Chapter Master's grim face to troubles regarding how to salvage and transport the treasure from the remote burial mound; others say that he worries about Mayor Nightpitch's claims on transparency and tolls. But the older and more experienced suspect that there may be other explanations for Cornelio's dark gaze. And if they are correct, many more than Thistle Hold's wizards have reason to fear what is to come ...

TOMB OF DYING DREAMS is the third and final episode in the adventure suit meant to introduce players and GMs to the rules and game world of Symbaroum. It is time for the player characters to embark on a journey into Davokar, taking them to a location with ancient ruins, horrifying adversaries and secrets which have been buried for centuries.

Among other things, *Tomb of Dying Dreams* includes a rich adventure landscape set in the depth of Davokar; a dozen creatures and NPCs to cooperate with or fight against; five full color maps and as many handouts; five mystical artifacts, six new traits; and the elixir Purple Sap that can wash your spirit free from the taint of corruption.

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Symbaroum



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