

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®]

DUNGEON[®] MAGAZINE ANNUAL



ROLEPLAYING GAME ADVENTURES
Edited by Torah Cottrill, Miranda Horner, and Chris Youngs

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS®

DUNGEON® MAGAZINE ANNUAL

The Best of D&D Insider™





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DUNGEON MAGAZINE ANNUAL

It's a new world for the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] game. Print and digital content live side by side. Magazines and game supplements are complemented by a suite of electronic tools intended to enhance the play experience of players and DMs alike. And we're releasing the book you hold in your hands: our second *D&D Insider*[™] compilation.

This supplement contains adventure material from *Dungeon*[®] magazine, our digital magazine that provides DMs with monthly support content. Inside this book, you'll find a total of five adventures spanning two campaign settings and over twenty levels of play. Although *Dungeon* also includes articles, we stuck to adventures here for a couple of reasons. First of all, the selection window for this book (from the launch of 4th Edition through September 2009) ended just before the first *Dungeon* feature article appeared. More importantly, while *Dungeon* is the home of all things DM-related, we know that first and foremost, this magazine is still the ultimate home for DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventures. We wanted to recognize that here.

As I looked at each of the adventures we published in our first year plus, I realized what a tough job it would be to narrow my choices to a mere 160 pages. My first selections resulted in almost 400 pages of adventures, and I had to come up with a way to narrow the field: I wanted an adventure from each tier of play. I wanted at least one adventure from each of our two currently published campaign settings, EBERRON[®] and the FORGOTTEN REALMS[®]. Finally, I wanted something from the *Scales of War* adventure path.

At the end of the day, after my managing editor gently informed me that I couldn't double the size of the book, we put together the following list.

"Menace of the Icy Spire," by Sean Molley, *Dungeon* #159: page 4. Our first adventure takes place in the FORGOTTEN REALMS and challenges 2nd-level characters. Set near Loudwater, the sample town presented in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*, it features everything that makes a short, low-level dungeon crawl memorable. You have classic monsters (goblins with a twist), an unexpected villain, and some fun noncombat challenges to handle.

"Winter of the Witch," by Stephen Radney-MacFarland. *Dungeon* #161: page 23. We follow our lowest-level adventure with our highest, for 22nd-level characters. This is the only epic adventure you'll find in this supplement, and one of only a handful we've produced so far. But even if I hadn't wanted to include an epic adventure in this product, I would still have picked "Winter of the Witch." Wayne Reynolds' art, combined with the terror inspired by the Witch herself, makes for (no pun intended) a chilling experience.

"Throne of the Stone-Skinned King," by Logan Bonner. *Dungeon* #166: page 60. The *Scales of War* adventure selected for this compilation is for 15th-level characters, the heart of the paragon tier. Logan takes the heroes into the insanity of a fomorian king's lair in the Feywild, where they must also contend with the most insidious of threats: Tiamat's shapeshifting green dragon exarch. A combination of tense negotiation and thrilling combat, this adventure was also the first place where we revealed that Tiamat was the über-threat of *Scales of War*.

"Storm Tower," by Christopher Perkins. *Dungeon* #166: page 111. What compilation of *Dungeon* adventures would be complete without a contribution from *Dungeon*'s most prolific author? This 3rd-level adventure is also unique because it was originally run for the power-gaming quartet of Scott Kurtz (from PvP), Mike Krahulik and Jerry Holkins (of Penny Arcade), and Wil Wheaton. The adventure also features the amazing illustrations of Mike Krahulik.

"Heart of the Forbidden Forge," by Luke Johnson. *Dungeon* #167: page 129. An EBERRON adventure for 7th-level characters caps off the *Dungeon Annual*. Two words: warforged dragon. When Luke first proposed this, I remember visiting the desk of Design Manager James Wyatt. "Can we do this?" I asked. "A warforged dragon?" His face lit up, and his answer should be apparent by now. Perhaps the most innovative villain in the book is ready to rock the world of any adventurers who get in its way. Even if you don't usually play in the EBERRON setting, I think you'll find this adventure as fun as they come.

Honorable mentions go out to a few other adventures that we couldn't shoehorn into this book. "Haven of the Bitter Glass" (<http://www.wizards.com/dnd/Article.aspx?x=dnd/duadp/2009March>) and "Rescue at Rivenroar" (<http://www.wizards.com/DnD/Article.aspx?x=dnd/duadp/20080711>) were both outstanding *Scales of War* adventures from *Dungeon*'s first year, and "Last Breath of Ashenport" (<http://www.wizards.com/DnD/Article.aspx?x=dnd/duad/20080729>) proved that a little Lovecraftian horror in your game makes for an amazing experience at the table.

It's a privilege to work on the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game each day, and a privilege to continue to have the fires of my imagination stoked by such great adventures each month. I hope you find the offerings in this supplement to be as inspirational in your games as I do, and that you visit us at *D&D Insider* to see all the other adventures and articles we have, ready to make your game as exciting as possible.

—Chris Youngs



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MENACE OF THE ICY SPIRE

An adventure for 2nd-level characters

by Sean Molley

illustrations by Rob Alexander, Ben Wootten and Ron Lemen ♦ cartography by Kyle Hunter

“Menace of the Icy Spire” is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure for five characters of 2nd level. The adventure is set in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting near the town of Loudwater in the Gray Vale. This adventure is designed to work well with the sample adventures found in Chapter 1 of the FORGOTTEN REALMS® Campaign Guide. In particular, this adventure makes an excellent sequel to *Barrow of the Ogre King™*, which introduces Loudwater and the surrounding area along with several NPCs who would make ideal patrons for sending the PCs on this adventure. However, it is not necessary for the characters to have visited Loudwater previously.

BACKGROUND

About 30 years ago, a dwarf warlock named Draigdurroch came to the Gray Vale. Draigdurroch was part of a cabal of warlocks, and his particular research dealt with the creation of new types of eldritch pacts. He believed that the Dire Wood contained a particularly potent source of untapped energy—the remains of a failed deity. Thousands of years before the Spellplague, a Netherese city called Karse stood in the area, and the demigod Karsus was its patron. Karsus tried and failed to ascend to full godhood, dying in the process, and his city (along with the rest of the ancient Empire of Netheril) fell

not long thereafter. Draigdurroch's research suggested that the petrified remains of Karsus yet lie beneath the forest's heart. Draigdurroch hoped that he could tap into the latent energy that Karsus had accumulated and use it to power his new pact. The dwarf warlock built a tower about a mile outside the Dire Wood and began his experiments in earnest.

Draigdurroch's hunch turned out to be correct. A powerful nexus of magical energy is beneath the heart of the Dire Wood. However, the fey spirits that dwell within the Dire Wood have long been aware of how dangerous the remnants of Karsus could be if the demigod's power fell into the wrong hands. They have appointed themselves as guardians to ensure that no one tampers with the failed deity's resting place. When Draigdurroch's efforts began to bear fruit and the dwarf warlock drew upon the latent echoes of Karsus's power to form a dark pact, the fey approached him and warned him to cease his meddling. The warlock was confident in his powers and ignored the warning. For his temerity, the fey punished him. Draigdurroch was imprisoned within the Feywild and his tower was sealed in a block of magic ice as a warning to others. The fey set a powerful gemstone holding a spirit of winter to act as the keystone holding the icy barrier.

The ritual enacted by the fey was designed to have a limited area of effect—Draigdurroch's tower was encased in ice, but the surrounding lands were not supposed to be affected. Unfortunately, such a powerful spell cannot go unnoticed forever. Draigdurroch's tower contains several small rifts to the Elemental Chaos that he had created as part of his arcane research. Recently, a group of ice warriors discovered one of these rifts, drawn by the strength of the cold energy emanating from the gemstone. They have taken up residence in Draigdurroch's tower, finding it a most hospitable environment thanks to the perpetual layer of ice. The warriors have begun to modify the ritual that the fey created, increasing its power and spreading the effects of the magic frost over a larger area. If they are not stopped, a permanent winter will come to the entire Gray Vale.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

This adventure occurs after Midsummer but before the end of Highsun. Over the last several weeks, temperatures in the Gray Vale have been dropping to levels that would not normally occur until after Highharvesttide. The area has not become too dangerous for travelers yet, but from all indications, winter is coming several months early. If that occurs, the crops will freeze and die before they are ready to be harvested, putting the entire area's food supply at risk.

The PCs can find little information in Loudwater. However, local woodfolk report that the cold temperatures appear to be more pronounced in the area of

the Dire Wood. Rumors even tell of blizzards in Midsummer! Some claim it is the work of evil faeries, but the town's leaders believe that a more likely source of the problem is Draigdurroch Tower. No one has seen or heard from Draigdurroch in 30 years, and the tower's cursed history is well known. The PCs find a reasonably detailed map of the area and set out to investigate the tower.

The adventurers' first challenge is the magically altered weather. The ice warriors have manipulated the magic of the fey gemstone and have created a powerful snowstorm to shroud the area around the tower. The PCs must overcome a skill challenge to navigate the treacherous wintry hazards. Their success or failure in this challenge determines whether they are in a favorable position when they are ambushed by goblins during a break in the storm. These goblins have been frost-touched by the corrupted fey magic, giving them some unusual characteristics.

After defeating the frost goblins and overcoming the storm, the PCs arrive at the tower, which is a three-story structure carved with images of demons and devils (in honor of Draigdurroch's original infernal pact). The cocoon of ice is still intact, so the PCs need to find a way to break through before they can enter the tower. When they do, however, they trigger some of the tower's original defenses, and some of the carvings and statues animate and attack.

Inside the tower, the PCs discover that everything is perfectly preserved, as if the warlock had just stepped out an hour ago. Frost covers every surface, but the furnishings and contents of the tower are intact. The ice warriors attack from all sides in a running battle that spans two floors of the tower. The PCs must deal not only with the main group of warriors inside the tower, but also with reinforcements that are coming from the Elemental Chaos through small rifts in the fireplaces.

Once the warriors have been dealt with, the PCs can ascend to Draigdurroch's study, where they find his research notes and rituals, along with a trap that he left to protect his belongings from intruders. Here they discover the truth about the warlock's efforts to tap into the power of the failed deity Karsus. This provides a way for you to introduce the dark pact warlock (from the *FORGOTTEN REALMS*® *Player's Guide*) to your campaign, if you are so inclined. The PCs can also learn that Draigdurroch was part of a larger cabal of warlocks, so his research might not have ended when the fey cursed him and sealed the tower.

At the top of the tower, the PCs discover the true source of the unnatural weather. The ritual of winter is feeding on itself and growing more powerful by the day. The only way to stop it is to destroy the gemstone that acts as the focus for the ritual. However, when the adventurers attempt to interfere with the gemstone, its guardian creature emerges and attacks.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure assumes that the PCs are either based in Loudwater or have come to the town for some reason. The primary hook is that the PCs are asked to investigate the unnatural weather before it becomes a serious problem. The PCs might already be known to some or all the prominent citizens of Loudwater, but even if this is their first visit to the town, they are still the obvious choice to investigate the early onset of winter. For more information about Loudwater, see Chapter One of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*.

The local farmers are petitioning Lady Moonfire, the civic leader of Loudwater, and Brother Griffon, the head of the temple of Silvanus, to find out what's going on. Evil magic was suspected, as it usually is in these sorts of cases, which led to the involvement of Curuvar the Brazen, Loudwater's resident wizard. Any or all these three could ask or hire the PCs to help.

Lady Moonfire: As Loudwater's civic leader, the half-elf Lady Moonfire is responsible for the town's protection. She has been getting an earful from the local farmers, who are concerned about the early onset of winter. If the harvest fails, then the entire Gray Vale will have a lean winter.

Read the following:

"We would be in your debt if you find the source of this unnatural winter," says Lady Moonfire. "If conditions continue as they have, the crops will die in the fields and Loudwater's next Deadwinter Day will be a lot more than symbolic. I suggest you start by investigating Draigdurroch Tower, near the Dire Wood. Considering the tower's history, I can't imagine this cold is a coincidence. I'm sure that Curuvar can tell you more. Honestly, thirty years is far too long to wait—someone should explore that tower anyway. I'm sure it will be a grand adventure!"

Because she is a warlock, Lady Moonfire has long been interested in Draigdurroch Tower for her own purposes. She knows everything in the Adventure Background up to the point where Draigdurroch disappeared. She did not know the dwarf personally, but he was reputed to own quite a collection of magic tomes. Thus, in addition to hiring the PCs to determine if the tower is indeed the source of the early winter, Lady Moonfire also asks them to bring her any ritual books or other magic tomes that they discover.

Curuvar the Brazen: Loudwater's resident wizard is a middle-aged human who is normally suspicious of strangers. However, Curuvar is under a lot of pressure to do something about the change in the weather, since it is presumed to be caused by evil magic. He is not the adventuring type, and his own efforts to discover the source of the problem

from afar have borne little fruit. Despite that, he has ascertained that a powerful magical aura definitely emanates from an area near the Dire Wood. Like Lady Moonfire, Curuvar is interested in Draigdurroch Tower and asks the PCs to bring him anything they discover that might pertain to the warlock's arcane research.

"By Mystra's lost spell, I'm certain that the tower must be connected to this somehow. Nobody knows what that dwarf Draigdurroch was researching or what triggered the calamity that encased his tower in magic ice, but any time powerful magic is involved, these events have a way of spiraling out of control. It appears the Dire Wood is drawing a lot of attention these days. Even if the tower isn't the source of the problem, perhaps you can find a clue among the warlock's notes or possessions. It's high time someone investigated all the ancient secrets in this area."

Brother Griffon: The head of the local temple of Silvanus, Brother Griffon is a stout human of Uthgardt descent. Although winter is a natural part of the cycle of the seasons and therefore not bad in and of itself, its early arrival is clearly a perversion of the natural order and as such it is of grave concern to the Forest Father. The balance between the seasons must be preserved. Brother Griffon can introduce the PCs to either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen, if necessary.

Rumors and Stories: The PCs could get involved in Loudwater's troubles through any of the various local residents who have encountered the effects of the unnatural weather. An evening spent in the Green Tankard yields all sorts of rumors and wild speculation. Farmers are worried about their crops, which might freeze in the fields before the harvest comes in; woodsfolk tell stories of freak snowstorms occurring in the middle of the day and then vanishing as if they were never there; hunters spread tales of strange, blue-skinned goblins lurking around the outskirts of the Dire Wood. Everyone has a pet theory about what or who is behind the problems, but mainly, the common folk are just worried.

Travel Interrupted: If the PCs have no ties to Loudwater and you just want to use the tower as a stand-alone adventure site, you could consider starting the adventure with the PCs traveling through the Gray Vale on unrelated business, when suddenly they are struck by the powerful magic blizzard. Because of the corrupted fey magic, every attempt that the PCs make to free themselves of the storm leads them around in circles, back toward Draigdurroch Tower. The only way for the PCs to escape the trap they are caught in is to make their way to the tower and find out what is causing the unnatural weather.

JOURNEY TO THE TOWER

Although nobody now living in town has ever been to the tower, many have a good idea of its approximate location, about a mile east of the edge of the Dire Wood. It's less than a day's travel to reach the tower from Loudwater, so the PCs should not need to make camp along the way. However, given the situation, they might want to prepare for cold weather. Loudwater has a general store and an apothecary who can supply all the basics. The PCs might also think to cast the Endure Elements ritual on themselves, or ask either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen to cast it for them.

II. THE BLIZZARD

As the PCs depart Loudwater, read the following:

The Gray Vale is beautiful in the late summer, although a pronounced chill in the air even during what should be the hottest part of the day indicates that something is definitely amiss with the weather. The first few hours of your journey pass uneventfully, but as you travel through the forest, the temperature drops steadily. A sharp wind carries with it the promise of winter, even though the leaves have not begun their annual autumn change.

More time passes, until finally you catch sight of the stark white wood of the albino trees that mark the boundary of the Dire Wood. Draigdurroch Tower should be within a few miles of here. However, none of the landmarks indicated on your map are visible for reference. The horizon is shrouded by a blanket of solid white. A cold fog appears to issue from the very heart of the dark forest and snowflakes begin to fall from the steel-gray sky. The way ahead is quickly obscured, as is the way you have just come.

THE BLIZZARD

The storm's intensity continues to rise minute by minute until the PCs are caught in the middle of a blizzard. To find their way through the driving snow, they must succeed on a skill challenge.

The PCs must survive the harsh conditions while staying on the right path to reach Draigdurroch Tower. They use their skills and knowledge to choose the right direction and protect themselves against the storm's hazards.

Because the storm is in some sense attacking the characters as they travel, this challenge proceeds in hours. Each PC must make an Endurance check every hour, and each PC can also attempt one other check each hour.

Level: 2 (XP 375)

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

THE QUESTS

While on this adventure, the PCs can try to fulfill two quests. The minor one could be accomplished as the PCs seek to fulfill the major one regarding the weather issue.

Major Quest—Fix the Weather

Discover the source of the unnatural early onset of winter and remove it so that the seasons return to normal. Lady Moonfire rewards the PCs with 500 gp on behalf of the grateful citizens of Loudwater for completing this quest.

Reward: 625 XP and 500 gp.

Minor Quest—Find Draigdurroch's Research

Bring Draigdurroch's ritual books and his research notes to either Lady Moonfire or Curuvar the Brazen. Either NPC is willing to pay up to 100 gp for these items.

Reward: 125 XP per character, plus 100 gp per item retrieved.

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Arcana, Athletics, History, Insight, Nature, Perception.

Acrobatics (DC 10): A character helps guide the party over hazards such as icy patches of ground and through sudden gusts of wind that would otherwise knock party members off their feet. A failure with this skill costs the character 1 healing surge.

Arcana (DC 15): The character senses the direction from which the arcane energy powering the storm flows and can work backward from the flows of magic to get a sense of the tower's location. The first time a character earns a success with this skill, he or she also recognizes the fey nature of the magic, which opens up the use of the Insight skill (see below).

Athletics (DC 10): A character helps force a way through the storm using brute strength—breaking a path through a snow drift, moving fallen trees or jumping over them, and so forth. A failure with this skill costs the character 1 healing surge.

History (DC 10): A character recalls a specific detail about the location of Draigdurroch Tower or discovers a unique landmark that helps orient the group and guides them along the right track. Only 1 success can be gained in this way.

Insight (DC 10): This skill cannot be used until it has been unlocked by a successful Arcana check. Because this storm is partially the result of fey magic, some of its effects are illusory. A character who succeeds on an Insight check recognizes some of these illusions and can help the group avoid traveling in circles, prevent them from choosing paths that look safe but are dangerous, and so forth.

Nature (DC 5): A character relies on knowledge of the area, an ability to study terrain, an innate sense of direction, and wilderness survival skills to help lead the group through the blizzard.

Perception (DC 15): A character relies on keen senses to look for safe paths, avoid hazards, spot gaps in the swirling storm, and otherwise help guide the group through the storm.

Secondary Skills: Endurance, Heal.

Endurance (DC 10): Every character must attempt an Endurance check every turn (representing 1 hour of exposure to the storm) to resist the chill winds and other hazards of the blizzard. This gives no successes toward the skill challenge. Failure means the character loses a healing surge, but it does not count as a failure in the overall challenge. Characters who are protected by the Endure Elements ritual or who have innate cold resistance gain a +5 bonus to these checks (they are not immune, because some of the cold is magical). Success means the character tolerates the weather conditions.

Heal (DC 10): The character helps another character deal with the extreme weather conditions. A character who has not attempted to use another skill (other than Endurance) during a turn can attempt a Heal check if another character fails a skill check that would cause the loss of a healing surge. If the Heal check is successful, the other character does not lose a healing surge, but that character's failure still counts against the overall skill challenge if it would otherwise have counted against the skill challenge. The Heal check does not count as either a success or a failure in the overall challenge.

Success: If the characters earn 8 successes, they find their way through the storm without losing any

additional healing surges, and they emerge in a favorable position before the goblin ambush.

Failure: If characters earn 3 failures, they survive the storm, but each character loses 2 healing surges to represent the beating he or she takes from the blizzard, and the characters are in an unfavorable position when the goblins attack.

DEVELOPMENT

As the unnatural blizzard subsides, the PCs can see that the area surrounding the tower for several miles is covered with ice and snow, a preview of the fate that awaits the rest of the Gray Vale. Visibility is limited, but they can make out a stark gray silhouette on the horizon some distance away. They still have a few hours of daylight left, and even if they lost healing surges to the blizzard and decide to make camp, it's clear that doing so is risky, since another, stronger storm could come along at any moment. The best course of action is to proceed to the tower. (If they turn back to Loudwater at any point, they have to overcome another blizzard the next time they try to retrace their steps to the tower, and each storm's intensity is greater than the last one: Increase the DCs of all the skill checks by 1.)

FROST GOBLIN AMBUSH

Although the ice warriors have manipulated the original ritual, the fundamental magic creating these unnatural snowstorms is still that of the Feywild, and as such it works in unexpected and mysterious ways. A few days ago, a tribe of local goblins was caught in one of the sudden blizzards. Although many of

WRITING FOR ORGANIZED PLAY

This adventure was written to serve a dual purpose. Obviously, it was written for *Dungeon*® magazine and needed to have broad appeal to any DM running a game in the FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign setting. At the same time, I am deeply involved in the D&D Organized Play programs offered by Wizards of the Coast, as an administrator for the LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS campaign (for more details, visit the Events page on the D&D website). So, I knew that I wanted this adventure to be easily adapted to the LFR campaign. Writing for organized play changes the way you think about adventure design. In particular, you cannot assume that the PCs will have any particular role or skill set covered. Many times, the players are meeting one another for the very first time at a convention with as little as 15

minutes of lead time before sitting down to play the game. Convention sessions also run on tight schedules, so you want to provide at least one adventure hook that allows the PCs to jump right into the action and that doesn't assume the players have any background knowledge about the setting. The "Travel Interrupted" hook on page 6 offers a way to start this adventure without any setup other than that the adventurers are traveling through the Gray Vale when they get caught in a freak snowstorm. Of course, many RPGA players love roleplaying just as much if not more than combat, so I provided other hooks to appeal to these types of players, too.

—Sean Molley

the goblins died, those who survived the storm were subtly altered, becoming frost-touched. Their skin gained a blue tint and they found themselves well adapted to their new environment.

As the PCs draw closer to the tower, they reach an area where several hills come together with dangerous ice between them. This is an ideal spot for an ambush, and the frost goblins are waiting.

Tactical Encounter: "Frost Goblin Ambush," page 9.

FROST GOBLIN AMBUSH

Encounter Level 3 (975 XP)

SETUP

8 frost goblin cutters (C)
3 frost goblin sharpshooters (S)
1 frost goblin hexer (H)

A group of frost-touched goblins has set up an ambush in this location. Depending on how they fared in the skill challenge, the PCs come into the area in a more or less favorable position. If the PCs succeeded on the challenge, they set up in the area marked "A" on the map. If the PCs failed the challenge, they set up in the area marked "B" instead.

In addition, this encounter also includes an area of treacherous ice.

The goblins are positioned at a higher elevation, as shown on the map. Ramps of packed snow lead

up the hills in a few places, but the terrain favors the goblins. If none of the PCs succeeds on a Perception check, the goblins gain a surprise round. The goblins are all crouching down and have the advantage of elevation.

Perception Check

DC varies (active or passive, as appropriate; opposed by a goblin's Stealth check, and it has a +5 bonus): A goblin is crouching down above you.

Nature Check

DC 16 (trained only): These goblins appear different from normal. Their blue skin is highly unusual, and the fact that they are not dressed for the cold weather indicates that they have somehow adapted to the unnatural winter. They are probably resistant to cold.

When the goblins attack, read:

A mass of goblins leap up from the hills on both sides of you. Most of them brandish javelins and crude short swords, but a few of them wear better armor and carry crossbows. From the highest vantage point, another goblin clad in robes waves a rod and makes arcane gestures.

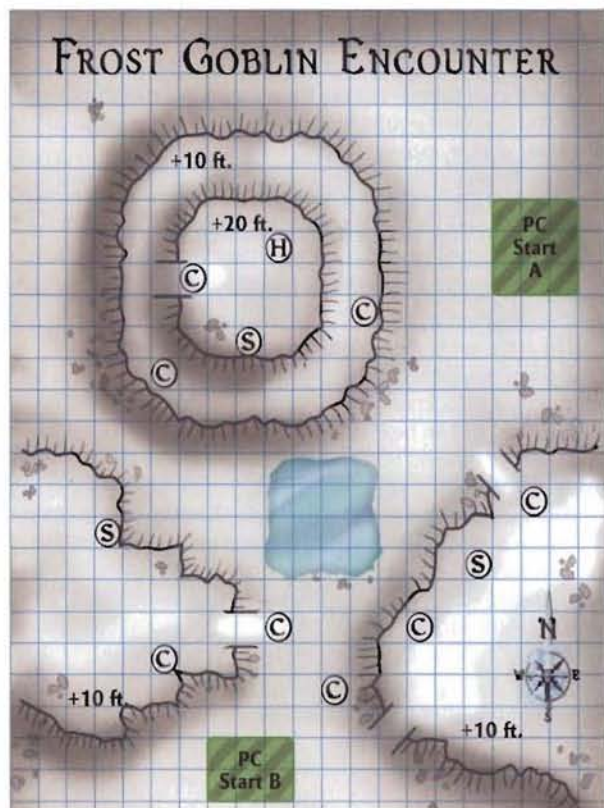
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The light varies based on the time of day.

Hills: The hills are at +10 foot and +20 foot elevation as indicated on the map. Ramps of packed snow lead up the sides of the hills in a few places; these are considered normal terrain. A character can also try to climb the sides of the hills, which are icy and slippery. A successful DC 10 Athletics check allows a character to climb at half speed (for example, it costs 4 squares of movement to climb up the side of a 10-foot-tall hill).

Ice Slick: The 4-by-4 square area indicated on the map is hindering terrain. Characters moving through this area are subjected to attacks by the treacherous ice (see its statistics block for details). The goblins all have the ice walk ability and are not affected by the treacherous ice.

Treasure: The goblins have a total of 50 gp among them, along with two *potions of healing*. The hexer carries a *+1 rod of reaving*.



Treacherous Ice

Hazard

Level 1 Obstacle

XP 100

A slick sheet of ice creates a hazardous obstacle.

Hazard: This sheet of ice fills 16 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain.

Perception

No check is necessary to notice the ice.

Additional Skill: Nature

◆ DC 15: The character identifies the squares of treacherous ice.

Trigger

The ice attacks when a creature enters or begins its turn in a square of treacherous ice. It also attacks when a creature stands up in a square of treacherous ice.

Attack**Opportunity Action** Melee**Target:** Every creature on the ice**Attack:** +5 vs. Reflex**Hit:** 1d6 damage and the target falls prone. If the target is already prone, it takes no damage but its turn ends immediately.**Countermeasures**

- ◆ With a DC 5 Acrobatics check and a move action, a character can move into 1 square of treacherous ice without falling. If the check fails or the character moves more than 1 square, the ice attacks.
- ◆ With a DC 10 Acrobatics check and a move action, a character can move at his or her normal speed across treacherous ice without falling. (The ice is still considered difficult terrain.) If the character fails the check or attempts to run or charge through treacherous ice, the ice attacks.
- ◆ With a DC 15 Acrobatics check, a character can run (move action) or charge (standard action) across treacherous ice without falling. (The ice is still considered difficult terrain.) If the check fails, the ice attacks.

TACTICS

The terrain favors ranged combat and the frost goblin cutters start out by tossing javelins rather than rushing into melee. They engage anybody who tries to climb up the sides of the hills, allowing the sharpshooters to remain free. The hexer uses its *freezing cloud* to create a patch of difficult terrain, hopefully slowing some of the PCs down so that they are exposed to more ranged attacks. The goblins' ice walk ability allows them to ignore the effect. The hexer uses its *freezing hex* and *icebound hex* to slow down any PCs who appear to be leading the attack. It tries to keep at least one cutter near it so that it can use its *lead from the rear* ability if anyone targets it with a ranged attack.

3 Frost Goblin Sharpshooters (S) Level 2 Artillery

Small natural humanoid (cold) XP 125 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision**HP** 31; **Bloodied** 15**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11**Resist** 5 cold**Speed** 6 (ice walk)④ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.⑦ **Hand Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.**Sniper**

When a frost goblin sharpshooter makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.

Combat Advantage

The frost goblin sharpshooter deals 1d6 extra damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction; when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The frost goblin shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Str** 14 (+3) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 13 (+2)**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 8 (+0)**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, hand crossbow with 20 bolts**8 Frost Goblin Cutters (C) Level 1 Minion**

Small natural humanoid (cold) XP 25 each

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 11**Resist** 5 cold**Speed** 6 (ice walk)④ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage (5 damage if the frost goblin cutter has combat advantage against the target).⑦ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +6 vs. AC; 4 damage.**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Str** 14 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+1)**Con** 13 (+1) **Int** 8 (-1) **Cha** 8 (-1)**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, 5 javelins in sheaf**Frost Goblin Hexer (H) Level 3 Elite Controller (Leader)**

Small natural humanoid (cold) XP 300

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision**HP** 92; **Bloodied** 46**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17**Resist** 5 cold**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6 (ice walk)**Action Points** 1④ **Hexer Rod** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.⑦ **Freezing Hex** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Cold**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).⑦ **Icebound Hex** (standard; recharge ☹️|☹️) ◆ **Cold**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 cold damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).☹️ **Freezing Cloud** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ◆ **Cold, Zone**

Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all squares within the zone are treated as difficult terrain (creatures with the ice walk ability can ignore this effect). The zone grants concealment to the frost goblin hexer and its allies. The frost goblin hexer can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.

⑦ **Incite Bravery** (immediate reaction, when an ally uses *goblin tactics*; at-will)
Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 additional squares and make an attack.**Goblin Tactics** (immediate reaction; when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The frost goblin hexer shifts 1 square.

Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt; when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)

The frost goblin hexer can change the attack's target to an ally of its level or lower that is adjacent to it.

Body of Ice

Any creature that hits the frost goblin hexer with a melee attack is slowed until the end of that creature's next turn.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Stealth +10, Thievery +10**Str** 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 18 (+5)**Equipment** leather robes, hexer rod

DRAIGDURROCH TOWER

Once they have dealt with the frost goblins, the PCs reach Draigdurroch Tower without further incident.

Show the players the illustration of the tower on page 4 and read the following:

Draigdurroch Tower is encased from top to bottom in a shimmering cocoon of pure ice. The sunlight is reflected in all directions by the angled planes of the frozen barrier, which climbs to a single peak in the air at the top of the tower and widens as it plunges to ground level. A palpable sensation of bitter cold emanates from the tower and its icy prison.

Through the imperfect mirror formed by the ice, you can see that the exterior stone of the tower has been carved into a series of massive sculptures and reliefs depicting various devils in flight. It is as if a huge, swirling column of fiends had erupted from deep within the earth and were being pulled into the heavens. Their mouths are open, though whether they are laughing or screaming is hard to tell.

A circular stone walkway winds around the tower's base, and squat statues of leering devils of all sorts line both sides of this path. The cobblestones are frozen over and look slippery. The tower's only obvious entrance is a single door at its base, but a foot-thick sheet of solid ice stands in your way.

Several events happen in this encounter. First, the PCs must come up with a way to breach the ice so that they can reach the door. (They can search around the tower in hopes of finding another entrance, but there is none.) The PCs have a number of ways they can break through the ice. They can use brute force, they can use various powers (those with the fire keyword could be especially effective), and they can use their skills (such as by making Perception checks to look for weak points in the ice). The ice is intended as a thematic barrier, not a meaningful obstacle. The 10-foot section in front of the door has AC and Reflex defenses of 4, a Fortitude defense of 12, immunity to effects that target Will, 40 hit points, resist 20 cold, and vulnerable 10 fire. Chopping out this portion of the ice does not cause the rest of the ice cocoon to collapse.

In the process of clearing their way to the door, the PCs also break the ice away from several sections of the carved exterior of the tower. This is important because as soon as the PCs touch the tower in any fashion (most likely to open the door), the guardians animate and attack.

The door is locked with the Arcane Lock ritual, requiring a successful DC 16 Thievery or Strength check, or the successful application of the Knock ritual, to open. The Arcane Lock is keyed only to Draigdurroch, and he's not around to open the door for visitors. Of course, the various uninvited guests (first the fey and now the ice warriors) have had their own ways of getting into the tower and have not needed to make use of the door.

Tactical Encounter: "Tower Guardians," page 16.

FEATURES OF THE TOWER

Unless noted otherwise, areas in the tower have the following features.

Illumination: The tower is filled with magic light sources that are often placed in disturbing locations (such as the eyes or other parts of devil statues). The ice that coats every surface reflects and amplifies this ambient light, so the entire interior of the tower is brightly illuminated.

Ceilings: Ceilings are 12 feet high. The center atrium that spans the first and second floors is 24 feet high from top to bottom.

Doors: The first floor of the tower has lightweight wooden interior doors that open easily (break DC 10) and do not have locks. Other doors are stronger (break DC 15) and have locks (DC 19 Thievery to open).

Floors: The tower is made of stone throughout. Every surface is coated with a thin layer of frost, but this does not impede movement.

Walls: All the tower's walls are made of stone that is about a foot thick. They have a break DC of 35. The icy surface outside the tower is nearly impossible to climb (DC 30) and deals 1d6 cold damage per round to anyone touching it with bare skin.

Windows: The tower has dozens of cunningly created windows, but they don't let any light into the building. Rather, they serve as a way for those inside the tower to observe the outside. Throughout the tower, statues of devils stand and squat against the walls in various places. Many of these statues have eyes that appear to gleam ever so slightly (DC 15 Perception to notice). The gleam comes from small glass lenses that are placed in the eye sockets. These sockets open onto thin stone tubes containing a cunning system of mirrors. These tubes lead to the open mouths of some of the carvings on the outside of the tower. In essence, anyone who is adjacent to an exterior-facing interior wall can find an opening to peer through to see the outside of the tower on the same side, as if the wall is not there. This arrangement grants line of sight, but not line of effect, from the inside of the tower to the outside of the tower to any creature looking through these periscopelike openings.

INSIDE THE TOWER: FIRST FLOOR

Once the PCs enter the tower, they find that the conditions inside are not much better than those outside, except that the howling wind and driving snow are not present. The temperature remains below freezing, and a thin layer of frost covers every surface inside the tower. (This rime is not thick enough to cause the floors to become slippery, however, so the PCs can walk around inside the tower without having to make Acrobatics checks.)

Everything is perfectly preserved, other than being frozen solid. The magic ice has so thoroughly pervaded every object in the tower that most items are extremely fragile (as if they had been dipped in liquid nitrogen). Wood and stone are largely unharmed, but cloth and metal have become so brittle that they shatter with any sort of rough handling.

When the fey came for Draigdurroch, he was completely unprepared, and the struggle was over quickly. The ice warriors have no care for the mundane furnishings of the tower and so have left them undisturbed. The overall effect is that the tower appears lived-in, as if it were suspended in a single moment of time. Even the fireplaces still have frozen blue flames within them (the fireplaces act as portals to the Elemental Chaos, as explained in the tactical encounter).

Tactical Encounter: "Ice Warriors," page 18.

T1. FOYER

Draigdurroch was not terribly creative when it came to his decorating scheme. The interior of the tower continues the theme established by the carvings and statues outside. Doorways lead to the banquet hall and sitting room, and an open two-story atrium with staircases on either side opens out directly in front of the foyer.

T2. ATRIUM / STAIRWAY

Three closed doors lead from the atrium to the back half of the tower. Reversed staircases lead up from this area to the second floor. When the PCs move into this area, they might draw the attention of the ice warriors, triggering the tactical encounter. However, if the PCs choose to explore the entire ground floor before they go up the stairs, the warriors hold their attack, hoping to catch the PCs when they have split up a bit and some of them are in different rooms.

T3. BANQUET HALL

Draigdurroch rarely had guests, but he did occasionally entertain other members of his cabal. The banquet hall runs the length of the tower and has fireplaces on either end. The main table is large enough to seat ten comfortably. The place settings are utilitarian and are of no particular value.

The two fireplaces in this room are filled with frozen blue flames; ice warriors can use both of the fireplaces to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

T4. SITTING ROOM

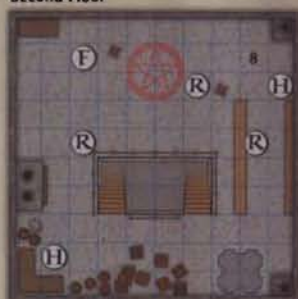
This is a small sitting room with a low table and several comfortable chairs. Long bookshelves line the walls. They are filled with treatises on the Nine Hells and the various devil lords who dwell within, with a particular focus on Asmodeus. A number of books also cover the history of ancient Netheril (the original empire, not its current incarnation). Like everything else in the tower, the books are frozen, but the pages can be turned carefully. If a character takes the time to study these books, a successful DC 20 History check reveals that Draigdurroch had a particular interest in one specific Netherese city named Karse. The location of Karse appears to have been somewhere in the current area that is covered by the Dire Wood.

WARLOCK'S TOWER INTERIOR

First Floor



Second Floor



Levitation Disc
Up to Third Floor

Third Floor



Levitation Disc
Up to Roof

Levitation Disc
Down to Second Floor

Roof



Levitation Disc
Down to Third Floor

1 square = 5 ft.

The fireplace in this room is filled with frozen blue flames. The ice warriors can use it to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

Treasure: On one of the bookshelves is a delicate sculpture made of crystal, depicting Asmodeus. To the right collector, this item is worth 260 gold pieces. However, the PCs must be careful to handle the item so that it does not shatter.

T5. SERVANTS' ROOM

Draigdurroch hated to interrupt his work to focus on the mundane details of life, so he had a pair of live-in servants. When the warlock was dragged off to the Feywild, nobody noticed the two elderly humans hiding fearfully in their beds. When the ritual of ice was enacted and the tower froze solid, the two servants were killed instantly and their preserved corpses remain in this room, hiding under the sheets with terrified looks on their faces. They died thirty years ago, so they are long past the reach of the Raise Dead ritual, although the PCs could use the Speak with Dead ritual to interrogate the corpses (but they would have to thaw the bodies first—their jaws are frozen shut).

The fireplace in this room is filled with frozen blue flames, and the ice warriors can use it to enter from the Elemental Chaos.

T6. KITCHEN

The kitchen is basic, but it contains all the mundane implements that one would expect to find. Draigdurroch had a taste for pickled eels. Several glass jars of frozen eels are sitting on the counter. The PCs might be distracted by these bizarre delicacies for a moment, thinking they are perhaps some sort of preserved devil-spawn or mind flayer tadpoles, but they are just mundane eels.

T7. LARDER

The larder is well stocked and contains enough food to feed three people for several months. Everything has a thirty-year case of freezer burn, however, so it would be inedible even if it were somehow thawed out.

INSIDE THE TOWER: SECOND FLOOR

If the PCs have not already drawn the ice warriors' notice while exploring the first floor of the tower, they encounter the elemental creatures when they ascend to the second floor. The entire level is taken up by a huge laboratory. No interior walls are on this level, although tall bookcases do block off an area on one side. Along the other walls are an alchemical workbench, a table covered with bits and pieces of warlock implements and infernal carvings, and some crates and barrels containing various magic and alchemical supplies. Carved into the floor on the northern side is a large summoning circle inlaid with silver. A successful DC 20 Arcana check can determine that the runes and sigils are attuned to the Nine Hells.

The staircases run between the first and second floors of the tower. The atrium spans both levels, with a decorative railing around its edge on the second floor to prevent people from falling over. However, the railing is not sturdy; any character who is bull rushed or pushed over the edge receives a +2 bonus to his saving throw to avoid the fall, but the railing breaks free if the character fails the saving throw and falls.

Although the tower is clearly three stories high when observed from the outside, there is no obvious way to reach the third floor from the second floor. The trick is that there is a section of floor in the southeast corner (shown on the map) that acts like a Tenser's Floating Disk. A character who stands on any of the appropriate squares feels the palpable plane of force beneath his or her feet. A successful DC 15 Arcana check allows a character to realize the nature of this disk and how to command it. Unlike a regular Tenser's Floating Disk, this platform can be commanded to move up and down only, and it moves only along its prescribed path. It requires a move action to command the disk to ascend or descend, and the disk takes 6 seconds to complete its movement (an additional safeguard that Draigdurroch included in case anyone was ever pursuing him through his own tower).

Treasure: Among the few unspoiled alchemical components, the PCs can discover three vials of alchemist's frost (see the *Adventurer's Vault*™ supplement for details). If you don't have that book or don't want to give out that specific item, then the PCs find 210 gold pieces' worth of miscellaneous alchemical and ritual components that they can sell or keep for their own use.

INSIDE THE TOWER: THIRD FLOOR

The third floor of the tower houses Draigdurroch's research library, personal study, and living quarters. It also contains a trap that he placed in the event that anyone ever attempted to ransack his belongings. The ice warriors have no interest in Draigdurroch's possessions, so they use this floor only as a means to venture back and forth to the roof of the tower, where they have been modifying the gemstone that controls the magic ritual.

T8. LIBRARY

This is where Draigdurroch kept his collection of ritual books and the notes from his magical research. The bookshelves are all magically warded and the books have been protected from the effects of the frost that permeates nearly everything else in the tower. A great many books fill the shelves, and it should take some time for someone to study them all.

The details on Draigdurroch's contact with the remaining fragments of the failed deity Karsus indicate that he was working on forging a new type of pact that would draw upon the echoes of the demigod's lingering spite and rage to create effects of dark magic. A warlock character who spends several months studying these notes and attempting to recreate Draigdurroch's research can, if you allow it, change his or her current eldritch pact to the dark pact described in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide*.

T9. MASTER'S QUARTERS

Draigdurroch's personal living space continues the devilish theme that has been established elsewhere in the tower. Unlike the furnishings found on the lower floors, everything in this room is of the highest quality. Unfortunately, the fine silks and other expensive materials have been damaged by 30 years of endless frost. Tapestries hang from the walls. Their flowing folds are stiff and brittle; if a character handles them too roughly, they crack and fall apart.

Behind one of the tapestries is a secret door (DC 21 Perception to notice) that leads into the study. This door was once sealed with the Arcane Lock ritual, but the ice warriors have broken that ward and the door now opens easily once it is discovered.

T10. STUDY

Draigdurroch's study is free of ornamentation. A heavy wooden desk with a single chair dominates the room. There are no obvious exits.

The desk is warded, and this magic protects its contents from the everpresent frost. The magic also wards the desk against outside interference, and the glyph activates and attacks if the PCs disturb it without first detecting and disabling the trap.

Inside the desk, the PCs find Draigdurroch's journal. The entries begin with his arrival in the area, the construction of his tower in honor of Asmodeus, his theory that the ruins of the Netherese city of Karse lie beneath the Dire Wood, his early contact with the scattered fragments of the dead demigod Karsus, and his efforts to forge an eldritch pact with Karsus. He makes a passing note that the "ridiculous faeries" that live in the Dire Wood sent an emissary with a warning not to tamper with the demigod. Draigdurroch's response was to blast the emissary to cinders. "Let them feel the fire of Asmodeus, and soon the fury of Karsus as well," he writes in the final entry of his journal, with obviously misplaced self-satisfaction. "They claim that they will punish me for my actions if I do not heed their warnings. THEY will punish ME? How laughable!"

Another levitation platform, identical to the one between the second floor and the third floor, operates between this room and the roof of the tower.

Glyph of Warding Trap

Level 2 Warlock
XP 125

An explosion erupts from the desk in a burst of silver-tinged green light.

Trap: A magic glyph wards the warlock's desk, ready to explode with arcane fury when the trap is triggered.

Perception

◆ DC 15: The character notices the glyph.

Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 15: The character spots the glyph and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery checks made to disable it.

Trigger

When a creature tries to open the desk drawer (which would include searching the desk in general without first checking for traps), the glyph explodes. The papers in the warlock's desk are destroyed if the trap is triggered.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Close burst 3**

Target: All creatures in burst

Attack: +5 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d6 + 3 fire damage, and ongoing 2 fire damage (save ends).

Countermeasure

◆ A character adjacent to a glyph can disable it with a DC 15 Thievery check.

TOP OF THE TOWER: WINTER'S HEART

Read the following:

The top of the tower presents a bizarre scene that is strangely beautiful in its own way. The view of the surrounding area is refracted and twisted in spectacular fashion, as if you are standing inside a gigantic prism looking out. Floating several feet above the exact center point of the tower, forming the keystone at the apex of the icy cocoon, is a perfect sapphire, easily the size of a man's clenched fist.

Above the gemstone, the ice that sheathes the tower draws together into a single point about 20 feet in the air. All around this jutting finger, the air appears to harden into ice and snow, swirling away in all directions as it is propelled by a vicious wind. The clouds above the tower appear to draw energy from the gem, filling them with the pure essence of a winter storm.

The wind whips across the roof of the tower on the inside as well, each chilling gust accompanied by a pulse of energy that erupts from the sapphire's heart. The gem's otherwise flawless surface appears to have been marred by scratches or runes that glow with their own white energy.

Investigation reveals that these scratches are in the Barzhad script of the Primordial language and it can be surmised with a successful DC 15 Arcana check that they were made by the ice warriors to corrupt the gem's power. This gem is undoubtedly the source of the unnatural weather phenomena.

Tactical Encounter: "Winter's Heart," page 21.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: WRITING FOR A PUBLISHED SETTING

At the time I was writing this adventure, the 4th Edition FORGOTTEN REALMS supplements had not yet been published, but I knew that the FORGOTTEN REALMS *Player's Guide* was going to include a new warlock build (the dark pact). I thought it would be cool to use this adventure as a way for DMs to introduce this new pact into their own campaigns. Draigdurroch's investigations and research notes offer a plausible way for the PCs to learn about this new option. If a player wants his or her PC to retrain from one of the pacts in the *Player's Handbook*® to the dark pact, you can explain this change in the game by having the character spend time studying Draigdurroch's journal and trying to recreate his experiments. (A similar rationale would allow this adventure to be used to introduce the vestige pact from *Arcane Power*™, or new arcane powers and rituals from other supplements and *Dragon*® magazine.)

—Sean Molley

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Word of the PCs' success precedes their return to Loudwater, since the change in the weather and the rising temperatures are noticed immediately by everyone in the area. The local farmers are extremely grateful and the PCs never again have to buy their own drinks at the Green Tankard. Lady Moonfire throws a huge party in their honor, and Brother Grifon offers them the blessings of Silvanus as well.

Curuvar the Brazen wants to pick their brains about everything they learned—in particular, he asks if the PCs found Draigdurroch's body at the tower. Upon learning that they did not, he speculates that the warlock might have been taken into the Feywild. Regardless, Curuvar warns the PCs that although they have done Loudwater a great service, the fey of the Dire Wood have a different view of the world than mortals do, and they are not likely to be pleased by the PCs' having undone their handiwork, even though it was for a good cause. The PCs might well receive a visit from the fey, asking them to justify their actions or face the same punishment as Draigdurroch did.

A number of seeds for future adventures suggest themselves here. The PCs might have to perform some tasks to placate the fey of the Dire Wood, or perhaps they might travel to the ruins of Karse in an attempt to learn whether Draigdurroch made contact with a dead demigod from ancient Netheril. The cabal of warlocks of which Draigdurroch was a member is still active in the world, and they might serve as allies or enemies of the PCs in the future. Certainly they would be interested in continuing Draigdurroch's research if they have the opportunity, and the only way to stop them might be for the PCs to find a way to destroy the remains of Karsus. The consequences of this adventure don't all need to be revealed immediately; for example, when the PCs reach the paragon tier, the cabal might try to hire or trick them into entering the Feywild in an attempt to rescue Draigdurroch from his imprisonment.

If you are planning to run these characters through the FORGOTTEN REALMS mega-adventure *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*™, you could set that up by putting some information and rumors about Lady Saharel among Draigdurroch's research notes. Perhaps the warlock was thinking about trying to find Lady Saharel himself, or perhaps he learned about her in the course of his studies of the ancient Netherese Empire, since she was alive during those days.

TOWER GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 2 (700 XP)

SETUP

4 tower iron defenders (I)

1 tower clay scout (C)

The tower's guardians do not attack until the PCs interact directly with the tower (their instructions are to guard the tower, and the icy cocoon is not part of the tower). The most likely trigger is after the PCs have cleared the ice away from the front door and attempt to open (or break down) the door.

A character who suspects that some of the statues are guardians and studies them closely can try to identify the iron defenders before combat starts. If the characters attack the guardians directly, the guardians activate even if the PCs have not interfered with the tower. However, if PCs have not broken the ice, then the clay guardian cannot reach them because it is initially inside the frozen barrier.

Perception Check

DC 21: *Not all these statues are merely statues!*

When the guardians attack, read:

One of the devils carved into the side of the tower suddenly turns its head toward you. Ice breaks from its stone wings as it takes flight. Several of the squat, toadlike statues along the sides of the path also shudder and shake off the frost that coats them.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: FROST GOBLINS, TOWER GUARDIANS, AND ICE WARRIORS

Most of the monsters encountered in this adventure are reskinned versions of creatures that already appear in the *Monster Manual*[®]. The frost goblins are identical to their *Monster Manual* counterparts, with a few modifications to fit the cold theme. The ice warriors are scaled-down versions of ice archons. The tower guardians are homunculi. Only the Spirit of Winter is a completely new monster created for this adventure. I always look to existing sources before deciding to create a brand-new monster. *Dungeon Master's Guide*[®] 2 offers excellent guidance on monster themes and other ways of modifying existing creatures to suit the specific environment or purpose you need for your own adventures.

—Sean Molley

TACTICS

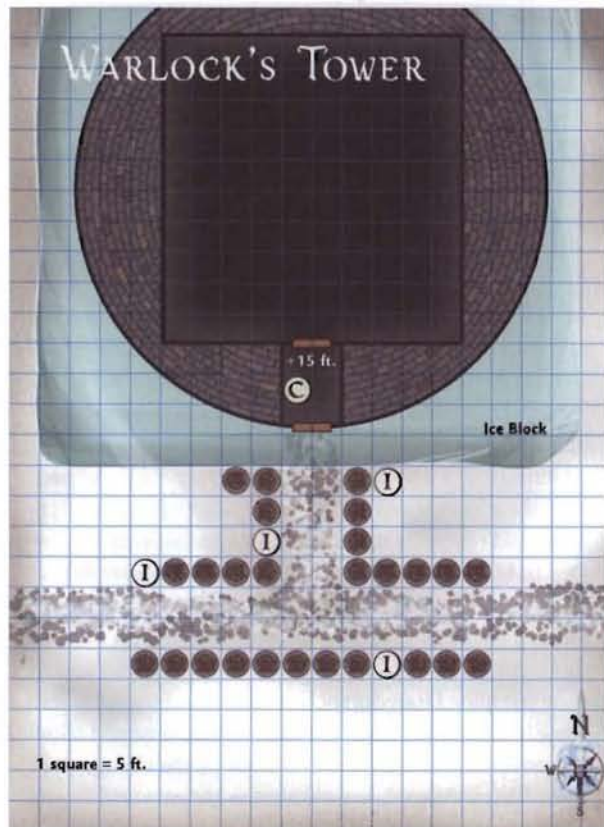
All the homunculi have the *guard area* power, and the area they are guarding is the tower. This gives the tower clay scout a bonus to attack rolls, and the tower iron defenders a bonus to all defenses, within 5 squares of the tower. However, the homunculi are not limited to engaging creatures only within that radius. The tower clay scout is reasonably intelligent and attempts to engage ranged attackers, relying on its *mind touch* and *limited invisibility* to protect it from reprisals. The tower iron defenders are less intelligent and go after the nearest enemy.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The light varies based on the time of day.

Path: The frozen cobblestones are slippery. Squares on the path are treated as difficult terrain. A creature that attempts to run or charge across these squares must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone, ending its move action.

Statues: The statues that do not animate are normal stone statues. They are depictions of squat, toadlike devils, about 4 feet high. Squares containing statues are treated as difficult terrain, and the statues can provide cover to a Medium or smaller creature that crouches or falls prone behind them.



4 Tower Iron Defenders (I) **Level 2 Soldier**

Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 125 each

Initiative +5 Senses Perception +6; darkvision

HP 39; Bloodied 19

AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 12; see also *guard area*

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.

Guard Area

The tower iron defender gains a +1 bonus to all defenses (not included above) when it is within 5 squares of the tower. However, it does not hesitate to pursue foes who step beyond this area. The tower iron defender does not pursue creatures that flee the area entirely, since its focus is on guarding the tower.

Pursue and Attack

When the tower iron defender makes an opportunity attack, it shifts 1 square before or after the attack.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 16 (+4) Dex 15 (+3) Wis 11 (+1)

Con 15 (+3) Int 5 (-2) Cha 8 (+0)

Tower Clay Scout (C) **Level 2 Lurker**

Small natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 125

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +6; darkvision

HP 31; Bloodied 15

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6, fly 3 (clumsy)

Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will) ⚡ Poison

+3 vs. AC; 1d6 damage, and the homunculus makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +2 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). See also *guard area*.

Ⓢ Mind Touch (standard; at-will) ⚡ Psychic

Ranged 10; +5 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends); see also *guard area*.

Guard Area

The tower clay scout gains a +4 bonus to attack rolls against targets within 5 squares of the tower.

Limited Invisibility ⚡ Illusion

The tower clay scout is invisible to dazed creatures.

Redirect (immediate interrupt; when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; at-will)

The tower clay scout makes an attack against the attacker; +4 vs. Will; the triggering attack targets a creature adjacent to the tower clay scout instead (as chosen by the clay scout).

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Skills Stealth +8

Str 10 (+1) Dex 15 (+3) Wis 10 (+1)

Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 16 (+4)

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: RUNNING BATTLE IN THE TOWER

I didn't intend for the PCs to fight the ice warriors all at once; I wanted to have several waves of enemies. However, I didn't really design the tower in the best way to encourage this. For my original idea to work, the PCs have to explore the first floor of the tower, instead of going directly up the staircase, and then a few of the ice warriors (but not all of them) can come down the stairs behind them, triggering the fight.

I think it's more fun if you end up with a running battle and combatants scattered throughout the tower. I recommend taking one of the ice warrior raiders and one of the ice warrior icicle hurlers and removing them from the second floor. Instead, have them enter the battlefield after a few rounds, using the fireplaces on the first floor. That way you don't have all the standard monsters on one flank and all the minions on another flank; you have a mixture of standard monsters and minions on all sides of the PCs. Removing several of the standard monsters also allows you to keep them out of the fight entirely if the encounter is going badly for the PCs—without the players ever knowing. Having monsters in reserve that you can use (but don't have to use) makes it much easier for you as the DM to tailor the fight to the party's combat prowess.

—Sean Molley



ICE WARRIORS

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

2 icicle hurlers (H)

2 ice warrior raiders (R)

1 ice warrior frostling (F)

This encounter can span multiple locations, with combatants on both the first and second floors of the tower. The positions indicated on the map show where the ice warriors are located when the PCs first enter the tower. However, the warriors might engage the PCs from different positions depending on how the situation unfolds.

The four fireplaces on the first floor of the tower are conduits to the Elemental Chaos, and additional ice warrior reinforcements come through the fireplaces until the PCs disable or destroy the portals.

In addition, any number of ice warrior shardlings (minions) can enter the battlefield through the four fireplace portals, beginning in the second round of combat. (The XP budget for this encounter assumes that the PCs have to fight at least 8 shardlings.) There are none in the tower when the PCs first arrive, so they are not shown on the map.

When the warriors attack, read:

A featureless creature made entirely of translucent blue ice stomps forward. It wears heavy armor and carries a huge maul-shaped chunk of frozen ice. Behind it, a more slender version of the same creature creates long, sharp missiles of ice, ready to throw. Yet another version of the same basic creature, this one wielding a wicked blade of glistening ice, glides across the floor, jagged shards of ice crystallizing out of thin air all around it.

Arcana Check

DC 16 (trained only): These creatures are ice warriors, denizens of the Elemental Chaos that seek to turn the world into a frigid wasteland. They must have been drawn here by the icy tomb of Draigdurroch Tower.

Ice Warrior Shardlings	Level 1 Minion
Medium elemental humanoid (cold)	XP 25 each
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +1
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 11	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⊕ Ice Shard (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon +5 vs. AC; 4 cold damage.	
⊗ Ice Bolt (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold, Weapon Ranged 5/10; +4 vs. AC; 4 cold damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial
Str 17 (+3)	Dex 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Wis 12 (+1)
	Cha 8 (-1)

2 Ice Warrior Icicle Hurlers (H)	Level 2 Artillery
Medium elemental animate (cold)	XP 125 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8
HP 32; Bloodied 16	
AC 15; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold +7 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage plus 1d4 cold damage.	
⊗ Flying Icicle (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage plus 1d6 cold damage.	
❄ Icicle Storm (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ⊕ Cold Area burst 3 within 20; +7 vs. AC; 1d10+1 cold damage.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)
Con 14 (+3)	Wis 14 (+3)
	Cha 11 (+1)

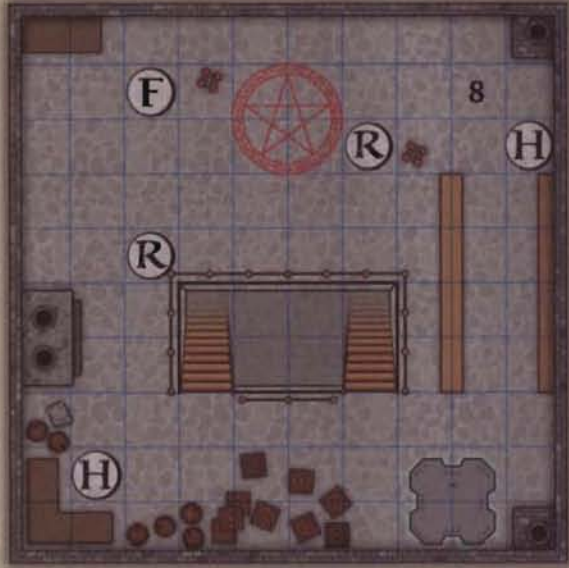
2 Ice Warrior Raiders (R)	Level 2 Soldier
Medium elemental animate (cold)	XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +1
HP 42; Bloodied 21	
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 13	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). Against a slowed target, the attack deals 1d6 extra cold damage.	
⊕ Ice Embrace (minor; at-will) ⊕ Cold +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized by ice (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial
Str 17 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)
Con 18 (+5)	Wis 11 (+1)
	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment maul	

Ice Warrior Frostling (F)	Level 4 Controller (Leader)
Medium elemental animate (cold)	XP 200
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8
Icy Aura (Cold) aura 5 (not active while bloodied); each cold creature within the aura gains regeneration 2. Enemies treat the area within the aura as difficult terrain.	
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 16	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 cold	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
⊕ Ice Shard (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 cold damage.	
⊗ Freezing Shot (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold Ranged 10; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 cold damage, the target is slowed until the end of the frostling's next turn, and one of the frostling's allies within 3 squares of the target can shift 3 squares to a space adjacent to the target.	
❄ Icy Burst (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ⊕ Cold Area burst 1 within 5; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). First Failed Saving Throw: The target is immobilized (save ends).	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Primordial
Skills Intimidate +13	
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 15 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Wis 12 (+3)
	Cha 18 (+6)

First Floor



Second Floor



Levitation Disc
Up to Third Floor

TACTICS

This encounter can be overwhelming if all the ice warriors engage the PCs at the same time. A better way to run this encounter is as a series of waves, splitting the warriors up into two or more smaller groups.

The warriors are initially on the second floor, so the PCs probably cannot perceive them. If a PC comes up the stairs, then the warriors attack, which most likely causes that PC to retreat, and the warriors come forward. The raiders and the frostlings descend the stairs, and the hurlers take advantage of the open atrium to launch ranged attacks at any character they can see. Meanwhile, the shardlings begin coming out of the fireplace portals.

If the frostling has the element of surprise or if it can catch a group of PCs together, it uses its *icy burst*. It is equally effective as a ranged or a melee combatant, so it adjusts its position and tactics to try to give its allies the maximum benefit of its *icy aura*.

The raiders try to focus on a single PC so that they can receive the benefit of their extra cold damage (the first maul hit slows the PC, allowing subsequent hits to deal extra damage).

The ice warriors pursue the PCs anywhere within the tower. They break off their attack only if all the PCs leave the tower. Given enough time (at least a day) they can draw reinforcements from the Elemental Chaos to replenish their numbers.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Portals: With a successful DC 15 Arcana check, the PCs can recognize the frozen flames in each fireplace as being magically active. A DC 20 Arcana check result allows the PCs to recognize that the

fireplaces are portals to the Elemental Chaos. The rifts are large enough for Medium creatures to pass through (although if the PCs go through, they will die, since they are probably completely unprepared to survive in the Elemental Chaos). Even if the PCs don't recognize what the portals can do beforehand, they can figure it out once the ice warrior shardlings start coming through the fireplaces.

During the first round of combat, four shardlings enter the first floor, one through each portal. Each portal has a recharge of 5–6. At the start of each new round of combat, roll a d6 for every active portal (the same way you would roll to see if a creature's powers recharge). Those portals that recharge trigger the arrival of another shardling from that portal. When the PCs close a portal, it does not change the recharge frequency of the other portals. However, if there are ever 8 shardlings on the map at the start of a round, none of the portals recharge that round.

To close a portal, the PCs can destroy it by brute force (each portal has AC and Reflex defenses of 5, Fortitude defense 10, immunity to attacks that target Will, resist 5 all, and 30 hit points). They can also close a portal by means of Arcana checks (attacking the magical auras that keep the gate open) or Thievery checks (treating the portals as magic traps). Only a character who is trained in the skill can attempt these checks. It requires a total of 4 successes with either Arcana or Thievery to close a portal. A DC 11 check result counts as one success and also closes the portal for 1 round (meaning that the portal does not recharge on the next round). For every 5 points by which a character's check result exceeds 11, he or she scores an additional success (meaning that a check result of 26 scores 3 successes and closes the portal for one round).

Tables: There are various tables and other pieces of furniture indicated on the map (most notably in the banquet room). With a successful DC 10 Athletics check, a creature can hop up on a table as part of normal movement; otherwise, it takes an extra square of movement to clamber up. A creature standing atop a table has combat advantage against foes of its size or smaller. However, because everything in the tower is coated with a thin layer of ice, the creature must succeed on a DC 20 Acrobatics check at the end of its turn to avoid slipping and falling off. If the creature fails the check, it lands prone in a randomly determined square adjacent to the table—even one occupied by another creature.

Bookshelves: These are 10 feet high and crammed with books. They block movement, line of effect, and line of sight. As a standard action, a creature can push over a bookshelf with a successful DC

25 Strength check. A fallen shelf covers an area 2 squares on each side. Any creature in a square the shelf falls in is subject to a melee attack: +7 vs. Reflex; 3d6 damage, and the target is grabbed until escape (DC 15). A fallen shelf creates difficult terrain in the squares it covers.

Summoning Circle: A character standing within the summoning circle on the second floor can feel a powerful eldritch force. Any attacks made using powers that have the arcane keyword gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls while the attacker is standing in the circle. The warriors cannot benefit from this effect.

Treasure: When the ice warriors are defeated, their equipment melts away (since it is made of ice). However, one of the mauls carried by the raiders is an actual weapon, and the PCs can claim this +1 frost maul.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE SPIRIT OF WINTER

The solo monster at the heart of this adventure is a new creature that I created. My inspiration was the Wendigo from Algonquian mythology, and in particular the Great Old One Ithaqua from the stories of August Derleth and Algernon Blackwood. Writing the art order for this creature was a lot of fun, and the artist did a fantastic job of capturing the scene, showing both the monster and the gemstone with the fury of a brutal winter storm emanating from them both.

From a game-mechanics perspective, the key concept behind this encounter is that the Spirit of Winter is bound to the sapphire positioned atop Draigdurroch Tower. The gemstone is the focus of the fey ritual that encased the tower in ice, and even though the ice warriors have corrupted that ritual in a way the fey never intended, the Spirit of Winter is still compelled to defend the gem, forcing the PCs to destroy it. By including the gem as a focus, this provides a different

way for the PCs to attack the spirit rather than by targeting it directly. This helps keep the PCs spread out on the battlefield, which can sometimes be an issue with solo encounters. However, I also wanted the monster to have a way to threaten those characters in the back rank, so the gemstone was originally a trap, with its own statistics block, initiative count, hit points, attacks, and defenses. The PCs had to destroy both the gem and the spirit in order to prevail. During editing, Chris Youngs realized that the encounter would work better if these two stat blocks were combined into one, so he merged the trap into the monster, adding the *blast of cold* power and the *gem bound* vulnerability. This eliminated the need for the gem to have its own stat block, and makes the Spirit of Winter that much more menacing, which is certainly appropriate for a solo monster!

—Sean Molley

WINTER'S HEART

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

Spirit of Winter (W)

This encounter takes place when the PCs first interact with the gemstone at the top of the tower. The spirit of winter contained within comes forth from the gemstone to defend it. Show the players the illustration on page 22 depicting the gem and its guardian.

When the PCs trigger the gemstone, read:

The gemstone pulses with blue light, and a wave of energy knocks you back. A thin stream of white mist issues from the center of the sapphire, coalescing into the form of a massive, thickly muscled, white-furred monster. Thick mist rolls off the creature's hide, congealing the air into heavy frost that clings to everything nearby. The creature roars, and in its howl you can hear the pure elemental fury at the heart of a raging blizzard. The sapphire continues to crackle with energy, the blue light pulsing rhythmically, as if it were the beating of the very heart of winter.

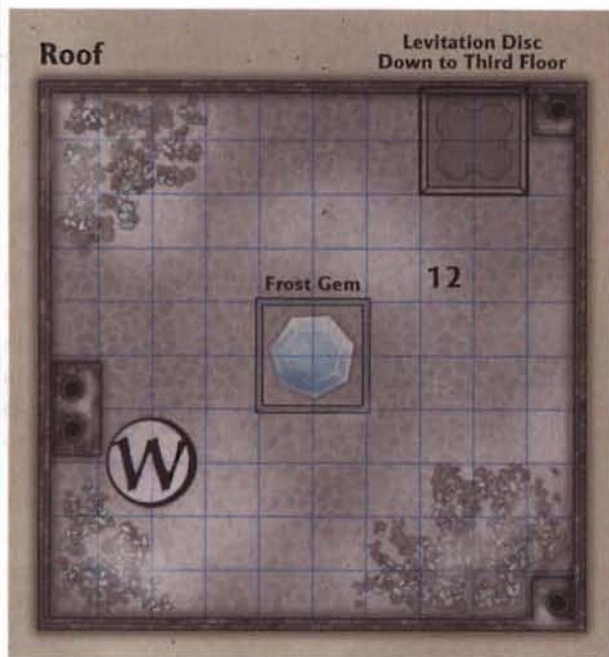


TACTICS

The spirit of winter focuses its attacks on whoever is nearest to it or is dealing the most damage to it. Perhaps the most dangerous tactic available to the spirit of winter is to try to position itself so that its *freezing burst* includes one or more characters who are within 2 squares of the tower's edge. A fall from the top of the tower deals 3d10 damage.

The spirit of winter does not pursue PCs who use the levitation platform to retreat back into the tower. If the PCs completely disengage, the spirit of winter goes back inside the gemstone, where it gains regeneration 10, meaning that it needs only 2 minutes to become fully healed. (The spirit of winter cannot use this tactic as long as there are PC combatants on the roof of the tower.)

Spirit of Winter (W)	Level 3 Solo Brute
Large fey humanoid (cold)	XP 750
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
Choke Frost Aura (Cold) aura 2 (not active while bloodied); any creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura is slowed (save ends).	
HP 250; Bloodied 125; see also <i>bloodied burst</i>	
AC 18; Fortitude 19, Reflex 15, Will 16	
Resist 15 cold	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 6 (ice walk)	
Action Points 2	
Ⓛ Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold	
Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage plus 1d6 cold damage (plus 1d6 extra cold damage against a creature that is under the effect of the spirit's <i>choke frost aura</i>).	
† Frost Fury (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold	
The spirit of winter makes two slam attacks.	
↘ Blast of Cold (minor; at-will) ♦ Cold	
Ranged 10 from frost gem; two targets; +4 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 1 cold damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
↩ Freezing Burst (standard; recharge [1]) ♦ Cold	
Close burst 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 cold damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and is knocked prone. Miss: The target is pushed 1 square and is not knocked prone.	
↩ Bloodied Burst (when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Cold	
The spirit of winter's <i>freezing burst</i> recharges, and the spirit uses it immediately.	
Gem Bound	
The spirit of winter is bound to the frost gem. Attacking either damages the spirit; when the spirit of winter drops to 0 hit points or fewer, the gem is also destroyed. The gem's defenses are identical to the spirit's, and the gem has resist 5 all.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages telepathy 20
Skills Athletics +15	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 18 (+5)	Int 10 (+1) Cha 8 (+0)



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Rubble: The indicated squares on the map are filled with broken shards of ice and stone. These squares are difficult terrain.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs have defeated the spirit of winter, the magic cocoon of ice shatters and collapses.

Read the following:

The spirit of winter clutches at its chest and howls in agony. A spiderweb of tiny cracks spreads across the sapphire's surface. Moments later, the next pulse of blue energy surges forward from the gemstone, but its structure is no longer able to contain the elemental forces. The sapphire explodes, tiny shards scattering in all directions. The spirit of winter's form wavers and blurs and then it collapses into itself in a cloud of white mist.

The icy walls that surround Draigdurroch Tower begin to tremble. With a great roar, like the sound of a gigantic waterfall made of glass, huge chunks of ice begin breaking apart from the frozen cocoon and falling to the ground below, where they shatter. Within a few seconds, the entire barrier has splintered and collapsed.

The sky above the tower begins to grow lighter as the gray clouds disperse. The swirling snow stops falling and the howling of the chill wind falls silent for the first time since you set foot in the Dire Wood. The world appears suddenly peaceful, as nature's proper course is restored.

After they have destroyed the gemstone and broken the fey curse, the PCs can rest in the tower if they want, although it takes many days before the frozen surfaces return to a normal temperature, so sleeping inside the tower feels like sleeping inside a meat locker.

The bitter wind and raging storms outside cease immediately when the gem is destroyed, and the outside temperature returns to normal within a few days. Of course, it takes some time for all the accumulated snow and ice that has built up in the region near the tower to melt.

EXPANDING A CAMPAIGN SETTING

"Menace of the Icy Spire" was commissioned specifically to follow up on the introductory adventure and plot hooks provided in Chapter 1 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*. Even though we all love building our own worlds, there are a lot of great things about expanding an existing campaign setting. The inspiration for this adventure (Draigdurroch Tower as the home of a mysterious warlock who disappeared under suspicious circumstances, leaving the tower shrouded in magical ice) comes directly from page 28 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide*. A good campaign setting is filled with these kinds of adventure hooks, and part of the fun of using the setting is following up on some of those rumors and interesting sites. I think of them like signposts, marking places where the setting's authors are saying, "Here's a cool location or a neat idea that we don't have room to flesh out, so you fill in the details any way that fits with your campaign."

—Sean Molley



WINTER OF THE WITCH

An adventure for 22nd-level characters

by Stephen Radney-MacFarland

illustrations by Dave Allsop, Eric Deschamps, Izzy, Damien M, William O'Connor, Wayne Reynolds, Sam Wood
cartography by Jason A. Engle, Sean Macdonald

A cold winter wind blows from the Scourge Mountains, but its origins are not of this world. And with it come horrifying stories of a fey who walks the land. Cold, beautiful, and deadly, she turns every mortal she touches into a statue of ice, and she seems determined to cover the entire north in a blanket of frost.

It is the Winter of the Witch . . . and if the archfey Koliada is not stopped, it could be the world's last.

BACKGROUND

The ways of the fey can be mysterious and deadly. This is especially true for the cold-hearted and cruel fey that constitute the Winter Court. Overseen by Prince of Frost, the various fey that make up the court are often left to their own devices and the pursuit of their own capricious whims.

Although it is known that the Prince of Frost holds mortals in utter contempt, he also rarely acts against them directly, but such constraint is not known by another member of his court. One being in particular, a minor archfey named Koliada the Winter Witch, regularly makes deadly forays into the world.

Every century or so, the Winter Witch launches a campaign of frozen despair upon the mortal world. When she comes, snows fail to recede in springtime, and winter's chill starts to spread southward, expanding with each of her victories. Along with the chill come strange armies made up of fey and the wicked mortals that have kneeled before the Winter Witch. As her winter spreads, the Winter Witch freezes mortals into statues of ice, which act as grim conduits for Koliada's power.

The last time the Winter Witch walked upon the world, a group of knights from the Empire of Nerath halted her advance. These heroes procured Koliada's nemesis—a powerful artifact of pure sunlight called the *Sun's Sliver*—the only item in the known universe that can destroy Koliada. The knights entered the frozen far reaches of the Feywild and confronted Koliada within her fortress, Winter's Heart. With the *Sun's Sliver* in hand, they battled the archfey, but before they could use the artifact to destroy her, Koliada fled. The knights won the day, but they knew someone would have to confront the Winter Witch again. In preparation for that day, they hid the *Sun's*

Sliver, sealing it in an isolated monastery where a member of their order could retrieve it again the next time Koliada appeared in the world. But then proud Nerath fell, and with it went almost all knowledge of the *Sun's Sliver* and how to defeat Koliada.

Now the Winter Witch walks the world again. As cold spreads southward, an undead and disgraced knight tries to assemble a group of heroes who can retrieve the *Sun's Sliver* and defeat the Winter Witch once and for all, but other foul powers work against the plan. The demon lord Orcus has become interested in Koliada's march, not for any love of the fey and their motivations (although he finds the chaos they sow useful). Rather he has set his agents to work behind the scenes to retrieve the *Sun's Sliver*. Not only does the Demon Lord of Undead want to corrupt such a powerful artifact of radiant energy, he also wants Koliada's march to reach farther than it ever has before, hoping that it will freeze over a volcano to the south and free a primordial trapped within—for what purpose only the demon knows.

One idea is clear: Heroes are needed to end the Winter of the Witch.

CUSTOMIZING THIS ADVENTURE

A good chunk of this adventure's background deals with and uses the town of Winterhaven and characters who appeared in the adventure *Keep on the Shadowfell*. Winterhaven is really just a placeholder for a settlement and characters who hold emotional resonance for the players and their characters. It is possible that epic-level characters got their start in that village, but if they didn't, tailor the starting encounters to the PCs by reskinning the adventure with a village and NPCs the players care about. This is as simple as changing the details and keeping the encounter structure relatively intact. The only place where this might get tricky is having a death knight masquerade as an NPC that isn't an undead knight, but using a well-placed illusion or making Drzak a doppelganger in the service of Orcus should do the trick.

TREASURE

"Winter of the Witch" uses the parcel technique of treasure distribution detailed in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. Use these 13 treasure parcels.

- Parcel 1: Magic item, level 26
- Parcel 2: Magic item, level 26
- Parcel 3: Magic item, level 25
- Parcel 4: Magic item, level 25

- Parcel 5: Magic item, level 24
- Parcel 6: Magic item, level 24
- Parcel 7: Magic item, level 23
- Parcel 8: 1,500 pp + six 5,000 gp gems
- Parcel 9: 1,000 pp + 2 scrolls of Endure Elements, 2 scrolls of Fey Passage, a scroll of Consult Oracle, and 4,200 gp worth of *residuum*
- Parcel 10: 600 pp + two *potions of recovery*
- Parcel 11: 600 pp + ten 5,000 gp gems
- Parcel 12: 350 pp
- Parcel 13: Seven 5,000 gp gems

Distributing the Loot

Consult the player's magic item wish lists, then apportion the following parcels into the indicated sections of the adventure. It's possible that the monsters make use of the magic items in their sections. Decide that ahead of time.

- K1: Two parcels in the possession of Sir Drzak
- M2: Three parcels, along with the *Sun's Sliver*, hidden beneath the seal of Remliel
- S1: Two parcels hidden in the troll cave
- S2: Four parcels in the white dragon's lair
- W3: Two parcels and the *sword of black ice* in Winter's Heart

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

"Winter of the Witch" starts with the PCs receiving an urgent but somewhat cryptic message from the skeletal knight Sir Keegan. In that missive, he asks them to return to the village of Winterhaven and meet him in his tomb under the ruins of the Keep on the Shadowfell.

Making it back to Winterhaven, the PCs find that in their absence the settlement has taken a turn for the worse. An unnatural cold snap has destroyed the local crops, villagers from the town and the surrounding countryside have gone missing, and stories of the return of the infamous Winter Witch—a cruel and hateful hag of legend—abound. But as terrible as events appear to be on the surface, they're shown to be much worse when the PCs visit Sir Keegan. They find the skeletal knight the helpless victim of an aggressive interrogation by a flameskull and a pair of demons. The undead minion of Orcus and his demonic thugs are attempting to extract the location of something called the *Sun's Sliver* from the stubborn knight. If rescued, Sir Keegan explains to the PCs the nature of the blight on the surrounding countryside and the reasons why the minions of Orcus are interested in the return of the Winter Witch.

Armed with this knowledge, the PCs' next task is to find and uncover the *Sun's Sliver* before the forces of Orcus can do so. The *Sun's Sliver* lies under the remote ruins of the Monastery of St. Alabat. It was bound there for hundreds of years by a powerful seal placed by Sir Keegan's long-extinct order. By the time the PCs reach the place, Orcus's minions are already there, and they have enacted a complicated ritual that will unbind the wards of the seal. Fortunately for the PCs, the minions' task is not yet complete. The PCs can fight their way into the deeper ruins, defeat the demon lord's toadies, and retrieve the *Sun's Sliver*, but not before having to deal with the artifact's guardian: a powerful angel of prophecy named Remliel.

Once the PCs have recovered the *Sun's Sliver*, the next step is to find and confront the Winter Witch. The search leads them to a cold mountain glacier in the Scourge Mountains. From this place, the Winter Witch has been launching her chilly assaults into the Nentir Vale and beyond, entering the world through a fey passage that takes the shape of a menhir circle made out of strange blue ice. Guarded by a cadre of icy minions and an ancient white dragon bound into the Winter Witch's service, the portal leads to Winter's Heart, the domain of the witch.

Once the PCs win their way past the portal's guardians, they have to traverse the icy terrain of the Feywild's snowy reaches on the way to Winter's Heart. Only there can they confront the cold-hearted archfey and save a section of the world from a wintry doom.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure starts when the PCs receive the following note:

Heroes of Winterhaven,

I beseech you to travel back to my tomb under the Keep on the Shadowfell. Winter is without end here, and I know its secret. I am hoping that once again, where I failed, you can succeed. Please make haste.

Sir Keegan,

Doomed Knight of the Keep on the Shadowfell

SIR KEEGAN? DIDN'T WE KILL THAT GUY?

There is a good chance that the PCs killed Sir Keegan when they played *Keep on the Shadowfell*. Because of his curse, Sir Keegan suffers on, even after he is vanquished. He rises again a month after his defeat. How he learned of the heroic nature of the group that vanquished him the first time is up to you, but given Sir Keegan's shame, he does not begrudge the PCs' actions the first time they met in his tomb.

PART ONE: WINTERHAVEN ON ICE

Although Winterhaven is not large enough to have a permanent teleportation circle, the nearby town of Fallcrest has one within the Septarch's Tower (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*®, page 204) and it's relatively easy to gain that circle's sigil sequence, if the PCs haven't obtained it already in their previous adventures. From Fallcrest, it takes only a couple of days of travel to reach Winterhaven.

When the PCs approach the town, read the following:

Even though the Nentir Vale is a northern region and used to the icy chill of hard winters, that weather rarely lingers this late into the spring. Where you were expecting to see the verdant greens of spring on the tree limbs, all you see are the twisted dark talons of wintershorn branches. Snow still drapes the Gardbury Downs. The air is cold, the sky is overcast, and every so often flurries still drift down from the chilly white skies.

WINTERHAVEN

Village, Population 942

Ice still lingers in the ruts that dot the King's Road that winds its way to the broad hill crowned by the walled village of Winterhaven. The alabaster fangs of Cairngorm tower appear behind the snow-draped village. The settlement's walls and palisades are slick with clinging ice.

As you pass by the thatched homes surrounding the village, they seem abandoned. When you enter Winterhaven's gates, you see that a shanty town of makeshift huts clutters the inner courtyard. The local populace is gathering within the walled town for shelter from the cold.

It's obvious that the strange weather is having an effect on the people of Winterhaven, but something worse is going on here. As the PCs enter the village, everyone has a look of fatigue brought on by hunger and misery, but also a small spark of hope caused by the PCs' arrival. News spreads quickly of the PCs' return to the village, and it's not long before Lord Padraig comes to greet the "Saviors of Winterhaven."

Padraig looks far older than the last time you saw him, and he seems very haggard.

PADRAIG'S STORY

Once Lord Padraig invites the PCs to join him by the fire and offers them heated brandywine, he nervously tells them his tale.

My land is cursed by a creature called the Winter Witch.

Honestly, when I first heard the tales of the Winter Witch, I thought she was just a long-lived superstition—a story to explain long winters. But that's before I saw her myself.

In the dead of winter, the refugees started pouring into Winterhaven. According to them, the Winter Witch was on the march, along with her armies of ice imps, frozen trolls, and other outlandish creatures. I assumed it was a tribe of orcs or giants from the Stonemarch, or maybe just a band of hungry and ferocious wolves or worgs scaring the populace. I led the Winterhaven Regulars to the northern settlements of my dominions.

We were near the Vesk holdings, in the northern highlands of the Cairngorm Peaks, not far from the shores of Wintermist. The settlement was in ruins, but it was bashed rather than burned. As the regulars explored the ruins, I took shelter from the biting winds among the nearby rocks. And that's when she appeared among the regulars, seemingly out of nowhere.

She was cold, dangerous, and beautiful beyond imagination. She was the most perfect and most terrible woman I have ever laid my eyes upon. My terror overwhelmed me, and I hid among the stones as she waded through my regulars. Though the regulars fought bravely, engaging the woman at every turn, she sidestepped blows as if they were child's play. Then came her touch, which transformed her victims into rime-crusting statues. A few, she cut down with her black blade as she laughed. I only watched, shivering in cold and terror.

I'm deeply ashamed of my actions. But I know in my heart that what stalks the frozen land is a being beyond the pale. And that is why I called upon your aid. This is a threat that requires true heroes.

At this point the PCs might be a little puzzled. Their missive was from Sir Keegan, not Lord Padraig. If they bring this up to the lord of Winterhaven, he is also puzzled by the revelation. He sent a message out at great personal expense, and he has not spoken to Sir Keegan about the local problems. As far as Padraig knows, the skeletal knight is forever confined to his tomb under the Keep on the Shadowfell and has no knowledge of Winterhaven's current problems.

Lord Padraig is not above begging and using guilt to gain the PCs' aid against the Winter Witch. He's downright scared for his own life and his people's very existence. If nothing else persuades the PCs to help, he'll go so far as to bequeath Winterhaven to the PCs—he'll abdicate his title and proclaim the PCs the lords of Winterhaven if that is what it takes to save it.

WHAT HAPPENED TO LORD PADRAIG'S LETTER?

Lord Padraig's letter was intercepted by Sir Dzak, and the death knight still carries it. It's just a simple plea for summons, similar to Sir Keegan's letter, but it goes into more detail about the nature of the threat.

PC KNOWLEDGE OF THE WINTER WITCH

Although the tales of the Winter Witch are obscure and somewhat regional in nature, as epic-level characters, the PCs might have knowledge of her. Have the PCs make an Arcana check.

Arcana DC 25: *The Winter Witch is a particularly malicious and terrible archfey also called Koliada. One of the Winter Fey (see Manual of the Planes™, page 37), she pursues a crusade into the mortal world every century or so that starts with an enduring winter. Some say her ultimate goal is to freeze the world, or to carve off frozen parts that she conquers into the Feywild.*

Arcana DC 30: *Conjecture abounds on the true nature of Koliada the Winter Witch. Some claim that she's merely one of many forms taken by the Prince of Frost; other stories tout her as his queen, his daughter, or his sister. Some of the stranger tales claim more than one of these relations or even all of them. Such are the ways of the fey.*

Arcana DC 35: *As an archfey, Koliada can be destroyed only by her nemesis. Each nemesis is particular to one archfey. Often, a nemesis is an item, although sometimes it is another kind of agent of doom.*

OTHER STORIES

Lord Pdraig isn't the only person in Winterhaven with knowledge about the Winter Witch. PCs can gain more knowledge by visiting old acquaintances Valthrun the Prescient and Eilian the Old, as well as the only survivor from the initial assault on the Vesk settlement: Lauran Vesk.

VALTHRUN THE PRESCIENT

Winterhaven's local sage and practitioner of rituals and other arcana knows a good deal about the Winter Witch, including what he believes is her true name.

The Winter Witch is a fey, part of the court of the Winter Fey, and the mistress of the Prince of Frost. Called Koliada by her people, she is cold and deadly, and she wants to cover the world in ice. If she is not stopped, this strange winter will expand farther south and east. Soon it will affect Fallcrest and the lands beyond.

EILIAN THE OLD

Winterhaven's resident amateur historian has not fared well during the long and cold winter brought on by the Winter Witch's onslaught. Suffering from coughs and fevers, the old man is on death's door. A successful use of the Remove Affliction ritual eases Eilian's suffering and helps ensure that he survives the current cold snap. It also makes him lucid enough to give the PCs the following information.

I remember my grandfather used to tell stories about the Winter Witch. Her last cold march was when he was just a lad. He told me that the last knights of Nerath, armed with a sliver of the sun, pushed her back to her domain of Winter's Heart. Now that I think about it, I think he said that Sir Keegan, when he was a page, accompanied one of those knights.

LAURAN VESK

The only survivor of the Winter Witch's assault on her family's settlement, this teenage girl can tell the PCs the following about the archfey.

She is a cruel and malicious hag who laughed as she sealed my kin in their frozen tombs. She commanded icy imps and trolls, and she rode a white dragon.

DEVELOPMENT

After gaining whatever information they can in Winterhaven, the PCs have only a few options. They could check out the Vesk settlement, but little is to be found there except ruins and the frozen remains of the Vesk family and the Winterhaven Regulars. More likely, the PCs want to talk to Sir Keegan. In that case, continue on to "Part Two: Return to the Keep on the Shadowfell."

PART TWO: RETURN TO THE KEEP ON THE SHADOWFELL

Eventually, the PCs might want to talk with Sir Keegan about his cryptic letter. It doesn't take them long to reach the ruined keep, and, when they do, a figure steps out from the shadows.

OUTSIDE THE KEEP

When the PCs approach the keep's ruins, they are greeted by a skeletal knight in plate armor.

From the ruined tower that serves as the main entrance to the keep's lower works, a skeletal knight in plate armor steps out of the shadows. He calls out in a raspy voice, "Old friends, I am glad you have heeded my call. Times are dire and I find that I need your help again."

This creature masquerading as Keegan is a death knight named Sir Dzrak—an undead servant of Orcus, and part of a group of the demon prince's servants sent here to gain intelligence about the Sun's Sliver from the skeletal knight who haunts the keep.

Dzrak's plan is simple—pretend to be Sir Keegan and lead the PCs astray. He does so by telling them the following.

This long and strange winter is the work of a mad wizard named Veira Rimefire, who is even now hiding in Gloomwrought, which is a port in the Shadowfell. She has stolen a seal that once locked a portal connecting the mountains of the north to the frozen tundra of the Feywild. Only by recovering the seal and using it to lock the portal can this winter finally end. I beseech you to go to Gloomwrought, find Veira, recover the seal, and bring it back here. Once you do, I'll guide you toward the next challenge of this quest.

If the PCs ask him about Koliada the Winter Witch, he tells them the following:

Veira is a tricky and powerful mage. I would not be surprised if this Winter Witch is a guise she uses to wreak havoc on the world, or a strange fey that she has bound to her wicked cause.



The false Sir Keegan takes any further questions with a calm ease. The conversation with him is actually a skill challenge. If the PCs succeed, the tactical encounter begins. A failure probably results in the PCs heading to Gloomwrought (page 29).

Skill Challenge: SC1: Piercing Dzrak's Ruse (page 33).

Tactical Encounter: K1: Duplicitous Death Knight (page 34).

SIR KEEGAN'S TOMB

If the PCs uncover Dzrak's ruse and move deeper into the ruins of the keep, they find that the death knight isn't the only minion of Orcus in the lower works. Although they have already received key information from the cursed curator of the Keep on the Shadowfell, a flameskull and two demons are still interrogating Sir Keegan in his old tomb. See the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: K2: Harsh Interrogation (page 39).

SIDE TREK: GLOOMWROUGHT

If the PCs are fooled by the false Sir Keegan, they are led on a wild goose chase in Gloomwrought.

The PCs can travel to Gloomwrought in a variety of ways, but the easiest is by the many teleportation circles that exist in the port. Once the PCs arrive in Gloomwrought, they start a skill challenge to find Veira Rimefire. If they succeed, they learn that Veira is a relatively minor mage who is buried in a forsaken cemetery outside town. More importantly, they learn that this appears to be a false lead. If they fail the skill challenge, they learn this information once they find Veira's grave and deal with the undead monstrosity that haunts the graveyard.

GLOOMWROUGHT

Village, Population Approximately 12,600

A dismal and crowded seaport on the Stormy Sea, this mist-shrouded metropolis is both bleak and foreboding, but it serves as one of the safest ports in the Shadowfell. It will be difficult to find Veira Rimefire in this place, since its inhabitants are known for their tight-lipped caution and secretive plots.

This creepy Shadowfell port is dark and dank, but it is hospitable when compared to the rest of this shadowy plane. It sits on the shore of a dark, foreboding sea, amid a group of inland bogs called the Skins.

Full information on Gloomwrought is found in the *Manual of the Planes* (pages 58 to 59), but playing it up as creepy, cagey, and crowded will do for this side trek. Traversing the village and interacting with its citizens is a skill challenge done over the course of at least a couple of days.

Skill Challenge: SC2: Finding Veira Rimefire (page 40).

BLACKEARTH CEMETERY

If the PCs fail the skill challenge, they are led to Blackearth Cemetery, the last known hideout of Veira Rimefire. A wizard and petty thief, Veira once used the cemetery as a hideout, but now she is buried there.

Getting to the cemetery is a two-day barge trip through the Skins, which are the treacherous bogs around Gloomwrought. Once there, it is easy to find Veira—or her grave. If the PCs try to dig up the grave to look for further clues, they are attacked by the desecration that guards the place.

Tactical Encounter: G1: The Cemetery (page 41).

PART THREE: MONASTERY OF ST. ALABAT

With the information gained from Sir Keegan or other sources, the PCs should make their way to the ruined monastery of St. Alabat in the Dawnforge Mountains to recover the *Sun's Sliver*.

If Sir Dzrak tricked the PCs into searching for Veira Rimefire in Gloomwrought and the PCs took more than six days to discover that the quest was a diversion, they find St. Alabat empty except for the remains of a great battle between the angel Remliel and the forces of Orcus. The seal is broken, and the *Sun's Sliver* is gone. Although you might want construct a great chase for the *Sun's Sliver* where the PCs enter the Abyss to retrieve it, that's beyond the scope of this adventure. Without the *Sun's Sliver*, the PCs can go on to the Scourge Mountains, enter Koliada's domain, and even face her at Winter's Heart, but any victory will be temporary. They can banish Koliada for a period of time, but they cannot destroy her.

If the PCs weren't fooled by the death knight or didn't tarry long in Gloomwrought, the forces of Orcus are here and are just about to break open the seal.

Orcus's chief agent in this matter is a sorrowsworn renegade named Morthalat. By the time the PCs arrive, Morthalat and his minions—a rag-tag group of undead and planar renegades—have been attempting for days to open the seal binding Remliel and the *Sun's Sliver*, but with little luck. To aid their endeavors, they've just activated the *Engine of Lum*—an unstable magic device that channels a dangerous form of eldritch energy from the Far Realm. The *Engine* disrupts the seals and wards of divine, primal, and arcane nature.

THE APPROACH

The only way to reach St. Alabat is by way of a winding trail up a rugged and windswept section of the Dawnforge Mountains. When the PCs reach the monastery, they find the scene described in the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: M1: Deathwatch at Ravensroost (page 42).

THE RUINS

The ruins of St. Alabat are across the bridge, on the side of the mountain atop a large ledge. Just outside the sundered monastery walls is a flat area where a group of Morthalat's cronies waits among the snow and trees for any interference in their master's plans (see "M1: Deathwatch at Ravensroost," page 42).

The roofless monastery is long abandoned, and the upper works have collapsed to expose the lower area and the seal of Remliel to the elements. Morthalat is at work in this area, using the *Engine of Lum* to pry open the seal.

Tactical Encounter: M2: Morthalat's Endgame (page 45).

ST. ALABAT'S LAST SECRET

On the southeast tower of St. Alabat, behind a copse of pines, is a secret door. Originally designed as a hidden exit from the monastery, its existence is long forgotten. It takes a successful DC 27 Perception check to find the hidden door. The door can be opened with a DC 30 Thievery check or it can be broken down (AC 4; Reflex 4, Fortitude 24; hp 80), since the magic key that opened it was lost when the monastery fell.

If this secret door is breached, or if an attempt to open it with the Thievery skill fails by 5 or more, the tampering triggers inert guardians: a pair of stormstone golems. The constructs then move to attack all intruders, including the forces of Orcus, but starting with the creature that breached the secret door.

2 Stormstone Golems (G) Level 21 Elite Soldier

Large natural animate (construct) XP 6,400

Initiative +11 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

Stormstone Aura (Lightning) aura 2; any creature that starts its turn in the aura take 10 lightning damage.

HP 406; **Bloodied** 203; see also *death burst*

AC 37; **Fortitude** 35, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 27

Immune disease, poison, sleep

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6; can't shift

Action Points 1

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +28 vs. AC; 3d6 + 9 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The stormstone golem makes two slam attacks.

⊕ **Golem Rampage** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂ)

The stormstone golem moves up to its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.

⚡ **Death Burst** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ⚡ **Lightning**

The stormstone golem explodes in a burst of jagged stones and lightning. Close burst 1; +28 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 lightning damage, and the space it occupied is difficult terrain until cleared.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 26 (+18) **Dex** 7 (+8) **Wis** 8 (+9)

Con 27 (+18) **Int** 3 (+6) **Cha** 3 (+6)



PART FOUR: ATOP THE SCOURGE MOUNTAINS

Either with the *Sun's Sliver* or without it, the PCs are urged by Sir Keegan or Lord Padraig to go on to confront the Winter Witch. Even if they cannot defeat the archfey once and for all, they can at least end her assault on the world.

Either through Sir Keegan or their own research, the PCs can find that the Winter Witch enters the world through a fey passage located atop a peak called Crone's Finger among the northernmost Scourge Mountains. The crossing, which directly links Koliada's domains with the world, occurs only during the coldest of winters, when a glacial shelf is formed from Crone's Finger. Then a circle of blue ice menhirs forms on the shelf, allowing Koliada and her minions to pass through easily.

To use the blue ice menhirs to pass into the Feywild, the PCs need to use the Fey Passage ritual (from *Manual of the Planes*, page 150, and reprinted below). If they don't already have access to the ritual, they can gain it either by way of Valthrun the Prescient in Winterhaven or by trading with the peaceful eladrin enclave located in the Scourge Mountains.

FEY PASSAGE

You open a path marked by standing stones, allowing you and your allies to step into the Feywild.

Level: 6	Component Cost: 140 gp
Category: Travel	(see below)
Time: 10 minutes	Market Price: 360 gp
Duration: Instantaneous	Key Skill: Arcana or Nature (no check)

Use this ritual at a fey crossing. When you perform this ritual, you transport yourself and up to eight allies from the world to a corresponding location in the Feywild, or from the Feywild to a corresponding location in the world. The fey crossing need not be active for Fey Passage to work.

You remain in the Feywild until you leave by another means or you perform this ritual again at a fey crossing.

Special: Eladrin have a special connection to the Feywild. Consequently, an eladrin who has mastered this ritual or performs it from a scroll does not pay the component cost.

CLIMBING CRONE'S FINGER

Though a difficult task and rather slow going, the PCs face no real challenge climbing up the mountain to the glacial shelf. Once the PCs reach the foot of the mountain, it takes the entire day before they deal with the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: S1: Frozen Passage (page 49).

KURIKVEAERI'S LAIR

PCs might want to search for Kurikveaeri's lair after they defeat the dragon. The adventure assumes that searching for the lair and finding its treasure is relatively easy, but you could expand it to a more difficult challenge, and in doing so expand the size of the white dragon's hoard.



PART FIVE: WINTER'S HEART

Once the PCs use the blue ice menhirs to cross over to Feywild, they find a broad bitter expanse of eerily cold snow and ice. PCs with the aid of an Endure Elements ritual do not suffer any ill effects from the frozen climate, but those without must make a successful DC 26 Endurance check every 8 hours or lose a healing surge that does not come back with an extended rest, unless that rest is taken in a warm and comfortable place.

The landscape of this place is bitter and desolate. The only creatures the PCs can see are the fields of frozen bodies. These innocents were touched by the Winter Witch, and they line the path to her palace, Winter's Heart.

It takes the PCs two days of travel to reach Winter's Heart. The path to the icy palace is a long ice bridge over a turbulent sea of cold water and floating ice.

Tactical Encounter: W1: Orchard of Deadly Chills (page 52).

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure ends with the defeat of the Winter Witch. If the PCs used the *Sun's Sliver* to destroy the Winter Witch, the artifact is destroyed with her, and the world is free from her threat once and for all.

If the PCs didn't retrieve the *Sun's Sliver*, or if they could not destroy Koliada with it, the Winter Witch rises again to threaten the world, but maybe not in the PCs' lifetime. The PCs might be interested in regaining the *Sun's Sliver* from Orcus so that he cannot corrupt the item. If the PCs still have the *Sun's Sliver*, they might want to find a way to hide it and keep it safe for the next generation to use to fight the Winter Witch.

The people of Winterhaven and especially Sir Keegan are greatly relieved by the PCs' success, and they celebrate the PCs as twice the saviors of Winterhaven.

Defeating the Winter Witch does not go unnoticed beyond the world. It might bring the ire of both the Prince of Frost and Orcus, but such are the matters of further epic adventures.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: ORIGINS OF KOLIADA

When I was first assigned a fey-themed epic adventure, my first idea was to have Baba Yaga as the villain. This idea was influenced by the fact that I was making my way through the *Hellboy* trade paperbacks at the time, and Baba Yaga is an absolutely frightful baddy in those comics. That inclination was eventually tempered by the fact that I didn't think I had room to do Baba Yaga justice, so I decided to make something new. I wanted a name that was still connected to folklore, and in my research found a minor Slavic deity

of winter named Koliada. I picked her because I like the name and because she is tangentially related to Christmas, which is my birthday. It's true, sometimes designers make obscure or whimsical decisions, and naming the villain Koliada was mine. My apologies go out to the mythological Koliada. I'm sure you would never do the terrible things the archfey in the adventure is trying to accomplish.

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

SCI: PIERCING DZRAK'S RUSE

Encounter Level 22 (4,150 XP)

SETUP

While the PCs are conversing with the disguised death knight, they are engaging in a secret skill challenge. Perceptive PCs have clues that they can piece together to help them realize that they are being deceived.

If the PCs discover Dszak's ruse or attack the death knight, start the tactical encounter.

Tactical Encounter: K1: Duplicitous Death Knight (page 34).

If they are deceived by Dszak and decide to go on to Gloomwrought, go to "SC2: Finding Veira Rimefire" (page 40).

PIERCING DRZAK'S RUSE

By recalling their last meeting with Sir Keegan and noticing some abnormalities around the meeting place, the PCs learn that this undead knight is not the creature he claims to be.

Level: 22 (XP 4,150)

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Insight, Perception.

Insight (DC 25): Although he is a charismatic and skilled manipulator, Drzak is telling a number of boldfaced lies, and each successful Insight check picks up on a lie and earns 1 success. If the character remembers that Sir Keegan cannot leave his tomb and questions Drzak about that detail, the death knight makes a feeble excuse, but the PC earns 2 successes for making the connection.

Perception (DC 25): There are many inconsistencies a character can notice with a successful Perception check. First, he or she can spot the bones sticking out from the snow here and there (Drzak's Risenguard minions); second, he or she can notice that Drzak is left handed, and Keegan was right handed; finally, he or she can notice differences in bone structure between Keegan and Drzak. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this challenge.

Secondary Skill: Religion.

Religion (DC 29): A character notices that the undead knight radiates an aura similar to that of a death knight. This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge.

Success: If the characters earn 4 successes, they are certain that this undead knight is not Sir Keegan.

Failure: If the characters earn 3 failures, they are certain that they are speaking to Sir Keegan, although they might suspect he is hiding something.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: CHALLENGES OF EPIC ADVENTURE DESIGN

Designing an epic level adventure out of whole cloth has its challenges. I believe there are a few essential ingredients every epic adventure needs. The first is a grandness of scope. The characters have to go up against a far-reaching threat with the potential to do drastic harm if the characters fail. Second, the challenges should be really difficult. This means taking off the kid gloves when designing encounters. Lastly—and this is the difficult part—it must engage the characters (and thus the players) on a personal level. In home campaign or an adventure path, this is easy to accomplish. You've accumulated a wealth of history of character and NPC interaction, and can find the right strings to tug to create personal investment. On the other hand, a stand-alone adventure has to give advice on how to

tie it into a story with details the adventure's designer has no way of knowing.

So I cheated.

I figured a large number of campaigns would launch with *Keep on the Shadowfell*". It's also a memorable adventure with a number of interesting and iconic NPCs whom I could borrow and use. So "Winter of the Witch" brings the PCs back to Winterhaven, where they have to save those people (and all of the Nentir Vale) from a new and vastly more destructive evil. Of course my cheaty trick doesn't work if you campaign didn't start in Winterhaven, so I made sure to explain what I was doing in the "Customizing this Adventure."

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

KI: DUPLICITOUS DEATH KNIGHT

Encounter Level 24 (34,070 XP)

SETUP

2 tormenting ghosts (G)
15 Riseguard of Dzak (R)
False Sir Keegan (Dzak the death knight) (D)

This encounter takes place as the PCs approach the upper works of the Keep on the Shadowfell. Sir Dzak, a death knight in the service of Orcus, masquerades as Sir Keegan and attempts to trick the PCs into following another course. If his subterfuge is detected, he attacks.

Dzak starts combat by calling forth his minions. Some of the death knight's minions rise from the snow-covered ground (the bones in the snow that the PCs have a chance of spotting) or move forward from hidden positions within the ruins of the keep.

TACTICS

Sir Dzak strides forward arrogantly though the battle, supporting his troops with his aura and *unholy flames*. He seeks out those worthy of his attention—usually a defender, most definitely a paladin of Pelor or the Raven Queen—and he calls out a challenge for them to battle him one on one. Of course he is not as honorable as calling out such a challenge makes him seem. He has no problem making opportunity attacks against soft targets, and his real goal is to keep the defender busy as his Riseguard and ghosts assault the PCs' controller and leader characters.

The pair of tormenting ghosts focus their attacks on a controller or on flying enemies. If tactically prudent, they split up, attacking both the controller and the PCs' leader.

The group of Riseguard stationed within the ruins push forward and move into position to pepper their enemies with arrows—preferably through the arrow slits. Those hidden in the snow rise to face the PCs in melee and work to give their fellow minions and their master opportunities to flank.

DEVELOPMENT

Sir Dzak does not yield and does not talk if the PCs find a way to capture him. Unlike most death knights, Sir Dzak has a phylactery that works exactly like a lich's. It is in the possession of his dread lord. He knows that his service to Orcus is too important for his destruction to be permanent.

If the PCs discover Sir Dzak's ruse and defeat the death knight and his minions, they can proceed into the lower works of the keep toward Sir Keegan's tomb.

If the PCs search the area for clues, a character who makes a successful DC 22 Perception check discovers a strange green scale close to the entrance of the lower works. A successful DC 20 Arcana check reveals it as the scale of a marilith—a six-armed demon that is a master of swordplay.

False Sir Keegan/ Sir Drzak (D)		Level 24 Elite Soldier (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 12,100	
Initiative +16		Senses Perception +11; darkvision	
Marshal Undead aura 10; every undead ally of a level lower than Sir Drzak that is within the aura gains a +2 bonus to its attack rolls.			
AC 40; Fortitude 36, Reflex 36, Will 36			
HP 440; Bloodied 220; see also <i>second wind</i>			
Immune disease, fear, poison; Resist 15 necrotic;			
Vulnerable 15 radiant			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 6, fly 6			
Action Points 1			
⊕ Soulsword (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic, Weapon +30 vs. AC; 2d12 + 18 damage plus 10 necrotic damage (crit 3d6 + 42 damage plus 10 necrotic damage).			
⊕ Icy Death Strike (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic, Weapon Requires soulsword; +23 vs. AC; 2d12 + 18 plus 10 necrotic and cold damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).			
⊕ Warrior's Challenge (standard; encounter) ⊕ Necrotic, Weapon Requires soulsword; +23 vs. AC; 3d12 + 18 plus 10 necrotic damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares. All enemies within 2 squares of the target are marked until the end of the death knight's next turn.			
⊕ Unholy Flames (standard; recharge ☹️; ☹️) ⊕ Fire, Necrotic Close burst 2; +19 vs. Reflex; 6d10 + 18 fire and necrotic damage to living creatures. Undead creatures within the burst (including the death knight) deal 3d8 extra fire damage with melee attacks until the end of the death knight's next turn.			
Combat Challenge Every time the death knight attacks an enemy, whether that attack hits or misses, the death knight marks the target. The mark lasts until the end of the death knight's next turn. In addition, whenever an enemy adjacent to the death knight shifts, the death knight makes a melee basic attack against that enemy as an immediate interrupt.			
Indestructible When Sir Drzak drops to 0 hit points, his body and possessions crumble into dust, but he is not destroyed. He reappears (along with its possessions) in 1d10 days within 1 square of his phylactery, unless the phylactery is also found and destroyed.			
Second Wind (standard; encounter) ⊕ Healing The death knight spends a healing surge and regains 110 hit points. The death knight gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.			
Alignment Evil		Languages Abyssal, Common	
Skills Bluff +20			
Str 24 (+19)	Dex 15 (+14)	Wis 11 (+12)	
Con 20 (+17)	Int 13 (+13)	Cha 17 (+15)	
Equipment plate armor, light shield, soulsword (longsword), Sir Padraig's letter to the PCs			

15 Risenguard of Drzak (R) **Level 22 Minion**

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 1,038 each

Death's Icy Grasp aura 1; any living creature that starts its turn in the aura takes 5 cold damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn.**Initiative** +11 **Senses** Perception +11; darkvision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 25; **Fortitude** 25, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 22**Resist** 15 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 10 radiant**Speed** 8⚔ **Fullblade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+24 vs. AC; 13 damage (crit 16 damage).🏹 **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +24 vs. AC; 13 damage.**Alignment** Evil **Languages** Supernal**Str** 21 (+16) **Dex** 20 (+16) **Wis** 17 (+14)**Con** 18 (+15) **Int** 10 (+11) **Cha** 8 (+10)**Equipment** plate armor, fullblade, longbow, 20 arrows**2 Tormenting Ghosts (G)** **Level 21 Controller**

Medium shadow humanoid (undead) XP 3,200 each

Initiative +19 **Senses** Perception +17; darkvision**HP** 152; **Bloodied** 76**AC** 32; **Fortitude** 30, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 32**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial**Speed** fly 6 (hover); phasing⚡ **Spirit Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
+24 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 9 necrotic damage.† **Ghostly Possession** (standard; recharge ⏳) ♦ **Charm**Target must be a living humanoid; +24 vs. Will; the tormenting ghost enters the target's space and is removed from play, and the target is dominated (save ends). The tormenting ghost can use this power against only one creature at a time. When the target is no longer dominated, or when the tormenting ghost chooses to end its *ghostly possession* (a free action), the ghost reappears in a square adjacent to the target.⚡ **Burst of Terror** (standard; recharge ⏳) ♦ **Fear**, **Necrotic**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 1d8 + 9 necrotic damage, the target is pushed 5 squares, and the target is dazed and immobilized (save ends both).

✖ **Ghostly Terrain** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Zone**

Area burst 1 within 10; the area is filled with ghostly lights, wisps of necrotic mist, and the faint whispers of the dead. The zone is difficult terrain and is lightly obscured. Any creature that enters or ends its turn in the zone is immobilized (save ends). The zone lasts until the end of the encounter or for 5 minutes.

Spectral Shift (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The tormenting ghost shifts 3 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Stealth +24**Str** 11 (+10) **Dex** 28 (+19) **Wis** 14 (+12)**Con** 20 (+15) **Int** 12 (+11) **Cha** 25 (+17)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The light depends on the time of day.**Boulder:** The squares occupied by the boulder on the far side of the tower ruins cost 4 squares to enter instead of the normal 2, but creatures adjacent to the boulder can gain cover from it from enemies on the other side of the boulder.**Cliffs:** The 20-foot-tall cliff faces are sheer and slippery. It takes a successful DC 30 Athletics check to climb them.**Cliff Side Rock Falls:** Areas of the cliff sides that are difficult terrain because of the rock fall cost 4 squares to enter instead of the usual 2 squares due to the slick and steep conditions.**Sacred Circle:** The circle is an artifact from when the tower defended this section of the valley, and creatures within the circle gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls.**Tower Rubble:** The difficult terrain near the tower entrance is standard—it costs 2 squares to enter.

K2: HARSH INTERROGATION

Encounter Level 23 (28,350 XP)

SETUP

1 glabrezu (G)
1 marilith (M)
1 great flameskull (F)

As the PCs approach Sir Keegan's tomb, they can hear a commotion coming from up ahead.

Before the PCs reach the encounter area, read the following:

High-pitched, maniacal laughter echoes from a point deeper in the lower works of the keep, in the direction of Sir Keegan's tomb. After the laughter, the same high voice utters something that's hard to make out.

PCs succeeding at a DC 28 Perception check make out what the voice is saying:

"This has all been very entertaining, Keegan, but I believe you have outlived your usefulness. Prepare to meet oblivion."

You can't be sure, but you think you hear a weak voice whisper "Thank you" in response.

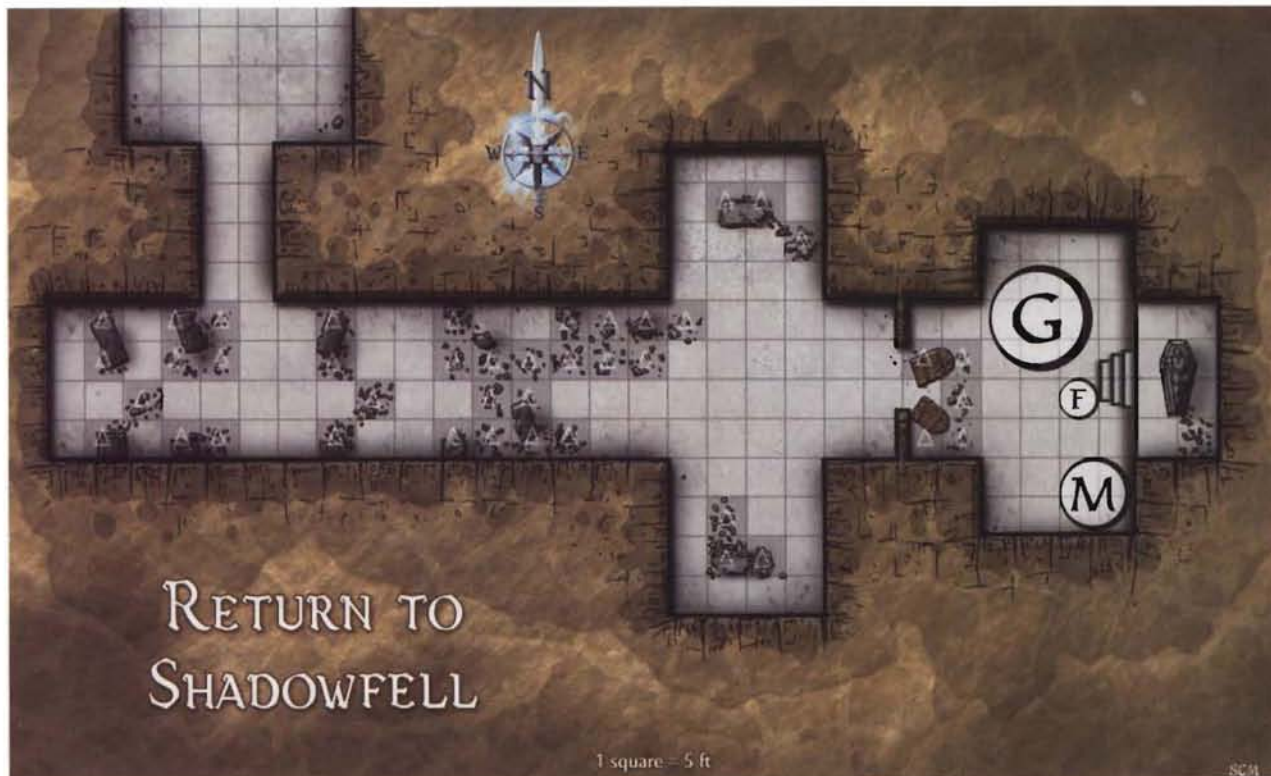
From their location, it takes the PCs scant seconds to reach the encounter area, and when they do, they find the shrine to Bahamut and Sir Keegan's tomb in utter shambles. The agents of Orcus have demolished the place and desecrated the iconography dedicated to the Platinum Dragon. As the PCs enter, they see a flameskull, a marilith, and an enormous glabrezu about to finish off the undead knight.

TACTICS

Once the demons and the flameskull realize they are not alone, they move into action to take on the PCs. The glabrezu squeezes through the tomb's entrance and into melee with the PCs. The marilith snakes around, using its *weapon dance* if necessary, to place itself in a tactical position where it can attack as many PCs as possible. The great flameskull—the leader of this grim operation—stays behind its wall of demons, targeting the PCs with its *flame ray* and *firestorm* from a distance.

Glabrezu (G)	Level 23 Elite Brute
Huge elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 10,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +18; truesight 6
HP 520; Bloodied 260; see also <i>arcane fury</i>	
AC 39; Fortitude 42, Reflex 37, Will 37	
Resist 20 variable (3/encounter; see glossary)	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8, fly 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Pincer Claw (standard; at-will)	Reach 3; +26 vs. AC; 2d8 + 8 damage.
⊕ Double Attack (standard; at-will)	The glabrezu makes two pincer claw attacks. If both claws hit the same target, the target is grabbed (until escape) if the glabrezu so chooses.
↗ Abyssal Bolt (minor; at-will)	Ranged 10; +24 vs. Reflex; 3d4 + 7 damage.
↖ Blasphemous Word (minor; encounter) ⊕ Psychic	Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Will; 1d12 + 7 psychic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the glabrezu's next turn.
↖ Chaos Word (minor; recharge [1])	Close burst 5; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + 7 damage. This damage bypasses all resistances.
Arcane Fury (free, when first bloodied; encounter)	The glabrezu teleports 8 squares, recharges its <i>blasphemous word</i> and <i>chaos word</i> powers, and makes an <i>abyssal bolt</i> , <i>blasphemous word</i> , or <i>chaos word</i> attack.
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal, Common
Skills Arcana +23, Bluff +19, Intimidate +19	
Str 26 (+19)	Dex 17 (+14) Wis 14 (+13)
Con 20 (+16)	Int 24 (+18) Cha 16 (+14)

Marilith (M)	Level 24 Elite Skirmisher
Large elemental humanoid (demon)	XP 12,100
Initiative +22	Senses Perception +21; darkvision
HP 440; Bloodied 220	
AC 38 (42 when using <i>shroud of steel</i>); Fortitude 36, Reflex 35, Will 33	
Resist 20 variable (3/encounter)	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 8	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon	Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage (crit 6d10 + 29).
⊕ Hacking Blades (free, when an enemy adjacent to the marilith misses the marilith with a melee attack; at-will)	The marilith makes a scimitar attack against the enemy.
⊕ Shroud of Steel (standard; at-will)	The marilith makes two scimitar attacks and uses its other scimitars to parry incoming attacks, gaining a +4 bonus (+1 per scimitar) to AC until the start of its next turn.
⊕ Weapon Dance (standard; recharges when first bloodied)	The marilith makes six scimitar attacks. Each time it hits, the marilith shifts 1 square.
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Abyssal
Skills Bluff +23, Insight +21, Intimidate +23, Stealth +25	
Str 28 (+21)	Dex 26 (+20) Wis 19 (+16)
Con 20 (+17)	Int 14 (+14) Cha 22 (+18)
Equipment 6 scimitars	



Great Flameskull (F) Level 24 Artillery

Small natural animate (undead)

XP 6,050

Initiative +19 Senses Perception +22; truesight 6

HP 174; Bloodied 87

Regeneration 10

AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 39, Will 37

Immune disease, poison; Resist 20 fire, 10 necrotic;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed fly 10 (hover)

④ **Fiery Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

+26 vs. AC; 1d4 damage plus 2d6 fire damage.

↘ **Flame Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire

Ranged 20; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 fire damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the great flameskull's next turn.

✦ **Firestorm** (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire

Area burst 4 within 20; +27 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 10 fire damage. Miss: Half damage. The firestorm blocks line of sight, deals 10 fire damage to any creature that starts its turn in the area, and lasts until the end of the great flameskull's next turn. The great flameskull can exclude allies from the effect.

☞ **Mage Hand** (minor; at-will) ♦ Conjurat

As the wizard power *mage hand* (*Player's Handbook*, page 158).

Illumination

The great flameskull sheds bright light out to 5 squares, but it can reduce its brightness to dim light out to 2 squares as a free action.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, one other

Skills Stealth +24

Str 10 (+12)

Dex 25 (+19)

Wis 21 (+17)

Con 24 (+19)

Int 30 (+22)

Cha 28 (+21)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None.

Smashed Sarcophagi: The sarcophagi once held the undead remains of knights sharing Sir Keegan's curse, but the flameskull and the demons have toppled them, smashed them, and left bits of the skeletons' undead remains scattered on the floor, creating squares of difficult terrain.

Smashed Altars: The two altars that used to stand in the inner alcoves have also been smashed by the demons. What is left of them constitutes difficult terrain.

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs save Sir Keegan, they can question him about his summons, the Winter Witch, and the minions of Orcus that are swarming through the ruins above. If the PCs are fooled by Sir Dzrak and return here only after the minions of Orcus have destroyed the skeleton knight, they must wait a month for him to reanimate (at which point all could be lost) or gain the information with a successful use of a Speak with Dead ritual.

The following is the information Keegan can give the PCs.

Q: Why did you summon us here?

Winterhaven, the Nentir Vale, and the entire region are threatened. The Winter Witch has returned and if she has her way, she will bury the entire world in frost. You need to right another of my failures and stop her.

Q: How did you find out about the Winter Witch?

When I was a boy, I was squire to one of a group of knights sent by the empire to stop her last march. We were bold, strong, and armed with her nemesis—an artifact in the form of a mote of pure sunlight called the Sun's Sliver. But ultimately we failed. Though we forced her to flee the world and we put an end to her last winter, we did not slay her. Now you must succeed where we failed.

Q: How do we defeat the Winter Witch?

My order hid the Sun's Sliver, binding it under a powerful seal in a monastery that sits high in the Dawnforge Mountains. If you retrieve it and confront the Winter Witch in her lair, you can destroy her. But you must hurry, for I've failed you again. Agents of Orcus tricked me into revealing the location of the monastery and the seal. They are already one step ahead of you, and without the Sun's Sliver you can hope only to banish the Winter Witch. Her evil will come again.



Q: What do demons and undead have to do with this?

At first I was puzzled as to why the filth of Orcus would be interested in the Sun's Sliver and Koliada's cold march, but during his interrogation, the flameskull told me the reason. Not only does Orcus want to corrupt the holy artifact to his own use, he wants the Winter Witch to succeed in her goal of freezing the entire northlands. A great evil lies dormant in a lowland volcano south of here. A winter freeze would unlock it, or so the flameskull claimed.

As the last knight of his order, he knights each of the PCs, and teaches them the ritual they need to open the seal and retrieve the Sun's Sliver. He then gives them these final words of warning:

The seal is not the only defense protecting the Sun's Sliver. A mighty invoker bound an angel of prophecy along with the artifact. He must be defeated before you can gain the Sun's Sliver.

**BEHIND THE CURTAIN:
SIR KEEGAN'S
MYSTERIOUS NOTE**

Not long after "Winter of the Witch" was released, I received an email from a *Dungeon*® magazine reader who wanted to know how Sir Keegan—who is cursed and trapped under the Keep on the Shadowfell—was able to know about Koliada. I always find these kinds of questions to be both wondrous and a tad odd. There's no definitive answer. The real answer is "by whatever means you want." But for those who enjoy the narrative illusion, here's my take, a little after the fact.

Sometime after Kalarel was defeated, a bard named Cynan made his way to Winterhaven. His goal was to write an epic about the fall of Kalarel and the sealing of the gate to the Shadowfell. Cynan, a believer in preserving the true history of events (with only the necessary artistic flourishes), wanted to interview as many of the people affected by the events in and around Winterhaven as he could find. His investigations eventually led him to delve under the keep's ruins, where he found the crypt of Sir Keegan. Fascinated by the undead knight and intrigued by his story and the particulars of his curse, Cynan stayed with Keegan for a time, serving as the cursed knight's chronicler as well as his eyes and ears. It was Cynan who first reported to Keegan about the march of the Winter Witch, and it was Cynan whom Keegan tasked with writing and delivering his missive to the characters.

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

SC2: FINDING VEIRA RIMEFIRE

Encounter Level 24 (12,100 XP)

SETUP

Once the PCs reach Gloomwrought and begin their search for Veira, start the following skill challenge.

FINDING VEIRA RIMEFIRE

This skill challenge uses a variation on a group check (see *Dungeon Master's Guide 2*, page 85). Once each day, the characters can each attempt a single check toward the completion of the skill challenge. To gain a success in the challenge, the group must succeed on at least three primary skill checks during the course of the day. Not doing this accrues a failure. A secondary skill check can either augment another character's skill check or offer another character a second chance at a primary skill check, depending on the skill used. Making a secondary skill check counts as the one skill check a character can make each day.

The first few successes lead the characters to people who have known Veira. These informants haven't seen the wizards in years, and don't remember her as being particularly powerful (not powerful enough to blanket a section of the world in winter's cold, anyhow), but they know she dabbles in frost magic and is unscrupulous enough to ally with dark powers. Each of these contacts gives the characters enough information to continue with their search. The third success toward the skill challenge leads the characters to the last person who saw Veira alive—a tiefling paladin of the Raven Queen named Wrath. Wrath tells the characters that Veira was nothing more than a petty criminal he brought to justice a few months ago. Wrath killed Veira when she tried to rob a group of pilgrims that he was protecting. The paladin is positive Veira could not be the Winter Witch. She did not possess the power, she is interred in Blackearth Cemetery, and her soul has moved on to the Raven Queen.

Level: 24 (XP 12,100)

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures), though taking six or more days searching for Veira Rimefire has its own failure consequences (see below).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, History, Streetwise.

Arcana (DC 24): By questioning local hedge wizards or bargaining with one of Gloomwrought's arcane cabals, the character gains a lead in the search for Veira.

Diplomacy (DC 29): The character's honeyed tongue elicits aid from a local magistrate or a curt point of the finger from one of the mysterious keepers, which keeps the pursuit going.

History (DC 29): By searching arrest records or gaining the aid of local sages, the character learns of some of Veira's local exploits.

Streetwise (DC 24): Dropping a few coins for drink in an alehouse or delivering a mysterious package for a shadar-kai merchant gains the character the name of someone who used to work with Veira.

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Insight, Intimidate, Perception.

Bluff (DC 24): The character aids his or her ally with deception and wordplay. The character grants the next ally who makes a primary skill check on the same day a +2 bonus to that check.

Insight (DC 29): The character notices something about a conversation that his or her ally missed, giving that ally the chance to prod further. The character allows an ally to reroll a single failed primary skill check made on the same day.

Intimidate (DC 16): The character's imposing presence encourages an informant to answer an ally's questions. The character grants the next ally who makes a primary skill check on the same day a +2 bonus to that check.

Perception (DC 29): The character spots something, turning a cold trail into a new opportunity. The character allows an ally to reroll a single failed primary skill check made on the same day.

Success: It becomes apparent that the search for Veira Rimefire is a dead end. If the characters take five days or fewer to complete the skill challenge, either by gaining three success or deciding it's a dead end, they'll have enough time to return to the Keep on the Shadowfell, gain important information from the remains of Sir Keegan using a Speak with Dead ritual, and reach the Monastery of St. Alabat before Orcus's agents open the seal and gain the *Sun's Sliver*.

Failure: Accumulating three failures leads the characters to Veira Rimefire's old hideout and current grave, the Blackearth Cemetery (see "G1: The Cemetery," page 41). The delay takes the characters at least three additional days out of their way. In the meantime, Morthalat and his band are able to open the seal (see "M2: Morthalat's Endgame," page 45), defeat Remliel, and gain the *Sun's Sliver*. The artifact is lost and the characters will have to confront Koliada without it.

If the characters take six or more days to complete the skill challenge, the *Sun's Sliver* is also lost.

G1: THE CEMETERY

Encounter Level 23 (25,500 XP)

SETUP

1 desecration

When the PCs try to dig up Veira's grave for further clues, read the following:

The ground rumbles, and the remains of those interred issue forth violently from the black dirt of the cemetery. The earth and corpses coalesce into an animate amalgamation. Once in its animate form, an unnatural voice rasps from the strange maw.

"Death to desecrators," it says, as it advances toward you.



Desecration

Level 23 Solo Controller

Gargantuan natural animate (earth, undead)

XP 25,500

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +14; darkvision

Aura of Malevolence (Fear) aura 10; any enemy within the aura that attacks with a radiant power takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

HP 1,075; Bloodied 538; see also *dark plague* and *second wind*

AC 39; Fortitude 38, Reflex 33, Will 37

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 radiant

Saving Throws +5

Speed 8

Action Points 2

⊕ **Unholy Smite** (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Reach 4; +28 vs. AC; 3d6 + 15 necrotic damage, and ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

The desecration makes two *unholy smite* attacks.

⊕ **Mouth of Darkness** (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Reach 4; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 15 necrotic damage, and the target is grabbed.

⚡ **Dark Plague** (when first bloodied and again when the desecration drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic

Close burst 20; targets enemies; +24 vs. Fortitude; the target is weakened (save ends). In addition, the target loses a healing surge. Miss: Half damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn. The target does not lose a healing surge.

Rejuvenation

A desecration rises at full hit points one day after it has been destroyed. Only a quest destroys the creature completely, preventing it from using the *rejuvenation* power.

Second Wind (standard; encounter) ♦ Healing

The desecration spends a healing surge and regains 269 hit points. The desecration gains a +2 bonus to all defenses until the start of its next turn.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages –

Str 26 (+19)

Dex 16 (+14)

Wis 16 (+14)

Con 23 (+17)

Int 10 (+11)

Cha 24 (+18)

TACTICS

As a relatively simple encounter, the fight has no encounter map. The desecration's goal is simple: to punish those who desecrated its graveyard. It typically lashes out with its *unholy smite* and *double attack*, reserving its *mouth of darkness* power for pesky strikers. It continues its assault until destroyed, following the PCs into the bog if need be.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The area's illumination depends on the time of day.

MI: DEATHWATCH AT RAVENSROOST

Encounter Level 26 (46,000 XP)

SETUP

- 1 death titan (T)
- 2 dread wraiths (W)
- 1 phane (P)

The PCs enter this area by way of a long, winding mountain trail that leads to the ruins. At the end of the trail, just shy of the ruins, is a black stone bridge that is somewhat obscured by mists creeping up from the chasm it spans.

When the PCs approach the bridge, read:

A black stone bridge stretches across a chasm and into the mists that swirl up from the breach. Just beyond, the silhouette of the broken monastery peeks through the mist. The bridge is mostly unadorned, but a pair of large raven-shaped statues crown the bridge's abutments, at this end at least. Atop the right-hand statue, a real raven—foreboding and impossibly black, with glowing red eyes—is perched.

The mists diffuse and obscure the light. Beyond it, a group of creatures serving the sorrowsworn Morthalat—a death titan, dread wraiths, and a phane—stand guard diligently, silent as the grave.

The ravens atop the abutments are shadowravens also in the service of Morthalat—part of the

shadow raven swarms that perch inside the ruined monastery. These ravens are here to serve as lookouts for activity coming across the bridge (although they're not particularly observant, since their passive Perception is 16). At the first sight of the PCs, they fly toward the monastery, cawing loudly, which sets Morthalat's underlings in motion (see "Tactics" below) and, if at least one of the ravens makes it into the monastery, it ultimately warns Morthalat that interlopers approach.

Shadowraven

Initiative +12 **Senses Perception** +6
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a shadowraven.
AC 39; **Fort** 37, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 16
Speed 2, 12 fly (hover)

Death Titan (T)

Level 25 Elite Brute

Huge shadow humanoid (giant) XP 14,000

Initiative +18 **Senses Perception** +20; darkvision
Soulburner aura 5; each enemy in the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and to all defenses; any creature that dies within the aura bestows one soul shard to the death titan (see *soul shroud*).

HP 574; **Bloodied** 287
AC 39; **Fortitude** 42, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 35
Resist 30 necrotic
Saving Throws +2
Speed 8
Action Points 1

⚔ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage (crit 6d8 + 26).

⚔ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
 The death titan makes two greataxe attacks.

☠ **Soul Devourer** (standard; recharge [ii]) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Ranged 5; +28 vs. Fortitude; the target loses a healing surge, and the death titan's soul shroud gains one soul shard. A target without healing surges takes damage equal to one-half its total hit points.

⚡ **Soulfire Burst** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Close burst 1; +26 vs. Reflex; 2d12 + 6 necrotic damage. The death titan must expend one soul shard to use this power.

⚔ **Consume Soul Shard** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Healing**
 The death titan expends one soul shard and regains 20 hit points.

Soul Shroud
 The *soul shroud* contains soul shards that swirl around the death titan to protect and empower it. At the beginning of an encounter, the *soul shroud* contains four soul shards. While the *soul shroud* is depleted of soul shards, the death titan takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Giant
Skills Intimidate +20
Str 31 (+22) **Dex** 23 (+18) **Wis** 17 (+15)
Con 27 (+20) **Int** 12 (+13) **Cha** 16 (+15)

Equipment plate armor, greataxe



TACTICS

Unless the PCs can successfully escape the notice of the shadowravens and sneak across the bridge (the phane's passive Perception is 25), the death titan moves up to cut off the path off the bridge, but stops short of squeezing onto it.

The dread wraiths dart out of the conifer copses and harry both the PCs on the bridge and any PCs who are using flight to bypass the death titan's choke point.

The phane keeps its distance for as long as the death titan is keeping the PCs at bay. It shoots its *wizening ray* at defenders engaged with the death titan, at controllers, and at leaders, in that order of priority.

The goal of these creatures is to stop the PCs from interrupting Morthalat's work within the monastery, and they pursue that goal to the death.

2 Dread Wraiths (W) Level 25 Lurker

Large shadow humanoid (undead) XP 7,000

Initiative +25 **Senses** Perception +18; darkvision

Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.

HP 124; **Bloodied** 62; see also *death shriek*

Regeneration 20 (if the dread wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of the wraith's next turn)

AC 37; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 37

Immune disease, fear, poison; **Resist** 30 necrotic, insubstantial; **Vulnerable** 15 radiant (see also *regeneration*, above)

Speed fly 10 (hover); phasing; see also *shadow glide*

⊕ **Dread Blade** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Necrotic**

Reach 2; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d10 + 9 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

⊖ **Death Shriek** (when reduced to 0 hit points) ⊕ **Psychic**

Close blast 3; targets enemies; +27 vs. Will; 4d6 + 9 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not dazed.

Combat Advantage ⊕ **Necrotic**

The dread wraith deals 3d6 extra necrotic damage against any target it has combat advantage against.

Shadow Glide (move; encounter)

The dread wraith shifts 6 squares.

Spawn Wraith

Any humanoid killed by a dread wraith rises as a free-willed dread wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the *Raise Dead* ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common

Skills Stealth +26

Str 18 (+16) **Dex** 28 (+21) **Wis** 12 (+13)

Con 20 (+17) **Int** 14 (+14) **Cha** 28 (+21)

Phane (P)

Level 26 Elite Controller

Large immortal magical beast

XP 18,000

Initiative +23 **Senses** Perception +25; darkvision

HP 478; **Bloodied** 239

AC 41; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 38

Resist insubstantial

Saving Throws +2

Speed 10, fly 10

Action Points 1

⊕ **Temporal Touch** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +29 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the phane's next turn. The phane shifts 4 squares before or after making this attack.

⊖ **Wizening Ray** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 9 damage, and the target is dazed and weakened (save ends both).

Aftereffect: The target is weakened (save ends). The target appears elderly until the effect of the *wizening ray* ends.

⊖ **Wizening Tempest** (standard, usable only while bloodied; at-will)

Close burst 1; phanes are immune; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 10 damage, and the target is stunned (save ends).

Aftereffect: The target is dazed and weakened (save ends both). The target appears elderly until the effect of the *wizening tempest* ends.

Temporal Fugue (minor; at-will)

By moving backward and forward in time, a phane can remove one effect afflicting it.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Supernal

Str 24 (+20) **Dex** 30 (+23) **Wis** 25 (+20)

Con 23 (+19) **Int** 28 (+22) **Cha** 22 (+19)

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: COULD I GET A DO-OVER?

One of the great advantages of having your adventure republished in an anthology is the chance to go back and make the adventure a little better. Since writing this adventure, skill challenge tech and innovation have grown exponentially. Because skill challenges are rather new and can be very dynamic, it's an exciting frontier of D&D game design. Like any frontier, casualties and calamities abound in the early stages. Looking back at my "Finding Veira Rimefire" challenge, I just shook my head and wondered what the heck I was thinking. I begged my editor to allow me to rewrite the challenge. I'm much happier with the challenge appearing in this version of the adventure.

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lighting depends on the time of day.

Bridge: This ancient bridge is not only physically sturdy, it is magically enhanced. It has the following statistics: AC 4; Fortitude 30; hp 400.

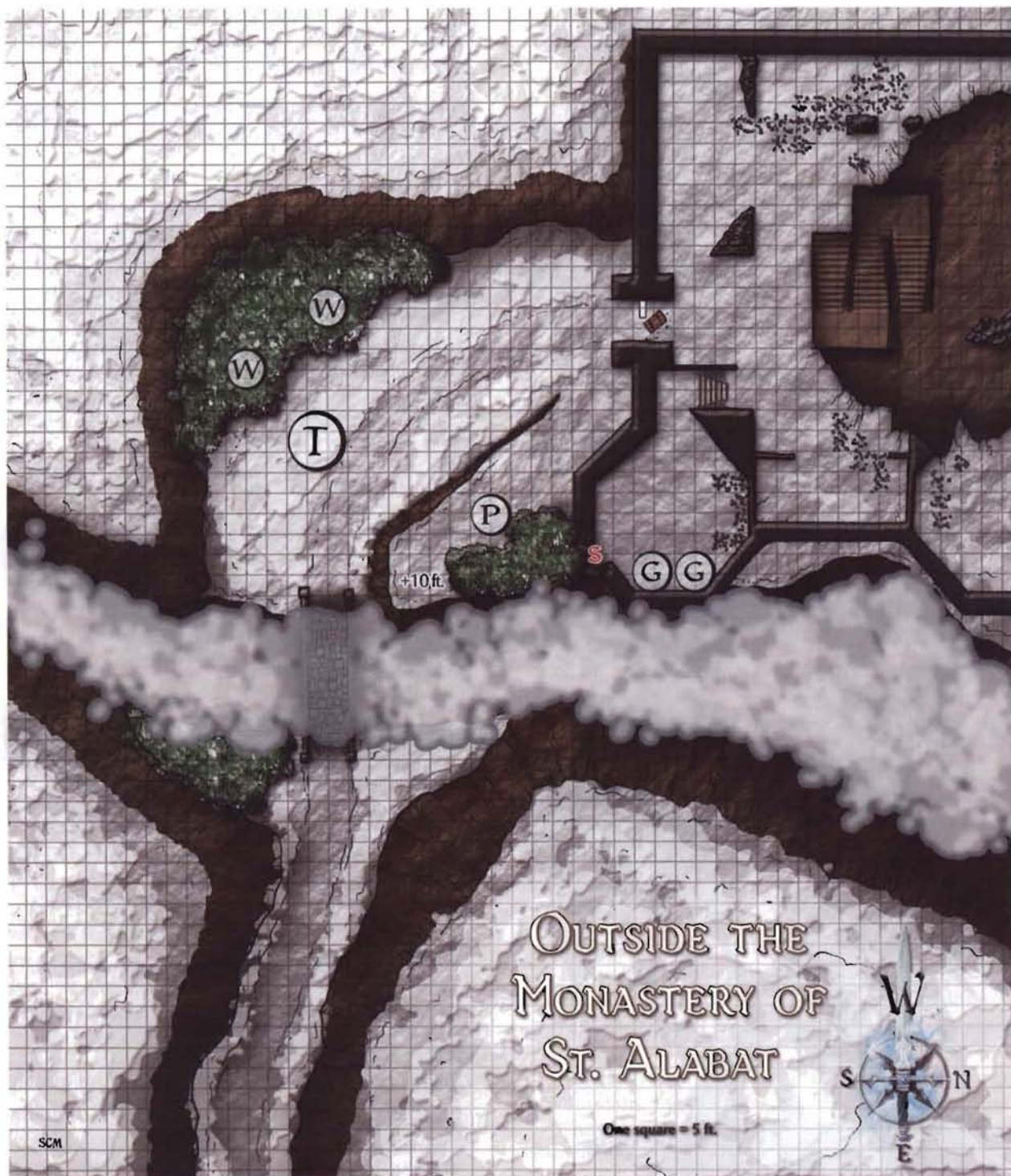
Chasm: A frozen mountain river winds its way 150 feet (30 squares) below the bridge.

Monastery's Front Door: The door has been burst open, and it offers no resistance to those seeking entrance to the inner ruins.

Secret Door: The secret door is difficult to spot (Perception DC 27) and must either be burst through (AC 4; Reflex 4; Fortitude 24; hp 80) or opened with a DC 30 Thievery check. Bursting through the door or failing the Thievery check by 5 or more rouses the two inert golems inside (see "St. Alabat's Last Secret," page 30).

Snow Drifts: The snow in the area is normal terrain; it is not deep enough to impede movement.

Trees: The trees are difficult terrain and grant cover.



OUTSIDE THE
MONASTERY OF
ST. ALABAT



One square = 5 ft.

M2: MORTHALAT'S ENDGAME

Encounter Level 26 (52,228 XP)

SETUP

6 tomb guardian thralls (T)

3 shadowraven swarms (S)

Morthalat, shadowsworn deathlord (M)

2 stormstone golems (G), if triggered by the previous encounter

As the PCs enter the area, the forces of Orcus are on the verge of victory. Even before they see what's going on, the PCs can hear the strange, whirling buzz of the *Engine of Lum*.

When the full area comes into the PCs' view, read the following:

Down the stairs, some 80 feet below, is a collapsed section of the monastery. At the far end of it, covering a large section of the floor, is a gargantuan seal made of stone and gold and etched with glowing, purple Supernal runes. At the far end of the room is a strange machine—a large, dark purple crystal lying on its side. Electric blue energy shoots from the crystal toward a series of four pylons positioned symmetrically around the seal. Held off the ground by ornate legs of matte black metal, the crystal is studded here and there with plates of the same black metal, which are adorned with knobs, buttons, switches, gyroscopes, levers, and other whirling devices. A winged humanoid, looking like a mixture of demon and undead, anxiously inspects the control panels on the machine.



The arcane energy shoots from the tip of the crystal toward a pylon made up of the strange black metal and a lesser crystal. From there, the energy swirls around the pylon before splitting into two streams, each shooting to a similar pylon beyond. The energy from those two meets again at a fourth pylon that sits opposite the first in the group encircling the seal.

After weeks of frustration, Morthalat is ecstatic that he has finally found the right settings on the outlandish and complicated *Engine of Lum* to break the tricky ward that stands between him and the Sun's Sliver. He becomes enraged when he sees a group of PCs who intend to stop him.

When Morthalat sees the PCs, read the following:

"Foolish and puny creatures of this world, do not interfere with the work of Orcus, or your bones will adorn the walls of Everlost."

DEVELOPMENT

If the PCs don't disrupt the *Engine of Lum*, it opens the seal on its seventh turn in the encounter, and Remliel bursts out of the ward and joins the fray (see "M3: Remliel," page 48). If the PCs disrupt the *Engine of Lum*, they can open the seal by using the ritual Sir Keegan gave them. These are the only two ways to open the seal.

THE ENGINE OF LUM

Though an artifact in its own right, one of the many creations of the legendary Lum the Mad, for the purposes of this adventure the *Engine of Lum* is presented as a piece of active terrain, with the following rules.

If you want, you can give out the *Engine of Lum* as treasure, but this strange and fickle artifact does not give out its secrets easily (and it has many) and figuring out what it can do and how to work the machine should be its own epic quest.

Engine of Lum

Initiative +22

On Its Turn most of the artifact's power is focused on breaking down the seal's defenses. After 7 turns, the engine completes its task.

HP 299; Bloodied 148

AC 39; Fortitude 37, Reflex 39, Will 36

◀ **Eldritch Feedback** (free action, when the engine or the pylons are attacked, or an attempt to disable the device with a *Thievery* check fails by 5 or more)

Close burst 3, centered on a square adjacent to the triggering creature; +33 vs. Reflex; 4d6 +8 lightning damage, and the target is stunned until the end of its next turn.

Countermeasures

Thievery (standard action): Success at a skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures) shuts down the device or a pylon, disrupting the engine.

Arcana (standard action): Success at a skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures) shuts down the machine by manipulating the controls on the main engine.

6 Tomb Guardian Thralls (T) **Level 22 Minion**

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 1,038

Initiative +19 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision
HP 1; a missed attack never damage a minion.
AC 34; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 34, **Will** 32
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant

Speed 8

⊕ **Twin Scimitar Strike** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 The skeletal tomb guardian makes two attacks against the same target: +25 vs. AC; 5 damage (crit 7 damage).

† **Cascade of Steel** (standard; at-will)

The skeletal tomb guardian makes two twin scimitar strike attacks (four attacks total).

† **Sudden Strike** (immediate reaction, when an enemy adjacent to the tomb guardian shifts; at-will)

The skeletal tomb guardian makes a twin scimitar strike attack against the enemy.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 26 (+19) **Dex** 27 (+19) **Wis** 19 (+15)**Con** 24 (+18) **Int** 3 (+7) **Cha** 3 (+7)**Equipment** 4 scimitars**3 Shadowraven Swarms (S)** **Level 27 Brute**

Medium shadow beast (swarm) XP 11,000

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision
Swarm Attack aura 1; the shadowraven swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against any enemy that begins its turn in the aura.

HP 296; **Bloodied** 148**AC** 39; **Fortitude** 37, **Reflex** 39, **Will** 36**Resist** half damage from melee and ranged attacks;**Vulnerable** 10 against close and area attacks**Speed** 2, fly 12 (hover)

⊕ **Swarm of Talons** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 +30 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 damage plus 1d8 necrotic damage.

† **Murder's Wrath** (standard, usable only while bloodied; encounter)

The shadowraven swarm shifts up to 6 squares and can move through enemy-occupied squares as it moves. It makes a melee basic attack against any creature whose space it enters. The swarm cannot attack a target more than once in this fashion, and it must end its movement in an unoccupied square.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 20 (+18) **Dex** 24 (+20) **Wis** 12 (+14)**Con** 16 (+16) **Int** 2 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+17)

TACTICS

When the tomb guardian thrall at the top of the stairs spots the PCs, it makes enough commotion to warn its fellow farther down the stairs, and that warning then spreads to the others. The group clamors up the stairs to confront the threat, aided by the shadowraven swarms perched among rocks in the area's periphery.

Morthalat does not enter combat at first. He hangs back to protect the *Engine of Lum*. He knows he is close to breaking the seal, and he wants to see the job through. If the PCs approach the machine, he flies over the seal and the energy produced by the Engine to confront the PCs, using his *reap and fade* power to harry their approach.

Morthalat (M) **Level 28 Lurker (Leader)**

Large shadow humanoid XP 13,000

Initiative +31 **Senses** Perception +26; darkvision
Mournful Whispers aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is dazed until the start of its next turn.
HP 204; **Bloodied** 102

AC 42; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 41, **Will** 38**Speed** 8, fly 10 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Dark Scythe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Psychic, Weapon**

Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d10 + 9 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the sorrowsworn deathlord's next turn.

† **Reap and Fade** (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓝ Ⓢ) ♦ **Teleportation**

The sorrowsworn deathlord makes a *dark scythe* attack, teleports 10 squares, and turns insubstantial until the start of its next turn.

Bleak Visage ♦ **Fear**

Melee and ranged attacks made against the sorrowsworn deathlord take a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common**Skills** Insight +26, Stealth +32**Str** 28 (+23) **Dex** 36 (+27) **Wis** 24 (+21)**Con** 30 (+24) **Int** 24 (+21) **Cha** 30 (+24)**Equipment** robes, scythe

If defeated and captured, Morthalat's bluster turns to a craven need to survive at any costs. He tells the PCs all he knows, including the reason for the Blood Lord's desire to obtain the *Sun's Sliver*.

In the southland, there is a crater lake atop a still-active volcano, and on that lake, there is an island with a bubbling volcanic spring. What few know is that an ancient primordial is trapped under the lake. If that bubbling spring is ever completely frozen over by winter's chill—cold spells, prayers, and invocations will not do—the primordial trapped there will be freed. Orcus has made a deal with the Winter Witch—if he captures and corrupts the Sun's Sliver, she'll push winter farther southward toward the Smoking Lake.

Although Orcus's desire to free the primordial bound in the Smoking Lake is beyond the scope of this adventure, it could provide an interesting adventure of your own design.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lighting in the area depends upon the time of day. The glowing runes light the area.

Rubble: The rubble in this area is difficult terrain.

Large Debris Pieces: The large pieces of collapsed debris are 20 feet tall and serve as blocking terrain for those who are not 5 or more squares above them.

Stairs: The stairs are steep. It costs 2 squares to go up the stairs, but only 1 square to go down the stairs.

Snow Drifts: The snow in the area is normal terrain; it is not deep enough to impede movement.

MONASTERY OF ST. ALABAT



BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE GROGNARD GRUMBLES

I have to admit, I'm one of those insufferable old-guard gamers who loves old D&D references. That's why I couldn't just call Morthalat's arcane contraption anything other than the *Engine of Lum*. For those of you without grognard tendencies, the Machine of Lum the Mad was an artifact from 1st Edition. A device of 40 dials and 20 switches (only half of which worked) it could create fantastic effects if the right dials and

switches were manipulated. It was basically one of those works of bizarre technology infused into fantasy all through the 70s and the 80s. In many of my campaigns throughout the years, something "of Lum" was synonymous with a strange and powerful machine that was nearly impossible to manipulate. The engine in "Winter of the Witch" continues that tradition.

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

M3: REMLIEL

Encounter Level 23 (25,500 XP)

SETUP

Remliel, Angel of Prophecy

This encounter occurs either when the *Engine of Lum* destroys the last wards of the seal of Remliel or when one of the PCs uses the ritual given to them by Sir Keegan to lower the wards.

When this happens, an angel of prophecy, Remliel, bursts from the ward to confront those who dared break it.

When this happens, read the following:

The violet runes on the seal glow more intensely, and then flicker out. With a sharp cracking sound, fissures start to form on the stone and gold of the seal. The ground rumbles as the seal blasts out in all directions, and a huge, angelic form armed with a pair of icy katars bursts from the seal.

If the *Engine of Lum* freed the angel, instead of using Remliel's initiative, place him in the initiative right after the *Engine's* turn. Remliel bursts from the seal as a free action, and when he does, the shattered seal makes the following close burst attack:

← **Blast of the Broken Seal** (free, when Remliel bursts forth from the seal; encounter) ♦ **Thunder**
Close burst 5; +26 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.

Remliel ends his move 12 squares (60 feet) above the seal, spends the rest of his turn assessing the situation, and says in Common:

Mortals, look upon me and despair. Though it was hoped that this day would never come, prophecy also foretold it must. Know that the light that lies below can be removed only over my lifeless form. Only through this trial by combat can I give up the Sun's Sliver.

TACTICS

Remliel begins his assault by flying down to within striking distance of the strongest or most menacing combatant. If Morthalat is still on the field, Remliel begins with the sorrowsworn. Remliel starts by placing his *mark of prophecy* on the first target he engages, and then he uses his *katar death dance* to attack multiple combatants. He spends an action point to repeat the *katar death dance* during his first turn in combat.

When Remliel drops to 0 hit points or fewer, the angel plays dead (Bluff +19 against the PCs' passive Insight each round) for as long as he can to regain strength to renew the pursuit of his duty.

Remliel, Angel of Prophecy	Level 23 Solo Skirmisher
Huge immortal humanoid (angel)	XP 4,800
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +23
HP 872; Bloodied 436; see also <i>prophecy of rebirth</i>	
AC 40; Fortitude 38, Reflex 37, Will 37	
Immune disease, fear; Resist 15 thunder, 15 cold, 15 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, fly 12 (hover)	
Action Points 2	
⊕ Katar (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Radiant, Weapon	
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage plus 2d8 cold and radiant damage (crit 1d10 + 18 damage plus 16 cold and radiant damage).	
↓ Katar Death Dance (standard; at-will)	
Remliel can make katar attacks against four different enemies. After each attack (hit or miss), Remliel can shift 2 squares.	
↓ Mark of Prophecy (minor; at-will)	
Reach 3; +26 vs. Will; the target is under the effect of Remliel's <i>mark of prophecy</i> . Remliel can have only one creature under the effect of a <i>mark of prophecy</i> at a time. The <i>mark of prophecy</i> has the following effect: the target is marked by Remliel, and while marked and within sight of Remliel, when the target hits Remliel, the angel can force it to reroll the attack with a -2 penalty. Also, once on each of his turns as a free action, if Remliel misses the target with a melee attack, the angel can reroll that attack.	
← Word of Prophecy (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Thunder, Fear	
Close burst 3; +23 vs. Will; 3d8 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares, takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, and is slowed (save ends both).	
Angelic Presence (while not bloodied)	
Any attack against Remliel takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.	
Prophecy of Rebirth	
The first time in the encounter that Remliel drops to 0 hit points or fewer, he gains regeneration 10 until he regains hit points equal to his bloodied amount or drops to 0 hit points or fewer again, whichever comes first.	
Threatening Reach	
Remliel can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within his reach (3 squares).	
Alignment Any	Languages Supernal
Skills Acrobatics + 23, Insight +23, Intimidate +24	
Str 29 (+20)	Dex 24 (+18) Wis 25 (+18)
Con 26 (+19)	Int 19 (+15) Cha 27 (+19)
Equipment plate armor, 2 katars	

DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs defeat Remliel, they find the *Sun's Sliver* at the bottom of the 50-foot-deep pit that the seal once covered.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lighting in the area depends on the time of day.

SI: FROZEN PASSAGE

Encounter Level 26 (47,450 XP)

SETUP

4 iceling slashers (I)
Colzath, iceling mage (C)
3 ice troll rimehammers (T)
Kurikveaeri, ancient white dragon (D),
when summoned

If they are traveling by foot, the PCs approach by way of the ledge trail that winds up to the western section of the map.

If the PCs use flight to assault the overhang from another direction, modify the encounter appropriately, which means that Colzath sounds the ice horn earlier, doing so as soon as she's threatened.

When the PCs approach, read:

The wind blows fiercely here, and the snow swirls in a way that obscures your vision. In the distance, you can just barely make out the strange circle of blue ice you seek. It sits on a thick glacial overhang covered with snow and pocked with boulders that must have fallen recently from the peak of Crone's Finger.

Amid the blowing snow, creatures shamble and flit.

Nearer to the trail that leads to the overhang are a quartet of icy fey—their thin blue forms flutter about and are at times held aloft clumsily by translucent wings of what appears to be thin ice. They are quicker when they are on the ground, and they wrestle one another with savage glee, using sharp teeth and icicle claws in their violent play.

Beyond them, near an area choked with the frozen folk that litter the other areas of the Winter Witch's advance, is a group of three ice trolls. Each wields a maul made of ice.

Near the far edge of the overhang, next to what appears to be a horn made of ice, stands another of the icy fey. This one wears white, ice-encrusted robes and wields a staff of black ice. This fey is not engaging in the frivolities of her kin and her face is fixed in a serious expression, as if she is lost in thought.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lighting depends on the time of day.

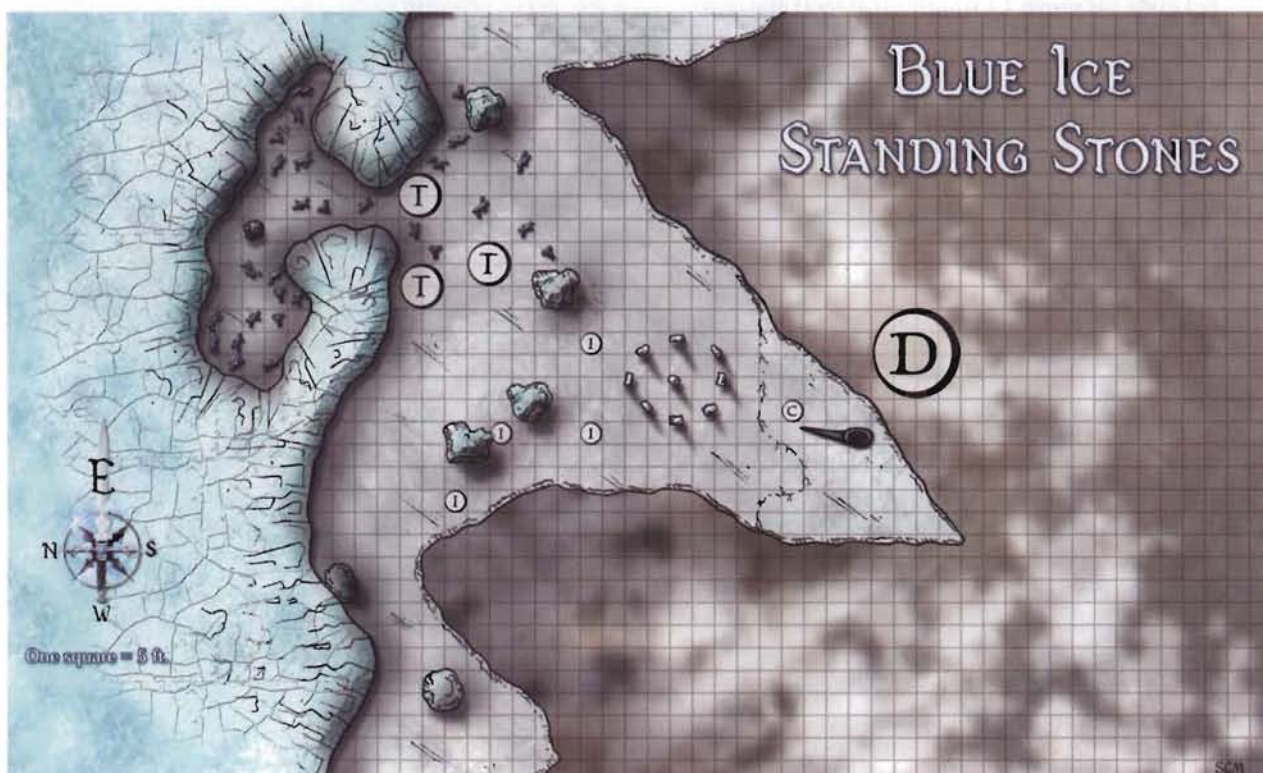
Boulders: The boulders are 2 squares (10 feet) tall and serve as blocking terrain for creatures not flying over them.

Ice Horn: The ice horn is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.

Frozen Victims: Each frozen victim is like a statue; it is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.

Over the Edge: A PC pushed over the edge of the ledge or the snow overhang gets a saving throw. If the PC saves, he or she is knocked prone. If the PC fails, the fall is 200 feet to the bottom, but the PC can attempt a saving throw each 20 feet to try to hold on to an icy ledge or an overhang as he or she falls. On a save, the PC takes falling damage for the distance fallen. It takes 1 round for each 5 feet the character has to climb to return to the fight.

Snow Drifts: The snow in the area is deep. Those without ice walk treat the snow here as difficult terrain.



TACTICS

Bored and waiting for their mistress, the icelings and trolls are eager to fight. They move forward and attack as soon as they spot the PCs.

The icelings engage in hit-and-run tactics with their *slick assault* and *frost step* attacks, taking advantage of the effect of the ice trolls' auras. They provide flanking for the ice trolls whenever possible.

The ice trolls try to lock down the PCs and beat them to a bloody mess. They don't hesitate to use *bull rush* against those who stray too close to the ledges and overhangs.

The iceling mage, Colzath, stays back, peppering the PCs with her *freezing bolt* and *venomous hailstorm*. She stays close to the ice horn, blowing it (a standard action) when or just before she is threatened by melee combatants. Blowing the horn summons the dragon Kurikveaeri from his lair below (see "S2: Kurikveaeri Rises," page 51).

4 Iceling Slashers (I)		Level 23 Skirmishers	
Medium fey humanoid (cold)		XP 5,100	
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision			
HP 210; Bloodied 105			
AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 37, Will 34			
Immune cold			
Speed 10 (ice walk), fly 6 (clumsy)			
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold			
+30 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 cold damage.			
⊕ Slick Assault (standard; recharge ☞ ☞) ⊕ Cold			
The iceling makes 2 claw attacks against different targets. If both attacks hit, the iceling shifts 5 squares as a free action.			
Frost Step (move; encounter) ⊕ Cold, Teleportation			
The iceling teleports 10 squares, making the following attack against all creatures that are adjacent to it after it teleports: +25 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends both).			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Insight +26, Stealth +32			
Str 17 (+14)	Dex 28 (+20)	Wis 25 (+18)	
Con 26 (+19)	Int 22 (+17)	Cha 19 (+15)	

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: GETTING TO PLAY WITH MY TOYS

When I first received the assignment to write an epic level adventure, there is one thing I knew it must have—a battle against an ancient white dragon, preferably on the ledge of some windswept peak. The reason was simple: I really love the Icingdeath miniature released with the "Legend of Drizzt Scenario Pack" and I figured I wasn't the only one who was dying to use it in an adventure. Thus Kurikveaeri the deadly servant and sometimes mount of the Winter Witch was born, even before there was a Winter Witch.

—Stephen Radney-MacFarland

Colzath, Iceling Mage (C)		Level 24 Artillery	
Medium fey humanoid (cold)		XP 6,050	
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision			
HP 170; Bloodied 85			
AC 37; Fortitude 34, Reflex 37, Will 34			
Immune cold			
Speed 10 (ice walk), fly 6 (clumsy)			
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold			
+30 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 cold damage.			
⊕ Freezing Bolt (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold			
Ranged 20; +29 vs. Reflex; 3d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target is slowed until the end of its next turn.			
⊕ Venomous Hailstorm (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞) ⊕ Cold, Poison			
Burst 1 within 20; +27 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 poison damage (save ends).			
Frost Step (move; encounter) ⊕ Cold, Teleportation			
The iceling teleports 10 squares, making the following attack against all creatures that are adjacent to it after it teleports: +25 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends both).			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Insight +26, Stealth +32			
Str 17 (+15)	Dex 29 (+21)	Wis 22 (+18)	
Con 26 (+20)	Int 26 (+20)	Cha 19 (+16)	
Equipment robes, staff of black ice			

3 Ice Troll Rimehammers (T)		Level 25 Soldier	
Large natural humanoid		XP 7,000	
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +18			
Emanating Cold aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed by the numbing cold until the start of its next turn.			
HP 227; Bloodied 113			
Regeneration 20			
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, Will 36			
Vulnerable acid or fire (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)			
Speed 8 (ice walk)			
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon			
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends).			
⊕ Bull Rush (standard; at-will)			
+28 vs. Fortitude; the ice troll pushes the target 1 square and shifts into the vacated space.			
⊕ Frenzied Strike (free, when a troll's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)			
The troll makes a maul attack.			
⊕ Rimehammer (standard action; recharge ☞) ⊕ Weapon			
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends both).			
Troll Healing ⊕ Healing			
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.			
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Athletics +27, Endurance +25			
Str 30 (+22)	Dex 25 (+19)	Wis 22 (+18)	
Con 27 (+20)	Int 9 (+11)	Cha 14 (+14)	
Equipment scale armor, maul			

S2: KURIKVEAERI RISES

Encounter Level 24 (30,250 XP)

SETUP

Kurikveaeri, ancient white dragon (D)

When Colzath blows the ice horn, the dragon Kurikveaeri is summoned from its ice cave in the vale below. Roll for the dragon's initiative. It flies to the spot next to the icy overhang on its initiative a round after the iceling mage sounds the horn.

Read the following when Kurikveaeri appears:

For a moment, the harsh winds atop the mountain turn into a gale, and the overhang begins to shake. A giant white dragon's form blots out what little sunlight there is. Its massive wings beat out a thunderous rhythm. Calmly, arrogantly, the white wyrm assesses the situation while still on the wing. It looks at you with disdain, and roars one word: "Die!"

TACTICS

Kurikveaeri is arrogant, brutal, blunt, and bound by ancient pact to Koliada and the protection of her passage to the Feywild. He starts with a blast of his *breath weapon* and then launches into melee, landing near the far tip of the glacial overhang (the collapsible part) if it can. It wants to draw the PCs on to it, and then use its *frightful presence* before collapsing the section.

It continues to fight until defeated or victorious.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

This encounter takes place in the same space as "S1: Frozen Passage" (page 49), and it has the same terrain features. The difficult terrain effect of the dragon's aura and the difficult terrain for the snow drifts do not stack.

The collapsing ice shelf is a power that only Gargantuan creatures (in this encounter, only Kurikveaeri) can use.

❖ **Collapsing Shelf** (standard; encounter)

Targets all creatures on the collapsible section of the ice shelf (the squares south of the thin black line on the map); +27 vs. Reflex; the target falls as the shelf collapses, but can make a saving throw to hold onto an edge. *Successful Saving Throw:* The target can attempt to climb 15 feet up on its next turn (Athletics DC 25) to reach the ledge. *Failed Saving Throw:* The target starts to fall 200 feet to the bottom. Each 20 feet, the target gains another saving throw. On a successful saving throw, the target takes falling damage for the distance fallen, and it can then climb back up to the ledge. Climbing the ice shelf requires 1 round for each 5 feet climbed.

Kurikveaeri, Ancient White Dragon (D) **Level 24 Solo Brute**

Gargantuan natural magical beast (dragon) XP 30,250

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +21; darkvision

Aura of Winter (Cold) aura 5; any creature that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 30 cold damage. The ground within the area of the aura is difficult terrain, and creatures flying in the aura (other than the dragon) move at half speed. Creatures within the aura have concealment against ranged attacks.

HP 1,145; **Bloodied** 572; see also *bloodied breath*

AC 38; **Fortitude** 43, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 38

Resist 30 cold

Saving Throws +5

Speed 9 (ice walk), fly 9 (hover), overland flight 12

Action Points 2

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Cold**

Reach 4; +29 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage plus 3d12 cold damage (plus 3d12 extra cold damage on a successful opportunity attack).

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 4; +29 vs. AC; 2d12 + 7 damage.

⊕ **Dragon's Fury** (standard; at-will)

The dragon makes two claw attacks. If the dragon hits a single target with both attacks, it makes a bite attack against the same target.

➤ **Icy Tomb** (standard; recharge ☼☼) ⊕ **Cold**

Ranged 10; +27 vs. Fortitude; 4d12 + 9 cold damage, and the target is restrained and stunned (save ends both).

⊕ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge ☼☼) ⊕ **Cold**

Close blast 5; +27 vs. Reflex; 8d6 + 9 cold damage, the target is slowed and weakened (save ends both), and the white dragon makes a secondary attack against the target. *Secondary Attack:* +27 vs. Fortitude; the target loses any cold resistance until the end of the encounter.

⊕ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ⊕ **Cold**

The dragon's breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it.

⊕ **Frightful Presence** (standard; encounter) ⊕ **Fear**

Close burst 10; targets enemies; +27 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. *Aftereffect:* The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Athletics +29

Str 25 (+19)

Dex 17 (+15)

Wis 18 (+16)

Con 29 (+21)

Int 15 (+14)

Cha 15 (+14)

WI: ORCHARD OF DEADLY CHILLS

Encounter Level 25 (42,000 XP)

SETUP

3 frostblight treants (T)

Before the PCs can gain entrance into Winter's Heart, they must defeat the group of frostblight treants that guard the stairs leading to Koliada's inner sanctum.

When the PCs reach the stairs, read:

At the front of the stairs that lead up to the cold spires of Winter's Heart, a trio of trees tower over some of the Winter Witch's frozen victims. Leafless and black, the trees are glazed in frost. Jagged icicles hang from every gnarled branch.

As you approach, one of the trees twists so that it can gaze upon you with strange, glowing blue eyes. A section of its trunk separates to show a maw of icicles, and the tree sounds a deep, rumbling call. With that, the other trees start to shamble toward you.

3 Frostblight Treants (T)		Level 25 Elite Soldier
Huge fey magical beast (plant)		XP 14,000
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +17; low-light vision	
Frostblight Aura (Necrotic) aura 3; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed and takes 10 necrotic damage.		
HP 476; Bloodied 238		
AC 43; Fortitude 39, Reflex 36, Will 35		
Resist cold 15		
Vulnerable fire (a frostblight treant takes ongoing 5 fire damage [save ends] when damaged by fire)		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6 (ice walk)		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold		
Reach 3; +32 vs. AC; 2d10 + 9 damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage (save ends).		
† Freezing Roots (minor; at-will) ⊕ Cold		
Reach 4; +28 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 4 cold damage and the target is restrained (save ends). <i>Aftersave:</i> The target is immobilized until the end of its next turn.		
⊕ Shake the Shards (standard; encounter) ⊕ Cold		
Close burst 3; targets enemies only; +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 cold damage, and the target loses any cold resistance (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Skills Nature +22, Stealth +23		
Str 33 (+23)	Dex 23 (+18)	Wis 18 (+17)
Con 30 (+22)	Int 16 (+15)	Cha 28 (+21)

TACTICS

The three frostblight treants serve as the door guards to Winter's Heart. They move into defensive positions and then advance, using their *freezing roots* to hold the PCs in place for their *slam* and *shake the shards* attacks. The treants continue their assault until they are slain, knowing that death is a better fate than the one their mistress could concoct for them if they fail.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The lighting depends on the time of day.

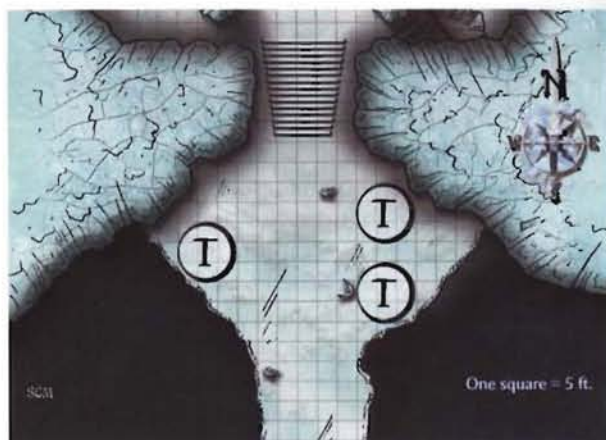
Stairs: The stairs are both slick and steep. Creatures without ice walk must spend an extra 2 squares of movement to go up the stairs, and an extra 1 square of movement to descend safely. A creature without ice walk can attempt to descend the stairs without treating them as difficult terrain, but doing so requires a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check, and failure means that the creature falls down the stairs, taking 1d6 damage for each square and falling prone at the bottom of the stairs.

Frozen Lake: A creature that starts its turn in the frozen lake takes 20 cold damage and is dazed until the end of its next turn. Swimming in the freezing water requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check. Climbing out of the lake requires a successful DC 25 Athletics check.

Ice Horn: The ice horn is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.

Frozen Victims: Each frozen victim is like a statue; it is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.

Icy Ground: The ice in the area is unnaturally slick, and it is difficult terrain for creatures without ice walk. Creatures that are not prone and that do not have ice walk can attempt to slide on the ice, ignoring the difficult terrain. In order for a creature to ignore the ice, it must make a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check for each move action taken. If the creature fails the check, it falls prone, but the move action is not spent.



W2: WINTER'S HEART

Encounter Level 25 (35,700 XP)

SETUP

2 ghaeles of winter (G)

3 iceling slashers (I)

2 frostfury ice trolls (F)

Up the frozen stairs is Winter's Heart, the seat of Koliada's power. Here, the Winter Witch waits and watches both her domain and the world, using a link between the eyes of those she has frozen and a large scrying crystal. More importantly, she waits here for those who would move against her.

Although she is surprised that the PCs have gotten this far, she is prepared to fight them. But first, she'll give her minions the chance to prove their worth and defeat this threat to her.

Read the following as the PCs approach Winter's Heart:

At the top of the frozen stairs is a vast chamber shaped entirely of ice. Two massive crevasses mar the floor to the right and the left. To the right are three icelings like those encountered on the top of Crone's Finger, and to the left are two eladrin males wearing robes bearing a winter motif, their eyes glowing blue.

At the chamber's center, massive spires of ice twist hundreds of feet up into the cloud-covered sky. These regularly spaced spires lead to a raised section of ice, which is accessible by a pair of frozen stairs that curve around the farthest spires. Each stair is guarded by an ice troll. The trolls ripple with muscle, their claws are long and sharp, and they snarl at you with a mix of fury and contempt.

Atop the ice shelf, among some of her frozen victims, stands Koliada, the Winter Witch. She's a stunningly beautiful eladrin woman with alabaster skin and midnight black hair. She wears a crown of icicles and wields a longsword made of black ice. She is cold in both appearance and demeanor, and she merely glances at you disinterestedly, then returns to studying a strange obelisk of pure elemental ice that sits at the center of the icy rise. With a wave of her snowy white hand, her servants move forward to engage their mistress's enemies.

TACTICS

The trolls and icelings move forward first, creating a front line of frost and fang as the ghaeles of winter move into position behind the wall, flying to gain the best vantage point and then targeting the PCs with freezing ray. At the right time, they move forward, attacking with chilling defiance and imperious wrath, hoping to daze as many of the PCs as they can before using fey step to move back into support positions.

The Winter Witch watches and waits, until it is clear that her minions are not up to the task or the PCs show the Sun's Sliver. At that point, she enters the fight.

Tactical Encounter: W3: The Lady's Attentions (page 55).

Ghaele of Winter (G) Level 21 Artillery

Medium fey humanoid, eladrin XP 3,200

Initiative +19 Senses Perception +16; low-light vision
HP 134; Bloodied 77

AC 33; Fortitude 30, Reflex 33, Will 33

Resist 25 cold, 25 radiant; Vulnerable necrotic (the ghaele is slowed until the end of its next turn)

Saving Throws +5 against charm effects

Speed 6, fly 8 (hover); see also fey step

⊕ Winter's Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold
+25 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 cold damage.

↻ Freezing Ray (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold
Ranged 12; +25 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 9 cold damage, and the target is slowed (save ends).

◀ Chilling Defiance (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Healing
Close burst 3; targets enemies; automatic hit; the target takes 10 cold damage and is slowed until the end of the ghaele's next turn. The ghaele of winter regains 2 hit points for each enemy that takes damage from this power.

◀ Imperious Wrath (minor; recharges when the ghaele of winter regains at least 4 hit points with chilling defiance)
Close burst 3; +23 vs. Will; the target is dazed until the end of the encounter.

Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation

The ghaele of winter can teleport 5 squares.

Alignment Any Languages Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +15, Diplomacy +24, History +15, Insight +21, Intimidate +24, Nature +21

Str 17 (+13) Dex 28 (+19) Wis 22 (+16)

Con 22 (+16) Int 17 (+13) Cha 29 (+19)

Equipment robes

3 Iceling Slashers (I) Level 23 Skirmishers

Medium fey humanoid (cold) XP 5,100

Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision
HP 210; Bloodied 105

AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 37, Will 34

Immune cold

Speed 10 (ice walk), fly 6 (clumsy)

⊕ Claws (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 cold damage.

⊕ Slick Assault (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ♦ Cold
The iceling makes 2 claw attacks against different targets. If both attacks hit, the iceling shifts 5 squares as a free action.

Frost Step (move; encounter) ♦ Cold, Teleportation

The iceling teleports 10 squares, making the following attack against all creatures that are adjacent to it after it teleports: +25 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends both).

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven

Skills Insight +26, Stealth +32

Str 17 (+14) Dex 28 (+20) Wis 25 (+18)

Con 26 (+19) Int 22 (+17) Cha 19 (+15)

2 Frostfury Ice Trolls (F)**Level 26 Brute**

Large natural humanoid

XP 7,000

Initiative +20 **Senses Perception** +19**Emanating Cold** aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn.**HP** 287; **Bloodied** 148**Regeneration** 20**AC** 38; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 38, **Will** 36**Vulnerable** acid or fire (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)**Speed** 8 (ice walk)① **Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Cold**

Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d12 + 11 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends).

‡ **Frenzied Strike** (free, when a troll's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)

The troll makes two claw attacks. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 16-20.

Frostfury (free action, when first bloodied; encounter)

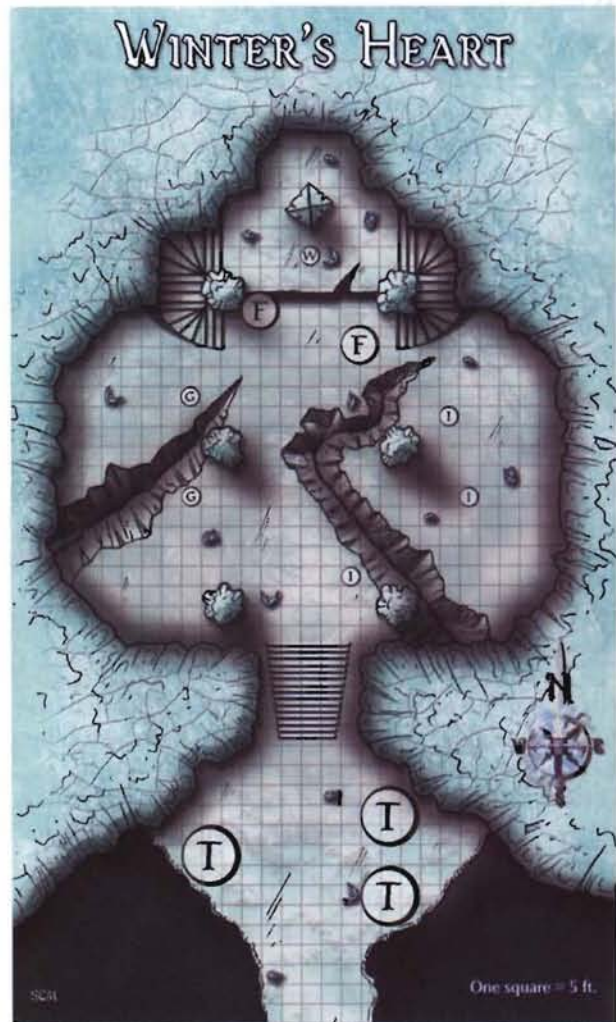
The troll makes a claw attack against every enemy within reach. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 16-20.

Troll Healing ♦ **Healing**

If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it revives on its next turn and has 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +27, Endurance +25**Str** 30 (+23) **Dex** 25 (+20) **Wis** 22 (+19)**Con** 27 (+21) **Int** 9 (+12) **Cha** 14 (+15)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light emanates from braziers that flicker with silver-blue flames.**Stairs:** The stairs are both slick and steep. Creatures without ice walk must spend an extra 2 squares of movement to go up the stairs, and an extra 1 square of movement to descend safely. A creature without ice walk can attempt to descend the stairs without treating them as difficult terrain, but doing so requires a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check, and failure means that the creature falls down the stairs, taking 1d6 damage for each square and falling prone at the bottom of the stairs.**Frozen Lake:** A creature that starts its turn in the frozen lake takes 20 cold damage and is dazed until the end of its next turn. Swimming in the freezing water requires a successful DC 15 Athletics check. Climbing out of the lake requires a successful DC 25 Athletics check.**Crevasses:** The crevasses are 20 feet deep. It takes a successful DC 20 Athletics check to climb them.**Frozen Victims:** Each frozen victim is like a statue; it is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.**Icy Ground:** The ice in the area is unnaturally slick, and it is difficult terrain for creatures without ice walk. Creatures that are not prone and that do not have ice walk can attempt to slide on the ice, ignoring the difficult terrain. In order for a creature to ignore the ice, it must make a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check for each move action taken. If the creature fails the check, it falls prone, but the move action is not spent.

W3: THE LADY'S ATTENTIONS

Encounter Level 26 (45,000 XP)

SETUP

Koliada the Winter Witch (W)

This tactical encounter begins when at least half of the Winter Witch's minions are dead, when the Winter Witch is attacked, or when the PCs show her that they have the Sun's Sliver.

When this encounter begins, read:

Koliada's coldly beautiful face twists in rage. "Insects!" she screeches. "I have been patient with you, but my largess has reached its limits. You've been an interesting distraction, but I tire of your meddling. Prepare to feel my touch. You will tremble. You will freeze. And you will serve me forever more."

TACTICS

Koliada either flies or uses *fey charge* to reach the PCs. Because she can use creatures frozen by her *freezing touch* to gain a flank, she positions herself to take advantage of those flanks whenever possible, and she makes strategic retreats to areas where those opportunities are most numerous. When bloodied, Koliada retreats up to the ice shelf, where she can use her obelisk to regain hit points (see "Features of the Area").

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Elemental Ice Obelisk: The obelisk is an enchanted sliver of elemental ice that Koliada can use to see through the eyes of any of the victims frozen by her *freezing touch*. While Koliada is within 3 squares of the obelisk, she can spend a minor action once per turn to regain 20 hit points or to make an immediate saving throw against each effect she is suffering from.

Stairs: The stairs are both slick and steep. Creatures without ice walk must spend an extra 2 squares of movement to go up the stairs, and an extra 1 square of movement to descend safely. A creature without ice walk can attempt to descend the stairs without treating them as difficult terrain, but doing so requires a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check, and failure means that the creature falls down the stairs, taking 1d6 damage for each square and falling prone at the bottom of the stairs.

Frozen Victims: Each frozen victim is like a statue; it is difficult terrain, and it grants cover.

Icy Ground: The ice in the area is unnaturally slick, and it is difficult terrain for creatures without ice walk. Creatures that are not prone and that do not have ice walk can attempt to slide on the ice, ignoring the difficult terrain. In order for a creature to ignore the ice, it must make a successful DC 27 Acrobatics check for each move action taken. If the creature fails the check, it falls prone, but the move action is not spent.

Koliada, the Winter Witch (W)		Level 26 Solo Skirmisher
Medium fey humanoid		XP 45,000
Initiative +25	Senses Perception +21; low-light vision	
Winter's Chill (Cold) aura 5; any enemy that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 10 cold damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn.		
HP 980; Bloodied 490		
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 40, Will 38		
Immune cold; Resist 15 lightning, 15 thunder		
Saving Throws +5 (+10 against charm effects)		
Speed 6, fly 6 (hover), teleport 8		
Action Points 2		
⚔ Sword of Black Ice (standard; at-will) ⚔ Cold, Poison, Weapon		
+31 vs. AC; 2d8 + 12 damage plus 2d8 poison damage (crit 28 damage plus 16 poison damage plus 6d10 cold damage), and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.		
† Sweeping Black Ice (standard; at will)		
Koliada makes a <i>Sword of Black Ice</i> attack against each enemy adjacent to her.		
† Freezing Touch (minor 1/round; recharge [1]) ⚔ Cold		
Target creatures slowed by the <i>winter's chill</i> aura; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 9 cold damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage and the target is immobilized (save ends both). <i>First Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target takes ongoing 10 cold damage and is restrained instead of immobilized (save ends). <i>Second Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target is encased in Koliada's ice until the end of the encounter. A creature encased in Koliada's ice cannot take actions, gains resist 10 all, and is unaware of its surroundings. See also <i>winter's mistress</i> , below.		
Chill of Black Ice (free action, when Koliada hits a creature with <i>Sword of Black Ice</i> ; encounter)		
The target is stunned (save ends).		
⚔ Fey Charge (standard action; recharge [2][1]) ⚔ Teleportation		
Koliada teleports 8 squares and make a melee basic attack.		
Winter's Mistress		
Koliada considers creatures encased in Koliada's ice as allies for flanking.		
Combat Advantage		
When Koliada hits a creature that grants her combat advantage, that creature takes 2d6 extra cold damage loses any cold resistance (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Elven		
Skills Acrobatics + 28, Arcana +25, Endurance +27, Nature +25, Intimidate +24		
Str 25 (+20)	Dex 30 (+23)	Wis 26 (+21)
Con 29 (+22)	Int 24 (+20)	Cha 23 (+19)
Equipment <i>Sword of Black Ice</i> (longsword)		

APPENDIX 1: NEW MONSTERS

The following are new monsters that appear in this adventure.

ANGEL OF PROPHECY

AS SERVANTS OF DEITIES, all angels have purpose. One of the rarest and most specialized of these is the angel of prophecy. Typically called to protect an item or a person of prophetic significance, these angels can serve other tasks of prophecy. Powerful and single-minded, these angels neither accept nor give any quarter in the fulfillment of their duty.

Angel of Prophecy **Level 23 Solo Skirmisher**
Huge immortal humanoid (angel) XP 4,800

Initiative +20 **Senses** Perception +23
HP 872; **Bloodied** 436; see also *prophecy of rebirth*
AC 40; **Fortitude** 38, **Reflex** 37, **Will** 37
Immune disease, fear; **Resist** 15 thunder, 15 cold, 15 radiant
Saving Throws +5
Speed 8, fly 12 (hover)
Action Points 2

⊕ **Katar** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Cold, Radiant, Weapon**
Reach 3; +28 vs. AC; 1d10 + 8 damage plus 2d8 cold and radiant damage (crit 1d10 + 18 damage plus 16 cold and radiant damage).

⊕ **Katar Death Dance** (standard; at-will)
The angel of prophecy can make katar attacks against four different enemies. After each attack (hit or miss), the angel can shift 2 squares.

⊕ **Mark of Prophecy** (minor; at-will)
Reach 3; +26 vs. Will; the target is under the effect of the angel *mark of prophecy*. The angel can have only one creature under the effect of a *mark of prophecy* at a time. The *mark of prophecy* has the following effect: the target is marked by the angel of prophecy, and while marked and within sight of the angel, when the target hits the angel, the angel can force it to reroll the attack with a -2 penalty. Also, once on each of its turns as a free action, if the angel misses the target with a melee attack, the angel can reroll that attack.

⊕ **Word of Prophecy** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ⊕ **Thunder, Fear**
Close burst 3; +23 vs. Will; 3d8 + 9 thunder damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares, takes ongoing 10 psychic damage, and is slowed (save ends both).

Angelic Presence (while not bloodied)
Any attack against the angel of prophecy takes a -2 penalty to the attack roll.

Prophecy of Rebirth
The first time in the encounter that the angel drops to 0 hit points or fewer, it gains regeneration 10 until it regains hit points equal to its bloodied amount or drops to 0 hit points or fewer again, whichever comes first.

Threatening Reach
The angel of prophecy can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach.

Alignment Any **Languages** Supernal
Skills Acrobatics + 23, Insight +23, Intimidate +24
Str 29 (+20) **Dex** 24 (+18) **Wis** 25 (+18)
Con 26 (+19) **Int** 19 (+15) **Cha** 27 (+19)

Equipment plate armor, 2 katars

ANGEL OF PROPHECY TACTICS

An angel of prophecy begins combat with its *mark of prophecy*, typically targeting the creature that appears to be the greatest threat. It then weaves through its enemies in a blur of katars and carnage until its task is done.

ANGEL OF PROPHECY LORE

Religion DC 20: Protectors of prophecy or the guardians of items of prophecy, these angels cannot be reasoned with and they do not back down. They live only to fulfill their duty.

Religion DC 25: When one encounters an angel of prophecy, one encounters something protected by a god. Though defeating an angel of prophecy is a victory to be savored, it can also be a harbinger of a greater threat to come.

MONSTERS OF THE EPIC TIER

A common thread in all our early epic adventures is that authors found themselves frequently stymied by the lack of monster options in the epic tier. In the first couple of years of 4th Edition, we have (rightly, I might add) focused on providing monsters in the heroic and paragon tiers, where most people are playing their games. For this reason, nearly all of our epic adventures feature new monsters.

—Chris Youngs

ICELINGS

COLD AND VICIOUS FEY that look like ice-covered, winged quicklings (see *Monster Manual*, page 215), these creatures pervade the colder climes of the Feywild and are the favorite servants and spies of the archfey that make up the Winter Court.

Mischievous, cruel, and having a dark and dangerous sense of humor, these creatures venture out into the colder part of the worlds to pursue their violent whims.

Iceling Slasher	Level 23 Skirmisher
Small fey humanoid (cold)	XP 5,100
Initiative +22 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision	
HP 210; Bloodied 105	
AC 37; Fortitude 35, Reflex 37, Will 34	
Immune cold	
Speed 10 (ice walk), fly 6 (clumsy)	
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will) ⊕ Cold	
+28 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 cold damage.	
⊕ Slick Assault (standard; recharge [1]) ⊕ Cold	
The iceling makes 2 claw attacks against different targets. If both attacks hit, the iceling shifts 5 squares as a free action.	
Frost Step (move; encounter) ⊕ Cold , Teleportation	
The iceling teleports 10 squares, making the following attack against all creatures that are adjacent to it after it teleports: +25 vs. Fortitude; the target is immobilized and takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends both).	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Insight +26, Stealth +32	
Str 17 (+14) Dex 28 (+20) Wis 25 (+18)	
Con 26 (+19) Int 22 (+17) Cha 19 (+15)	

ICELING SLASHER TACTICS

Iceling slashers are mischievous cowards that delight in hit-and-run tactics. They use their mobility and *slick assault* to accomplish this, saving *frost step* for a quick retreat.

ICELING LORE

Arcana DC 15: Immune to cold, icelings are creatures made of ice. Some arcanists believe that icelings are elemental creatures that became fey over time.

Arcana DC 25: Some scholars believe that all icelings serve the Winter Witch and act as her spies and agents even when they are in the employ of other members of the Winter Court.

ICE TROLLS

ALTHOUGH THEY ARE NATURAL CREATURES, trolls have ventured into the Feywild to hunt and to serve fomorians, hags, and even the more evil members of the fey courts. The Winter Witch surrounds herself with troll minions—specifically, the most powerful types of ice trolls.

Ice Troll Rimehammer	Level 25 Soldier
Large natural humanoid	XP 7,000
Initiative +21 Senses Perception +18	
Emanating Cold aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed by the numbing cold until the start of its next turn.	
HP 227; Bloodied 113	
Regeneration 20	
AC 41; Fortitude 39, Reflex 37, Will 36	
Vulnerable acid or fire (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)	
Speed 8 (ice walk)	
⊕ Maul (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 2d8 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends).	
⊕ Bull Rush (standard; at-will)	
+28 vs. Fortitude; the ice troll pushes the target 1 square and shifts into the vacated space.	
⊕ Frenzied Strike (free, when a troll's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)	
The troll makes a maul attack.	
⊕ Rimehammer (standard action; recharge [1]) ⊕ Weapon	
Reach 2; +32 vs. AC; 4d8 + 10 damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 cold damage and is immobilized (save ends both).	
Troll Healing ⊕ Healing	
If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 10 hit points.	
Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Common, Giant	
Skills Athletics +27, Endurance +25	
Str 30 (+22) Dex 25 (+19) Wis 22 (+18)	
Con 27 (+20) Int 9 (+11) Cha 14 (+14)	
Equipment scale armor, maul	

ICE TROLL TACTICS

Ice trolls are not subtle combatants. They plow into their enemies to spread carnage and to slow their foes with debilitating cold. The only subtle tactics these creatures employ is the intelligent use of their auras to lock their enemies down.

Frostfury Ice Troll**Level 26 Brute**

Large natural humanoid

XP 7,000

Initiative +20 Senses Perception +19

Emanating Cold aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn in the aura is slowed until the start of its next turn.

HP 287; Bloodied 148

Regeneration 20

AC 38; Fortitude 39, Reflex 38, Will 36

Vulnerable acid or fire (if the troll takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

Speed 8 (ice walk)

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Cold**

Reach 2; +29 vs. AC; 2d12 + 11 damage, and the target takes ongoing 15 cold damage (save ends).

⊕ **Frenzied Strike** (free, when a troll's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)

The troll makes two claw attacks. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 16-20.

Frostfury (free action, when first bloodied; encounter)

The troll makes a claw attack against every enemy within reach. This attack scores a critical hit on a roll of 16-20.

Troll Healing ⊕ **Healing**

If the troll is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it revives on its next turn and has 10 hit points.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +27, Endurance +25**Str** 30 (+23) **Dex** 25 (+20) **Wis** 22 (+19)**Con** 27 (+21) **Int** 9 (+12) **Cha** 14 (+15)

ICE TROLL LORE

Nature DC 15: Enemies that fight near these trolls are slowed by the cold that emanates from them.

Nature DC 25: Ice trolls are some of the favorite minions of the Winter Witch, and some tribes in the world worship her almost like a god.

TROLLS RULE!

Trolls are my favorite monster, so when Stephen and I started talking about this adventure and he brought up epic ice trolls, I was sold. I regret to say that other, less-honorable people have used this knowledge of my love of trolls against me. Someday, I'll have my revenge. . . .

But I digress. I was excited, but I feel like I need to explain the troll obsession a little. This goes all the way back to my first 3rd Edition campaign.

I was an assistant editor for *Dragon and Dungeon* magazines, and Dave Noonan was an editor in R&D. He was starting up a new 3rd Edition campaign based on an update of *Keep on the Borderlands*. I was in. I rolled up what would be my first of many 3rd Edition characters: Horatio the paladin. I know, this doesn't have anything to do with trolls. Yet. I'm getting there.

One of the caves in the Caves of Chaos was a troll cave, inhabited by, you guessed it: trolls. There are a couple of things you need to know about a Dave Noonan campaign. He runs by the numbers. No fudging. So if he kills you, you're dead. He also helps those who help themselves. We could have done some recon on the caves, but we opted to just pick one at random instead. Because we were dumb. (As an aside, this may be why we built the Chaos Scar, our newest homage to *Keep on the Borderlands*, so that the easier caves were near the mouth of the valley and the tougher ones were deeper in. I'm just saying.)

Anyway, we wandered into the troll cave when we were 3rd level. At the time, we were playtesting (this was late 1998), and trolls had been given a CR of 4. Dave though, "Why not? They can handle a couple of trolls." Now take a look at the stats for 3rd Edition trolls. Those were nearly the exact trolls Dave ran against us. And their CR? 6. Why did 3rd Edition trolls end up with CR 6? Because of our experience in the troll cave in Dave's campaign.

We lost three good adventurers that session. The only survivors were the resilient Horatio and Steve Schubert's sorcerer. And we made it out with single digit hit points, combined.

Thus began my love affair with the troll. I've thought them badass in the extreme ever since they utterly destroyed us that day, and nothing and no one will ever convince me they aren't the coolest monsters on the block.

—Chris Youngs

APPENDIX 2: KOLIADA THE WINTER WITCH

A member of the mysterious Winter Court, which is headed by the Prince of Frost, Koliada the Winter Witch is one of the least powerful archfey of that court. With so many similarities to the Prince of Frost, Koliada is obviously connected to him in some way. Stories about their connections are many and conflicting. Some claim that Koliada is the Prince's sister or daughter, others say that she is his consort, and still others claim that she is more than one of these.

Although the Prince of Frost hates mortals, he does not often move against them. Koliada appears to have no such compunctions or restraint. In fact, it seems that's all she desires to do. Every hundred years or so, when the strong winds blow at the peaks of the Scourge Mountains, a blue ice menhir appears on a glacial overhang on the mountain called Crone's Finger and Koliada pursues her campaign to cover the mortal world in a layer of ice and frost.

Over the centuries, many combatants have stopped her, banishing her to the Feywild for a period of time and ending the unnatural winter in the mortal world, but no one has destroyed her ultimately. To do so, a challenger must kill Koliada with a blast of pure sunlight created by the Winter Witch's nemesis, a minor artifact called the *Sun's Sliver*.



KOLIADA'S TACTICS

Koliada either flies or uses *fey charge* to reach the PCs. Because she can use creatures frozen by her *freezing touch* to gain a flank, she positions herself to take advantage of those flanks whenever possible, and she makes strategic retreats to areas where those opportunities are most numerous.

WINTER WITCH LORE

Arcana DC 25: The Winter Witch is a particularly malicious and terrible archfey also called Koliada. One of the Winter Fey (see *Manual of the Planes*, page 37), she pursues a crusade into the mortal world every century or so that starts with an enduring winter. Some say her ultimate goal is to freeze the world, or to carve off frozen parts that she conquers into the Feywild.

Arcana DC 30: Conjecture abounds on the true nature of Koliada the Winter Witch. Some claim that she's merely one of many forms taken by the Prince of Frost; other stories tout her as his queen, his daughter, or his sister. Some of the stranger tales claim more than one of these relations or even all them. Such are the ways of the fey.

Arcana DC 35: As an archfey, Koliada can be destroyed only by her nemesis. Each nemesis is particular to one archfey. Often, a nemesis is an item, although sometimes it is another kind of agent of doom.

Koliada, the Winter Witch Level 26 Solo Skirmisher

Medium fey humanoid

XP 45,000

Initiative +25 **Senses Perception** +21; low-light vision**Winter's Chill (Cold)** aura 5; any enemy that enters or starts its turn in the aura takes 10 cold damage and is slowed until the end of its next turn.**HP** 980; **Bloodied** 490**AC** 41; **Fortitude** 39, **Reflex** 40, **Will** 38**Immune** cold; **Resist** 15 lightning, 15 thunder**Saving Throws** +5 (+10 against charm effects)**Speed** 6, fly 6 (hover), teleport 8**Action Points** 2⊕ **Sword of Black Ice** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Cold, Poison, Weapon**

+31 vs. AC; 2d8 + 12 damage plus 2d8 poison damage (crit 28 damage plus 16 poison damage plus 6d10 cold damage), and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn.

† **Sweeping Black Ice** (standard; at will)Koliada makes a *Sword of Black Ice* attack against each enemy adjacent to her.† **Freezing Touch** (minor 1/round; recharge [ii]) ⊕ **Cold**Target creatures slowed by the *winter's chill* aura; +29 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 9 cold damage, and ongoing 10 cold damage and the target is immobilized (save ends both). **First Failed Saving Throw:** The target takes ongoing 10 cold damage and is restrained instead of immobilized (save ends). **Second Failed Saving Throw:** The target is encased in Koliada's ice until the end of the encounter. A creature encased in Koliada's ice cannot take actions, gains resist 10 all, and is unaware of its surroundings. See also *winter's mistress*, below.**Chill of Black Ice** (free action, when Koliada hits a creature with *Sword of Black Ice*; encounter)

The target is stunned (save ends).

Fey Charge (standard action; recharge [ii]) ⊕**Teleportation**

Koliada teleports 8 squares and make a melee basic attack.

Winter's Mistress

Koliada considers creatures encased in Koliada's ice as allies for flanking.

Combat Advantage

When Koliada hits a creature that grants her combat advantage, that creature takes 2d6 extra cold damage loses any cold resistance (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Acrobatics +28, Arcana +25, Endurance +27, Nature +25, Intimidate +24**Str** 25 (+20) **Dex** 30 (+23) **Wis** 26 (+21)**Con** 29 (+22) **Int** 24 (+20) **Cha** 23 (+19)**Equipment** *Sword of Black Ice* (longsword)

NEW MAGIC

The following two magic items are important to the Winter Witch. The first is her *Sword of Black Ice*, the fearsome weapon that is more powerful in her hands than in the hands of any other creature.

The second is her nemesis, the one item in the universe that can truly destroy her. This minor artifact is called the *Sun's Sliver*.

Sword of Black Ice

Level 27

Carved from a sliver of black ice from the abyss, this deadly sword never melts.

Level 27 +6 1,625,000 gp

Weapon: Longsword**Enhancement:** Attack rolls and damage rolls**Critical:** +6d10 cold damage, and the target is dazed**Property (Poison):** Whenever an attack with this weapon hits, the target takes 2d8 poison damage.**Power (Daily):** Free action. **Trigger:** Whenever an attack with this weapon hits a creature dazed by this weapon. **Effect:** The creature is stunned (save ends).**Sun's Sliver**

Minor Artifact

This sliver of pure sunlight is the only object in the universe that can truly destroy the Winter Witch.

Wondrous Item: Cannot be crafted**Property:** The creature that possesses the *Sun's Sliver* takes no ill effect from cold weather and gains ice walk.**Property:** The creature that possesses the *Sun's Sliver* gains resist cold 10.**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. **Effect:** You and allies within 5 squares of you regain the use of your second wind and all spent encounter powers.**Power (Daily):** Standard Action. **Effect:** If the artifact is used against Koliada the Winter Witch when she is unconscious and at 0 hit points or fewer, this use destroys the Winter Witch and the *Sun's Sliver*.



THRONE OF THE STONE-SKINNED KING



by Logan Bonner

illustrations by John Stanko ♦ cartography by Sean MacDonald

“In this war, we face not only mortal danger, but a more sinister attack—an assault against our hearts and minds. The githyanki threaten to drive us to defeat through neglect and treachery. Neglect because we refuse to take the bold steps we must to survive, and treachery because our enemies lead astray those who could be our allies, and mobilize them against us.”

—Amyria, appealing to the Coalition



BACKGROUND

Before beginning their attacks, the githyanki built a network of allies across many planes. One of these allies is Cachlain, a powerful fomorian known as the Stone-Skinned King. From his secluded lair, he provides transport for the forces of evil. Like the Elsir Vale, Cachlain's realm contains portals to different planes and locations. Although the githyanki possess many means of transport, the Stone-Skinned King's portals are especially worrisome, since they connect to lands near several cities of the Coalition. The fomorian has established total control over the portals, using rituals that took decades to take effect; no one passes through one of the portals without Cachlain's seal.

Cachlain rules a subterranean complex of caverns, much of it chipped from great crystals and shaped by cyclops slaves into immaculate, enormous corridors and rooms. Cachlain is particularly fond of beautiful magical craftwork, and his citadel is filled with arcane torches and doorways that open on command. Constructs are his favorite marvel, and he has many throughout his realm. Once, when the king was in an especially irrational mood, he had a stone golem pried apart and its stone armor affixed to his skin. This gave him his name.

Cachlain's assistance to the githyanki came only recently, after a human named Sovacles replaced the king's former advisor. Sovacles urged cooperation with the githyanki, and he holds great influence over Cachlain. No one is certain where Sovacles came from or how he ended up in the fomorian's court.

The Coalition's war council found out about the githyanki troop transports, but it doesn't know how many troops are moving through Cachlain's portals, or what Cachlain is gaining for his assistance. The Coalition also knows that Cachlain provided the *Seed of Winter* to the invaders in "Alliance at Nefelus." Rumors have spread that Cachlain wants the *Seed of Winter* back. Furthermore, he has been using a portal that connects the Feywild to a region near where the Elsir River flows from the mountains. His underlings have been taking slaves from the Elsir Vale, then transporting them through the portal into a grove that lies on the outskirts of Cachlain's realm.

Meanwhile, the war council has been thrown into an uproar in the PCs' absence. Enemy forces have killed two members, Lord Torrance of Sayre and Kalad of Overlook. The war council needs a new leader, and it has two empty seats.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs return to Sayre from Nefelus, bearing the *Seed of Winter*. The council members seek a leader to head a new war council that will oversee all the armies involved in the war. The PCs engage in a skill challenge in which they nominate their preferred candidate (most likely Amyria). Then, the council discusses the fomorian king Cachlain. For some time, githyanki troops have been traveling through the Feywild and to the world using the natural gates within Cachlain's dark domain, and spies have discovered that the *Seed of Winter* was given to Nefelus's enemies by the fomorian. The PCs are sent to the court to find out what Cachlain is getting for his help and to try to make him to leave the conflict, or even switch sides. They carry the *Seed of Winter* as a bargaining chip.

THE QUESTS

As the PCs pursue the central goals of "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King," they have several opportunities for picking up minor tasks from potential allies.

Major Quest—End Cachlain's Interference

Enemies of the PCs have allied with Cachlain, the Stone-Skinned King, so that they can use the magic portals of his Feywild kingdom as a staging area for raids. The PCs travel to the fomorian king's realm, where they must convince him (through diplomacy or force) to stop allowing githyanki troops to travel through his domain.

Reward: 8,000 XP.

Minor Quest—Assist the Eladrin

A group of eladrin seek to end their enmity with Cachlain and form an alliance. After the PCs meet these eladrin, they can help them achieve this goal.

Reward: 1,600 XP.

Minor Quest—Turn Bram Ironfell

The PCs meet Bram Ironfell of House Karak once more. He is now serving as an ambassador for the githyanki. If the PCs can turn him to the side of good, he could be a valuable ally in the future.

Reward: 1,400 XP.

Minor Quest—Speak to Talyrin

Sovacles, Cachlain's new advisor, turned the king against his cyclops advisor Talyrin when he took over. Talyrin is imprisoned somewhere near Cachlain's throne room, and if the PCs find her prison, they can gain her as an ally against Sovacles.

Reward: 1,400 XP.

After following Cachlain's slavers to find a portal to the Feywild and obtaining the fomorian's seal from those slavers, the PCs enter the Feywild. They're soon attacked by firbolgs, which want to return the PCs and the *Seed of Winter* to followers of Inzira, the Daughter of the Frostwhite Forest, who claims to be the proper owner of the artifact. Inzira's general seeks an alliance with Cachlain, fearing the machinations of Sangwyr—a fomorian upstart and their mutual enemy. The general allows the PCs to borrow the *Seed of Winter* and go to Cachlain's court, hoping they can form an alliance with him.

When they reach Cachlain's realm, the PCs meet with the king and his advisor Sovacles, and they discover that Sovacles nearly controls the king. Rebuffed for the time being, the PCs must await another audience with the king. As they explore the court, they discover the sheer number of troops traveling through the domain, and that the forces of evil have promised to spy on Cachlain's enemies in exchange for his help. Bram Ironfell, from "The Lost Mines of Karak" (*Dungeon* #159), reappears as an ambassador to the court from the githyanki. The PCs can also meet a cyclops oracle who formerly advised Cachlain but is now imprisoned in a hidden jail.

Cachlain's rival sends assassins to slaughter the PCs. The assassination attempt foreshadows a military assault that happens soon after, as the fomorian rival attempts to seize Cachlain's domain. As the PCs help fight them off, Bram Ironfell's moment of truth approaches, and the PCs' actions determine whether he becomes a foe or an ally.

The PCs learn that Sovacles had something to do with the invasion, and they confront the advisor. However, the advisor still has Cachlain under control and has convinced him that the PCs were responsible for the attacks. As the PCs battle Sovacles and Cachlain, the advisor reveals that he works for Tiamat. Enraged at this news, Cachlain drops the PCs and Sovacles into a gladiatorial arena below the throne room. Sovacles reveals his true form as a powerful shapeshifter and an exarch of Tiamat.

ADVENTURE PACING

Both the skill challenge early in the adventure and the time the PCs spend in Cachlain's court can take whatever amount of time you feel is appropriate, and their durations are left vague. If your players are antsy, or worry that the githyanki danger can grow while the PCs spend time away from the world, bring on encounters or events in a more rapid succession.

If the PCs succeed, they convince Cachlain to form an alliance with the eladrin, who receive the *Seed of Winter* as a token of the agreement. The PCs also find hints that the githyanki's efforts in their world have suffered serious setbacks in recent weeks, and their forces are preparing to consolidate at their largest stronghold.

PREPARING FOR ADVENTURE

"Throne of the Stone-Skinned King" takes the PCs into the dark places of the Feywild and involves them in political intrigue. The PCs go through several skill challenges as they try to find solutions to the difficult, uncertain situations caused by the war.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Descriptions of the different segments of the adventure follow, and tactical encounter complete with stat blocks and maps give you everything you need to run each encounter. If you aren't sure how to use the tactical encounter format, see a previous *Scales of War* adventure, such as "Alliance at Nefelus."

TREASURE PREPARATION

"Throne of the Stone-Skinned King" uses the treasure parcel system described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The PCs should gain a total of 10 treasure parcels. The Treasure Parcels sidebar lists the most likely places to find parcels, so you can fill in the blanks with the parcel numbers noted below. The magic items should come from the players' wish lists, with most of the higher-level items appearing in parcels found later in the adventure, and the 20th-level magic item found on Virizan's body.

VITAL INFORMATION

This adventure reveals *Scales of War's* true villain: Tiamat, the god of greed, wealth, and envy. If you're running the adventure path, make sure the players find out the following plot points:

- ◆ Kalad and Lord Torrance of the Coalition were killed while the PCs were in Nefelus. Thrown into chaos, the Coalition requires new leadership. With Kalad gone, the Coalition also lost its best general.
- ◆ Cachlain, the fomorian king, has grown more aggressive. He takes slaves from areas that are under attack, and transports githyanki troops through his realm.
- ◆ The githyanki leave nothing when they invade, and they bring about the total destruction of any lands they conquer. Vlaakith, the Lich Queen, no longer leads the githyanki. (Bram Ironfell reveals these facts.)

- ◆ The fomorian named Sangwyr seeks to conquer Cachlain's realm, and only an alliance between Cachlain and Inzira, a noble eladrin, can keep him at bay. He would be a strong ally of the githyanki (and Tiamat).
- ◆ Sovacles is Virizan, one of Tiamat's exarchs, and Chillreaver (from "Alliance at Nefelus") was an exarch, as well. Tiamat is helping the githyanki and is behind the githyanki attacks.
- ◆ The githyanki have outposts all across the world, but their largest is a fortress called Garaitha's Anvil, from which the githyanki launched their invasion from their home on the Astral Sea.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

As soon as the PCs return from Nefelus, they're summoned to meet with the leaders of the Coalition. Skill challenge "SC1: The Coalition's Leader" (page 74) takes place over days or weeks, so the PCs have time to catch up with their allies amid the chaos of choosing a leader for the Coalition.

TREASURE PARCELS

- Parcel A: _____, SC1: The Coalition's Leader.
 Parcel B: _____, A1: Slay the Slavers.
 Parcel C: _____, A1: Slay the Slavers.
 Parcel D: _____, A4: Battle Camp Raid.
 Parcel E: _____, B3: Assassination Attempt.
 Parcel F: _____, B3: Assassination Attempt.
 Parcel G: _____, B1: Disrupted Banquet.
 Parcel H: _____, B4: Caged Animals.
 Parcel I: _____, B6: Arena of Blood.
 Parcel J: _____, B6: Arena of Blood.

Based on the guidelines in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, the following parcels can go in the spaces above. Rely on the wish lists your players gave you for the first six parcels.

- Parcel 1: Magic item, level 20.
 Parcel 2: Magic weapon, level 19.
 Parcel 3: Magic item, level 19.
 Parcel 4: Magic item, level 18.
 Parcel 5: Magic item, level 18.
 Parcel 6: Magic item, level 17.
 Parcel 7: Four platinum bars minted in Tu'narath, each worth 9,000 gp (36,000 gp total).
 Parcel 8: An emerald faceted by cyclops experts (15,000 gp) and 170 pp.
 Parcel 9: Bag of precious gems worth a total of 16,500 gp and 10,000 gp.
 Parcel 10: 300 pp.

RETURN TO THE COALITION

When the PCs return, they find that the Coalition has been shaken up by several events. While the PCs and Amyria were absent, the politically savvy Lord Divian Torrance maneuvered to become the head of the council. The dwarf Kalad, one of the PCs' most outspoken allies, had become an effective general for the Coalition's armies and had earned the enmity of the githyanki. While preparing for a battle near Sherrbyr, he was assassinated by the githyanki. Without his leadership, the battle ended in defeat for the Coalition.

Shortly before the PCs finished their battles to save Nefelus, Torrance went missing. Githyanki from Garaitha's Anvil claimed he came to them as a representative of the council, seeking a diplomatic compromise to prevent further bloodshed. Seeing this as an affront and a threat, they killed Torrance for his arrogance.

Now, the Elsir Vale and Sayre seats on the Coalition are open, and the council lacks a leader. The head of Brindol's council, Eoffram Troyas, seeks both spots. Many people, both citizens of the Elsir Vale and influential people in other regions now ruled by the Coalition, have suggested Amyria as a replacement for either seat and as leader. The PCs take part in a skill challenge as they put forth a candidate they'd like to see on the council and run a brief campaign to put that person in power.

Skill Challenge: SC1: The Coalition's Leader (page 74).

NEWS OF THE STONE-SKINNED KING

Regardless of who leads the Coalition's council, the Coalition has a task it wants the PCs to undertake. The fomorian Cachlain, known as the Stone-Skinned King, is allied with the githyanki. They have been funneling troops through his domain in the Underdark of the Feywild, taking advantage of the numerous portals to other lands that lie within it. Githyanki have moved more rapidly due to this, but no one is sure how severe the problem is. Caliandra has been tracking the situation in the Feywild and knows that Cachlain wants the *Seed of Winter*. The fomorian once believed it belonged to him, and Caliandra believes he lent it to aid the attack on Nefelus.

The Coalition wants to decipher Cachlain's motives and prevent him from helping the githyanki, if possible. They believe the PCs are the only ones strong enough to safely travel to the king's domain and deal with him.



ENTER THE FEYWILD

Taking advantage of the chaos caused by the githyanki's attacks, Cachlain has been sending underlings to the world to collect slaves for his court. By comparing the locations of a few raids in the Elsir Vale, the Coalition has guessed that the slavers have been traveling out of Rhest, a ruined city that was once the capitol of the kingdom of Rhestilor. Some explorers were trying to excavate the ruins, but no one's heard from them in a long time.

If the PCs go to the ruins, they find the cyclops slavers didn't take much care to cover their tracks. They hold slaves in a small room, preparing to take them

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: A CRUCIAL REVEAL

Since this adventure contains one of the big reveals for *Scales of War*, I wanted to make sure that none of the plot threads got lost. Clearly laying out the plot points we expect the DM to convey and the PCs to understand is crucial to making an adventure in a series successfully fill its role. The "Vital Information" section also reminds the DM to keep the githyanki threat lingering even though they don't appear much in this adventure.

—Logan Bonner

THE SEED OF WINTER

Over the course of most of this adventure, the PCs still carry the *Seed of Winter* they gained during "Alliance at Nefelus." The *Seed* isn't pleased about being used as a bargaining chip, and it makes its wishes known. When it realizes it has the chance to return to Inzira's possession, it decides that's what it truly wants. The *Seed* is impatient and vocal about its wishes, but Inzira can calm it for the immediate future. The *Seed* proves useful when fighting the inferno bats in "B2: Invasion Tunnel" (page 94) and the winter wolves in "B4: Caged Animals" (page 98).

back to Cachlain's court. By defeating the cyclopes, the PCs find the special ritual scroll given to the cyclopes to let them access a portal back to the Feywild. The slaves are all citizens of nearby towns in the Elsir Vale. If the PCs kill the slavers and set the slaves free, neither group will be missed—they're small potatoes to the fomorian king. He's more interested in the *Seed of Winter*.

Tactical Encounter: A1: Slay the Slavers (page 77).

FIRBOLG HUNTERS

Once the PCs arrive in the Feywild, they find themselves inside a large circle surrounded by standing stones. This is the fey demesne of the Sky Shaper, an archfey who can control the course of the moon and sun within his small realm. Cyclops slavers were using it as a base, but the Sky Shaper was pleased when the firbolgs recently arrived and killed the cyclopeses in a glorious battle.

These firbolg hunters, working to gain favors from the eladrin of the Frostwhite Forest, have staked out this grove. The eladrin have detected the path of the *Seed of Winter* and helped set up the firbolg ambush. The firbolgs want to capture the PCs. The first group doesn't speak. They fight for the sake of fighting, wanting to test the PCs' mettle. In the second battle, if the firbolgs find out the PCs are willing to meet with the eladrin peacefully, they volunteer to lead them, but the firbolgs still ask if they can fight until one side submits.

Tactical Encounter: A2: Sky Shaper's Grove (page 79).

Tactical Encounter: A3: Firbolg Cave (page 82).

ELADRIN ENCAMPMENT

After the battle, the firbolgs lead (or carry, if the PCs lost) the PCs to a battle camp of eladrin ruled by Inzira, Daughter of the Frostwhite Forest. The firbolgs depart soon after, tired of the companionship of other humanoid.

In the battle camp, the PCs meet one of Inzira's lesser generals, Druemmeth Goldtemple. He is a tall, muscular eladrin with long, dark brown hair and, true to his name, streaks of gold in the hair above his ears. Adorned in mithral chainmail and wearing a longsword, he's clearly prepared for battle.

PYRADAN

A dusk harrier named Pyradan leads this small group of firbolgs and their beast allies. He's comfortable in battle, but gruff and tactless when interacting with others. He works for the eladrins only because they have the foresight to find powerful opponents that can give the firbolgs a good fight. He uses the missions as training, and he asks only that he be allowed to take trophies of his victories.

Druemmeth questions the PCs. He has heard tales about the war against the githyanki, so he knows the PCs by reputation and is friendly to them as long as they aren't aggressive. In fact, he apologizes for sending the firbolgs after them, claiming that he would have approached them more diplomatically had he known who they were.

However, Druemmeth hasn't received word about the events in Nefelus, and he wants to know how the PCs attained the *Seed of Winter*. If they're forthcoming and appear honest, he believes them easily. Otherwise, his attitude is no longer friendly, and his interrogation grows more threatening. Whether he finds out what he wants to know with little effort or is unable to pry any information from the PCs, he asks the PCs to leave his tent while he converses with Inzira, his ruler. When he brings the PCs back in, he has prepared a means for the PCs to converse with Inzira.

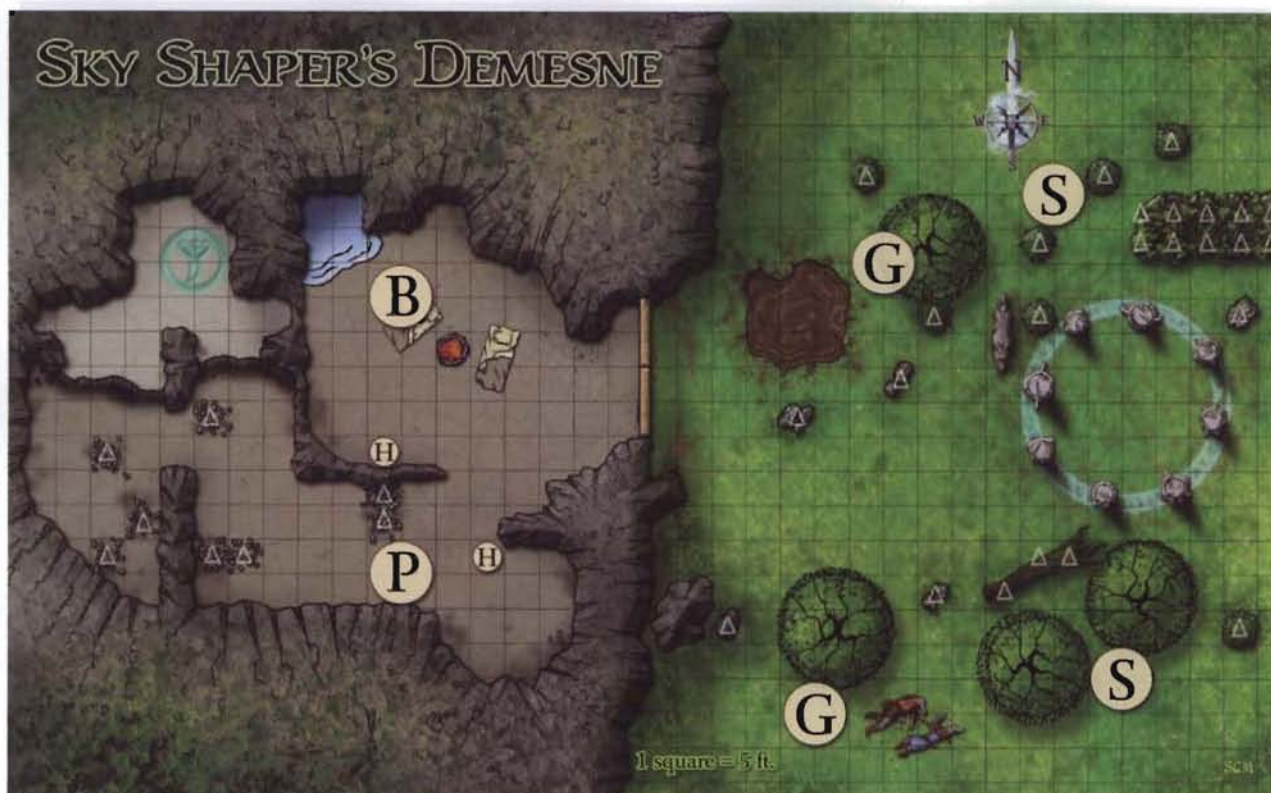
Read the following:

The general says, "Inzira seeks a temporary alliance with the Stone-Skinned King. It's best if she speaks with you." He then removes a mithral medal from his chest and pins it to the wall of the tent. Ice spreads from it, crystallizing across a large surface and forming the image of a female eladrin's face. With her long white hair and piercing, icy blue eyes, Inzira seems cold and unfeeling. Her eyes study you as she speaks.

"The Seed of Winter belongs to me, not to you and certainly not to the Stone-Skinned King. It was a gift from Koliada to me when I was a mere child, and I have no intention of parting with it. However, I see that the fomorian and I must work together to foil the plots of Sangwyr. Use the Seed of Winter for the time being, as a tool to make a way into the King's court. I'll be expecting you to return it when you're finished.

"It's convenient that our interests align, so you'll be my messengers. Tell the fomorian I do not like him, and I know he does not like me. However, Sangwyr utterly hates both of us, and we must stop his stupid uprising."

Druemmeth offers to guide the PCs to a place near the Stone-Skinned King's palace where they can easily find some of the king's guards. The general is proper and respectful, although it's clear he resents that the PCs were sent as Inzira's emissaries rather than himself. He also mentions that emissaries were sent before, but haven't been heard from again. He asks that the PCs attempt to find them and have them released—if they're alive.



SANGWYR'S CRONIES

Before the PCs and Druemmeth can leave the battle camp, raiders affiliated with the upstart fomorian Sangwyr make a strike against them. While the other eladrin soldiers fight off lesser members of the horde, a few monsters break through to attack the tents around Druemmeth. After the assault, if Druemmeth still lives, he urges the PCs to make their way to Cachlain's court even sooner.

Tactical Encounter: A4: Battle Camp Raid (page 85).

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: MAPPING THE COURT

You'll notice the map doesn't show a very big portion of Cachlain's domain. One of the difficulties of trying to show a fomorian palace is the scale: How do you make a place big enough for Huge creatures but still keep your map legible? I also wanted to make it possible for the DM to construct the map using Dungeon Tiles without too much extra effort and substitution.

I clustered the main areas of the map fairly close together, using a couple of levels of elevation to make it feel as if there was more space. Still, the PCs are seeing only a very small segment of the vast underground complex that makes up the Stone-Skinned King's entire palace.

—Logan Bonner

CACHLAIN'S COURT

After their first audience with Cachlain and Sovacles, the PCs have some time before Sangwyr attacks. They have a chance to explore a few areas of the court, and meet some old and new allies. Most of the encounters in the court are attacks by Sangwyr's followers, or they occur toward the end of the adventure—when the PCs face Sovacles and Cachlain.

THE COURT

A vast network of subterranean tunnels, both natural and constructed, the domain of the Stone-Skinned King is labyrinthine. Dozens of exits to the surface dot the landscape. Cachlain's troops patrol that territory aboveground, which the king considers a part of his domain.

The PCs can approach the guards to be taken to the king, and they reach the area with little trouble. Infiltration is possible, if they can move into one of the exits. However, navigating the winding, twisting tunnels of the Feydark palace is nearly impossible, not to mention dangerous. Some of the tunnels don't even appear to lead back to the central complex, and connecting tunnels can be found only through secret doors. If the PCs decide to enter this way, create a complexity 2 or 3 skill challenge.

When the PCs enter the tunnels, read:

As you descend into the tunnels of Cachlain's domain, the air becomes cold and stagnant. The purple crystal that forms the walls around you glows faintly. Strange, vibrantly colored mosses and fungi carpet the floors and walls, although the living quarters and common areas you pass through are scoured clean. Slaves and their cyclops overseers walk the halls, and you begin to see a wider variety of fey as you move closer to the heart of Cachlain's holdings.

The map and descriptions here describe only a small segment of the fomorian's massive underground palace. Numerous passages, living quarters for servants, and workshops used by cyclops artisans sprawl out for miles surrounding the main complex of the court.

FEATURES OF THE COURT

Most of the rooms and halls of Cachlain's court share some common features.

Illumination: Bright light. Magic torches line the walls, emitting yellow and blue light.

Doors: In most areas, unlocked double doors are large enough for Huge creatures to fit through, or no doors exist there at all.

Walls: Most walls are hewn from purple crystal and supported in some places with beautifully forged iron plates.





1. FOYER

The only room connecting public passageways and Cachlain's throne room, this room also contains a secret door that leads to a set of stairs connected to a hidden prison (area 6).

Perception Check

When PCs are in this room, compare their passive Perception checks to the DC below.

DC 25: *You catch a faint light shining through the deep purple crystal of the eastern wall of this room. It outlines what is almost certainly a secret door.*

2. THRONE ROOM

This room is where Cachlain spends most of his time, watching the gladiatorial matches through the enormous window in the floor of the room. It's also where he speaks to important visitors.

A warding ritual protects the door between this room and the hallway, and only a command from Cachlain or Sovacles can open the door.

The PCs have a skill challenge here when they first arrive to meet with the king.

Skill Challenge: SC2: Audience with the King (page 28).

The PCs later engage in battle with Cachlain and Sovacles in this room. See the "Confrontation" section.

3. CACHLAIN'S BEDCHAMBER

The fomorian king's sleeping quarters are spacious and ornately decorated, with iron filigree along the walls. It's unlikely the PCs end up in this room, and there's no chance Cachlain invites them there for any reason. Inside the room is an enormous bed with blankets made of luxurious animal hides.

The only interesting information that can be found in this room is in the fomorian king's diary. It has a brief description of each day, with few facts and a lot of paranoid rambling and screeds against the king's rivals. The king hasn't made an entry for several months—not since Sovacles became his advisor.

4. BANQUET HALL

An enormous table fills the center of this room. It's made from a huge, ancient tree split in half. A few twigs still grow from it. The table is ringed with chairs, some sized for Large creatures and others for Medium creatures. Cachlain doesn't join in at banquets, instead allowing his closest cyclops followers to entertain his guests.

THE AMBASSADORS' BANQUET

The PCs are invited to a banquet at one point, at which they meet the ambassadors from other courts. Among their number are the following individuals.

Droeth: This laconic cyclops speaks for Uluhcouram, a fomorian monarch and close relative of Cachlain's. Droeth doesn't appear to have any pressing business, and he has been in Cachlain's domain for a while, apparently wasting time. However, although he appears to be a lazy, uninteresting toady, he's an oni spiritmaster in disguise. The spiritmaster dispatched Droeth some time ago and plans to take the ambassadors hostage and steal the *Seed of Winter*.

Andrinna Baelsblood: A haughty tiefling, Andrinna claims to be a direct descendant of the rulers of Bael Turath. She runs numerous slave trading operations in the world and has come to propose sharing resources with Cachlain.

Troke: Dissatisfied with his treatment here, this satyr came to resolve a territory dispute with the king, and he hasn't had an audience for nearly a month. He represents the Circle of Crownstone, a collective of fey that live in lands bordering Cachlain's domain.

Bram Ironfell: This former ally now represents githyanki interests in Cachlain's court. The PCs have a chance to talk to him during the banquet. He isn't willing to talk about what he has done to achieve his place in the githyanki hierarchy, nor the ways he betrayed the people of the Elsir Vale (more out of shame than secrecy). However, he doesn't mind talking about the githyanki and what he has learned about them. The following are some of the bits of information the PCs can pry out of him.

- ◆ Bram deserted the people of the Elsir Vale because he was certain they were going to lose the war, and it was better to survive by joining the enemy than to die with the others. He's surprised at the PCs' success fighting off the githyanki and their allies.
- ◆ Vlaakith, the Lich Queen, once the leader of the githyanki, has been slain. The githyanki are now led by Emperor Zetch'r'r in a campaign to bring war and conquest across the planes.

- ◆ The githyanki are merciless and destructive, and they leave nothing behind in realms they conquer. After sacking an entire land and destroying everything they find, the githyanki leave only a barren wasteland.

During the banquet, some of Sangwyr's agents attempt to take hostages. The agents placed sedatives in the meal, so keep track of which PCs partake of food and drink at the banquet. Refer to "B1: Disrupted Banquet" to run the sleeping elixir.

Tactical Encounter: B1: Disrupted Banquet (page 91).

ENCOUNTERS IN THE COURT

The middle encounters in Cachlain's court don't occur in any particular order. Once the PCs arrive, they meet with the king, but they'll have some time to kill before they see the king again. They later are called back to the throne room for the "Throne Room Showdown" encounter. Between those bookends, they explore. Use encounters based on where the PCs go or what secrets they try to uncover. If you know PCs intend to go to one place repeatedly, consider triggering the encounter on a later visit. Sangwyr and his githyanki allies (which plan to betray Cachlain) engineered all the attacks, but the assaults don't necessarily occur in sequence or in close proximity. Put whatever amount of time feels best between the fights.

Assassination Attempt (Area 6): The PCs might explore the secret prison after seeing the secret door. Or they might hear rumors about Cachlain's former advisor, and receive a hint that she's in a hidden prison.

Disrupted Banquet (Area 4): Bram invites the PCs to the banquet as a token of respect. If they refuse, Cachlain's relative Droeth requests their attendance (and it's a bad idea to refuse the king's kin).

Invasion Tunnel (Area 5): This battle might occur when the PCs return to rest or right after the "Disrupted Banquet" or the "Caged Animals" encounters. In either case, this invasion raises an alarm that gets the PCs' attention.

Caged Animals (Area 8): The PCs might be in the arena to watch a bout, hear rumors about a plot to cause mischief, or respond to an alarm.

5. AMBASSADORS' QUARTERS

Visitors to the court stay in these modest rooms. Two of them are meant to house Medium creatures, and the northeast room is larger—sized for a Large or Huge visitor. The doors to the chambers lock and require a DC 20 Thievery check to open.

The middle room is for the PCs, and Cachlain's servants bring cots if there are more than four PCs. It's not particularly comfortable, but the beds are of high quality, and the room is quiet.

The room to the west houses Bram Ironfell and his two guards. See the sidebar below for more information about Bram Ironfell. He also makes an appearance in the "Disrupted Banquet" encounter.

Sangwyr's agents tunnel into these rooms and begin marauding through the halls.

Tactical Encounter: B2: Invasion Tunnel (page 94).

6. HIDDEN PRISON

Located below the other rooms on this level of the court, this prison is down a flight of stairs concealed behind a secret door. The prison contains three cells, each of which is occupied.

Talyrin: A former advisor to Cachlain, this cyclops is a wealth of information (page 71).

Eladrin Ambassadors: In one cell sit two eladrin followers of Inzira named Elletraius (male) and Serennel (female). Sovacles and the king jailed them shortly after they arrived two weeks ago seeking an audience so they could propose an alliance. Sigils covering the walls, floors, and iron bars prevent them from teleporting out of their cell. They have little new information and are curious about what has been happening outside. They've been talking with Talyrin from time to time, although they don't trust her any more than she trusts them.

"Legbreaker" Kimdal: This gnome might be the only prisoner who unequivocally deserves to be here. Known only for larceny and violence, this vicious thief awaits his execution. He's gruff and off-putting, and his only practical advice is about various ways to murder fey creatures and which ones have the best loot (arguably useful information for PCs).



BRAM IRONFELL, GITHYANKI AMBASSADOR

Since the PCs met him in "The Lost Mines of Karak" (*Dungeon* #159), the dwarf Bram Ironfell has gone from being a secret agent of Sarshan to serving as an ambassador on behalf of the githyanki. When they meet him in Cachlain's palace, the PCs realize that the dwarf has made a power grab among the githyanki forces and has been rewarded for treachery against the people of his homeland.

The more the PCs talk to him, the more they realize that he has some regrets about his decision. Ironfell seems harried and fearful. The PCs have a chance to talk with him at length during the banquet.

Ironfell is surrounded by githyanki bodyguards at all times. One of these, Arzoa, attempts to assassinate the PCs if they venture into the secret prison (see "B3: Assassination Attempt," page 96).

TALYRIN

This cyclops was once the king's advisor, but she was imprisoned when Sovacles took over her spot. Talyrin has been in this prison for months and is eager to help anyone who can release her. Though she's by no means a friend of good or of the eladrin, she's the lesser of two evils compared to Sovacles. Despite her situation, she's still fiercely loyal to Cachlain. If the PCs talk to her, they can learn the following information.

- ◆ Sovacles arrived about three months ago and quickly ingratiated himself with Cachlain. Soon after that, Talyrin was imprisoned in the middle of the night. She was imprisoned by Cachlain's order; no evidence or accusation is needed for the king to imprison someone. Synch this up with the amount of time that has passed in your campaign. Sovacles arrived at least one month before the PCs encountered the fey in "The Temple Between" (*Dungeon* #161).
- ◆ Talyrin believes that Sovacles has supernatural power that lets him control Cachlain. This is the first of the Stone-Skinned King's advisors to wield magic openly. Fearing its power, Cachlain was unwilling to choose anyone but sages and powerful warriors as advisors in the past.
- ◆ A rival of Cachlain's named Sangwyr has long coveted the Stone-Skinned King's caverns. For decades now, the upstart has fought both Cachlain and the eladrin of the Frostwhite Forest. Talyrin hears that Sangwyr's forces are growing, bolstered by allies from another plane. (She doesn't know they're githyanki.)
- ◆ Under Sovacles's guidance, conditions have gotten worse in Cachlain's realm. The troops moving through secret complexes deep below ground take food and resources that would go to those who live in the court. The cyclopes collect more and more slaves, and Sovacles sends them to assist the githyanki soldiers.
- ◆ After the eladrin in another cell told her that Inzira seeks an alliance, Talyrin has come to believe it's a good plan—if Sangwyr is truly becoming dangerous. She fears the rumors of his power might be lies spread by the eladrin to trick Cachlain, and she hasn't seen evidence that an attack is imminent.

Tactical Encounter: B3: Assassination Attempt (page 96).

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE GITH STILL MATTER

To remind the PCs who their main enemies are, a githyanki assassin makes a brief appearance. The ambush encounter also shows that the githyanki realize how big a threat the PCs present.

The skill challenge was a late addition to this encounter that I put in to make it a little more interesting and memorable. This challenge both imposes a time limit (as does the previous "Sway the Sky Shaper" challenge) and uses failures to alter the challenge. These simple alterations can add variety to a skill challenge and give it a sense of urgency and dynamism.

—Logan Bonner

7. GLADIATORIAL ARENA

Within a massive cavern, surrounded by a 10-foot-wide chasm, is a vast, flat pillar of bloodstained purple crystal. In this room, gladiatorial battles are held continuously for the pleasure of the fomorian king watching through the window at the apex of the cave. All the walls here are riddled with tunnel openings, creating dozens of platforms from which audience members can watch the matches. Betting is lively, as are calls for blood. All sorts of humanoids and fey beasts are brought here to battle, and Cachlain considers this the jewel of his palace.

The climactic encounter of this adventure takes place in this arena. See the "Confrontation" section on the following page.

8. ANIMAL PENS

Beasts used for gladiatorial matches are kept here, as are a rack of weapons and some chariots. Cyclops animal handlers, which are also trained guards, guard this area. A tunnel leads from this room to the slave pens and the quarters of free gladiators that fight here for fame and wealth.

When Sangwyr's raiders attack, they attempt to set the animals free from these pens.

Tactical Encounter: B4: Caged Animals (page 98).

CONFRONTATION

After a string of attacks by Sangwyr's followers, Cachlain invites the PCs back to his chamber to talk about the attacks.

As soon as the PCs arrive, read:

Sovacles commands that the doors to the throne room be closed, and they slam behind you. The advisor, clearly angered, yells, "The gracious king invited you into his palace, and you use trickery and deceit to compromise the security of his domain. You aid his enemy, Sangwyr, and you plot against our brave, wise king! At every opportunity, you've allowed his enemies into the king's domain and led them in their assault! Now, submit to imprisonment and the king might spare your lives."

If the PCs try to reason with the king and his advisor, they quickly find that logic won't work, and that Cachlain shares the irrational hatred Sovacles demonstrates for the PCs. Once the PCs become aggressive or anger Sovacles with their persistence, the advisor leads Cachlain in an attack against the PCs.

Tactical Encounter: B5: Throne Room Showdown (page 100).

This encounter leads into the climactic fight of the adventure, as the PCs and Sovacles drop into the gladiatorial arena below and face off.

Tactical Encounter: B6: Arena of Blood (page 102).

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE CHALLENGE OF THE CHALLENGE

Making a complexity 5 skill challenge is a big undertaking that we save only for important events. It also demands, really, that we go beyond the basic structure of a skill challenge that we set out in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. The basic structure works fine for something that will take only a handful of rolls, but longer challenges need more drama and surprises.

In this case, the machinations of the PCs' political rivals provide the twists. Although the players might figure out their plan for the challenge, the political gambits make them rethink their strategy and give characters who might not otherwise participate much a chance to make a big difference.

You'll also see some techniques in this challenge that break the rules of skill challenges. The most crucial of these is the ability to have more than 3 failures. This lets the DM take the gloves off and scare the PCs. If players get used to the standard number, the DM can keep that "if we fail this one, we might be done" tension going for a longer time.

—Logan Bonner

SHIFTY VILLAINS

Logan and I talked about this scene at great length. I really wanted Sovacles/Virizan to be a Wormtongue sort of character to the already mad Cachlain. All along, we wanted each of the five exarchs of Tiamat to be unique, and not just in terms of level or statistics. We wanted each adventure they appeared in during the *Scales of War* campaign to feel different, each of their abilities and appearances to be different, and most of all, we didn't just want five dragons. Certainly, it makes sense that most of Tiamat's exarchs would be dragons, but all of them? That's just boring.

Virizan is probably the wackiest of the bunch. He's a shapeshifter, which is unique, and while he has a draconic essence, he's been warped by Tiamat's magic to the point at which he's not a dragon anymore. The shapeshifting idea was Logan's, and I think it fits this adventure—and villain—very well. Virizan's insidious, deceitful words are matched by an equally deceptive form.

—Chris Youngs

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

If the PCs knocked Virizan out instead of killing him, Cachlain demands a quick execution, believing the exarch is too dangerous to be allowed to live. He absolutely refuses to let the creature leave his domain. If he has his way, the Stone-Skinned King has Virizan executed, and his remains torn apart by animals from the pens.

If the PCs convince Cachlain to let them interrogate Virizan, they find the exarch is extremely disciplined and obstinate. He would rather die than reveal any of his queen's secrets. However, he also boasts, and the PCs might learn the following information about Tiamat's plans:

- ◆ No one who opposes Tiamat will be left alive when her plans come to fruition.
- ◆ She has three other (living) exarchs. Virizan is cryptic, but the PCs can figure out a few details. Tiamat usually keeps one exarch to represent each of her heads, and the PCs have now defeated both her white and green exarchs. Three more remain, each certainly involved in the war against the PCs' world.

CACHLAIN'S CHOICE

After they reveal his advisor's true motives and protect his palace, the PCs have influence over Cachlain. He comes as close to trusting them as a fomorian can. With his autonomy restored, he releases Talyrin from her prison and reinstates her as his main advisor. She vouches for the PCs, too.

Cachlain agrees that Sangwyr is a true danger. He'll ally with Inzira and her eladrin for now, and even—though it pains him to do so—allow her to take the *Seed of Winter* as a token of this alliance. The *Seed* wants to go back to Inzira (for now), and anyone else who keeps it takes the -1 concordance penalty for every day he or she refuses the *Seed*.

The king refuses to help the githyanki again, but doesn't intend to take up arms against them. Sangwyr presents a big enough threat to him that Cachlain will be preoccupied with the upstart's destruction for some time. However, the king does have information about the githyanki strongholds, since they've been using his portals. He gives the PCs some information on a githyanki outpost in the mountains north of the Elsir Vale, including a fairly detailed map on how to reach it.

INZIRAX AND THE FROSTWHITE ELADRIN

To settle the specifics of the alliance, Druemmeth Goldtemple is invited to Cachlain's court. He thanks the PCs, and states that Inzira sympathizes with their alliance. If the PCs speak with her, they can persuade her to join the Coalition. She appoints Druemmeth to the council, effective once he finishes dealing with Cachlain.

BACK TO THE COALITION

Their task complete, the PCs can return to Sayre to deliver the news to the Coalition. Cachlain allows them to exit through one of his portals (and they arrive near the portal they first took to reach the Feywild). If they succeeded on either the Audience with the King skill challenge or the Release Cachlain's Mind skill challenge (in the "Throne Room Showdown" encounter), Cachlain gives them the sigil sequence so they can use Linked Portal or similar rituals to travel to his court.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: A FAMILIAR SCENE

Since the early stages of planning this adventure, the Insider crew wanted a scene like the showdown between Wormtongue and Gandalf in *The Two Towers*. This is the type of iconic scene it's good to sneak in once in a while. It's great when players have that moment of recognition as they realize they know they're taking part in a classic scene. Of course, it's bound to go differently, since you're dealing with a diverse lot of PCs.

Unlike Theoden, Cachlain is sort of a lout and a bastard. This wrinkle switches the idea up a bit. The PCs realize they need an alliance of some sort with the king, but they certainly won't be his friends.

—Logan Bonner

SCI: THE COALITION'S LEADER

Encounter Level 15 (6,000 XP)

SETUP

After the deaths of two of its members, the Coalition's council lacks a strong leader and needs representatives for the Eلسir Vale and Sayre. The PCs can nominate a candidate. Most likely, this would be Amyria. The members of the council make it clear that the PCs will not be accepted onto the council, since they are vital to combat efforts and are needed elsewhere. The candidate is selected by all the members of the council who aren't running for the seat, but the council members also listen to those they represent, so convincing the people of various regions is as important as convincing the council members themselves.

RIVAL CANDIDATES

Two major players oppose the PCs' candidate. Each time the PCs have a failure in the skill challenge, assign it as a success for one of these candidates, based on which one you think would do best at the activity described. Describe how these successes benefit the rivals, to let the PCs know how their adversaries fare and where the PCs need to step up. For example, if the PCs try to speak to the people of Overlook and fail at the Diplomacy check, you might decide that many of those people have jobs in Quelenna's trade organization, and give their support (and a success) to her instead.

If the PCs choose to support Eoffram or Quelenna instead of a third candidate, skip the skill challenge or do a simple (complexity 1) challenge. The PCs' support is probably enough to carry the candidate to victory, since the two are otherwise evenly matched.

EOFFRAM TROYAS

A member of the Brindol council, the male half-elf Eoffram Troyas is outspoken and rash, and he has become even more so as he hears more news of war. When speaking, he is somber, methodical, and humorless. Debate bores him, and he'd rather make quick, unilateral decisions than let issues get bogged down in endless chatter.

If you're playing *Scales of War*, Eoffram was the NPC who recruited the PCs in "Rescue at Rivenroar."

Represents: Brindol.

Motive: Though he truly seeks to do good, Eoffram believes his ideas are the only ones that matter. He's willing to sacrifice whatever he needs to if it helps end the war. A quick, decisive victory is what

he believes he needs to establish his leadership and immortalize his name. Eoffram wasn't chosen to advise the Coalition, and he still harbors resentment that he wasn't included.

Platform: Eoffram wants to be aggressive—to take the fight to the enemies of the Coalition. A show of force can, in his opinion, cause the enemy troops to scatter and retreat. He favors a combat crash course for citizens of all the Coalition's communities, along with recruiting mercenaries, followed by a rapid assault against the githyanki forces.

FACTIONS AND COUNCIL MEMBERS

If the PCs try to sway specific settlements or members of the council to their side, special rules apply. Each faction's effect applies only for one success; after a faction has sided with them, the PCs need to find additional allies.

Brindol: Eoffram Troyas made both friends and enemies on his council. If the PCs recruit this faction, they undermine his base. Eoffram loses one success if he has any.

Overlook: The people of Overlook respect the PCs because of their previous assistance and because Kalad allied with them. PCs receive a +2 bonus to attempts to recruit this faction.

Bejam: If the PCs convinced him to join the council, this deva from Nefelus is eager to support them and gives an automatic success.

Fariex: Fariex enjoys political squabbles and especially clever ripostes. If the PCs have succeeded at any political gambits, they receive a +2 bonus to checks to recruit him.

Caliandra: The elf barbarian queen respects strength of arms. If the PCs succeed at the "Blockade" political gambit, they receive a +2 bonus to checks to recruit her. If they fail at that gambit, they take a -2 penalty instead.

Inogo: If the PCs use Religion to recruit Inogo, they gain a +2 bonus to the skill check.

Odos: The githzerai leader isn't interested in these political games and wants the selection process to be over with. If the PCs are far ahead when they attempt to recruit Odos, they receive a +2 bonus to the checks.

QUELENNA ENTROMIEL

Since the council's inception, Quelenna has occupied a seat. Ruler of the settlement called Dornaihtos, she has influence over trade in several lands, and she can easily access raw materials needed for the war effort. Traders in every major settlement know her name. She's an expert at arranging deals, especially when time is tight, and some say she'll use bribes if it will help her.

Represents: Dornaihtos, a major trade city.

Motive: Quelenna wants Dornaihtos's fortunes to continue, and she thinks running the war council is a way to make herself more prominent and to secure better deals for Dornaihtos to provide war materiel.

Platform: Two words encapsulate Quelenna's proposal: caution and commerce. Quelenna believes—and makes this belief widely known—that the war won't last long, and that the free cities can weather the storm until the githyanki assault runs out of steam. She encourages a defensive posture and argues that building up the defenses of the cities is best for now and for the future. Of course, Dornaihtos is happy to provide the materials and expertise to build these fortifications.

THE COALITION'S LEADER

The PCs argue for their candidate, try to gather support, rebut the arguments of the other candidates, and train their candidate to be a better leader. Most checks in this challenge take one or more days to resolve, so the challenge takes up a bit of time.

Level: 15 (XP 6,000).

Complexity: 5 (requires 12 successes before 3 failures).

Special: When the PCs gain a failure, assign it as a success to one of the rival candidates (whichever is most likely to benefit from the PCs' failure on that specific task). The PCs fail the challenge only if a single rival gains 3 successes. Consequently, the PCs can have more than 3 total failures.

If the PCs have developed especially favorable relations with members of the council or leaders in regions of the Coalition, give them one automatic success (total, not per person or per region) to represent the support of those individuals.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, History, Insight, Religion, Streetwise.

Diplomacy (DC 18): The character speaks to common people, convincing them to urge their leaders to support the PCs' candidate.

Diplomacy (DC 23): Eoffram Troyas seeks both the Elsir Vale seat and the leadership of the council. If the PCs' candidate seeks only the Sayre seat and leadership, Eoffram fights less ardently, since the Elsir Vale seat will likely go to him. A character attempting this check gains a bonus equal to the number of successes the PCs have. This use of the Diplomacy skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

History (DC 18): The character uses his or her knowledge of historical warfare to coach the PCs' candidate on lessons to be learned from past battles, so that the candidate can look more knowledgeable about the art of war. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Insight (DC 18): A character watches one of the rival candidates speak and figures out some of that candidate's true motives. This also gives a +2 bonus to all checks during the next event (see below) triggered by that rival. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge, one success per rival.

Religion (DC 18): By encouraging the PCs' candidate to show religious devotion, the character gains the backing of many religious leaders in various regions. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Streetwise (DC 23): The character finds out that Quelenna Entromiel has been bribing officials to secure their support. Exposing her also removes 1 success from her tally, if she has any successes. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Bluff, Streetwise.

Bluff (DC 18): By misrepresenting the number of influential people supporting their candidate, the character sows doubt in the competition. The use of this skill does not grant a success in this challenge. Instead, the next political gambit (page 76) has its DC reduced by 5.

Streetwise (DC 11): By gathering or spreading rumors, the character finds ways to undermine a rival's support base. The use of the Streetwise skill for this purpose does not grant a success in this challenge. Instead, the next PC who makes a skill check in this challenge gains a +5 bonus.

Success: The NPC nominated by the PCs is chosen to lead the war council.

Failure: When a rival achieves three successes (in other words, three of the PCs' failures are assigned to that rival), that rival is chosen as the leader of the war council.

POLITICAL GAMBITS

The PCs' rivals aren't passive in this challenge. The following political events can happen during the course of the challenge, and give Eoffram and Quelenna opportunities to gain successes for themselves (bringing the PCs closer to defeat). Each gambit can appear after the PCs have a certain number of successes, and each entry mentions in what range it should appear. For example, "The Blockade" can occur when the PCs have 2, 3, or 4 successes, and the PCs choose whether to forgo actions when you announce that the event occurs.

THE BLOCKADE

This event occurs when the PCs have 2-4 successes.

A group of hobgoblins seize a road used by the Elsir Consortium and prevent the flow of goods. Quelenna uses this as evidence that trade is vital to the war, and she intends to make sure resources continue to move.

Effect: Any number of PCs can skip their next skill checks to travel to the affected region and try to break the blockade. One of the PCs makes a d20 roll, with a +5 bonus for each participating PC. The DC is 17.

Success: The PCs break the blockade, but they do not gain a success in the skill challenge.

Failure: Quelenna's mercenaries break the blockade, and she gains 1 success in the skill challenge.

RAID ON BRINDOL

This event occurs when the PCs have 4-7 successes.

A stealth raid by hobgoblins against Brindol is easily foiled by the city's guards. Eoffram claims this shows that the evil forces can be defeated easily, but the details of his story don't add up.

Effect: One or two PCs can skip their next skill checks to instead investigate the evidence of this raid. Each PC makes one DC 23 Perception check and one DC 23 Streetwise check. If one PC is sent, that PC must succeed on both checks; if two are sent, the PCs must succeed on at least 3 of the checks.

Success: The PCs reveal that the severity of the raid was greatly exaggerated, and there's no evidence that the hobgoblins were associated with the githy-anki. The PCs gain one success in the skill challenge.

Failure: Eoffram's views appear more credible, and he gains 1 success in the skill challenge.

ACCUSATION

This event occurs when the PCs have 7-9 successes.

Quelenna uses her connections to find out about the PCs' wealth, acquired from their various adventures, and uses this evidence to claim that the PCs have only their own profit in mind. Claiming the PCs are biased, she contends that the PCs' candidate is only a pawn who can offer them the best mercenary opportunities.

Effect: Each PC has to defend his or her motives.

Success: The PCs convince all present that their efforts are noble and intended for the greater defense of the world. Their backing of their candidate carries even more weight, and one PC gains a +2 bonus on the next skill check made during the skill challenge.

Failure: If at least one PC fails, Quelenna gains 1 success. If more than half of the PCs fail, they also lose 1 success, because someone they had already brought to their side decides to support Quelenna instead.

CHANGING SIDES

This event occurs when the PCs have 8 or more successes.

Once the PCs are close to victory, one of the other candidates might switch sides and come to the aid of the PCs. (You might choose to have a rival switch just after his or her second political gambit fails.)

Effect: If either rival has fewer successes than the other, he or she joins the PCs' cause and says that the PCs' candidate speaks for his or her people. This removes one candidate from contention. The rival gains or retains a seat on the war council for his or her trouble.

FALSE COMMANDS

This event occurs when the PCs have 9-11 successes.

Desperate to prove his plan's viability, Eoffram sends out false orders to three cities, commanding them to raise civilian armies and strike back at the invaders.

Effect: Up to three PCs can forgo their next skill checks to instead try to prevent the messages from being acted on. Each PC can attempt a DC 18 Endurance check to catch a messenger or a DC 18 Diplomacy check to convince the leaders of one city to ignore the orders. The PCs fail if they commit fewer than three of their members to this gambit (adjust the number of messages if you have fewer than three players).

Success: If all PCs succeeded, they prevent Eoffram's plan from working and likely save some lives. The PCs gain one success in the skill challenge.

Failure: Eoffram denies responsibility for the orders, claiming that the people demand this course of action. He claims that he must be given control of the council or the war effort is doomed to failure. He gains 1 success in the skill challenge.

A1: SLAY THE SLAVERS

Encounter Level 16 (7,600 XP)

SETUP

- 2 cyclops crushers (C)
- 2 cyclops slavers (S)
- 1 stone golem (G)

The PCs go down a narrow set of stairs that lead to a large room where water drains from the ruins above.

When the PCs look into the room, read:

Ahead is a room made of white stone brick. Deep channels built into the floor carry water out, away from the room, and you hear a steady flow of water to the south.

In the room sit four cyclopes, relaxing. Two have giant wooden clubs, and the other two have nets attached to their belts and spears slung across their backs. Near the entrance, a stone golem stands perfectly still.

Surprise

The PCs can try to gain surprise. The PC with the lowest bonus rolls a Stealth check opposed by the cyclopes' passive Perception checks. The PCs have surprise against all enemies that do not detect them.

Dungeoneering Check

DC 18: *This room looks newer than the surrounding ruins. Judging from the way water falls into the room, it appears the room was built to drain the swampy water away from the ruins, perhaps so they could be made livable once again. The construction uses dwarven methods, and the room was clearly not constructed by cyclopes or other fey.*

When the PCs see the people imprisoned behind the portcullis, read:

An iron portcullis blocks off a dead-end tunnel. Inside are several humans, dwarves, and other residents of the Elsir Vale. When they see you, they shout at you, begging for help.

2 Cyclops Crushers (C)		Level 14 Brute
Large fey humanoid		XP 1,000
Initiative +12	Senses Perception +16; truesight 6	
HP 171; Bloodied 85		
AC 26; Fortitude 27, Reflex 26, Will 25		
Speed 8		
⊕ Spiked Greatclub (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon		
Reach 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d10 + 8 damage.		
➤ Evil Eye (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Ranged sight; targets a creature the cyclops crusher has hit with a melee attack during this round; the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and all defenses until the end of the encounter or until the crusher uses <i>evil eye</i> against a different target.		
⚡ Tremor Smash (standard; recharge ☹ ☹) ⊕ Weapon		
Close blast 2; +17 vs. AC; 2d12 + 8 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Skills Athletics +18		
Str 23 (+13)	Dex 20 (+12)	Wis 19 (+11)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 10 (+7)	Cha 11 (+7)
Equipment scale armor, greatclub		

2 Cyclops Slavers (S)		Level 15 Controller
Large fey humanoid		XP 1,200 each
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +15; truesight	
HP 149; Bloodied 74		
AC 29; Fortitude 27, Reflex 29, Will 25		
Speed 7		
⊕ Spear (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon		
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Shuriken (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon		
Ranged 6/12; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.		
➤ Evil Eye (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Ranged sight; the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the cyclops slaver until the end of the encounter or until the slaver uses <i>evil eye</i> against a different target.		
⚡ Barbed Net (standard; requires net; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹) ⊕ Weapon		
Close blast 4; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).		
⚡ Sleep Powder Flask (standard; encounter) ⊕ Sleep		
Area burst 1 within 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw:</i> The target is knocked unconscious instead of slowed (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Skills Stealth +19		
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 24 (+14)	Wis 17 (+10)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 11 (+7)	Cha 10 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, spear, 3 nets, 10 shuriken, 1 sleep powder flask		

Stone Golem (G) **Level 17 Elite Soldier**

Large natural animate (construct) XP 3,200

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision**HP** 336; **Bloodied** 168; see also *death burst***AC** 33; **Fortitude** 33, **Reflex** 24, **Will** 24**Immune** disease, poison, sleep**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6; can't shift**Action Points** 1⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +23 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square and dazed (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The stone golem makes two slam attacks.

⊕ **Golem Rampage** (standard; recharge ⓧ; ⓧ)

The stone golem moves its speed plus 2 and can move through enemies' spaces, provoking opportunity attacks as normal. When it enters a creature's space (ally or enemy), the golem makes a slam attack against that creature. The creature remains in its space, and the golem must leave the space after it attacks. The golem must end its rampage in an unoccupied space.

⚡ **Death Burst** (when the golem drops to 0 hit points)

The stone golem explodes in a burst of jagged stones. Close burst 1; +23 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage, and the space it occupied is difficult terrain until cleared.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Str** 24 (+15)**Dex** 7 (+6)**Wis** 8 (+7)**Con** 24 (+15)**Int** 3 (+4)**Cha** 3 (+4)

TACTICS

The slavers' main goal is preventing the loss of any of the slaves they've just collected. All the cyclopes attack anyone who moves close to the portcullis. This room has a narrow entryway, so it's possible to let the fight stagnate if you create a bottleneck there. Give the PCs a good chance to move into the larger room. Of the enemies, only the golem is likely to move toward the entryway.

Cyclops Crushers: The crushers move into position to guard the slaves' cell, moving into the water if necessary. They use their bulk to block passage and attack with *tremor smash* to restrict their enemies' movement. If the cyclopes act before the PCs, the crushers move into position, then ready actions to attack anyone who comes into reach.

Cyclops Slavers: The slavers use shuriken and their *evil eye* powers to keep enemies at bay. They move in if multiple enemies are clustered together, and they toss barbed nets to entangle foes. Each slaver has one flask filled with powder that induces sleep, and they use these expensive items sparingly. They wait until the battle is going poorly before they throw their flasks. The slavers are in command and can order allies to move away from the PCs to make it easier to throw nets over them.

Stone Golem: The golem follows the slavers' orders and tries to keep the PCs away from the slavers and the prisoners. It flanks with one of the crushers. When all the PCs have spread out, or when one of the cyclopes drops to 0 hit points, the golem

uses *golem rampage* to hurt as many PCs as it can. The slavers direct the golem to use its slam attack to knock PCs into the water. Remember that the stone golem's slam attack can't push a creature if it's used during *golem rampage*.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Several braziers throughout the room provide bright light.

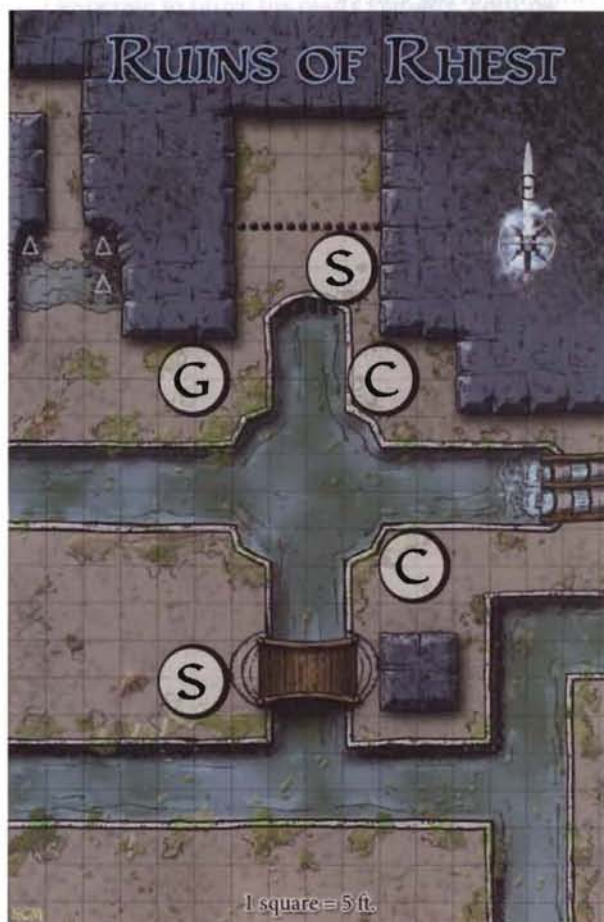
Rubble: The rubble near the entrance is difficult terrain.

Water: The water in the channels is 5 feet deep, so PCs need to swim (DC 10 Athletics). The monsters are tall enough that they can walk through the water in the channels, but they treat it as difficult terrain. The pool near the entrance is shallow, but it counts as difficult terrain.

Portcullis: Prisoners from the Elsir Vale are trapped in a small room behind a well-crafted portcullis. A DC 28 Strength check is required to force open the portcullis, and it has AC 4, Reflex 4, Fortitude 12, and hp 120. One of the cyclops slavers carries the key.

Walls: The walls are smooth stone, requiring a DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Treasure: The PCs receive a map and a ritual scroll that let them locate and access a portal near the ruins.



A2: SKY SHAPER'S GROVE

Encounter Level 17 (9,800 XP)

SETUP

2 firbolg ghostravens (G)
2 shadow snakes (S)

As the PCs appear in this grove after traveling through the portal from the Elsir Vale, read:

You are surrounded by a circle of tall stone columns. A ring of glowing runes encircles them, which dims after you arrive. You're in a verdant grove in the Feywild, and a bright moon hangs in the sky above the tops of the tall trees. A bit to the west is a steep cliff. A cave mouth is directly across from you. Two enormous doors made of wood entwined with vines span the tunnel, which is just inside the cave mouth.

The firbolg hunting party wants to surprise the PCs, so roll a Stealth check against the highest passive Perception of the party to determine surprise. Use the lowest bonus among the enemies (the firbolgs' +19). The PCs can't surprise the firbolgs, since the firbolgs know they're coming and the portal doesn't allow for a stealthy entry.

When the PCs see their enemies, read:

You see two humanoids, each about 12 feet tall. They wear headdresses crafted to look like crows and carry enormous picks with the same motif. Near them, you can barely make out two snakes, each of which has two heads and is made of solid shadow.



2 Firbolg Ghostravens (G)

Level 16 Elite Lurker

Large fey humanoid

XP 2,800 each

Initiative +18 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision
HP 236; Bloodied 118

Regeneration 5

AC 30; Fortitude 28, Reflex 29, Will 28

Vulnerable necrotic (if the firbolg ghostraven takes necrotic damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn)

Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects, immobilized, restrained, and slowed)

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⚔ Heavy War Pick (standard; at-will) ⚔ Weapon

Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage (crit 2d12 + 19).

⚔ Double Attack (standard; at-will)

The firbolg ghostraven makes two heavy war pick attacks. If the ghostraven hits two targets with the attacks, one of the targets of the ghostraven's choice is blinded (save ends).

☾ Moonfire (minor 1/round; recharge ⏳ ☒ ☒ ☒)

Ranged 10; +19 vs. Will; until the end of the firbolg ghostraven's next turn, the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.

👁 Ghostraven Form (minor; at-will) ⚔ Polymorph

Until the firbolg ghostraven attacks, it gains insubstantial and phasing and gains a fly (clumsy) speed equal to its walk speed. While in dim light or darkness, it has concealment while in this form.

Ghostraven Strike

When the firbolg ghostraven hits a target that couldn't see the ghostraven at the start of the ghostraven's turn, the attack deals 2d8 extra damage.

Hunter's Flight

A firbolg ghostraven doesn't provoke opportunity attacks while jumping or when moving at half speed while flying.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven

Skills Athletics +18, Nature +18, Stealth +19

Str 20 (+13) Dex 23 (+14) Wis 21 (+13)

Con 17 (+11) Int 13 (+9) Cha 15 (+10)

Equipment leather armor, raven helmet, heavy war pick

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Begins in dim light. See the "Sway the Sky Shaper" skill challenge.

Trees: The small (1 square) trees provide cover to any creature that stands in their spaces. The larger trees (3 squares across) have wider trunks, which are blocking terrain.

Doors: The doors aren't locked and can be opened easily. If this happens, combine the next encounter, "A3: Firbolg Cave," with this one.

Thorn Bushes: The thorn bushes are difficult terrain, and any creature moving into them or starting its turn in them takes 5 damage.

Statue: This stone statue represents a wolflike hound. A creature standing in the statue's space gains cover.

Difficult Terrain: The puddle, clusters of rocks, and fallen tree are difficult terrain.

2 Shadow Snakes (S)**Level 16 Skirmisher**

Large shadow beast (reptile)

XP 1,400 each

Initiative +17 **Senses Perception** +13; darkvision**HP** 158; **Bloodied** 79**AC** 30; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 27**Resist** 10 poison**Speed** 7, climb 7; see also *shifting shadowstrike*⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Poison**

Reach 2; +21 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

⊕ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

The shadow snake makes two bite attacks and shifts 1 square before, between, or after the attacks.

⊕ **Shifting Shadowstrike** (standard; encounter) ⊕ **Poison**

The shadow snake shifts 7 squares and makes a bite attack against two different targets at any point during its move.

Vanish into the Night (standard; encounter)

The shadow snake gains insubstantial and phasing, and is invisible in dim light until the end of its next turn.

Alignment Evil**Languages** –**Skills** Stealth +20**Str** 20 (+13)**Dex** 25 (+15)**Wis** 10 (+8)**Con** 22 (+14)**Int** 4 (+5)**Cha** 20 (+13)

TACTICS

With both cover from the trees and concealment from the darkness, enemies can be difficult to find (and hit) in this fight. The hunters take advantage of the terrain and lighting.

Firbolg Ghostravens: The firbolgs are silent throughout this encounter, never letting out more than a grunt of pain. They test the PCs by making a few bad moves, such as provoking opportunity attacks when they don't need to, to see if the PCs are worthy opponents. An Insight check (DC 20) reveals that they are testing the PCs and not fighting as aggressively as they could. If a firbolg is killed, the other retreats when it is low on hit points, rather than facing an unnecessary death.

By using *ghostraven strike*, the firbolgs use the darkness to the fullest. Although a firbolg can attack then immediately use *ghostraven strike*, it waits before striking to see if the PCs capitalize on its poor tactical decision.

The firbolgs fight to subdue, not to kill. A PC knocked unconscious by a firbolg doesn't need to make death saving throws.

Shadow Snakes: Unlike the firbolgs, the snakes fight on bestial instinct and do attempt to kill PCs. Using trees and standing stones to gain cover, the snakes attempt to hide whenever they can. They are extremely aggressive, unless the Sky Shaper transforms the environment to daylight, in which case they fight while retreating into the trees away from the center of the grove.

SWAY THE SKY SHAPER

A rumbling voice thunders through the sky. "You fight in my domain, do you? Fine, then. Entertain me." The PCs quickly realize this must be the Sky Shaper, the archfey that Caliantra told them about.

The PCs can try to sway the Sky Shaper to their side, causing him to make his domain sunny to disadvantage the firbolgs. As the PCs gain successes, the sky gets lighter, and it darkens again if they fail. Each PC can contribute once per round. Most attempts require a minor action, but a character who makes an Acrobatics check for a different reason can count that check for the challenge, and Arcana, History, and Insight checks are all free actions.

Level: 16 (XP 2,800).**Complexity:** 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).**Primary Skills:** Acrobatics, Bluff, Nature.

Acrobatics (DC 13): A character amuses the Sky Shaper with his or her antics. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this challenge.

Bluff (DC 13): By flattering the Sky Shaper with compliments, a character gains his favor.

Nature (DC 20): A character recognizes how the Sky Shaper has reshaped the terrain here and displays this knowledge, impressing the archfey.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, History, Insight, special.

Arcana (DC 20): A character searches his or her memory for details about the Sky Shaper and remembers the Sky Shaper's love of acrobatics and compliments. This skill gains no successes in this challenge, but reveals information about the applications of the Acrobatics and Bluff skills in this challenge.

History (DC 20): A character remembers that the Sky Shaper made pacts with fey. This skill gains no successes in this challenge, but reveals the conditions of the "Fey Pacts" special entry.

Insight (DC 13): A character learn about the Sky Shaper's tastes. This skill gains no successes in this challenge, but reveals one of the primary skills for this skill challenge.

Special (Critical Hit): Whenever a creature scores a critical hit, the Sky Shaper chortles with glee and rewards that creature. A successful critical hit gives 1 success (if a PC scored the hit) or 1 failure (if an enemy scored the hit).

Special (Fey Pacts): A creature of the fey origin (such as a gnome or an eladrin) or a fey pact warlock invokes a pact the Sky Shaper made with fey races in times past. Each fey character can use this special action to gain a maximum of 1 success in this skill challenge.

Special (Inaction): If a round passes without any PC attempting a check on the skill challenge, the PCs gain 1 failure. Tell the players about this effect when the encounter begins.

Success: If the characters earn 4 successes, the Sky Shaper decides to side with the PCs and alters the sky in this domain: The area is filled with bright light, and each enemy takes 5 necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.

Failure: If the characters accumulate 3 failures, the Sky Shaper supports the firbolgs and alters the sky in this domain: The area remains in dim light, and all light sources that normally create bright light produce dim light instead. In addition, until only one enemy remains, a random enemy becomes invisible at the start of each round of combat, and remains so until the start of the next round.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: TEACHING OLD DOGS NEW TRICKS

When looking for a magic animal to hunt alongside the firbolg—something that would fit in running alongside the Wild Hunt—I didn't find anything that fit what I was looking for. The thought of an innately magic animal made me think of the blink dog. Now, I've never actually *liked* blink dogs. I guess I just found them boring and didn't get why I should care that they hate displacer beasts. So I drew inspiration from blink dogs and created the portal hounds instead of updating blink dogs to something that didn't match their original concept. The portal hounds' ability to constantly teleport themselves and others drives home the point that these are magic fey dogs. Their ability to corner prey makes them a great match for the hunting firbolgs.

—Logan Bonner

PLANAR JAUNTING

When we first sat down to outline the *Scales of War* campaign, front to back, one of our goals was to present a campaign that fully encompassed the scope of the threat at each tier: localized (heroic), regional (paragon), and world-spanning (epic). The war theme of the overall campaign made this a snap, since we wanted to communicate to DMs and players alike that this war was something that crossed many, many worlds, and that more was at stake than simply the characters' own homes.

We first sent characters "off world" in "The Shadow Rift of Umbraforge," in *Dungeon* #158. The characters were only 4th level at the beginning of this adventure. This let us begin the hints about the large scope of the conflict. It also let us emphasize another 4th Edition aspect of the planes: They should be accessible to characters of all levels.

The characters then returned to the planes in "The Temple Between" (*Dungeon* #161), "Beyond the Mottled Tower" (*Dungeon* #163), and, finally, "Throne of the Stone-Skinned King."

One of the goals in this adventure, unlike previous planar journeys, was to really explore one of the elements of the Feywild that made it unique. Fomorian kings and their insane, almost Alice in Wonderland-style kingdoms, are a local favorite in the Wizards of the Coast offices. The concept also fit our Worm-tongue-style exarch, Virizan, perfectly.

—Chris Youngs

A3: FIRBOLG CAVE

Encounter Level 17 (8,400 XP)

SETUP

1 firbolg bloodbear (B)
2 portal hounds (H)
Pyradan, firbolg dusk harrier (P)

This encounter is connected to “A2: Sky Shaper’s Grove,” and it might be combined with that encounter if the PCs go through the door into the cave before the previous battle is over.

When a PC enters the cave, read:

Inside this cave, you see a blazing campfire surrounded by bedding. In the back of the cave, you can see a constructed wall made of large, natural stones.

When a PC sees the cliff in the back of the cave, read:

A 10-foot-tall cliff rises up in front of you, with a shaft of solid stone separating it into two sections. Atop the cliff, you see that a soft blue light shining from the floor illuminates the ceiling and walls above it.

When Pyradan joins the fight, read:

A firbolg carrying two spears, one of which has a hooked point, faces you. For the first time since you encountered these firbolgs, one speaks. He says, “It appears you are worthy to fight. And now that we know you’re a challenge, it will bring us great glory when we capture you for the Daughter of the Frostwhite Forest. Introduce yourselves so we might fight as warriors. I am Pyradan, and the fury of the Wild Hunt runs through my veins.”

Arcana Check

A character who sees the magic circle on top of the cliff, or sees another creature using the circle, can make this check.

DC 18: This magic circle grants clairvoyance, allowing anyone inside it to see nearby areas despite any solid objects in the way.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light in most areas, but the biggest room is lit with bright light from a campfire.

Campfire: Any creature that enters or starts its turn in the campfire takes 2d8 fire damage.

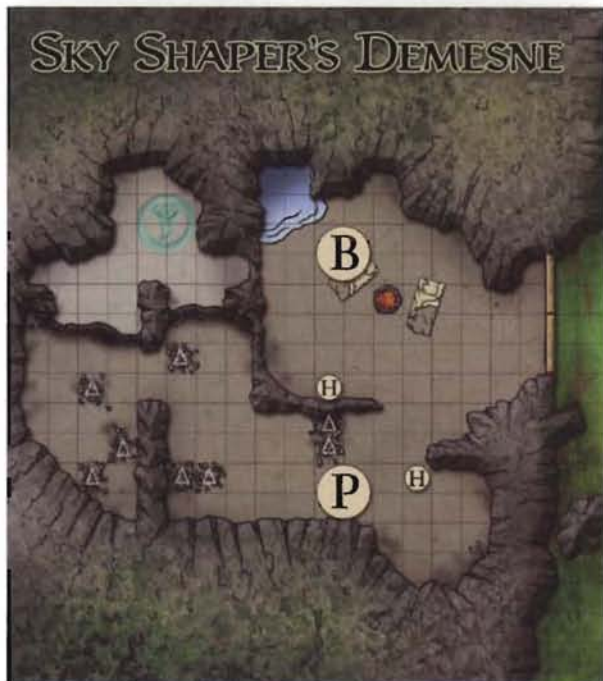
Water: Fresh water wells up in this cave from a spring. The water is difficult terrain.

Rocks: Piles of rock are difficult terrain.

Cliff: The cliff that leads up to the magic circle is 10 feet tall (2 squares) and requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Magic Circle: A creature inside the circle can see the area around the firbolgs. That creature has line of sight to all other squares in the cave and outside as far as the hound statue (see “A2: Sky Shaper’s Grove,” page 79). This does not give line of effect, but it does allow the creature to ignore concealment, and to see any creatures, including hidden creatures, in the area.

Doors: The doors aren’t locked and can be opened easily. Most likely, they’re already open when this encounter begins.



Firbolg Bloodbear (B) Large fey humanoid	Level 15 Elite Brute XP 2,400
Initiative +12 Senses Perception +18; low-light vision HP 240; Bloodied 120; see also <i>bloodbear form</i> Regeneration 5 (10 while in <i>bloodbear form</i>) AC 27; Fortitude 28, Reflex 25, Will 28 Vulnerable necrotic (if the firbolg bloodbear takes necrotic damage, its regeneration does not function on its next turn) Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects, immobilized, restrained, and slowed) Speed 8 Action Points 1	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will) Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 damage.	
⊕ Claw (standard; usable only while in bloodbear form; at-will) Reach 2; +18 vs. AC; 2d12 + 9 damage.	
‡ Double Attack (standard; at-will) The firbolg bloodbear makes two melee basic attacks. If the bloodbear hits with both attacks, it makes a secondary attack against the target. Secondary Attack: +17 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed.	
‡ Bloodbear Maul (standard; recharges when bloodied) Reach 2; targets a creature grabbed by the firbolg bloodbear; no attack roll; 4d10 + 9 damage, and if the bloodbear is in bloodbear form, it makes a bite attack against the target as a free action.	
‡ Bite (standard; usable only while in bloodbear form; at-will) +18 vs. AC; 3d12 + 9 damage, and if the target is granting combat advantage to the firbolg bloodbear, the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).	
☞ Moonfire (minor; recharge ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐) Ranged 10; +15 vs. Will; until the end of the firbolg bloodbear's next turn, the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.	
Bloodbear Form (when first bloodied; encounter) † Healing, Polymorph The firbolg bloodbear takes the form of a humanoid-bear hybrid. It regains all its hit points, gains regeneration 10, and gains bite and claw attacks. When the bloodbear is bloodied a second time, it reverts to its normal form until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Elven Skills Athletics +19, Intimidate +13, Nature +18 Str 24 (+14) Dex 20 (+12) Wis 22 (+13) Con 20 (+12) Int 12 (+8) Cha 13 (+8)	
Equipment hide armor, bear helmet	

2 Portal Hounds (H) Medium fey beast	Level 16 Controller XP 1,400 each
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +21; low-light vision Portal Aura (Teleportation) aura 2; when any enemy starts its turn within the aura, the portal hound can teleport that creature to a different square within the aura. HP 150; Bloodied 75 AC 30; Fortitude 26, Reflex 30, Will 28 Speed 7, teleport 7	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.	
‡ Dimensional Jaws (standard; at-will) † Teleportation +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the portal hound makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +22 vs. Will; the hound teleports the target 10 squares.	
↖ Portal Walk (move; encounter) † Teleportation The portal hound attacks, then teleports itself to a square within 10 squares of its starting location; close burst 1; +21 vs. Will; after the hound teleports, it teleports the target to a square adjacent to the portal hound.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Str 16 (+11) Dex 24 (+15) Wis 21 (+13)	
Con 14 (+10) Int 5 (+5) Cha 19 (+12)	

TACTICS

The firbolgs and their trained hounds attempt to subdue the PCs. If one of the creatures reduces a PC to 0 hit points or fewer, it knocks the PC unconscious, and the PC doesn't need to make death saving throws.

Portal Hounds: These animals are well-trained hunting companions, and they take orders from Pyradan. Their main purpose is to drag creatures that remain outside the cave into the cave using their teleportation powers.

Firbolg Bloodbear: With its huge damage output, the bloodbear is in charge of beating enemies to a pulp until they've been subdued. It singles out one target at a time, and it especially likes to attack defenders. Facing the bloodbear when it's in its bear berserker form can be dangerous, and there's a chance it will try to kill its opponents while it's in this form.

Pyradan: Preferring to fight in melee alongside allies, Pyradan keeps his enemies contained by sliding them with his hooked spear, trapping them in flanked positions. He taunts his enemies, but respects them if they fight bravely and competently.

Pyradan, Firbolg Dusk Harrier (P) **Level 17 Elite Skirmisher**

Large fey humanoid XP 3,200

Initiative +17 **Senses Perception** +17; low-light vision
HP 322; **Bloodied** 161

Regeneration 5

AC 31; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 27

Vulnerable necrotic (if Pyradan takes necrotic damage, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn)

Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects, immobilized, restrained, and slowed)

Speed 8

Action Points 1

⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage.

⊕ **Javelin** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.

† **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)
Pyradan makes two spear attacks, and slides one target he hits 1 square. Pyradan then shifts 3 squares.

➤ **Moonfire** (minor 1/round; recharge ☹ ☹ ☹)
Ranged 10; +20 vs. Will; until the end of Pyradan's next turn, the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment, and Pyradan gains combat advantage against the target.

⚡ **Forest of Spears** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ **Weapon**
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +22 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is either slowed or takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both). On a critical hit, the target takes both effects.

Deadly Flanker

When an ally flanks with Pyradan, that ally deals 1d8 extra damage with attacks against the flanked creature.

Harrier's Flank (immediate reaction, when an ally moves adjacent to a creature within 2 squares of Pyradan; at-will)

Pyradan shifts 2 squares. He must end this shift in a flanking position with the ally that triggered this power.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven
Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +20, Intimidate +15, Nature +17

Str 22 (+14) **Dex** 25 (+15) **Wis** 18 (+12)

Con 17 (+11) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 15 (+10)

Equipment hide armor, 2 spears, 4 javelins

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THAT FEYWILD FEELING

For the first time in the adventure path, the PCs travel into the Feywild. I wanted to give them a proper welcome and really convey the core concepts of the plane. So I dropped them right into the fire, fighting wild fey in a forested grove ruled over by a demanding, inscrutable archfey.

The Sky Shaper shows the magical power of the archfey to alter the world around them, and how their desires trump mortal concerns (at least in their estimation). The first firbolgs the PCs encounter are the ghostravens, which use some overtly magical powers. The portal hounds and shadow snakes (though the latter come from the Shadowfell initially) show the magical nature of the Feywild's animal population.

—Logan Bonner

A4: BATTLE CAMP RAID

Encounter Level 15 (6,600 XP)

SETUP

2 night hags (H)
3 rakshasa archers (R)
1 troll vinespeaker (T)

While the PCs are finalizing their agreement with Druemmeth Goldtemple, the sound of clashing blades and shouts of alarm echo from a distant part of the camp. All the monsters are attempting to hide, so make Stealth checks for each group. The monsters, NPCs, and PCs roll initiative.

When a PC looks outside, read:

Though the sounds of battle come from far across the camp, you see a few eladrin bodies much closer. The bodies are peppered with arrows or flayed with hundreds of tiny cuts.

If a PC's passive Perception check beat a monster's Stealth check, point out the location where the PC sees movement in the trees.



When a PC sees the troll vinespeaker, read:

You see a troll with thorny vines wrapped around its arms and chest. It chants as it lashes out with magic rays formed of razor-sharp brambles.

SILHOUETTED TARGETS

At the start of the fight, a glowing silver sigil illuminates Druemmeth's tent, casting silhouettes of those inside onto the walls of the tent. This allows the rakshasa archers outside to shoot at the PCs and NPCs through the tent (which provides cover). With his first minor action, Druemmeth dims the sigil, ending this effect.

2 Night Hags (H)

Medium fey humanoid

Level 14 Lurker

XP 1,000 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision
Shroud of Night aura 5; bright light within the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.

HP 109; **Bloodied** 54

AC 27; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 26

Speed 8

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+19 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage. If the night hag has combat advantage against the target, the target is also stunned (save ends).

‡ **Dream Haunting** (standard; at-will) † **Psychic**

The night hag moves into a stunned or an unconscious creature's space and makes an attack against it; +18 vs. Will; 3d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the night hag disappears into the target's mind. While in this state, the night hag is removed from play and does nothing on subsequent turns except deal 3d6 + 4 psychic damage to the target (no attack roll required). As long as the target remains stunned or unconscious, the night hag can't be attacked. When the target is no longer stunned or unconscious, or when the target dies, the hag reappears in a square adjacent to the target and is insubstantial until the start of its next turn.

◀ **Wave of Sleep** (standard; recharge [ii]) † **Psychic, Sleep**
Close blast 5; +17 vs. Will; 1d8 + 3 psychic damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). **First Failed Saving Throw:** The target is unconscious (no save).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) † **Polymorph**

A night hag can alter its physical form to appear as an old crone of any Medium humanoid race (see "Change Shape," *Monster Manual*, page 280).

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +14, Bluff +16, Intimidate +16, Stealth +16

Str 22 (+13)

Dex 18 (+11)

Wis 17 (+10)

Con 19 (+11)

Int 14 (+9)

Cha 18 (+11)

TACTICS

The monsters start off by going after Druemmeth, but they focus on the PCs once the PCs become more dangerous than the remaining eladrin. They also attack anyone who gets in their way, so the eladrin winter blades and the PCs can soak up some attacks to keep Druemmeth from dropping. The hags and rakshasas are in their natural forms.

Troll Vinespeaker: The troll is the leader of this band. It waits until multiple allies are bloodied before using *chant of power*.

Night Hags: The hags try to reduce Druemmeth to 0 hit points, and they take turns using claw attacks and *wave of sleep*. They intend to set up Druemmeth for *dream haunting*.

Rakshasa Archers: After each attack, the rakshasas try to hide if they can. They spread out their attacks, and save *ghost arrow* attacks for PCs.

Allies: Druemmeth Goldtemple leads the eladrin soldiers and any eladrin PCs with his aura. He uses the PCs as human shields, preferring to assist them rather than venture out into melee and leave himself exposed.

3 Rakshasa Archers (R)		Level 15 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 1,200 each
Initiative +13 Senses Perception +16; low-light vision		
HP 110; Bloodied 55		
AC 28; Fortitude 24, Reflex 26, Will 25		
Speed 6		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+19 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.		
⊕ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 20/40; +20 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.		
↗ Double Attack (standard; at-will)		
The rakshasa archer makes two longbow attacks against a single target or against two targets within 3 squares of one another.		
↗ Ghost Arrow (standard; recharge ☹ ☹) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon		
Requires longbow; ranged 20/40; +20 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target cannot spend healing surges (save ends).		
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion		
The rakshasa archer can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common
Skills Bluff +14, Intimidate +14		
Str 17 (+10)	Dex 20 (+12)	Wis 18 (+11)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 12 (+8)	Cha 14 (+9)
Equipment longbow, quiver of 30 arrows		

Druemmeth Goldtemple		Level 15 Skirmisher (Leader)
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin		XP 1,200
Initiative +16 Senses Perception +9; low-light vision		
Fey Quickness aura 10; any eladrin ally within the aura can use <i>fey step</i> as a minor action.		
HP 144; Bloodied 72		
AC 29; Fortitude 27, Reflex 29, Will 25		
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects		
Speed 6		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.		
Nimbus of Battle (immediate reaction, when an ally within 10 squares of Druemmeth damages an enemy; at-will) ♦ Healing		
The triggering ally regains 1d10 hit points.		
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
Druemmeth teleports 5 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven
Skills Diplomacy +15, History +17, Insight +14		
Str 21 (+12)	Dex 24 (+14)	Wis 14 (+9)
Con 16 (+10)	Int 20 (+12)	Cha 17 (+10)
Equipment chainmail, longsword		

2 Eladrin Winter Blades		Level 14 Soldier Minion
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin		XP 250 each
Initiative +15 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 30; Fortitude 26, Reflex 27, Will 24		
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects		
Speed 6		
⊕ Winter Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon		
+21 vs. AC; 8 cold damage.		
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
The eladrin winter blade teleports 5 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Elven
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 23 (+13)	Wis 12 (+8)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 15 (+9)	Cha 16 (+10)
Equipment leather armor, longsword		

Troll Vinespeaker (T)**Level 14 Controller**

Large natural humanoid

XP 1,000

Initiative +10 **Senses Perception** +13**HP** 142; **Bloodied** 71; see also *troll healing***Regeneration** 10**AC** 28; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 21**Vulnerable** acid or fire (if the troll vinespeaker takes acid or fire damage, its regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)**Speed** 8⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +19 vs. AC; 2d6 + 7 damage.

⊕ **Frenzied Strike** (free, when the troll vinespeaker's attack bloodies an enemy; at-will)

The vinespeaker makes a claw attack.

⤴ **Ray of Thorns** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Implement**

Ranged 10; +18 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage.

⤵ **Chant of Power** (standard; encounter) ⊕ **Healing, Implement**

Close burst 5; targets allies; the target gains 10 temporary hit points and a +4 bonus to damage rolls while it has the temporary hit points.

⚡ **Thorny Burst** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Implement, Zone**

Area burst 1 within 10; +18 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends). The burst creates a zone of thorns and brambles that lasts until the end of the encounter. The zone is difficult terrain, and each creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 1d8 damage.

Troll Healing ⊕ **Healing**

If the troll vinespeaker is reduced to 0 hit points by an attack that does not deal acid or fire damage, it falls prone and remains at 0 hit points until the start of its next turn, when it regains 10 hit points. If an attack deals acid or fire damage to the vinespeaker while it is at 0 hit points, it is destroyed.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Athletics +16, Endurance +15**Str** 18 (+11) **Dex** 16 (+10) **Wis** 12 (+8)**Con** 22 (+13) **Int** 16 (+10) **Cha** 10 (+7)**Equipment** mantle of thorny vines, gnarled staff**FEATURES OF THE AREA****Illumination:** Dim light. Squares within 4 squares of the campfire are in bright light.**Rocks:** Difficult terrain.**Bushes:** A creature in a bush gains cover. Bushes are difficult terrain.**Trees:** The tree trunks are blocking terrain. A creature standing in the tree's branches gains cover.**Tents:** Walls of tents block line of sight and provide cover (though the large tent has an open entrance).

AUDIENCE WITH THE KING

Encounter Level 13 (4,200 XP)

SETUP

The PCs, in the company of several cyclops bodyguards, are taken before the king when they first arrive. Cachlain is accompanied by his advisor, Sovacles, and the two begin to question the PCs about why they've come and how they attained the *Seed of Winter*. Read the information about Cachlain and Sovacles before running the adventure, so you can take their personalities and motivations into account during the skill challenge.

When the PCs enter the throne room, read:

A massive throne of purple crystal stands on the far side of this room. Cachlain sits there, looking you over with his grotesque eyes. Like other fomorians, his body is deformed, and his skin is purple and covered in warts. Plates of stone are bonded to his flesh. They look almost like armor and are carved with elaborate designs.

Next to the throne is a smaller seat; when you enter, a human rises from it. He's a slight, bald man, and he carries a staff of office. His eyes dart from one to another of you as he prepares to speak.

The unique feature of this room is the floor. Giant panes of glass—or maybe smooth crystal—form a window that looks down on an arena far below. Gladiators battle there, and you catch the king sneaking glances at the fight.

Show the players the illustration on page 68.

Arcana or Nature Check

DC 13: *You can tell that the plates in Cachlain's skin are fragments of a stone golem, and they still retain some of the golem's magical essence.*

CACHLAIN, THE STONE-SKINNED KING

Gruff and easily distracted, Cachlain is a difficult creature with whom to converse. He lets his advisor lead the discussion and interjects only when he's annoyed with the proceedings. He rarely asks questions, and when he does they're either insulting or inspired by his deep, unrelenting paranoia.

Cachlain ascended to the throne after he killed his father, and his realm had been steadily growing in size until recent years. He blames this stagnation on Sangwyr and on Inzira's followers equally. The *Seed of Winter* was one of his most prized possessions, and he lent it to the forces invading Nefelus only under great duress. Sovacles has forced Cachlain to do things he'd rather not have, and any crack in the advisor's control would let the Stone-Skinned King come to his senses, such as they are.

Though paranoid and cruel, Cachlain is less reprehensible than are other fomorian rulers. Cachlain captures slaves to work in his halls or fight in the arena, but isn't as cruel to them as other fomorians are to their slaves. He has even set slaves free in the past, though he stopped that practice after other fomorians saw it as a sign of weakness.

An avid fan of gladiatorial combat, Cachlain spends days in his throne room watching the games; he takes his meals there and slumbers on his throne. The king keeps strange hours and requires the arena to be active all day and night. The plates in Cachlain's skin were once a stone golem crafted by cyclopes to fight in the arena. It destroyed all who battled it, and when the king tired of seeing the same result in every fight, he had the golem destroyed. Its "reward" was to become a part of the king. Its consciousness still exists in a latent form, and it feels constant pain from the process that bound it to the king.



SOVACLES, HUMAN ADVISOR

A cold, secretive man, Sovacles speaks for the king. Compromise and compassion aren't in his vocabulary, and he's dismissive of anyone whose goals don't align with his. Though he's arrogant, he's not stupid. He can tell that the PCs are dangerous and won't risk confronting them directly the first time he encounters them. Once they've been worn down by Sangwyr's attacks, he thinks he can defeat them.

Appearances are deceptive in Sovacles's case. In truth, he was once a snaketongue cultist, given serpentine traits by the yuan-ti. Later, unsatisfied with the power he'd been given, he sought out followers of Tiamat. His ambition paid off, and he received the blessings of the god of greed. He became a shape-shifter, able to take on five different forms. These forms mix human, snake, and dragon traits. In time, his service gained him the title of exarch to Tiamat. He is commonly known by the name Virizan. "Sovacles" is an alias.

The alliance Cachlain made with the githyanki was Sovacles's plan, and the details of it aren't in Cachlain's best interest. In fact, the githyanki are closely allied with Tiamat, and Sovacles serves only her interests. Now, Sovacles thinks Cachlain is too difficult to deal with, and he seeks a more pliable ally: Sangwyr, the fomorian who seeks Cachlain's throne. Sovacles forged a secret pact with Sangwyr to depose the king, take over, and embark on aggressive attacks against the enemies of Tiamat and of the githyanki.

AUDIENCE WITH THE KING

The Stone-Skinned King sits upon his tall throne, looking down on the PCs with disdain. His advisor, Sovacles, steps forward and asks, "Why do you come here, and what makes you think the great king cares what you have to say?"

Although the PCs are supposed to be here negotiating with the king, it's a certainty that they won't succeed. This is because Sovacles has the king under mental control. The real goals of the challenge are to figure out what Sovacles is doing and to plant the thought in Cachlain's mind that the PCs might be powerful, and that Sangwyr is a true danger.

Level: 16 (XP 4,200).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Acrobatics, Athletics, Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Intimidate.

Acrobatics or Athletics (DC 13): By performing a feat of strength or agility, the character appeals to the fomorian's love of gladiatorial skill. If Cachlain was distracted (see "Special" below), restore the DCs to normal for this round of the skill challenge. The king is impressed and takes those he perceives as powerful warriors more seriously. Each PC can gain only 1 success with this skill.

Bluff (DC 20): The character worries Cachlain by lying about how much danger the king is in, or by suggesting that his githyanki allies or his advisor are treacherous. Bluffing successfully requires making the king feel he's in danger, not just describing the actual state of events. This skill can be used to gain 3 successes in this challenge.

Diplomacy (DC 25): Attempting to sway Cachlain to help the Coalition and/or Inzira, the character overcomes the king's mental block—to at least a small degree—and makes him see reason. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this challenge.

History (DC 20): By reciting some of the history or the magical traits of the Seed of Winter, the character inflames Cachlain's hunger to possess the item, which makes him more eager to make a deal with the PCs. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Intimidate (DC 20): Sovacles claims that threats won't work against the mighty king, but Cachlain is clearly shaken. His paranoia makes him more susceptible to intimidation. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 3 successes in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, Insight, special.

Arcana (DC 20): By reciting some of the history or the magical traits of the Seed of Winter, the character inflames Cachlain's hunger to possess the item, which makes him more eager to make a deal with the PCs. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Insight (DC 13): A character can use the Insight skill to tell by Cachlain's behavior that he doesn't have his wits about him, or to notice that when Sovacles makes a suggestion Cachlain is quick to adopt the same line of thinking. This skill provides no successes in the challenge. Instead, the next PC who makes a Diplomacy check in this challenge gains a +2 bonus.

Special (Distraction): The gladiatorial battle in the area below distracts the king. At the start of each round of the skill challenge, roll a d6. On a roll of 5 or 6, the king isn't paying attention that round, and the DC for primary skills is increased by 5.

Special (Seed of Winter): By showing the Seed of Winter, the PCs gain an automatic success. The use of this special quality can gain a maximum of 1 success in this challenge.

Success: If the characters earn 8 successes, they are asked to leave for now, but they're given a room among the ambassadors' quarters. Sovacles tells them they'll be granted another audience in a few days, after the king has had time to ponder their words.

Failure: If the characters accumulate 3 failures, Sovacles says the king has had enough of the PCs' chatter and tells them to leave the court. However, as they leave they see Bram Ironfell, who requests they be allowed to stay for a time so he can talk to them.

BI: DISRUPTED BANQUET

Encounter Level 14 (5,600 XP)

Encounter Level 15 (6,300 XP),

if Bram Ironfell joins the oni and the rakshasas

SETUP

Andrinna Baelsblood (A)

Bram Ironfell (B)

1 oni spiritmaster (O)

3 rakshasa warriors (R)

Troke (T)

At the start of this encounter, the rakshasas and oni are still disguised and are posing as dinner guests. The oni is in the form of Droeth, the fomorian. The three rakshasas have replaced the githyanki in Bram Ironfell's entourage.



The agents have also tainted the food at the banquet with a solution that causes sleep. Compare the DC below to the PCs' passive Perception checks.

Perception Check

DC 25: *You detect an odd, sweet scent in the food and wine.*

A PC who succeeds on the Perception check (or is told about the strange scent) can make a Nature or Thievery check.

DC 20: *On closer inspection, you can tell the scent is typical of alchemical elixirs that cause sleep.*

The elixir works slowly, so give the PCs time to interact with the other guests (especially Bram Ironfell) before anyone falls asleep.

When the elixir takes effect, make an attack against Bram Ironfell and any PC who ingested the food or drink. The other NPCs (Andrinna Baelsblood and Troke) eat or drink (assuming the PCs didn't warn them against doing so), and are automatically hit. The attack is +22 vs. Fortitude, and any creature hit is unconscious until awoken by being attacked or shaken awake (a standard action). After being woken up, the creature is slowed (save ends).

If anyone is still conscious after the elixir takes effect, the monsters transform to their true forms and attack whoever's left. Otherwise, they abscond with the bodies, take them to the ambassadors' quarters, and restrain them with manacles. In that case, once the PCs escape, the battle instead occurs in area 5 (page 95).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Walls: The hewn crystal walls require a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Table: It takes 2 extra squares of movement to move onto the table.

Chairs: The chairs sized for Large creatures are difficult terrain for Medium creatures.

DEVELOPMENT

Bram's moment of truth comes during this encounter, as he decides whether to continue fighting for his githyanki masters or to assist the PCs. Bram didn't know his guards were rakshasas in disguise, so he's taken aback by their actions. Bram chooses sides based on how friendly and persuasive the PCs were when speaking to him. He wants to side with the winners, and he's not above cowering indecisively for a round or two until he can guess the victor, or trying to switch sides in the middle of the fight.

The monsters' githyanki masters don't plan to keep Bram around, so the oni and rakshasas don't bother protecting him even if he joins their side.

Bram Ironfell (B) **Level 12 Skirmisher (Leader)**Medium natural humanoid, dwarf XP 700**Initiative** +9 **Senses** Perception +10; low-light vision**HP** 123; **Bloodied** 61**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 23, **Will** 26**Saving Throws** +5 against poison effects**Speed** 5⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Weapon**

+17 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage.

† **Coward's Slice** (standard; at-will)

Bram makes a dagger attack, then shifts half his speed. If the attack hits, the target is marked by one of Bram's allies within 5 squares of the target. The mark lasts until the end of Bram's next turn.

◀ **Ambassador's Sanction** (standard; at-will)

Close burst 10; targets one ally in burst; the target can move half its speed and make a melee basic attack. The target receives a +2 bonus to the attack roll if it attacks a creature marked by the it.

Stand Your Ground

When an effect forces Bram Ironfell to move—through a pull, a push, or a slide—he moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack would knock Bram prone, he can roll a saving throw to avoid falling prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep

Speech, Dwarven, Elven

Skills Bluff +17, Diplomacy +17, Dungeoneering +15, History +14**Str** 14 (+8) **Dex** 12 (+7) **Wis** 18 (+10)**Con** 19 (+10) **Int** 16 (+9) **Cha** 22 (+12)**Equipment** dagger**3 Rakshasa Warriors (R)** **Level 15 Soldier**Medium natural humanoid XP 1,200 each**Initiative** +13 **Senses** Perception +16; low-light vision**HP** 142; **Bloodied** 71**AC** 31; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 28, **Will** 28**Speed** 6⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Weapon**

The rakshasa warrior makes two attack rolls and keeps the better result; +21 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the rakshasa's next turn.

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+21 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage.

† **Tiger Pounce** (immediate reaction, when a marked enemy within 5 squares of the rakshasa warrior shifts; at-will)

The rakshasa shifts to the nearest square adjacent to the enemy and makes a basic attack against it.

Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ⊕ **Illusion**

The rakshasa warrior can disguise itself to appear as any Medium humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the rakshasa's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Athletics +15, Bluff +14, Intimidate +14**Str** 20 (+12) **Dex** 18 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+11)**Con** 14 (+9) **Int** 12 (+8) **Cha** 14 (+9)**Equipment** scale armor, heavy shield, longsword**Oni Spiritmaster (O)** **Level 14 Elite Artillery**Large natural humanoid XP 2,000**Initiative** +12 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision**HP** 142; **Bloodied** 71**AC** 26; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 26, **Will** 26**Saving Throw** +2**Speed** 7; fly 8 (clumsy); see also *spirit form***Action Points** 1⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage.

⤴ **Dread Fear** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Fear, Necrotic**

Ranged 20; +19 vs. Will; 3d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the oni spiritmaster and undead creatures (save ends).

⤴ **Harassing Spirits** (standard; encounter; see also *devour spirit*) ⊕ **Necrotic, Psychic**

Ranged 20; +19 vs. Reflex; 3d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed and takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends both).

◀ **Howling Blast** (standard; encounter; see also *devour spirit*)⊕ **Fear, Psychic**

Close blast 5; targets enemies; +17 vs. Will; 2d8 + 6 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ⊕ **Illusion**An oni spiritmaster can appear as a Medium or a Large humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the oni's Bluff check) pierces the illusion (see "Change Shape," *Monster Manual*, page 280).**Devour Spirit** (minor 1/round; at-will)The oni spiritmaster devours one howling spirit within sight, killing it and recharging *harassing spirits*, *howling blast*, or *spirit form*.**Spirit Form** (standard; encounter; see also *devour spirit*) ⊕**Polymorph**The oni spiritmaster becomes insubstantial, gains phasing, and gains fly (hover) 8 until the end of its next turn. *Sustain Standard*: The effect persists.**Spirit Retinue**

An oni spiritmaster starts combat with four howling spirits. These four spirits are part of the oni spiritmaster's XP value. An oni spiritmaster can have twelve howling spirits as part of its retinue, with each howling spirit beyond the first four counting toward the encounter's XP value.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Giant**Skills** Bluff +17, Religion +14, Insight +14**Str** 18 (+11) **Dex** 20 (+12) **Wis** 14 (+9)**Con** 22 (+13) **Int** 19 (+11) **Cha** 21 (+12)

4 Howling Spirits

Level 14 Minion

Medium shadow humanoid (undead), oni XP 250 each*

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +14; darkvision

Choir of Madness aura 1; any enemy within the aura that takes damage from a power that has the fear keyword or the psychic keyword takes 5 extra psychic damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic, insubstantial

AC 30; **Fortitude** 26, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 28

Speed fly 8 (hover); phasing

⊕ **Spectral Srafe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

The howling spirit shifts 1 square before or after the attack; +17 vs. Reflex; 7 necrotic damage.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Giant

Str 6 (+5) **Dex** 24 (+14) **Wis** 14 (+9)

Con 12 (+8) **Int** 6 (+5) **Cha** 21 (+12)

* XP is included in the oni spiritmaster's XP value.

TACTICS

The monsters have two goals: to eliminate witnesses by killing anyone still conscious, and to kidnap the ambassadors to hold for ransom. The oni, disguised as Droeth, secured the largest of the ambassadors' suites, and they plan to take the hostages there to transport them out of Cachlain's palace. (See "B2: Invasion Tunnel," page 94, to see how they plan to transport the hostages out.)

Oni Spiritmaster: As soon as it acts, the oni moves out into the nearest hallway (using *spirit form* if it needs to move without taking too much damage from opportunity attacks). It then brings its howling spirits out of hiding, making them into a line to block the hallway off. It counts on the rakshasas to mark enemies, and it relies on all its allies to keep it safe so it can use ranged attacks from a safe position. The oni uses *devour spirit* when it's cornered and needs to use *spirit form* or *howling blast* again.

BRAM'S FATE

After the fight, the PCs need to decide what happens to Bram (if they didn't already kill him). The githyanki are finished with his services, the Coalition won't welcome him back, and Cachlain doesn't want him around if he's not a useful diplomat. If Bram is set loose on his own, the githyanki probably kill him, and if he's taken back to the world, the Coalition might execute him for treason. The future's not bright for Bram Ironfell.

Rakshasa Warriors: The rakshasas try to block off the exits, and they mark PCs to prevent them from attacking the oni or the howling spirits. When a rakshasa isn't in a dangerous position, it grabs one of the unconscious ambassadors and drags him or her toward the hall to the north.

BETRAYAL AND REDEMPTION

Early in the planning for *Scales of War*, we identified a number of NPCs we wanted the characters to encounter. Actually, that's not entirely accurate. We identified some NPC archetypes we wanted the characters to encounter. One was the mentor, represented by the dwarf paladin Kalad, and another was the redeemable betrayer, represented by Bram Ironfell.

Bram first shows up in "The Lost Mines of Karak" as an opportunistic war profiteer from the city of Overlook. The characters help him reclaim his family's mine, not knowing that Bram is the sort who's willing to sell to the highest bidder. In this case, the highest bidder ends up being the bad guys.

The mid-paragon tier was the perfect time to have Bram resurface, and Logan was very amenable to the addition. We wanted to show Bram in over his head and starting to feel serious regret. If the characters want, they can just off Bram. I expect many angry adventurers will react in exactly that way.

But it's interesting to sometimes present the characters with a moral quandary. What if Bram can be redeemed? What if they take pity on him and show him the error of his ways? In any event, it can make for a tense, engaging roleplaying encounter, with Bram's fate hinging on the outcome.

—Chris Youngs

B2: INVASION TUNNEL

Encounter Level 16 (7,050 XP)

SETUP

5 drow underlings (U)

1 drider fanglord (D)

1 scarred bulette (B)

2 inferno bats (S)

A bulette, warped by Sangwyr's torturers, digs a path into Cachlain's palace. Drow underlings follow the creature, carefully reinforcing the tunnels it creates. A drider fanglord leads the group, accompanied by two trained inferno bats. These invaders could arrive to take away the hostages collected in the "Disrupted Banquet" encounter, or they could be an isolated attack designed to cause havoc in the court.

The tactical map assumes the PCs arrive after the creatures have breached the wall. If you want the monsters to arrive and enter the palace while the PCs are there, have the bulette come through the wall first, followed by the other monsters. The noise the bulette makes while burrowing makes a stealthy entrance impossible for the monsters.

When the PCs see the monsters, read:

A rampaging bulette, covered in thousands of scars, thrashes through the hall. Behind it, you see several drow carrying short swords and daggers. In the air above these creatures float two bats made entirely of fire.

When the PCs see the drider fanglord, read:

A drider wielding a serrated greatsword moves toward you, climbing along the walls.

5 Drow Underlings (U) **Level 14 Minion Skirmisher**
Medium fey humanoid XP 250 each

Initiative +15 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 28; **Fortitude** 24, **Reflex** 27, **Will** 26

Speed 6

⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+19 vs. AC; 6 damage.

⚔ **Thrown Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison, Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +19 vs. AC; 6 poison damage.

Darkfire Sacrifice (when the drow underling drops to 0 hit points)

An ally within 5 squares of the drow underling gains combat advantage against the target of its next attack and ignores concealment on its next attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Str 16 (+10) **Dex** 23 (+13) **Wis** 14 (+9)

Con 13 (+8) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+12)

Equipment leather armor, 3 daggers, short sword

Drider Fanglord (D) **Level 14 Brute**

Large fey humanoid (spider) XP 1,000

Initiative +12 **Senses** Perception +15; darkvision

HP 172; **Bloodied** 86

AC 26; **Fortitude** 27, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23

Speed 8, climb 8 (spider climb)

⚔ **Greatsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+19 vs. AC; 1d12 + 7 damage.

⚔ **Quick Bite** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Requires combat advantage; +16 vs. Fortitude; 1d4 damage, and ongoing 10 poison damage (save ends).

⚔ **Darkfire** (minor; encounter)

Ranged 10; +16 vs. Reflex; until the end of the drider's next turn, the target grants combat advantage to all attackers, and the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment.

⚔ **Web** (standard; recharge ⚔⚔⚔)

Ranged 5; +15 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained.

Escaping from the web requires a successful DC 25

Acrobatics check or a successful DC 27 Athletics check.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Elven

Skills Dungeoneering +15, Stealth +17

Str 24 (+14) **Dex** 21 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+10)

Con 22 (+13) **Int** 13 (+8) **Cha** 9 (+6)

Equipment leather armor, greatsword

Scarred Bulette (B) **Level 15 Elite Skirmisher**

Large natural beast XP 2,400

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +10; darkvision,

tremorsense 20

HP 304; **Bloodied** 152; see also *habituated to torture*

AC 29; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 25, **Will** 23

Vulnerable charm (a tortured bulette hit by a charm attack is immobilized until the end of its next turn)

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6, burrow 6

Action Points 1

⚔ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Before it bites, the bulette can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, or 4d8 + 6 damage against a prone target.

⚔ **Earth Furrow** (move; at-will)

The scarred bulette moves its burrow speed just below the surface of the ground, avoiding opportunity attacks as it passes underneath other creatures' spaces. As it burrows beneath the space of a Medium or smaller creature on the ground, the bulette makes an attack against the creature; +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.

⚔ **Rising Burst** (standard; the bulette must have emerged from the ground after burrowing this turn; at-will)

Close burst 2; the bulette sprays rocks and dirt into the air when it rises out of the ground; +19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage.

Spray of Tainted Blood (when a creature adjacent to the bulette hits the scarred bulette with a melee attack)

The attacker takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude until the end of the scarred bulette's next turn.

Habituated to Torture

While the scarred bulette is bloodied, it gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and to speed.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Skills Athletics +20, Endurance +19

Str 27 (+15) **Dex** 21 (+12) **Wis** 16 (+10)

Con 24 (+14) **Int** 2 (+3) **Cha** 11 (+7)

2 Inferno Bats (S)**Level 15 Skirmisher**

Medium elemental beast (fire)

XP 1,200 each

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +13

HP 144; Bloodied 72

AC 29; Fortitude 25, Reflex 29, Will 23

Resist 20 fire

Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8; see also *fiery swoop*⚔ **Inferno Touch** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Fire

+20 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends). *Each Failed Saving Throw:* Each ally of the target within 2 squares of the target takes 10 fire damage.

⚔ **Fiery Swoop** (standard; at-will) ⚡ Fire

The inferno bat shifts 4 squares and can move through occupied squares as it moves. It makes a melee basic attack against any creature whose space it enters. The inferno bat cannot attack a target more than once in this fashion, and it must end its movement in an unoccupied square.

Heatseeker (immediate reaction, when the inferno bat is damaged by an enemy's ranged attack; at-will)

The inferno bat shifts 2 squares toward the triggering enemy.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 8 (+6) Dex 27 (+15) Wis 12 (+8)

Con 16 (+10) Int 2 (+3) Cha 9 (+6)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Walls: The hewn crystal walls require a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: The smaller rooms' doors are locked, but the doors to the larger room have already been opened by the monsters. A creature inside a room can lock the doors with a minor action. Locked doors require a DC 18 Thievery check to open.

Furniture: Most of the furniture requires an extra square of movement to move onto. The enormous table in the larger room is high enough for Medium or smaller creatures to stand under. A creature under the table gains cover against Large or larger creatures.

TACTICS

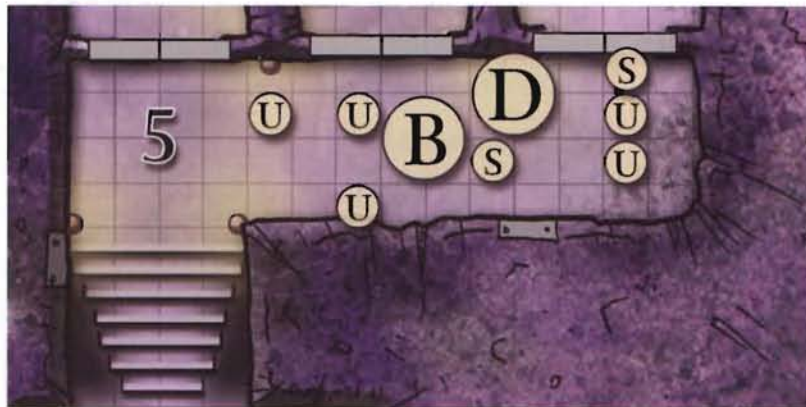
Sangwyr's agents attack anyone who approaches, and they fight to the death.

Scarred Bulette: In the relatively confined area of this encounter, the bulette burrows from room to room to move itself out of harm's way or to chase down enemies who are difficult for the bulette's allies to approach. The bulette doesn't worry about its allies, and it doesn't care if it hits them with *earth furrow* or *rising burst*. The bulette can't burrow into the throne room, because that room is protected by hundreds of warding rituals put in place by the paranoid fomorian king.

Drider Fanglord: The drider's tactics complement the bulette's. To avoid the bulette's *earth furrow* power, the drider climbs on the walls or ceiling. It uses *web* to set up targets for the bulette's *rising burst* attack, and it uses *quick bite* against creatures that have a penalty to Fortitude from the bulette's *spray of tainted blood*. The drider leads the group and has a rapport with the inferno bats and the bulette.

Inferno Bats: These creatures follow the drider's orders. They use *fiery swoop* to pass over creatures and give them ongoing damage, then they flank with the drider or the drow.

Drow Underlings: These poorly trained warriors are fiercely loyal and are willing to give their lives for their commanding drider.



B3: ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT

Encounter Level 16 (7,200 XP)

Encounter Level 17 (9,200 XP),
with optional skill challenge

SETUP

Arzoa, githyanki assassin (A)
2 purplespawn nightmares (P)

As the PCs explore the hidden prison, mysterious assassins attack them. Make Stealth checks for each monster and compare the results to the PCs' passive Perception checks. If the PCs don't detect any of the enemies, the assassins have a surprise round.

If a PC's passive Perception is higher than a monster's Stealth check, read:

You suddenly hear soft footfalls coming from the hall. Whatever's approaching is clearly trying to conceal its presence.

When a PC sees Arzoa, read:

A githyanki clad in heavy, red robes glares determinedly and brandishes a silver longsword. You catch a glimpse of chainmail during her rapid, graceful movements.

When a PC sees a purplespawn nightmare, read:

Skulking through the shadows comes a creature with a vaguely humanoid shape. Purple scales cover its body, and its long tail, tipped with spikes, lashes in the air. It has humanoid arms and carries a longsword.

TACTICS

The assassins pile up ongoing psychic damage to increase their effectiveness.

Arzoa: The leader of the assassins, Arzoa is aggressive and smart. She hits the PCs with *mind assassination* as soon as she can to set up her *mental block*. If she's almost bloodied when *mind assassination* recharges, she saves it so she can use *tide of woe* first. She tries to keep a PC in melee combat and repeatedly uses double attack to make two longsword attacks against that PC. Arzoa knows that healers are dangerous, and she tries to beat down leaders quickly.

Purplespawn Nightmares: If the monsters have a surprise round, a nightmare readies *nightmare form* to use against any PC who comes adjacent to it. These creatures are willing to let their leader take the brunt of the attacks. Bright light frightens and aggravates the nightmares. If one takes radiant damage, it shifts away from the source.

Talyrin: If the PCs have talked to Talyrin and if she believes they have similar goals, she helps them survive the assassination attempt. She can use a standard action to give a PC resist psychic 5 until the end of that PC's turn. She has also studied purplespawn nightmares and can tell the PCs about their capabilities.

Eladrin Ambassadors: The eladrin can't offer much help. They encourage the PCs and are certain that the assassins must be minions of Sangwyr, but they don't do anything useful.

"Legbreaker" Kimdal: Once the battle starts, this gnome thief rattles his bars and yells that he can help the PCs if they'll just let him out. If they do, he immediately makes a run for the exit. The monsters make opportunity attacks against him if he runs past, but they don't chase him down.

Arzoa, Githyanki Assassin (A)	Level 18 Elite Controller
Medium immortal humanoid	XP 4,000
Initiative +16	Senses Perception +15
HP 344; Bloodied 172	
AC 32; Fortitude 29, Reflex 31, Will 30	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Silver Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.	
† Double Attack (standard; at-will)	
Arzoa makes a silver longsword or <i>mind grip</i> attack, shifts half her speed, then makes another silver longsword or <i>mind grip</i> attack.	
↗ Mind Grip (standard; at-will) ♦ Psychic	
Ranged 10; +22 vs. Will; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and Arzoa slides the target 5 squares.	
↖ Mind Assassination (minor; recharge ⓂⓂ) ♦ Psychic	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +22 vs. Will; 1d10 + 7 psychic damage, and the target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage (save ends).	
↖ Tide of Woe (immediate reaction, when an enemy within 10 squares of Arzoa takes psychic damage; usable while bloodied; at-will) ♦ Fear	
Close burst 10; targets the triggering enemy; no attack roll; the target is knocked prone.	
Telekinetic Leap (move; encounter)	
Ranged 10; targets Arzoa or one ally; the target can fly 5 squares.	
Mental Block ♦ Psychic	
If a creature taking ongoing psychic damage hits Arzoa, that creature takes 2d8 psychic damage.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Deep Speech
Skills Acrobatics +21, Arcana +20, Bluff +18, Stealth +21	
Str 17 (+12)	Dex 25 (+16) Wis 22 (+15)
Con 20 (+14)	Int 23 (+15) Cha 18 (+13)
Equipment chainmail, silver longsword	

2 Purplespawn Nightmares (P) **Level 17 Lurker**
 Medium natural humanoid (reptile) XP 1,600 each

Initiative +17 Senses Perception +8; darkvision
HP 128; Bloodied 64

Regeneration 10 (if the purplespawn nightmare takes radiant damage, regeneration does not function until the end of its next turn)

AC 30; Fortitude 29, Reflex 30, Will 28; see also *psychic edge*

Resist 10 psychic

Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb)

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Weapon**
 +22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Tail** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Sleep**
 Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 3d6 + 8 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends). *First Failed Saving Throw:* The target is dazed and slowed (save ends both). *Second Failed Saving Throw:* The target falls unconscious (save ends).

Nightmare Form (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Polymorph**
 The purplespawn nightmare can alter its physical form to appear as an enemy of its choice. While the nightmare is adjacent to that enemy, roll a d20 whenever a melee or ranged attack targets the nightmare. On a roll of 10 or higher, the attack instead targets the copied enemy. The copied enemy's attacks are not subject to this effect.

Nightmarish Torment ⊕ **Psychic**
 If the purplespawn nightmare's melee attack hits an enemy it is copying with *nightmare form* or a sleeping target, that target takes ongoing 10 psychic damage in addition to the attack's other effect (save ends).

Psychic Edge
 A purplespawn nightmare gains a +4 bonus to all defenses against attacks from enemies that are taking ongoing psychic damage.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +18, Bluff +18, Stealth +18, Thievery +18
Str 19 (+12) **Dex** 20 (+13) **Wis** 11 (+8)
Con 20 (+13) **Int** 13 (+9) **Cha** 20 (+13)

Equipment longsword

DEVELOPMENT

Arzoa, though she's part of Bram's entourage, acts on behalf of Sangwyr and the githyanki leaders. They've decided to cut Bram out of the loop. Arzoa knows this, but as a part of her training, she mastered a technique to eradicate her own mind in case of failure. If the PCs interrogate her, they enter a skill challenge.

ARZOA'S SECRETS

As the PCs attempt to interrogate Arzoa, they catch a flash of psychic power. She whispers, "You'll get nothing from me. My mind slips away even as I speak. Failure is unacceptable."

The PCs have only a short time to interrogate Arzoa before her mind is gone. If they can act quickly, the PCs have a better chance of getting information from her.

Level: 18 (XP 2,000).

Complexity: 1 (requires 4 successes before 3 failures).

Special (Mind Degeneration): After every two skill checks the PCs attempt, Arzoa's mental faculties deteriorate, giving the PCs an automatic failure. After the first failure, she's still somewhat lucid. After the second, she has the mind of a child, and after the third, she dies.

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Intimidate.

Diplomacy (DC 20): A character learns one of the four success facts. With each failure the PCs have, the character making this check takes a -2 penalty, as Arzoa becomes more difficult to reason with.

Intimidate (DC 20): The character learns one of the four success facts. With each failure the PCs have, the character making this check gains a +2 bonus, as Arzoa becomes less stubborn and more pliable.

Secondary Skills: Heal, Insight.

Heal (DC 20): By slowing the degradation of Arzoa's mind, the character buys more time. The PCs don't gain an automatic failure this round. This skill can be used only once during the challenge.

Insight (DC 13): The PC realizes that Diplomacy works best early in the challenge, and Intimidate works better later on.

Success: The PCs learn one piece of information per success, based on what the PC asked.

◆ "You fight well. Chillreaver . . . perhaps not such a failure."

◆ "Bram is not strong. Not strong like githyanki."

◆ "Cachlain will fall. Too much resistance . . ."

◆ "I follow githyanki ways . . . now the dragons' ways."

Failure: Once the PCs accumulate 3 failures, Arzoa dies and they fail to find out all the secrets she knows.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: One magic sconce fills the prison with dim light. The hallway to the west is dark.

Cells: The cells are locked. Opening a lock requires a DC 30 Thievery check. The bars can be bent or destroyed (break DC 28; AC 4, Fortitude 12; hp 120).

Doors: The double doors leading into the prison are open at the start of the battle. The doors can't be locked.



B4: CAGED ANIMALS

Encounter Level 17 (8,600 XP)

SETUP

- 2 quickling zephyrs (Q)
- 3 winter wolves (W)
- 1 chimera (C)
- 1 thunderfury boar (B)

In the animal pens right next to the gladiatorial arena, Sangwyr's quickling minions set the animals loose to run unchecked through the halls of Cachelain's court. The PCs probably arrive from the tunnel on the north side of the room, but there's a chance they'll come through the arena.

If you choose, Bram Ironfell and two of his guards might be in their room (the small room with three beds), or Bram might be there alone if his guards were already exposed as rakshasas (in the "Disrupted Banquet" encounter).

When the PCs arrive, read:

Along the walls of this room, well-crafted iron cages stand, filled with various animals trained for gladiatorial combat. Corpses of cyclops animal handlers and guards slump in the corners of the room, their blood splattered across the walls behind them. Two small humanoids with gray skin and powerful legs swiftly move near the cages. They flip open the latches to release the animals.

Have the players roll initiative after you read the text above.

2 Quickling Zephyrs (Q)	Level 14 Lurker	
Small fey humanoid	XP 1,000 each	
Initiative +20	Senses Perception +10; low-light vision	
HP 82; Bloodied 41		
AC 30; Fortitude 26, Reflex 29, Will 23		
Speed 12, climb 6		
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+19 vs. AC; 1d6 + 9 damage.		
Blinding Speed (move; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓝ; ☞) ♦ Illusion		
The quickling zephyr moves 12 squares and becomes invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.		
Combat Advantage		
If the quickling zephyr has combat advantage against its target, on a successful melee attack it deals 2d6 extra damage and dazes the target (save ends).		
Unstoppable		
The quickling zephyr ignores difficult terrain and can move across any solid or liquid surface.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Elven	
Skills Acrobatics +26, Bluff +13, Stealth +21		
Str 12 (+8)	Dex 28 (+16)	Wis 17 (+10)
Con 22 (+13)	Int 16 (+10)	Cha 12 (+8)
Equipment short sword		

3 Winter Wolves (W)	Level 14 Skirmisher	
Medium natural magical beast	XP 1,000 each	
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +10; low-light vision	
HP 141; Bloodied 70		
AC 28; Fortitude 27, Reflex 26, Will 24		
Resist 20 cold		
Speed 8 (ice walk)		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage plus 1d6 cold damage, or 2d10 + 6 damage plus 1d6 cold damage against a prone target.		
⊕ Takedown (standard; usable only when charging; at-will) ♦ Cold		
+19 vs. AC; 2d10 + 6 damage plus 1d6 cold damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
⊕ Freezing Breath (standard; recharge Ⓜ; ☞) ♦ Cold		
Close blast 5; +17 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 6 cold damage. Miss: Half damage.		
Drag (minor; usable only while adjacent to a prone enemy; at-will)		
The winter wolf shifts 1 square and pulls a prone target that is adjacent to it 1 square.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Giant	
Str 23 (+13)	Dex 21 (+12)	Wis 17 (+10)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 9 (+6)	Cha 10 (+7)

Chimera (C)	Level 15 Elite Brute	
Large natural magical beast	XP 2,400	
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +14; all-around vision, darkvision	
HP 366; Bloodied 183; see also <i>bloodied breath</i>		
AC 27; Fortitude 29, Reflex 23, Will 24		
Resist 10 fire		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, fly 10 (clumsy), overland flight 15		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Lion's Bite (standard; at-will)		
+18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.		
⊕ Ram's Charge (standard; at-will)		
The chimera makes a charge attack; +19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 11 damage, and the chimera either pushes the target 1 square or knocks it prone.		
⊕ Triple Threat (standard; at-will)		
The chimera makes the following three melee attacks, each one against a different target:		
Lion's Bite +18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.		
Dragon's Bite +18 vs. AC; 3d6 + 7 damage.		
Ram's Gore +18 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
⊕ Dragon Breath (standard; encounter) ♦ Fire		
Close blast 5; +16 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends).		
⊕ Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter)		
<i>Dragon breath</i> recharges and the chimera uses it.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Draconic	
Str 24 (+14)	Dex 17 (+10)	Wis 14 (+9)
Con 23 (+13)	Int 5 (+4)	Cha 17 (+10)

Thunderfury Boar (B) **Level 15 Brute**

Large fey beast

XP 1,200

Initiative +9 **Senses Perception** +8**HP** 182; **Bloodied** 91; see also *death strike***AC** 27; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 20**Speed** 8⚡ **Gore** (standard; at-will)

+18 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, or 3d8 + 7 damage while the thunderfury boar is bloodied.

† **Death Strike** (when the boar drops to 0 hit points)

The thunderfury boar makes a gore attack.

⚡ **Thunderfury** (standard; recharge ⚡ [1]) ⚡ **Thunder**Close burst 2; +17 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 thunder damage, and the target is knocked prone. *Miss*: Half damage, and the target is not knocked prone.**Thunderous Charge** ⚡ **Thunder**

The thunderfury boar deals 10 extra thunder damage when it charges.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Str** 24 (+14)**Dex** 15 (+9)**Wis** 12 (+8)**Con** 22 (+13)**Int** 5 (+4)**Cha** 9 (+6)

TACTICS

By the time the PCs and monsters roll initiative, the quicklings have opened two cages. They first open the cages containing the chimera and two of the winter wolves. The first time the zephyrs' initiative comes up, they release the other monsters.

All the animals have been trained for the arena, so they're more tactically savvy than most beasts. However, they don't have a designated target. Although most of their attacks target PCs, they sometimes hit the quicklings, especially with multitarget attacks or when the quicklings are bloodied.

Quickling Zephyrs: As often as possible, the quicklings move away from their targets after attacking (using *blinding speed*, if possible). They try to keep the animals between themselves and the PCs. Once they're bloodied, the quicklings retreat using the safest path possible.

Winter Wolves: Using pack tactics, the wolves gang up on single foes or small groups. If a winter wolf knocks an enemy prone, it uses *drag* to pull that enemy closer to the other wolves. The wolves also go after creatures knocked prone by the thunderfury boar's *thunderfury* attack.

Chimera: If multiple enemies are clustered near the pit, the chimera flies across the pit, lands on the other side, and uses *dragon breath* against them. If it doesn't have three PCs in reach for its *triple threat* attack, it uses one of those attacks against a quickling or another humanoid. The PCs might parlay with the chimera, but it has been penned up for a long time, and it's not receptive to reason.

Thunderfury Boar: In tight quarters, the boar has some trouble charging. It sometimes chooses to provoke opportunity attacks just so it can charge.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

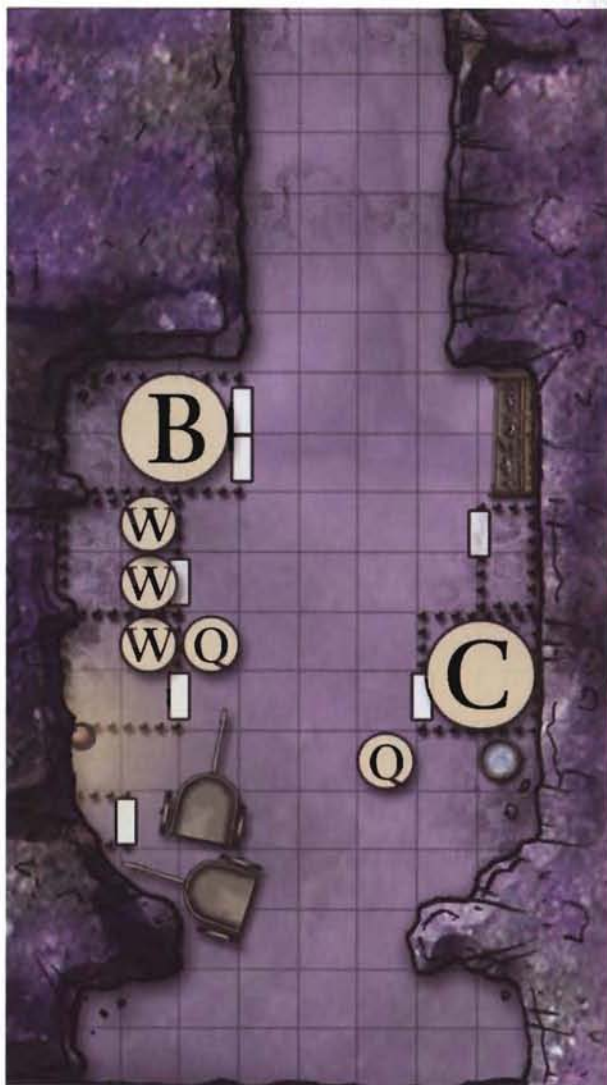
Illumination: Bright light.

Pens: The locks on the pens are easy for humanoid creatures to open. The bars can be bent or destroyed (break DC 28; AC 4, Fortitude 12; hp 120).

Pit: The crevasse that forms the southern border of the room is 4 squares (20 feet) deep. A creature that falls in takes 2d10 damage from the fall. The sides require a successful DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Water Basin: It costs 1 extra square of movement to move into the water basin. A Small creature in the basin gains cover. The basin is full of water, but it's not deep enough to do more than make a creature wet.

Treasure: The weapons rack could contain a magic weapon a PC can steal. You can include one of the treasure parcels here (and possibly allow the PC to pick up the weapon during the encounter).



B5: THRONE ROOM SHOWDOWN

Encounter Level 17 (9,600 XP)

SETUP

Cachlain, the Stone-Skinned King (C)

Sovacles, Cachlain's Advisor (S)

This encounter begins after Sovacles calls the PCs back to his throne room and accuses them of allying with Sangwyr and compromising the king's palace.

Cachlain, the Stone-Skinned King (C)		Level 20 Elite Soldier
Huge fey humanoid		XP 5,600
Initiative +13	Senses Perception +18; truesight 6	
HP 388; Bloodied 194; see also <i>cracked stone</i>		
AC 36; Fortitude 34, Reflex 30, Will 32		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 8, fly 2 (hover)		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
Reach 3; +27 vs. AC; 2d10 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.		
↗ Evil Eye (minor 1/round; at will) ✦ Charm		
Ranged 10; +25 vs. Will; Cachlain slides the target 3 squares, and the target makes a melee basic attack against a target of Cachlain's choice.		
↖ Stone Swat (standard; recharge ☒ ☒)		
Close blast 3; +27 vs. AC; 3d10 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 2d4 squares and knocked prone.		
Cracked Stone		
While bloodied, Cachlain has a -2 penalty to all defenses and his attacks deal 1d10 extra damage.		
Stone Defense (immediate reaction, when hit and damaged by an attack; recharge ☒ ☒ ☒)		
Cachlain gains resist 5 to all damage until the end of his next turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Bluff +21, Endurance +23, Intimidate +23		
Str 22 (+16)	Dex 12 (+11)	Wis 17 (+13)
Con 26 (+18)	Int 19 (+14)	Cha 23 (+16)
Equipment robes, crown		

TACTICS

The PCs aren't meant to finish this fight by defeating both enemies. See "Development" and the "Release Cachlain's Mind" skill challenge ("B6: Arena of Blood," page 102).

Cachlain: Struggling against the control of Sovacles, the Stone-Skinned King becomes more reluctant to fight as the PCs gain successes in the skill challenge. He doesn't stop attacking, but he makes poor decisions. For instance, he might use his *evil eye* on a creature with a poor melee basic attack.

Sovacles: The advisor remains close to the king, using *serpent's trickery* to redirect attacks to the fomorian. He uses the attacks he redirects as evidence that the PCs are trying to kill the king. *Ensnaring coil* lets him move enemies into position to be hit by *bane quills* or by Cachlain's attacks.

RELEASE CACHLAIN'S MIND

The fomorian king is fighting against Sovacles's control, even while attacking the PCs. He squints his eyes and shakes his head as though trying to banish unwanted visions. While they fight the Stone-Skinned King and Sovacles, the PCs can attempt to free the monarch from his advisor's control. Each PC can attempt a skill check as a minor action once per round to contribute to this challenge.

Level: 18 (XP 6,000).

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, special.

Arcana (DC 25): Fighting power with power, the character recites countermagic to reverse Sovacles's enchantment.

Diplomacy (DC 20): The character reasons with Cachlain, convincing him the PCs aren't his enemies. Increase the DC to 25 if the PC has attacked Cachlain during this encounter.

Insight (DC 20): The character points out that Sovacles is becoming more blatant and is flaunting his control over the king. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this skill challenge.

Intimidate (DC 25): The character berates Cachlain for letting Sovacles order him around. This skill can be used to gain a maximum of 2 successes in this skill challenge.

Special (Previous Skill Challenge): If the PCs succeeded on the skill challenge in "Audience with the King," they gain one automatic success in this skill challenge.

Special (Sovacles Attacks): The character makes one of Sovacles's attacks hit Cachlain, either by redirecting the attack, by dominating Sovacles, or by luring Sovacles into using a multitarget attack that hits the fomorian. This action can be used to gain a maximum of 1 success in this skill challenge.

Secondary Skill: Heal.

Heal (DC 13): This skill does not earn a success in the skill challenge. By healing Cachlain's wounds, the character gains a +5 bonus to his or her next check in the skill challenge, and Cachlain won't attack that PC (save ends).

Success: If the characters earn 6 successes, Sovacles reveals his true intentions and Cachlain changes the fight. See "Development" on page 101.

Failure: If the characters accumulate 3 failures, they realize they can't end the enchantment through their efforts. The PCs will need to wait until they reduce Sovacles to below his bloodied value before the events of "Development" occur.

DEVELOPMENT

Sovacles reveals his true motives after he becomes bloodied, or when the PCs succeed on the skill challenge and he realizes he has lost control over the king. Sovacles should be standing on the window in the floor when he makes his pronouncement.

When this happens, read:

Sovacles, wounded and angry, snarls, "You have no idea who you're dealing with! My queen has given me the power to destroy you easily! Tiamat will have all that you possess and more, and your blood is my gift to her! And I'm sure Cachlain's replacement will be more amenable to our commands."

Sovacles, Level 18 Elite Controller Cachlain's Advisor (S)

Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 4,000

Initiative +14 Senses Perception +18

HP 340; Bloodied 170

AC 32; Fortitude 29, Reflex 30, Will 31

Resist poison 10

Saving Throws +2

Speed 6

Action Points 1

Ⓜ Staff (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon
+23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 necrotic damage.

⚔ Ensnaring Coil (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic
Ranged 15; +22 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and Sovacles slides the target 4 squares.

⚔ Bane Quills (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison
Area burst 1 within 10; +22 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 poison damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls and skill checks until the end of Sovacles's next turn.

⚔/⚔ Coils and Quills (standard; at-will)
Sovacles makes an *ensnaring coil* attack and a *bane quills* attack.

⚔ Poison Darkness (standard; encounter) ♦ Poison
Area burst 1 within 20; +22 vs. Fortitude; 3d6 + 7 poison damage. *Effect:* The burst becomes a zone of darkness until the end of Sovacles's next turn. Any creature that starts its turn within the zone takes 5 poison damage and is blinded (save ends). Sovacles can see through the darkness. *Sustain Minor:* The zone persists.

Serpent's Trickery (immediate interrupt, when targeted by an attack while an ally is adjacent to Sovacles; at-will)
Sovacles redirects the attack to an ally adjacent to him and shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, Elven

Skills Arcana +20, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +20, Insight +18, Religion +20

Str 13 (+10) Dex 20 (+14) Wis 19 (+13)

Con 18 (+13) Int 22 (+15) Cha 25 (+16)

Equipment fine clothing, staff of office

Cachlain responds quickly, shouting out that he'll never let the god of greed steal what belongs to him. He gestures at the floor and his evil eye flashes green. The plates of glass flutter away, opening a hole that drops the PCs and Sovacles to the gladiatorial arena below. The fall is 40 feet, and a creature that falls takes 4d10 falling damage. Remember that a character trained in Acrobatics can make a check as a free action to reduce the damage by half of the result of the check.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Fireplace: This fireplace is tall enough to contain Medium creatures. A creature that enters or starts its turn in the fireplace takes 5 fire damage.

Magic Circle: The arcane sigils carved into the floor here are used for scrying rituals by Sovacles, but they don't have any use during combat.

Throne: Cachlain's throne is blocking terrain for Medium creatures. A creature can climb onto it with a successful DC 13 Athletics check. The base of the throne is solid crystal, so it's not possible to walk under it.

Floor: The window in the floor is perfectly safe to walk on. Until Cachlain commands the floor to open, the floor's durability and magical protection keep it intact.

Doors: The southern door is locked by magic, and only Cachlain or Sovacles can command it to open. The door leading to Cachlain's bedchamber is unlocked and can be opened easily.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 5 squares (25 feet) high.



B6: ARENA OF BLOOD

Encounter Level 20 (14,800 XP)

Encounter Level 21 (20,400 XP),

if the gladiators fight for Virizan

SETUP

4 eladrin Feydark gladiators (G)

1 blackroot treant (T)

Virizan, Exarch of Tiamat (S)

This encounter begins immediately after “B5: Throne Room Showdown.” Virizan begins the encounter in his venom wisp form.

After the PCs land in the arena, read:

In the gladiatorial arena you find yourselves in, a handful of eladrin gladiators fight an undead treant bound in place with massive iron chains. A crowd masses in dozens of cave mouths along the towering walls to take in the bout.

You see Sovacles plummet down and hear his body snap as he hits the purple crystal of the arena floor. The crowd cheers! Just when it appears that the advisor’s threat is ended, his body evaporates and reforms into a wispy green cloud with smoky wings.

The PCs keep the same initiative, and Virizan goes at the same time Sovacles did. Roll initiative for the treant and the gladiators.

Throughout the fight, Virizan reveals the following information:

- ◆ *“You have destroyed my human guise! Still, I have four more forms that can defeat you easily. Now you know you face Virizan, exarch of Her Dark Majesty Tiamat! All in this room will take my secret to their graves!”*
- ◆ *“Cachlain won’t last long. Sangwyr marches, and the fomorian weakling’s forces can’t stop him alone. Tiamat covets this domain and it will be hers, and Sangwyr will be a perfect puppet upon the throne.”*
- ◆ *“Do not think I ever underestimated you. You defeated Chillreaver, so you’re clearly skilled. None of Tiamat’s exarchs falls easily!”*
- ◆ *“I have no illusions that I am the strongest of Tiamat’s exarchs. Even if you defeat me, you can’t stop us all!”*

MOVING INTO THE ARENA

If the combatants jump to the arena floor, they enter the middle of a gladiatorial bout. You can use a couple of the eladrin Feydark gladiators from the “Arena of Blood” encounter on page 102, or pick whatever monsters you want for the battle on which the PCs and monsters intrude. You could instead use a handful of minions in the arena for the gladiators to cut down, to make the fight feel more chaotic.

The venom wisp form is described in the readaloud text above. The other three forms are described below.

To describe the naga form, read:

Virizan transforms into an enormous, coiled serpent with a humanoid face. A row of green quills run down his spine, and longer spines jut out from the tip of his muscular tail. Peals of thunder sound at his command.

To describe the snake swarm form, read:

The exarch’s body rips into pieces, which become writhing snakes as they fall to the ground. A swarm of the creatures crawl across the ground, baring fangs that drip with venom.

To describe the snaketongue form, read:

Virizan assumes the guise of a human creature with scaled skin. He produces his staff of office, now twisted and warped into the image of a hooded serpent.

TOUGH FIGHT

If the PCs are low on resources and you don’t want the fight to turn into an endless series of at-will attacks, use the following variant rule: Each time a PC saves against *overwhelm mind*, he or she regains an encounter attack power.

TACTICS

The fight between the PCs and Virizan is the heart of this encounter, and the gladiators and the treant introduce chaos into the battle.

Eladrin Feydark Gladiators: Neutral parties, the gladiators fight for whichever side the crowd is behind. Though fickle, the crowd supports the PCs, and so, for the moment, do the gladiators. They can also fight the PCs after being hit with Virizan’s *overwhelm mind* power.

Blackroot Treant: Driven mad with rage, the treant lashes out indiscriminately. See the sidebar.

Virizan: No longer hidden in human form, this exarch of Tiamat can shapechange constantly. He uses *mind spike* each turn, and *overwhelm mind* when possible. Virizan chooses his form based on the abilities he needs.

Artillery: When enemies can’t reach him, the exarch chooses naga form to make artillery-style area attacks. He also uses it when he needs to push foes away.

Control: To move enemies around (to push them into the pit or within the treant’s reach), Virizan uses snaketongue form.

Melee: When he wants to enter melee combat or is surrounded, Virizan chooses his snake swarm form.

Defense and Mobility: To cover a lot of ground, or to reduce the damage he’s taking, the exarch changes to venom wisp form to gain flying and insubstantial.



4 Eladrin Feydark Gladiators (G) **Level 16 Soldier**
 Medium fey humanoid XP 1,400 each

Initiative +17 **Senses** Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 154; **Bloodied** 77
AC 32; **Fortitude** 28, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 26
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects
Speed 6

⊕ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the gladiator's next turn.

‡ **Bloodletting Stab** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**
 +23 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and if the gladiator has combat advantage against the target, the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).

Gladiator's Cage
 An enemy flanked by the gladiator takes a -5 penalty to attack rolls.

Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ **Teleportation**
 The eladrin Feydark gladiator teleports 5 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven

Str 21 (+13) **Dex** 24 (+15) **Wis** 13 (+9)
Con 18 (+12) **Int** 15 (+10) **Cha** 16 (+11)

Equipment scale armor, spear

Blackroot Treant (T) **Level 19 Elite Soldier**
 Huge fey magical beast (plant, undead) XP 4,800

Initiative +13 **Senses** Perception +13; low-light vision
Blackroot Aura (Healing, Necrotic) aura 2; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 10 necrotic damage. Any undead ally that starts its turn within the aura regains 10 hit points.
HP 368; **Bloodied** 184

AC 36; **Fortitude** 34, **Reflex** 29, **Will** 32

Vulnerable fire (a blackroot treant takes ongoing 5 fire damage [save ends] when damaged by fire)

Saving Throws +2
Speed 6 (forest walk)

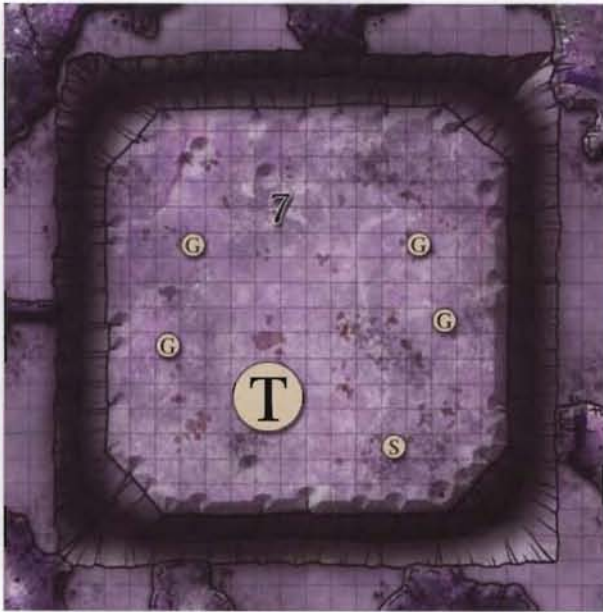
Action Points 1

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Reach 3; +25 vs. AC; 1d12 + 8 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

‡ **Entangling Roots** (minor; at-will)
 Reach 4; +23 vs. Reflex; the target is knocked prone and restrained (save ends). If the blackroot treant moves, slides, or is pushed more than 4 squares away from the target, the target is no longer restrained.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Elven

Skills Nature +18, Stealth +16
Str 27 (+17) **Dex** 14 (+11) **Wis** 18 (+13)
Con 24 (+16) **Int** 16 (+12) **Cha** 22 (+15)



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light.

Pit: The crevasse that surrounds the arena floor is 4 squares (20 feet) deep. A creature that falls in takes 2d10 damage from the fall. The sides require a successful DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

Ledges: The towering walls are honeycombed with cave mouths that serve as viewing areas for a diverse audience of fey creatures. The lowest ledges (shown on the map) are 2 squares (10 feet) higher than the floor of the arena, and the walls around them require a successful DC 20 Athletics check to climb.

THE TREANT IS TERRAIN

In this battle, the blackroot is treated more like a hazard than a monster. Because the treant cannot move from its location, the PCs can choose to avoid it. The treant doesn't give experience points unless the PCs end up fighting and defeating it.

- ◆ Iron chains bind the treant. It is immobilized and can't be forced to move by a push, a pull, or a slide. The chains have AC 4; other defenses 12; break DC 30; hp 120.
- ◆ The treant treats everyone as an enemy, including the PCs, Virizan, and the gladiators.
- ◆ It makes opportunity attacks against anyone it can.
- ◆ On its turn, it uses *entangling roots* and its slam attack against random targets within reach.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

Audience members pack the viewing ledges. The crowd's support determines on which side the eladrin gladiators fight. The crowd cheers for exciting attacks and might help the PCs if they've been fighting well. This could include distracting Virizan, drawing the treant's attention away from PCs, or dropping ropes to help a PC out of the pit.

Virizan, Exarch of Tiamat (S) Level 18 Solo Controller
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 10,000

Initiative +14 **Senses** Perception +18

Shifting Body Track hit points separately for each of Virizan's forms. He is bloodied once two forms have dropped to 0 hit points, and he is defeated when all forms have dropped to 0 hit points. See also *death change*.

AC 32; **Fortitude** 29, **Reflex** 30, **Will** 31

Resist determined by current shape

Saving Throws +5

Speed determined by current shape

Action Points 2

◀ **Mindspike** (minor 1/round; at-will) ◆ **Psychic**

Close burst 10; targets one creature in burst; +22 vs. Will; 3d6 psychic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic damage (save ends).

➤ **Overwhelm Mind** (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️) ◆ **Charm**

Ranged 20; targets a creature taking ongoing psychic damage; +22 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends).

Exarch's Shape (minor 1/round; at-will) ◆ **Polymorph**

Virizan changes to one of the forms on page 104. The form must have more than 0 hit points.

Death Change (when current form drops to 0 hit points)

Virizan uses *exarch's shape*, and the new form takes damage equal to half the damage of the effect that reduced the previous form to 0 hit points.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Deep Speech, Draconic, Elven

Skills Arcana +20, Bluff +21, Diplomacy +21, History +20, Insight +18, Religion +20

Str 13 (+10)

Dex 20 (+14)

Wis 19 (+13)

Con 18 (+13)

Int 22 (+15)

Cha 25 (+16)

Equipment fine clothing, staff of office

Naga Form Only

Large natural magical beast (reptile, shapechanger)

HP 170

Speed 6

⊕ **Tail Slap** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

⚡ **Exarch's Thunder** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Thunder**Area burst 10 within 20; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 7 thunder damage. *Miss*: Half damage.**Snake Swarm Form Only**

Medium natural magical beast (reptile, shapechanger, swarm)

Swarm Attack aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 7 damage.

HP 170

Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks;

Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks

Speed 6; ignores difficult terrain

⊕ **Swarm of Fangs** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+23 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

Snaketongue Form Only

Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)

HP 170

Resist 10 poison

Speed 6

⊕ **Serpent Staff** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+23 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 poison damage.

↻ **Emerald Coils** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

Ranged 20; two targets; +22 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 7 poison damage, and Virizan slides the target 3 squares.

Venom Wisp Form Only

Medium natural magical beast (shapechanger)

HP 120

Immune poison; Resist insubstantial

Speed 0, fly 8 (altitude limit 3, hover)

⊕ **Venomous Claws** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**

+23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 poison damage.

⚡ **Caustic Breath** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**Virizan shifts his speed and makes an attack at any point during that movement; close blast 3; +22 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 7 poison damage. *Miss*: Half damage.**BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE BIG EVENT!**

I knew I wanted to end this adventure with a bang. While researching what we'd said about fomorians previously, the part that really hooked me was a passing reference to their love of gladiatorial combat. This led to the layout of Cachlain's throne room, the *Return of the Jedi* moment where he dumps the PCs into danger, and the final showdown in the vast crystalline arena. The battle is meant to be chaotic and impressive in

scale, with four different groups battling it out and the main adversary constantly changing forms. I figured a shapechanging enemy could make a compelling solo monster, and chose some forms that reinforced the trickery, poison, and serpent themes that fit a conniving green dragon exarch.

—Logan Bonner

APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

CYCLOPS SLAVER

TASKED WITH PROCURING SLAVES for their fomorian masters, cyclops slavers craft the specialized tools they use to capture their targets.

Cyclops Slaver		Level 15 Controller
Large fey humanoid		XP 1,200
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +15; truesight	
HP 149; Bloodied 74		
AC 29; Fortitude 27, Reflex 29, Will 25		
Speed 7		
⊕ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +20 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Shuriken (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 6/12; +20 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.		
☞ Evil Eye (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Ranged sight; the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the cyclops slaver until the end of the encounter or until the slaver uses <i>evil eye</i> against a different target.		
⚡ Barbed Net (standard; requires net; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞) ♦ Weapon		
Close blast 4; +19 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 6 damage, and the target is restrained and takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both).		
☞ Sleep Powder Flask (standard; encounter) ♦ Sleep		
Area burst 1 within 10; +19 vs. Fortitude; the target is slowed (save ends). <i>First Failed Saving Throw</i> : The target is knocked unconscious instead of slowed (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Elven	
Skills Stealth +19		
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 24 (+14)	Wis 17 (+10)
Con 21 (+12)	Int 11 (+7)	Cha 10 (+7)
Equipment leather armor, spear, 3 nets, 10 shuriken, 1 sleep powder flask		

CYCLOPS SLAVER LORE

Arcana DC 18: Fomorians seek slaves to do their work for them. The misshapen giants trust the work of collecting these slaves to their cyclops followers. The slavers create barbed nets and alchemical sleep powder, and set out to distant lands in search of new creatures to enslave.

CYCLOPS SLAVER TACTICS

After using *barbed net* to restrain as many targets as it can, a slaver moves back and lets its allies beat on the enemies. Slavers use *evil eye* on strikers or other characters with primarily single-target attacks. The slavers' alchemical sleeping powder is difficult to create and requires rare substances, so they throw their flasks only when desperate. Slaves aren't much good when they're dead, so a slaver can throw its barbed net inside-out, and the target doesn't take ongoing damage.

ELADRIN

IN THE WORLD, ELADRIN ARE EXCEPTIONAL. In the Feywild, though, they're more common, and many serve as rank-and-file fighters.

Eladrin Winter Blade		Level 14 Soldier Minion
Medium fey humanoid, eladrin		XP 250
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 30; Fortitude 26, Reflex 27, Will 24		
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects		
Speed 6		
⊕ Winter Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Weapon		
+21 vs. AC; 8 cold damage.		
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
The eladrin winter blade teleports 5 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Elven
Str 20 (+12)	Dex 23 (+13)	Wis 12 (+8)
Con 14 (+9)	Int 15 (+9)	Cha 16 (+10)
Equipment leather armor, longsword		

ELADRIN WINTER BLADE LORE

Arcana DC 11: The rank and file of armies mustered by the Winter Court, eladrin winter blades don't have much combat training. Most aren't soldiers by trade and rely on the small amount of longsword training all eladrin receive. They carry blades that develop frost when carried by eladrin from the Winter Court.

ELADRIN WINTER BLADE TACTICS

When fighting with mostly other eladrin, winter blades follow orders, and they take the brunt of assaults. If they're grouped with other creatures that are better suited to fighting on the front lines, the eladrin teleport to surprise the enemies behind the first rank.

Eladrin Feydark Gladiator		Level 16 Soldier
Medium fey humanoid		XP 1,400
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +9; low-light vision	
HP 154; Bloodied 77		
AC 32; Fortitude 28, Reflex 30, Will 26		
Saving Throws +5 against charm effects		
Speed 6		
⊕ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+23 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the gladiator's next turn.		
⊕ Bloodletting Stab (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon		
+23 vs. AC; 3d8 + 7 damage, and if the gladiator has combat advantage against the target, the target takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends).		
Gladiator's Cage		
An enemy flanked by the gladiator takes a -5 penalty to attack rolls.		
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation		
The eladrin Feydark gladiator teleports 5 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common, Elven
Str 21 (+13)	Dex 24 (+15)	Wis 13 (+9)
Con 18 (+12)	Int 15 (+10)	Cha 16 (+11)
Equipment scale armor, spear		

ELADRIN FEYDARK GLADIATOR LORE

Arcana DC 20: Many fomorian kings love gladiatorial combat, and they seek all sorts of warriors and creatures to fight in their arenas. They especially prize eladrin slaves, because the fomorians love gloating over an eladrin's pain.

ELADRIN FEYDARK GLADIATOR TACTICS

Experts in arena combat, eladrin Feydark gladiators prefer to fight in pairs (to gain the benefit of *gladiator's cage*). If they need to move into battle, they do so carefully instead of rushing in, and they save *fey step* in case they need to escape from the heat of battle.

FIRBOLG DUSK HARRIER

IN THE WILD HUNT, dusk harriers flush out prey and assist other firbolgs as they chase down their quarry.

FIRBOLG DUSK HARRIER LORE

Arcana DC 11: Among the Wild Hunt, firbolg dusk harriers occupy a support role, and they set up their prey to be slaughtered. They hunt both beasts and people, adapting their skills to both situations. Masters of a fighting style that uses two spears (one with a hooked point), dusk harriers can attack rapidly, and they drag their foes into the middle of the hunting party.



Arcana DC 18: Other firbolg hunters judge dusk harriers harshly, and a dusk harrier is shunned if he or she fails to be fully effective in combat. A dusk harrier expelled from a hunting party might become a hermit or run with a pack of wild beasts. A few, however, become enforcers or commanders for fomorians or archfey. Still, they refuse to teach firbolg secrets—especially the dusk harriers' two-spear fighting style.

Firbolg Dusk Harrier Large fey humanoid	Level 13 Elite Skirmisher XP 1,600
Initiative +17	Senses Perception +17; low-light vision
HP 322; Bloodied 161	Regeneration 5
AC 31; Fortitude 29, Reflex 30, Will 27	Vulnerable necrotic (if the dusk harrier takes necrotic damage, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)
Saving Throws +2 (+4 against charm effects, immobilized, restrained, and slowed)	Speed 8
Action Points 1	⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +22 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage.
	⚔ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 10/20; +22 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage.
	⚔ Double Attack (standard; at-will) The dusk harrier makes two spear attacks, and slides one target it hits 1 square. The dusk harrier then shifts 3 squares.
	☾ Moonfire (minor 1/round; recharge ☐☐☐☐☐) Ranged 10; +20 vs. Will; until the end of the dusk harrier's next turn, the target cannot benefit from invisibility or concealment, and the dusk harrier gains combat advantage against the target.
	⬅ Forest of Spears (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Weapon Close burst 2; targets enemies; +22 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is either slowed or takes ongoing 10 damage (save ends both). On a critical hit, the target takes both effects.
	Deadly Flanker When an ally flanks with the dusk harrier, that ally deals 1d8 extra damage with attacks against the flanked creature.
	Harrier's Flank (immediate reaction, when an ally moves adjacent to a creature within 2 squares of the dusk harrier; at-will) The dusk harrier shifts 2 squares. It must end this shift in a flanking position with the ally that triggered this power.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Acrobatics +19, Athletics +20, Intimidate +15, Nature +17	
Str 22 (+14)	Dex 25 (+15)
Con 17 (+11)	Int 13 (+9)
	Wis 18 (+12)
	Cha 15 (+10)
Equipment hide armor, 2 spears, 4 javelins	

FIRBOLG DUSK HARRIER TACTICS

Rarely found without other melee warriors fighting alongside them, firbolg dusk harriers use their mobility and *harrier's flank* power to help their allies. When encountering intelligent prey, they use psychological warfare, taunting their enemies. When fighting an adventuring party or another group, a dusk harrier repeatedly attacks the weakest target if doing so provokes desperate actions from others within the group. For instance, a dusk harrier might repeatedly strike at a wizard if that causes defenders and leaders to disengage from other foes to protect the wizard.

PORTAL HOUND

PART PHYSICAL FLESH AND PART MAGICAL ENERGY, a portal hound can teleport itself and other creatures easily.

PORTAL HOUND LORE

Arcana DC 13: These hounds of the Feywild seethe with magical power, and they manifest extraordinary abilities of teleportation. Even their jaws warp and shift, allowing them to transport their quarry with a simple bite. Though wild portal hounds are cunning predators, the creatures are even more dangerous when trained by firbolgs, which use the hounds to corner their enemies.

Arcana DC 20: Because of their unique abilities, portal hounds live and stalk prey in unusual terrain. In marshy areas, around cliffs, among dangerous vegetation, and near rushing water, portal hounds use their teleportation abilities to trap prey on isolated or dangerous terrain. They then try to push or frighten the prey into dangerous places (into brambles, off precipices, or into rushing water, for example) to weaken or kill it.

Portal Hound	Level 16 Controller
Medium fey beast	XP 1,400
Initiative +15	Senses Perception +21; low-light vision
Portal Aura (Teleportation) aura 2; when any enemy starts its turn within the aura, the portal hound can teleport that creature to a different square within the aura.	
HP 150; Bloodied 75	
AC 30; Fortitude 26, Reflex 30, Will 28	
Speed 7, teleport 7	
Ⓢ Bite (standard; at-will) +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage.	
† Dimensional Jaws (standard; at-will) † Teleportation +21 vs. AC; 2d8 + 7 damage, and the portal hound makes a secondary attack against the same target. Secondary Attack: +22 vs. Will; the hound teleports the target 10 squares.	
◀ Portal Walk (move; encounter) † Teleportation The portal hound attacks, then teleports itself to a square within 10 squares of its starting location; close burst 1; +21 vs. Will; after the hound teleports, it teleports the target to a square adjacent to the portal hound.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 16 (+11)	Dex 24 (+15) Wis 21 (+13)
Con 14 (+10)	Int 5 (+5) Cha 19 (+12)



PORTAL HOUND TACTICS

The versatile allotment of teleportation powers portal hounds possess are useful in any situation. When trained by firbolgs, portal hounds use precise teleportation to trap foes. Wild portal hounds, on the other hand, target weak foes (especially bloodied and lightly armored enemies), teleporting their prey and themselves away from other combatants to go one-on-one.

Portal hounds are especially skilled at using terrain to their advantage. Include thorns, wildfires, or other hazardous terrain into which the portal hound can teleport PCs.

SCARRED BULETTE

TORTURED BY SERVANTS OF FOMORIANS, these bulettes have been inculcated into blind obedience to their misshapen masters.

SCARRED BULETTE LORE

Nature DC 18: Though bulettes live primarily in the world, a few are found living in the Feywild or are taken there to serve as pets or beasts of burden for powerful fey. Fomorians that capture bulettes have them tortured for years, until the beasts' wills are broken. These obedient bulettes are covered in scars, and their blood has become tainted by magic toxins.

SCARRED BULETTE TACTICS

In most ways, a scarred bulette fights like any other bulette, burrowing beneath opponents to knock them over and using *rising burst* when it emerges from the ground. However, since it doesn't have second wind, a scarred bulette is more likely to keep fighting after being wounded. After a creature hits the bulette and triggers its *spray of tainted blood*, the bulette uses *earth furrow* to move beneath that creature and take advantage of its weakened Fortitude.

Scarred bulettes are rarely encountered without masters. It takes great effort and years to turn a bulette into this monstrosity, and no one that possesses a scarred bulette wants the effort required to produce it to be wasted.

Scarred Bulette	Level 15 Elite Skirmisher
Large natural beast	XP 2,400
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +10; darkvision, tremorsense 20
HP 304; Bloodied 152; see also <i>habituated to torture</i>	AC 29; Fortitude 28, Reflex 25, Will 23
Vulnerable charm (a tortured bulette hit by a charm attack is immobilized until the end of its next turn)	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6, burrow 6	
Action Points 1	
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)	Before it bites, the bulette can make a standing long jump (as a free action) without provoking opportunity attacks; +20 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, or 4d8 + 6 damage against a prone target.
⊕ Earth Furrow (move; at-will)	The scarred bulette moves its burrow speed just below the surface of the ground, avoiding opportunity attacks as it passes underneath other creatures' spaces. As it burrows beneath the space of a Medium or smaller creature on the ground, the bulette makes an attack against the creature; +14 vs. Fortitude; the target is knocked prone.
⚡ Rising Burst (standard; the bulette must have emerged from the ground after burrowing this turn; at-will)	Close burst 2; the bulette sprays rocks and dirt into the air when it rises out of the ground; +19 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage.
Spray of Tainted Blood (when a creature adjacent to the bulette hits the scarred bulette with a melee attack)	The attacker takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude until the end of the scarred bulette's next turn.
Habituated to Torture	While the scarred bulette is bloodied, it gains a +2 bonus to all defenses and to speed.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Skills Athletics +20, Endurance +19	
Str 27 (+15)	Dex 21 (+12) Wis 16 (+10)
Con 24 (+14)	Int 2 (+3) Cha 11 (+7)



HEROIC

1-10

"I want you to know something before I die."

"I was awesome."



STORM TOWER

An adventure for 3rd-level characters

by Christopher Perkins

illustrations by Mike Krahulik and Scott Kurtz ♦ cartography by Jason A. Engle and Mike Schley

“Storm Tower” is a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*[®] adventure designed for five 3rd-level characters. It begins in the town of Fallcrest, described in Chapter 11 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide*. The player characters have been in Fallcrest for a short while, just long enough for rumors of their heroism to begin circulating among the locals.

BACKGROUND

The fortified town of Fallcrest faces many threats, among them encroaching monsters from the borderlands, where civilization meets the harsh, untamed wilderness. Goblins and giants are of particular concern. To hold them back, the Lord Warden of Fallcrest ordered the reconstruction of a damaged tower that once kept watch over the Witchlight Fens to the south and the Ogréfist Hills to the west. He hired a team of dwarf stonemasons from the stronghold of Hammerfast and sent them to the tower. Nathan Faringray, a captain in the town militia, was assigned to protect them. Faringray and a dozen warriors accompanied the dwarves to the tower, where they set up camp.

While Faringray and his retinue were away, the Fallcrest Guard suffered significant losses defending the King’s Road from monstrous brigands. A week ago, Faringray was summoned back to Fallcrest to help train new recruits for the town guard. He left his retinue at the tower and rode back to town, believing that the stonemasons were adequately protected. But he was wrong.

Yesterday, while training raw recruits in the cold, muddy fields west of Fallcrest, Nathan Faringray was surprised to see Sorik Orvash, one of the dwarf stonemasons, staggering along the road toward town. The captain confronted Sorik and learned that brigands had attacked the ruined tower the previous morning. Sorik described the gang of brigands as a mixture of armored humans and walking skeletons. The humans looked haggard, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls. This evil force overcame the guards at the

tower, yet Sorik escaped. Taking advantage of the fog and rain, he fled unseen.

The Lord Warden has instructed Captain Faringray to dispatch another force to reclaim the tower. Rather than risk more of the town’s militia, Faringray has decided to hire a party of adventurers. He has heard reports that such a party currently resides in Fallcrest, and that these adventurers can be trusted with such an important task.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

When the PCs take the task, they must first venture to Vanamere’s Tower, where they find Yellowskull bandits. After the combat with this group, the watching spirit of Vanamere allows them into the tower. Once inside, the PCs encounter more bandits and several traps. If all goes well, they also free the dwarf survivors. Eventually, they have to figure out how to get into the vault. Once they do that, they can find the skull that the bandits sought.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: THE YELLOWSKULL BANDITS

Chapter 11 of the *Dungeon Master’s Guide* describes the town of Fallcrest in detail and provides an overview of the surrounding Nentir Vale. The one-paragraph description of the Temple of Yellow Skulls (on page 208) provided the inspiration for the Yellowskull bandits.

In the podcast, I made the bandit leader, Jeras Falck, a servant of Kalarel, the main villain from *Keep on the Shadowfell*. This worked for the podcast because the players had already crossed paths with Kalarel and hated his guts. (They called him “Karl.”) Falck and Kalarel both hung around with undead creatures, so it wasn’t much of a stretch. However, I was more intrigued by the notion that Falck was a pawn of darker powers lurking in the Temple of Yellow Skulls.

—Chris Perkins

AUTHOR'S NOTE

In early 2008, Wizards of the Coast teamed up with the mad geniuses of Penny Arcade to create a very special D&D 4th Edition podcast. James Wyatt and I ran a group of upstarts through an abbreviated version of *Keep on the Shadowfell*, the first 4th Edition adventure. Our players included Mike "Gabe" Krahulik and Jerry "Tycho" Holkins of Penny Arcade (www.penny-arcade.com) and special guest Scott Kurtz of PVP (www.pvponline.com). Together, they formed Acquisitions Incorporated, a party of adventurers in search of fame and fortune—more fortune than fame, actually. Split into eight hilarious segments, the podcast proved a resounding success, with almost half a million hits on the Internet. The members of Acquisitions Incorporated—Jim Darkmagic, Omin, and Binwin Bronzebottom—became instant legends in the real world.

In December of 2008, Penny Arcade teamed up with Wizards once again for a sequel. Mike, Jerry, and Scott needed another fix. This time, however, we added actor Wil Wheaton to the mix, playing the party intern. Wil's character was an elf avenger named Aeofel, and as it turns out, the very survival of Acquisitions Incorporated would rest on his slender shoulders.

The adventure, which had the working title "Penny Arcade and the Tower of Storms," wasn't written to be humorous. Quite the contrary. I always knew the humor would come from the players, not the set-up . . . and

certainly not the DM. The adventure took 8 hours to complete, at which point we had to cut the game short. (Turns out I had another D&D game across town that evening.) We probably could've finished the adventure sooner, but as happens when you run a game for cartoonists and actors, expeditious play often takes a back seat to wacky hijinks.

If you want to know how Acquisitions Incorporated fared, listen to the podcasts. Look for the podcasts on our website, in the "News & Resources" section of the Article Archive (<http://www.wizards.com/dnd/Archive.aspx>). I'm not going to tell you which characters died, if any. You'll have to do your research! I will say that Jim Darkmagic and the gang had a tough go this time 'round, and Mike's temper tantrum in the eighth hour is true magic and should be remembered in song.

In closing, I'd like to add that the adventure you're reading isn't exactly the same as the adventure I ran for Mike, Jerry, Scott, and Wil. As a DM, I make impromptu changes to an adventure while running it, usually to heighten the tension or surprise the players. I encourage you to exercise similar license and not be bound by what's written here. I also made a couple of alterations to surprise players who listen to the podcast and think they know everything. You can thank me later.

—Chris Perkins

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in Fallcrest. The heroes are relaxing inside one of the local inns, such as the Nentir Inn or the Silver Unicorn Inn.

Begin the adventure by reading the following:

Thick curtains of rain fall outside, turning the streets to mud, and peals of thunder resound in the distance. Your evening's rest comes to an abrupt end when a figure enters the inn and slams the door behind him. His shoddy cloak is drenched, and when he pulls back the cowl, you see that he's a young tiefling boy. He nods to the innkeeper sheepishly, then slinks toward you. From within the folds of his cloak, he produces a dry, unsealed letter and hands it to you.

This 12-year-old tiefling ne'er-do-well is named Tirion Blackhorn. He lives with a family of human farmers in Fallcrest. The letter is from Captain Nathan Faringray of the Fallcrest Guard. Tirion hands the letter to one of the heroes, having already taken the time to read it himself. He sticks around long enough to see if the heroes offer him a token payment, then darts back outside and slips away into the rain.

Captain Faringray's letter reads as follows:

Good folk,

I have heard tales of your heroism and want to employ your services. Adventure awaits in the borderlands! The Lord Warden of Fallcrest has authorized me to pay well for your time and effort.

If this offer intrigues you, look for me in the fields west of Fallcrest tomorrow morning. Simply take the western ferry across the river and walk to the outskirts of town. You will find me there.

*With respect and regards,
Captain Nathan Faringray of the Fallcrest Guard*

If the heroes accept Faringray's invitation, read or paraphrase the following text:

The next morning, you head west through the rain and fog. A short ferry ride brings you to the western shore of the river. You march along a muddy road past farmers'

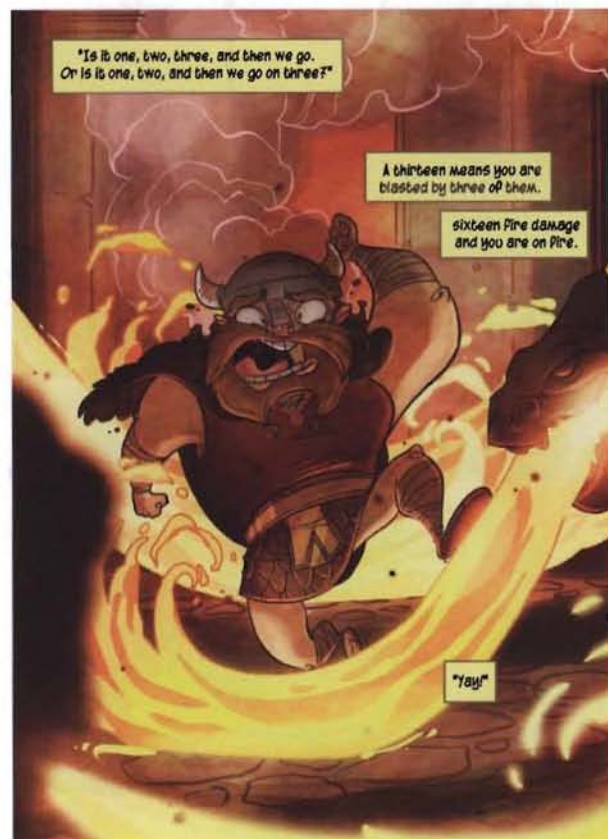
dwelling until you see an open field of tilled earth and thicker mud. In the middle of the field scream a dozen militia recruits. They attack one another with wild abandon, swinging wooden swords and shields. Watching them with dismay is a cloaked man on horseback. Near him, standing in a puddle by the road, is a dour dwarf smoking a pipe. Rain pours off his wide-brimmed hat.

The figure on horseback is Captain Nathan Faringray, a handsome 40-year-old man. The captain introduces the dwarf as Sorik Orvash, a stonemason from distant Hammerfast, a dwarven hold in the eastern Dawnforge Mountains.

WHAT FARINGRAY KNOWS

When questioned, Captain Faringray imparts the following information:

- ◆ Some months ago, Faren Markelhay, the Lord Warden of Fallcrest, hired a group of six dwarf stonemasons to rebuild a ruined tower to the west. Faringray was assigned to protect them.
- ◆ Faringray and his retinue of six well-trained guards accompanied the dwarves to the tower. Reconstruction efforts were underway and events were moving apace until Faringray was summoned back to Fallcrest to train new warriors for the town guard. He thought he was leaving the tower in capable hands, however.



- ◆ The day before yesterday, a group of brigands attacked the tower and overwhelmed the guards and masons. Only Sorik escaped. Some of the brigands were humans clad in leather armor, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls. The rest were clearly undead skeletons.
- ◆ In generations past, the tower was key to the town's defense, watching over the Cloak Wood to the north, the Witchlight Fens to the south, and the Ogréfist Hills farther west. Thirty-odd years ago, a legion of goblins and hill giants advanced from the Ogréfist Hills and attacked the tower, which had but one defender: a powerful elf wizard named Vanamere. No one knows exactly what happened, but when the battle was over, the giants were dead, the goblins were driven off, and Vanamere's tower was destroyed.
- ◆ For years, Fallcrest lacked the funds and the incentive to rebuild the tower. However, the growing threat of monsters prompted its reconstruction.
- ◆ Although he's not a skilled combatant, Sorik knows the fastest way to the tower and is willing to escort the characters there, provided they keep him out of harm's way.

Faringray would prefer to return to the tower and clean up his own mess, but his orders are clear: He must remain in Fallcrest to complete the training of the new recruits. Therefore, he asks the characters to investigate the tower, look for survivors, and deal with the mysterious brigands.

Major Quest: The PCs gain a 1,000 XP award for dealing with the brigands and rescuing the prisoners.

TREASURE

This adventure can take a party of 3rd-level characters most of the way to 4th level. If you add an encounter or two, it certainly will. Distribute nine (or ten, if you add encounters) level 3 parcels in this adventure. A couple of locations—area 1, area 2, and area 5—have suggested treasure. The bandits should have money and valuables, which can be multiple monetary parcels split up among them, but most of the significant treasure is in the hands of the named NPCs. If the PCs demand it, Faringray assures them that the Lord Warden will award them a monetary award that you devise from the parcels. For example, each brigand captured alive and returned to Fallcrest might garner the party 50 gp.

SORIK ORVASH

Sorik Orvash is the stereotypical “dour dwarf” and can barely contain his anger toward the brigands. He doesn’t talk much during the return trip to the tower.

Sorik Orvash	Level 3 Minion Skirmisher	
Medium natural humanoid, dwarf	XP –	
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 12		
Saving Throws +5 against poison effects		
Speed 5		
Ⓢ Pick (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage, and Sorik shifts 1 square.		
Roll With It (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter)		
Sorik can roll a saving throw to avoid damage from the attack. If he succeeds, he can also shift 2 squares.		
Stand Your Ground		
When an effect pulls, pushes, or slides Sorik, Sorik moves 1 square less than the effect specifies. When an attack could knock Sorik prone, a successful save negates that effect.		
Alignment Good	Languages Common, Dwarven	
Skills Dungeoneering +9, Endurance +10		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 10 (+1)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 12 (+2)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, pick, hat, pipe		

WEATHER

This adventure takes place during whichever season works best for your campaign, but regardless of the time of year, it rains constantly, and light fog shrouds every location to which the characters go. Ill weather is an important theme; rain and fog persist until the adventure is complete.

Rain and Light Fog: Weather lightly obscures anything within 5 squares of a viewer and heavily obscures anything 5 or more squares from a viewer.

REACHING THE TOWER

Vanamere’s Tower lies 25 miles west of Fallcrest, on the far side of the Cloak Wood, on the northern edge of the Witchlight Fens. Faringray urges the characters to steer clear of the forest and instead suggests that they follow the Nentir River south until they come upon the Witchlight Fens. Then they can trudge west across rugged, grassy terrain and avoid the fens. The total trek covers 30 miles. What’s left of the tower sits atop a hill north of the fens and can be seen from 2 miles away on a clear day.

If the characters travel the route that Faringray suggests, the journey to the tower is dreary and uneventful. Feel free to insert an encounter with the creatures of the Witchlight Fens if the players are spoiling for a fight. Here’s one you can use.

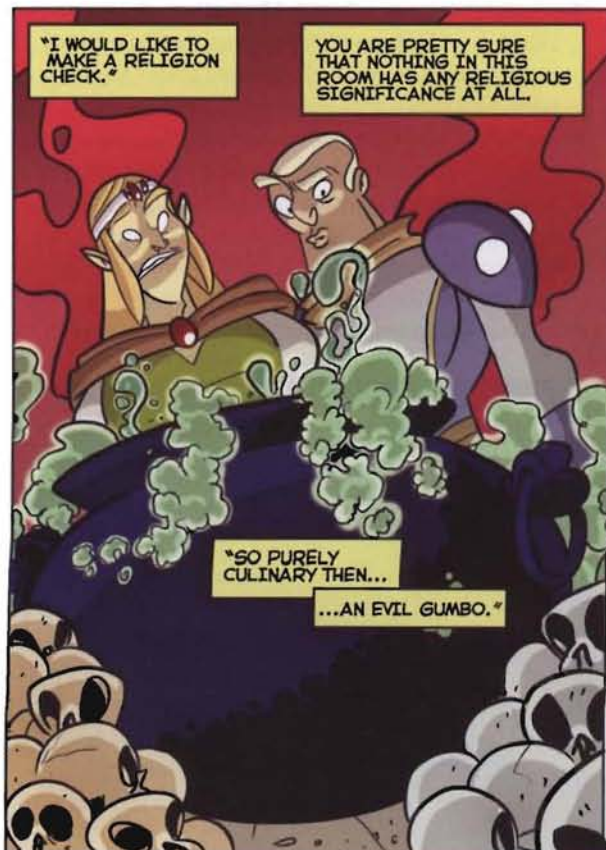
Encounter Level 4 (XP 875)

- ◆ 1 visejaw crocodile (level 4 soldier, *Monster Manual* 45)
- ◆ 4 greenscale hunters (level 4 skirmisher, *Monster Manual* 178)

If the characters ignore Faringray’s advice and try to cut 5 miles off the journey by traveling through the Cloak Wood, use the following encounter to illustrate the dangers of the forest and why it’s usually avoided. During the encounter, Sorik does his best to hide and avoid combat. If the characters are defeated, he flees.

Encounter Level 5 (XP 1,250)

- ◆ 1 goblin underboss (level 4 elite controller, *Monster Manual* 138)
- ◆ 4 goblin skullcleavers (level 3 brute, *Monster Manual* 137)
- ◆ 2 spitting drakes (level 3 artillery, *Monster Manual* 91)



VANAMERE'S TOWER

A pair of retired adventurers—an elf wizard named Vanamere and a human fighter named Lethion Goldenhawk—married and built this tower as a private residence, sinking a considerable amount of their accumulated wealth into the endeavor. Only later did the tower become important to the defense of Nentir Vale, and only after special agreements were reached with the owners.

When Lethion passed away, Vanamere placed his remains in a secret tomb carved out of the hill beneath the tower. With him she buried their remaining treasure, including magic items seized during their careers. One of the items entombed with Lethion was a gold-plated human skull, taken from the corpse of a gnoll demon-worshiper in the Ogresfist Hills. The golden skull is believed to be one of several stolen from the Temple of Yellow Skulls (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 208).

Goblins from the Ogresfist Hills and the Witchlight Fens tried to overrun the tower on several occasions, but their attacks were rebuffed. Thirty-odd years ago, the goblins joined forces with a clan of hill giants, and descended from the hills in force. They pounded the tower with rocks and broke through its defenses. Vanamere used a ritual to summon a mighty storm.

When the monsters breached the tower, a great bolt of lightning struck its peak, causing the tower

to explode. Jagged shards of rock killed most of the invaders. The magic attack so frightened the remaining monsters that they fled back into the hills, never to return. What became of Vanamere, no one knows. According to legend, when the lightning struck, she became one with the tower and remains trapped within its ruined walls to this day.

ARRIVAL

When the characters approach within a mile of the tower, read the following (if Sorik Orvash is alive):

The rain and fog make it hard to discern your surroundings. Sorik looks at you wearily. "We're almost there," he says, leading you up a gentle hill dotted with head-sized chunks of gray stone half embedded in the ground. You also see bones lying amid the grass and weeds.

The skeletons are all that remain of those that attacked the tower around 30 years ago. No valuables can be gained by searching them.

When the characters reach the top of the hill, proceed with the first encounter.

Tactical Encounter: Encounter 1: Yellowskulls (page 117).

Once the encounter begins, the PCs can follow the trail of encounters through the tower areas until they finish what they came to do.



THE YELLOWSKULLS

The brigands that attacked the tower paint their faces to resemble yellow skulls and call themselves the Yellowskulls. They came from the Temple of Yellow Skulls, a ruin located in the Ogréfist Hills to the west. They were sent by their evil masters to retrieve a relic of the temple—a gold-plated skull—that was stolen years ago and is rumored to lie somewhere below Vanamere's tower. The leader of these brigands is a necromancer named Jeras Falck, but he is merely the henchman of a more powerful enemy. The identity of Falck's master is left up to you.

THE DUNGEON

Falck's lieutenants, Tregger and Lurash, are stationed here and are guarding the six captive stonemasons.

Tactical Encounter: Encounter 2: The Dungeon (page 119).

TRAPPED HALL

Flameskulls can take cover behind the double doors here and make good use of trap positions to create a challenging combat environment for the PCs.

Tactical Encounter: Encounter 3: Trapped Hall (page 62).

SKULL CAULDRON

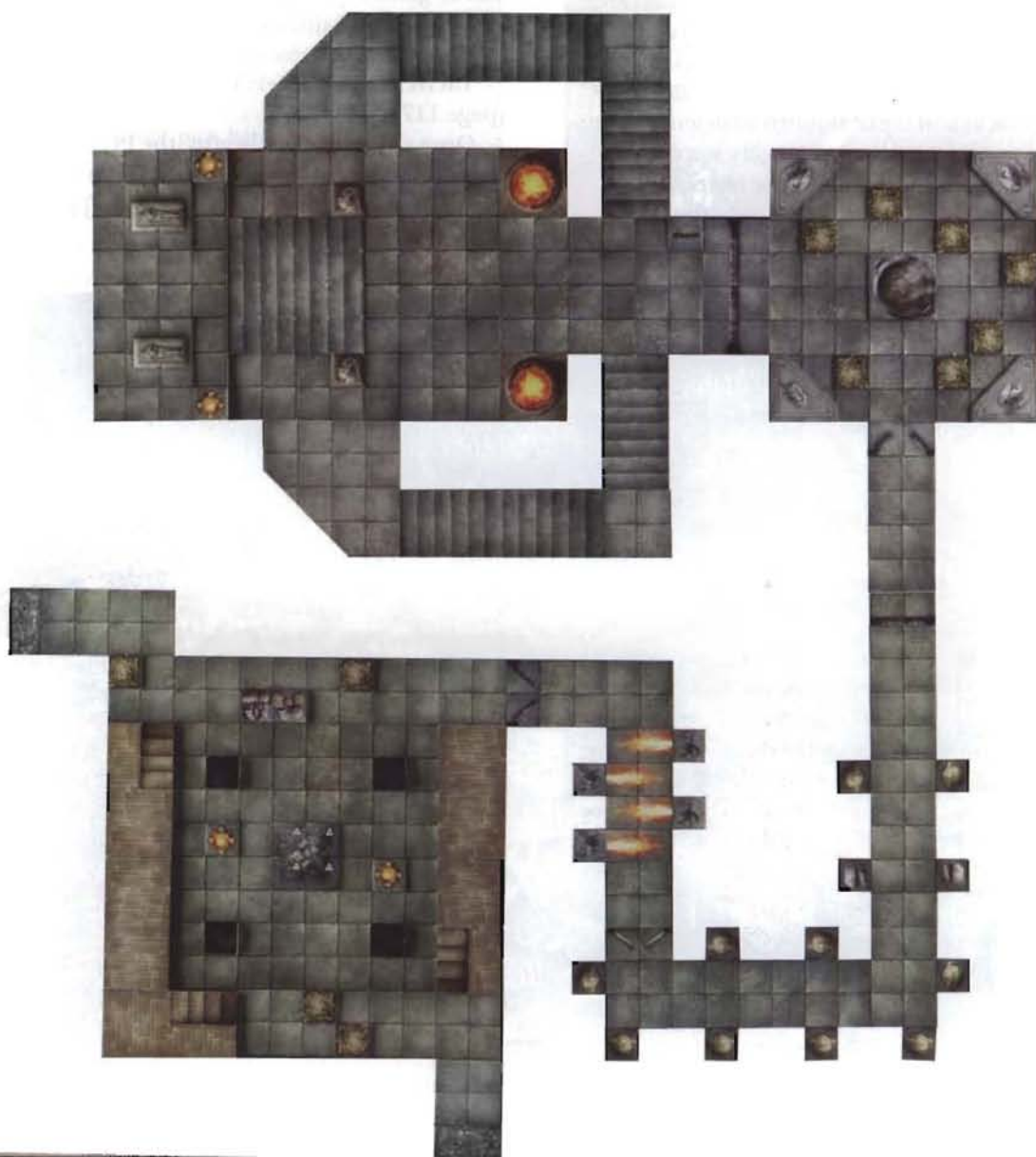
The cauldron here serves as the key to getting into the vault. If the PCs fail to deal with it correctly, they encounter the defenses for the vault.

Tactical Encounter: Encounter 4: Skull Cauldron (page 122).

THE VAULT

Once the vault opens, the PCs encounter Falck, who seeks the gold-plated skull that is within the sarcophagus.

Tactical Encounter: Encounter 5: The Vault (page 124).



ENCOUNTER 1: YELLOWSKULLS

Encounter Level 4 (878 XP)

SETUP

Celk, Yellowskull Doppelganger (C)

4 Yellowskull bandits (B)

6 zombie rotters (Z)

When the Yellowskull bandits attacked the tower, Faringray's guards put up strong resistance. Eight bandits died. Jeras Falck took his revenge by turning the dead guards into zombies that now wander the hill. He then ordered four bandits and Celk, a doppelganger, to stand guard in and around the tower. Celk assumes the form of a dwarf stonemason named Tarjin Stoneheart and pretends to be the bandits' prisoner.

Place the bandits and Celk only when they come within 5 squares of the characters. Beyond that range, the rain and fog grant total concealment. The zombie rotters are placed only after the battle is joined (see "Tactics" below).

When PCs reach the ruined tower, read:

Fog obscures your view of the hilltop, but as you ascend, you see a tower that has been reduced to a broken ring of mortared stone, punched through with gaping holes. It rises to a height of only 20 feet, its top resembling a jagged crown. The upper levels are gone, their remains scattered upon the hillside. Some large shrubs grow near the tower, and you also see a pair of drab tents and a smoldering campfire threatened by the rain.

When the characters and the bandits meet, read:

Sullen men clad in leather armor, their faces painted to resemble yellow skulls, take aim with crossbows. Rain has streaked the paint on their faces. Near them stands a haggard dwarf, his hands tied behind his back. "Drop your weapons or the dwarf dies!" shouts one of the bandits. His voice is nearly drowned by a deafening peal of thunder.

Any character who suspects a ruse can make a DC 20 Insight check to determine that the dwarf is not, in fact, the bandits' prisoner, or a DC 19 Perception check to spot the short sword hidden on the dwarf's person.

Peals of thunder make it impossible for the bandits beneath the tower to discern cries of alarm from the bandits stationed here. No reinforcements are forthcoming.

TACTICS

Sorik Orvash stays out of harm's way but recognizes the other dwarf as Tarjin Stoneheart, a fellow stonemason. The bandits threaten to kill their dwarf prisoner unless the heroes throw down their weapons and surrender.

If the characters refuse or attempt to put one over on the bandits, "Tarjin" stomps on the boot of the nearest bandit, causing him to yelp. Then he bolts toward the PCs, taking cover behind their ranks. If a fight breaks out, Celk slips out of his bonds, draws a hidden short sword, and attacks. He tries to take out the party's leader or controller while avoiding defenders and strikers. The doppelganger withdraws into the fog if combat turns against him.

The bandits use the tower walls for cover as they shoot at the PCs. When forced into melee, they draw their maces and attempt to gain combat advantage by flanking.

The zombie rotters appear in two groups of three, arriving on the second and third rounds of combat.

Celk, Yellowskull Doppelganger (C)		Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)		XP 150
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 16		
Speed 6		
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.		
⊕ Mindwarping Feint (minor; at-will)		
+6 vs. Will; the doppelganger gains combat advantage against the target until the end of the doppelganger's next turn.		
⊕ Deep Stab (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ⊕ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, ongoing 5 damage (save ends), and the target is pushed 2 squares and slowed until the end of Celk's next turn.		
Combat Advantage		
Celk deals 1d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to him.		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⊕ Polymorph		
Celk can alter his physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common
Skills Bluff +10, Insight +9, Stealth +9		
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, short sword		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Giant Skeleton: East of the tower lies the skeleton of a particularly large hill giant that was killed a generation ago. Three rabbits nest in its skull.

Goldenhawk Crest: A large crest is painted on the southeast wall. Time and weather have caused the crest to fade, but it clearly depicts a two-headed golden hawk against a shield of purple and black. This is the crest of Vanamere and Lethion Goldenhawk, the tower's original owners. The crest holds an important clue to the cauldron in area 4 (page 124).

Hole: The brigands have punched a hole through the flagstone floor of the tower, exposing a 5-foot-deep shaft that breaks through the ceiling of a

20-foot-high chamber. Anyone standing within the tower can see flickering light and hear faint voices rising up through the gaping hole. The voices belong to the bandits in area 2. Anyone who falls down lands on the pile of jagged rubble in the middle of the chamber (3d10 damage).

Rope Ladder: A rope ladder with one end tied off to an iron spike in the floor is rolled up next to the hole. The ladder is 50 feet long and descends to the lower chamber.

Ruined Tower: The outer wall of the tower is 20 feet high and slick with rain (DC 20 Athletics check to climb). A large break in the northeast wall is where the tower entrance used to be, and a smaller door-sized gap opens to the southwest. A stone staircase curls upward, stopping short of where the tower's second story used to be. Piled on the staircase are the corpses of four dead bandits.

Tents: The two tents once belonged to Farin-gray's guards. The bandits have already looted them, although six damp bedrolls can be found within the tents.

DEVELOPMENT

When the last enemy falls, the PCs have proven their worth to Vanamere's watching spirit. As they prepare to descend the shaft or to take a short rest, lightning strikes the top of the tower, breaking away part of the wall and causing a wooden scroll tube to fall to the tower floor.

The scroll tube has a golden stopper at each end, one emblazoned with the symbol of Corellon and the other adorned with the symbol of Kord. The scroll

tube contains a scroll with the Hand of Fate ritual (175 gp, 25 gp for the scroll tube).

Celk's Lies: If Celk is defeated but kept alive for questioning, he uses his Bluff skill to spin a web of lies, claiming that he and the brigands are under the spell of a bog hag named Zerilka who lives in the Witchlight Fens, with orders to explore the secret dungeon beneath the tower. Those whom Zerilka hexes wither and die if they defy her. Celk goes on to describe the hag's rivalry with Vanamere, and how the hag only recently learned of the secret dungeon beneath Vanamere's ruined tower. Celk claims that slaying Zerilka is the only way to free him and the cursed brigands from her spell. Of course, none of his story is true, although Zerilka might be real.

Sorik Orvash: If he survives the battle, Sorik remains in the tower while the characters explore the dungeon.

Voices from Below: Characters who listen to the voices from below hear the following exchanges (in Common) with a successful Perception check:

DC 12: "Who built this place anyway?" "Some elf wizard with a lot of money and time on her hands, apparently."

DC 15: "So, why we keepin' the dwarves alive?" "I dunno, maybe Falck thought they'd be more useful alive than undead." "Ain't it obvious, you two? This place is partly collapsed. We might need 'em for diggin'."

DC 18: "This place gives me the creeps." "Don't worry. As soon as Falck finds that skull, we're outta here."



ENCOUNTER 2: THE DUNGEON

Encounter Level 5 (1,000 XP)

SETUP

Tregger, Yellowskull berserker (T)
Lurash, Yellowskull cutthroat (L)
4 Yellowskull bandits (B)
"Chomper," iron snapjaw (C)

The bandits stationed here include Falck's lieutenants, Tregger and Lurash. Six captured dwarf stonemasons (D) are also kept here (see "Development," page 120). The map shows everyone's location, but Lurash is hidden under the scaffolding. Do not place him on the map until he's spotted or until he attacks.

If the characters alert the bandits, Tregger takes up position behind one of the pillars so that he's no longer out in the open. Although they exchange insults, the bandits cannot be coerced into giving up their position or allowing the PCs through without a fight.

When the PCs descend into this room, read:

The hole breaks through the ceiling of a 60-foot-square, dusty room with four large pillars. Directly beneath the hole is a mound of rubble. Two braziers illuminate the area and reveal three exits. A heap of supplies and several piles of skulls are on the chamber floor.

The walls are adorned with half-finished murals depicting great battles. Rickety, 10-foot-high wooden scaffolding clings to the north and south walls, directly below these murals.

Upon the floor and scaffolding stand several leather-clad figures with yellow skulls painted on their faces, as well as a device that looks like rusty iron jaws stained with blood.

The PCs might see the masons. They might also recognize the real Tarjin among the dwarves. All the dwarves have statistics like those of Sorik Orvash.

TACTICS

Tregger uses *staggering strike* to push an enemy adjacent to the iron snapjaw he calls "Chomper." He resorts to throwing handaxes only if targets are out of melee reach on a given turn.

Lurash remains hidden until he can attack a PC with 1 round's worth of actions. He poisons his targets so he can keep combat advantage easily. Meanwhile, he tries to stay close to another bandit, so that when he's targeted by a melee or ranged attack, he can use *sly shift* to move out of harm's way.

The bandits shoot their crossbows from atop the rickety scaffolding until forced to engage in melee.



Tregger, Yellowskull Berserker (T) Level 4 Brute

Medium natural humanoid, human XP 175

Initiative +3 **Senses Perception** +2**HP** 66; **Bloodied** 33**AC** 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 13, **Will** 12**Speed** 7⊕ **Maul** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 2d6 + 6 damage.

† **Staggering Strike** (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 3d6 + 6 damage, the target is pushed 2 squares, and Tregger shifts to a square that is adjacent to the target.

† **Battle Fury** (while bloodied)

Tregger deals 1d6 extra damage on any hit.

➤ **Handaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +5 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Athletics +9, **Endurance** +9**Str** 17 (+5) **Dex** 12 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 16 (+5) **Int** 8 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+2)**Equipment** leather armor, maul, 2 handaxes**Lurash, Yellowskull Cutthroat (L) Level 4 Skirmisher**

Medium natural humanoid, human XP 175

Initiative +10 **Senses Perception** +4**HP** 52; **Bloodied** 26**AC** 18 (22 against opportunity/immediate attacks);**Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14**Speed** 6⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and Lurash shifts 2 squares.

Poisoned Blade (minor; at-will)Lurash dips his short sword in a poison-filled scabbard. The next time he hits with his short sword, Lurash makes a secondary attack against the target. *Secondary Attack*: +7 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage, and is dazed (save ends both). Lurash has enough poison for three attacks.**Sly Shift** (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; recharges when first bloodied)

Lurash switches places with an ally within 2 squares (each shifts into the other's space) and redirects the attack to that ally.

Combat Advantage

Lurash's attack deals 2d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to him.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Acrobatics +11, **Stealth** +13, **Thievery** +13**Str** 8 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)**Con** 12 (+3) **Int** 12 (+3) **Cha** 9 (+1)**Equipment** leather armor, short sword, poisoned scabbard**"Chomper," Iron Snapjaw (C) Level 3 Soldier**

Medium natural animate (blind, construct) XP 150

Initiative +6 **Senses Perception** +2; tremorsense 3**HP** 47; **Bloodied** 23**AC** 19; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14**Speed** 6⊕ **Clamping Bite** (standard; at-will)

+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is grabbed (-2 to escape) and takes ongoing 10 damage while grabbed. While grabbing an enemy, the iron snapjaw cannot make attacks.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 18 (+5) **Dex** 16 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)**Con** 15 (+3) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 1 (-4)**4 Yellowskull Bandits (B) Level 2 Skirmisher**

Medium natural humanoid, human XP 125 each

Initiative +6 **Senses Perception** +1**HP** 37; **Bloodied** 18**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 12, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12**Speed** 6⊕ **Mace** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.

†/➤ **Dazing Strike** (standard; recharge ☼☼☼☼) ♦ **Weapon**

Requires mace or crossbow; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.

➤ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.

Combat Advantage

The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Stealth +9, **Streetwise** +7, **Thievery** +9**Str** 12 (+2) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+1)**Con** 13 (+2) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 12 (+2)**Equipment** leather armor, mace, crossbow with 10 bolts

DEVELOPMENT

Dwarf Survivors: If the PCs dispatch all but one of their enemies, the emboldened dwarf stonemasons surge forth to help the PCs overcome their final adversary. If one or more stonemasons are returned safely to Fallcrest, they make arrangements to head back to Hammerfast, their stronghold in the Dawnforge Mountains. Within a couple of weeks, a small delegation of Hammerfast dwarves arrives in Fallcrest bearing two treasure parcels for the characters.

Minor Quest: Before he joined the Yellowskulls, Lurash murdered a merchant in Winterhaven. With a successful DC 15 Streetwise check, a PC might recognize Lurash as a wanted man. If the characters capture him alive and haul him back to Fallcrest, the Lord Warden offers to release Lurash into their custody so that they can collect a bounty worth one treasure parcel. Payment requires that Lurash be delivered to Winterhaven alive. If the characters succeed in delivering Lurash to the Winterhaven town guard, they gain 150 XP.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Exits: The double doors in the northwest corner of the room hang open and lead to area 3. The corridors to the southwest and northeast have collapsed (but can be used to expand the complex if you want).

Murals and Scaffolding: Vanamere and Lethion intended to cover the walls of this room with murals chronicling their exploits as adventurers. The 10-foot-high scaffolds (DC 5 Athletics check to climb) have barely withstood the passage of time. Each square of scaffolding has 10 hit points; reducing a section of scaffolding to 0 hit points causes it to collapse. Any creature atop or underneath the collapsed scaffolding must succeed on a saving throw or take 1d10 damage and be knocked prone. The area becomes difficult terrain.

Fire: If the area of a fire attack, such as from the braziers, contains scaffolding, the dry wood quickly catches fire. Each round thereafter, 1 additional square of scaffolding catches fire. A creature that enters or starts its turn in such a square takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends), as does the scaffolding.

Fiery Braziers: These brass braziers contain burning oil. Knocking over a brazier fills a close blast 2 area with flaming oil: +4 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).



Rubble: This pile comes from the hole in the ceiling. It is difficult terrain.

Skull Piles: These piles contain bleached goblin skulls. Each pile is difficult terrain.

Supplies: This pile near the western wall includes water, ale, and foodstuffs taken from the dwarf stonemasons and the Fallcrest guards. These squares are difficult terrain.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: SORIK ORVASH, DOPPELGANGER

Sorik Orvash serves as a guide, of sorts, but doesn't have a lot to contribute to the overall adventure. In the Penny Arcade podcast, I portrayed him as rather sullen and off-putting, which made the heroes suspicious of him.

I tinkered with the idea of making Sorik a doppelganger in cahoots with the tower bandits, but I couldn't reconcile why he'd lead the heroes to the tower. Thus, there was no doppelganger in the podcast, but I liked the idea of including a doppelganger in the bandit gang, so when it came time to revise the adventure for print, I added the doppelganger Celk as a "hostage."

If you want to throw the players another curveball, you might consider adding a second doppelganger to the bandit gang. It could be hiding on the hilltop or in the dungeon below. If Sorik becomes separated from the heroes, the doppelganger could kill him, hide his body somewhere, and take the dwarf's place.

If you choose to include it, the second doppelganger should have statistics comparable to Celk's and remain close to the heroes for as long as possible. The first time a character falls in battle, the doppelganger quickly loots the body and flees with whatever items it can snatch. Alternatively, it might try to steal the gold-plated skull (in Encounter 5) on the return trip to Fallcrest, possibly while the heroes are distracted or asleep.

—Chris Perkins

ENCOUNTER 3: TRAPPED HALL

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

2 Yellowskull bandits (B)

4 flamejet statues

2 iron maidens-in-chains (P, pressure plates)

When they heard sounds of battle from area 2, the Yellowskulls here took cover behind the double doors east of the flamejet traps (eastern doors) and readied actions to shoot at the first enemy that moves into view. Don't place them until the PCs see them.

When the PCs reach the first corner, read:

Around the next corner you see four alcoves. Statues of angels occupy the alcoves on the right; statues of demons fill the alcoves on the left. All four statues breathe continuous goutts of flame. Beyond these jets of fire, you see an open set of double doors.

Perception Check

DC 21: Two human figures are crouched behind the double doors.

When the PCs pass the eastern doors, read:

Beyond the double doors, you see more alcoves, each one containing an upright sarcophagus. The lids of these sarcophagi bear the graven images of elf and human warriors.

2 Yellowskull Bandits (B)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +1	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
AC 16; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 6		
⊕ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚡ Dazing Strike (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ♦ Weapon		
Requires mace or crossbow; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, the target is dazed until the end of the bandit's next turn, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
⚡ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the bandit shifts 1 square.		
Combat Advantage		
The bandit deals 1d6 extra damage to any target granting combat advantage to it.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9, Streetwise +7, Thievery +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, mace, crossbow with 10 bolts		

TACTICS

If one or more intruders advance past the flamejet traps, the bolters withdraw to the end of the hall, avoiding the iron maiden trigger plates in the floor.

4 Flamejet Statues **Level 1 Blaster**
Trap XP 100 each

Flame belches from the mouth of each statue, threatening to burn all who pass.

Trap: Flame fills the 2 squares directly in front of the statue.

Perception

- ♦ DC 10: The character thinks it might be possible to avoid the flames with a successful Acrobatics check.
- ♦ DC 15: The character sees a way to disable a statue (see "Countermeasures" below).

Trigger

The trap attacks any creature that enters a fiery square.

Attack

Free Action Close burst special

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Miss: 1d6 fire damage.

Countermeasures

- ♦ A character adjacent to a statue can disable the statue until the end of his or her next turn with a DC 20 Thievery check as a standard action.
- ♦ A character can move into a flaming square without being attacked by the trap with a DC 20 Acrobatics check as part of a move action.

2 Iron Maidens-in-Chains **Level 2 Obstacle**
Trap XP 125 each

Stepping on a hidden pressure plate causes the iron sarcophagus in the nearby alcove to open, revealing a lid lined with spikes. Animated chains lash forth from inside the sarcophagus to pull you in.

Trap: The floor in front of the iron maiden contains a hidden pressure plate. Stepping on it causes the iron maiden to open and attack.

Perception

- ♦ DC 20: The character spots a hidden pressure plate in the floor.
- ♦ DC 25: The character realizes that the sarcophagus is an iron maiden.

Trigger

The trap attacks any creature that enters the square directly in front of the iron maiden. If the iron maiden has a creature trapped already, the trap does not attack.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee 1

Target: The triggering creature

Attack: +6 vs. Reflex

Hit: A Medium or smaller target is grabbed and pulled into the iron maiden, taking 1d6 + 4 damage and ongoing 5 damage while inside the trap. Other creatures lose line of sight to the target, and the target loses line of sight to everything outside the iron maiden. A Large or larger target is grabbed (DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics check to escape).

Countermeasures

- ♦ A character adjacent to a pressure plate can disable it with a DC 18 Thievery check.

- ◆ A character adjacent to the iron maiden can force it open, freeing the creature within and ending the ongoing damage, with a DC 18 Athletics check as a standard action. A creature caught inside an iron maiden can open it from within with a DC 20 Athletics check as a standard action. A freed creature appears in the iron maiden's square.
- ◆ A character outside the iron maiden can attack it (AC 15, Fortitude 15, Reflex 2; hp 50). Destroying the iron maiden frees the creature within, ending the ongoing damage. The freed creature appears in the iron maiden's square.

DEVELOPMENT

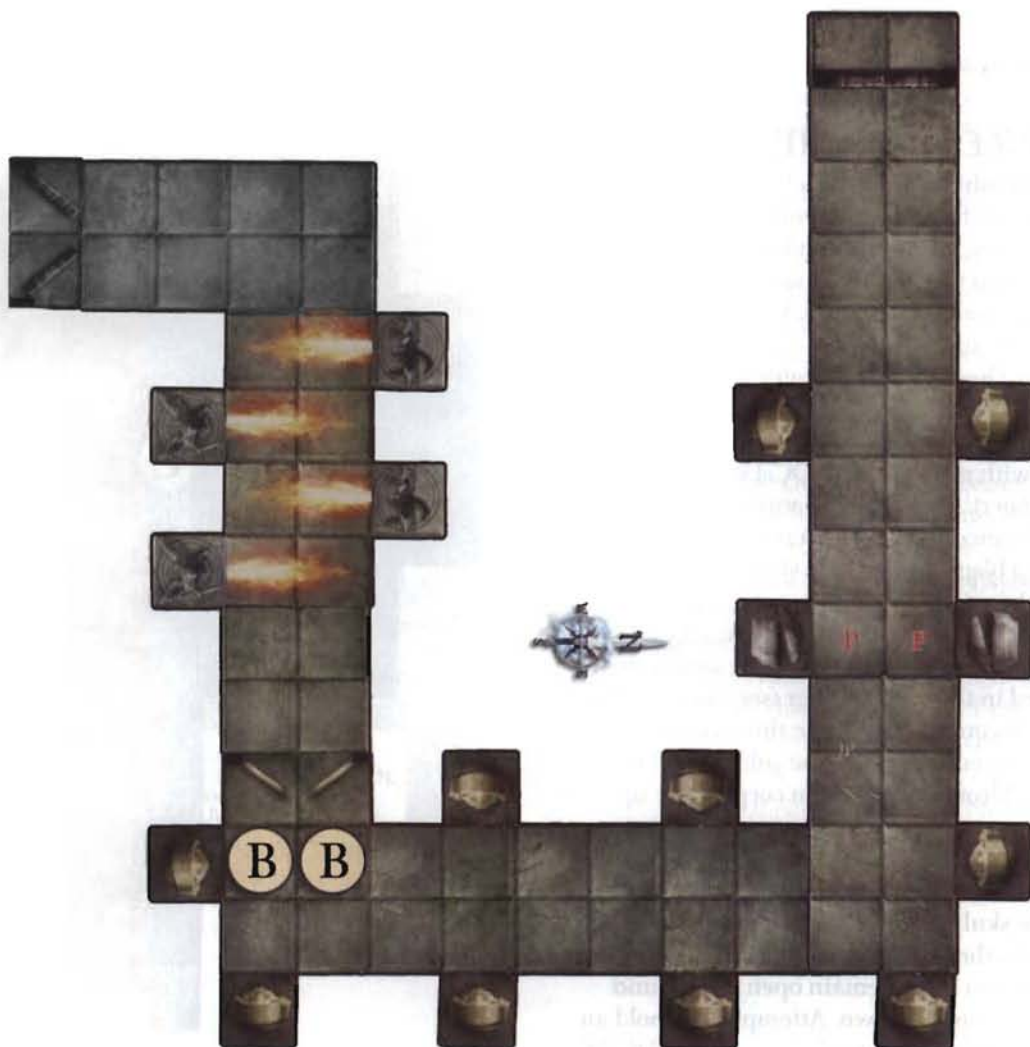
The Rings: If the characters remove one or more of the rings from the warriors sealed in the sarcophagi, they suffer Vanamere's wrath. Until the rings are replaced, the characters take a -2 penalty to all saving throws while they are within the tower. A successful DC 15 Arcana check tells a PC that removing a ring causes eldritch energy to shift within the tower, giving a feeling of being watched by a disapproving observer.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Flamejet Trap Lever: The lever that shuts off the flamejet traps is hidden behind the doors east of the traps (DC 18 Perception check to locate).

Sarcophagi: The stone sarcophagi (DC 15 Athletics check to open) contain the skeletal remains of elf or human warriors who once defended the tower. Etched into the lid of each sarcophagus is the name of the warrior sealed within, written in Elven or Common. These fallen defenders are buried with their weapons and armor, and each wears a silver ring worth 10 gp. Inscribed on the inside of each ring are the names "Vanamere" and "Lethion" in Common. There are ten rings in all.

Pressure Plates: Each square marked "P" is the pressure plate that activates the adjacent iron maiden-in-chains trap.



ENCOUNTER 4: SKULL CAULDRON

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

SETUP

2 cauldron corpses (C)

Do not place the monsters on the map until they show up (see “Features of the Area” below).

When the PCs open the double doors, read:

The centerpiece of this 20-foot-high room is a monstrous stone cauldron nearly 5 feet tall and 10 feet in diameter. Black, fetid tar fills the cauldron to the brim. Surrounding it are seven piles of goblin skulls. Each pile contains skulls painted a specific color.

Four statues depicting elf warriors and human warriors stand atop daises in the corners of the room. Fifteen-foot-high iron doors stand, closed, to the south.

If cauldron corpses appear, read:

The cauldron belches, and suddenly two blackened corpses rise up out of the tar, their eyes filled with hate.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Piles of Goblin Skulls: Each pile contains goblin skulls of a specific color. The number of skulls in each pile varies, with no less than 30 of each color. Beginning with the northernmost pile and moving clockwise, these colors are: black, green, red, gold, purple, white, and blue.

Statues: These 6-foot-tall statues are blocking terrain.

The Cauldron: The cauldron is bolted to the floor and filled with necrotic filth (DC 15 Arcana to identify the danger). Any living creature that touches the tarlike substance takes 1d8 necrotic damage.

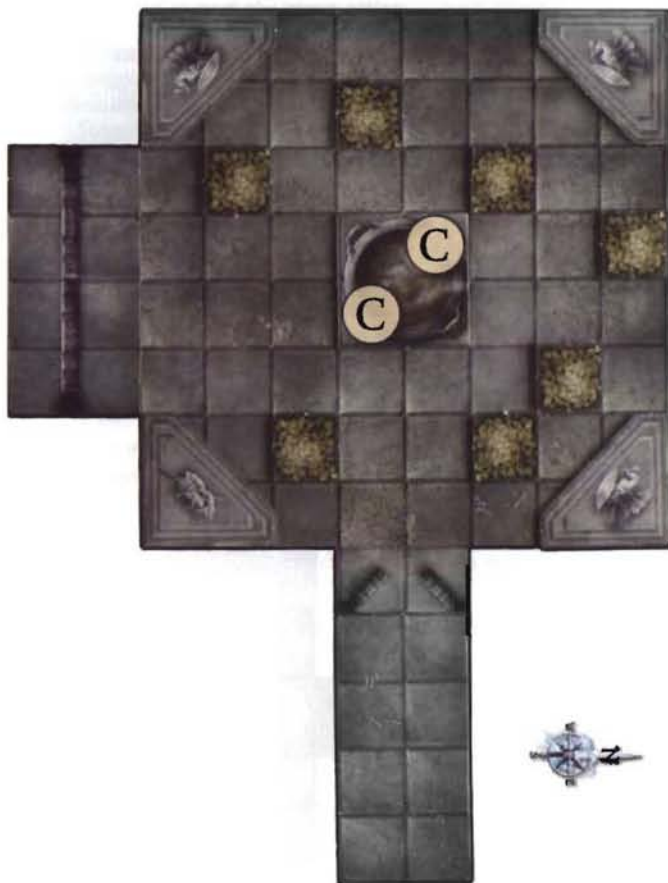
Tossing a black skull, a gold skull, and a purple skull into the cauldron (at once or in sequential order, with no other colors in between) causes the iron doors to open. The crest of Vanamere and Lethion, as displayed in the ruined tower (see Encounter 1, page 117), is composed of these three colors. The first time a green, red, white, or blue goblin skull is tossed into the cauldron, two cauldron corpses rise up from within and attack.

The Iron Doors: These doors cannot be opened by force or with magic. However, they open loudly when three skulls of the appropriate colors are dropped into the cauldron (see “The Cauldron” above). The iron doors remain open for 1 round before closing on their own. Attempting to hold an iron door open as it tries to close requires a DC 28 Athletics check.

TACTICS

The corpses fight until destroyed. They are not concerned about catching other undead in their necrotic spray.

2 Cauldron Corpses (C)		Level 5 Elite Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 400
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3	
HP 152; Bloodied 76		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 4		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Necrotic Slam (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+8 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
↘ Necrotic Spew (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 5; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the cauldron corpse's next turn.		
↙ Necrotic Spray (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Close burst 1; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage, and the cauldron corpse releases one cauldron mote.		
Alignment Evil		Languages –
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 4 (-1)



Cauldron Mote**Level 3 Minion Brute**

Tiny natural animate (undead)

XP –

Initiative +9**Senses** Perception +4; darkvision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 17; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 14**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic**Speed** 8④ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+8 vs. AC; 3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 2 necrotic damage (save ends). If the target is already taking ongoing necrotic damage, the ongoing damage increases by 2.

Tomb Tactics

When a cauldron mote hits a target adjacent to three or more other motes, it deals double damage.

Alignment Evil**Languages** –

DEVELOPMENT

Correct Skull Key: Vanamere and Lethion found the cauldron and hid it here. Only later did Vanamere put its power to use protecting the tomb. If the PCs open the iron doors without causing cauldron corpses to appear, award them experience as if they had slain the cauldron corpses.



BEHIND THE CURTAIN: ADVENTURE BUILDING AND HOSTAGE NEGOTIATIONS

At the time the Penny Arcade podcast was recorded, this adventure was nothing but a jumble of loose encounters and statistics blocks—mostly because I didn't have time to write the complete adventure ahead of time. The buttressing descriptive text, background information, and structure were added afterward, which was ultimately beneficial, because I made tweaks to the adventure based on the events in the podcast. I wrote the complete adventure over a weekend; then, some weeks later, Chris Sims and Chris Youngs took a development pass, tweaking monster abilities to make the encounters more fun. In a couple of cases, they added or replaced monsters (the cauldron motes in Encounter 4 were added, and the boneshard mongrels in Encounter 5 replaced a pair of gravehounds).

Although it's a fun romp, "Storm Tower" doesn't typify my adventure design sensibilities. It's more linear than most adventures I've written, the villains are less developed than I generally like, and the dungeon has some logic issues. That said, the response from people who've actually played the adventure has been great, attesting that the adventure's flaws aren't fatal.

In hindsight, I wish I'd found a way to include a skill challenge encounter in the mix. To my credit, I tried to include one: a hostage scenario in which the heroes had to negotiate the release of several captured dwarves. Alas, it didn't work. My initial plan was to have Lurash, the Yellowskull cutthroat in Encounter 2, threaten to kill the dwarf prisoners, giving rise to a complexity 1 skill challenge (4 successes before 3 failures) in which the heroes have to use Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate to convince Lurash to surrender the dwarves. The skill challenge was jettisoned once I realized that it would be more fun to have Lurash leap out from under the scaffolding and stab a hero in the ribs. Still, if circumstances result in Lurash being cornered with no chance of escape, I can see him threatening the prisoners—in which case, I say, roll with it!

—Chris Perkins

ENCOUNTER 5: THE VAULT

Encounter Level 6 (1,452 XP)

SETUP

Jeras Falck (F)
2 boneshard mongrels (B)
4 skeleton archers (S)
4 zombie rotters (Z)

Jeras Falck is attempting to bypass wards to reach the treasures within Lethion's sarcophagus. So far, his efforts have failed. This failure has made him very angry.

The PCs might not see the archers when combat begins. Describe the skeletons only when they're seen.

When the PCs open the doors to the tomb, read:

The iron doors part loudly, drawing you into a great vault illuminated by stone-rimmed wells of belching fire. At the far end of the vault, broad steps climb 15 feet to a platform supporting two stone sarcophagi and a pair of braziers. Statues of armored warriors stand at the base of the steps. To either side of the steps are raised galleries 20 feet above the floor.

Zombie Yellowskull bandits stand silently in the vault, reeking of death. Behind them, at the top of the stairs, a human wearing a golden mask shaped like a skull limps forward, drawing a crimson orb from the folds of his black robe. His voice is hollow and hateful. "This tomb will be yours unless you leave now."

TACTICS

Falck tries to avoid melee. He targets distant enemies with *pain bolt* and *crimson claws*. Each turn, he uses *command undead* to position allies between himself and his enemies. When two or more enemies are bloodied and within the area of effect, Falck employs *overwhelming wounds*. If he drops to 32 hit points or fewer, Falck assumes *wraithform* and tries to escape.

The mongrels and the zombies attack the nearest enemies, and the skeleton archers shoot arrows from the galleries.

4 Zombie Rotters (Z)		Level 3 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 38 each
Initiative -1	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 4		
Ⓢ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 6 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment leather armor		

Jeras Falck (F)	Level 5 Elite Controller (Leader)	
Medium natural humanoid, human		
XP 400		
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +2	
HP 114; Bloodied 57		
AC 19; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 18		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 4		
Action Points 1		
Ⓢ Dagger of Pain (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 2d4 + 2 damage, and Falck slides the target 2 squares.		
Ⓢ Pain Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic		
Ranged 20; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target takes -2 to all defenses until the end of Falck's next turn.		
Ⓢ Flurry of Pain (standard; at-will)		
Falck makes two basic attacks.		
Ⓢ Crimson Claws (standard; recharges when Falck does not have a creature immobilized with this power) ♦ Implement		
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage and the target is immobilized (save ends both). While Falck has a target immobilized with this power, he gains regeneration 3.		
Ⓢ Overwhelming Wounds (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement		
Close burst 5; +9 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 damage, and if the target is bloodied after the damage, that target is dazed until the end of Falck's next turn.		
Command Undead (move; at-will)		
Undead allies within 10 squares of Falck can shift 2 squares as a free action. One destroyed undead minion rises again with 1 hit point and stands up as a free action.		
Wraithform (standard; encounter)		
Jeras Falck becomes insubstantial and gains phasing until the end of his next turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Arcana +9, History +9, Religion +9		
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 9 (+1)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 16 (+5)	Cha 18 (+6)
Equipment robes, dagger, orb, golden skull mask (100 gp)		

2 Boneshard Mongrels (B)		Level 5 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 200 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 70; Bloodied 35; see also <i>boneshard burst</i>		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
Ⓢ Boneshard Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
Ⓢ Bite and Hurl (standard; recharge ⓈⓈⓈ) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends), and the mongrel slides the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
Ⓢ Boneshard Maul (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Targets a prone creature; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 necrotic damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2)	Cha 3 (-2)

4 Skeleton Archers (S) **Level 2 Artillery**

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 125 each

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3; darkvision

HP 31; Bloodied 15

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 5

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ⬥ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.➤ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ⬥ **Weapon**
Ranged 20/40; +6 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.**Shake the Mark** (immediate reaction, when the skeleton archer is marked; at-will)

The skeleton archer is no longer marked.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 15 (+3) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)

Con 13 (+2) Int 3 (-3) Cha 3 (-3)

Equipment short sword, longbow, quiver of 20 arrows

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Vault Levels: The ceiling in the main hall is 30 feet high. The platform upon which the sarcophagus rest is 15 feet above the floor of the main hall; the ceiling is 15 feet above the platform. The western and eastern galleries that overlook the main hall are 20 feet above the main hall's floor; the ceiling is 10 feet above the galleries.

Stairs: The stairs leading up to the galleries and to the platform are not steep.

Iron Lever: A few feet inside the vault, a heavy iron lever juts out of the floor. Pulling on this lever opens the iron doors, which remain open for 1 round before closing on their own. Attempting to hold an iron door open as it tries to close requires a DC 28 Athletics check.

Wells of Fire: These stone wells are 20 feet deep (DC 20 Athletics to climb) and filled with fire that spews from volcanic vents below the tomb. Any creature pushed into a well takes 1d10 fire damage in addition to 2d10 damage from the fall. Any creature starting its turn in a well takes 1d10 fire damage.

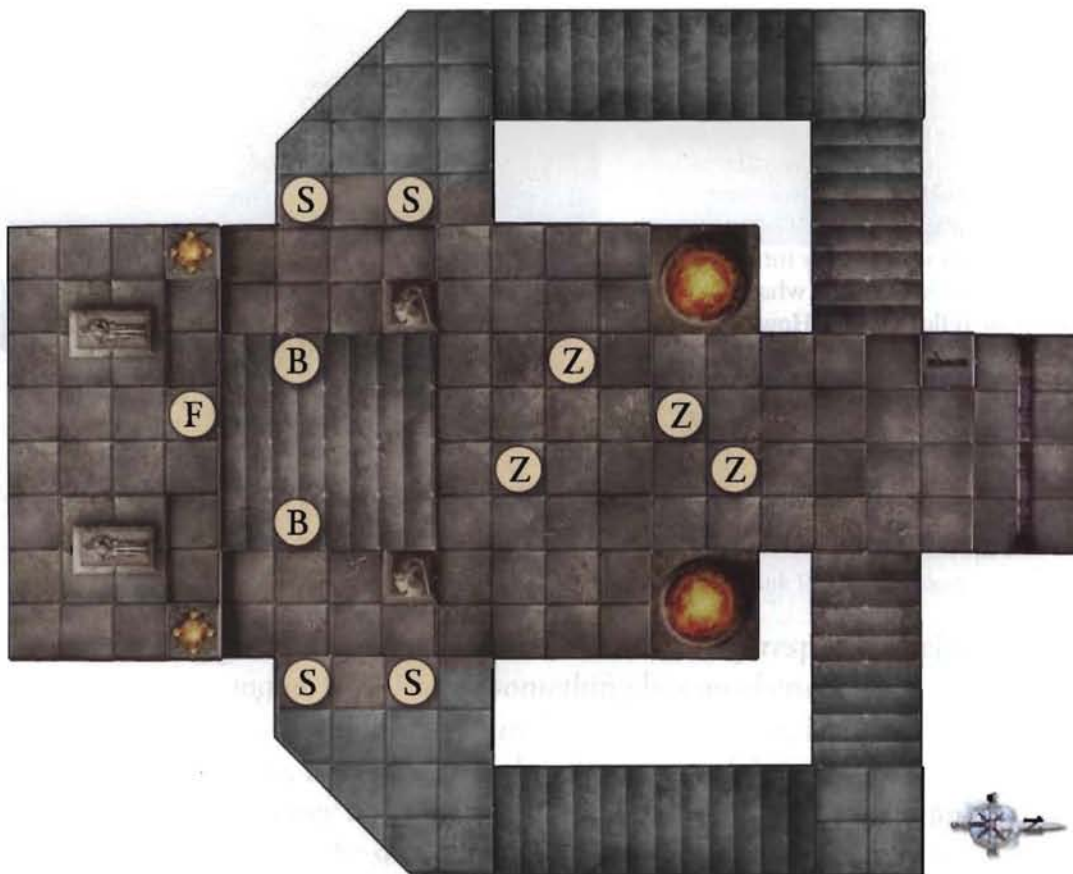
Fiery Braziers: These brass braziers contain burning oil. Knocking over a brazier fills a close blast 2 area with flaming oil: +4 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

Statues: The two 6-foot-tall statues are blocking terrain.

Vanamere's Sarcophagus: This sarcophagus has a lid carved in the likeness of a female elf wizard wearing a robe and clutching a staff. Carved into the staff is the following, in Elven:

anbóvš n̄ an̄vā n̄ad zvg anbóvšg

The runes translate as follows: "Master of magic and fey majesty." The phrase refers to the god Corellon. The lid is askew, exposing the empty interior.



Lethion's Sarcophagus: The lid of this sarcophagus is carved in the likeness of a male human fighter clad in plate armor and clutching a greatsword. The lid refuses to budge, and the sarcophagus seems impervious to harm. The following Elven script is carved into the blade of the stone sword:

ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ ḡḡḡ ḡḡḡḡ ḡḡ ḡḡḡḡḡḡ

The Elven letters translate as follows: "Lord of battle and king of storms." This phrase refers not to Lethion but to the god he worshiped: Kord. When a holy symbol of Kord touches the sarcophagus, or when a prayer to Kord is uttered while touching the sarcophagus, the magic seal is broken, and the lid can be pushed aside with a DC 15 Athletics check.

Within the sarcophagus amid Lethion's remains are three treasure parcels and a gold-plated human skull (see "Development").

DEVELOPMENT

Gold Skull: The gold-plated skull in Lethion's sarcophagus contains the bound essence of a powerful demon. Evil forces based in the Temple of Yellow Skulls are after this and other skulls lost over time. Any character who holds the skull can sense the evil trapped within it. However, evil creatures within 20 squares can hear it calling out to them for release.

Finishing with Falck: If Falck escapes and returns to the temple empty-handed, his superiors give him one chance to redeem himself. Within a week, the necromancer hires a mercenary gang and attempts to recover the skull. The villains begin their search in Fallcrest, and this time, Falck fights to the death.

If he is captured and successfully intimidated, Falck might be persuaded to reveal what he knows about the Temple of Yellow Skulls. However, before he can divulge anything, he bursts into flame, lets out a horrifying scream, and turns to ash.

CONCLUSION

The defeat of the Yellowskull bandits brings an end to the rain. Sunlight breaks through the gray clouds as the characters prepare to depart. Vanamere is at rest once more, and the characters are free to return to Fallcrest and claim their reward.





HEROIC

1-10

EBERRON

HEART OF THE FORBIDDEN FORGE

An adventure for 7th-level characters

by Luke Johnson

illustrations by Matt Cayotta, Francis Tsai, and Empty Room Studio
[David Hammond and Frank Wall] ♦ cartography by Sean Macdonald

“I knew hiring goblins was a bad idea. I knew! But my respect for Jelia blinded me and stayed my tongue. Now I sense something has awakened deep within the forge, and I am stuck here as a hostage to ensure Jelia’s cooperation. Dear reader, if you hold this book in your hands, I beg you to make it your sacred duty to return it to Breland and the King’s Citadel. They must know what happened here if Valsath and her hobgoblins take the secrets of this forge back to Darguun.”

—Journal of Marus, a Citadel novice

The Kech Shaarat goblins have numerous schemes to unite the Dhakaani clans under the Bladebearer banner. One such plan focused on beating the Wordbearer goblins to an artifact called the *Ashen Crown*. A group of adventurers defeated the goblins in this quest, but other missions are moving forward. One involves the capture of a destroyed creation forge and the forbidden creature within it. The Bladebearers have an unlikely ally in this goal: an eladrin artificer working for the Brelish government.

"Heart of the Forbidden Forge" is a *DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*[®] adventure for five 7th-level characters in the *EBERRON*[®] campaign setting. If the PCs have been through the events in *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*[™], this adventure can run after the events of that one have concluded. However, characters do not need to have been involved with *Seekers of the Ashen Crown* to play through "Heart of the Forbidden Forge." The adventure can also be adapted to another campaign setting.

BACKGROUND

During the Last War, a creation forge near Darguun, on the border of what is now the Mournland, was important in the experiments that led to the creation of the warforged race. In the past, it produced many prototypes that led the way for the creation of modern warforged. Later, it was used for continued experiments in this vein. At that time, the forge's overseer, Haestus d'Cannith, was also interested in necromancy. He sought a way to combine this art with Cannith's artifice to create other sorts of beings. Haestus and his people continued to work on prototype warforged and constructs, largely without oversight from house officials.

The forge's importance was not lost on other forces. Shortly before the Mourning ended the Last War, a group of irregular special forces, thought to be a freelance mercenary team in service to the Karrnathi government, collapsed the forge's entrance, trapping everyone inside. Haestus and the other artificers died slowly.

The Karrnathi irregulars were journeying through Cyre with news of their success when the Mourning struck. Nobody saw them again. In the chaos ensued, the creation forge on Darguun's border was all but forgotten. Even though House Cannith knows of the forge, its actual location was secreted in documents held within Cyre. Or so the house's officials believe.

Several months ago, Jelia, an eladrin artificer working for the Citadel of Breland, discovered a mention of the forge while going through documents from the Last War. She also found captured documents indicating that the Cannith artificers had been working on something that could have turned the tide of the Last War: infiltrator warforged units and an autonomous heavy assault construct in the shape

of a dragon. These documents, unseen since the Day of Mourning, indicated that the forge had even produced working prototypes.

If she told her patrons about her discovery, they would send a team from the Citadel, and Jelia would gain little for her momentous discovery. She wanted the credit; she wanted to help her country in a more substantial way. She decided that she didn't need the Citadel to capture the forge for Breland.

But she knew she couldn't do it on her own, and her partner and apprentice Marus wasn't enough support. She needed a neutral third party—warriors who wouldn't betray her to her superiors until her plan was complete. Thus, she hired reputable hobgoblin mercenaries in Darguun. One of their leaders, Valsath, struck a deal with Jelia: For triple the normal fee, the goblins would help her find the forge, set it up and get it running, and then relinquish control of it to Breland. In return, Jelia promised to share her secrets with the group's artificers. Jelia realized that her new allies were dangerous, but she felt that she could handle them. In her haste, she failed to do enough legwork to discover that Valsath and her cohorts are far from neutral. They're Bladebearers working under the cover of a mercenary company.

The mission started out promisingly. The entrance to the forge complex was beyond recovery, so Jelia and her goblin allies blew a hole in a nearby cliff. This new cave allowed access to a small complex of natural caverns that connect to the forge.

Once inside, Jelia and the Bladebearers discovered prototype constructs and Haestus d'Cannith, now a forgewraith. Since Jelia and Valsath planned to restart the forge, Haestus agreed to work with them. Everything was going well until Jelia and Valsath arrived at the heart of the complex. Here, they found the creation forge and next to it the hulking, motionless form of the prototype dragon.

After several days of sweat and toil, Jelia was able to activate the dragon. When the dragon stirred, the creation forge also came to life. Machinery whirred and gears turned, although the forge was clearly damaged. "I am Calmachia," said the dragon, "and my heart and this forge are one. You are mine now." Before she went into torpor, the dragon had linked the forge to herself.

Calmachia began creating smaller dragonlike constructs—her children. Valsath quickly turned on Jelia, keeping the artificer and her apprentice alive for further use. The hobgoblin commander figures that Calmachia and her progeny can help the Bladebearers slay their enemies and prove their strength to the other Dhakaani clans.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Through any of a variety of hooks, the PCs learn of the creation forge. Investigating, they fight their way through goblins, constructs, and undead, contend with traps, and finally meet Valsath and the true power behind the forge, Calmachia. They can also free Jelia and her aide from the clutches of the draconic construct and the Bladebearers.

STARTING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins when the PCs arrive at the creation forge on the border of the Mournland. Getting here should be quick, although if you want, you can throw an encounter at the PCs during the journey. The PCs might be coming to the forge based on one or more of the following hooks.

HOOK: WORDBEARER WARNING

If the PCs have a relationship with the Kech Volaar (Wordbearer goblins)—which they do if they have completed *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*—a concerned goblin approaches them. The Wordbearers have identified Valsath's mercenary company as a group of Bladebearer operatives. They also know that this company is now working for an eladrin artificer. They don't know Jelia's true identity or purpose, but they do know that the artificer and her hirelings have gone to the forge. The Wordbearers lost a scouting party sent to investigate, and they can give the PCs enough information to locate the forge.

Major Quest: Locate the forge and prevent the Bladebearers from gaining access to its secrets.

Minor Quest: Find out the identity of the eladrin artificer, and prevent her from working further with the Bladebearers.

HOOK: MISSING AGENT

Characters who completed *Seekers of the Ashen Crown* have probably worked with the Citadel and have a favorable relationship with the agency. Such PCs are also likely to have favorable relations with a goblin faction in Darguun, making them ideal candidates for this job. Regardless, through a government contact, the PCs learn the Citadel is concerned because an elite agent, an artificer named Jelia, is missing. She was recently working on a case involving war research in Old Cyre, and her last report indicates that she went to Darguun in the company of goblin mercenaries. The Citadel suspects Jelia's mission might have gone badly, and it sends the PCs to find

Jelia and bring her back alive—or to bring back whatever she was after. The characters eventually track her to the forge.

Major Quest: Locate Jelia and rescue her from the goblins if necessary. Bring her back to the Citadel.

Minor Quest: Find out what Jelia was working on, and secure it for Breland.

HOOK: CANNITH FAMILY SECRETS

Although most people have forgotten the existence of the creation forge, House Cannith hasn't. The house just hasn't yet gotten around to sending a recovery team. At least one house faction learns that someone has blasted a way into the forge. Eager to prevent enemy acquisition of house secrets, a Cannith representative calls on the PCs to investigate and to ensure that House Cannith's property is uncompromised. If one of the PCs is a house scion, this is a duty rather than a job.

Major Quest: Secure the Cannith facility for future use, keeping its secrets and dealing with any threats within it.

Minor Quest: Keep any advancements (such as Calmachia) as functional as possible while neutralizing dangers within the forge.

QUESTS

The PCs have a single major quest that is level 7. Completing it offers a reward of 1,500 XP, divided among the party members. They might have a number of quests, especially if you combine one or more hooks. In this case, the PCs choose the major quest to complete and can try to complete other major quests as if they were minor. For instance, it's impossible to complete the major quest for the Citadel and completely succeed in the quest for House Cannith. Each minor quest the PCs complete is worth 300 XP, divided among the party members.

THE FORGE COMPLEX

The creation forge complex consists of three areas: a few natural caverns that connect with the main area, the facility's upper level, and the facility's lower level.

FEATURES OF THE NATURAL CAVERNS

The natural caverns are located in areas F1-F3. They are composed of brown stone with rough walls. The following features apply to the caverns unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling is 15 feet high.

Walls: The rough stone requires a DC 15 Athletics check to climb.

FEATURES OF THE UPPER LEVEL

The forge complex's upper level consists of areas F4-F13. They are composed of smooth white marble with gray-green flecks and veins. The following features apply to the upper level unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dim light. A pale orange luminescence suffuses the upper level. It has no obvious source.

Ceiling: The ceilings are 15 feet high.

Walls: The smooth stone requires a DC 25 Athletics check to climb.

Doors: The doors are copper-sheathed wood. They open easily and are unlocked.

FEATURES OF THE LOWER LEVEL

The forge complex's lower level consists of areas F14-F18. It has an industrial and arcane feel: Surfaces (walls, floors, and ceilings) are covered with steel plates, and arcane devices appear throughout the area. The following features apply to this area unless otherwise indicated.

Illumination: Dim light. A pale red luminescence suffuses the upper level. It has no obvious source.

Ceiling: The ceilings are 20 feet high.

Walls: The steel walls are difficult to climb, but the seams between the metal plates provide minor handholds and footholds (DC 25 Athletics check to climb).

Doors: The doors are steel. Each side of such a door has a wheel in the center and is locked. Spinning its wheel (a standard action) unlocks a door.

TREASURE

Characters who successfully complete this adventure should earn enough experience to advance from level 7 to about a quarter of the way between 8th and 9th levels. That means you should assign all ten level 7 parcels, and possibly one level 8 parcel, to locations in this adventure. The encounters have notes about locating parcels in them. Here's a summary, with NPC encounters noted to allow you the option of assigning the NPC a magic item he or she can use that is valuable to the PCs.

Encounter 1: One parcel.

Encounter 4: One parcel.

Encounter 6: One parcel.

Encounter 7: One parcel (NPC).

Encounter 9: One parcel.

Area 12: One parcel.

Encounter 13: One parcel.

Encounter 15: One parcel (NPC).

Encounter 16: One parcel (NPC).

Encounter 17: Two parcels.

RESEARCH NOTES

If you like, the characters might find Haestus d'Cannith's notes in various forge areas. These are curiosities that describe Haestus's unethical work, his necromantic dabbings and questionable practices, and his sources—perhaps ancient artifacts from Xen'drik. The notes can be valuable to the right buyer, serving as a form of treasure. Further, these papers might serve as hooks for future adventures by identifying other sites and treasures.

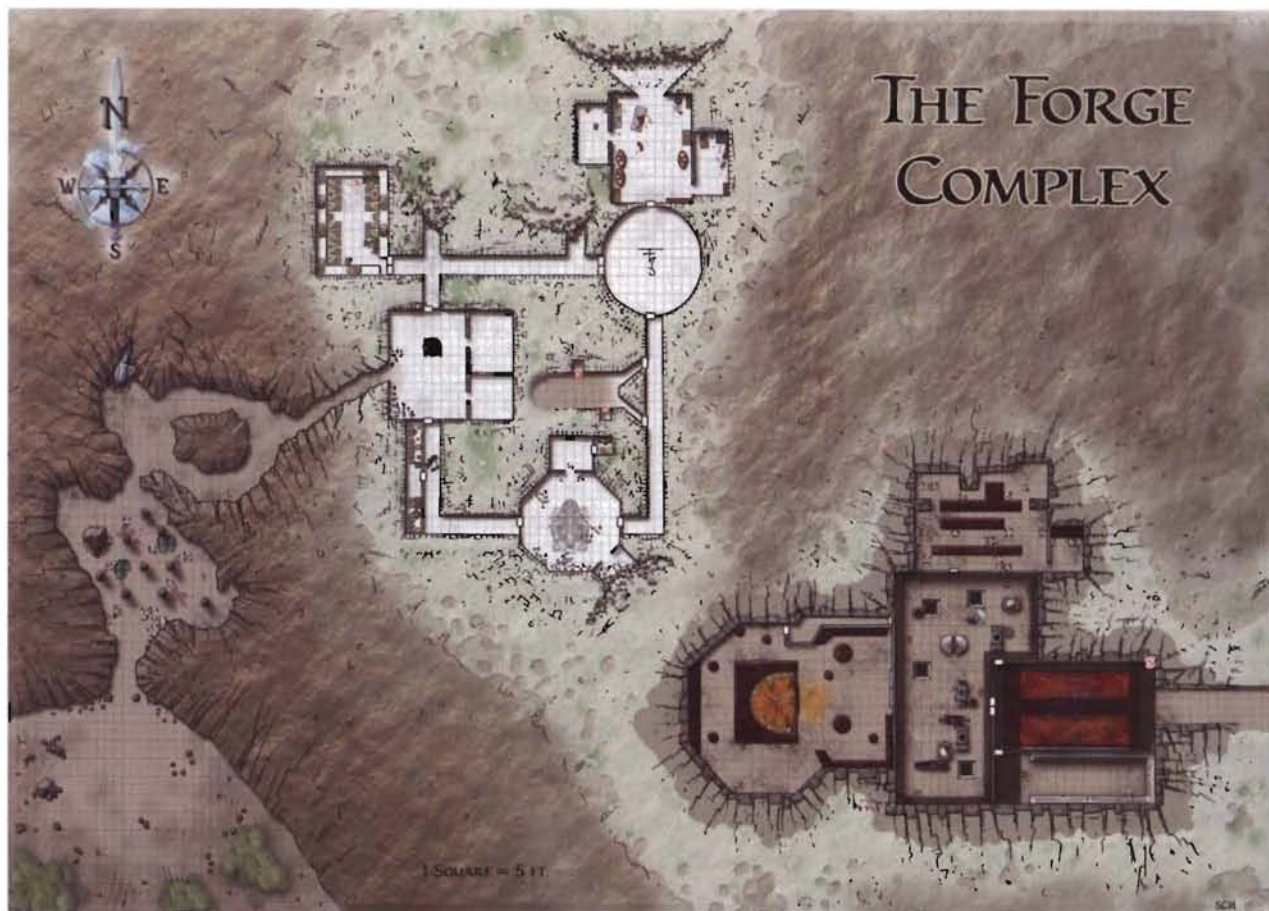
1. ENTRY

Not long ago, several Kech Volaar scouts ran afoul of the forge's denizens. Several Bladebearers stand guard here.

As the PCs approach the cave, read:

The hillside is covered with scree, thorny bushes, and large rocks that look as if they tumbled down from above. The hillside slopes up to a tall cliff, and soon you notice a cave in the cliff. A great deal of debris lies near the entrance. It looks as if the hole was knocked open by explosive means.

Tactical Encounter: 1: Entry Guards (page 137).



2. WATERFALL

The body of a slain Wordbearer goblin now lies at the bottom of a chasm in this room.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The hall opens into a small chamber. A waterfall streams down the far wall, disappearing into a crevasse in the floor. From the ledge, you can see the waterfall falls about 30 feet into a shallow pool below.

Nature DC 10: The pool must have a narrow outlet, preventing the falls from flooding this area.

Perception DC 19: A corpse lies in the hollow behind where the waterfall strikes rock.

The waterfall descends for 30 feet (DC 20 Athletics to climb the slick rock). Investigating the body turns up a couple of interesting details.

Heal DC 15: *The goblin died of violence—multiple bludgeons and slashes are evident on the body. He was dead before he fell here and has been dead for about a week.*

History or Nature DC 15: *The goblin has a branding scar that marks him as a Wordbearer.*

3. WARED PASSAGE

Jelia placed a glyph of warding halfway down this hallway. She and her allies use the other passageway.

**Warding Hall Glyph
Trap**

**Level 7 Elite Warder
XP 600**

A hidden glyph in the wall suddenly glows and unleashes a violet cascade of magical force as you pass.

Trap: A magic glyph unleashes energy when the trap is triggered.

Perception

◆ DC 22: A character notices the glyph.

Additional Skill: Arcana

◆ DC 22: A character senses the glyph and then spots it.

Trigger

When a creature passes the halfway point of the passage, where the glyph is located, the glyph attacks.

Attack ◆ Force

Immediate Reaction **Close burst 3**

Target: All creatures in burst

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d8 + 5 force damage, and targets are slammed to the ceiling (1d10 damage) and then fall (1d10 damage).

Miss: Half the force damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Countermeasure

◆ A character adjacent to the trap can disable the glyph with four successful DC 21 Arcana or Thievery checks as standard actions.

4. PROTOTYPE LAB

Mindless models for warforged prototypes dwell in these chambers. Unlike normal warforged, these creatures rely on an arcane generator to function.

Tactical Encounter: 4: Prototype Lab (page 15).

5. COLLAPSED PASSAGES

This hallway and the one to the east are collapsed. The forge complex used to be much larger, but a good portion of it collapsed in the attack several years ago.

6. LIVING QUARTERS

The Bladebearers have appropriated this chamber to use as living quarters. They also discovered a secret trapdoor, which bypasses the traps in area 8.

Tactical Encounter: 6: Living Quarters (page 141).

7. CONSTRUCT LAB

In life, Haestus d'Cannith experimented by combining necromancy with alchemy and artifice. These rooms were his primary laboratory.

Tactical Encounter: 7: Construct Lab (page 143).

8. SECURITY GAUNTLET

This wide hallway slopes down to area F14. The hallway is trapped heavily. Jelja detected the traps when she and the Bladebearers originally moved into the complex; since they found a better way to the lower level (in area F6), she left the traps active.

Tactical Encounter: 8: Security Gauntlet (page 145).

9. RUINED FOYER

This chamber was once the primary entrance to the forge complex.

Tactical Encounter: 9: Ruined Entrance (page 147).

10. GUARD POST

The door to this small room is locked from the outside, and opening it requires either a successful DC 20 Thievery check or a key that Valsath has. This small chamber was once a security post. Now, it serves as a holding cell for Marus, Jelja's erstwhile apprentice. The room has a desk, a chair, an empty weapon rack, a chamber pot, and a small store of food and water.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens into a small chamber. A desk is near one wall, and sitting at it is a male half-elf with red hair and a weary expression. Looking a bit battered, he wears an outfit an explorer might wear. He's writing and drawing in a tattered book with a quill pen.

Perception Check

DC 14: *The half-elf has nothing resembling a weapon or an implement. He appears to be unarmed.*

To approach without attracting Marus's attention, the PCs must succeed on DC 16 Stealth checks.

When Marus becomes aware of the PCs, read:

The half-elf looks up with an alarmed expression that turns into a smile when he sees you. "Oh," he says. "Oh, thank the Host." He shuts his book, closes his eyes, and sighs.

Perception Check

DC 16: *He places his thumb on a sigil on the book cover. The symbol glows dimly. (DC 19 Arcana check to note the arcane nature of this sigil.)*

Insight Check

DC 14: *His relief seems genuine.*



TALKING TO MARUS

Marus hopes the PCs are here to liberate the forge and thereby him. He is wise enough to feel the characters out before revealing all he knows. Marus is here to impart any background information you want to give out, telling the characters everything that happened up to Jelía and the hobgoblins breaking into the forge complex. He is aware that he is severely outmatched in physical terms. Marus has no love for the goblins, but he has mixed feelings toward Jelía—admiration mixed with blame. He desperately wants to go back to Breland, clear his name, and put this fiasco behind him.

Use this section to aid in interactions with Marus. Give out information without requiring checks if you think the players' roleplaying is especially appropriate. At the very least, the PCs gain check bonuses (+2) if they are forthcoming and reveal intentions in line with Marus's hopes. Further, the players might come up with other ways to gain information from Marus—the skills and DCs indicated below are just guidelines. If a check fails, Marus expresses distrust and hesitation (DC 10 Insight check to discern), but no hostility.

- ◆ **Who are you?** (DC 8 Diplomacy): *"My name is Marus, and I am an agent for the Brelish Crown—an assistant to another agent here."*
- ◆ **Who is this other agent?** (DC 8 Diplomacy): *"Her name is Jelía. She is the senior agent on this mission."*
- ◆ **What is the mission?** (DC 14 Diplomacy): *"Jelía planned to reactivate the forge for Breland. She wanted to play the hero, so we went without Brelish support. Instead, she hired these godsforsaken goblins."*
- ◆ **What are you doing here?** (DC 8 Diplomacy): *"Valsath, the goblin leader, turned on us. She and hers are Bladebearers, which means as soon as Jelía and I are of no use, we'll be dead. They keep me locked in here so she won't turn on them. You have to get us out of here."*
- ◆ **What's going on here?** (DC 14 Diplomacy): *"Valsath and Jelía found something deep in the forge. You've seen those drake homunculi? I think it must be the key to creating them. This place holds a creation forge, as well as something else intelligent and capable of running the forge."*
- ◆ **A creature runs the forge?** (DC 14 Diplomacy): *"Something like that. Jelía and Valsath call whatever it is 'Calmachia.' They appear to be taking steps to aid this Calmachia. More of those drakes have been created in the past weeks, and the process appears to be speeding up."*

◆ **Whom can we trust?** (DC 14 Diplomacy): *"I'm sure Jelía is being forced to cooperate. We wouldn't be in this mess if she hadn't been so . . . careless. Still, she might help you if you can prove you're here to help."*

MORE ABOUT MARUS

Marus is too terrified to help the PCs fight. If he's attacked, he has statistics similar to Dakai's (page 143). He tries to surrender quickly or flee, rather than fighting, but he defends himself if he must.

The book Marus has is a journal in which he is writing notes for his report to his Citadel superiors. It can impart much of the information Marus knows. The sigil on the book obscures its actual contents with seemingly personal and sappy diary entries (DC 27 Perception check to see the real Citadel report entries; DC 21 Arcana check to break the sigil). Marus also has thieves' tools hidden on his person (DC 15 Perception check to find).

11. HALLWAY

This hallway once held a trap. Two Bladebearers ran afoul of it before Jelía disarmed it.

When the PCs can see into the hallway, read:

You look into a long hallway. About halfway down, two blackened bodies—one large, one small—lie on the floor.

Arcana or Heal DC 20: *Intense lightning killed these creatures.*

Nature DC 12: *The small body is that of a goblin, and the large body is that of a bugbear.*

Perception DC 22: *The runes and crystals of an old trap are embedded in a grove in the walls here. Someone or something marred the runes and removed some of the crystals, probably disarming the trap.*

12. STORAGE

This long room was a storage area for construct parts.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

You look into a long room. Shelves contain artificial limbs, heads, torsos, and other parts of incomplete constructs—humanoid and otherwise.

Treasure: One parcel.

13. CATWALK

A catwalk crosses a lake of molten metal. The PCs encounter Haestus d'Cannith (again) here.

Tactical Encounter: 13: Catwalk (page 149).



14. ARCANE WORKSHOP

This large chamber was a primary work area for the forge. Here, large pieces of arcane machinery were assembled and constructs were repaired. Valsath has taken a liking to this place.

Tactical Encounter: 15: Arcane Workshop (page 151).

15. CREATION FORGE CONTROLS

This is the primary control area for the forge in area 17. The entry is locked (Valsath has the key).

Skill Challenge: Disabling Calmachia's Forge (page 153).

16. STORAGE

This room is a storage area for the parts and tools the forge workers once used. Jelia has been spending a lot of time in this room lately to find parts to meet Calmachia's demands and to escape the hobgoblins and their draconian mistress.

Tactical Encounter: 16: Jelia's Refuge (page 154).

17. WYRM FORGE

Although the entire facility is often referred to as "the creation forge," this room contains the forge. It is here that warforged, constructs, and Calmachia walked from the fires of their creation into life.

Tactical Encounter: 17: Wyrms Forge (page 156).

CONCLUSION

Defeating Calmachia causes the forge to shut down. Someone might start the forge working again, but that someone probably shouldn't be the PCs.

If the characters allow it, Marus and Jelia can act as supporting characters on the trip back to Breland. Either might become a contact for PCs who treated them well.

If the PCs bring Jelia back to Breland for justice, the ramifications of her foolish actions should be tempered to fit the needs of your campaign. She endangered Breland's national security with her activities. However, if the Citadel can secure the creation forge and use it as leverage with House Cannith, Jelia's mission might be considered a risky but profitable success. Further, if the PCs vouch for Jelia, their words carry significant weight in the artificer's defense. For its part, House Cannith might hold Breland's possession of the forge, however temporary, against the characters.

In the case that the PCs serve House Cannith, the house is grateful for the location of the forge and its contents. House members move quickly to reestablish the facility. This can have lasting ramifications for the campaign when House Cannith starts tinkering with the arcane discoveries inside the forge.

The PCs have thwarted the Bladebearers and aided the cause of the Wordbearers—at least twice now, if the characters played through *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*. The Bladebearer leadership might take more of an interest in these pesky adventurers. That interest is unlikely to be good for the PCs.

1: ENTRY GUARDS

Encounter Level 6 (1,275 XP)

SETUP

2 Bladebearer hobgoblins (B)

5 Valsath's warriors (W)

1 hobgoblin fleshcarver (F)

Plenty of boulders and undergrowth dot the hillside leading up to the cave, so the characters can approach stealthily if they like. The goblins aren't particularly alert, so their passive Perception checks oppose the PCs' Stealth checks care to make.

If the hobgoblins notice the characters' approach, the hobgoblins hide, making Stealth checks. Place a hobgoblin's miniature only if the PCs notice the creature.

When the characters see into the area, read:

A large natural cavern extends into the cliff. Several torches are placed on poles wedged into debris around the room. Several boulders—8 or 9 feet tall—stand here and there. Passages lead off from the cavern.

Perception

(Opposing Stealth Checks): *A slight sound or motion draws your eye to a shadow. An armored hobgoblin lurks there.*

DC 15: *A couple of large, reddish-brown patches stain the floor.*

DC 15 **Arcana or Religion:** *These patches are blood rock.*

2 Bladebearer Hobgoblins (B)		Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid		XP 200 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 62; Bloodied 31		
AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16		
Speed 6		
⊕ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).		
† Scimitar Advantage (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; at-will)		
The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes two scimitar attacks.		
Bladebearer Finesse (free; usable only while charging; at-will)		
The Bladebearer hobgoblin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of its charge.		
Dhakaani Footwork (free, when the Bladebearer hobgoblin hits with a melee attack; at-will)		
The Bladebearer hobgoblin shifts 1 square.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)		
The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11		
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 2 scimitars		

5 Valsath's Warriors (W)		Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (hobgoblin)		XP 75 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 23 (25 with phalanx soldier); Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 18		
Speed 6		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.		
⊕ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)		
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.		
Phalanx Soldier		
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Athletics +9, History +5		
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 16 (+6)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 11 (+3)	Cha 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows		

Hobgoblin Fleshcarver (F)		Level 6 Elite Controller
Medium natural humanoid		XP 500
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision	
Fleshcarver's Trap aura 2; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 damage the first time it moves during that turn.		
HP 146; Bloodied 73		
AC 20 (22 with phalanx soldier); Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 18		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Glaive (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Toxic Dart (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison, Weapon		
Ranged 6/12; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 poison damage, and the target is slowed (save ends). If the target was already slowed, it is instead immobilized (save ends).		
⊕ Defensive Dart (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin fleshcarver is hit by an enemy's melee attack; recharge ☹)		
The fleshcarver shifts 2 squares and uses toxic dart against the triggering enemy.		
⊕ Glaive Flurry (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +11 vs. AC; 3d4 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin fleshcarver slides the target 2 squares. The target must end the slide within 3 squares of the fleshcarver.		
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin fleshcarver becomes subject to an effect; encounter)		
The fleshcarver makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.		
Phalanx Soldier		
A hobgoblin fleshcarver gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11		
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 12 (+4)	Cha 16 (+6)
Equipment chain armor, glaive, 10 poisoned darts		

TACTICS

Bladebearer hobgoblins move around the battle's fringes, targeting those at the back of the party. They use *Bladebearer finesse* and *Dhakaani footwork* to move to these foes, and they use their stealth or they flank with their allies to make *scimitar advantage* attacks.

The fleshcarver moves into melee quickly so that he can use *glaive flurry*. He resorts to ranged attacks only when he cannot reach a target for melee or when *defensive dart* triggers.

Hobgoblins with *phalanx soldier* try to fight alongside at least one ally. The warriors attack to aid their stronger allies with flanking and the like.

All the creatures know about the blood rock. The fleshcarver and Bladebearer hobgoblins fight to the death. If all three of them fall, any remaining warriors surrender.

DEVELOPMENT

Hallways: If the PCs search the area, they might discover that the hall to the east hasn't been used for foot traffic for weeks (DC 23 Perception).

Searching the Hobgoblins: If the PCs search closely, such as by removing a bracer or something similar from a hobgoblin, they notice the symbol of an ornate blade branded on the hobgoblins. This is the Bladebearer symbol (DC 15 History or Nature to identify).

Questioning Prisoners: A prisoner doesn't talk willingly and lies if questioned (DC 14 Insight to discern). A prisoner can be tricked, cajoled, or threatened (Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate) into telling the truth. Even then, the goblin answers only specific questions and otherwise avoids straight answers.

◆ **Who is your leader?** (DC 14): Valsath is the leader. The prisoner trusts Valsath and can describe her. Valsath has been deep in the forge for a long time now.

◆ **Who else is here?** (DC 14): Jelia, a "weakling eladrin artificer," brought the goblins here. She works for Breland and is deep in the forge, perhaps with Valsath. Dakai, a hobgoblin artificer, is working in a lab with golems (area 7). He has numerous guards. Some of the golems might function.

◆ **What other dangers are here?** (DC 14): The prisoner knows of the glyph (area 3) and the prototype warforged (area 4). A successful DC 19 Insight check reveals the goblin is withholding information, and a subsequent DC 14 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check causes the creature to reveal that other guards are camping in a nearby room (area 6).

◆ **What are you doing here?** (DC 16): Valsath found something deep in the forge, and she plans to seize control of the place when the time is right.

◆ **Are you Bladebearers?** (DC 19): The PC receives a +2 bonus to this check if he or she shows knowledge of the Bladebearers or of the scars on the goblins' forearms. The prisoner confirms the tribal affiliation of the goblins here. However, with a failed check the prisoner lies and says the goblins are Bladebearer slaves that escaped and formed a mercenary crew.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from torches.

Boulders: The boulders are blocking terrain.

Debris: Debris from the excavation as well as loose rocks, scree, and accumulated trash are piled up in various parts of the chamber. This is difficult terrain, as marked on the map.

Blood Rock: The areas marked on the map are blood rock. A creature standing in a square of blood rock can score a critical hit on a natural die roll of 19 or 20.

Treasure: One parcel.



4. PROTOTYPE LAB

Encounter Level 8 (1,752 XP)

SETUP

- 4 decrepit warforged (D)
- 3 berserk warforged prototypes (B)
- 1 infiltrator warforged prototype (I)
- 1 arcane generator (G)

The warforged here are experiments with differing body forms for possible implementation with actual military warforged models during the Last War. None of them have true sentience. Instead, the arcane generator at the center of the room powers them and allows them to move. It also acts as a central intelligence and awareness for the constructs. Jelja tampered with the generator, disabling its safety protocols. Now, it activates and attacks any creatures that enter, apart from Jelja or her allies.

When the PCs can see into the chamber, read:

At the end of the natural tunnel, a hole is smashed in the wall. Beyond it is a room of finely wrought white stone with gray-green veins and flecks. A large, arcane contraption of metal and stone stands in the center of the room. It is about 7 feet high; levers project from it, runes shine on its surface, and a large purple crystal glows at its apex.

Standing at various places in the room are humanoid creatures that resemble warforged. Some are incomplete or worn with time; others have fared better. Most of those are wide-framed models that resemble burly humans. One of these appears to have a sheath of flesh that has been cut or torn away in places, revealing inner workings that are thinner than those of a normal warforged.

If the PCs enter or attack, read:

As you enter, the eyes of the inert constructs glow with the same purple color as the crystal at the top of the strange device. The constructs lurch to life.

TACTICS

The warforged prototypes surge into melee. They fight until destroyed or until they are convinced to cease their attacks (see "Development," page 140).

4 Decrepit Warforged (D)	Level 6 Minion Brute
Medium natural humanoid (living construct)	XP 63 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 18; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Speed 5	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)	
+9 vs. AC; 6 damage; on a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Str 18 (+7)	Dex 14 (+5) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 4 (+0) Cha 4 (+0)

3 Berserk Warforged Prototypes (B)	Level 7 Brute
Medium natural humanoid (living construct)	XP 300 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +3
HP 98; Bloodied 49	
AC 19; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage	
Speed 6	
⊕ Sweeping Slam (standard; at-will)	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, plus 4 damage to another enemy adjacent to the prototype. On a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.	
⊕ Wild Charge (standard; recharges after the berserk warforged prototype hits two or more targets with a <i>savage sweep</i>)	
The prototype charges, gains a +3 bonus to AC during the charge, and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack: +11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 9 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⊖ Savage Sweep (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞)	
Close burst 1; +10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14). Miss: 4 damage.	
Arcane Empowerment	
While the arcane generator functions, whenever a berserk warforged prototype hits with a melee attack, it gains 4 temporary hit points.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Str 20 (+8)	Dex 15 (+5) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 4 (+0) Cha 4 (+0)

Infiltrator Warforged Prototype (I)	Level 7 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid (living construct)	XP 300
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +3
HP 80; Bloodied 40	
AC 19 (21 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 17	
Saving Throws +2 against ongoing damage	
Speed 6	
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the infiltrator warforged prototype shifts 1 square.	
⊕ Infiltrator Feint (minor; recharges after the infiltrator warforged prototype hits with <i>impersonator's strike</i>)	
+10 vs. Reflex; the infiltrator prototype gains combat advantage against the target.	
⊕ Impersonator's Strike (standard; recharge ☞☞☞☞☞) ⊕ Fear	
+11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the infiltrator warforged prototype's next turn.	
Arcane Empowerment	
While the arcane generator functions, whenever an infiltrator warforged prototype hits with a melee attack, it gains 3 temporary hit points.	
Combat Advantage	
An infiltrator warforged prototype deals 1d8 extra damage on melee attacks against any target granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 18 (+7) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 4 (+0) Cha 12 (+4)

Arcane Generator (G)
TrapLevel 7 Warlord
XP 300

This arcane contraption of metal, gems, and stone glows with some hidden purpose.

Trap: When triggered, the generator activates allied constructs and attacks to fend off those who might tamper with it.

Perception

- ◆ No check is required to see the generator.
- ◆ DC 20: The character spots something on the generator that looks important to its working, granting a +2 bonus to the next countermeasure skill check.

Additional Skill: Arcana

- ◆ DC 20: The character knows that this device distributes energy to the area's constructs. This check is a minor action.

Trigger

When a creature enters the lab, the trap rolls initiative, as do connected creatures. It makes an attack as an immediate reaction when damaged (see "Countermeasures" below).

Initiative +6**Attack** ◆ **Force****Standard Action** Area burst 1 within 10**Target:** Each enemy in burst**Attack:** +10 vs. Fortitude**Hit:** 2d6 + 5 force damage, and the trap pushes the target 3 squares.

Effect: At the start of its next turn, a destroyed allied construct in the burst gains 1 hit point, reactivates, and can act. Each allied construct can be affected by this effect only once. If no destroyed allied construct is within the burst, one allied construct in the burst instead gains 5 temporary hit points.

Attack ◆ **Psychic****Immediate Reaction** Ranged 10**Target:** One creature**Attack:** +10 vs. Will**Hit:** 1d8 + 4 psychic damage.**Countermeasures**

Each successful countermeasure check is cumulative; five such successes deactivate the generator.

- ◆ A character can disrupt the generator's energy with a DC 20 Arcana check as a standard action, ranged 5 or melee 1.
- ◆ A character adjacent to the generator can break part of the generator with a DC 15 Athletics check as a standard action, triggering the trap's immediate reaction attack.
- ◆ A character adjacent to the generator can tamper with the generator's workings with a DC 20 Thievery check as a standard action.
- ◆ A character can attack the generator (AC 2, Reflex 2, Fortitude 20; hp 90; immune push, pull, and slide). An attacker triggers the trap's immediate reaction attack.



DEVELOPMENT

Playing the Warforged Prototypes: The warforged prototypes are woefully inadequate compared to completely functional warforged. They are little more intelligent than animals. This fact might emerge during combat, as the warforged speak in halting Common or otherwise reveal their impaired mental function. They also reveal their role as experimental subjects, reporting on the significance of damage dealt to them or other conditions. Once the generator is deactivated, the warforged can be convinced not to attack the PCs if one of the PCs suggests the current "test" or "experiment" is over.

Reactivating the Generator: Unless they destroy the generator, the PCs can reactivate it using Arcana and Thievery checks similar to those required to deactivate it. If they do so, they can repurpose the generator to attack creatures other than them.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light emanates from the generator crystal.

Generator: The generator is blocking terrain.

Rubble: Rubble is strewn across the floor near the west wall. It was left over from when the hobgoblins smashed their way into the complex and is difficult terrain.

Treasure: One parcel.

6. LIVING QUARTERS

Encounter Level 6 (1,400 XP)

SETUP

6 Valsath's warriors (W)

3 Bladebearer hobgoblins (H)

1 Bladebearer strangler (B)

Goblins rest here between guard shifts. One warrior keeps a lax watch from the room's corner and the others are sleeping. Sneaking up on them requires DC 13 Stealth checks, but the guard notices any light. If he becomes aware of the approach of other creatures, he quietly wakes his allies, who pretend to sleep. The bugbear sleeps on a ledge off the floor because she doesn't trust the hobgoblins to keep her safe. If the guard wakes her, she hides, increasing the Perception DC required to see her (below) to 25.

When the PCs can see the room, read:

Furs, blankets, and other bedding cover the floor of this chamber, which has a ledge around it and a high ceiling. Clothing, boots, fresh torches, and other personal items are also scattered about, but an element of organization is apparent. The creatures that dwell here are not savages.

Several hobgoblins sleep on some of the bedrolls, their weapons at hand. One lounges in the corner, sharpening his sword.

Perception

DC 20 (or 25): A bugbear is asleep on the far ledge.

If the PCs sneak up successfully, they surprise the sleeping goblins. If the goblins are aware, they might surprise the approaching PCs. In this latter case, the guard on watch charges during the surprise round.

6 Valsath's Warriors (W) Level 7 Minion Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (hobgoblin) XP 75 each

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 23 (25 with phalanx soldier); Fortitude 20, Reflex 19,

Will 18

Speed 6

④ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.

⊗ Longbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)

The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier

The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +9, History +5

Str 19 (+7) Dex 16 (+6) Wis 14 (+5)

Con 15 (+5) Int 11 (+3) Cha 10 (+3)

Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows

3 Bladebearer Hobgoblins (H) Level 5 Skirmisher

Medium natural humanoid XP 200 each

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 62; Bloodied 31

AC 19; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 16

Speed 6

④ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).

† Scimitar Advantage (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; at-will)

The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes two scimitar attacks.

Bladebearer Finesse (free; usable only while charging; at-will)

The Bladebearer hobgoblin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of its charge.

Dhakaani Footwork (free, when the Bladebearer hobgoblin hits with a melee attack; at-will)

The Bladebearer hobgoblin shifts 1 square.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)

The Bladebearer hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11

Str 20 (+7) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 16 (+5)

Con 14 (+4) Int 10 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)

Equipment leather armor, 2 scimitars

TACTICS

The warriors engage the PCs directly, if possible. A couple of them might climb the ledge and fire arrows from there. They work together to provide combat advantage for their allies and to gain the benefit of phalanx soldier.

Bladebearer hobgoblins also engage directly, but they try to approach from a vector that can allow them combat advantage or allow them to shift into a flanking position after a successful attack. They use *Bladebearer finesse* to charge wounded enemies in hopes of taking those foes out quickly.

Lurking on the ledge to sneak up on an opponent, the Bladebearer strangler selects a target carefully from among those who like to stay out of melee. Since the bugbear is trained in Acrobatics, she isn't afraid to leap from the ledge to charge and grab someone. She then works to kill that enemy before moving on to another target.

Pulling Out Bedrolls: For some swashbuckling fun, the warriors might try to pull bedrolls from under a PC's feet to knock the character prone. Doing so is a standard action; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Bladebearer Strangler (B) **Level 8 Lurker**Medium natural humanoid (bugbear) **XP 350****Initiative** +12 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision**HP** 88; **Bloodied** 44**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 19**Speed** 7⊕ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Weapon**

+13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage.

⊕ **Strangle** (standard; requires combat advantage and a garrote; at-will) ⊕ **Weapon**Can be used as part of a charge; +11 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed (-4 penalty to escape). *Sustain Standard:* When it sustains this power, the bugbear deals 1d10 + 5 damage to the target and sustains the grab.**Body Shield** (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a melee or a ranged attack; recharge ☼☼☼☼☼☼)

The Bladebearer strangler makes the creature it is grabbing the triggering attack's target. The Bladebearer strangler can't use this power against an attack made by a creature it is grabbing.

Strangler's Alacrity (free, when a creature the Bladebearer strangler has grabbed drops to 0 hit points or fewer; encounter)

The Bladebearer strangler can make a charge attack.

Combat Advantage

The Bladebearer strangler deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Strangler's Cover

While the Bladebearer strangler is grabbing a creature, that creature's allies consider the grabbed creature to be an enemy for determining cover.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Acrobatics +13, Intimidate +11, Stealth +15**Str** 20 (+9) **Dex** 18 (+8) **Wis** 16 (+7)**Con** 16 (+7) **Int** 10 (+4) **Cha** 10 (+4)**Equipment** leather armor, battleaxe, wire garrote

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ledge: This ledge is 10 feet from the floor, and the walls leading to it are rougher than others in the complex (DC 20 Athletics to climb). A couple of ladders (DC 0 Athletics to climb; DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics to climb at normal speed) lead up to the ledge.

Secret Trapdoor: A DC 21 Perception check reveals the trapdoor. It is locked (DC 21 Thievery to open; Valsath and Jelia each have a key). Opening the door reveals a 10-foot-deep shaft with metal rungs hammered into its side. The shaft ends in a narrow, sloping tunnel that leads to area 13.

Gear: In a couple of areas, stacked gear hinders movement, causing difficult terrain. The PCs can find any useful mundane gear here that you'd like them to have. Food and water are part of the assortment.

Treasure: One parcel.

DEVELOPMENT

Escape: If the battle goes badly, one of the creatures here might try to escape. If one does so, it runs toward the security gauntlet in area 8, avoiding the pressure plates.

Questioning Prisoners: Any captured goblins act as those in area 1 did. The PCs might know to ask about more subjects (using Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidation).

◆ **How did you move beyond the warforged near the entrance?** (DC 14): Jelia and Dakai reactivated the generator there, making it so the warforged within ignored the goblins and their allies. They attack anyone else.

◆ **Where does this trapdoor lead?** (DC 19): The goblin doesn't know where the passage under the door leads but does know it leads past the trap gauntlet in area 8. If it isn't convinced to tell the truth, the goblin lies, saying Valsath and Jelia didn't allow the others to see where the passage goes.



7. CONSTRUCT LAB

Encounter Level 7 (1,600 XP)

SETUP

4 Valsath's warriors (W)

Dakai (D)

1 forge drake (F)

1 decrepit flesh golem (G)

Initially, the PCs see only the hobgoblin warriors acting as guards. These guards know that they have little chance against a well-armed party. They challenge the PCs, but stall with conversation as one warrior "idly" taps his longsword against the north door to alert Dakai about intruders. A successful Insight check (DC 14) reveals that the hobgoblins are stalling.

When the PCs can see into this chamber, read:

The door opens into a round room with doors on the north, west, and south walls. A rune is inlaid into the floor, and four hobgoblins stand near the door to the north. They seem shocked by your arrival.

Arcana Check

DC 17: The rune on the ground courses with eldritch energy. Standing on it empowers arcane attacks.

DC 21: The character knows the specifics of the rune (see "Features of the Area," page 144).

Dakai, an artificer, has reanimated one of the constructs, but time has not been kind to it. If a hobgoblin warrior raps on the door or a fight starts, Dakai and his creatures take 1 round to prepare, then join the fray.

Decrepit Flesh Golem (G)	Level 8 Elite Brute
Large natural animate (construct)	XP 700
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +5; darkvision
HP 210; Bloodied 105	
AC 20; Fortitude 23, Reflex 18, Will 19	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 5; can't shift	
Action Points 1	
① Slam (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the golem pushes the target 2 squares.	
⊕ Berserk Attack (immediate reaction, when damaged by an attack; at-will)	
The flesh golem makes a slam attack against a random enemy within its reach.	
⊕ Golem Rampage (standard; recharge [1])	
The decrepit flesh golem moves its speed and can move through enemies' spaces. When it enters a creature's space, the golem makes a slam attack against that creature.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 20 (+9)	Dex 7 (+2)
Con 15 (+6)	Wis 8 (+3)
	Cha 3 (+0)

When the PCs can see into the lab area, read:

Four forms loom in this macabre room. Each is constructed of mismatched humanoid parts held together with metallic thread and other metal parts. Tools hang on the walls, and shelves hold various containers.

4 Valsath's Warriors (W)	Level 7 Minion Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (hobgoblin)	XP 75 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 23 (25 with <i>phalanx soldier</i>); Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 18	
Speed 6	
① Longsword (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.	
② Longbow (standard; at-will) ⊕ Weapon	
+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)	
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.	
Phalanx Soldier	
The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +9, History +5	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 16 (+6)
Con 15 (+5)	Wis 14 (+5)
	Cha 10 (+3)
Equipment scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows	

Dakai (D)	Level 7 Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid (goblin)	XP 300
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 80; Bloodied 40	
AC 22; Fortitude 21, Reflex 22, Will 20	
Speed 6	
① Mace (standard; at-will) ⊕ Arcane, Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the next of Dakai's allies to attack the target gains +2 to its attack roll.	
② Rod Arc (standard; at-will) ⊕ Arcane, Implement, Lightning	
Dakai ignores the target's cover; ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 lightning damage, and the target takes a -3 penalty to its next damage roll.	
⚡ Shard Orb (standard; recharge [2][3][4]) ⊕ Arcane, Force, Implement, Zone	
Area burst 1 within 10; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 force damage, and the target is knocked prone. <i>Effect:</i> The burst creates a zone that lasts until the end of Dakai's next turn. An enemy that ends its turn in this zone takes 1d10 + 4 force damage.	
⚡ Resistive Formula (minor; encounter) ⊕ Arcane, Healing	
Close burst 5; allies in burst gain +1 to AC and can end this bonus as a free action to gain 5 temporary hit points.	
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack)	
Dakai shifts 1 square.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +9, Stealth +5, Thievery +10	
Str 10 (+3)	Dex 10 (+3)
Con 16 (+6)	Wis 14 (+5)
	Cha 13 (+4)
Equipment leather armor, mace, rod	

Forge Drake (F)	Level 7 Skirmisher	
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 300	
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 79; Bloodied 39		
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 18		
Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)		
⊕ Claws (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.		
† Shifting Bite (standard; at-will)		
+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.		
† Guard Creature (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)		
The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claws attack against that creature.		
◀ Force Breath (standard; encounter) ♦ Force		
Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and the drake pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 4 (+0)	Cha 4 (+0)

TACTICS

If the PCs attack, one hobgoblin warrior bangs on the door to the lab area in desperation (a minor action). The warriors then fight alongside one another to gain the benefit of *phalanx soldier*.

The golem and forge drake rush into combat. This winged drake appears to be made of shining steel. Both constructs work to protect Dakai, the drake's guarded creature. These constructs fight until destroyed.

Dakai stays inside the lab and fights from there, launching *rod arc* and *shard orb* at the PCs. The goblin is eager to put his constructs to the test, and he fights as long as they are still functional. If the golem and the forge drake fall, Dakai can be made to surrender with a successful DC 20 Intimidate check.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Inert Golems: The inert golems are blocking terrain. However, a character adjacent to a golem can use a standard action to push over an inert golem (DC 15 Athletics). The golem falls, allowing the pushing creature to make an attack with the golem as the origin: close blast 2; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8 damage, and the target is knocked prone and grabbed. A grabbed creature can escape (DC 19), but cannot stand until it does so. The fallen golem occupies a 2-by-2-square area, and it becomes difficult terrain.

Rune: The rune is a font of power. A creature standing on the rune gains a +2 bonus to damage rolls with attacks that have the arcane keyword.

Treasure: One parcel.

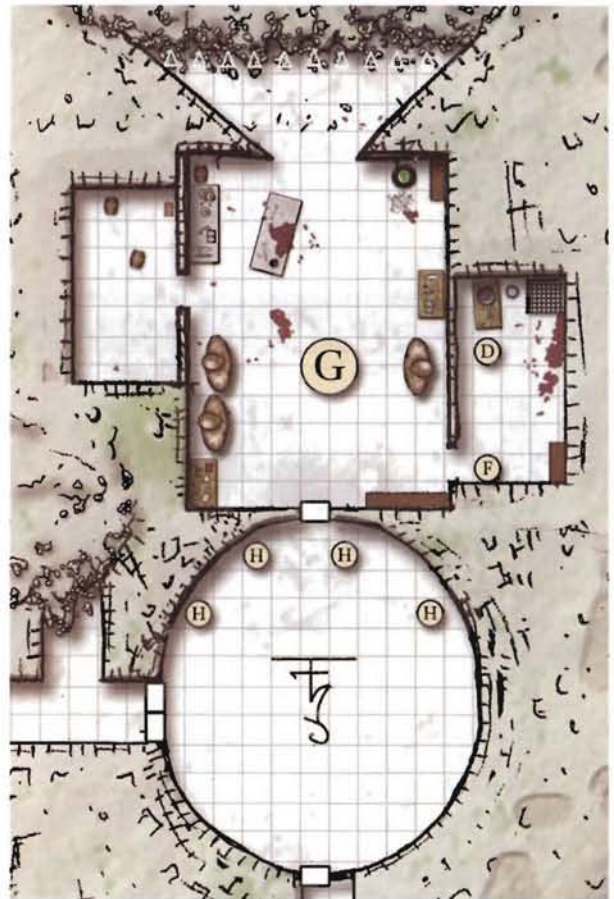
DEVELOPMENT

If captured, Dakai knows much of what the goblins in area 1 and 6 knew. He tries to avoid answering questions or lies with Bluff, but in doing so he might contradict facts the PCs already know. For instance, he doesn't admit to being a Bladebearer until the PCs force him to. This means you might have to edit the facts below until the PCs discover the whole story.

♦ **What are the plans for the forge?** (DC 19): Valsath plans to use the weapons and constructs in the forge for the glory of the Bladebearers. With these weapons, the Bladebearers could rise to power more quickly.

♦ **What about the eladrin, Jelja?** (DC 14): Jelja hired the goblin mercenaries to help her uncover the forge, but she didn't know the goblins were Bladebearers. Valsath turned the tables on Jelja, who is now stuck here. The hobgoblin leader will probably kill the eladrin when the time is right.

♦ **What is this drake construct?** (DC 14): The forge drake, and others like it, comes from deeper in the forge, where Valsath and Jelja found a very powerful weapon called "the Calmachia." Dakai hasn't met Calmachia, but he suspects the "weapon" is an intelligent construct, and he fears that this being has influence over Valsath.



8. SECURITY GAUNTLET

Encounter Level 8 (1,750 XP)

SETUP

1 arcane turret (A)

Trap 1:

1 ceiling scythe

1 razormesh net

1 whirling blades automaton (B)

Trap 2:

1 ceiling scythe

1 razormesh net

1 whirling blades automaton (B)

The PCs don't know of the danger here unless they succeed on the required skill checks. Stepping into a numbered area activates a pressure plate linked to all the area's traps (see above). For each trap, a net launches from a hatch in the ceiling, the ceiling scythe starts swinging, and a secret door rises into the ceiling, releasing a whirling blades automaton. The arcane turret activates when either trap is activated.

When the PCs enter the hall, read:

This unlit hallway is wide but otherwise featureless.

History Check

DC 20: *Cannith facilities—especially those surrounding creation forges—often have security trap gauntlets in halls such as this one.*

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: ENCOUNTER SPACE

Look at the encounter area for the construct lab. Notice all the nice space for PCs and monsters to maneuver. Notice the two side rooms that provide convenient corners for sneaky characters. Neither of these features existed on my original maps.

I think I was stuck in a 3rd Edition headspace. I hope we can all agree that 4th Edition places more emphasis on tactical combat, and thus the encounter areas require something more than a big space in which to duke it out. My editor's primary comment on my first draft was to make the encounter areas larger, to include small rooms coming off of them, and to add other tactically interesting features.

It's good advice. So, for those of you writing your own adventures (in addition to using my excellent piece), keep that in mind.

—Luke Johnson

Perception Check

DC 17: *Thin, shallow cuts mark the floor in several places.*

DC 19: *There are slots in the ceiling above the cuts in the floor. (A character who makes a DC 15 Dungeoneering check recognizes these as signs of a ceiling scythe trap.)*

DC 20: *The dust and debris here indicate that no traffic of any sort has moved down this hallway in a long time.*

DC 21: *Some of the marble flagstones are slightly raised; they must be pressure plates for a trap.*

When an automaton activates, read:

A construct like a whirling top spins out of a compartment in the wall. Sharp blades spin at its highest point.

Arcane Turret (A)

Level 6 Blaster

Trap

XP 250

A crossbowlike contraption emerges and begins to fire magical bolts much like magic missiles.

Trap: When triggered, the trap begins launching bolts of force.

Initiative +6

Trigger

When a creature steps on a linked pressure plate, roll initiative for the trap.

Attack ♦ Force

Standard Action Ranged 10

Target: One creature

Attack: +10 vs. Reflex

Hit: 3d4 + 4 force damage.

Countermeasures

- ♦ Three successful DC 20 Arcana or Thievery checks as standard actions disable the turret.
- ♦ A character can attack the turret (AC 20, Fortitude 18, Reflex 20; hp 66; immune push, pull, and slide). When it is reduced to 0 hit points, the turret is destroyed.

2 Ceiling Scythes

Level 6 Lurker

Trap

XP 250 each

Scything blades sweep across the hall.

Trap: Scything blades emerge from the ceiling and sweep across the hallway.

Initiative +6

Trigger

Roll initiative for the trap when a creature steps on a linked pressure plate.

Attack

Standard Action Melee touch

Target: Each creature in the row of squares in front of the trap

Attack: +11 vs. AC

Hit: 2d6 + 4 damage, and the trap slides the target 1 square and knocks it prone. A prone creature takes 1d6 extra damage from the trap's attack.

Countermeasure

- ♦ A character can attack a pendulum blade (AC 20, Fortitude 9, Reflex 19; hp 35). Reducing a blade to 0 hit points destroys it.

2 Whirling Blades Automaton (B) **Level 6 Skirmisher**

Small natural animate (blind, construct) XP 250 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1; blindsight 10**HP** 66; **Bloodied** 33**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16**Immune** disease, knocked prone, poison**Speed** 5⊖ **Whirling Blades** (standard; at-will)

Close burst 1; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the automaton can shift 1 square for each target it hits (up to 3 squares).

⊖ **Remove Mark** (minor; at-will)

Close burst 5; targets an enemy marking the automaton; +9 vs. Will; the mark ends.

⊖ **Bladed Destruction** (when the automaton drops to 0 hit points)

The whirling blades automaton explodes, launching blades in all directions. Close burst 5; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 2 damage.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** –**Str** 14 (+5)**Dex** 19 (+7)**Wis** 6 (+1)**Con** 10 (+3)**Int** 2 (-1)**Cha** 2 (-1)**2 Razormesh Nets****Level 6 Obstacle**

Trap

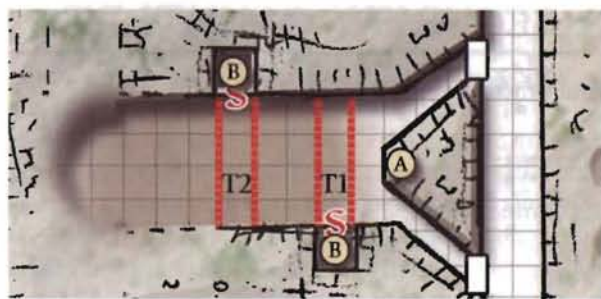
XP 250 each

*A mesh of sharp steel wire falls from a hatch in the ceiling.***Trap:** The net is composed of lightweight steel mesh. It is enchanted to twist and grasp its targets.**Trigger**

When a creature steps on a linked pressure plate, the trap attacks. The attack is centered on the triggering creature and occurs only once.

Attack**Immediate Reaction** Close burst 1**Target:** Each creature in burst**Attack:** +10 vs. Reflex**Hit:** 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone and restrained; the target is unable to stand and takes ongoing 5 damage while it remains restrained (see "Countermeasures" below). **Aftersave:** Ongoing 5 damage (save ends).**Miss:** The trap pushes the target into an unoccupied square adjacent to the burst.**Effect:** The area of effect is difficult terrain.**Countermeasures**

- ◆ A character can make an DC 18 Acrobatics or Athletics check as a standard action. If the check is successful, the character is no longer restrained.
- ◆ The net has AC 20, Fortitude 20, Reflex 2, and hp 70; it is immune to push, pull, and slide. If the net is reduced to 0 hit points, all creatures restrained by the net are no longer restrained.

**DEVELOPMENT**

If the characters trigger the traps, the noise likely alerts the creatures in area 13.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Control Panels: Each set of traps has its own control panel under its own hatch (DC 23 Perception to locate) at the end of the hall adjacent to the arcane turret. A lock seals each panel (DC 21 Thievery to open). Deactivating the set of traps that a panel controls requires three successful DC 21 Thievery checks.

Secret Doors: Each whirling blade automaton is behind a secret door (DC 20 Perception to locate). Opening the secret door without deactivating the associated control panel activates the automaton. When the automaton moves, it sets off the net trap. Neither automaton makes opportunity attacks during its initial action. On subsequent rounds, the automatons move to attack as many PCs as possible each round.

**BEHIND THE CURTAIN:
ENGAGING ENCOUNTERS**

D&D, especially 4th Edition, does a great job of making combat interesting. The PCs are stocked with cool powers and magic items, and the players are itching to see them in action. As a DM, I could spend 10 minutes with the *Monster Manual*, pick a few level-appropriate nasties with a healthy mix of artillery/brutes/others roles, throw them in front of the PCs on an empty field, and the players would be happy.

But any DM can do that. You're paying good money for this adventure, and it needs to do more than save you 10 minutes. So I made a significant effort to ensure that every encounter is not only especially interesting (e.g., mysterious prototype warforged), but also meaningful for the story (e.g., the phantoms of past forge workers).

—Luke Johnson

9. RUINED FOYER

Encounter Level 7 (1,550 XP)

SETUP

- 1 bone worm (B)
- 2 tomb mote swarms (M)
- 1 ghostly flame jets trap

Here in the forge's original entry point, the former overseer and many of his underlings died. The overseer's spirit remains in the area, and his connection to the place makes him aware of intruders who enter it. He can manifest within if he chooses. No monsters are apparent when the PCs enter.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens into a large, octagonal room that must once have been magnificent. The large symbol set into the floor still looks impressive, but the southern wall is shattered. Rubble is scattered everywhere, and some of the room's southern section is blackened as if by an explosion. A large number of humanoid bones are also strewn about the area.

History Check

DC 10: *The symbol is that of House Cannith.*

Perception Check

DC 19: *Numerous tiny nozzles project from grooves in each of the room's walls, at least a dozen nozzles in each wall.*

Arcana Check

DC 19 (success on the Perception check required): *The nozzles look like the sort that spew magical fire. If they are activated, everything in the room would be burned beyond recognition.*

This foyer once contained a deadly security device that could fill the entire chamber with fire. It hasn't been functional since the end of the Last War. If a PC attempts to detect magic, a successful DC 21 Arcana check reveals that no magic remains in these nozzles.

After a PC moves into the room, read:

An apparition rises through the floor. It is a translucent human male dressed in the finery of House Cannith. At his heart burns a spectral blue flame. His eyes, mouth, and hair share a similar fire.

"Look who else has come! What are you people doing here in my forge?"

TALKING TO HAESTUS

The PCs can learn the following information from Haestus, who is arrogant, a little crazy, and confident they have little chance of breaching the forge's lower level. Feel free to reward roleplaying with check bonuses. You can also just give out some information, rather than requiring a skill check.

◆ **Who are you? (DC 8 Diplomacy):** *"I am Haestus d'Cannith, the overseer of this place. You might already have seen some of my work. The golems? The warforged prototypes?"*

◆ **What are you? (DC 19 Diplomacy):** *"I am something between living and dead, and greater than either. My power in life allowed my spirit to remain kindled in death. I am a soul alight with the forge's fire."* **Arcana or Religion (DC 15):** Haestus is a forgewraith, an undead creature with fiery powers.

◆ **This is your forge? (DC 8 Diplomacy):** *"Yes, I am lord over those who died here. The others have the living forge back up and running. Perhaps you'll see, but I doubt it."* **Insight (DC 19):** Available only after Haestus mentions "the others," above. Haestus's claim that this is his forge isn't entirely true. Clearly, he has some loyalty to or is beholden to the others he has mentioned.

◆ **Others? (DC 16 Diplomacy, or DC 12 Bluff/Diplomacy if the PC mentions Jelia or the hobgoblins):** *"Valsath is a cunning leader for a hobgoblin. Her alliance with Calmachia and me will prove fruitful for her people, I have no doubt. I'm not sure I trust that eladrin female. She serves another agenda, I suspect."*

◆ **Calmachia? (DC 19 Diplomacy, or DC 16 Bluff/Diplomacy if the PC mentions the forge drakes):** *"Ah, yes. She is the heart of the forge and mother of the forge drakes. One day, perhaps, her children will be more like her. The world will know her soon enough, and they will know the name of her father—Haestus d'Cannith."*

When the conversation ends, read:

Haestus cackles, "Perhaps I'll see you again, but I hope not." His eyes flash, and pieces of bone around the room tremble. "Witness, now, my power over the dead things of this forge!" He sinks into the floor, and as he does, bones dart through the rubble, meeting each other and knitting together. A spectral blue flame lingers in the spot where he was. It pulses, filling the nozzles on the walls with a pale glow, then goes out.

DEVELOPMENT

Haestus leaves and warns Valsath that she might expect company, then returns to area 13. If the PCs somehow keep Haestus here, he fights until he can escape (see "Tactics," page 150). Once Haestus vanishes or the PCs attack him, the monsters appear: Roll initiative for them.

When this happens, read:

The bones knit to form a sinuous form like a centipede with ribs for legs. A human skull caps the monstrosity. Bits of broken bone, teeth, and ash also gather into tiny humanoid shapes that mass in swarms to attack.

TACTICS

The monsters move to attack the nearest creatures, and the trap launches spectral flame at clustered PCs. The bone worm senses and favors as a target any creature taking ongoing necrotic damage. A tomb mote swarm is attracted to areas where it can keep more than one enemy in its aura and still be adjacent to an enemy adjacent to the other swarm. The monsters here fight until destroyed.

Bone Worm (B) Level 7 Elite Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (undead) XP 600

Initiative +10 Senses Perception +6; darkvision

HP 158; Bloodied 79

AC 21; Fortitude 18, Reflex 21, Will 19

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7, climb 4; see also *skittering rake*

Action Points 1

⊕ Rake (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic

The bone worm shifts up to 2 squares before or after the attack; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

† Skittering Rake (standard; recharge Ⓜ; Ⓜ; Ⓜ) ⊕ Necrotic

The bone worm shifts up to 7 squares and can make two rake attacks during this move.

Combat Advantage ⊕ Necrotic

A bone worm deals 1d8 extra necrotic damage to creatures it has combat advantage against.

Necrotic Advantage

A bone worm gains combat advantage against any creature taking ongoing necrotic damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 15 (+5)

Dex 20 (+8)

Wis 16 (+6)

Con 15 (+5)

Int 2 (-1)

Cha 2 (-1)

2 Tomb Mote Swarms (M) Level 7 Brute

Medium natural beast (swarm, undead) XP 300 each

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +6; darkvision

Swarm Attack (Necrotic) aura 1; any enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 necrotic damage plus 3 extra necrotic damage per tomb mote swarm adjacent to the enemy.

HP 87; Bloodied 43

AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 10

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 10 against close and area attacks

Speed 6

⊕ Swarm of Bones (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic

+10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 1 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). A creature already taking ongoing 5 necrotic damage instead takes ongoing 10 necrotic damage from this attack (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 12 (+4)

Dex 20 (+8)

Wis 16 (+6)

Con 17 (+6)

Int 4 (+0)

Cha 14 (+5)

Ghostly Flame Jets

Level 8 Blaster

Trap

XP 350

Ghostly light pulses in the ancient nozzles and phantom flames silently explode into existence.

Trap: When the trap is triggered, the flame pulses and attacks each round on its initiative count.

Religion

⊕ DC 21: A character knows the nature of the ghostly flame jets, including the countermeasures.

Initiative +9

Trigger

When a non-undead creature enters area of the ghostly flame jets, roll initiative for the trap.

Attack

Standard Action Area burst 1 within 10

Target: Each non-undead creature in burst

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: 1d6 + 3 fire damage plus 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire and necrotic damage (save ends).

Miss: Half damage.

Effect: Undead creatures in the burst gain 5 temporary hit points.

Countermeasures

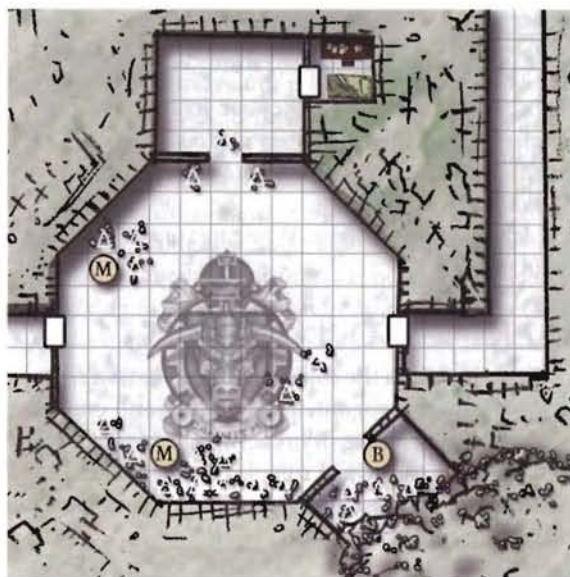
⊕ A character can direct radiant damage against the trap, targeting any nozzles on the walls (AC 22, other defenses 20). If the trap takes 8 or more points of radiant damage, it makes the following attack against the last creature to deal it radiant damage: ranged 10; +12 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 psychic and necrotic damage (save ends).

⊕ As a standard action, a character can make a DC 21 Arcana or Religion check from anywhere in the trap's encounter area. A total of four successful checks disables the trap. Any check failed by 5 or more allows the trap to attack as an immediate reaction.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Rubble: This is difficult terrain.

Cannith Seal: While a dragonmarked character stands on this symbol, he or she feels a surge of power and gains a +2 bonus to saving throws during this encounter.



13. CATWALK

Encounter Level 9 (2,050 XP)

SETUP

- 2 forge drakes (D)
- 6 forge wisp wraiths (under lava)
- Haustus (H)
- 1 catwalk deadfall and mesh trap (T)

If the PCs made little noise moving down the hall, they might take the creatures here by surprise. If not, Haustus moves out of sight under the lava when they arrive. Whatever the case, the forge wisp wraiths are out of sight in the lava when the PCs arrive.

When the forge was operational, the trap here was locked in a closed position unless the facility was under attack. Jelja and Valsath leave the trap active, since their lackeys rarely come here and know of the trap's safety mechanism.

When the PCs can see into this room, read:

The marble of the passageway gives way to steel-covered walls and the flicker of fire from below. The hallway opens onto a steel catwalk, which narrows to a 10-foot-wide bridge as it crosses to the other side. Thirty feet below, molten metal churns. A fine mesh is stretched across the room about 10 feet above the chasm, and on it rests charred humanoid remains.

On the far side of the catwalk are a pair of winged drakes made of steel. Their luminous eyes flare when they notice your arrival.

2 Forge Drakes (D)	Level 7 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)	XP 300 each
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; Bloodied 39	
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 18	
Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)	
Ⓛ Claws (standard; at-will)	+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.
† Shifting Bite (standard; at-will)	+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.
† Guard Creature (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)	The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claw attack against that creature.
↖ Force Breath (standard; encounter) † Force	Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and the drake pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 19 (+7)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 4 (+0)
	Wis 14 (+5)
	Cha 4 (+0)

6 Forge Wisp Wraiths	Level 7 Minion Brute
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 75 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 19; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 19	
Immune disease, fire, necrotic, poison; Resist insubstantial	
Speed fly 6 (hover), phasing	
Ⓛ Kindling Touch (standard; at-will) † Fire, Necrotic	+8 vs. Fortitude; 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
↖ Explosive End (when the wisp drops to 0 hit points) † Fire	Close burst 1; +7 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages –
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 4 (+0)	Dex 13 (+4)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 4 (+0)
	Wis 10 (+3)
	Cha 15 (+5)

Haustus (H)	Level 8 Elite Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)	XP 700
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +9; darkvision
HP 123; Bloodied 61; see also <i>bloodied wrath</i>	
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 21	
Immune disease, nonmagical fire, poison; Resist 5 fire, insubstantial; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing	
Action Points 1	
Ⓛ Pain Hammer (standard; at-will) † Fire, Necrotic	+12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and Haustus pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.
Ⓛ Soulburn (standard; at-will) † Fire, Necrotic	Ranged 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, Haustus slides the target 2 squares, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of Haustus's next turn.
† Double Attack (standard; at-will)	Haustus makes two basic attacks.
† Forge Strike (standard; recharge Ⓛ Ⓛ Ⓛ) † Fire	Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 fire damage, ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends), and Haustus knocks the target prone. Each time a target takes ongoing damage from this attack, Haustus gains 5 temporary hit points.
↖ Forge's Wrath (standard; recharge Ⓛ Ⓛ) † Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation	Close burst 2; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and if the target leaves its space, it takes 2d6 + 5 psychic damage (save ends). While the target remains in its space, all other creatures have concealment against the target. Miss: Half damage. Effect: Haustus can teleport to any square in the area of effect.
Bloodied Wrath (when first bloodied; encounter) † Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation	Forge's wrath recharges, and Haustus uses it.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Arcana +13, Intimidate +14, Stealth +10	
Str 10 (+4)	Dex 12 (+5)
Con 16 (+7)	Int 18 (+8)
	Wis 10 (+4)
	Cha 20 (+9)

Catwalk Deadfall and Mesh (T) **Level 7 Warden**
Trap XP 300

The catwalk falls open.

Trap: A 2-by-2-square section of floor flips downward, dumping creatures toward the molten metal.

Perception

- ◆ DC 21: A character notices the door.
- ◆ DC 21 (requires the character to know the door is there): A character adjacent to the door's western side discovers its hidden locking mechanism.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a nonflying creature enters one of its western squares.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls 30 feet onto the safety mesh, takes 2d10 damage, and falls prone.

Miss: The target grabs a rail and does not fall, and it must make a DC 10 Athletics check to climb to a safe square.

Effect: The false floor opens and the pit is no longer hidden. A creature that starts its turn on the safety mesh takes 5 fire damage.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character adjacent to the trap can trigger it with a DC 17 Thievery check as a standard action.
- ◆ A character adjacent to the trap can disable it with a DC 21 Thievery check as a standard action. If the character is on the eastern side of the door, two successful checks are required to jam the door closed. If the character is on the western side, one successful check is required to lock the trap with its hidden locking mechanism.

TACTICS

The creatures here make use of their ability to fly to outmaneuver the PCs. Forge wisp wraiths emerge from the molten metal to harry the PCs. The forge drakes prefer to land before attacking. They consider Haestus to be their guarded creature.

Haestus waits until PCs are on the catwalk, then emerges to start off with *forge's wrath*. When he uses an action point, he tries to do so when he can unleash *forge's wrath* and *forge strike* during the same turn—or when he can try to knock multiple targets off the catwalk. Haestus is unafraid of melee, but he uses his ability to hover to remain free of attackers so he can use his powerful ranged attacks.

All the creatures here fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from the molten metal.

Rails: The catwalk and balconies have rails, which give any creature forced over an edge a +2 bonus to a saving throw to avoid falling.

Safety Mesh: The safety mesh is inches above the molten metal. A creature that starts its turn on the mesh takes 5 fire damage. The charred humanoid form on the mesh was a hobgoblin that fell to its death.

Treasure: When the PCs defeat Haestus, a single corporeal object clatters to the catwalk as he dissipates. His personal House Cannith signet ring is left behind. House Cannith is likely to give one treasure parcel, even a magic item, for the return of this item—as long as the PCs reveal its origin. The characters can gain a smaller monetary treasure parcel from a jeweler or a fence, but doing so might offend House Cannith.

DEVELOPMENT

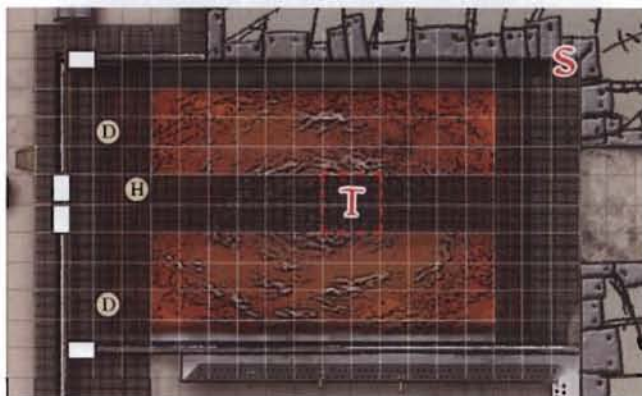
Roleplaying Haestus: Haestus taunts and mocks the PCs as the battle progresses. He uses what was said in his earlier meeting with the PCs as a starting point for interactions in this room. The undead artificer also makes it very clear that any undead here exist due to his influence. He is supremely arrogant, and he is shocked as the PCs destroy him.

BEHIND THE CURTAIN: MONSTER SWAP

When I first wrote this adventure, Haestus was a regular-grade ghost rather than a forgewraith. Originally, he could possess PCs and force them to throw themselves off the catwalk. One of the editors pointed out that this guy should really be a forgewraith, which was true. Haestus can still knock PCs off the catwalk with *pain hammer* and *soulburn*, but somehow it doesn't feel quite the same as a ghost taking over your body and forcing you to leap into the fires below.

So maybe it would be fun to put a ghost in here again. If you want to make this encounter tougher (maybe you have a party of six PCs, or maybe they're level 8), consider adding a ghost. It could be one of Haestus's henchman, a companion, or a superior. Then the PCs can watch each other swan-dive into the flames.

—Luke Johnson



14. ARCANES WORKSHOP

Encounter Level 8 (1,900 XP)

SETUP

2 bugbear wardancers (B)
1 hobgoblin dirge singer (D)
6 Valsath's warriors (W)
Valsath (V)

Valsath is likely to have been warned, so she and her compatriots are expecting company. Due to the dim illumination, the PCs might not see their enemies immediately. Unless the characters are trying to be stealthy, opening the door and entering this room alerts Valsath and her guards to the PCs' presence.

Don't place an enemy's miniature until the PCs see the creature. Some of the guards are out of line of sight.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The door opens onto a metal catwalk. About 20 feet above you is the ceiling, and 30 feet below you is the floor of a vast room of industrial and arcane complexity. Huge, bulky devices of incomprehensible purpose abound. Yawning pits open in the steel floor. Chains dangle from above, some looping on the ground. Some of these items evince signs of life: chains ratchet upward, a device hums, and a crystal sparks fitfully.

Passive Perception

DC 18: Movement alerts you to lurking creatures.

2 Bugbear Wardancers (B)		Level 6 Skirmisher	
Medium natural humanoid		XP 250 each	
Initiative +9		Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 70; Bloodied 35		AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 18	
Speed 7		⚔ Flail Dance (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 damage, the wardancer pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone, and the wardancer shifts 1 square.		⚔ Flail Barrier (standard; recharge ⏏; ⏏) ♦ Weapon	
Close burst 2; targets enemies; no attack roll; 5 damage, and the bugbear wardancer takes half damage from weapon attacks until the end of its next turn.		⚔ Flail Assault (standard; encounter) ♦ Weapon	
Close burst 2; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6 damage, and the wardancer pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.		Combat Advantage	
A bugbear wardancer deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.		Alignment Evil	
Languages Common, Goblin		Str 16 (+6)	
Dex 19 (+7)		Wis 14 (+5)	
Con 14 (+5)		Int 11 (+3)	
Cha 16 (+6)		Equipment hide armor, heavy flail	

TACTICS

The goblins prefer to wait until some PCs are on the floor, then they attack. However, the bugbear wardancers climb up to assault PCs who remain on the catwalk. If they can, they push PCs off the catwalk to the floor. Some of the warriors might also take up positions on the catwalk to fire their longbows.

Valsath, the wardancers, and the dirge singer remain mobile as the warriors engage the PCs in melee. The dirge singer aids this mobility with *battle chant* and *fateful keening*. While Valsath or the dirge singer is conscious, the rest of the goblins fight to the death.

Hobgoblin		Level 6 Controller (Leader)	
Dirge Singer (D)		Medium natural humanoid	
Initiative +4		Senses Perception +5; low-light vision	
HP 72; Bloodied 36		AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 18, Will 19	
Speed 5		⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage.		⚔ Grave Cry (standard; requires a longsword; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target takes a -1 penalty to all defenses against attacks by the dirge singer's allies until the end of the dirge singer's next turn.		⚔ Battle Chant (standard; recharge ⏏; ⏏)	
Close burst 5; two allies within burst shift 5 squares and each makes a melee basic attack as a free action. If an attack hits, the target of the attack is marked by the ally until the end of the dirge singer's next turn.		⚔ Fateful Keening (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder	
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +10 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 thunder damage, and the dirge singer pushes the target 2 squares. <i>Effect:</i> The dirge singer slides each ally in the blast 1 square.		Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)	
The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.		Alignment Unaligned	
Languages Common, Goblin		Skills Diplomacy +12, History +11, Insight +10	
Str 12 (+4)		Dex 12 (+4)	
Con 16 (+6)		Int 16 (+6)	
Wis 14 (+5)		Cha 19 (+7)	
Equipment chainmail, longsword			

DEVELOPMENT

Battle Sounds Carry: Jelja, in area 16, likely hears combat in this room, but she does not come to aid the Bladebearers.

Prisoners: If the PCs take any enemies as prisoners, the goblins know everything, although they avoid revealing anything in Valsath's presence. Valsath speaks only if intimidated (DC 20 Intimidation check).

6 Valsath's Warriors (W) Level 7 Minion Soldier

Medium natural humanoid (hobgoblin) XP 75 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 23 (25 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 20, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18**Speed** 6⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin's next turn.

⊕ **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Weapon**

+11 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin becomes subject to an effect; encounter)

The hobgoblin makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier

The hobgoblin gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Athletics +9, History +5**Str** 19 (+7) **Dex** 16 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+5)**Con** 15 (+5) **Int** 11 (+3) **Cha** 10 (+3)**Equipment** scale armor, light shield, longsword, longbow and 10 arrows**Valsath (V) Level 8 Elite Skirmisher**

Medium natural humanoid (hobgoblin) XP 700

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision**HP** 178; **Bloodied** 89; see also *bloodblade dance***AC** 23; **Fortitude** 21, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 20**Saving Throws** +2**Speed** 6**Action Points** 1⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ⚔ **Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 1d8 + 15), and the target is marked until the end of Valsath's next turn.

⊕ **Scimitar Rend** (standard; requires combat advantage against the target; requires a scimitar; recharge ⏏⏏⏏) ⚔ **Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage (crit 2d8 + 22), and ongoing 10 damage and the target takes a -2 penalty to AC (save ends both).

⊕ **Bladebearer Riposte** (immediate reaction, when hit or missed by a melee attack; at-will)Valsath shifts 1 square and makes a melee basic attack against the triggering target. See also *bloodblade dance*.**Bladebearer Finesse** (free; usable only while charging; at-will)

Valsath doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when leaving the initial square of her charge.

Bloodblade Dance (while bloodied)The use of *Bladebearer riposte* becomes a free action, 2/round.**Dhakaani Footwork** (free, when Valsath hits with a melee attack; at-will)

Valsath shifts 1 square.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when Valsath becomes subject to an effect; encounter)

Valsath rolls a saving throw against the effect.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Athletics +14, Intimidate +10, History +12**Str** 20 (+9) **Dex** 17 (+7) **Wis** 18 (+8)**Con** 17 (+7) **Int** 12 (+5) **Cha** 12 (+5)**Equipment** plate armor, light shield, scimitar, key to secret trapdoor in area 6, key to area 10, key to area 15

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Arcane Machinery: The bulky and largely non-functional arcane machinery is blocking terrain. Each piece of machinery is about 10 feet high.**Catwalk:** The catwalk is 15 feet above the floor, with ladders (DC 0 Athletics to climb; DC 15 Acrobatics or Athletics to climb at normal speed) to the floor. Rails here give any creature forced over an edge a +2 bonus to a saving throw to avoid falling.**Chains:** Leaping among the chains hanging from the ceiling requires DC 15 Athletics or Acrobatics checks, allowing a character to essentially fly around the room at half speed (+10 to the DC to move at full speed). While among the chains, a creature grants combat advantage to foes but also has cover.**Noise:** The noises in this room impose a -4 penalty to Perception checks.**Pits:** These pits were once used to dispose of refuse. They are 20 feet deep (DC 20 Athletics to climb).**Steel Drums:** These drums are low (4-foot) containers that hold old alchemical reagents and hinder ground movement. A creature can hop atop one as part of a move action with a successful DC 10 Athletics check, treating the square as difficult terrain. A creature can instead use an entire move action to clamber atop one without a check. Otherwise, a steel drum blocks movement into its square.**Treasure:** One parcel.

15. DISABLING THE FORGE

Encounter Level 7 (600 XP)

SETUP

Opening the door here requires a successful DC 20 Thievery check or DC 25 Athletics check.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

The walls of this tall room are covered with levers, knobs, runes, and other arcane devices. Lights blink from crystals, symbols glow softly, and the whir and clank of machinery fills the air. A ladder leads from a catwalk at the entry to the floor.

Arcana or History DC 15: These are the primary controls for a creation forge.

DISABLING CALMACHIA'S FORGE

You need to shut down the forge. Jelia can help, if you've convinced her to betray Calmachia.

Level: 7 (XP 600).

Complexity: 2 (6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Arcana, History, Thievery.

Arcana (DC 19): A character manipulates the energy in the arcane device. With a few quick gestures and a word, the character forces part of the forge to start shutting down.

History (DC 21): A study of history has familiarized the character with the general workings of creation forges, and the character recalls the shutdown protocols. This skill can provide a maximum of 1 success in this challenge. Success grants a +2 bonus to all other primary skill checks, and the character also knows that attacking the controls is counterproductive.

Thievery (DC 19): A character can adroitly sabotage a few important controls or follow protocol instructions to shut down part of the device.

Secondary Skills: Athletics, Perception.

Athletics (DC 19): A character helps to unjam part of the controls. This skill can be attempted only once during this challenge. Success with this check does not gain a success in the challenge, but it eliminates one Thievery check failure.

Perception (DC 19): A character sees the pattern to the glowing crystals, which reveals the energy flow in the controls. Success with this check does not gain a success in the challenge, but it eliminates one Arcana skills check failure or grants a +2 bonus to one primary skill check. Success with this check can be used to eliminate a maximum of 1 Arcana failure.

Success: If the PCs attain 6 successes, Calmachia's forge in area 17 shuts down over the course of a few minutes. It won't function during the encounter with Calmachia. Without Jelia, the shutdown alerts Calmachia that something suspicious is afoot. With Jelia's help, the shutdown can be delayed so that the dragon is not alerted until the PCs arrive to confront her.

Failure: If the PCs earn 3 failures, security countermeasures activate, alerting Calmachia to tampering in the forge controls. The forge can no longer be shut down from this room but requires manual manipulation of the controls in area 17. The controls in this location make the following attack against any creature that tampers with them further: Melee 1; +11 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 lightning damage.

Special: If the forge in area 17 is reset, a character here can retry this skill challenge, starting the challenge with the number of successes remaining when the challenge failed but with the failures reset to zero.

DEVELOPMENT

If the forge shuts down before Calmachia is defeated, the dragon warns Valsath, who in turn warns Jelia. All these creatures prepare for attack.



16. JELIA'S REFUGE

Encounter Level 7 (1,500 to 1,550 XP)

SETUP

1 Jelias iron cobra (C)

2 forge drakes (D)

Jelia (J)

The PCs have a chance to convince Jelia that they can help her, and that she should help them. Doing so is a skill challenge (below). If the PCs instead attack, Jelia responds in kind.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

A large bank of metal cabinets stand in the center of this rectangular room. Many are open, and objects—mostly construct parts—are spilled onto the floor. Leaning against the eastern wall is a striking eladrin female regarding you with a tense expression, a rod in one hand and a sword in the other.

An iron cobra in front of her spreads its hood. The female taps it on its head with the rod, but keeps her eyes on you. "Hello, whoever you are." She swallows. "Um . . . who are you?"

Insight Check

DC 14: *Although she doesn't appear frightened of you, this female is clearly a bundle of nerves. She is haggard and rattled, and she sees you as an opportunity to be free of something that is troubling her.*

Perception Check

DC 20: *A scrape against the floor behind the cabinets indicates something is moving back there.*

NEGOTIATING WITH JELIA

Jelia is in a poor state. She has all but betrayed Breland—even though she thought she was doing it for the greater good. She allied with evil hobgoblins, plus she unleashed a construct dragon who has turned out to be more intelligent and cunning than she expected. Now she is in this dragon's thrall. She is desperate for a way out of this situation, and it is up to you to offer her one

Level: 7 (XP 1,500).

Complexity: 5 (12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Intimidate, special.

Bluff (DC 16): A character falsely convinces Jelia that harsh consequences will result unless she turns from her course, and Jelia believes those lies.

Diplomacy (DC 16): A character plays on Jelia's loyalties or honestly promises some form of protection.

Insight (DC 16): A character knows that Jelia fears something, such as the goblins, and the character offers Jelia aid or otherwise tries to comfort her.

Intimidate (DC 20): A character convinced Jelia that although she might be afraid of something else, she should definitely be afraid of the party or other consequences.

Special: Jelia might reveal more about Valsath and the goblins, as well as this facility, when the PCs succeed on primary skill checks. She does not, however, reveal Calmachia's existence until the PCs have acquired six or more successes.

Secondary Skills: Arcana, History.

Arcana (DC 16): As part of another check, a character can impress Jelia with the character's knowledge of magic or insight into Jelia's profession. Success with this check does not gain a success in the challenge, but it grants a +2 bonus to the character's next primary skill check. Each character can attempt this skill check a maximum of 1 time.

History (DC 16): A character can impress Jelia with knowledge of Breland, of the Citadel, or of House Cannith facilities. Success with this check does not gain a success in the challenge, but it grants a +2 bonus to the character's next primary skill check. Each character can attempt this skill check a maximum of 1 time.

Success: If the characters gain 12 successes, Jelia thinks PCs have the right of it. She describes Calmachia, the forge area, and the controls. She tells the PCs what to expect and agrees to help them with her skills, but she refuses to face the dragon. ("If she kills you, at least I'll live.") Jelia can help shut down the forge in area 15. She then waits for the outcome. If the PCs are successful, she upholds her end of any bargain.

Failure: If the characters earn 3 failures, Jelia doesn't trust the PCs. She decides that best chance is with the hobgoblins and Calmachia and that it is her job to eliminate intruders. She attacks.

Jelias Iron Cobra (C)		Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 250
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 75; Bloodied 37		
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 7; see also <i>slithering shift</i>		
④ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
↻ Poison the Mind (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐☐☐)		
Ranged 10; affects only creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +8 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both); see also <i>guard creature</i> .		
Guard Creature		
Jelias iron cobra can use its <i>poison the mind</i> power against any creature that has attacked Jelia since the end of the iron cobra's last turn, even if the power hasn't recharged and even if the target isn't taking ongoing poison damage.		
Slithering Shift (move; at-will)		
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages —
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 17 (+6)	Dex 15 (+5)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 19 (+7)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 12 (+4)

TACTICS

The homunculi move among the PCs, keeping between the characters and Jelja. Jelja is their guarded creature. The iron cobra uses *poison the mind* to keep determined attackers away from Jelja.

Jelja prefers to attack from a short distance, augmenting her homunculi with *eldritch discharge* or using *staggering notes*. She uses her teleportation powers to keep her distance from the PCs or to position herself behind her homunculi.

The constructs fight until destroyed or until Jelja orders them to stand down. When reduced to 40 hit points or fewer, Jelja can be persuaded to surrender (DC 20 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate). If she surrenders, she might subsequently help the PCs.

2 Forge Drakes (D) Level 7 Skirmisher Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus) XP 300 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 79; **Bloodied** 39

AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 18

Speed 6, fly 4 (clumsy)

⊕ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Shifting Bite** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. The forge drake can shift 1 square before or after the attack.

⊕ **Guard Creature** (immediate reaction, when an enemy attacks a creature guarded by the forge drake; at-will)

The forge drake shifts 2 squares toward or around the triggering creature. If the drake is adjacent to the triggering creature after shifting, it can make a claw attack against that creature.

⊕ **Force Breath** (standard; encounter) ⬥ **Force**

Close blast 3; +10 vs. Reflex; 3d6 + 4 force damage, and target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)

Con 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)

Jelja (J) Level 8 Elite Controller (Leader)

Medium fey humanoid, eladrin XP 700

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 176; **Bloodied** 88

AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 20

Saving Throws +2; +5 against charm effects

Speed 6; see also *construct space* and *fey step*

Action Points 1

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ⬥ **Weapon**

+13 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, and the next creature among Jelja and her allies to hit the target gains a +3 bonus to the damage roll.

⊕ **Eldritch Discharge** (standard; at-will) ⬥ **Force**

Close burst 10; Jelja or one ally (the primary target) gains a +1 bonus to AC until the end of Jelja's next turn. An enemy adjacent to the primary target is attacked: +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 5 force damage, and the enemy is pushed 1 square away from the primary target.

⊕/⊕ **Artificer's Expertise** (standard; at-will)

Jelja makes two basic attacks.

⊕ **Resistive Formula** (minor; encounter) ⬥ **Arcane, Healing**

Close burst 5; allies in burst gain +1 to AC and can end this bonus as a free action to gain 10 temporary hit points.

⊕ **Staggering Notes** (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ⬥ **Force**

Close blast 5; targets enemies; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 force damage, and Jelja slides the target 2 squares. Jelja also slides the target 2 squares each time an attack hits the target (save ends).

Construct Space (immediate interrupt, when hit by an attack; encounter) ⬥ **Teleportation**

Jelja switches spaces with a construct or a living construct within 5 squares. That creature becomes the attack's target.

Fey Step (move; recharges when first bloodied) ⬥

Teleportation

Jelja teleports 5 squares.

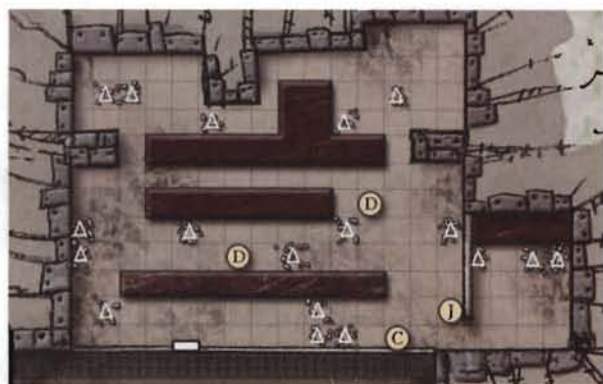
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin

Skills Arcana +16, History +16, Thievery +12

Str 10 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+6)

Con 16 (+7) **Int** 20 (+9) **Cha** 18 (+8)

Equipment leather armor, longsword, rod, key to secret trapdoor in area 6



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cabinets: Cabinets stretch to the ceiling like walls.

Junk: The junk is difficult terrain.

Treasure: One parcel. If Jelja has this parcel, she gives it to PCs who succeed on the skill challenge.

17. WYRM FORGE

Encounter Level 10 (2,600 XP) or 9 (2,000)

SETUP

Calmachia (C)
Calmachia's Forge

Calmachia dwells here. She has not yet left the forge complex; indeed, she hasn't left this chamber, because she sees no reason to do so. She works on the forge, hoping to create children superior to the forge drakes she has brought into being.

If the forge is operational, read:

Heat and loud sound pour through the open door. Beyond is a vast arcane workshop that appears to be performing all its functions by itself—gears whirl, levers move up and down, and lightning arcs between rods. Across from the door, an enormous glass hatch reveals red fire on the other side.

If the forge is shut down, read:

Beyond the door is a vast arcane workshop that is dead except for an ambient red light. Gears are still, levers are frozen between positions, and rods that might conduct energy stand quiet and dark. Across from the door, an enormous glass hatch reveals a blackened hearth where no fire lives.

If the forge is working, Calmachia is engrossed in her plans and might not notice the PCs immediately. If the PCs shut down the forge, Calmachia hides behind the forge, preparing an ambush. She is out of line of sight.

When the PCs see Calmachia, read:

As supple as a serpent, a dragon emerges from near the forge. It has flesh made of wood strands, stone plates, and metal scales. Its teeth are like steel daggers, and its eyes flash with blue light. A hint of lightning dances on its steely scales.

"Who enters my forge unbidden?" says the dragon in a voice that vibrates your innards and tickles your mind.

TALKING TO CALMACHIA

When Calmachia sees the PCs, she is taken aback. She doesn't attack immediately, but she is hostile and suspicious. A successful DC 20 Diplomacy check can convince her to parley beyond an initial exchange. Otherwise, the draconic construct attacks. When Calmachia chooses not to answer a query, she suggests the PCs are unworthy of the answer or are merely biding their time.

◆ **What are you? (DC 14 Diplomacy):** "I am Calmachia. I am the forge. The forge is me. But your question is more mundane than this profound truth. I am a construct with sentience beyond your comprehension."

Arcana or Nature (DC 15): This dragon has traits like those of a warforged. It is a living construct. A PC can intuit more by using Monster Knowledge checks (*Player's Handbook*, page 180).

◆ **What are you doing here? (DC 19 Diplomacy):** "I am creating my children. When I perfect the process, I will create others like me, and I will be their queen. I already rule the others here, whom you have likely slain."

Insight (DC 15): Calmachia's wrath rises at this point. She attacks unless the PCs sense this and appease her with a successful DC 21 Bluff, Diplomacy, or Intimidate check.

◆ **What about the others? (DC 14 Diplomacy):** "Yes, the eladrin and the goblins. They make excellent servants."

◆ **What are your plans? (DC 21 Diplomacy):** "I shall go into Darguun to enlist the Bladebearers, and I shall make them great. With others like me, I shall rule over these goblins. Then, according to their history, we shall reforge the Dhakaani Empire from this shattered land."

Bluff or Diplomacy (DC 23): The PCs can convince Calmachia that they have no problem with her plans. She agrees to let them leave if they agree to do so peacefully. Jelia's release can be part of the bargain.

Calmachia's Forge Level 7 Elite Warper
Trap XP 600

The mechanisms around the forge appear to move with a life of their own. Something takes form in the forge's heart.

Trap: The forge reacts to Calmachia's aggression by creating minions to aid the draconic construct.

Initiative +7

Trigger

When you roll initiative for Calmachia, you also roll initiative for the forge.

Attack

Standard Action

Create Minion

At the start of each of the forge's turns, two incomplete forge drakes emerge from the front of the forge and can act immediately. The minions act subsequently on the forge's initiative count.

Countermeasures

- ◆ As a standard action, a character adjacent to the controls can make a DC 20 Arcana check to reset the controls of the forge, allowing another character to retry the skill challenge to shut down the forge (area 15).
- ◆ A character can shut down the forge in its control room (area 15).
- ◆ Destroying Calmachia deactivates the forge.

Calmachia (C) **Level 9 Solo Controller**

Large natural dragon (living construct) XP 2,000

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision**HP** 400; **Bloodied** 200**AC** 23; **Fortitude** 23, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 21**Saving Throws** +5 (+7 against ongoing damage)**Speed** 6, fly 8 (hover)**Action Points** 2Ⓛ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2, +15 vs. AC; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target is grabbed.

Ⓛ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d10 + 6 damage, and Calmachia slides the target 2 squares.

Ⓡ **Double Attack** (standard; at-will)

Calmachia makes two claw attacks.

Ⓡ **Fling** (minor; at-will)Targets a creature Calmachia has grabbed; +13 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is pushed 6 squares and knocked prone. **Miss:** The target is pushed 2 squares.Ⓡ **Arcing Backlash** (immediate reaction, when hit by an attack; at-will) Ⓡ **Lightning**

Close burst 10; targets only the attacker; +13 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 5 lightning damage, and the enemy is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

Ⓡ **Breath Weapon** (standard; recharge Ⓛ Ⓛ Ⓛ) Ⓡ **Force**

Close blast 5; +13 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 5 force damage, and the target is slowed (save ends) and pushed 3 squares.

Ⓡ **Bloodied Breath** (free, when first bloodied; encounter) Ⓡ **Force**

Calmachia's breath weapon recharges, and she uses it.

Ⓡ **Commanding Voice** (standard; encounter) Ⓡ **Charm**Close burst 3; targets enemies; +11 vs. Will; the target is dominated until the end of Calmachia's next turn. **Miss:** The target is dazed until the end of Calmachia's next turn.**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common, Draconic**Skills** Arcana +13, Intimidate +14**Str** 23 (+10) **Dex** 10 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+5)**Con** 20 (+9) **Int** 18 (+8) **Cha** 20 (+9)**Incomplete Forge Drake** **Level 7 Minion Skirmisher**

Medium natural animate (construct) XP –

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4**HP** 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.**AC** 22; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 17**Speed** 6Ⓛ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs. AC; 5 damage, and the incomplete forge drake shifts 1 square.

Ⓡ **Guarding Flash** (immediate interrupt, when an ally within 5 squares is the target of an attack that could instead target the incomplete forge drake; encounter)

Targets the creature making the attack; +10 vs. Will; the target must instead make its attack against the incomplete forge drake or include the forge drake in the area of the attack.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Str** 16 (+6) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 14 (+5)**Con** 15 (+5) **Int** 4 (+0) **Cha** 4 (+0)**TACTICS**

Calmachia opens with *commanding voice*, following up immediately with an action point and her *breath weapon*. She bites to grab and *fling* those who deal her significant damage in melee, but only when she cannot use her breath weapon for a similar but more widespread attack. Although she is aggressive with melee attacks, she tries to keep a position near a wall or the forge where it is impossible for PCs to flank her. Calmachia has Haestus's arrogance, and she does not surrender to mortals such as the PCs.

If incomplete forge drakes are emerging from the forge, they rush into melee to protect their "mother." Each one employs *guarding flash* to sacrifice itself for Calmachia's benefit as soon as is necessary.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: If the forge is operational, the area is in bright light. If the forge is shut down, the area is in dim light.

Machinery: These chambers are filled with arcane machinery related to the working of the forge. It is blocking terrain.

The Forge: The forge is behind magically reinforced glass. Behind the glass is only magic fire, and the glass opens only long enough to release its incomplete forge drakes.

Treasure: Two parcels. Part of Calmachia or the creation forge might serve as a magic item, especially an attachable warforged component.

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs can force Calmachia to surrender by reducing her to 50 hit points or fewer and succeeding on a DC 23 Intimidate check. At the end of this encounter, the adventure is over—see "Conclusion" on page 136.



APPENDIX: NEW MONSTERS

FORGEWRAITH

A FORGEWRAITH IS AN UNDEAD HUMANOID whose spirit was extinguished and rekindled in the fires of a furnace or a forge. Inside it burns a spectral fire and, often, a hatred for the living.

Forgewraith		Level 8 Elite Controller	
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 700	
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +9; darkvision		
HP 123; Bloodied 61; see also <i>bloodied wrath</i>			
AC 20; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 21			
Immune disease, nonmagical fire, poison; Resist 5 fire, insubstantial; Vulnerable 5 radiant			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing			
Action Points 1			
⊕ Pain Hammer (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic +12 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, and the forgewraith pushes the target 2 squares and knocks it prone.			
⊗ Soulburn (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic Ranged 10; +12 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 5 fire and necrotic damage, the forgewraith slides the target 2 squares, and the target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the forgewraith's next turn.			
⚡/⚡ Double Attack (standard; at-will) The forgewraith makes two basic attacks.			
⚡ Forge Strike (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Fire Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 fire damage, ongoing 10 fire damage (save ends), and the forgewraith knocks the target prone. Each time a target takes ongoing damage from this attack, the forgewraith gains 5 temporary hit points.			
⚡ Forge's Wrath (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation Close burst 2; +11 vs. Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and if the target leaves its space, it takes 2d6 + 5 psychic damage (save ends). While the target remains in its space, all other creatures have concealment against the target. <i>Miss</i> : Half damage. <i>Effect</i> : The forgewraith can teleport to any square in the area of effect.			
⚡ Bloodied Wrath (when first bloodied; encounter) ♦ Illusion, Psychic, Teleportation <i>Forge's wrath</i> recharges, and the forgewraith uses it.			
Alignment Evil		Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Arcana +13, Intimidate +14, Stealth +10			
Str 10 (+4)	Dex 12 (+5)	Wis 10 (+4)	
Con 16 (+7)	Int 18 (+8)	Cha 20 (+9)	

Forge Wisp Wraith		Level 7 Minion Brute	
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 75	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3		
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.			
AC 19; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 19			
Immune disease, fire, necrotic, poison; Resist insubstantial			
Speed fly 6 (hover), phasing			
⊕ Kindling Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire, Necrotic +8 vs. Fortitude; 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).			
⚡ Explosive End (when the wisp drops to 0 hit points) ♦ Fire Close burst 1; +7 vs. Reflex; ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).			
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages --	
Skills Stealth +9			
Str 4 (+0)	Dex 13 (+4)	Wis 10 (+3)	
Con 17 (+6)	Int 4 (+0)	Cha 15 (+5)	

FORGEWRAITH LORE

History DC 15: Forgewraiths are born in the fires that feed arcane industry. Although these creatures are not common, numerous individuals are known to inhabit the lava furnaces and abandoned forges below Sharn. Most of these are crazed, soulless creatures that exist only to torment the living.

Religion DC 15: Most forgewraiths form when numerous humanoids die in a fiery disaster on a developed site. The souls pass on, but the pain and fire mix with unleashed magic to form a humanoid spirit of monstrous hate. Forge wisp wraiths are individual spirits that failed to join together to form a forgewraith.

Although most forgewraiths are amalgams of several spirits instead of a single sentient and souled undead, some are more like a ghost or a specter. Such forgewraiths retain a soul and a personality—frequently that of a person who was evil in life. They speak languages they knew in life, and they might retain higher goals.

FORGEWRAITH TACTICS

Forgewraiths like to see their enemies consumed in fire and pain. A forgewraith attacks while hidden, emerging among its foes to let loose with *forge's wrath*. It then employs basic attacks, perhaps with an action point, to give itself some space to use *forge strike* without danger of opportunity attacks. Even if it might provoke an opportunity attack, the forgewraith is content to rely on its insubstantial nature to mitigate damage from most attacks until it is bloodied.

AUTHOR BIOS

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SEAN MOLLEY has contributed design, development, and editing to a variety of d20 and non-d20 RPG print products since 2003, including the *Arcanis* and *Witch Hunter* settings from Paradigm Concepts. Sean currently serves as a Global Administrator for the *Living Forgotten Realms* shared-world campaign, which is part of the D&D Organized Play program. When he isn't sneaking off to write material for role-playing games, Sean works as a technology executive, building and analyzing large-scale databases for the healthcare industry. Sean lives in Atlanta, Georgia, with his very understanding wife (who fortunately is also a gamer). "Menace of the Icy Spire" was his first, but hopefully not last, appearance in *Dungeon* magazine.

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