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# THE EBON MIRROR

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 8TH TO 10TH LEVEL

BY KEITH BAKER



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# PENUMBRA

# THE EBON MIRROR

AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 8TH TO 10TH LEVEL

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BY KEITH BAKER



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*AUTHOR'S DEDICATION: To my mother for teaching me to dream, and my wife for helping to make my dreams reality.*

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# INTO THE EBON MIRROR

*Once there was a half-orc woman named Charra Lyn who rose above her humble beginnings to become a sorceress of great power and knowledge. But despite her vast power, she could not overcome her greatest enemy — herself. She believed that her soul had been tainted by the touch of her orcish father, and that this stain was preventing her from gaining access to her true mystical potential. And so she buried herself in the study of reality, of transmutation and wishes. She started to experiment with entirely new branches of magic, creating pocket universes — mirrors of the prime world, where she could experiment and twist reality without danger to others. Finally, she attempted to cast the orcish side of her spirit into one of her mirrors.*

*But as so often happens, something went wrong. Perhaps her calculations were off by a fraction, or she was missing a key component. Whatever the fault, it was compounded by the fact that the sorceress was mistaken about her problem to begin with. It was the human side of her soul that was holding her back, consumed as it was by bigotry and hatred; her orcish spirit was the better part of her. As it was, both sides were trapped within a magical mirror, in a universe shaped by her twisted soul.*

---

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

In *The Ebon Mirror*, the characters are hired by an elven order called the Crucible of Osai that seeks out and destroys cursed artifacts. The party is asked to deliver a shipment of malignant relics to its leader, the Seer Osai-en-La, in an isolated elvish village. On the way the party finds the wreckage of the sorceress Charra Lyn's laboratory, and unbeknownst to the characters, they are drawn into a mirror world. As they continue on their mission, they will find that the rules of reality have changed. The laws of reason and magic have been twisted by the mind of the mad sorceress; old allies are now enemies, and reliable spells

and weapons are dangerously altered. The characters must find a path through the chaos before it destroys them.

It will take between eight to twelve hours to complete the story. The adventure can be easily broken into two sessions by stopping at the end of Chapter Three and saving Chapters Four through Six for a second session.

The intent of the module is to force the Player Characters (PCs) to come up with new solutions to traditional situations, as reliable spells and artifacts will not function in the expected manner within the world of the mirror. The adventure contains a combination of thought puzzles, role-playing challenges, and combat-oriented encounters, including an encounter in which the PCs must fight duplicates of themselves. This adventure could also be used as a resource for additional trips into mirror realities.

## CUSTOMIZATION AND PREPARATION

This scenario is designed to fit into almost any campaign world. The one center of civilization that is mentioned — the hamlet of Shareth-en-La — is an out-of-the-way location, and if no one has ever heard of it before, that's not surprising.

The most interesting part of *The Ebon Mirror* is the way in which it twists the PCs' usually reliable items and abilities, requiring the party to come up with new strategies. However, this requires a considerable amount of preparation on the part of the GM. Before running the first session of the game, do the following things:

- Get a copy of the character sheet for each character. This will make the following tasks easier to accomplish, and will be necessary when the players encounter their mirror duplicates in Chapter Five.
- For each PC, review the magical items that character possesses and determine how these will work in the mirror world. See Appendix



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Two for guidelines on converting magical objects.

- If the character is a sorcerer or bard, repeat this process for the character's spells, again referring to Appendix Two. Such characters have a limited selection of spells, but are better able to experiment and find ones that work effectively behind the mirror. If the character is a wizard, skim down his list of available spells and familiarize yourself with their effects as best you can. You don't know what spells a PC will choose to memorize, and it is best if you can have an effect ready on a moment's notice, instead of having to pause the action while you come up with the result.
- If the character is a cleric, consult Appendix Two to determine what her modified spheres will be in the mirror world. For clerics or paladins, pause to consider the nature of the character's patron god in the mirror world. How will humans or orcs refer to the god? What sort of spells will the god force upon the character? Compared to the unpredictable nature of arcane



## Scaling the Adventure

*The Ebon Mirror* is designed for a group of four to six characters, ranging between 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> level. It can be adjusted for groups of higher or lower level if necessary, but it would be unwise to try to run it with characters below 4<sup>th</sup> or above 12<sup>th</sup> level. The two most challenging encounters are self-balancing; the first involves the party fighting their own mirror images, while the second is a thought puzzle. The other major encounters can be adjusted as follows:

### “THE RAIDERS STRIKE!” (page 30)

*4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Level* — 2 mirror elves, 2 mirror blink dogs

*6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 mirror halfling, 2 mirror elves, 2 mirror blink dogs

*11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Level* — 2 mirror halflings, 6 mirror elves, 6 mirror blink dogs

### “DEAD MEN DANCING” (page 36)

*4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 sacred ghoul, 2 sacred skeletons

*6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Level* — 2 sacred ghouls, 4 sacred skeletons

*11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Level* — 5 sacred ghouls, 12 sacred skeletons, 1 sacred wraith

### “A CHALLENGE AT THE GATES” (page 45)

*4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 sacred ghoul, 2 sacred skeletons

*6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 sacred ghoul, 3 sacred skeletons, 1 sacred wraith

*11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Level* — 4 sacred ghouls, 8 sacred skeletons, 2 sacred wraiths

### “THE WARBAND” (page 60)

*4<sup>th</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 mirror dwarf, 1 mirror elf, 2 mirror blink dogs (no elemental)

*6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 mirror dwarf, 1 mirror blink dog, 1 large fire elemental

*11<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> Level* — 1 mirror dwarf, 4 mirror elves, 5 mirror blink dogs, 3 large fire elementals

### “A TRAITOR REVEALED” (page 52)

This encounter may also be too dangerous for a low-level group. You can either remove this encounter (allowing the party to reach the Seer Osai peacefully), lower the spy Jeja’s level, or use the fact that Jeja believes the PCs to be her allies to give them a strong initial advantage.

• • •

The most important thing to consider when choosing to run this adventure for a group of lower- or higher-level characters is magic. One of the greatest challenges in *The Ebon Mirror* is learning the rules of magic within the mirror world. A low-level group may not have enough spells or magic items to fully experience this, and a lack of spell slots will limit casters’ ability to experiment and find spells that work to their advantage. On the other hand, a high-level group will mean more work for you, as they will have access to more magic items and more spells that you will need to convert.

magic, the challenge for a divine spellcaster is the fact that her god may give her spells she is not used to using. Come up with the list of spells the PC will receive as a result of prayer in the mirror world ahead of time; this will allow you to consider how you want to alter the character’s abilities.

- Druids and rangers are like wizards. Since you won’t control the spells they can select, think about the spells that they prefer to use and how these will be altered.
- It will also help to make notes about the characters’ altered combat abilities behind the mirror.

First, make a note of the normal armor class of each character. Then write down each character’s initial armor class behind the mirror, where all enchanted armor or equipment has its magical bonuses reversed. So a character with *bracers of armor* +4, a Dexterity bonus of +2, and a *large steel shield* +2 (which also has a +2 mundane armor bonus) normally gets a total AC of 20; the mirror world would change the enhancement bonus of the bracers to -4, and the shield to a -2 penalty, resulting in a modified AC of 8. Next, note the character’s best possible armor class in the mirror world — the AC he is likely to



have once he figures out that good has become bad. In the example given above, the PC will probably remove shield and bracers and end up with a Dexterity-based AC of 12. However, a character with a suit of *full plate* +2 (which gives a +8 mundane armor bonus) may choose to keep wearing the now-cursed armor, as it still gives her a net bonus of +6 to her AC.

- Similarly, make notes of any magical modifiers to saving throws, damage, or attack rolls based on magic items.

Especially in initial combats behind the mirror, you don't want to let the party in on the fact that their positives have become negatives. If players are used to adding in their own bonuses and simply telling you "I rolled a 33," you will need to know what they *think* they are adding and what the actual bonuses are.

For example, if a PC is using a +2 *short-sword* you will need to subtract a total of four points from the results that the player reports to you; the sword is now -2, and you need to cancel out the 2 points he has added as well as applying this negative.

Once the party has discovered this reversal of magical polarity, feel free to make the players do the work themselves — but initially, it helps if the PCs suddenly find that their weapons are not performing as well as they should without knowing precisely why.

## GOOD VS. EVIL

*The Ebon Mirror* is intended for use with a good or neutral party. Evil characters can always be lured by the promise of a reward or forced to go on the mission using the *stone of vengeance* (see page 13) but there are points in the story where evil-aligned PCs may seem problematic. Here are a few ways to handle these situations:

- Jeseth the vampire and the sacred ghouls can *detect evil*. Fortunately, the inhabitants of the mirror cannot sense the true alignment of characters from beyond the mirror. All PCs are considered to have *undetectable alignment* in effect while within the mirror. Note that this also means that PCs using *detect evil/good* spells will not be able to detect the alignment of other members of the party.

- One might assume that if the party members are evil, that their counterparts in the mirror world (encountered in Chapter Five) should be good. However, the evil nature of the humans and elves and their gods is not a simple reversal of the natural order. Instead, it is a representation of the hatred that burns within Charra Lyn's human soul. As a result, the mirror versions of the PCs should be even *more* evil than they are, though this might require them to worship different gods than their prime counterparts (e.g. the deities ven-

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## CHAPTER ONE: INTO THE EBON MIRROR

erated by the dopplegangers of evil PCs would be ones who are normally good in the prime world).

### THE STORY BEGINS

*Krogar adjusted his pillow and let his thoughts begin to drift. Tomorrow, they would set out for this little village with their strange cargo in tow. Hardly the most exciting quest he'd ever been on — but work was work.*

*As he began to doze off, he heard a voice coming from the corner of the room — a deep dwarven voice, with a slight metallic echo as if coming from within a great helm. Blinking, he looked around. The voice was coming from inside the wooden trunk the elf had given to them!*

*“Hey, you out there, open up already. You sound like a tough guy ... you and me, we could cause some serious damage. Come on, whaddy say?”*

This initial encounter sets the party on the road to the hamlet of Shareth-en-La, and gives the characters a chance to make (faulty) assumptions about what lies ahead. It also provides the party with a supply of cursed items — which will prove useful in the future — and introduces the Crucible of Osai.

The story opens with the party relaxing between challenges at a small inn, as night begins to fall. They may be celebrating a recent victory, finishing a birthday party, meeting a few friends for a meal, or simply enjoying the dark ale and brown bread that the region is famous for. If the party typically operates out of a particular city, this can be set there; otherwise, it can occur in a small town they are passing through while traveling.

### WHISPERS AND QUESTIONS

The members of the party are passing time in the common room of the inn. Evening is turning to night, and the crowd is slowly beginning to thin out. Any NPCs that the characters may have been dining with have finally left for the evening, and the characters may be preparing to turn in for the night. But suddenly there is a slight breeze, and the PCs hear a voice — quiet but clear, as if whispering in their ears. A soft female voice says “Come upstairs as quickly as possible. Do not call undue attention to yourselves.” If any

of the PCs are elvish or half-elvish, the message will be in the elven tongue, but will include “Bring your comrades-in-arms” so that the characters don’t think that the message is an exclusive invitation.

This message comes from Merita Aolias, an agent of the Crucible of Osai (see page 10 for information on the Crucible). She has been traveling through the region collecting flawed artifacts for future destruction. But now she has found herself in a bind. She has a lead on an object the Crucible has been seeking for decades — but her collection case is full, and it will prove a hindrance to her during the tasks that lie ahead. So she is searching for someone to take her trunk to Shareth-en-La, so that the cursed items it contains can be destroyed.

Merita is delivering a message to the party using the *whispering wind* spell. Any character who possesses the spell will instantly recognize it for what it is. Otherwise, a character can make a Spellcraft check (DC 17) to identify the magic being used.

On the second floor, an elven woman is standing in a doorway. Her long gray cloak blends in with the walls, and a deep hood and shadows conceal half her face. When she sees the characters, she steps silently into her room, gesturing for them to follow her.

The PCs may attempt to scout out the second floor of the inn using scrying magic or stealth before they go upstairs. Scrying spells will reveal Merita standing in the door of her room as described below, waiting for the characters to arrive.

A character who uses Hide or Move Silently to attempt to approach unseen should engage in an opposed skill check against Merita’s Spot and Listen skills, both of which are at +9. If Merita notices a stealthy character, she will gesture for him to come inside, just as if he had not been sneaking.

Merita will wait to speak until the PCs have entered the room; if questioned, she will raise a hand in a request for silence. She will indicate through gestures that they should all come into





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the room, but if some characters wish to stay outside, she will eventually close the door. She then murmurs quietly and casts a pinch of gold dust in the direction of the door.

Any observer can make a Spellcraft roll (DC 17) to determine that she has just cast *arcane lock* on the door.

At this point, characters should also make Search checks. Any character that makes a check against a DC of 15 will notice Merita's unusual necklace; a character who makes the check by 10 or more and who speaks elvish should be able to read the inscription — "Let my death have meaning" — that surrounds the central stone (see page 13 for full details on this object, the *stone of vengeance*). A character who rolls a total of 20 or better will also notice a large trunk in a corner of the room; this appears to be the woman's only possession aside from what she is wearing, and it has been covered with a blanket.

Once the door has been sealed, Merita will turn to face the party, pulling back the hood of her cloak. She is an elven woman, about one hundred and fifty years in age and tall for her race, almost 5'6" in height. Old burns mar the right half of her otherwise lovely face, and her right eye is milky white. Her dark hair is bound in a tight bun. She trains her good eye on the dominant character and softly says, "I thank you for coming. I have business to discuss, and I wish to be seen by as few people as possible. I have heard that you are capable and skilled individuals. If you do not wish to undertake the task I offer, I will understand — but I must ask for your pledge of silence on the matter to be discussed, ere we go any further."

Merita is firm on this point, and will not speak further until the PCs have agreed to keep her secrets. If necessary, she will cast *deafness* on members of the party who will not agree to a vow of silence, so that they cannot hear the discussion that follows.

A character who wishes to can use Bluff or Diplomacy to try to convince Merita to continue without the vow; the character should engage in an opposed skill check against Merita's Sense Motive skill total of +10.

A Sense Motive check against DC 20 will give a character the knowledge that Merita means no harm, and simply takes security quite seriously.

*Detect evil* will confirm that Merita is not malevolent in nature. The spell will detect an extremely faint aura of evil coming from the covered trunk in the corner of the room.

*Detect magic* will reveal the magic items on Merita's person (see insert on page 12). It will turn up a strange blur if it is directed against the trunk — if the character couldn't see the trunk, he probably wouldn't even notice it.

Once the PCs have agreed to Merita's request for confidentiality, she says "I do have a few questions I would ask, just to insure that you are the right people for this task." Speaking in a cold, quiet voice she asks the following questions:

- What motivates you? Money? Power? Glory?
- Do you have any qualms about theft?
- What would be required for you to kill a man in cold blood?
- How many people have you killed before? Do you know the names of your victims?

A Sense Motive check against DC 20 will give the idea that Merita is putting on an act — that she is presenting herself as cold and dangerous because she wants to see how the party will respond. If the character makes the check by 5 or more points, they will get the sense that Merita hopes that they will respond in a negative manner to her questions — she is treating them as brigands in the hopes that they will be offended by the treatment.

Merita herself will be using Sense Motive on the characters; a PC who wishes to lie to her should make an opposed check against her Sense Motive skill total of +10.

As noted above, Merita will be disappointed if the characters come across as amoral and ruthless. If they are offended by the questions, ask to leave, or simply answer in a positive manner, she will apologize for the deception. "I have learned what I needed to know. Now, the task at hand is actually quite simple ..."



But she doesn't get to finish the sentence. The next moment, the party is under attack.

## SILENT KNIVES

Merita knows nothing of Charra Lyn, but the elf has already run afoul of the sorceress. Charra's agents have been combing the countryside in search of mystical artifacts that could aid her in her experiments, and Merita happens to have such an object in her trunk — a magical mirror (see page 18). A trio of thugs has been homing in on the artifact — and now they have arrived. Merita had actually noticed the pursuit before coming to the inn, so this does not surprise her; in fact, she wanted to see how the PCs would deal with a little opposition.

There are three intruders. If any of the PCs remained in the hallways outside of Merita's room, they will be attacked first; otherwise the attackers throw open the door and leap into the room.

The intruders use a silent *knock* spell to bypass Merita's *arcane lock*.

A character who makes a Listen check against a DC of 18 will hear faint

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sounds of movement — and possibly the rustle of chainmail — outside the door, just before it opens.

The first figure through the door is a massive half-orc. He wears a chain shirt and wields a greataxe, and spittle flies from his mouth as he charges the nearest PC. He is followed by a smaller, leaner female half-orc wielding two blades. A young human dressed in simple black clothes stands in the hallway, watching the carnage unfold. (See stats on pages 12-15.)

In the beginning of this encounter Merita will attempt to stand back and stay out of the fight; she wants to see how the PCs handle themselves. If a PC is close to death or if the fight is almost over, she will assist by using *dispel magic*, *magic missile*, or *charm person*.

It is possible that the characters will believe that Merita is in league with the attackers and turn on her — or that the PCs are simply not very nice and will attack her on general principle. If she is rendered unconscious or killed, she will activate her *stone of vengeance*. Mystical energy will pour from the black opal at her neck, and she will speak in a sonorous voice to the character who struck the final blow:

*With my death, you shall take up my mission.*

*Return all of my possessions and the contents of my trunk to the Seer Osai in the hamlet of Shareth-en-La.*

*Make no delays; leave immediately.*

She then falls dead as the victim of the curse feels the coercive magic clutch at his mind (see insert on page 13).

If Merita survives the attack, she will thank the party profusely. She will then help bind any of the assassins who are still alive.

If the attackers are taken alive, players may wish to question them. An Intimidation check of 23 or better will get Orestes to talk; the half-orcs are more stubborn and will require a check of 25. Orestes can also be convinced to sell out; this will require at least 200 gp and a Diplomacy roll of 20 or better.

In any of these cases, they will reveal that they work for “the sorceress Charra Lyn,” and that they were sent to retrieve a magical mirror. They know nothing about the mirror and little about Charra; they receive instructions through Orestes’ hand mirror, and they are well paid for their work. For her part, Merita isn’t particularly concerned with finding out who these people are or why they were chasing her; she is used to being constantly pursued by one group or another and has gotten rather blasé about it. This is all exactly as it seems. Charra has a number of teams like this one searching for the mirrors she needs for her research; however, they are scattered far and wide, and the party will not actually encounter other agents of the sorceress in the adventure.

After the PCs are finished questioning the assassins, or if they don’t survive the battle, Merita will turn to the leader of the party and incline her head gravely.

“I thank you, my friends. I have no doubt that these ruffians were sent to interfere with the tasks that lie ahead of me — clearly, time is even more precious than I had thought. I apologize if I have misled you; I needed to learn all that I could about your nature and your talents. I see now that you are both bold and capable, and I will entrust you with my name and the nature of my mission. I am Merita Aolias, Hand of the Crucible of Osai.”

At this point Merita will give a brief overview of the Crucible and its goals, as outlined below:

The Crucible was founded by the Seer Osai-en-La, an elven sage with considerable charisma and a few unorthodox opinions about the nature of magic. Osai believes that there is a balance of magic and matter, and that each magic item that is created affects this balance — eventually a saturation point will be reached, and the flow of magic into matter will cease. At the same time, he believes that there are dark times in the future that will only be overcome with the proper magical tools. To combat this he formed the Crucible. The core of the Crucible is a group of skilled elvish artisans — the mystics who will create the artifacts that may save the future. The other members of the Crucible are wizard-rogues and wizard-rangers; these individuals comb the land in search of flawed artifacts — and their creators — and destroy them, in order to preserve the flow of magic for the future.

## CHAPTER ONE: INTO THE EBON MIRROR

A character with Knowledge (religion) can make a skill check (DC 18) to obtain information about the Crucible; use the paragraph above as a guideline, and decide how much information you wish to give out based on the degree of success. Use of *Legend Lore* or Bardic Knowledge (DC 20) will also reveal this information. An elvish character will receive a +5 bonus to a Knowledge skill or Bardic Knowledge check. Merita shares this information with the party freely, but PCs may appreciate being able to confirm it for themselves.

Merita then explains her present situation — she is on the trail of a vile gem (a job best suited to a single person with her specialized skills), and she needs someone to take her trunk of cursed artifacts to Shareth-en-La, so that they might be destroyed.

A character with Knowledge (geography) can make a skill check (DC 15) to recall the following information about Shareth-en-La. Any local elf can make an Int check (DC 10) to obtain the same information.

Shareth-en-La is a small enclave of elven craftsmen and artisans founded about 50 years ago. It is extremely isolated, separated from any other major habitation by two to three days of travel, but is known as a source of magical artifacts. Shareth is far off the beaten path, but the area is not known to be particularly dangerous — it's just far away. Occasionally bands of humanoids will raid the isolated farms, but when it comes down to it there isn't much worth raiding. (Alter this information as required to fit the campaign setting; the most important thing is that Shareth is far from any large city and that reaching the hamlet will require at least three days travel.)

Merita can offer 200 platinum coins to cover travel expenses, and promises that the party will receive a magic item of considerable power from the Seer Osai if they complete the mission, in addition to the gratitude of the Crucible. She is willing to bargain; the Crucible has access to a small treasury. Scale the ultimate reward based on the power level of the campaign; if you want, the Seer could hand out magic items like candy, or Merita could stand firm and drive a hard bargain.

Anyone who makes a Sense Motive check against a DC of 20 will get the sense that Merita is both sincere and desperate. A result of 25 or better will allow the character to get a sense of just how far he can push Merita while bargaining. Merita only has 220 pp on her, but if it came to it, she could offer an additional 280 pp on top of that from the treasury of the Crucible — of course, this is not a particularly dangerous job, and the party will have to make a good case for needing more money.

Bluffing Merita — should one wish to try this as a bargaining tactic — should be resolved by an opposed skill check against her Sense Motive skill total of +10. For every point the character beats her by, Merita will raise the reward by 20 pp, up to a total maximum of 500 pp (combining the initial payment and payment on delivery). A character who at least matches her roll can also bargain in regards to the magical item that is the primary reward; for example, a group may prefer a few minor items to one more powerful item, and Merita is flexible on this point (again, it's mainly up to you as what you feel like giving to the party).

Undoubtedly, the party will want to know more about the dangers involved. What would they be transporting? Will they have to deal with more attacks like the one they just survived? In answer, Merita will remove the cover from the object sitting in the corner of the room. This is revealed to be a large wooden trunk, equipped with wheels for ease of movement. This trunk is a fascinating thing; its surface is covered with glyphs and mystic sigils, and it has a large handle carved in the shape of a phoenix.

If a character takes a little time to examine the trunk, a Spellcraft roll (DC 18) will reveal that while the trunk is not actively magical; the runes and sigils are designed to passively shield the trunk and its contents from magical attack or *scrying*.

If the trunk is moved, a Listen roll (DC 15) will catch the sound of metal shifting against metal, including a rustle like chainmail.

As mentioned before, *detect magic* will turn up a strange blur if it is directed against the trunk.



## Merita Aolias, Hand of the Crucible

### 5<sup>th</sup>-Level Elven Rogue/7<sup>th</sup>-Level Diviner

CR 12; SZ M (humanoid); HD 5d6 + 7d4 – 12; hp 30; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +1 Dodge, +5 *bracers of armor*); Atk melee +9 (1d6+3/crit 19-20/x2, +2 *short sword*); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Elven Traits, Evasion, Sneak Attack +2d6, Uncanny Dodge; AL NG; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 8, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 14

**Skills:** Bluff +8, Climb +5, Concentration +9, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +12, Gather Information +10, Hide +7 (+17), Innuendo +8; Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (famous wizards) +10, Knowledge (geography) +10, Knowledge (magic items) +10, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +10, Pick Pocket +10, Read Lips +8, Scry +12, Search +14, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +14, Spot +9, Use Magic Device +10

**Feats:** Dodge (+1 AC vs. single opponent), Improved Initiative (+4 Init), Silent Spell (May remove verbal component; spell requires +1 level spell slot), Spell Focus (Enchantment; +2 DC to Enchantment spell saves), Spell Mastery (Can memorize *identify*, *hold person*, *locate object*, and *scrying* without a spellbook)

**Elven Traits (Ex):** Elves are immune to magic sleep spells and effects, have a +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, have Low-light Vision that lets them see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, or torchlight, and an elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check as though actively looking for it.

**Evasion:** If a Reflex save would result in half damage, it instead results in no damage.

**Sneak Attack:** +2d6 damage when foe is flanked or loses AC bonus.

**Uncanny Dodge:** Gains Dex bonus to AC even while flatfooted.

**Spells:** 4/5+1/4+1/3+1/2+1; DC 14 + spell level, 16 + spell level for enchantments.

0 Level — *arcane mark*, *daze*, *detect magic* x2

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *charm person*, *identify*, *mage armor*, *magic missile* x2

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *arcane lock*, *deafness* x2, *detect thoughts* x2

3<sup>rd</sup> Level — *clairvoyance*, *dispel magic* x2, *fire arrow*

4<sup>th</sup> Level — *dimension door*, *remove curse*, *scrying*

Merita will typically locate her target using *scrying* or *locate object*, acquire it through Stealth or by Bluffing (using *alter self* and *charm person*), then use *nondetection* to conceal the object while she makes her escape. As a diviner, Merita cannot use necromancy spells.

**Possessions:** *Bracers of armor* +5, *cloak of elvenkind*, *stone of vengeance* (see insert), a pair of *gloves of storing*, *rod of absorption*, *short sword* +2, and a purse containing 220 pp. Generally speaking, Merita's purse and the *rod of absorption* will be stored in her gloves. The gloves require the wearer to speak the command phrase 'crucible' in order to use their powers.

Merita is one of the most talented 'hands' (collecting agents) of the Crucible of Osai, a cult that travels across the world collecting and destroying cursed artifacts. Combining skill and magical divination with a mundane knack for gathering information and breaking and entering, Merita has spent the last thirty-two years collecting items for the Crucible.

"This is my collection case," Merita explains. "It is my duty to roam the land in search of dangerous objects and to return them to the Seer for destruction. This case serves both to hold in the malignant energies of the contents, and also to shield the objects from those who would track them. Which brings us to the element of danger. The objects in the trunk are not valuable — they are deadly and dangerous things. But foul objects are often fair in appearance, and many are blinded with greed at the sight of a jewel-encrusted

blade or a fabulous piece of jewelry. If you leave quietly, I do not believe that you will be pursued — but it would good to move quickly. Will you help me?"

Merita is a keen judge of character, and may use spells to confirm the party's intentions. She will not turn over the trunk unless she is convinced that the characters intend to fulfill her mission. If they agree, she will breathe a sigh of relief. She will produce a purse containing 200 platinum coins, directions to Shareth-en-La, and a letter for

## NEW WONDROUS ITEM:

## Stone of Vengeance

This is an amulet that is worn around the neck. It takes the form of a mithral disk surrounding a black opal; engraving around the stone bears the elven phrase “Let my death have meaning.” The *stone of vengeance* allows a dying wearer to channel her energy into a *geas* of great power. It can only be used at the moment of death, and a character that uses a *stone of vengeance* cannot be raised or resurrected. The wearer is held at the moment of death just long enough to cast a *geas* spell at the being that slew her. She may speak up to four sentences to outline the requirements of the quest. The effects are identical to the *geas* spell, save that the victim takes 4d6 damage each day he does not pursue the quest. The victim must make a Fortitude save vs. DC 22 to avoid falling ill if he abandons the quest, and it can only be canceled by *limited wish*, *miracle*, *wish*, or a *remove curse* cast by a character of 19<sup>th</sup> level or higher. A character can also choose to activate a *stone of vengeance* when she is about to fall unconscious — but this will immediately kill the user, with no chance of resurrection. The enchantment of the stone is broken when it is used.

*Caster Level:* 17th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous item, *geas/quest*, either *miracle* or *wish*; *Market Price:* 20,000 gp; *Weight:* —

the Seer, and push it and the trunk towards the characters. “I urge you to travel to Shareth with all possible speed. These objects *must* be destroyed, and as soon as possible. I pray that you will fulfill my trust in this matter.” If the characters drove a hard bargain with Merita and want to know if the details are in the letter, she will say that the PCs should simply tell the Seer the terms of the agreement. “He will know if you are lying,” she says.

Merita will be reluctant to open the trunk — “It is safer for you to have nothing to do with these terrible artifacts” — but if the party insists, she will open the trunk so they can see that she has told them the truth about what is being transported. She will reiterate that these are objects charged with evil magic and strongly encourage the characters not to let their curiosity get the better of them when dealing with these items. With that, she will close the trunk, wish the party well, and then depart.

## Blacktooth

### 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Half-Orc Barbarian

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d12+8; hp 42; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Increased Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (+4 chain shirt, +1 Dex, -2 Rage); Atk melee +10 (1d12+9/crit 20/x3, 2H greataxe); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Fast Movement, Half-Orc Traits, Rage, Uncanny Dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +8\*, Ref +1, Will +2\*; Str 22\*, Dex 12, Con 18\*, Int 8, Wis 9, Cha 6

**Skills:** Listen +6, Move Silently +3, Ride +3, Wilderness Lore +3

**Feats:** Increased Initiative (+4 Init), Power Attack (May reduce chance to hit by up to 4 to add an equal amount to damage)

**Fast Movement:** The barbarian has a speed faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet when wearing no armor, light armor, or medium armor (and not carrying a heavy load).

**Half-Orc Traits (Ex):** Half-Orcs have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

**Rage:** May Rage twice a day for seven rounds each time. While enraged, gains +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 Will save, -2 AC.

**Uncanny Dodge:** Gains Dex bonus to AC even while flatfooted.

The barbarian Blacktooth will Rage just before entering the room; as a result, Rage bonuses have already been added into his statistics. After seven rounds he will lose these bonuses and become fatigued, suffering a -2 penalty to AC, -4 to hit, -5 to damage, and losing 8 hit points. In battle, Blacktooth will attempt to engage the strongest-looking PC.

## THE TRUNK OF CURSES

Whether willingly or due to the magic of Merita’s necklace, the party now has a purpose. Merita has stated that time is of the essence, but it is up to the characters whether they wish to set out in the middle of the night or wait until morning.

Once Merita has departed, there are a few things the party may wish to examine. Merita’s purse contained a letter to the Seer; this letter is sealed with blue wax in the shape of a hand surrounded by a stylized flame.



NEW WONDROUS ITEM:

## Mirror of Sending

A *mirror of sending* allows instant verbal and visual communication over long distances, and is an invaluable aid for a mastermind seeking to coordinate the activities of groups of agents. This artifact takes the form of a large mirror, at least one inch by two inches in size. During the process of creation, it is linked to a number of *mirrors of receiving*, and each receiver is assigned a name. From that point on, the owner of the *mirror of sending* can create a communications link between the central mirror and a receiver by speaking the name of the receiving mirror. The two mirrors then become windows, allowing each character to look through into the other location, and to hear sounds as if present at the location of the other mirror. This communications link remains open until a second command word is spoken.

Physical distance is not a concern for a *mirror of sending*, and a link can even be formed across planes — but an interplanar link may be patchy and difficult to understand (Charra Lyn's *mirror of sending* cannot contact Orestes' *mirror of receiving* while it is in the mirror world).

**Caster Level:** 12<sup>th</sup>; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*, *sending*; **Market Price:** 52,000 gp; **Weight:** 8 lbs.

NEW WONDROUS ITEM:

## Mirror of Receiving

A *mirror of receiving* is linked to a specific *mirror of sending*. In and of itself, it has no power; it can only be activated by the owner of the *mirror of sending*. It can be a mirror of almost any size; a common design is a small, round mirror with a face three inches in diameter.

This mirror has a moderate magical aura in both the universal and divination spheres (it will require *detect magic* or Spellcraft rolls against a DC of 20 to determine this). An *identify* spell will reveal that it is some sort of scrying device, but gives no clues on how to activate its powers.

**Caster Level:** 12<sup>th</sup>; **Prerequisites:** Craft Wondrous Item, *scrying*, *sending*; **Market Price:** 6,000 gp; **Weight:** varies

## Orestes

### 2<sup>nd</sup>-Level Human Rogue/6<sup>th</sup>-Level Sorcerer

CR 8; SZ M (humanoid); HD 2d6 + 6d4; hp 22; Init +7 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +1 Dodge, +4 *mage armor*); Atk melee +3 (1d6–1/crit 19–20/x2, short sword); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Sneak Attack +1d6, Evasion; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 14

**Skills:** Bluff +7, Concentration +6, Disarm Device +7, Disguise +7, Gather Information +7, Hide +6, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +6, Scry +5, Sneak +6, Spellcraft +5

**Feats:** Dodge (+1 AC vs. single opponent), Improved Initiative (+4 Init), Quick Draw (Draws weapon as a free action), Silent Spell (May remove verbal component; spell requires +1 level spell slot)

**Evasion:** If a Reflex save would result in half damage, it instead results in no damage.

**Sneak Attack:** +1d6 damage when foe is flanked or loses AC bonus.

**Spells:** 6/7(6)/6(4)/3(2); DC 12 + spell level.

0 Level — *daze*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sounds*, *light*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *change self*, *charm person*, *mage armor*, *magic missile*

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *knock*, *locate object*

3<sup>rd</sup> Level — *dispel magic*

**Possessions:** Orestes is carrying a small hand mirror that serves as a focus that allows Charra Lyn to *send* messages to his team of assassins; see the *mirror of receiving* insert, and the related *mirror of sending* insert. He also has a pouch containing 15 pp, 30 gp, and a ruby worth 300 gp.

Orestes will try to stay back and let the half-orcs do the fighting. He will use *dispel magic* to block the actions of enemy spellcasters. If there are no spells to block, he will use *magic missile* or *charm person* to support his allies, dropping higher level spells if necessary to cast these first level spells. Just before combat, he cast *mage armor* on himself and used a 3rd-level spell slot to cast a silent *knock*. He also used *locate object* a few times earlier in the day. His spells per day show the number of spells he currently has available in parentheses, and his AC includes the bonus from *mage armor*.

## Harra

### 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Half-Orc Ranger

CR 4; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d10+4; hp 28; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Increased Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+2 Dex, +4 chain shirt); Atk melee +4 (1d6+2/crit 18-20/x2, scimitar), melee +4 (1d6+2/crit 19-20/x2, short sword); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; SQ Favored Enemy, Half-Orc Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +8, Search +6, Wilderness Lore +7

**Feats:** Dodge (+1 AC vs. single opponent), Increased Initiative (+4 Init), Track (Make Wilderness Lore

check to track), Ambidexterity/Two-Weapon Fighting (May attack with 2 weapons at a -2 penalty to each; this is already counted in her scores)

**Favored Enemy (Humans):** Inflicts +1 damage against human opponents.

**Half-Orc Traits (Ex):** Half-Orcs have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

As a ranger, Harra is a little more cunning than Blacktooth, and she will target the weakest-looking character she can, preferably an unarmored spell-caster.



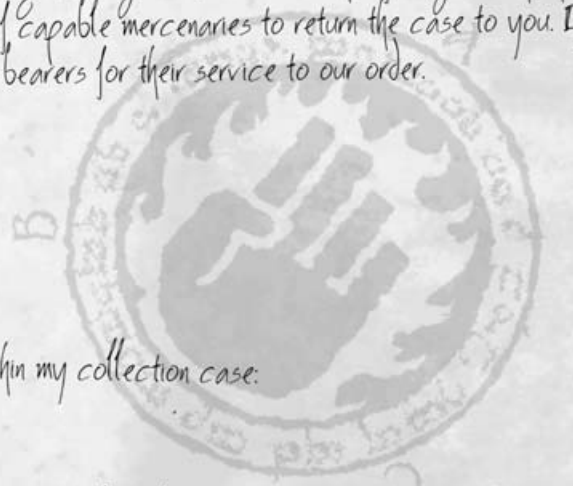


Osai-en-La.

As I have followed my calling and the noble pursuit of our order, I have heard rumors of the whereabouts of the Black Sapphire of Ang. I have been searching for this vile gem since I was ordained as a Hand of the Crucible, and I must follow it now. My collection case will be an obstacle in this quest, but it is full, and many of the items within are quite dangerous. I cannot risk it falling into the hands of outsiders. And so I am seeking the aid of a band of capable mercenaries to return the case to you. If you are reading this message, please reward the bearers for their service to our order.

Yours in service,  
Merita Falias  
Hand of the Crucible

The following artifacts are contained within my collection case:

- 
- Item 1 - Form: Chain mail  
Enchantments: Allows attacks to pass through to its wearer.
- Item 2 - Form: Necklace, bone segments  
Enchantments: Asphyxiates the wearer.
- Item 3 - Form: Battleaxe  
Enchantments: Sentient weapon. "Carcoasn." Psychic grip on wielder. Inflicts damage on wielder in battle.
- Item 4 - Form: Necklace, silver and jade  
Enchantments: Silences the wearer.
- Item 5 - Form: Oval mirror  
Enchantments: I cannot discern the true purpose of this object. It shows false images within the glass, but I sense that greater power resides within it.
- Item 6 - Form: Metal wig  
Enchantment: Attaches itself to the head of the wearer. Command word 'golden hair.'
- Item 7 - Form: Harp  
Enchantments: Sentient, no name. Kills those who hear it, including the musician.
- Item 8 - Form: Mace  
Enchantments: Drives its wielder into a berserk rage.
- Item 9 - Form: Ring, silver and jet  
Enchantments: Absorbs energy from spells cast by the wearer, kills wearer when fully charged.
- Item 10 - Form: Ring, gold and ruby  
Enchantments: Wearer becomes obsessed with romantic conquest.

A character who wishes to read the letter without making it obvious can destroy the seal and attempt to recreate it later by making a Forgery check (DC 15). Or she can try to remove the seal intact so it can be reapplied to the letter by using Disable Device or Pick Pocket (DC 20).

The parchment itself is imprinted with Merita's *arcane mark*; this sigil is visible if the letter is opened and is identical in appearance to the wax seal.

The letter is written in elvish, the translated text of which is provided in the player handout on page 16; make a copy to show to any player who wishes to read it.

Curious characters will want to examine the trunk itself. It has a simple latching mechanism, but it has been mystically sealed.

Merita has sealed the trunk using *arcane lock*. Opening the trunk will require use of *dispel magic* (DC 18) or *knock*. The wood is magically strengthened, and has a Hardness value of 8, 20 hit points, and has a DC of 33 for Strength checks to break. As noted on page 11, a Spellcraft check (DC 18) will provide additional information about the nature of the warding symbols on the surface of the chest.

If the trunk is opened, characters will find an array of objects inside — weapons, a suit of armor, jewelry, and a few other odds and ends. Most of the objects are quite beautiful, and the temptation to take the artifacts out and examine them further should be strong — although this is not a supernatural compulsion.

The statistics for the contents of the trunk are provided in the insert on the following pages. Most of them are indeed quite dangerous; the party would be wise to leave them alone at this time.

## Contents of the Trunk of Curses (Prime Version)

### NEW CURSED ITEM: ARMOR OF SELF-LOVE

This appears to be a beautiful set of polished chainmail. It is immune to the effects of rust and weather, and to a simple *identify* it appears to have a +5 enchantment bonus. However, there is a reason that it is in such good condition; whenever the armor is about to be damaged a hole will open up in the links, allowing the attack to pass through unimpeded. As a result, this armor provides no protective value whatsoever!

*Caster Level:* 14<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *animate objects*; *Market Price:* 36,000 gp; *Weight:* 35 lbs

### NEW CURSED ITEM: BONE CHOKER

This is a choker made from segments of bone. When it is worn about the neck, the victim begins to asphyxiate; the necklace does not physically constrict, but it blocks all passage of air to the lungs. The

wearer takes six points of suffocation damage per round until she dies or the necklace is removed. The necklace can only be removed by use of a *wish*, *limited wish*, or *miracle*.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Create Wondrous Item, *slay living*; *Market Price:* 60,000 gp; *Weight:* —

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: CARCOASN, THE AXE OF BALANCE

In ancient times a rebellious smith made this beautiful dwarven waraxe for an unjust lord. It is an axe fit for a king; the haft is shod in silver and brass, and the studs that hold the head to the shaft are tipped with rubies. The blade of the axe is engraved with patterns of flame, with a hint of a face hidden amidst the fire. Despite its beauty, the axe has no magical bonuses to hit or to the damage that it inflicts (although it receives a +1 to hit for being a masterwork weapon). Instead, it has one simple but powerful enchantment: whenever it inflicts damage on a living creature, its wielder must make a Will save

## Contents of the Trunk (cont.)

against a DC of 22 or suffer equal damage himself. The damage the user receives should include all additions for Strength, skill, or the effects of a critical hit; this damage is mental in nature and does not actually damage the victim's armor. To add insult to injury — literally — the weapon is intelligent. It has the power of speech (it speaks dwarven and accented common), it can communicate telepathically with its wielder, and it has one additional power — the ability to hold fast to the hand of its wielder. In order to put down the axe, the user must make a Will save against a DC of 20; he can attempt this save once every hour. *Remove curse* will also allow the victim to let go of the axe. Carcoasn (*kar-ko-ass-en*) can choose to release its wielder, but it is not likely to do so. It was created to punish unjust warriors, and at this point it is very cynical about humanoid nature.

Carcoasn is somewhat manic-depressive; it goes through moody phases and talkative periods. This can be a useful tool to break up the otherwise uneventful periods of traveling and camping. It will try to cajole warriors to pick it up, first playing on their greed (“Oooh, with your strength and skill and my mystical powers, just think of the damage we could do!”) alternating with attacks on their pride (“What, are you scared to seize your destiny?”). If a character does pick up the weapon, it will try to encourage him to do battle. When Carcoasn's curse is revealed, it will make fun of the wielder (“Not so tough now, are you, big guy?”). As a result of its background and intended purpose, it prefers to target dwarves and warriors of all sorts.

With this said, Carcoasn is intended to serve a useful purpose in this adventure. In the mirror world, it actually becomes a very powerful weapon. But aside from that, it also is intended to serve as comic relief when there is a slow moment, and as a potential plot motivator or provider of hints if the players become stuck. Of course, if it does provide a hint that proves to be especially useful, the characters will never hear the end of it ...

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 15 lbs

### NEW CURSED ITEM: COLLAR OF SILENCE

If a character places this necklace of silver and jade around his throat, he will find that words flow easily off of his tongue, and that he is more comfortable talking to others and making speeches. The only problem is that no one else can hear him. The character will hear his own words, but in fact he is making no sound at all. While wearing the collar the character cannot cast any spells that require verbal components, and cannot engage in conversation

with others. Initially the wearer will refuse to believe that he is not speaking. Even when he comes to recognize the curse, he will find that he cannot remove the collar from his neck; a *remove curse* spell is required to get rid of the necklace.

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*, *silence*; *Market Price:* 2,000 gp; *Weight:* —

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: FALSE GLASS

This is an oval mirror, approximately 18 inches by 9 inches. It is formed of what appears to be polished obsidian, set into a silver frame. The true purpose of this mirror remains a mystery; its obvious enchantments are that it is immune to all forms of physical and magical damage, and that it shows false images in its glass. Generally it will reflect false images of the character looking into it, changing hair color, race, or similar aspects of appearance; but at times it may show scenes that will trouble the observer — loved ones in peril, a home in flames, etc. In point of fact, this mirror is a tool for studying alternate realities, and is something Charra Lyn would very much like to get her hands on — but that aside, it has no real use in this adventure. For the most part, this object is a red herring; it is here so that players who know that they are playing a module called *The Ebon Mirror* will have something to worry about.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 10 lbs

### NEW WONDROUS ITEM: GOLDENHAIR

This is a shoulder-length wig made from woven strands of flexible gold. It is quite beautiful, and a character will gain a +1 bonus to her Charisma score as long as the wig is worn. When it is placed on the head and a command word (“goldenhair”) is spoken, it adheres to the head of the wearer as if it is natural hair; if the word is spoken again, it can be removed. This item is not actually cursed; instead, it is an example of what the Crucible considers to be a waste of magical energy.

*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *polymorph other*; *Market Price:* 6,000 gp; *Weight:* 8 lbs

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: HARP OF THE BANSHEE

This is a beautiful harp formed from mithral and

## Contents of the Trunk (cont.)

gold. The neck of the harp resembles the torso of a gorgeous woman, and her hair streams out behind her to form the top of the harp. A character can learn more about the harp by using *legend lore*, or by making a Bardic Lore or appropriate Knowledge roll against a DC of 13; its story is fairly recent and well known. About ten years ago, two merchant families were engaged in a feud. The conflict was beginning to drain the resources of both families, and one of the merchants sued for peace. He produced this harp from the vaults of his family mansion, claiming that he wished to make restitution for his actions with this noble gift. But when the harp was played before the opposing merchants at a victory feast, it began to sing with a voice of its own — a terribly beautiful sound that drew the life from all who heard it play. The original owner fared no better than his foe; for when he went to reclaim the harp, he found that it was still singing amidst the hall of corpses, and he was the next to fall. It continued to sing for a day and a night, after which it fell silent. The servants were afraid to enter the hall — but eventually word of the incident reached the Crucible, who dispatched Merita to find the cursed instrument.

If it is left alone, the harp is relatively harmless. Occasionally, a character within ten feet of it may hear a soft, seductive woman's voice, whispering, "Play with me." Should someone actually pick up the harp, the woman's face will come alive, and it will encourage the user — "Play me, let us sing together." Should anyone be so foolish as to actually play the harp, it will begin to sing a beautiful, intoxicating song. Anyone who can hear the song of the harp — it can be heard from approximately seventy-five feet, although walls and other barriers can reduce this distance — must make a Fortitude save vs. a DC of 23 or die on the spot. This affects the twenty people closest to the harp, and it will continue each round until the harp itself chooses to stop singing or until 24 hours have passed. The effect is considered to be both death magic and a sonic attack. *Silence* and similar spells will provide temporary protection, but will not actually stop the harp from singing; when the spell expires, the harp will continue its deadly song. The harp cannot be damaged by simple physical or magical attacks.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 10 lbs

### NEW CURSED ITEM: MACE OF FURY

Compared to Carcoasn, this heavy iron mace seems plain and worn; there are no engravings or decorations on the haft or head. Anyone touching the mace is filled with unreasoning anger and fury; while carrying the weapon, the bearer suffers a -2 to all

Intelligence, Charisma, and Wisdom-based skill checks. If the wielder enters battle, the weapon functions as a -2 *heavy mace*; in addition, the user goes berserk, with all of the effects of the barbarian Rage ability. In battle, the wielder will fight until he is slain or rendered unconscious, or until there are no living creatures within 30 feet.

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *bestow curse*, *feeblemind*, *Market Price:* 17,500 gp; *Weight:* 12 lbs

### NEW CURSED ITEM: RING OF CHARGED DEATH

This silver and jet ring absorbs spells, just like a *rod of absorption* — except that it absorbs spells cast by the *wearer* of the ring, as opposed to spells directed against him. It saves these spell levels, and whenever it reaches a multiple of 7 it casts *finger of death* on the wearer (Fortitude save DC 17, a failed save results in instant death, and the wearer still takes 3d6+15 damage on successful save). While it is worn, spells cast by the user have no effect, aside from charging the ring. It can only be removed through use of a *remove curse* spell — which must be cast by someone other than the wearer of the ring!

*Caster Level:* 15<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *finger of death*, *spell turning*; *Market Price:* 17,000 gp; *Weight:* —

### NEW CURSED ITEM: RING OF LOVE

The wearer of this ring becomes obsessed with romantic conquest, to the exclusion of all other activities. She must make a Will saving throw against a DC 20 to engage in any sort of activity aside from flirtatious banter and posturing, and even if she is successful, she must make this roll again if a new potential partner appears. The wearer has no idea that this behavior is in any way unnatural, and the only way to break the spell is to forcibly remove the ring — the wearer herself becomes quite attached to the ring and will not take it off willingly. The magic of the ring will only force the wearer to pursue other humanoids (although orcs and goblins are humanoids too!) and gender orientation is unaffected. The ring itself features a heart-shaped ruby set into a gold band.

*Caster Level:* 15<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *bestow curse*, *emotion*, *limited wish*; *Market Price:* 10,000 gp; *Weight:* —

## CHAPTER TWO

# THE ROAD TO SHARETH-EN-LA

*“Shareth-en-La?” the portly innkeeper smiled at Sera. “That’s a name I don’t hear every day. What takes you out that way?”*

*Sera shrugged. “Well, we were hired to deliver ...” she broke off as Krogar kicked her under the table. With a dart of his eyes, he indicated an ill-shaven man sitting across the common room, who seemed to be listening with interest. “Um ... shoes.”*

*“Shoes for Shareth? Now I have heard everything.” The innkeeper went back to polishing mugs.*

*“You forgot to mention me,” a metallic voice said from inside the wooden trunk. Krogar silenced it with a quick kick and grinned sheepishly at the other patrons.*

## PREPARING FOR TRAVEL

Perhaps the party decides to get a good night’s sleep, or to take a quick trip to the general store or the gambling den before they start their journey. But sooner or later they will find themselves trudging along the road to Shareth-en-La. It is possible that they will choose to ride through the night or otherwise deviate from the schedule described here; in this case, simply have them run into the encounters in the order that they are given.

## DAY ONE: THE SHADY HANDYMAN

The first day of travel passes without incident; there are a reasonable number of travelers on the road, all of whom mind their own business and leave the party alone. Evening brings the players

to a small thorp with an inn. If there is a pre-existing location within your campaign setting that serves this purpose, go ahead and use it; otherwise, the thorp is called Rockfield (stones being the primary crop the farmers harvest) and the inn is named The Standing Stone. The inn is not particularly crowded; the innkeeper — a burly red-haired woman named Huldra — offers beds and two meals for 8 sp a head. She will make polite small talk regarding the destination of the party and their reasons for traveling; she comments that she rarely sees travelers to Shareth, except for the occasional merchant.

Any character that makes a Spot check (DC 15) will notice a lean, scruffy-looking man eyeing the trunk (assuming it is visible).

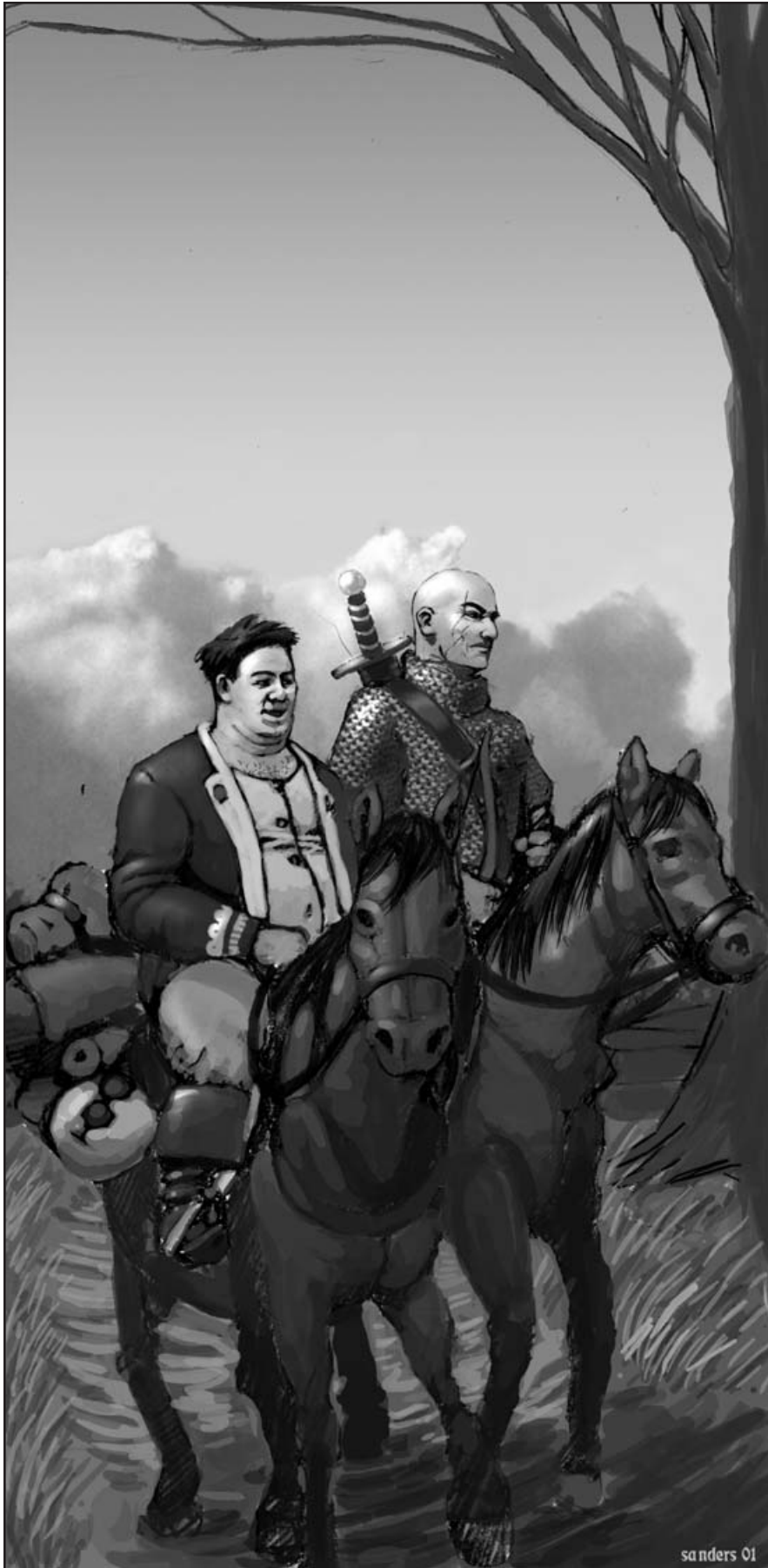
This man is named Chort, and he does odd jobs around the inn. His interest is intended to raise the paranoia level of the party, but Chort is not actually bold enough to try to steal from a group of armed adventurers; if they confront him, he will cower and beg to be left alone, insisting he meant no harm. Huldra will take offense if the characters bully Chort; if things go too far, she may ask the party to leave.

Characters can also choose to sleep in the wilds outside of Rockfield. The ground is, of course, rocky and uncomfortable, but the night passes without incident — aside from Carcoasn’s occasional pestering and requests to be let out of the trunk.

## DAY TWO: DEVON THE PEDDLER

The road beyond Rockfield is less traveled; the party passes a few farms, but as the day wears on they see few people on the road. Unless it is

## CHAPTER TWO: THE ROAD TO SHARETH-EN-LA



deeply at odds with the campaign setting, the environment is fairly barren — rocky fields and hills, with occasional patches of forest. Towards mid-afternoon there is one notable encounter — riders appear coming from the direction of Shareth-en-La.

Characters who make a Spot check (DC 12) will spot something approaching on the road ahead. Characters who make this roll by four or more points will see that there are two riders, both with heavily laden horses — sunlight glints off of the armor worn by the larger of the two figures.

These riders are the merchant Devon and his bodyguard Jared. As they come closer, characters will see that their horses are laden with pouches and packages of all shapes and sizes. Devon is a large, jovial man wearing bright clothes that are a little worse for traveling; Jared is a squat, scarred human with one facial expression (grim), wearing chainmail and a greatsword slung across his back. He holds a shortbow in his left hand, and a fighter or ranger will recognize the style of one trained to shoot from horseback.

## Devon the Peddler

### 3rd-Level Human Expert

CR 2; SZ M (humanoid); HD 3d6; hp 10; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk melee +1 (1d3-1 subdual, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14

**Skills:** Appraise +7, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Forgery +7, Innuendo +8, Profession (merchant) +8, Riding +4, Sense Motive +10

**Feats:** Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Diplomacy), Skill Focus (Sense Motive)

There is little threatening about this duo; Jared appears grim and dangerous, but he looks like what he is — a bodyguard keeping an eye out for trouble — as opposed to a bandit. Devon is chattering away about the countryside — “You know, the last time I was here, this fellow actually wanted to trade rocks for my wares. Rocks! He said it was all that he had.” Jared ignores him. If the characters hide, the pair will pass right by them without incident.

Otherwise, Jared will spot the party and poke his companion. The two come to a halt a safe distance away — Devon isn’t *too* trusting — and the merchant calls out to the characters:

“Greetings! Hail! Hello! Are you potential customers, or bandits with plans to rob us honest men of our livelihood?”

## Jared the Bodyguard

### 3rd-Level Human Fighter

CR 3; SZ M (humanoid); HD 3d10+6; hp 25; Init +1 (+1 Dexterity); Spd 20 ft. (50 ft. on horseback); AC 16 (+1 Dexterity, +5 chainmail); Atk ranged +5 (1d6+1/crit 19-20/x2, shortbow), melee +6 (2d6+5/crit 19-20/x2, greatsword); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11

**Skills:** Riding +6, Wilderness Survival +3

**Feats:** Mounted Archery (The penalty for shooting from horseback is halved), Mounted Combat (May make opposed Ride check to block attacks against mount), Point Blank Shot (+1 to hit and damage with ranged attacks made within 30 feet), Rapid Shot (May make an extra attack with a ranged weapon at a -2 penalty on all attacks), Ride-by Attack (May charge, attack, and move on after the attack)

If the party does threaten the merchant, Jared will produce arrows from a quiver and wait. At the first sign of hostilities, Jared will open fire, while Devon heads for the hills.

Jared fires arrows until his enemies close, then drops his bow and draws his greatsword. He will fight to the death, if need be; Devon freed him from slavery, and while he often grows weary of the old man’s chatter, he has sworn to protect him.

But hopefully hostilities will not occur. In this case, Devon will chortle with joy. “Wonderful, wonderful! I trust you have something besides rocks to barter! And best for you to empty your purses now, before you run into the bandits who lie on the road ahead.”

He will continue in this vein, running along with a constant stream of relatively meaningless chatter. If anyone asks about the bandits, he will talk about a recent increase in the raiding of the beastly humanoids near Shareth: “Who can say why? Do those savage creatures need a reason to do the things they do?” If no one asks, he will eventually bring up the bandits ahead in normal conversation.

Devon is exaggerating the bandit situation in the hopes of making a sale. It’s not entirely untrue — the sorceress Charra Lyn did come to the area with a few of her orcish relatives — but someone who makes a Sense Motive check against a DC of 22 will get the sense that he is stretching the truth a little.

Devon’s primary interest is selling his goods. At the moment, these are potions, “Fresh from Shareth!” He does indeed have a small supply of actual magical potions — which he will use if the party demands to test the merchandise — but he

will try to encourage characters to buy in bulk, so he can slip snake oil in with the real thing. In fact, only items the characters actually test will be real — at least until Chapter Three. When the party travels into the mirror, only these false potions will perform their intended function.

Devon's goods include the following:

- *Cure moderate wounds*: Devon only has two real bottles of this healing potion, along with seven identical placebo bottles. In the mirror world, these fake potions will actually become potions of *cure light wounds*.

“This little number will heal almost any injury. Sword wounds? Burns? No trouble at all. Just send it down the hatch and you'll be as good as new, just like that. A bargain at only 290 gold pieces, 240 each for three or more!”

- *Invisibility*: Again, only one of these potions is real; the other two are fake, but will work as potions of *invisibility* in the mirror world.

“Now, I've only got three of these — you're lucky I ran into you before I reached Rockfield. It's amazing what those elves can do. One shot from this little bottle and BAM, not even a shadow to be seen. Just think of all the fun you could have! Now, I've got a limited supply here, so I'm offering these for 300 gold apiece — or 750 for all three!”

- *Truth*: This is actually a fake potion, although it will work normally on the other side of the mirror.

“What a marvel we have here. Truth in a bottle — what will they think of next? I only have this one flask, but some day it could save your life! A bargain at 450 gold, don't you think?”

- Devon also has a small supply of spell components, elven textiles, and musical instruments, which he will sell at list prices.

“A little music adds a lift to your step on a long ride, doesn't it? I do think the horses enjoy a bit of music.”

Someone wishing to bargain with Devon should make opposed Diplomacy or Bluff rolls against Devon's Sense Motive skill. Success will cause Devon to reduce the price by 10%.

A player who makes a Sense Motive check against a difficulty of 25 (Devon is, after all, a professional) will get the sense that Devon is trying to take them for a ride — although there may be some truth hidden amidst the lies.

After chatting for a bit about the weather, the locals, and the bandits — and trying to lift as much money off the party as possible — Devon will be ready to move on.

Jared, meanwhile, will avoid conversation. If anyone tries to speak to him, Devon will say “Oh, don't mind him, he's been in a bit of a mood ever since we met that half-orc woman the other day. Not only did she pass up my amazing bargains, she wouldn't even speak to us! Quite attractive, even for a half-orc — I can see his fascination. But you have to keep moving, don't you? Speaking of which, we have to keep moving if we're going to reach Rockfield by night. A great pleasure meeting you all.”

With that, the two ride off, heading down the road to Rockfield. The rest of the day is uneventful; sounds in the undergrowth turn out to be frogs or hedgehogs, and there are no signs of howling orcish raiders. The night also passes without incident.

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## DAY THREE: CLOUDS ON THE HORIZON

The next day also begins innocently enough. Maybe a few minor events occur to keep the party on their toes — perhaps crows seem to watch the group from the tree branches, as if guided by a human intelligence — but in fact, there is no danger. The characters are not far from the middle of nowhere, and they are getting closer every hour.

However, around midday a strange event occurs. The characters are traveling up a slight hill, and they see a plume of smoke rise up over the hori-





## THE EBON MIRROR

zon, perhaps half a mile away on the road ahead. This dark mist behaves in a very unusual way; it spreads out, and then seems to shatter and fall back to the earth. As the characters approach the scene, they find tiny slivers of dark, warm glass scattered across the landscape; these splinters seem to be melting away as they watch. Going over the rise, they can see the wreckage of what was once a large, enclosed wagon sitting in a clearing on the side of the road.

### THE RUINED WAGON

The wagon was once a fantastic thing; it seems to have been a small yacht on wheels. Judging from the pieces of painted wood and the massive gild-

ed wheels, it was once about twenty-four feet long, nine feet across, and almost ten feet tall. There are remnants of upholstered furniture, torn tapestries, and bits of rich carpeting; whoever created the wagon liked to live in style. There are no signs of horses or any method of propulsion. It seems to have exploded from the inside, as though a tremendous concussion blew it apart without any sort of fire or heat.

The rod is the key to the situation. After someone has picked up the rod — or when the party begins to leave the scene, if no one touches the rod — the gems begin to glow with a brilliant light. A flash spreads out from the wand, and for an instant even those looking away are blinded. When vision returns, the wreckage, corpses, and energy sphere are gone. The wand is all that remains



from the scene — and half of the wand has vanished, leaving only three inches of silver wand attached to a small ruby. The party may not real-

ize it, but they are now inside the sphere — on the other side of the mirror the half-orc sorceress was leaning against.

## Searching Around the Wagon

As the characters approach the wagon, they will notice smaller details. Have each character make a Search roll and compare it to the table below. A character with a high roll may notice all of the lesser details, or you can divide these up between multiple high-rolling characters. GM-only notes are in parenthesis.

### Search

#### Roll Information

- 0** There is a sphere of dark energy floating about a foot above the ground, in the exact epicenter of the destruction. The sphere is about six feet in diameter.  
A Spellcraft check at a DC of 25 will identify the sphere as a variation of a *wall of force*. (The sphere resists all attempts to move or destroy it, including *dispel magic* and *disintegrate*.)
- 5** There are two dead orcs and one dead goblin partially hidden beneath pieces of wagon wall. These corpses are dressed in ragged hide armor and carry axes and crude shortbows. They appear to have been killed by the concussive force of the explosion. (These unfortunates were guards working for Charra — who, despite her disdain for her goblinoid side, still appreciated the cheap labor she could get with her family connections — but the party may jump to the conclusion that these were raiders that attacked the wagon.)
- 10** An observant character can see through the sphere with enough clarity to make out details of what lies within. There is a woman dressed in ornate robes, slumped over a flat, round object that has been placed on a pedestal.
- 13** Glancing around the wreckage — twisted scraps of metal, shattered pieces of wood, and torn parchments — the character is able to put together enough pieces to identify a few tools. These appear to be unusual compasses, pendulums, and pieces of maps.  
A Knowledge (arcana) or similar Knowledge roll (DC 15), or Spellcraft at DC 25, will identify these as geomantic tools used to trace lines of magical power. These lines have no use in everyday spell-casting, but there are some sages who claim that they could be used to produce powerful effects. None of the equipment can be salvaged, and trying to put together a map would take hours of work (and ultimately only result in a map of the region, with the exact spot the party is at marked).
- 15** Someone with a sharper pair of eyes will pick out a few more interesting scraps of metal within the wreckage. These appear to be picture frames — approximately five of them, all of which seem to have been hanging on one wall of the wagon. The frames are empty.  
If the party has opened the trunk of curses, anyone making an Intelligence roll against a DC of 18 will notice a similarity between some of the broken frames and the frame of the *false glass* contained in the trunk. (At one time these frames contained mystical mirrors, and it was the shattering of the glass within these mirrors that formed the dark plume the characters saw over the hill.)
- 18** Close to the sphere, a character finds a smeary outline of slime on the floor. After considering the shape and proximity to the sphere, she comes to the conclusion that it was an orc that was standing inside the wagon when the cataclysm occurred.
- 22** Examining the sphere more closely, this character determines that the woman inside is probably a half-orc — he is able to spot an unusually heavy brow, and a heavy build beneath the robe — and that the object she is leaning against is reflective; it looks like a circular mirror.

**Highest Roll** — The character with the best Search check out of the party notices something glittering in the wreckage a short distance from the sphere. If she approaches this, she finds that it is a short silver rod. It is approximately six inches long; one half terminates in a ruby, the other in a sapphire. Both gems are slightly luminescent.

If it is examined using *detect magic*, the wand is found to possess a strong magical aura (indicating a caster level of 12th to 20th). With a Spellcraft roll (DC 20) the magic can be determined to be in the universal sphere, but it defies any other attempts at identification.



## CHAPTER THREE

# THROUGH A MIRROR, DARKLY

*Sera watched in bemusement as the glowing skeletons capered about. Dancing skeletons? This was the great danger that they had to overcome?*

*“Now, sister,” hissed Molric, the priest they had met on the road. “Join your power to mine and let these vile creatures feel the Stonefather’s wrath!”*

*Well, dancing or not, they WERE still undead creatures. Sera raised her holy symbol, calling on the cleansing power of the Stonefather to eradicate this unnatural blight. And energy flowed into her — but it was an awful feeling, dark and cold, as if her blood was being transformed into viscous ooze. She felt the energy spread out towards one of the skeletons, coating it and extinguishing its light, and tears came to her eyes as its playful capering came to a halt. Nothing should have to die like that ... not even the dead.*

## CURIOUSER AND CURIOUSER ...

The PCs have now entered the world within Charra Lyn’s mirror. Before proceeding, you should familiarize yourself with the altered physics of the mirror world, most notably the way in which it will affect the memorized spells and special abilities of the characters. This information is contained in the “Customization and Preparation” section of Chapter One, and more extensively in Appendix Two.

Physically, the world is identical to what the characters have left behind; they will notice no changes until they begin interacting with the inhabitants of this world, for they are also significantly different. In the prime world, bands of savage orcs and goblins roam the wilds around the elven hamlet of Shareth-en-La. Within the world according to Charra, orcs are wise and peaceful. Here the elves and their kin are the savages, goaded on by humans who lurk in the shadows,

scheming to destroy the orcs — just as Charra sought to destroy her own orcish side.

Meanwhile, both sides of Charra’s spirit have been pulled into this alternate world, and now they are playing a dangerous game to see which side will return to her body. The silver wand found by the party was intended to serve as an escape hatch, in case just such an accident occurred. By touching the wand, the PCs have been drawn into Charra’s world; they now possess the power to upset the balance between the warring halves of her soul. The wand itself cannot be lost; if it is thrown away, given away, or if it was not picked up in the first place, it will soon appear in the pack of the character who first spotted or touched it.

## THE INHABITANTS OF THE MIRROR

Here is a brief overview of the forces the party will encounter in the mirror, and how they differ from their counterparts in the prime world.

### GOBLINOIDS

Known as violent savages in the character’s world, the goblinoid races — orcs, goblins, ogres, kobolds, and their ilk — are the dominant society behind the mirror. They are peaceful by nature, and while they have fashioned arms and armor to combat the depredations of elves and humans, they dislike violence. The following species can be found in the area:

- **Orcs** are the most numerous inhabitants of the realm; the humans and their allies tend to use ‘orc’ as a blanket term for all of the goblinoid races. Orcs are skilled craftsmen and scholars with a great aptitude for magic; most of the magical artifacts players will encounter behind the mirror are orcish work.

## CHAPTER THREE: THROUGH A MIRROR, DARKLY

The favored class of orcs in the mirror realm is **wizard**.

- **Goblins** are clever beings, much like the gnomes of the prime world. Some goblins devote their energies to the study of magic and science, while others are content to be simple farmers.

The favored class of a mirror goblin is **expert**.

- Despite their physical strength, **ogres** are the most peaceful of the goblinoid races. They generally devote their brawn to farming, pushing plows or turning mills.

The favored class of an ogre is **commoner**.

### “CIVILIZED” RACES

Behind the mirror, the traditionally civilized humanoid races are anything but. These include:

- **Humans** are the only race with any sort of organized society. The other races are primitive tribes that the humans have managed to rally to their banner; as a result, ‘human’ is often used as a blanket term to refer to both the species and their allies. Humans are xenophobic schemers dedicated to destroying the goblinoid races. Of all of the mirror races, the changes to humanity are the most subtle; PCs who encounter mirror humans may not notice the differences. They are the most numerous of the non-goblinoid races.

Like prime humans, those in the mirror world can select any favored class.

- **Elves** are the second most common race; due to their bloodthirsty nature and legendary capacity for violence, most goblins and orcs are terrified of the elves. While they retain the agility and grace of their counterparts, they are notably lacking in intelligence and

charisma. Their society is brutal and warlike, and any situation can turn bloody at a moment’s notice.

The favored elven class is **barbarian**.

- Where the elves are possessed by savage fury, the **halfings** are grim and serious. Next to humans, they are the best tacticians of the raider hordes, and their lives are dedicated to the art of war. If they didn’t spend so much time fighting each other, they might have made more of a mark on the world.

The favored class of the mirror halfling is **fighter**.

- **Gnomes** retain their prime counterparts’ affinity for nature — but they possess none of the intelligence of the common gnome. They are feral, almost animalistic beasts; the raiders value them for their tracking skills, and use them as humanoid bloodhounds.

Their favored class is **ranger**, with an emphasis on tracking and stealth skills.

- **Dwarves** are rarely seen; they are even less common than the gnomes. Aside from humans, they are one of the only humanoid races that have the patience or mental acuity required to study the arcane arts. The dwarves that PCs may encounter are wizened shamans, wasted away by ritual drug use and contemplation of the mysteries of the unseen realms.

Their favored class is **adept**.

Statistics for warriors of these species can be found on pages 31-32 and pages 59-61. Also note that any spells given for mirror world NPCs function normally, since they’re used to the altered physics of their own realm.



## Contents of the Trunk of Curses (Mirror Version)

The *arcane lock* spell that sealed the trunk does not function in the mirror world, and the characters can plunder its contents at any time. The now-modified statistics for the items in the trunk are provided below. Note that creation information on these items is not provided as these items weren't created; these enchantments only exist as a result of the mirror twisting.

### NEW MAGICAL ARMOR: ARMOR OF SELF-LOVE

In the mirror world, this set of +5 *chainmail* takes extra care of its owner; its links will clump together in order to provide additional protection against a blow. This reduces any damage inflicted on the user by 5 points per attack. However, this takes a terrible toll on the armor; after absorbing eighty points in this manner, it will collapse into hundreds of pieces.

*Caster Level:* 14<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 35 lbs

### NEW WONDROUS ITEM: BONE CHOKER

Instead of asphyxiating its wearer, this necklace provides a pure supply of oxygen at all times. The wearer gains the benefits of the *water breathing* spell, and also gains a complete immunity to suffocation or airborne attack, including *cloudkill*, *stinking cloud*, or the stench of a ghost. This object will even protect against the Euphoric Scent ability of a sacred ghoul (see page 39).

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* —

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: CARCOASN, THE AXE OF BALANCE

In the mirror world, Carcoasn is transformed from an annoying hindrance into a powerful weapon. It still has no magical bonuses to hit or damage, but its victim feels the pain of the blow as if he had been struck twice. When Carcoasn strikes a target, the victim must make a Will saving throw vs. a DC of 20. If he fails, he suffers additional mental damage equal to the total damage of the original attack, including bonuses for Strength, skill, and critical hits. This phantom pain has no effect on non-living

creatures or objects, including automatons or the undead. It can be quite a deadly weapon, but only if you are on its good side — for in the mirror world, Carcoasn's ability to hold fast to the hands of its wielder has also been transformed. The axe has the power to force a user to drop it; in order to maintain a grip on the axe, the wielder must make a Will save against a DC of 20, and Carcoasn can use this ability every round. Initially the axe may find the experience of being useful to be novel and entertaining in its own right — but eventually this power will go to its head. It will demand to be given credit for every victory during battles in which it is used, and generally seek reparations for all the indignities it has suffered over the years.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 15 lbs

### NEW WONDROUS ITEM: COLLAR OF SILENCE

This silver and jade necklace makes the user feel somewhat awkward and tongue-tied. But its actual effects are quite the opposite. It provides its wearer with a +2 to any Charisma-based skill checks, increases the DC of saves of all enchantment spells cast by the wearer by 2, and allows anyone who can hear the wearer speak to understand her (although the user does not gain the ability to understand the speech of others).

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* —

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: FALSE GLASS

Now that the party is in a mirror world, this artifact acts as a window to their home. Generally it will simply reflect images of those who look into it, but occasionally it will show visions of interesting events that are occurring in the prime world. There is no way to direct or control these images.

*Caster Level:* 18<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 10 lbs

### NEW CURSED ITEM: GOLDENHAIR

This item functions in the same manner in the mirror world as it did in the prime world. However, once it has been attached to the wearer's head, it will immediately destroy all hair beneath the wig; when

## Contents of the Mirror Trunk (cont.)

the wearer removes the item, she will discover that she is bald. Not everything in the trunk is beneficial behind the mirror!

*Caster Level:* 10<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 8 lbs

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT: HARP OF THE BANSHEE

Behind the mirror, the beautiful music of the harp has the remarkable ability to invigorate and heal all who hear it. This has the effects of a *heal* spell on all people within seventy-five feet of the instrument. However, the harp is malevolent by nature, and it will be appalled once it realizes the effect its music is having. After it has been used once, it will fall silent and cannot be cajoled to sing again.

*Caster Level:* 20<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 10 lbs

### NEW MAGIC WEAPON: MACE OF FURY

This weapon functions as a +2 *heavy mace*. In battle, its wielder will also find that she enters a clearly focused, meditative state; this has the effect of giving her the Improved Initiative, Dodge, and Mobility feats.

*Caster Level:* 8<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* 12 lbs

### NEW MAGICAL RING: RING OF CHARGED DEATH

In the mirror universe, this ring absorbs spells directed at the user, just like a *rod of absorption*. These energy levels are not available to the wearer; instead the ring saves these spell levels, and whenever it reaches a multiple of 7 it casts *heal* on the wearer.

*Caster Level:* 15<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* —

### NEW MAGICAL RING: RING OF LOVE

Wearing this ring increases a character's Charisma by three points. If she talks to someone of her own species for at least one uninterrupted minute, she may cast *charm person* on the target (DC 13); if the target makes the save, he is immune to this effect for one day.

*Caster Level:* 15<sup>th</sup>; *Weight:* —

## THE TRUNK OF CURSES, REVISITED

As described in Appendix Two, the magical items belonging to the PCs will no longer function as they should. This should not be immediately obvious, but eventually the characters will figure it out — and if they are clever, they will realize that the previously dangerous objects that they were carrying might now be beneficial. (See pages 28-29.)

## THE RUINED ESTATE

While the disappearing wagon is certainly unusual, there is no reason for the PCs to realize that they have entered an entirely new version of reality. In all likelihood they will continue on their way to Shareth. If they do not, the GM may need to play with the physics of the mirror world; mys-

teriously (due to the influence of the silver wand), all roads now lead to Shareth.

The next few hours pass without incident. Then the PCs spot the silhouette of a building in the distance — and as they come closer, they see that it is in ruins. This was obviously a country estate that has been pillaged and burned. The raid appears to have occurred within the last few days; the ruins are cold, but vines have not begun to sprout amidst the rubble.

Characters who make a successful Search check (DC 15) will discover a few charred corpses in the ruins. Most identifying features have been burned away or chewed off by predators, but the corpses can be identified as the bodies of two goblins and one elf.

A character who makes a successful Track check (DC 17) can find the trail of approximately eight humanoids — it's hard to tell what kind — who were riding some sort of



## THE EBON MIRROR

wolf-like creatures. The trail runs a short distance to the south of the estate (Shareth is to the east), and then abruptly vanishes.

In point of fact, the mounts were large blink dogs; the natural *dimension door* abilities of the dogs make further tracking impossible, as tracks are separated by 700 foot gaps.

The estate has been thoroughly looted. All that remains are shattered pieces of pottery and broken arrows — arrows that look remarkably similar to those found amidst the wreckage of the wagon.

The intention here is for the PCs to assume that they are following the trail of the orcs and goblins

Devon mentioned earlier. But in fact, this was the estate of a goblin landowner that was raided by elves — and it is only the first such ruin that the players will encounter.

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## THE RAIDERS STRIKE!

When the party continues down the road, the next hour and a half passes without serious incident; a flock of crows flies overhead, and there is a slight drizzle that passes quickly. Eventually, they see a column of smoke on the horizon — and this time, it appears to be coming from an ordinary fire.



Characters who make a Listen check (DC 17) will hear screams and war cries from up ahead.

If the party sits back and waits, the sounds will eventually fade away, and the farmhouse will be burned to the ground when the PCs eventually arrive. But if they are hearty adventurers and charge into the action, they come upon the sight of a farmhouse with its fields in flames and its sheep and chickens running wild. The door of the farmhouse has been knocked off of its hinges, and cries come from within the building. If the party enters, they are immediately confronted by a goblin warrior. This diminutive figure wears ill-fitting armor of obvious elven make — perhaps designed for a halfling, or an elven child — and threatens the PCs with a rusty spear, howling with rage.

A paladin using *detect evil* will sense the ‘malevolent’ aura radiating from the goblin, although if she is particularly sensitive — that is, if she makes a Wisdom check (DC 20) — she will realize that something doesn’t feel quite right; the ‘evil’ emanations are somehow different than anything she has ever sensed before.

This is because the goblin is *not* evil. He is one of the farmers, fighting to defend his land and family. His armor is the work of the ores of Shareth-en-La, ill-fitting because he has never worn it before — and if he seems to radiate evil, it is only because by this point a character does not realize that her *detect evil* spell is now detecting good!

Give the party the opportunity to strike first. But if they hesitate, the goblin will attack. His family is being butchered, and as far as he’s concerned, the people before him are the ones responsible. Unfortunately, he’s no match for the party — although characters with magical armor or defenses may be in for a surprise when those bonuses become negatives.

As soon as the goblin falls, the true threat appears. Before the party has time to fully assimilate the events, four or five figures come racing into the room, charging in through both interior

## Taris Felosial, Farmer

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-Level Goblin Commoner

CR 2; SZ S (humanoid); HD 3d4; hp 9; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+1 Dex, +1 size, +5 masterwork chainmail); Atk melee +1 (1d6–1/crit 20/x3, masterwork halfspear); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

**Skills:** Animal Handling +6, Craft (farming) +6

**Darkvision (Ex):** Goblins have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

## Mirror Elves (4)

### 3<sup>rd</sup>-Level Elf Barbarians

CR 3; SZ M (humanoid); HD 3d12; hp 26; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +3 studded leather, +1 small wooden shield, –2 Rage); Atk melee +7 (1d8+4/crit 19–20/x2, longsword), ranged +5 (1d6/crit 20/x3, shortbow); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Elven Traits, Rage, Uncanny Dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 8

**Skills:** Intimidate +6, Listen +8, Ride +5, Wilderness Lore +4

**Feats:** Improved Initiative (+4 Init), Power Attack (May reduce attack by up to 3 to increase damage by the same amount)

**Elven Traits (Ex):** Elves are immune to magic sleep spells and effects, have a +2 racial bonus to Will saves against enchantment spells or effects, have Low-light Vision that lets them see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, or torchlight, and an elf who merely passes within 5 feet of a secret or concealed door is entitled to a Search check as though actively looking for it.

**Rage:** May Rage twice a day for 5 rounds each time. While enraged, gains +4 Str, +4 Con, +2 Will save, –2 AC. Rage bonuses have been added into the listed statistics; when the Rage is over, the elves lose 6 HP, have a total +3 to hit, and inflict 1d8 damage.

**Uncanny Dodge:** Gains Dex bonus to AC even while flatfooted.





## Mirror Halfling (1)

### 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Halfling Fighter

CR 4; SZ S (humanoid); HD 4d10+4; hp 30; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 15 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +1 size, +5 chainmail); Atk melee +7 (1d10+4/crit 20/x3, halfling waraxe); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Halfling Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10

**Skills:** Climb +2, Jump +2, Swim +2

**Feats:** Dodge (+1 AC vs. single opponent), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (halfling waraxe), Improved Initiative (+4 Init), Weapon Focus (halfling waraxe; +1 to attack rolls), Weapon Specialization (halfling waraxe; +2 to damage rolls)

(Weapon Focus and Specialization bonuses are already counted in for the halfling.)

**Halfling Traits (Ex):** Halflings receive +2 morale bonus to saving throws against fear.

## Mirror Blink Dogs (4)

### Medium-sized Magical Beasts

CR 2; SZ M (magical beast); HD 4d10; hp 22; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Dex, +3 natural); Atk melee +6 (1d6+2, bite); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Blink, Dimension Door, Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +4; Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 13, Cha 10

**Skills:** Hide +8, Listen +8, Spot +8

**Feats:** Iron Will (+2 to Will Saves)

**Blink (Su):** As the spell; physical attacks and individually targeted spells have a 50% chance of missing the blink dog, the dog takes half damage from area effect spells. The dog gains a +2 attack bonus and the target loses any Dex bonus to AC. The dog may share these abilities with its rider; if it does not, the rider has a 50% chance of falling off each round.

**Dimension Door (Su):** As the spell; teleport up to 720 feet as a free action. The dog may act or attack after teleporting, and the dog may transport a rider while teleporting.

**Scent (Ex):** The blink dog can make a Wis check to track by scent.

doors. These creatures move too quickly to be seen clearly — they seem to be lean, athletic figures wearing skins and scraps of metal armor, with patches of wild color on exposed skin, and they emit blood-curdling howls as they hurl themselves upon the party. In their midst is one shorter figure — another goblin, most likely, but wearing chainmail of a more primitive design and a full helm — who moves with less grace but with greater determination than his comrades. Meanwhile, if anyone has remained outside the house, a few large wolf-like beasts — the mounts of the raiders — come around the side of the building. If no one has remained outside, these beasts will head for the party's mounts with slaughter on their minds.

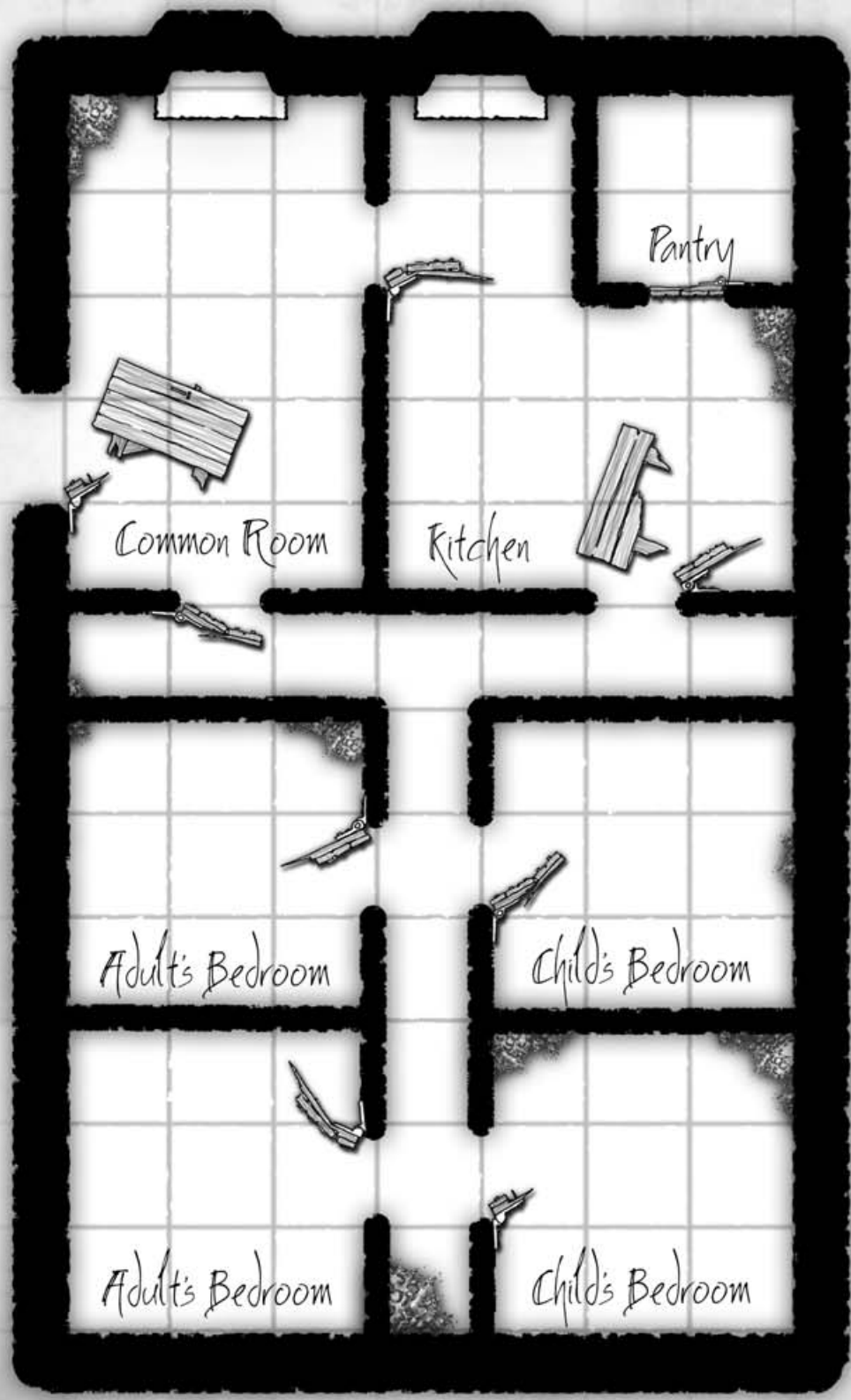
There are four elves and one halfling in the building, and four blink dogs outside. For a group of 8th-level adventurers, remove one elf and one blink dog. The blink dogs are likely to flee if they are seriously injured or if their masters are slain; use this as a balancing factor if the party is overwhelmed by the attack.

This will be the first real chance for the PCs to discover their equipment and spells don't work as they should; between spells backfiring and magical arms and armor proving detrimental to their wearers, the fight should be more of a challenge than the characters would expect.

The process of the PCs discovering the new abilities of their equipment is the true challenge of this encounter, and you should draw it out. Don't simply say "your +2 *shortsword* is now -2"; let the PCs fight for a time, and occasionally say things like "Something feels wrong — your attacks feel slightly clumsy." Of course, certain things will be immediately obvious; characters will notice if a *keen* weapon doesn't score a critical hit when it should, or if a *shocking weapon* zaps its user. See Appendix Two for more details on converting magical weapons and equipment.

After a round of combat has passed, any character who makes a Spot check against a DC of 16 will recognize the attackers as filthy elves, their hair matted and skin covered with tattoos, scars, and war paint. The elves will immediately Rage, but they have no sense of strategy and will attack whichever target is closest.

# THE LOOTED FARMHOUSE



1 square = 5 feet



## THE EBON MIRROR

The halfling is more difficult to identify, but after a few rounds an opponent should catch a glimpse of halfling skin beneath the armor. The mounts are more difficult to identify, at least until they begin to teleport. They are unusually large, savage blink dogs; their matted fur and yellowed fangs will surprise any character who is familiar with the blink dogs of the prime world. None of these attackers will listen to reason; they are lost in battle frenzy, and see the party as interlopers trying to steal their victory.

The halfling is the greatest threat here; he will attempt to target spellcasters, and if one is not available he will join with one of the elves to flank the weakest-looking target. He will always be on the lookout for an attack of opportunity.

The innate power and abilities of the PCs should carry them through this encounter. Sadly, there is little to be gained from it. The elves are wearing piecemeal studded leather armor, and carrying longswords and shortbows with arrows that match those found at the scene of the last attack. The halfling carries a weapon much like a dwarven waraxe (it's actually a weapon of halfling design) and wears plain chainmail; he has a sack at his belt containing 40 sp, 30 gp, and a pair of silver candlesticks worth 100 gp apiece (this is the treasure gathered from the farmhouse by the raiders).

The dead goblin has masterwork chainmail and a masterwork halfspear, but only a halfling or gnome could wear his armor (likewise for that of the halfling fighter).

Should a tracker think to try to find the trail of the raiders, it will prove to be impossible; once again, the teleporting movement of the blink dogs results in a trail spread too far apart to be followed.

If the characters search the farmhouse, they will discover that the fire has begun to spread.

The fire has spread too far throughout the house to be put out by mundane means — but a druidic *flame strike*, *fireball*, *flaming sword*, or similar magical effect can stop the flames. See Appendix Two for additional information about the altered effects of spells.

A character who makes a Listen check (DC 17) will hear whimpering cries from a back room.

If a character hears the pathetic cries and follows them, she will see that they are coming from a barricaded door in the kitchen, which is beginning to catch flame.

Shifting the furniture blocking the door will require a Strength check (DC 22).

Behind the door, three goblin children — two girls and a boy — have been hidden in the pantry; upon seeing any of the characters, they will squeal in terror and flee in three different directions. A character who makes a determined effort can probably catch a child, but it will be a challenge, as the children know the area and are small and fast.

If necessary, use the statistics provided for Smudge (page 85) for the goblin children. They are younger than Smudge, but the statistics will serve.

Any character with a movement rate faster than 30 feet will be able to catch at least one of the children, provided he acts immediately. A character with the Tracking feat will be able to follow a child with a Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 15); a dedicated tracker will simply be able to run a child to ground.

If caught, a child will faint from sheer terror; if the characters take her with them, she will attempt to escape at any possible opportunity, and refuse to communicate with the players in any way. PCs with exceptional skills or magical tricks may be able to influence the children, but communication will be a major problem; the children only speak the local dialect of orcish — a strange blend of orcish and elvish, made more confusing by the poor grammar and limited vocabulary of the children.

If a character speaks both elvish and orcish, he may attempt to communicate with the children. A Diplomacy roll against a DC of 30 will be required to get them to willingly speak to the monstrous humans and their companions.

Even if a PC can win over the children, age and lack of knowledge will prevent the young goblins

from giving too much away; all the party will really be able to find out is that the children live in the house and are afraid of elves. The children will be especially terrified of elven and halfling PCs, and will be completely mystified by any gnomish PCs, as the prime gnomes are remarkably different from their feral mirror cousins.

There is little else to be found in the farmhouse; even if the PCs use magic to put out the fire, the contents have already been seriously damaged by flame and there is not much of value. A quick search will reveal the corpses of four adult goblins armed with knives and farming implements, and the body of the one elf that the goblins managed to kill. A painting on one wall shows a sunset over the fields; it is a remarkably romantic, subtle technique, and it seems quite impossible that it could be goblin work.

Once the PCs do have time to reflect on the encounter, they should have a sense that their magic weapons are not functioning normally. Balance is off, and the edges seem dull. At this point, the characters may take some time to experiment with their equipment and spells to try to find a pattern; they may also choose to open Merita's trunk, correctly concluding that the cursed items are now useful (see pages 28-29 for the modified abilities of these items). If any of the PCs choose to wear the studded leather belonging to the elven raiders, goblins or orcs encountered later in the adventure will immediately jump to the conclusion that the characters are evil.

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## DANCING SKELETONS AND (UN)HOLY MEN

Eventually, there will be nothing left for the party but to continue on their journey. The sky has turned gray and seems to threaten rain, but the next few hours pass quietly enough.

As dusk begins to fall, the foremost rider of the party will spot a figure sitting by the side of the road. He appears to be a human male, and is lost in contemplation. As the party draws closer, they will see that he wears scale armor and carries a shield; his tabard and shield are marked with the emblems of the god of the party's most devout good player character. If there are no religious (or good) folk amongst the party, use a well-known benevolent deity from your campaign setting. He

appears to be a militant priest; a heavy mace rests at his feet.

Should the party approach openly, or make their presence known, he will examine them and break into a wide smile. "Thank (*insert god*)," he says, making a reverent sign. "I thought that you might be more of those mad elves."

This man is Molric Drach, and he is a priest in the service of the raider horde. However, while he hates the orcs and goblins above all other creatures, he bears no love for elves, halflings, or the other creatures allied with the human cause. He has been sent to punch a hole through the undead blockade that is protecting Shareth-en-La from the forces of the raiders. He has seen the mirror world duplicates of the PCs (who they will encounter in Chapter Five) in the raider camp, and he knows that they were also sent to break the blockade; he has jumped to the wrong conclusion, namely that the party was sent to help him. In fact, the PCs' doppelgangers are attacking a different enclave of undead further south. Since Molric has discovered that the undead force was more powerful than he expected it to be, he is very happy to see the party.

The conversation with Molric is intended to keep the party guessing just a little longer:

- Molric hates elves; they are savage, unpredictable, and besides which, they smell. If the party begins talking about the situation at the farm, he will shake his head. "They're insane, I tell you. I don't know what's wrong with them!"
- If the party asks about the goblin farmers, he will shrug. He hates them too. "You wouldn't expect civilized behavior from such vile creatures, would you?"
- If people complain about spells or magical objects backfiring, he will be honestly stumped — this is strange to him. "Perhaps there's some sort of magic flux." He will be happy to help them experiment with magic. Needless to say, all his spells do exactly what he expects them to do.
- If the characters are escorting one of the goblin children, Molric may ask about it — "Keeping souvenirs from your battle?" — but he won't pry too deeply; whatever the PCs say, Molric will jump to the conclusion that they intend to have a little gruesome fun with the child later on.



## THE EBON MIRROR

A PC can make a Sense Motive roll (DC 20) to get a better idea of Molric's intent. If successful, the character will sense that Molric is sincere in his desire to eliminate the undead and in his friendly intentions towards the players — but he has a surprising amount of vehemence directed against both goblins and elves. If there are elf characters in the party, he tries to hide these sentiments since he needs to convince the PCs to help him.

The goal of this encounter is for the PCs to think, "Maybe something strange has happened to the elves," but to pull them back from assuming that the entire world has shifted. This fellow seems reasonable enough, after all, and he thinks these things are strange, too.

After introductions have been made, Molric will turn to the character who shares his faith — or to the apparent leader of the group, if there are no devout PCs. "It shames me to impose, brother, but I must ask for your assistance. The path to the nearby village is blocked by a band of vile undead creatures. I have taken it as my task to cleanse this road and lay these tortured souls to rest — but I have looked ahead, and I cannot defeat such a force on my own. I sat here in contemplation, hoping that *(insert name of god)* would send me guidance ... and he has sent you. Will you aid me in my task?"

At this point, the PCs may have many questions. Molric has few answers: "I have seen floating bones of men, that move as if they were still encased in flesh. These are accompanied by creatures that may have once been men, but which are now gaunt and emaciated, chewing on bits of bone and rotting flesh." To someone who knows the undead, this sounds like skeletons and ghouls — hardly a challenge for a party of the level of the PCs.

Molric has no idea how long the undead have been present, and if PCs begin to theorize about a connection between the undead and the strange behavior of the elves at the farmhouse, he will simply shrug; he is focused on the battle that lies ahead. Eventually, he will state his intention to accomplish his task and ask if the PCs are with him. If not, he will go ahead alone, and die; the party will eventually have to overcome the undead without his assistance. If they join him, he will advise them to follow him as quietly as possible. Advancing a short distance to a slight hill, he bids the party to peer over the crest.

### DEAD MEN DANCING

The sight that meets the PCs eyes is an unusual one. Down a slight hill, approximately 90 feet from the characters, there is a congregation of undead creatures. Four ghouls stand together, devouring a corpse. Eight skeletons surround the ghouls in a rough circle.



## Molric Drach

### 6<sup>th</sup>-Level Human Cleric

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d8; hp 25; Init +0; Spd 30 ft; AC 16 (+4 scale mail, +2 large metal shield); Atk melee +6 (1d8+2/crit 20/x2, heavy mace); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; SA Spells; SQ Turn Undead, Spontaneous Casting (*inflict* spells); AL LE; SV Fort +6, Ref +2, Will +7; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 14, Cha 13

**Skills:** Concentration +7, Heal +8, Spellcraft +4, Spot +5

**Feats:** Cleave (May take one extra attack immediately after felling an opponent), Extra Turning x2, Power Attack (May reduce chance to hit by up to 4 in order to increase damage by the same amount)

**Turn Undead:** Molric may attempt to turn undead 12 times per day. He gets a +1 to his roll due to his Charisma score.

**Spontaneous Casting:** Molric may drop prepared spells to cast *inflict* spells

**Spells:** 5/4+1/4+1/2+1/0/0/0/0/0; Molric's spheres are Death and Evil.

0 Level — *guidance* x3, *resistance* x2

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *bane*, *cure light wounds* x2, *doom*; *protection from good*

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *augury*, *bull's strength*; *cure moderate wounds*, *spiritual weapon*; *death knell*

3<sup>rd</sup> level— *bestow curse*, *cure serious wounds*; *magic circle against good*

If Molric worships the same deity as one of the PCs, adjust his alignment and spheres to match the mirror version of the god. In this case, Molric is assumed to be the follower of a god who would have the Good and Healing spheres in the prime world (see page 90 for more information on clerical conversions).

With a Search check (DC 20) a character can determine that the corpse is that of an elf, dressed in a similar manner as the raiders encountered at the farmhouse. Otherwise, the PCs can determine that the figure is a human or elf, but cannot make out any additional details.

With a Spot check (DC 18) and an Intelligence check (DC 15), a PC who has encountered ghouls before will notice one anomaly. While most ghouls have crimson eyes that burn like hot coals, the eyes of these creatures shine with a soft, pale blue light.



NEW CREATURES:  
*The Sacred Undead*

There is a saying among the orcs of Shareth-en-La: "The only good human is a dead human." In the world behind the mirror, this is not a statement of bigotry; instead, it is a simple fact. Sometimes the gods of the orcs will spy a glimmer of light in the soul of a human, or one of the other non-goblinoid races; in these cases the gods may allow the creature the chance to atone for his sins in life through his actions after death. The corpses of these beings are charged with the divine light of the gods; this positive energy gives them greater powers than their negatively charged counterparts in the normal world, and abilities that may come as a surprise to the denizens of that world.

As a rule, the sacred undead only appear where orcish priests have called for aid. They are usually found holding bridges and gates for the peaceful orcs. Orcs and goblins recognize the undead as their allies and protectors, and will be angry at those who wantonly destroy these holy creatures.

Unlike the undead of the prime world, sacred undead react to *cure* and *inflict* spells just like living creatures. An infusion of positive energy restores the power of the spirit, while negative energy causes injury.

The sacred skeletons and ghouls confronted in this chapter are described below. For information on wraiths, see page 46. Vampires — as represented by Jeseth, the guardian of Shareth-en-La — are described on page 81.

NEW CREATURE:  
**SACRED SKELETON (8)**

**Medium-sized Undead**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	3d12 (20 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8 (+4 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	40 ft.
<b>AC:</b>	17 (+4 Dexterity, +3 natural)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Masterwork greatsword +6 melee, masterwork longbow +8 ranged
<b>Damage:</b>	Masterwork greatsword 2d6+3/crit 19-20/x2, masterwork longbow 1d8/crit 20/x2
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Death Flare

<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Fast Healing 8, +2 Turn Resistance, Sacred Undead, Immunities
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 14, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b>	None
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Initiative (+4 Init)
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Any (Where placed by priests)
<b>Organization:</b>	Any
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	3
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Neutral Good
<b>Advancement:</b>	5-6 HD (Medium)

A skeleton is the weakest member of the sacred undead. The physical appearance of the skeleton is a mirror to its spiritual state; in seeking to find a pure core within the corrupt human soul, the gods have stripped it down to its bare bones. A sacred skeleton has a very simple mind and is incapable of complex thought. It is cheerful and filled with energy; left on its own a skeleton will dance and caper about, and this speed is reflected in its high Dexterity and initiative bonus. The energy that flows through it manifests as a slight glow in dark areas, and in the remarkable degree of regeneration the skeleton possesses; bones will knit themselves together after being crushed. However, a sufficient amount of damage will break the bond that holds these bones together, resulting in a brilliant burst of energy.

**Death Flare (Su):** When a sacred skeleton reaches zero hit points — even if this occurs as a result of subdual damage — its energy is released in a final burst. This flare strikes all living creatures within a ten-foot radius of the skeleton. Victims must make a Reflex save vs. DC 15 or be *blinded* (as the spell) for two rounds. In addition, all evil creatures within the area of effect will lose 2 points of Strength score for four rounds and take 1d10 points of damage; there is no save against either of these two effects. These effects are cumulative; subsequent death flares will further reduce a victim's Strength and hit points. Note that a skeleton does not generate a death flare if it is destroyed through turning.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** The positive energy that flows through the sacred undead constantly replenishes their physical forms. As long as a skeleton has hit points remaining, it will heal 8 points at the start of each round. This effect cannot heal damage caused

by necromantic spells, which disrupt the positive energy of the spirit.

**Immunities (Ex):** Sacred skeletons have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

**Sacred Undead (Su):** All sacred undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or any effects that require a Fortitude save.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** The positive energy that flows through these undead creatures bolsters them and protects them from outside manipulation. Sacred skeletons are considered to be 6 HD creatures for purposes of turning.

NEW CREATURE:  
SACRED GHOUL (4)

Medium-sized Undead

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	5d12 (30 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+2 (Dex)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft
<b>AC:</b>	16 (+2 Dex, +4 natural)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Bite +6 melee; two claws +3 melee
<b>Damage:</b>	Bite 1d6+2 and Peaceful Touch; claw 1d4 and Peaceful Touch
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Peaceful Touch
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Detect Evil, Euphoric Scent, Fast Healing 4, +5 Turn Resistance, Sacred Undead
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 14, Dex 15, Con —, Int 13, Wis 16, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b>	Climb +7, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Intuit Direction +3, Jump +6, Listen +8, Move Silently +7, Search +6, Spot +8
<b>Feats:</b>	Weapon Finesse (bite)
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Any (Where placed by priests)
<b>Organization:</b>	Any
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	4
<b>Treasure:</b>	None

**Alignment:** Neutral Good

**Advancement:** 7-8 HD (Medium)

The sacred ghoul feeds on the corpses of evil-doers. It is a step between the skeleton and the vampire — pure enough in spirit to retain some semblance of life and a bare minimum of sentience in death, yet not so pure as to rise in its own shape nor to retain its own thoughts. A sacred ghoul shares the scabrous appearance of its negative counterpart, but despite its grisly form it moves with a sinuous grace, and it emits a strong odor of flowers.

In combat, a sacred ghoul will seek out the enemies that radiate the strongest levels of evil. It will attempt to incapacitate non-evil creatures with its peaceful touch and then move on to more malevolent foes.

**Detect Evil (Ex):** A sacred ghoul naturally perceives the world in shades of good and evil. A ghoul constantly has *detect evil* in effect within its visual range, and does not have to concentrate to maintain this.

**Euphoric Scent (Su):** The rich floral scent that surrounds a sacred ghoul fills those who breathe it with a sense of passive euphoria. Anyone who comes within 10 feet of the ghoul must make a Fortitude saving throw (DC 18). If he fails the roll, the character must make a Will saving throw (DC 15) every time he wishes to take any sort of hostile action; if he fails, he will instead take a total defense action (+4 dodge bonus to AC) while trying to remember why he wanted to hurt anyone. This effect lasts for 1d4 minutes.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** As long as the ghoul has hit points remaining, it will heal 4 points at the start of each round. This effect cannot heal damage caused by necromantic spells.

**Peaceful Touch (Su):** The touch of a sacred ghoul — even a vicious slash of its claws — floods its target with a rush of love and affection for the world. The victim must make a Will saving throw against a DC of 16; if she fails, she finds that she loves everything — including the ghoul — and will simply try to stay out of the way of other people while she grooves on the universe. A victim can make an additional saving throw every five rounds; once she makes a successful saving throw, she will be returned to normal until she is struck with another Peaceful Touch. An arcane *hold person* or other spell that would remove paralysis will cancel this effect.

**Sacred Undead (Su):** All sacred undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or any effects that require a Fortitude save.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** Sacred ghouls are considered to be 10 HD creatures for purposes of turning.





## THE EBON MIRROR

While the eyes of the ghouls are slightly unusual, the skeletons are downright bizarre. The bones of the skeletons are glowing with a pale blue light — the same light that shines in the eyes of the ghouls. The skeletons have formed a ring around the ghouls, and they are dancing a strange, circular jig that causes their bones to rattle and click together. As the characters watch, the skeletons circle around the ghouls, occasionally switching direction or spinning a partner around. Between the light and the rhythmic motion, it is oddly soothing. Should anyone ask, the skeletons appear to be human, although one or two may be the remains of elves. They are armed with beautiful greatswords, and longbows and arrows are set on the ground before them.

The undead are guarding a natural chokepoint — a bridge over a great deep chasm. This bridge is a wide arch of stone and wood, with railings in the shape of intertwined serpents; the work should appear to be that of master elven craftsmen, although it is of course the creation of orcs and ogres.

The skeletons will continue to dance as long as the characters care to watch. Eventually Molric will rouse the party to action. He is happy to listen to ideas on how to approach the situation, but he is not subtle by nature; his idea of a plan would be to charge in and rely on the protection of his god to keep these unholy beasts at bay. He will emphasize that the creatures must be destroyed; if they are simply driven off, they will return to threaten the area, and besides which, “their souls will still be trapped in this hellish torment.” The undead cannot be easily lured from their post; even if they are attacked with missile weapons, they will rely on the skeleton archers to return fire.

When it comes to battle, the party will find that these are not the undead they are used to dealing with. The undead of the mirror world are charged with positive energy, and they are quite different from their malign counterparts in the prime world. Statistics are provided in the insert boxes on pages 38-39.

When battle begins, the skeletons spread their attacks amongst the party members. The ghouls will concentrate their efforts on Molric, who they recognize as the vilest individual in the group; they will attempt to incapacitate PCs who

get between them and their target, but they will then return their attention to the evil priest. Once Molric is defeated, they will pick another target to attack as a mob. However, after they have incapacitated a non-evil character, they will turn their attention to a new target instead of striking a killing blow. Should they manage to incapacitate the entire party, they will pause, puzzled; eventually they will carry the PCs to the gates of Shareth, where they will be awakened and interrogated by Jeseth. In this case, move directly to the “Talking to Jeseth” section of Chapter Four — but assume that the PCs have already been disarmed.

Whatever happens, life is simpler here if Molric dies; feel free to do a little creative die rolling to ensure that he fails a saving throw and gets his throat ripped out.

The only treasures that the undead possess are the swords and bows of the skeletons. Molric is wearing a set of scale mail and carries a large metal shield and a heavy mace. His equipment is not magical — but it’s not cursed, either. Of course, the orc and goblin villagers of Sharethen-La will assume the worst about anyone wearing the holy emblem of Molric’s dark and terrible god (on the other hand, one of the PCs may already be displaying this emblem — so why not two?).

### AVOIDING COMBAT

It is possible that the PCs will find some way to avoid fighting the undead. A raven familiar or a shapeshifted druid could fly to the hamlet to deliver the letter from Merita Aolias — for the Crucible of Osai still exists in this world, and while she is now an orc, Merita is still a respected member of the community of Shareth. Alternatively, the characters might come up with some sort of clever way to cross the chasm without using the bridge. This is fine. If the entire party bypasses the encounter, simply allow them to continue on to the hamlet as if they defeated the sacred undead. If one character makes it to the village, give her the basic treatment described in Chapter Four under “Talking to Jeseth.” Assuming she keeps her head and explains the situation, the other characters will eventually be given an escort to the village.

# OFF TO SEE THE SEER

*“You travel with strange companions, sir,” the vampire said to the half-orc Krogar. “In spite of your questionable parentage, I would never have expected to find one of orcish blood in the company of a vile priest of the Stonefather. And yet I sense no emanations of evil from any of you. How do you explain this?”*

*At this slander of her god, Sera began to speak, but the hostile glares from the orcs and goblins in the room stopped the words in her throat. “Look, lady,” Krogar growled. “I told you before, we don’t belong here. We’re not like you people. Why don’t you let us talk to this Seer guy and we’ll get out of your hair?”*

*“Surely, you have been sent here to assassinate the great Seer,” snarled a half-orc priest. “We*

*should expect no better of one tainted with human blood. Either you have found a way to fool lady Jeseth’s vaunted senses, or her human spirit is not so pure as she would have us believe. Either way, you will never see the Seer Osai!”*

*The elderly female orc began to argue with the priest. In his mind, Krogar heard the voice of the axe. Come on, boss, it said, with your arms and my power, we can level this place. You’re not going soft on me, are ya? Come on, let’s do some damage!*

*“Shut up,” Krogar murmured. The vampire woman glanced over at him and he smiled sheepishly, cursing the damned axe.*

## The Hamlet of Shareth-en-La (Mirror Version)

**Power Center:** Conventional (Council of Elders)

**Alignment:** Neutral Good

**Community Authorities:** Jeseth VerDragt, 10<sup>th</sup>-Level Human Vampire Paladin

**NPCs in the Community:** The Seer Osai-en-La, 8<sup>th</sup>-Level Orc Diviner/10<sup>th</sup> Level Loremaster; Arivon Felosial, 5<sup>th</sup>-Level Goblin Wizard, village elder; Felienda Waterfall, orcish village elder (impersonated by Jeja VerDragt, Human 5<sup>th</sup>-Level Rogue/5<sup>th</sup>-Level Assassin); Throg, 6<sup>th</sup>-Level Half-Orc Cleric, village elder and priest; Koralian Silverbloom, 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Ogre Expert, village reeve

**Population:** 74 orcs, 46 goblins, 19 ogres (139 total)

Despite its small size, Shareth has a surprisingly high density of classed characters. The hamlet contains a total of 22 inhabitants with at least one level of arcane spellcasting skill, along with 36 experts. This is because the town was founded as a center for the creation (and destruction) of magical artifacts; the Seer Osai gathered craftsmen from across the orcish community when he set out to create the community.

While the Seer is the heart of the village, a Council of Elders oversees the daily operations of the community. The Seer remains in his private chambers beneath the roots of the Great Tree at the center of the hamlet, pondering the future and seeking ways to destroy the cursed artifacts that have been gathered by the Hands of the Crucible. The stockpile of mystical artifacts belonging to the village — both cursed objects awaiting destruction and the creations of the villagers — are kept in an underground vault, which can only be reached via teleportation and whose location is known only to the Seer.

The inhabitants of Shareth-en-La are pacifists by nature. The sacred undead serve as their guardians, with the vampire paladin Jeseth VerDragt acting as coordinator. With the arrival of the human and elven raiders, the villagers have come to rely on Jeseth to provide them with security.



# THE HAMLET OF SHARETHENLA

## IMPORTANT PLACES

- 1 - Central Tree
- 2 - Bookery
- 3 - Koralian's House
- 4 - Alchemists' Union
- 5 - The Golden Moon
- 6 - Hall of Smiths
- 7 - Jewelers' Hall
- 8 - Tannery
- 9 - Woodworkers' Hall
- 5 - Stairs to Tree Level



## JOURNEY'S END

In this chapter, the PCs finally reach the hamlet of Shareth-en-La. The first challenge is to gain entry to the village; but once within, the party must find a way to earn the trust of the inhabitants. Ultimately they will discover a human spy within Shareth; this situation will allow them to speak with the Seer Osai, who will explain the challenges that lie ahead of them.

The previous encounters — the battle with the elves and the encounter with Molric — most likely left the players somewhat confused about the nature of the mirror world. Are the elves evil? How do humans and halflings fit into things? The events of this chapter should allow the char-

acters to answer a few of their questions about the world, and present a roleplaying challenge; the PCs will have to deal with the fact that in this place they are considered savage monsters.

This chapter describes a series of events. It is possible that the party will deviate from this path. Perhaps they will choose to attack the paranoid priest Throg when he begins to harangue them. Maybe they will get into a bar brawl in the Golden Moon tavern. Or you could come up with an idea for a scene that would be more challenging for your particular group of PCs. The statistics of the NPCs are provided for this purpose; make sure to familiarize yourself with Appendix One before running this chapter, and use the NPCs as you see fit.



## A CHALLENGE AT THE GATE

After passing the undead blockade and crossing the chasm, the party will find that the environment around them begins to change. Where previously the area was rocky and barren, the land beyond the chasm is more lush; the density of vegetation slowly grows until the PCs find that they are wandering through a thick forest.

It takes about an hour for the party to reach the walls of Shareth. Up ahead, they see a group of giant trees, each spaced about 20 feet apart. The trees are connected by a fence made from interwoven branches — a dense wall of briar that can only have been created through magical means. The massive walls are approximately 20 feet in height. The forest path leads directly to an oaken gate embedded in the thorny wall. Patterns of ivy are engraved on the gate — another touch that seems too delicate for the hand of an orc. But beyond the walls characters notice taller trees stretching up towards the sky — and orcs and goblins can be seen moving about on platforms and bridges built into the branches.

Another group of undead lies between the party and the gate. Three ghouls are standing just in front of the gate, while six skeletons dance around them (this group includes three human skeletons, two elves, and a dwarf). In the air, a shimmering figure of light — a sacred wraith — skims back and forth along the top of the wall, keeping an eye out for intruders. There are a variety of options the party may consider at this point (including being dragged unconscious to the village gates if they were defeated by the ghouls earlier), but all roads eventually lead to a conversation with Jeseth, the undead defender of the village.

## THE SILENT APPROACH

The party may attempt to sneak into the city, either through use of stealth or by using illusion spells or disguise skills to pose as goblins or orcs. The only problem with this plan is that the hamlet is on alert because of the human raiders — few people are stealthy enough to escape the watchful eye of Jeseth the vampire, and visitors are so rare that a new group of goblins or orcs will be examined carefully. If a character did manage to slip into the town, he would raise such a panic when

seen that he would eventually be driven back to the city gates (use the stats for Zalanthe and Smudge on page 85 for generic villagers if it comes to this). As a general rule, characters attempting to approach by stealth will be confronted by Jeseth — although she will give them a chance to explain their presence without resorting to violence. In this case, move directly to “Talking to Jeseth,” below.

## BLOOD AND BONES

The other option is to approach the gates openly. Regardless of whether the party initiates an attack or simply makes their presence known, the undead will engage them; these creatures have been returned from the grave to protect the hamlet from humans and their allies, and they will not stop to listen to what the characters have to say. Statistics for the sacred ghouls and skeletons can be found on pages 38-39.

Allow the combat to go on for approximately four rounds. At that point, a raven will fly over the briar wall; heading towards the ground, it transforms into a young human woman wearing glistening armor of green scales. A gilded bastard sword shines in her hand, and a medallion in the shape of a golden tree glitters at her throat. Jeseth VerDragt has arrived.

A character who makes a Spot check (DC 15) will notice Jeseth’s corpse-white skin. If it is night, her eyes will gleam red in the darkness; if it is day, a Spot check (DC 20) will notice her fangs when she speaks.

Jeseth’s first action will be to raise her sword and call out “HOLD!” in a gravelly voice. The undead will cease their attacks; if the characters continue to fight, Jeseth will enter the fray, and combat will continue.

Jeseth will attempt to *dominate* the PCs and turn them against their friends. Whenever you feel enough time has passed, Jeseth will again attempt to stop the battle; she has used her ability to *detect evil* and found nothing. “Cease this battle! We have no reason to fight! I will not ask you again!”



## NEW CREATURE:

**Sacred Wraith (1)**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	5d12 (32 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	+8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good)
<b>AC:</b>	16 (+4 Dex, +2 deflection)
<b>Attacks:</b>	None
<b>Damage:</b>	None
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	None
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Aura of Sanctuary, Fast Healing 5, Healing Touch, Illumination, Imbue Life, Incorporeal, +5 Turn Resistance, Sacred Undead
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +0, Ref +4, Will +2
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 14, Dex 18, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 11
<b>Skills:</b>	Intuit Direction +10, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +10, Spot +12
<b>Feats:</b>	Alertness, Improved Initiative
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Any (Where placed by priests)
<b>Organization:</b>	Any
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	5
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Neutral Good
<b>Advancement:</b>	6-7 HD (Medium)

Some believe that these creatures are the souls of saintly creatures, while others say that they are pure emanations of positive energy. A sacred wraith appears as a shimmering figure of pure light; but the physical appearance of the wraith is not nearly as striking as its spiritual resonance. Anyone standing within thirty feet of a sacred wraith will feel a wave of warmth and goodwill flow through him. This affects even evildoers; the pure light of the spirit washes away hostility and fear, forcing aggressors to justify their actions without the excuse of anger.

In battle a sacred wraith will play a supporting role, healing the injured and spreading its Aura of Sanctuary. If all of its allies are defeated, the wraith will usually sacrifice itself to resurrect its most powerful ally.

**Aura of Sanctuary (Su):** As a being of pure positive energy, a sacred wraith radiates an aura of peace and comfort. It is difficult for other creatures to feel any sort of negative emotion while facing the spirit. This has two effects. First, anyone within thirty feet of the wraith receives a +4 to his saving throw against any sort of spell or effect that would cause an unpleasant emotion — *fear*, *spook*, etc. Additionally, the wraith

possesses a permanent form of the *sanctuary* spell; anyone who wishes to engage in a hostile action against the wraith must make a Will saving throw against a DC of 14. An attacker must make this roll every time he engages in hostilities against the wraith; succeeding once does not allow unlimited attacks for the duration of the battle. If a character fails this save, the character may engage in peaceful actions or engage other opponents, but cannot attempt to harm the wraith in any way.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** As long as the wraith has hit points remaining, it will heal 5 points at the start of each round. This effect cannot heal damage caused by necromantic spells.

**Healing Touch (Su):** A sacred wraith can channel its energy into another living creature or another one of the sacred undead. This has a number of beneficial effects. It can heal 3d10 hit points of damage, restore one level lost to level drain abilities, or restore up to two points of ability damage. The wraith may use one of these three effects per round, and it must touch the creature it wishes to heal. If a sacred wraith somehow encountered a negatively charged undead creature, its touch would inflict 3d10 points of damage on the negative entity.

**Illumination (Su):** The positive energy that flows through the wraith manifests itself as light. A sacred wraith provides illumination equal to a *daylight* spell within a 30-foot radius.

**Imbue Life (Su):** In dire circumstances, a sacred wraith may sacrifice all of its energy in order to restore life to someone who has just been killed. This functions as *resurrection*, but the wraith is slain in the process of using the effect. This ability can be used on both living creatures and sacred undead (which are, after all, animated by positive energy).

**Incorporeal (Ex):** A sacred wraith can only be harmed by other incorporeal creatures, by +1 or better weapons, or by spells, spell-like abilities, or supernatural attack forms. They are immune to all non-magical attack forms. Even when struck by magic or magical weapons, the wraith has a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. It may move in any direction at will and can pass through solid objects at will.

**Sacred Undead (Su):** All sacred undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or any effects that require a Fortitude save.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** Sacred wraiths are considered to be 10 HD creatures for purposes of turning.

If the characters refuse to back down, the fight will continue to the death. Jeseth will assume *gaseous form* and retreat if she is seriously wounded; when she is healed (which will only be a matter of a few rounds) she will return to attack the party again. Even if she is somehow destroyed, the sacred wraith can restore her, so hopefully the characters will choose to parley. If the PCs are defeated by the undead, Jeseth will use her Healing Touch to preserve their lives (after restraining them, of course) — she is curious about these raiders that do not bear the stench of evil.

- If they mention their home town, Jeseth may either remark, “So how is it that you came to be accepted by the troll lords of that fair city?” or say something more like, “So you admit you come from that wretched hive of human treachery — the seat of Crossac the Reaver?”

Despite her gruff demeanor, Jeseth is skilled with Sense Motive and she is troubled by the fact that she cannot *detect evil* in the party. She does not know what to make of the PCs, and she has a strong drive to see that justice is done. A character who makes a Sense Motive check at a DC of 20 will sense this internal struggle — the fact that she distrusts them, and yet is trying to overcome this natural instinct.

If a character wishes to Bluff Jeseth into believing some lie about their origins, he should engage in an opposed skill check against her Sense Motive skill of +12. If the Bluff attempt fails, this will cause Jeseth to become more hostile and suspicious towards the characters.

Jeseth’s statistics can be found on page 81.

## TALKING TO JSETH

Whether restrained or free, the PCs will eventually end up talking to Jeseth at the gates of Shareth-en-La. The vampire paladin is an imposing figure in her armor of gold and green scales, and her aura of courage lends her the aspect of strength and power. She is economical in her use of words, and cuts straight to the point. Her questions are straightforward:

- Who are you?
- Where do you come from?
- Why have you come here?

If the characters haven’t figured things out, it will quickly become clear that this is not the world they are used to:

- If they protest their innocence, Jeseth will point to any paladin or cleric in the party, telling the PCs, “You travel in the company of one of the servants of dark (*god*) and you claim to be innocent travelers? Speak truly, now!”
- If they think to produce the letter from Merita Aolias, Jeseth will at first seem placated, but when she opens the letter she will gesture at the mystic sigil that glows on the parchment. “This is not Merita’s seal, though the hand is hers. What have you done with her? What is your intent?”

Eventually, either one of the characters will ask to see the Seer, or Jeseth will suggest it herself, saying that he is the only one who might make sense of this situation. But seeing the Seer is no simple matter; she will have to obtain the approval of the Council of Elders — those whose wisdom guides the village — before she can take strangers to the sanctum of the Seer. If the PCs are willing to lay down their weapons and enter the village in peace, Jeseth promises to take them before the council.

## PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, SHARETH STYLE

Jeseth will return to her raven form and fly back inside Shareth, and within a few moments the great gates will open and the party can enter the village. At a glance, Shareth is a poster image for elven society — ramps ascend the trunks of ancient trees, and lanterns in the branches shed a pleasant glow onto platforms cunningly woven into the structures of the trees. But there are oddities. On the ground, there are quaint, ivy-covered cottages — but the doors to these cottages



are over ten feet tall, and the ceilings look to be at least fourteen feet high. As quickly becomes apparent, these are the houses of the ogres, who are not nimble enough to navigate the tree branches. In the background, the sound of a hammer ringing on an anvil echoes from a distant forge; orc villagers bustle about their daily chores, while goblins dart about in the branches overhead. Hardly anyone carries a weapon or wears armor; save for their race, these creatures could be craftsmen and farmers in any quiet town.

When the party enters, a silence falls upon the crowd. Depending on the hour, children will scream and run for the trees; ogres step protectively in front of their smaller kin, while orcs and goblins gape in astonishment. Before absolute panic can spread through the crowd, Jeseth steps in front of the party. “Be not afraid,” she grates in her gravelly voice. “I have these creatures under my eye, and I will not let them hurt you. Be about your business.”

Hesitantly, the onlookers disperse, backing away until they reach the safety of the buildings. A few of the orcs make warding signs, while ogres grit their teeth and clutch farming implements defensively. Jeseth calls a pair of goblins over with a gesture, and speaks to them briefly in the orcish-elvish hybrid language of the villagers. PCs with knowledge of both elvish and orcish can gather the basic gist of the message — she is asking the goblins to summon the elders to ‘the tree’. She turns back to the party as the goblins scamper off. “Follow me.”

With that, she leads them down a path towards the heart of the hamlet. All around, characters hear the frightened whispers of villagers watching from shuttered windows and high branches. If the PCs get too close to any of the orcs or goblins, the villagers will shy back in terror; parents clutch their curious children and pull them away. Eventually the group reaches the center of the hamlet. A vast tree dominates this area; it is not as tall as some of the other trees in the area, but its trunk is so wide that it resembles a wooden tower. Tunnels have been carved into the living tree, winding up through the trunk. Stepping inside tunnels large enough to admit ogres, the characters find that the wood within the tree glows with a faint light. As they travel further in, they can feel energy flowing out from the wood, a warm glow that soothes their nerves.

The tree is a powerful source of life energy; wounded characters will regain one hit point for every five minutes they spend in the tree.

Jeseth leads them up a short, spiral staircase into a large circular chamber with a domed ceiling; and there she holds up her hand, indicating that they should wait.

## THE COUNCIL OF ELDERS

The first person to arrive is an ogre. This burly fellow wears a shirt of glistening chain links and carries a large axe — although this weapon appears to be made for cutting wood rather than for fighting battles. Jeseth inclines her head towards him.

“Hail and well met, fair lady Jeseth,” he booms. “I did not believe the tales when I was told you had allowed humans into Shareth.”

“Something strange is going on,” the vampire replies curtly. “These creatures are not what they seem, and I am concerned about the state of our border guards. I will need to go scouting once this meeting is done. I must place these creatures in your charge, Koralian; I trust you will keep the village safe.” Jeseth and Koralian ignore interruptions from the party during this conversation, but afterwards they will respond to comments. Koralian looks over the characters bemusedly; the concept of friendly humans is a strange one, but the reeve has read stories of stranger things and is willing to consider the concept. He then takes his place to the side of a low table.

The next two arrivals enter together. One is an old goblin wearing robes of red and gold and leaning on a mahogany cane; this is the elder Arivon Felosial. At his side is a tall figure that stands out in contrast to the orcs, goblins, and ogres the PCs have seen; after a moment they realize that he is a half-orc, although his features seem more elvish than human. This is Throg, the village priest, and he glares at the characters with barely contained hatred. A moment later, the final elder, Felienda — a gray-haired female orc wearing a dress of black and crimson — joins the group. Throg, Arivon, and Felienda sit down at the table and examine the party.



## CHAPTER FOUR: OFF TO SEE THE SEER

“What have you done, Jeseth?” Throg hisses through clenched teeth. “Why have you brought these cursed creatures into our most sacred refuge?”

“You cannot see the world as I do, Throg,” Jeseth replies. “There is no evil in these souls. I suggest you talk to them and consider what they have to say — although I think that the Seer may be the only one who can solve this riddle.”

“Humans will never see the Seer — be they living,” Throg gives a meaningful glare at Jeseth, “Or dead.” Jeseth shrugs, unperturbed.

The orc Felienda speaks, her soft voice carrying across the chamber. “Well, I for one would very much like to hear what our visitors have to say. I

have long tried to get you to talk to the humans, to seek the good that must lie within every soul. And here is that opportunity.” Throg growls.

With that, the conversation turns to the party. A few guidelines:

- If there is a half-orc in the group, most of the questions will be directed to him. In this community, half an orc is better than none. Throg, the half-orc priest, will wish to know more of such a character’s lineage, and curses the vile creatures that would defile pure orcish blood. If there are no half-orcs, the preference will tend towards dwarves, then halflings, then humans, then elves. Gnomes will be viewed with extreme curiosity, as mirror gnomes are barely capable of speech.



## THE EBON MIRROR

- The elderly goblin Arivon is prejudiced against the characters, but he will ask sensible questions. He requires the characters to go over every detail of their journey. He will turn grim when they mention the farmhouse raid, especially if they admit to killing the goblin farmer (if they did); Felienda will try to calm him, but he may burst out with “You ... you killed my son, you monsters!”

Swaying Arivon through Diplomacy will require two successful rolls. A first roll (DC 20) will make him more willing to listen to what the characters have to say. If this first roll is successful, the party can try towards the end of the conversation to convince Arivon to allow them to see the Seer immediately. This is more difficult, and will require a check at DC 25. For both of these checks, the DC is increased by 2 if the speaker is an elf, and by 5 if Arivon hears that the party has killed one of his relatives.

Arivon is a cagey fellow; any attempt to Bluff him will have to beat a DC of 23, modified by how outrageous the claim is. The modifiers given for Diplomacy apply here as well.

A Sense Motive check against a DC of 20 will give a character the impression that Arivon is simply being cautious — this is a very strange situation, and he doesn't want to do anything too quickly. He's an old goblin, and he's used to taking his time on things.

- The priest Throg is seething with rage. He will interrupt Arivon's questions at every chance with dire predictions about how the characters are harbingers of doom. He first claims that the PCs have found a way to fool Jeseth's mystic senses, and then accuses the vampire of being in league with the raiders. If the party has fought the sacred undead, Throg will bring this up, noting how this both endangers the village and is an affront to the gods.

It will be virtually impossible to win over Throg; the only character that might be able to pull it off would be another half-orc. However, a Diplomacy roll against a DC of

30 will at least get him to shut up and listen. Add +10 to the DC if the speaker is an elf; subtract 5 if the speaker is a half-orc.

Throg is a little more gullible than Arivon and can be Bluffed with a DC of 18 — of course, a clever lie will not necessarily overcome his prejudices. Again, add +10 to the DC for an elf, and subtract 5 for a half-orc.

A Sense Motive check against a DC of 18 will reveal that Throg really is deeply concerned — he is afraid of the characters. Throg takes the threat of the raiders far more seriously than Arivon, and he is certain that the PCs are part of a raider plot. He also hates the elves and their allies for what was done to his mother.

- The third elder, Felienda, acts as the voice of reason, calming Throg and admonishing him for his outbursts. She will actively attempt to help the PCs, coming up with answers for difficult questions and generally encouraging the others to give the characters the benefit of the doubt. “This could be the dawning of a new age — if only we are willing to open our eyes and see it.”

A Sense Motive check (DC 20) will reveal that Felienda seems strangely eager to help the party out. Her rhetoric isn't very consistent — it's as if she hasn't really thought her position through, and is simply saying whatever she can come up with to improve the situation of the PCs.

A character who makes an Innuendo roll (DC 13) will get the distinct sense that she's trying to say “I'll meet you later.”

If a silver-tongued character manages to win over Arivon, the party will be taken to see the Seer immediately after the council votes two to one to allow the meeting. Pass over the following sections, and move immediately to “Arivon's Folly” on page 57.

Otherwise, Throg and Arivon will refuse to let the party see the Seer. Arivon says that he must consider the matter further. Throg grumbles and begins to muster arguments, while Felienda tries to get Arivon to “see reason.” Arivon says that he

will speak to the party again the following morning. Jeseth promises that she and Koralian will safeguard the party until then, and the vampire and the ogre usher the players out of the tree.

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## THE GOLDEN MOON

Emerging from the tree, Jeseth reassures the party. Listening to them, the paladin has come to believe their story, and she is convinced that Arivon can be made to see reason. But now she has other business to attend to — she needs to check on the undead patrols that are guarding the chokepoints against the raiders. If the party destroyed the first group of undead along with Molric, Jeseth needs to see if any of the spirits can be revived — and if not, if there are any signs of raider activity. She instructs the PCs to remain with Koralian the reeve, and tells Koralian to keep them safe. Then she transforms into a raven and flies away.

This leaves the party alone with the jovial ogre — and a few dozen frightened goblins and orcs watching from nearby windows and treetops. “Quite the story you wove, little ones,” rumbles the ogre. “It reminds me of the *Gurnlag* saga, if you remember the piece in which Gurnlag and his companions are transported to the Otherworld. Or do you have the great goblin epics in your world? Still, fantastic as it may seem, I find that I believe your tale. Though you are most foul in form, I sense the noble spirits that lie within you. Come with me — let us get some fine ogre ale.”

With that, Koralian leads the party to building constructed around the trunk of a tree. A sign above the door displays a crescent moon inlaid in gold. This is the Golden Moon, the only inn in Shareth. Within, a number of farmers and craftsmen sit around drinking wine from cunningly wrought pewter goblets. The innkeeper, a jolly orcish woman named Zalanthe, is joking with a herdsman. “Do you know how many gnomes it takes to light a torch?”

As before, all conversation stops when the party enters the common room. A goblin farmer drops his goblet of wine, and an orcish mother pulls her children close to her. A beat passes. Then Koralian roars, “What are you all gawking at? Howsoever hideous they may be, these people are

our guests! Now get us some ale and be about your business!” Zalanthe hastily brings drinks over for the players, stammering nervously and struggling not to spill anything.

At this point, the PCs have a little time to ask questions of their own. Koralian wants to hear more stories of their world, but is quite willing to answer any questions about the mirror world. He has never seen anything like the wagon that the party found in Chapter Two, and he cannot explain the laws of magic in the mirror world. But he can tell the characters that the raiders have been growing bolder and more dangerous. He can explain the nature of Jeseth and the sacred undead. And in general, he can talk about the other creatures that inhabit the mirror world — the dour halflings, cunning humans, feral gnomes, and the like. Make up atrocities committed by the humans and their allies — tell tales of fabulous works of art created by noble orcs, only to be destroyed by savage elves:

- “Mayhap you know the tale of the great library of Assonath? Nay? What sort of world do you come from, that did not have such a place? Alas, now it is no more, senselessly burned by the elves, who be ever enamored of flame. I shudder to think of the great works that were lost forever on that day ... ‘tis said that they had a copy of Shesierael’s *Principia* written in his own hand. What sense is there in destroying such a treasure?”
- “In truth, most tales of violence and savagery speak of the elves. But there are those amongst the humans who have no equal in matters of blood and terror. Crossac the Reaver is said to have slaughtered an entire village of kobolds so that he could sew their skins together to craft a tent for his wedding day.”
- “In many ways, ’tis the littlest ones we fear the most. The elves have force, but no sense of strategy. But a halfling is a cunning fellow ... like a goblin pale as death, with no thought in him but to bring that death to others. I heard a tale once ... though I do shudder to repeat it amidst such congenial company ... where a band of halflings captured a poor ogrish farmer, tied him down, and set a gnome underneath with a fire at his feet. The brute gnawed his way right through the poor farmer, or so ’tis said.”

If asked about the Seer, Koralian explains that Osai is a great man, but that he is rarely seen,



## THE EBON MIRROR

save by the elders and the Hands of the Crucible. Koralian isn't even certain where the Seer lives, although he has seen him once or twice.

Meanwhile, the other patrons will slowly inch closer. Most will be too frightened to enter the conversation, but eventually a goblin child named Smudge will approach the players. Smudge is too curious to be properly scared; he will ask lots of inappropriate questions, like "Do elves really eat one another?" and "What do you do with all the baby goblins that you steal?" If the characters keep up a friendly face they may manage to win over the crowd.

The patrons of the Golden Moon appreciate a good song or story as much as anyone. The difficult part is overcoming their initial fear. A character who makes a Perform or Diplomacy roll against a DC of 20 manages to soften the mood; if she makes the roll by at least five points, the crowd is sufficiently impressed to temporarily forget their racial differences.

If things go really well, Koralian might even grace them with a song ...

### A TRAITOR REVEALED

Eventually Koralian will take the party home to his vast cottage, where he will treat them to some surprisingly delicious ogre cooking. As they sit around the massive table, he will ponder what to do with them for the night; he trusts them, but he's not sure whether he ought to tie them up, since he did promise the elders he would watch them. At this point there is a knock on the door.

The visitor is Throg, the half-orc priest. He has come to check on the party, to make certain that they are being kept under close watch. He asks for an accounting of the party's activities for the last few hours. While he is talking, the orcish elder Felienda enters. She sees Throg ranting, and rolls her eyes. She takes up a position slightly behind him; a few seconds later, he falls down dead.

"Felienda" has just used the assassin's Death Attack ability to kill Throg.

Felienda then gasps and kneels down over the stricken priest (incidentally covering the wound with her empty hand), and looks up at the ogre. "By the tree! What has happened?"

If no one declares an immediate hostile action against Felienda, that gives her the break she needs to make a flatfooted Sneak Attack on Koralian. With a sudden motion, she stands and flings her shuriken at his eyes, striking the ogre for 5d6+1 points of damage. At this point, roll for initiative.

Remember that the characters had to disarm themselves when they entered Shareth. There are a few knives in the kitchen and Koralian's axe is in one corner of the cottage, but it will take at least a round for a PC to get over and grab one of these weapons.

On Felienda's turn, she tells the party, "Don't worry, brothers, we'll have this brute down in a moment," as she touches her comb and transforms into a human woman with a striking resemblance to Jeseth, only about a year or two younger than the paladin.

As she speaks, she materializes her rapier and tries to strike the ogre again. If one of the characters attacks her, she will shout "What are you doing? I'm on your side!"

Unless the PCs assist him, Koralian will not be able to stand up against Felienda (whose next priorities are to *un-glamer* her armor and activate her *ring of force shield*). Even if they do help, Koralian may die from bleeding if he has been struck by her *rapier of wounding*.

If Koralian has a chance to fight before Felienda un.masks herself, he will try to subdue her with his fists. "Don't kill her," he will call out to the PCs. "We need to find out ... why ..."

"Why" is simple enough. Felienda the orcish elder is not who she seems. She is Jeja VerDragt (see her stats on page 83), a disguised human

assassin sent by the raider leaders — which is to say, the mirror versions of the PCs. She infiltrated the hamlet a few days ago, and has been waiting for the signal to attempt to assassinate the elders and the Seer. She assumed that the arrival of the party was that sign. At this point she has slain all of the village elders; she killed Felienda when she took her place, Arivon before coming to the cottage, and Throg at the start of the encounter. With the help of the PCs, she now expects to kill the Seer Osai.

Now the party has a choice. Do they join with Jeja and betray the trust of the townsfolk? Or do they defend the ogre by taking sides against one of their own kind? When the players have resolved the conflict one way or another, a new element should be thrown into the equation — Jeseth the vampire steps into the house, examining the bodies of the dead and injured. She looks at Jeja with a puzzled expression.

## CONFRONTING THE SEER

Perhaps the party chose to back the assassin, or maybe Jeja has been killed or incapacitated. Possibly a smooth-talkin' PC managed to win over the elders in the initial meeting. Whatever their path, it's time to visit the Seer Osai.

## THE PATH OF THE PALADIN

If the party managed to capture Jeja alive, she will laugh at her sister. "All this time, Jeseth VerDragt, I was right under your nose. So much for your vaunted soul reading. Soon we will come and wipe this village from the world, and you with it. At last I will cleanse our family name!"

Jeja is furious about the betrayal by the characters, but they may be able to get some useful information out of her anyway — perhaps with a potion bought from Devon the peddler in Chapter Two?

Otherwise, an opposed Intimidate, Bluff, or Diplomacy roll vs. Jeja's Sense Motive will convince her it's in her best interests to confess her plan. (Jeja defaults to +0 based on Wisdom, which may explain why she

didn't sense the PCs were her enemies to begin with ... )

After a fair chance for interrogation, Jeja will escape any bonds she might have been in (using Escape Artist). Her goal is to get outside and out of eyesight of the others, so that she can use her *hat of disguise* to disappear into the village. She also has the ability to cast *darkness* to create a diversion. If she succeeds, you can decide if and when you want her to show up again; you may wish to save her for a future adventure. Otherwise, she will fight to the death to escape.

Once Jeja is taken care of, Jeseth will heal anyone she can. "The death of the elders is a terrible blow. We must see the Seer immediately and warn him. Our undead guardians have been destroyed, and I fear that the raiders are preparing for a massive assault on the village."

Of course, there is a problem. Jeseth has never seen the Seer, as the elders would not allow any humans in his presence. She knows that the Seer lives somewhere within the Great Tree, though, and so takes the party there.

There is a secret door hidden at the base of the tree. Finding this door will require a Search check vs. a DC of 20. If no one succeeds at this roll, well, give them another chance. Jeseth says "Somehow this area *feels* right — keep searching."

The door is mystically sealed, but can be opened by anyone of good alignment; if no one in the party is good, Jeseth can open the door.

Behind the hidden door, a winding staircase descends down into the earth. Glowing roots are woven through the earthen walls, and shed a dim light throughout the passage. The stairs descend approximately thirty feet, and then open into a small oval chamber. The party's weapons are in a corner of the room. At the center of the chamber, a thin figure dressed in a hooded robe of brown and green sits in a chair, facing the staircase. He is sitting at a small round table, which contains a turquoise and silver ring, a metal snake, a cloak of black and red material, and a small game piece



## THE EBON MIRROR

made from white marble — a rook from a chess set. He is the Seer Osai-en-La.

The Seer will raise a hand to interrupt if the characters begin to talk about the assassin or the possible threat from the raiders. “I know who you are, and I know why you have come,” he says, his deep voice resonating throughout the chamber. “I have been following your actions, and they have given me cause to look deeper into the world. And in so doing, I have found terrible things.”

Give the party a moment to talk. The Seer acts as if he already knows what they have to say, and will generally avoid answering any direct questions; “You will learn all things, in time,” is a good blanket non-answer. If PCs ask about the objects on the table, or when the conversation stalls if they don’t think to ask, he will hand over the game piece.

“You may need this in the future. These other artifacts possess malignant enchantments; I was preparing to destroy them, when this other matter came to my attention. This serpent occasionally comes to life and attempts to bite its bearer. The ring fills its wearer’s lungs with water. And on command, the cape tele-



ports its user a great distance ... into the air, usually to fall to his death.”

While on the topic of cursed items, the Seer will also bring up the matter of the items the party has been carting around (alternately, Carcoasn the axe can speak up, especially if it's still stuck in the trunk). If the party members haven't made use of the formerly cursed items, the Seer will point out the fact that they are “carrying the tools of your own salvation.” He can also provide specific information about the abilities of each item in the mirror world (see pages 28-29).

Convincing the Seer to identify an object will require a Diplomacy roll (DC 13) for each object; the DC for this check will increase by one each time he identifies an object. With proper justification, Bluff can be used instead of Diplomacy.

Clever players may realize that items that are cursed in the mirror world might be useful in the prime world. A good Bluff or Diplomacy roll — DC 20 or better — could convince the Seer to hand over the cursed artifacts on the table. In the prime world, the three objects become a *ring of swimming*, a *cloak of the mountebank*, and a *serpent blade*. The mirror statistics of these objects are provided below; the prime statistics for each item are given on page 77.

Eventually a character will probably ask about how to get home, or the true nature of the world. If not, the Seer will soon get to the point himself, saying the following:

“There are powers beyond the gods. There are forces that shape the world we know, that play with fate as a child with dice. You do not belong among us. You are our dark reflection ... your have our values, but you appear to us as the monsters that haunt our sleep. You are nightmares made real, and that gives you power ... for I sense that you carry within you the power to destroy our world.

“And yet ... in gazing upon you, I see within you a purity, a light that makes all that I have known seem as but a shadow. You illuminate the holes in my mind, and make me see that I am myself flawed ... that the forces that have shaped our world, while greater than the gods, lack the wisdom or the artistry of the gods. You carry the

## The Seer's Magic Items (Mirror Version)

### NEW CURSED OBJECT: CAPE OF THE MOUNTEBANK

When the wearer wraps herself in this beautiful cape, it teleports her seven hundred feet straight up. Have a great fall!

Caster Level: 9<sup>th</sup>; Weight: 1 lb

### NEW CURSED OBJECT: RING OF WATER BREATHING

When this ring is placed on the hand, the wearer's lungs instantly fill up with water. The wearer is immediately incapacitated; he must roll a Fortitude save (DC 20) each round or take 12 points of damage. The ring can be removed without special effort, but the wearer will be too occupied with choking to do it; however, an ally could pull it off. The victim must survive the Fortitude rolls for another three rounds even after the ring has been removed, as he clears the water out of his system.

Caster Level: 6<sup>th</sup>; Weight: —

### NEW CURSED OBJECT: SERPENT BLADE

This is a cleverly articulated metal serpent, approximately eighteen inches long from tip to tail. If someone picks it up and begins playing with it, it slowly begins to move of its own accord. If someone continues to fiddle with it for more than three rounds, it will lash out, biting with steel fangs and pumping venom into the hand that holds it. The victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d6 Constitution score damage, followed by an additional 1d6 Constitution damage a minute later. The serpent will then lay quiet for another three rounds. If it is left alone or simply kept in a container, it is harmless.

Caster Level: 12<sup>th</sup>; Weight: 4 lbs



## THE EBON MIRROR

seed of destruction ... but now I see that destruction may be our destiny ... and that it would be better to die in this way than at the hands of the monsters that haunt the plains.

“And so I will tell you this:

“Tomorrow a storm will destroy this place.  
Do not fight it; your destiny lies beyond.

“Travel to the steamfont and face the cause  
of our death;  
There you will find the twin to your scepter.

“The first world will fall, and you will step  
into the second;  
Question the answers, return to the start,  
And finish the game our creators began.

“There is no more to be said. Leave me now.”

If he hasn't already given one of the characters the white game piece, he will toss it to someone at this point. Then he will make a magical gesture and fade away.

Needless to say, Jeseth is puzzled by the whole affair. But regardless of the dire prophecy, she intends to fight. She takes the party to her cottage and tells them to rest — “Just leave the coffin alone,” she says — and then heads out to try to get the village organized and to look for raider activities.

From this point, the PCs' journey continues in Chapter Five.

### ALLYING WITH THE ASSASSIN

If the party has chosen to side with the assassin when Jeseth enters the house, Jeja will gloat; “I killed Arivon before I came here. All your elders are dead now, sister! And your precious Seer is next! Once we're done with you, that is.” She will then draw her blade and charge her sister.

After this second combat with Jeseth is resolved (assuming the PCs still maintain their alliance with the assassin — if they now join with Jeseth, go back to “The Path of the Paladin”), Jeja will ask if they are ready to strike the Seer; she has learned that he is hiding within the roots of the Great Tree.

If they ask why it's so important to kill the Seer, she will appear puzzled. “Look, I was just doing what I was told. He's an orc, and a threat to the security of our people ... what more of a reason do I need?”

Jeja knows the location of the secret door leading down to the Seer's sanctum, which will save a lot of searching. The only trick will be if there are no good characters in the party to open the door.

A rogue can bypass the mystic lock with a Disarm Device check (DC 30). An *arcane lock* or *hold portal* spell will open the door for ten minutes. Otherwise, the characters will have to convince a good person to open the door ...

The Seer is waiting for the characters in the chamber at the bottom of the stairs revealed behind the secret door, and he is sitting behind a *wall of force*.

The Seer is not at all surprised to see the party, and seems almost completely emotionless. “I know who you are, and I know why you have come,” he says, his deep voice resonating throughout the chamber. He looks directly at “Felienda,” who used her magic disguise for the walk across the village. “I even know about you, little one. Your time is coming, with the rest of our word.” He glances at the most dominant party member. “She cannot help you, you know ... she is part of this world, and you do not belong here. You will have to fight if you wish to return to where you belong. I have been following your actions, and they have given me cause to look deeper into the world. And in so doing, I have found terrible things.” He then repeats his prophecy from page 55, beginning with “There are powers beyond the gods”; but when he reaches the line “And so I will tell you this,” the prophecy is slightly different:

“A storm is building to the south,  
We cannot stop it now.

“Travel to the stormfront and face yourself;  
Take the twin to the rod that was broken.

“The first world will fall, and you will step  
into the second;  
Question the answers, return to the start,  
And finish the game our creators began.

“There is no more to be said. Leave me now.”

At the end of his speech he tosses the white gamepiece to one of the PCs. With that he vanishes. Before they leave, the characters notice any missing weapons of theirs are in a corner of the chamber.



## CHAPTER FOUR: OFF TO SEE THE SEER

Jeja has been in something of a state of shock throughout the conversation. “What was that? What was he talking about?” She’s confused and shaken up, and has had enough of the village. “Let’s be gone from this place, then ... come along, if you’re coming.” Escorted by “Felienda,” the group will have no problem getting out of the hamlet. She will take them straight to the raider’s camp, where the humans and their allies are girding for war. Elves are dancing around bonfires and howling, while halflings sharpen weapons and oil armor. Feral gnomes sniff curiously at the party, but no one challenges them. Jeja leads them right to the command tent at the base of a massive geyser that erupts at regular intervals — and there they meet themselves. Jump directly to the “Dark Reflections” section of Chapter Five (page 62), but add Jeja in as a loose cannon; she’ll probably realize what is going on and side with her true allies — but a clever player might be able to trick her into helping the party.

### ARIVON’S FOLLY

The final possibility is that during their interview with the Council of Elders the party may have convinced the goblin elder Arivon to let them see the Seer immediately. In this case, Arivon, Throg the half-orc Priest, the orc Felienda (still undercover), and the vampire Jeseth all accompany the party down to the base of the tree. Arivon reaches out and opens the hidden door — and then the trouble begins.

Suddenly Throg falls to the ground, fatally injured by the assassin Jeja’s Death Attack. “Felienda” kneels over the body of the fallen

priest, covering the wound with her hand and exclaiming, “By the tree! What has happened?” If no one takes a hostile action, Felienda flings a shuriken at Arivon, in a 5d6 Sneak Attack that will probably kill the goblin elder outright. Then, as she touches her comb and transforms into a human woman, she cries out “Kill the vampire, brothers, and the moment is ours!”

Now the party has a sudden decision to make, and quickly. Do they trust this mysterious assassin, who is at least human, or do they support — a vampire? Jeseth will attempt to incapacitate the false elder, so the characters have a moment to choose sides. If they take too long, Felienda will call out again for help. “Why do you stand there? I cannot take this vile beast on my own!”

At this point, the party is at a crossroads. If they side with Jeseth, it should be a simple enough matter to defeat the assassin; afterwards, continue with “The Path of the Paladin” on page 53, but skip over the problem of finding the hidden entrance to the Seer’s chambers. If the PCs choose to work with Jeja, they will have to overcome the deadly vampire — after which you can move on with the “Allying with the Assassin” plotline on page 56, skipping over the first five paragraphs of that section.

So whichever path the party has taken and whoever their allies are, the situation is generally the same: the elders of Shareth are dead, and the PCs have the prophecy of the Seer as their only clue as to how to get home.



# A TIME FOR WAR

*Dafyd blinked, but the vision was still there when he opened his eyes. He was certain that Sera had gone into the tent to the left of the camp — and yet there she was, just having stepped out of the one on the right? Had she found some sort of portal? Perhaps that was the way home! And yet ...*

*Blood pounded in his head as he saw himself step out of the tent, just behind Sera.*

*“It’s some sort of trick,” Carcoasn said. “Come on, what are you guys afraid of?”*

*“For once, axe, I agree with you,” Krogar growled. “Let’s show these imposters the strength of true steel!”*

*“Krogar, wait!” Dafyd cried, but it was too late. Oh well, he thought, let’s see what we’ve gotten ourselves into.*

In this section, the raiders assault Shareth in force. As it turns out, the raiders are actually a representation of the human side of Charra, and cannot be defeated; there are a seemingly endless number of them, and the characters must heed the advice of the Seer and flee. Following the directions given in the prophecy, the party comes upon the camp of the raiders — only to discover that they themselves — or at least, mirrored versions of themselves — are in charge of the camp.

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## THE FALL OF SHARETH

Dawn comes with the cries of approaching warriors. Goblins climb up to find vantage points in the trees, and if the characters follow suit they will see two armies — one approaching the southwestern gate, and the other heading towards the northwest gate (the one the PCs used). A few skeletons and ghouls stand before the gate, but the armies are vast — hundreds of elven dog-riders, accompanied by dozens of halflings chanting grim warsongs, dwarven battlemages, and feral gnomish scouts.

At this point, Jeseth will approach the party. “I have thought long and hard on the words of the Seer,” she says. “And I believe he is correct. You may possess great skills, but you cannot turn the tide against so many — and some greater force is at play here, for there was not so great an army encamped when I went scouting last night. We can hold out for a short time, but we will eventually be overwhelmed. Further, when the battle is joined, you will only frighten the people in the village — for you do resemble our enemies.” She frowns. “I cannot profess to fully understand what the Seer said, but perhaps you can find some other way to help us. We must get you out of the village now, before the armies are upon us. There is a great geyser to the southwest, and I believe it is what the Seer meant by ‘the steamfont’. Try to avoid the army and make your way there — and I can but trust that the gods will guide you and you will find your destiny there.” She then returns the characters’ missing weapons to them.

She leads the players to the gates, and stands with them as the gates begin to close. She smiles, baring her fangs. “Good luck — I do not think we will meet again.”

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## FIGHTING FIRE WITH ... FIRE?

At this point, the party finds themselves standing on the path leading away from Shareth-en-La. Behind them orcs and goblins prepare their last defense, while a few lonely skeletons dance in front of the walls. Ahead, the sounds of the army draw ever closer, with rumbling drums and the howling of the elves and their other-dimensional hounds. Staying on the path is an invitation to disaster. Heading into the woods is the simplest solution — although if the PCs come up with another idea, let them innovate!

The woods around the area are fairly dense; there are a few paths, but it is difficult to travel directly through the brush. As the characters move fur-

## CHAPTER FIVE: A TIME FOR WAR

ther away from the village, they hear sounds up ahead; it is clear that the army has outriders combing the forest as well. Can the PCs avoid the hunt?

There are two possible ways to accomplish this. If all of the players have Move Silently, they can attempt to bypass the raiders completely by stealth. Have every player make a skill check. With a lowest roll below 15, the group stumbles directly into the warband described on page 60. With a lowest result between 15 and 20, the group avoids the warband but encounters the gnome scout below. And if every party member rolls above 20, the party avoids the scouts completely, traveling straight to the raider encampment with no confrontations (see page 62).

The other option is for a character with Wilderness Lore to find a safer path for the group to travel. Less than 18 means the pathfinder leads the group directly into the warband. 18 to 23 means that a gnome scout manages to find the party. And a roll better than 24 means that the pathfinder has safely navigated around the army.

Be sure to describe the sense of activity in the woods — the sounds of hundreds of men and beasts marching to battle, searching through the forests for anyone who might be trying to escape.

You want the characters to feel like their lives are on the line, because they may be!

### THE GNOME SCOUT

A few warbands are scouring the woods in search of refugees. But tracking down prey is no specialty of either dwarf or halfling. That's what the gnomes are for.

As the party is moving quietly down one of the forest paths, a strange figure scampers into view. It is a small creature, generally humanoid, but loping along on all fours — a monkey of some sort? Getting a closer look, there is a little humanoid face tucked away beneath a wild mat of hair, which almost conceals the rough hides it is wearing.

Anyone who makes a Wisdom roll against DC 14 will realize that it's a gnome — hunched over to the point of deformation, with a savage gleam in its eye and lines of spit coming from its mouth, its teeth filed to points — but nonetheless, it's a gnome.

Roll initiative right away. If it survives long enough to get a second action, the gnome will howl loudly; this cry is the signal to the warband to close in. The warband will arrive 1d4 rounds after the call goes out, thanks to the teleporting abilities of the blink dogs.

## Mirror Gnome (1)

### 3rd-Level Gnome Ranger

CR 3; SZ S (humanoid); HD 3d10+6; hp 24; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 25 ft.; AC 14 (+1 Dex, +2 leather armor, +1 size); Atk melee +3 (1d4/crit 20/x2, bite); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Favored Enemy, Gnome Traits, Scent; AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 8

**Skills:** Hide +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +5, Wilderness Lore +6

**Feats:** Run (May run at five times normal move), Track (Use Wilderness Lore to track), Improved Unarmed Strike (May bite without provoking an attack of opportunity)

**Favored Enemy (Goblin):** +1 damage to any attack made against a goblin.

**Gnome Traits (Ex):** Gnomes have Low-light Vision that lets them see twice as far as a human in starlight, moonlight, torchlight, and similar conditions of poor illumination; they also have +2 racial bonus to saving throws against illusions, +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against kobolds and goblinoids, and +4 dodge bonus against giants.

**Scent:** May track or identify things by smell with a Wis roll.



If the gnome is slain before it can howl, then all is well.

## THE WARBAND

Perhaps the party didn't have the heart to kill a gnome in cold blood, and it got off its signal. Or possibly the party was just a little careless about what path they took. In either case, there is a woosh of displaced air as three savage elves riding blink dogs suddenly materialize. An emaciated, heavily tattooed humanoid clings to the back of the elf with the largest dog; after a moment, the PCs recognize him as a wasted dwarf. Charms are woven into his scraggly beard, and he rummages through enormous belt pouches.

Roll for initiative immediately.

There are three elves and three blink dogs; the statistics for these creatures can be found on page 31-32. The dwarf is an adept, and he has a special weapon; on his first action, he will drop a glass sphere on the ground. A cloud of smoke billows out and out of it strides a large figure formed from fire. Elves aren't the only beings who are fond of fire, and this



## Mirror Dwarf (1)

### 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Dwarf Adept

CR 3; SZ M (humanoid); HD 4d6+11; hp 25; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 20 ft; AC 10; Atk melee +2 (1d4/crit 19-20/x2, dagger); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft; SA Spells; SQ Dwarven Traits; AL NE; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 8

**Skills:** Alchemy +8, Concentration +9, Spellcraft +8

**Feats:** Combat Casting (+4 to Concentration checks while on the defensive), Toughness (+3 HP)

**Dwarven Traits (Ex):** Dwarves have +1 racial bonus to attack rolls against orcs and goblinoids, +2 racial bonus to Will saves against spells and spell-like abilities, +2 racial bonus to Fortitude saves against all poisons, +4 dodge bonus against giants, and Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only. Dwarves also receive a +2 racial bonus to checks to notice unusual stonework. A dwarf who merely comes within 10 feet of unusual stonework can make a check as though actively searching and can use the Search skill to find stonework traps as a rogue can.

**Spells:** 3/3/1

0 Level — *cure minor wounds* x 3

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *burning hands* x3

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *cure moderate wounds*

## Large Fire Elemental (1)

### Large Elemental (Fire)

CR 5; SZ L (elemental); HD 8d8+24; hp 60; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +5 Dexterity, +4 natural); Atk melee +10/+5 (2d6+3 and 2d6 fire, slam); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; SQ Burn, Damage Reduction 10/+1, Elemental, Fire Subtype; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +11, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 21, Con 16, Int 6, Wis 11, Cha 11

**Skills:** Listen +11, Spot +11

**Feats:** Dodge, Improved Initiative, Weapon Finesse (slam)

**Burn (Ex):** Those hit by the elemental's slam attack must succeed at a Reflex save (DC 17) or catch fire for 1d4 rounds. Those hitting the elemental with natural weapons or unarmed attacks take damage as though hit by the elemental's attack, and must also save or catch fire.

**Damage Reduction (Ex):** The elemental ignores the first ten points of damage from any attack made with a non-magical weapon.

**Elemental:** Immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, and stunning. Not subject to critical hits.

**Fire Subtype (Ex):** Fire immunity, double damage from cold attacks except on a successful save.

The challenge of dealing with the elemental is that the characters may not have any magical weapons, which makes damaging the creature quite difficult. However, this is the perfect opportunity to put the altered magical physics of the mirror world to work. As noted in Appendix Two, most spells that produce fire effects — like *fireball* or a druidic *flamestrike* — actually extinguish fire behind the mirror. Such spells will inflict full damage with no save on the elemental. A (formerly) *flaming* or *flaming burst* weapon will inflict double its usual bonus damage on the elemental.

fire elemental was carefully bottled for use in the battle.

As has been noted before, strategy is not the greatest strength of the elves. They will simply Rage and attack the closest target.

The dwarf will dismount during the battle and attempt to provide fire support (literally). The fire elemental will also charge into the fray, cheerfully setting the woods alight in its wake.

## THE STEAMFONT

Once the party gets out of the woods, it is not difficult to spot the steamfont — a massive geyser that erupts at regular intervals. It can be seen from nearly two miles away.

Once the characters have caught sight of the geyser, a character who makes a Spot check against a DC of 15 will see the tents scattered around its base — apparently this was where the raiders made their camp.

If the party moves closer, they can see that the camp appears to be completely deserted. The army has set out to take Shareth, and the camp seems to have been abandoned.

However, this impression is not entirely true. The leaders have remained behind, after sending their army off to do their dirty work. And who are the leaders? Why, the mirror world duplicates of the PCs. These evil twins are looking for the other half of a certain silver rod — a rod that a mysterious voice has told them is the secret to unlimited power. So now it comes down to the question — can the PCs beat themselves?

The mirror versions of the party have gathered in the central tent, which stands next to the steamfont. Presumably the PCs will search the camp, in which case they will eventually stumble onto their duplicates.

## DARK REFLECTIONS

To prepare for this encounter, make certain that you have copies of the PCs' character sheets beforehand, including spell lists. The mirror characters should have all the equipment the PCs normally use, but it is completely mundane — magic items have been replaced with the non-magical equivalent. Given the fact that much of the party's usual gear is currently cursed, this may actually give the mirror characters an advantage. On the other hand, the party has the artifacts from Merita's trunk — if they've been wise enough to use them.

The next step is to consider the appearance and nature of the mirror versions of the PCs. Consider how the characters would have evolved

in this darker world. A few basic things need to be taken into account:

- A **half-orc** would be a particularly vile individual, having turned his back on his noble orcish heritage to ally with the humans. Perhaps he is too stupid to know any better, simply driven by pure rage. Or perhaps he is a disturbingly cunning individual, always on the look-out for opportunities — in which case he might even be willing to turn on his current allies.
- **Gnomes** are savage, feral creatures. As such, the appearance of a mirror gnome will probably be radically different from her PC counterpart. One of the other mirror characters may even have her on a leash. If she has magical abilities (since her skills should match those of the PC, to ensure a proper challenge), she should appear to be some sort of idiot savant; she will snap out incantations in guttural bursts of speech, struggling with the words. Illusions will focus on violent, combat actions as opposed to subtle psychological manipulations.
- **Dwarves** are crazed mystics who dedicate their lives to the study of unseen mysteries. A dwarf will have charms woven into his hair and beard, and a feverish gaze that rarely focuses on others. Even if the dwarf is a warrior, he should reflect the mystical nature of the dwarves of this world; his armor is poorly maintained, but it is covered with painted sigils and fetishes. Dwarves are prone to ranting speeches about the mysteries of the universe; a dwarf may try to beguile the PCs into handing over their half of the wand with an incoherent rant about what will happen when the wands are combined. "If my calculations are correct, the esoteric energies that would be unleashed by the amalgamation of these arcane constructs could be collapsed to form a telluric convergence point. Do you understand what this means? Complete spectral transduction! Surely you will be a willing partner in this historic endeavor?"
- **Halfings** are grim and militaristic. They have no sense of humor. A halfling rogue will be filling the role of assassin as opposed to thief; she will watch the PCs closely, and they should always get the sense that she is sizing them up for a sneak attack. Her clothes should be drab and gray.

## CHAPTER FIVE: A TIME FOR WAR

- **Elves** are bloodthirsty, violent, and savage. It will be difficult to have an extended conversation with an elf, and it will most likely be the elf who cracks first and starts the fighting between the mirror party and the PCs. As with a gnome PC, an elven wizard is an oddity; such a character would be a prodigy who casts spells with an instinctive fury, with none of the finesse or grace of his PC counterpart.
- **Human** and **half-elf** characters will be the most similar to their PC counterparts. If anything, they should be disturbingly similar in comparison to the characters of other races. These characters are the most likely to be the schemers and leaders; it will be the human who holds the leash of the gnome illusionist.

There are a few additional things to bear in mind. The first is that these mirror characters are *really* evil. Even if the PCs are evil, that means the mirror characters have to be so evil so as to make the PCs look good. So think about that. Consider the personality traits and quirks of the characters and decide how you can turn a dark spotlight on them. Perhaps the wizard is sticking pins into his toad familiar. Maybe the thief keeps trying to filch objects from the other characters. Look at the group. Is anyone overbearing or bossy? A braggart? A coward? Is so, play that up — this is a chance for that character to take a hard look in the mirror, even if it is a dirty glass. Also, don't forget that mirror paladins or priests worship the mirror version of the god and venerate his values.



## THE DEVILS YOU KNOW

So, the party is standing face to face with their reflections — duplicates in every way, save for the equipment the party may have picked up during their time in the mirror and Merita's artifacts (while the mirror character's gear may not be magical, it still *looks* like the equipment the prime characters generally use).

What happens next?

One of the PCs is carrying the ruby half of the silver wand. If the characters take a good look at the mirror duplicate of this character, have them make a Search check; if they beat a DC of 15, they notice that she is carrying the other half with the sapphire, and occasionally fiddling with it.

The mirror versions of the characters have no inherent interest in a bloody battle. They won't start a fight immediately; the first thing they'll do is demand an explanation. But it won't take long for them to guess that these strange people might have that bit of silver wand they are looking for. The perceptive mirror characters will look over their prime duplicates looking for clues.

Once the mirror characters have ascertained — either through a Search roll DC 20 or by chatting — that the PCs have the other half of the wand, they will start coming up with a plan to overcome the PCs. They are evil and devious, and they know themselves — which means they know their weaknesses.

In the meantime, the doppelgangers will start talking, trying to put the PCs off their guard. Have them question their counterparts. They will want to know the history of these strangers, and may question their strange manner of dress or behavior. Why is that gnome off her leash? Did the halfling get dropped on his head? Meanwhile, as they talk, the mirror characters will be moving into position, looking for the ideal moment to strike and seize the wand.

A character who makes a Sense Motive roll at a difficulty of 20 should be able to get a hunch

that the mirror characters are setting up for something. Characters should get a +5 bonus to sense the motives of their own duplicate — but this also works the other way. Just as the players are getting ideas about what their doppelgangers are thinking, mirror characters should be able to get hunches about what their counterparts are thinking.

In general, it should be difficult to use Diplomacy or Bluff in this situation — specifically, it should be very difficult — DC 30 — for a character to bluff her counterpart. With that said, you know your party. Is there a character who is well-known for being gullible? If so, play that up! Of course, the smarter PCs would probably try to keep him in line — just as the raider leaders would with their party.

Continue to play the scene out for as long as it is entertaining; when it is beginning to get stale, that is the moment for the mirror characters to strike. Unless, of course, the PCs decide to make a preemptive attack!

This should be an extremely challenging encounter. These versions of the characters know how magic works in the mirror, and they will use their spells to the fullest effect; the paladin, for example, won't forget to use his Death Touch (see page 91). They should also work as a team; they should be just as good at strategy as the PCs themselves, working to flank, set up Sneak Attacks, and otherwise help each other out.

It is possible that the PCs will have terrible luck — that through no fault of their own, they will find that their mirror counterparts are decimating them. If this turns out to be the case, there are a few things you can do to even the odds. Perhaps the mirror characters don't work together as well as the PCs, after all. Try to think of any feuds or arguments that characters have had in the past, and blow those completely out of proportion — the wizard suddenly blasts the rogue, who stole that magic ring a few months ago. The encounter will be more satisfying if the PCs manage to beat themselves by fighting in top form or by out-thinking their counterparts — but if necessary, a



## CHAPTER FIVE: A TIME FOR WAR

few tricks like this can add an entertaining level of detail to the encounter.

A final possibility is that the PCs will be determined not to fight — that rather, they will try to steal the rod or somehow trick the mirror characters into giving up the rod. This will end the encounter, as described below. But don't make this too easy — this is certainly the biggest challenge the PCs face in this adventure, and they should have to work for it.

### BROKEN GLASS

If the PCs are victorious they will probably want to loot themselves, thinking to double their magic items when they return home. And if their counterparts had magical gear, this would work.

While searching, PCs will find two important objects, however — the sapphire half of the silver wand and a small black marble rook. Once the mirror counterparts are defeated, the gemstones on the two pieces of the silver wand begin to glow with a faint light. Suddenly the two pieces fly free from the hands of their holders and snap together, crackling with mystical energy, and rise into the air. Intact once again, the wand flares up in a blinding burst of light. As the characters watch, the air around them seems to turn to glass and then shatter. They find themselves standing in a barren chamber of gray stone. Only the black rook remains of the previous landscape; if the PCs didn't search thoroughly enough to find it, it will be sitting on the floor of the chamber. The wand is nowhere to be seen; it has served its purpose.



## CHAPTER SIX

# THE SECOND WORLD

*Sera wracked her brain. Krogar had already been turned into some sort of statue, and now this strange woman wanted her to come up with an answer for “Truth.”*

*“Yo! Lady!” Sera looked over. Krogar’s axe could still speak, apparently. “I don’t think she’s looking for an answer ... I think she wants you to ask her a riddle. Remember what that wizard guy said back at the village? ‘Question the answers?’”*

*You know, there might be something to that, Sera thought. All right ... who wants to live forever?*

*Looking out at the strange not-sphinx, she called out, “What is the one thing that no one wants to hear?”*

*“That is a terrible answer,” the stranger said, in her painfully beautiful voice. She turned to look at Dafyd. “Deception.”*

## FOLLOWING THE PROPHECY

At this point, the party has entered the final stage of the adventure. In this place, the divided halves of Charra Lyn fight for supremacy. If the PCs can reach Charra, they can determine her final fate.

This area is yet another level of reality. Here, magic — both spells and magic items — are completely inert; the characters will have to rely on their wits to finish things off. The one exception to this rule is the magical axe, Carcoasn. The powers of the axe do not function in this place — but it still has its sentience and the power of speech. If the party needs help, Carcoasn can provide hints — in exchange for gloating rights, of course. Most notably, all of the challenges the party will face have been outlined in the Seer’s prophecy. If the PCs did not take notes, well, Carcoasn has an excellent memory and can bring

up the relevant pieces of the prophecy when required.

## QUESTION THE ANSWERS ...

The characters are standing in a round chamber with walls of rough, gray stone. A single passage leads out of the chamber and curves around a corner; the only light in the entry chamber comes from this passage. They have all their gear and anything they picked up in the mirror world (except for the wand, of course).

Anyone who makes a Listen roll (DC18) will notice the sound of water lapping against the side of a pool, coming from down the tunnel. If no one succeeds, the player with the highest roll will be the one who first hears the sound of water when they begin to move down the tunnel.

When they go down the hallway, the PCs will eventually come to a second room. This is a long, rectangular chamber formed from the same rough stone. A pool of water dominates the center of the room; while translucent, the liquid appears to be glowing, and this is the only source of illumination in the room. The rippling water makes patterns of quavering light along the walls; the effect is quite calming.

After a moment characters will notice that there is a nude woman swimming in the water. She climbs out of the water on the opposite side of the pool from the party. With her back to them, she squeezes the water out of her golden hair. If someone makes a sound — or if no one does, after a few moments of hair-drying — the woman turns around. She has the head of a lion; her lovely hair

is simply a slightly anthropomorphized variation on a lion's mane. Seeing the party, she speaks; her voice is musical, and so beautiful that it is easy to ignore what she says and just listen to the sound. What she says is this: "Being seen does not bother me."

This woman — the Antisphinx — always says the opposite of what she means. She watches the party for a moment and then says "You can leave without my help. I will not test you."

At this point, the characters can ask a few questions; this should allow them to realize that the woman does not mean what she says. A few sample questions and answers:

- *Who are you?*  
No one of importance.
- *Where are we?*  
I'll certainly tell you that. (silence)
- *How did we get here?*  
You came of your own free will.
- *How do we get out of here?*  
You can leave without my help.

After a few questions she says, "The testing has not yet begun." She looks directly at one of the characters and says "Truth."

The Antisphinx is providing the characters with answers; she wants them to tell her a riddle, to which her answer is valid. This is what the Seer was referring to when he told the party to "question the answers."

There is no single riddle that will satisfy the Antisphinx. If a character comes up with a riddle that is clever or creative, and that makes sense, that's all that matters. If he doesn't try — "What's not false?" — then he fails. In all likelihood, the first person will fail simply because he doesn't know what she is asking for and won't provide a question of any sort. If her target gives a response that is not a riddle — or that is a poor one — she will say "An excellent question. You are free to go." She will gesture at the character, who will suddenly be frozen in place, not even breathing.

This is the Antisphinx's Temporal Trap special ability, which duplicates the effects of the spell *temporal stasis*.

## NEW CREATURE:

# The Antisphinx (1)

**Medium-sized  
Magical Beast**

<b>Hit Dice:</b>	10d10 + 50 (105 hp)
<b>Initiative:</b>	Init +8 (+4 Dexterity, +4 Improved Initiative)
<b>Speed:</b>	30 ft., swim 60 ft.
<b>AC:</b>	24 (+4 Dex, +10 dodge)
<b>Attacks:</b>	Bite +14/+9/+4 melee
<b>Damage:</b>	Bite 2d6+6
<b>Face/Reach:</b>	5 ft. by 5 ft./5 ft.
<b>Special Attacks:</b>	Temporal Trap, Wisdom Drain
<b>Special Qualities:</b>	Darkvision 60', Low-Light Vision, Stasis Step
<b>Saves:</b>	Fort +12, Ref +11, Will +3
<b>Abilities:</b>	Str 18, Dex 18, Con 20, Int 20, Wis 10, Cha 24
<b>Skills:</b>	Listen +15, Spot +15, Sense Motive +15
<b>Feats:</b>	Improved Initiative (+4 Init)
<b>Climate/Terrain:</b>	Special (subconscious plane)
<b>Organization:</b>	Solitary
<b>Challenge Rating:</b>	12
<b>Treasure:</b>	None
<b>Alignment:</b>	Neutral Good
<b>Advancement:</b>	None

The Antisphinx is the gatekeeper of Charra Lyn's subconscious. Attacking the Antisphinx is an exercise in futility; she will simply place her attacker in temporal stasis, or stop time and move away. If all of the characters attack her, she will move some distance away and then release someone from stasis, remarking, "Violence is a sensible course of action." Remember that the players cannot use spells or other magical effects while in this place — so if they really want to fight her, well, it's going to be a long fight.

**Stasis Step (Su):** The Antisphinx can step in and out of time at will; effectively, she may use the effect of *time stop* as a standard action.

**Temporal Trap (Su):** The Antisphinx can cast *temporal stasis* as a standard action. She may release a creature she previously placed in stasis as a free action. There is no limit to the number of creatures she may hold in stasis at any given time, or to the amount of time she can keep them in stasis.

**Wisdom Drain (Su):** As a standard action, the Antisphinx may inflict 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage on a target. There is no save against this effect, and its range is only limited by line of sight. The drained Wisdom returns at a rate of one point per day.

The Antisphinx then looks at the next character and says “Truth.”

If the characters just aren’t understanding the nature of the challenge, you could remind them of the words of the Seer’s prophecy, or Carcoasn could come to the rescue with a hint — “Hey! Boss! I think she wants you to ask her a question!”

The Antisphinx has three answers that she wishes to have questioned. These are provided below, along with an example of a question she would approve of:

- **Truth**

*What cuts down the braggart but leaves the humble unharmed?*

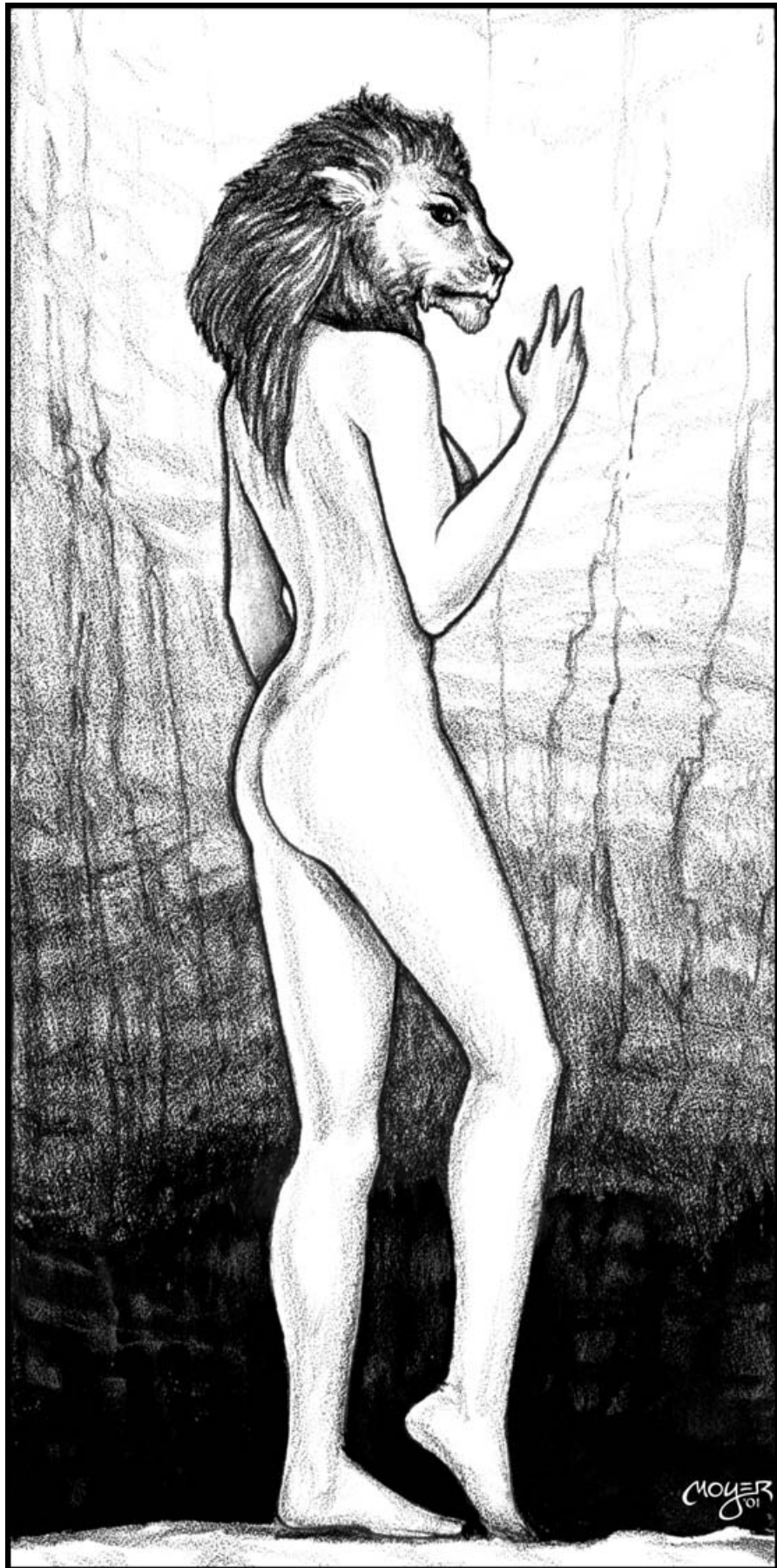
- **Deception**

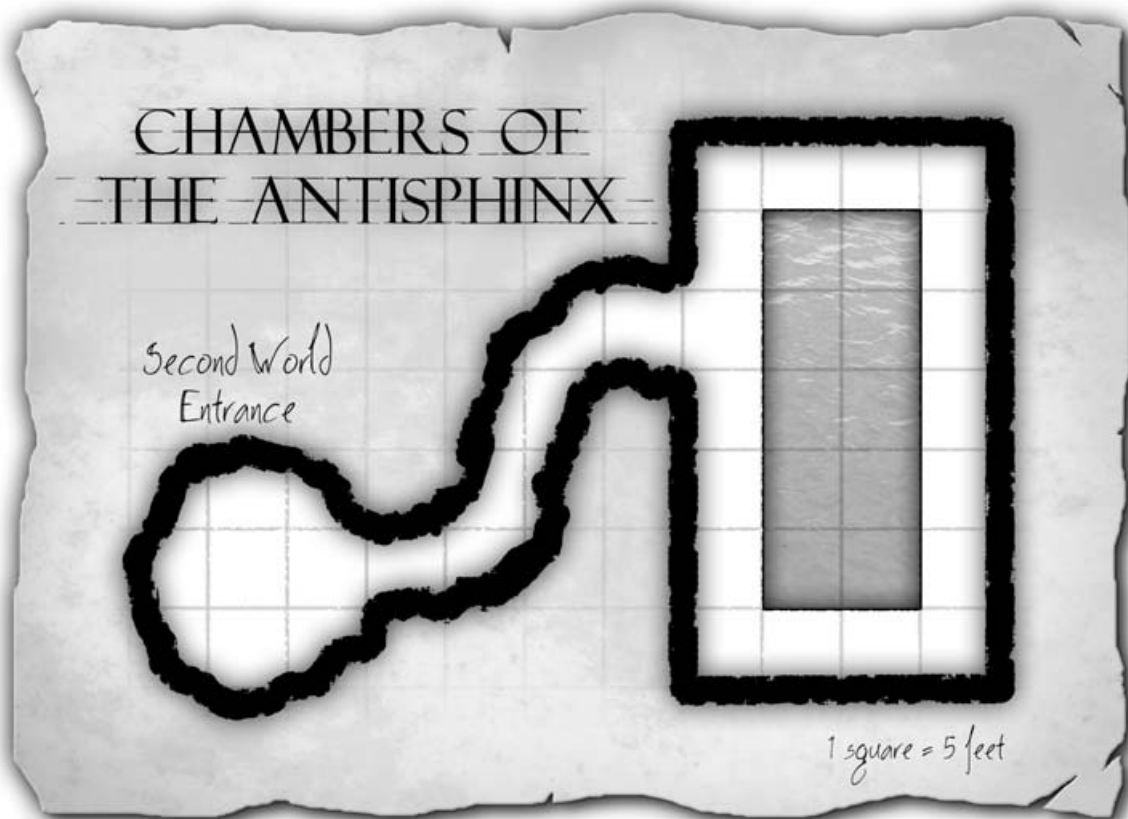
*The adulterer’s cloak, the actor’s coin, the author’s stock in trade.  
What am I?*

- **A Mirror**

*What holds all you can see and yet holds nothing at all?*

Encourage the party members to work together on these challenges. The first character or two will probably be frozen before they have even begun to understand the nature of the challenge, and you don’t want them to get left out of the fun. If all of the party members fail the





challenge, she will unfreeze the first character, remarking, “Your wisdom grows” — but as usual, she means the opposite of what she says.

The Antisphinx will return to the challenge, but now each time a character fails an answer, he loses Wisdom as well as being frozen again! The penalized character suffers 1d4 points of temporary Wisdom damage, as per the Antisphinx’s Wisdom Drain special ability.

Hopefully this will give the PCs some impetus to work together to solve the problems — if not, Carcoasn can always give additional hints.

Once the party comes up with riddles that satisfy her, the Antisphinx will gesture and release all characters in stasis. “You must remain here,” she says. “Do not enter the pool.” With that, she dives into the pool and swims down into the depths, eventually disappearing from view. Note that until this event occurs, there is nowhere to go in the pool; new depths appear as she dives down into the darkness.

## ... RETURN TO THE START ...

Presumably, the characters will eventually realize that since the Antisphinx told them *not* to enter the pool, they in fact *should* enter it. If they dive into the pool, they will find that they are pulled down by a powerful, inescapable current — which then spits them out onto dry stone. Up has become down, and what was the bottom of the pool was in fact an opening into another chamber. Swimming rolls are not required, weight is not an issue, and the characters don’t stay underwater long enough for air to become a concern.

Looking around, the characters find that they are in a dizzying maze of reflections. The walls, floor, and ceiling are completely covered with mirrors; wherever the characters look, their own reflections stretch off into infinity. Next to the pool, the tunnel runs to the north and south. Whichever direction the party goes, they will soon come to a T-junction. They are in a maze.



As it turns out, the maze is both small and remarkably simple — but as it is formed of Charra’s subconscious mind, it does not obey the laws of physics and doubles back on itself in multiple locations. Sooner or later, the characters will find themselves back at the pool. And that is the puzzle here. There is no other exit to the maze; as mentioned in the Seer’s prophecy, the characters must “return to the start.” If they dive back into the pool, they will again be pulled down towards the ‘bottom’ — but they will emerge into a chamber they have never seen before.

At the southern end of the room there is a raised dais. Two women are sitting at a table, playing a game of chess. Or so it seems at first glance.

Anyone making a Spot check of 20 or better will immediately notice that the two women are frozen in place, and are not even breathing; apparently they are in *temporal stasis*. If no one notices this on first glance, it will soon become obvious to all.

## ... AND FINISH THE GAME OUR CREATORS BEGAN

When the pool spits the party out, it is immediately clear that they have not returned to the chamber of the Antisphinx. There is a noticeable chill in the air, and the walls and floor are made from interwoven veins of black and white marble. The air itself seems slightly thick; walking across the room is almost like walking through water.

An hourglass is attached to the table, and whenever the sands run out one of the women makes a move and the hourglass flips over.

Closer examination reveals that the woman in control of the white side is an orc. She is dressed in a simple white robe, and has a slightly worried expression; her fangs are bared in frustration. The black side of the board is under the control of a stern-looking human woman wearing a robe of black velvet, embroidered with mystical sigils. Her dark hair is pulled back, giving her a severe widow’s peak. She has a slight smile on her lips.

## CHAPTER SIX: THE SECOND WORLD

If a character makes a Spot check against a DC of 15, she will notice that both women bear some resemblance to the shadowy figure seen in the energy sphere in Chapter Three — assuming, of course, that the character saw the shadowy figure during that encounter.

If someone examines the board, an Intelligence check (DC 14) or Profession (gambling) check (DC 10) — or a Knowledge or Profession skill with a similar logical connection — will reveal that black has a significant advantage over white; as it stands the game will be over in three turns.

A Search check against a DC of 18 at this time will also reveal that two rooks are missing from the gameboard — although anyone who specifically asks if rooks are missing can have this confirmed without needing to make a roll. The missing game pieces match those that the characters obtained in Chapters Four and Five.

Experimentation will reveal that the characters cannot affect the pieces on the board; they are in stasis, just like the women. But there is one exception. The PCs can place the rooks on the board. After placing a piece, a character cannot affect it until the current turn has been resolved — but after the move has been made, he can snatch it up again.



This is the final piece of the prophecy mentioned by the Seer — “Finish the game our creators began.” The characters are the only ones who can force the best possible solution out of this situation. If the party does not get involved, black will win. If the PCs interfere, they can sway the game one way or the other, or try to force a stalemate. But unless the characters know what they are doing, they may hurt the situation more than they help it.

The characters have five turns to try to shift the balance. They can attempt the following:

**Help Black Win:** Black doesn't really need any help. But if the players want to push things along, one of them must make a Gambling check against a DC of 10 or an Intelligence check against a DC of 12 in order to make a successful move for black. Black must make three successful moves in a row in order to win the game — if the character manages to screw this up, he will have cost the black player a sure victory.

**Help White Win:** In order to make a successful move for white, the moving character must make a Gambling check against a DC of 15 or an Intelligence check against a DC of 17. The PCs have five turns to play with, and they must succeed on at least three of them!

**Force a Stalemate:** This is a difficult challenge, given the current state of the game. To do this, the character must again score three successes within the five turns that remain — but the DC for Gambling is 20, and the DC for an Intelligence check is 22! If the character fails, roll 1d6; on a result of 1 through 4 black wins, while on a 5 or 6 white wins. (Note that there isn't time for characters to take 20, since the game is quickly coming to its conclusion as they ponder.)

Regardless of the victor, when the game comes to a close the air begins to harden. Within a few moments, it is completely solid, like glass; the characters cannot move at all. And then, with a stunning roar of thunder, the world shatters. Everything falls apart, and for a moment the players are falling from an immense height. Then they are back amidst the wreckage of the wagon — back where they were at the end of Chapter

Three. Bits of warm glass are falling from the sky. If, by some chance, the party managed to lose Merita's trunk, it's back. And the energy sphere has vanished.

## CHARRA LYN

Where there was once a globe of energy, now there is a woman stretched out across an empty metal frame that might once have contained a mirror. She wears a black robe embroidered with intricate designs in white and silver thread. She moans and slowly raises her head. What happens next — well, that depends on what the characters did in the chess game.

### BLACK WINS

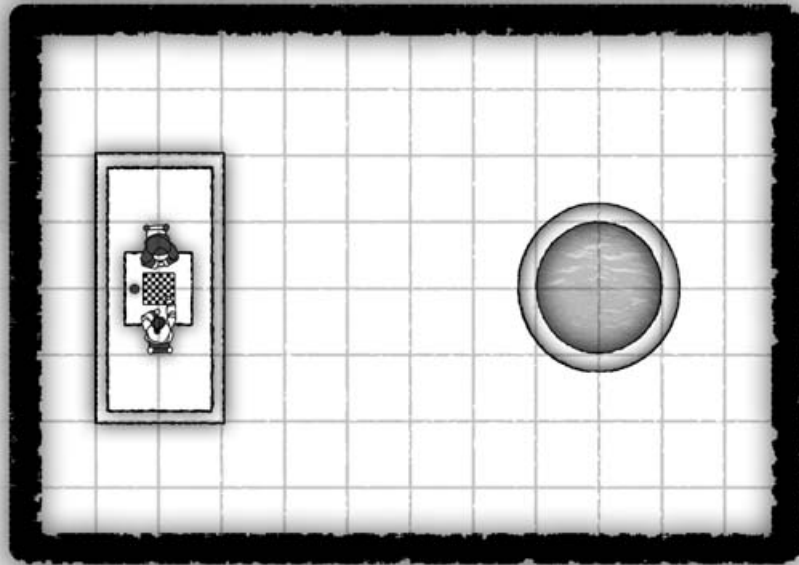
If the PCs gave the victory to black, the woman who looks up at them is a pure human. She looks at her hands and feels her face, laughing in an almost hysterical manner. She glances over at the party and recognition passes over her face. “Yes — I remember you. I suppose I am in your debt.” She smiles, but there is something cold and predatory about her expression. For the human side of Charra was her dark side, and she is much like the humans that were found within her mirror.

A character who makes a Sense Motive check (DC 15) will get the feeling that this woman is no one's friend; beneath her friendly words and expressions, she's cold and ruthless ... much like the mirror versions of the PCs.

The PCs will probably have questions at this point. Charra will seem somewhat annoyed at having to deal with them, but she will indulge them — after all, it gives her an opportunity to brag about her brilliance. “Yes, yes ... you see, I was not born as you see me now. In me, my father and mother had mixed the foul blood of the orc with the purity of the human. All my life, I could feel it holding me back, forcing me to be kin to those beasts. And so I began to research ways to create new worlds ... worlds of thought, where I could exile this tainted and weak part of my soul.” She laughs, a chilling silvery sound. “And now I have. There was a bit of a problem



## THE BLACK & WHITE CHAMBER



1 square = 5 feet

with my calculations, I suppose, and I was almost trapped as well ... but then you came along and broke the deadlock. So bravo to you!" At this point she steps in the outline of slime that may once have been an orc and wrinkles her nose. "Korg, that idiot ... I told him to stay out of the wagon when I was working. Well, I'll never have to work with his like again."

The characters may decide that they don't want to be in her debt, but Charra will laugh and ignore any such suggestions. She glances around the wreckage. "Well, I'm afraid I have little to offer at the moment ... but here, take this." From one of her sleeves she produces a small round hand mirror. "Don't worry, it won't bite ... it's a charm of communication. I'm sure I'll come up with a way to repay you later, and I'd hate to lose track of you." Again, the way she says this makes it sound more than a little threatening. Once a character has accepted the mirror, she smiles again. "Be seeing you." With that, she vanishes.

The mirror — identical in appearance to the one the party may have found on Orestes in the beginning of the adventure (see the *mirror of*

*receiving* insert on page 14) — is just a tool for bringing Charra back into the game later. She could use the mirror as a communications device or a summoning focus if she wished to offer the party employment in the future. Of course, this version of Charra is not a particularly nice person; the party may come to wish that they'd let white win. A few possible adventure ideas include:

- Charra collects magical mirrors of all kinds (if she wasn't disoriented from the polarization of her soul, she probably would have sensed the enchanted mirror in Merita's case and demanded it be given to her). At some point the party is in the middle of another job when Charra contacts them, demanding that they steal a mirror from their current employer. Which is more important — honor, or not making an enemy out of the sorceress?
- When she discovers that she still can't progress in her magical studies, Charra goes mad with frustration. She decides to start trapping the souls of other powerful wizards in a special mirror, hoping to tap into their

## THE EBON MIRROR

power. She calls upon the party to help her trap the wizards — do the players dare to turn her down?

### WHITE WINS

If white won the chess game, it is an orcish woman who rises from the wreckage. She heaves a deep sigh, feeling her face. She notices the characters and says, “I suppose I should thank you, my noble friends. Truly, you have saved me from myself ... but I have lost much of myself in the process.”

If the PCs wish to ask questions, she will explain how her former self wished to remove the orcish elements of her nature — and how, when the

experiment went awry, the intervention of the party caused the human side to be lost instead. “Truly I am only half a person,” she sighs. “And yet, perhaps it is the better half that I have kept. We will see. I feel more at peace than I ever have ... and yet, it was always my anger that drove me to greatness.” She glances around the wreckage and finally draws a small mirror from her sleeve. “I owe you much, but as you can see I have little to offer. If you would, take this and carry it with you. Perhaps someday I will be able to repay my debt to you, and when that time comes, I will speak to you through this.”

As above, the mirror (see page 14) is simply a tool to bring Charra back in the future. This version of Charra is nice — but in some ways, too nice. She lacks the ambition and drive her crueller side brought to the table. She will continue her magi-



"Let us pause  
and reflect."

(Might be smug, thoughtful, or sad  
depending which version she is)

## CHARRA LYN, MISTRESS OF MIRRORS

**KEY INFO:** Charra Lyn is the sorceress whose experiments were responsible for pulling the party into the mirror world.

**BACKGROUND:** Charra Lyn is a tremendously powerful sorceress. Born to a human mother and an orcish father in a backwater county, Charra grew up hating her parents and those around her. Somehow this hatred allowed her to tap into an inner reserve of magical power. As she developed her abilities, she became obsessed with the nature of reality and ways to bend it to her will — ways to create her own worlds. Frustrated with her failures, she began to blame all of her limitations on her orcish heritage. This gave her a new goal — to discover a way to completely eliminate all traces of her orcish soul.

Throughout her life, her efforts have been hindered by the fact that she is a sorceress as opposed to a wizard; instead of simply developing new rituals, she has had to find tools or tricks to bend her innate powers to her desired ends. She has spent the last few years working on her pocket realities, and has paid teams of mercenaries to scour the countryside in search of objects that could help her in her quest.

Of course, as this adventure shows, Charra was short-sighted on several fronts. To begin with, her trouble was never with her orcish heritage. Rather, her fault was her outlook on life. Her anger and bigotry may have sparked her discovery of her powers, but they are also what has kept her from developing her full potential. And she miscalculated a few points about the nature of the soul — which is why she was drawn into the mirror.

**APPEARANCE:** Charra's appearance will depend on her race. Orcish Charra dresses in white with lace and frills; she is fairly unpleasant to look upon, but has a warm aura that shines through her warts and boils. Human Charra is a pale woman with long dark hair, who prefers elegant black dress; she is quite beautiful, but there is something cold and disturbing that flashes out when she lets her guard down. And Charra the half-orc is gruff and plainspoken, with elements of each of the others in her features. She wears robes of black and white.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** How Charra interacts with the PCs and the campaign in the future will hinge on which version of Charra emerged at the end of the adventure.

The Orcish Charra is well-intentioned, but without the darkness that has driven her throughout her life she will find it difficult to accomplish much. She will be almost absent-minded, and painfully polite and sensitive.

The Human Charra combines the worst elements of Charra's personality. She has distilled all of Charra's bitterness and anger. When she discovers that the experiment was a failure — that losing her light side will prevent her from advancing her magical powers further — she will seek a new outlet for her rage and frustration, which could have grave consequences for the kingdoms around her. In conversation, she is cold and calculating, although as a schemer she is quite capable of putting on a friendly face.

The Half-orc Charra is the best of the three. Going through an internal war has taught her a great deal about herself. She has learned to appreciate both light and darkness. She may be the most reclusive of the three, as she has a great deal of introspection to do — but in the long run, she is likely to be the most useful ally for the party. While she has a gruff outer demeanor, she is actually very levelheaded; she has learned to consider everything carefully before jumping to conclusions.

### 18<sup>TH</sup>-LEVEL SORCERESS (HUMAN, ORC, OR HALF-ORC)

CR 18; SZ M (humanoid); HD 18d4+18; hp 63; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk melee +9/+4 (1d3 subdual, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells, SQ Racial Traits; AL see below; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +14; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 16, Cha 20

**Skills:** Alchemy +10, Bluff +10, Concentration +15, Craft (jeweler) +14, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (planar theory) +14, Stry +15, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +15

**Feats:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell (All variable numeric effects of spell are increase by 50%; spell uses up a slot two levels higher than usual), Forge Ring, Leadership, Maximize Spell (All variable numeric effects of spell are set to maximum value; spell uses a slot three levels higher than usual), Quickened Spell (May cast a spell as a free action; spell uses up a slot 4 levels higher than usual)

**Racial Traits (Ex):** If Charra ends up a half-orc, she will have Darkvision that lets her see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only. If she is a full orc, in addition to Darkvision she will also have a light sensitivity that gives her a –1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

**Spells:** Spells per day: 6/7/7/7/7/6/6/5/3; DC 15 + Spell Level.

Since Charra does not actually use her magic in this adventure, select her spells to suit your needs. Her 9<sup>th</sup> level spell is *wish*, and she should know *limited wish* as well; playing with reality is her stock in trade, although she prefers to create pocket realities than to alter the nature of the prime world. Other spells that make sense for her would include *mirror image*, *maze*, and *trap the soul*; the ritual to cast part of her spirit into the mirror was presumably a variation on *trap the soul*.

**Note:** If Charra is human, her alignment is lawful evil; if she ends up as an orc, her alignment is chaotic good; and if she turns out half-orcish, her alignment is true neutral.

cal research, but her ideas will be bizarre and half-baked. A few ideas to play with:

- Charra has continued to create mirror worlds — but instead of creating prisons, she’s created what she believes to be “the perfect world.” However, she needs someone to go and see how it’s turned out ... any volunteers?
- Charra wants to create ‘mirror villas’ — why live in a house when you can have your own pocket world? The only problem is that there seems to be something that can move from mirror to mirror, and it’s making a bloody mess of her customers ...

## STALEMATE

The final option is that it will be a half-orc that the PCs see rising from the wreckage — the same woman they spied through the sphere in the first place. She looks over at them and bows her head. “You have my thanks. You’ve saved me from my own folly.” If pressed on the subject, she will scowl slightly — she is not as friendly as White Charra, but neither does she have the Black Charra’s disturbing tendency towards veiled threats. “It was a fool’s idea ... I told myself that all my problems were because of my tainted blood, and that if I could find a way to purge the taint from my very spirit I’d ... well, it doesn’t matter. I see now that I was just looking for excuses, someone else to blame. You can’t throw away one face of a coin ... I better just figure out what to do with this coin I’ve got.”

She, too, will give the party a small mirror (see page 14). “Look, you did me a bigger favor than you know. I can’t help you now, but I’ll come up with something. So trust me and take this ... I’ll use it to contact you when I have something to offer you.”

Of the three, she is the safest character to have as a patron; she may offer the party jobs exploring mirror worlds, but she will be the wisest in her plans and will be fair and honest in her dealings with the PCs. Possible adventure ideas include:

- Charra discovers evidence that leads her to believe that the ‘prime’ world is, itself, a mirror in a more central reality. She wants to

## The Hamlet of Shareth-en-La (Prime Version)

**Power Center:** Conventional (Council of Elders)

**Alignment:** Neutral Good

**Community Authorities:** Daraela Aolias, 9<sup>th</sup>-Level Elvish Ranger/3<sup>rd</sup>-Level Wizard

**NPCs in the Community:** The Seer Osai, 8<sup>th</sup>-Level Orc Diviner/10<sup>th</sup>-Level Loremaster; Arivon Felosial, 5<sup>th</sup>-Level Gnomish Wizard, village elder; Felienda Waterfall, 7<sup>th</sup>-Level Elvish Wizard, village elder; Theras Cord, 6<sup>th</sup>-Level Half-elf Cleric, village elder and priest; Koralian Silverbloom, 4<sup>th</sup>-Level Elvish Expert, village reeve

**Population:** 97 elves, 27 half-elves, 18 humans, 9 gnomes, 1 orc (152 total).

Aside from its racial makeup, the prime version of Shareth is virtually identical to its mirror counterpart. As in the mirror, it has an unusually high concentration of classed characters, including 24 inhabitants with at least one level of arcane spell-casting skill and 36 expert craftsmen. In place of the undead force that protected the orcs of mirror Shareth, the hamlet is guarded by a small group of ranger-wizards, lead by Daraela Aolias (sister to Merita, the agent of the Crucible who hired the party in the first place).

Just as in the mirror, the Seer prefers to remain out of sight, working to further the goals of the Crucible. The vault containing the artifacts and treasury of the hamlet — which, due to its trade in magic, is far richer than the size of the community would suggest — is hidden underground. Only the Seer can reach it, through the use of *teleport*.

send the PCs to this inner reality to see what it is like.

- Charra has heard of an ancient ‘hall of mirrors’ — the stronghold of a forgotten order that did similar work with the study of reality. She hires the party to investigate the ruins and salvage what they can — but as it turns out, this sends them on a trip through a series of linked mirror worlds.

## The Seer's Magic Items (Prime Version)

### WONDRIOUS ITEM: CAPE OF THE MOUNTEBANK

This cape allows the wearer to use the power of *dimension door* once per day. When he disappears he leaves behind a puff of smoke, appearing in a similar fashion at his destination.

*Caster Level:* 9<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Item, *dimension door*; *Market Price:* 12,960 gp; *Weight:* 1 lb.

### NEW MAGICAL RING: RING OF WATER BREATHING

In the prime world, this ring keeps water out of the lungs of its wearer, providing a continuous *water breathing* effect.

*Caster Level:* 6<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Forge Ring, *water breathing*; *Market Price:* 2,300 gp; *Weight:* —

### NEW MAGIC WEAPON: SERPENT BLADE

A +2 *scimitar* with serpentine patterns engraved on the blade, this magic weapon has hidden powers. On a critical hit, the blade comes to life and bites its target; the victim must make a Fortitude save (DC 18) or suffer 1d6 temporary Constitution score damage, followed by an additional 1d6 Constitution damage a minute later. However, if the wielder rolls an unmodified one when rolling to hit, the blade will bite her, with the same consequences.

*Caster Level:* 12<sup>th</sup>; *Prerequisites:* Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *Animate Object*, *Poison*; *Market Price:* 18,315 gp; *Weight:* 4 lbs

## LOOSE ENDS: ARRIVING IN SHARETH-EN-LA

Sooner or later, the characters will remember that they still have to finish their trip to Shareth-en-La. If he was used, Carcoasn will complain bitterly about being abandoned, “after all the good I did!” He will do his best to guilt the party into keeping him around. But eventually the party will arrive at Shareth-en-La.

The elven hamlet is almost identical to the town they visited in the mirror world, except that the cottages on the ground are smaller since they don't need to accommodate ogres. With the exception of Jeseth, the people they met — Arivon Felosial, Koralian, Zalanthe, and even little Delas Felosial (Smudge) — are all actual inhabitants of the hamlet, albeit all elves and gnomes who have no knowledge of the players. When the party arrives, they are told that the Seer has been expecting them and wishes to see them immediately — much to the chagrin of the Council of Elders, who prefer that the Seer avoid contact with outsiders. When they meet him, the party may understand why ...

For the Seer Osai-en-La, founder of the Crucible of Osai, is an orc.

Any PC who had heard of Shareth or the Crucible knows that the Seer Osai was a great elven sage. But as far as the inhabitants of the prime world Shareth are concerned, reality has always been this way. The Seer himself knows that things have changed — and he warns the characters that other things may have changed as well. Perhaps Jeja VerDragt is wandering the roads, plotting revenge against the characters — or perhaps one of their own duplicates has escaped from the mirror.

Aside from this warning, the Seer will make good on whatever reward was set up with Merita — possibly with an additional bonus. It is up to you to decide how rich this reward should be, based on the power level of your campaign. If the PCs ask, perhaps the Seer could find some way to weave a positive enchantment into Carcoasn — so that he could remain with the party, should they find they have grown attached to the axe.

When rewards have been given, the Seer will call for a feast to welcome the party to the hamlet. And as song and cheer echo through the trees,



## Encounter Levels and Experience

Listed below are the Encounter Levels for each of the major encounters in this adventure, along with the experience points each is worth. Figure out the average level of your PCs, and add up the points under the column for each encounter they succeeded in defeating. Remember that “defeating” means being able to navigate past it to accomplish the larger goal; if they don't actually kill the sacred undead in “Dead Men Dancing,” but instead find a peaceful way to get around the encounter, that still counts as defeating it – although if the PCs manage to overcome the obstacle with a minimum of effort, you should feel free to reduce the reward. Split the total experience you come up with among your players.

Note that a few of the encounters have levels that do not strictly match the values of the creatures involved. This is to take into account unusual circumstances – the assistance of NPCs such as Molric or Merita, or special advantages like Jeja believing the PCs to be her allies.

Encounter	EL	8 <sup>th</sup> -Level XP	9 <sup>th</sup> -Level XP	10 <sup>th</sup> -Level XP
<b>Silent Knives</b>	8	2,400	1,800	1,500
<i>(The characters get no XP from fighting Merita herself, should they choose to.)</i>				
<b>The Raiders Strike!</b>	8/9	2,400	2,700	2,000
<i>(If an Elf and Blink Dog are removed from the attacking force, the EL is reduced from 9 to 8. This has been taken into account for the XP award for 8<sup>th</sup> level characters.)</i>				
<b>Dead Men Dancing</b>	9	3,600	2,700	2,000
<b>A Challenge at the Gates</b>	Special	800	900	1000
<i>(There are many ways to get past this encounter. Combat is not the ideal solution, and Jeseth will interrupt combat before it can be completed. As a result, the experience for the encounter does not reflect the full power of the opposition.)</i>				
<b>Molric Drach</b>	6	1,200	900	750
<i>(The party should only receive this reward if they choose to fight Molric when he is fully healthy, instead of allying with him against the undead. They receive no bonus for turning against him during or after the battle.)</i>				
<b>The Council of Elders</b>	Special	450	506	563
<i>(This award is for parties that manage to talk their way into seeing the Seer immediately. At your discretion, you can divide the reward up between characters actively involved in persuasion.)</i>				
<b>A Traitor Revealed</b>	6	1,200	900	750
<i>(This award only applies to characters who fight and defeat Jeja.)</i>				
<b>The Gnome Scout</b>	3	450	338	250
<b>The Warband</b>	9	3,600	2,700	2,000
<b>The Devils You Know</b>	8/9/10	7,200	8,100	9,000
<i>(This award should be provided for overcoming the opposing forces through any means. Parties that manage to outwit the opposition should be awarded as well as characters who fight themselves. The EL is based on the party's own CRs.)</i>				
<b>Question the Answers ...</b>	Special	100	115	130
<i>(This award should be given to each character who successfully questions one of the Antisphinx's answers.)</i>				
<b>... And Finish the Game Our Creators Began</b>				
Black Victory	Special	None	None	None
White Victory	Special	300	338	375
Stalemate	Special	600	675	750
<i>(This is a story award based on the final outcome of the game. The party only receives this award if they were trying to get the indicated outcome.)</i>				

## CHAPTER SIX: THE SECOND WORLD

characters may find themselves thinking of the world they left behind — and wondering what pieces of it they may see again.

### SPOILS OF WAR

The characters have no doubt been richly rewarded by the prime world Seer Osai, and they may also have gotten a few now-useful magic items from the Seer Osai in the mirror world (see page 55); on page 77 are their statistics in the prime world. Also, see the insert box on page 78 for experience rewards for your players.

### FURTHER ADVENTURES

The section on Charra Lyn's alternate personalities has already described a few ways in which the events of this adventure could tie into future games. Here are a few more ideas:

- A mad wizard begins a reign of terror, scattering deadly cursed objects about the realm. Merita Aolias shows up with a lead on the wizard — but she's going to need help to find him and take him down.
- On the other hand, there is a darker side to the Crucible. Occasionally the sect eliminates those who simply create foolish magical items, as a flawed or frivolous artifact uses

just as much energy as a cursed one. Perhaps the players come to know a harmless, eccentric sorceress who makes magical toys — and who is targeted by the Crucible for wasting magical energy.

- If one of the PCs is a rogue, people around town start treating him with a lot more respect — until suddenly a group of strangers tries to kill him. It turns out that his duplicate from the mirror world was dropped into this one and has been making a bloody name for himself in the local underworld; now the player character is left holding the bag.
- The Seer Osai contacts the party by magical means. He believes that he has located a group of refugees from the mirror world, but he is having trouble scrying on the location. Could the party look into the situation? As it turns out, he has found a group from the mirror world — the warlord Crossac the Reaver and his savage band of halfling and elven warriors.
- A woman approaches the party in desperation. Her sister has been turned into a vampire and is preying on her family and friends. The woman? Jeja VerDragt; the vampire is her older sister Jeseth. To further complicate matters, if the characters come to know Jeja, her mirror counterpart could show up to allow for a little mistaken identity hijinx!



## APPENDIX ONE

# WHO'S WHO IN SHARETH-EN-LA (MIRROR VERSION)

There are a number of NPCs in the mirror Shareth who the party may deal with on multiple occasions. This section places information about these NPCs in a single place. Note that all of the named characters here speak common — a language used in the rare interactions between the

goblinoids and raiders — but that most of the villagers only speak the orcish/elvish hybrid language of the area. Also, all spells listed for NPCs work as normal without conversion; only the PCs' spells need to be altered to work correctly in the mirror world.

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT:

## Dragonfang Sword (Mirror and Prime Versions)

This object is a worn bastard sword. The blade is gilded, but nicked and battered; it is a weapon that has seen a great deal of use. The hilt is carved in the shape of a green dragon's head, with the blade extending from between the teeth of the beast. In general, the blade functions as a +3 *bastard sword*. If the wielder is wearing *dragonscale armor*, additional enchantments are activated; the blade inflicts an additional 1d6 acid damage with every strike, and twice per day the wielder can fire an 8d6 cone of acid from the blade (Reflex save vs. DC 20 for half damage).

If the *dragonfang sword* and *dragonscale armor* are taken to the prime world, they will begin to flex and squirm, until in a sudden flash of motion they leap from wearer and wielder and combine into a living green dragon. This beast takes to the sky, growing in size as it ascends into the air, and disappears over the horizon.

*Caster Level:* 16<sup>th</sup>, *Weight:* 10 lbs.

### NEW MINOR ARTIFACT:

## Dragonscale Armor (Mirror and Prime Versions)

This armor is formed from emerald scales that appear to have come from the hide of a green dragon (one of the most noble of all beasts in the mirror world). A rampant dragon is displayed on the front of the armor, with its wings stretching out over the shoulders of the wearer; there is even a small tail that extends down from the wearer's spine. The armor itself serves as +3 *scale mail*, and it is incredibly flexible and comfortable; it seems to adjust to fit its wearer as perfectly as possible. If the wearer is carrying a *dragonfang sword*, the additional powers of the armor come to the fore. The user gains complete immunity to all forms of acid-based attack, becomes immune to the Frightful Presence ability of dragons, and gains the effect of *water breathing* for as long as the armor and sword are both worn or wielded.

See the *dragonfang sword* insert for information on the prime version of the *dragonscale armor*.

*Caster Level:* 16<sup>th</sup>, *Weight:* 25 lbs.





"Be pure. Be vigilant. Behave."

## JESETH VERDRAGT, UNDEAD GUARDIAN

**KEY INFO:** Jeseth is the strong arm of the village, restored to life to protect its inhabitants from harm. But as she cannot detect evil in the auras of the PCs, she is willing to give them a chance.

**BACKGROUND:** In life, Jeseth VerDragt was a human rogue. During a raider siege of a goblin encampment, Jeseth took pity on the goblins and smuggled food into the village. When this treachery was discovered, she was tortured and killed; but the orcish gods admired her courage and brought her back as one of the sacred undead. In the mirror world, all vampires are paladins by nature; restored to life by the gods, they take the blood of evil-doers and purify it within their own bodies. Jeseth has dedicated her undead existence to protecting Shareth-en-La, and as such, she is the only 'human' the villagers are willing to trust. If the adventurers can win her trust, they will have an easier time dealing with the villagers. If they somehow destroy her, it will be very difficult to make peace with the village ...

**APPEARANCE:** Jeseth is a human woman with a wiry, athletic build. Her red hair drops just below her shoulders, and she appears to be in her twenties. Her vampiric features are very pronounced; her skin is dead white, her eyes gleam red in the darkness, and her fangs are visible whenever she speaks or smiles. Her voice is gravelly and rough, a side effect of returning from death. Her armor is particularly unusual; this green dragonscale was a gift from an ancient dragon after she fought at the creature's side in order to save a bugbear settlement. Jeseth moves with the fluid grace of a predator, and in the case of the characters, they should always have the sense that she is sizing them up as targets.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** Jeseth is quiet and serious. She uses words sparingly, and is constantly on the watch for threats to the village. She is dedicated to the cause of good and helping those in need — and as such, she wishes to give the party a chance to prove what they say.

### 10TH-LEVEL HUMAN VAMPIRE PALADIN

CR 12; SZ M (undead); HD 10d12; hp 70; Init +9 (+5 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 27 (+4 Dex, +6 natural, +7 *dragonscale armor* +3); Atk melee +18/+13 (1d10+12+1d6 acid/crit 19-20/x2, +3 *dragonfang sword*); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Blood Drain, Domination (DC 19), rebuke undead (as 8<sup>th</sup>-level cleric), spells; SQ Alternate Form (raven, wolfhound), Aura of Courage, Damage Reduction 15/+1, Detect Evil, Divine Grace, Fast Healing 5, Gaseous Form, Healing Touch (as sacred wraith), Lay on Hands (40 hp), Resistance (cold/electricity 20), Sacred Undead, Spider Climb, Turn Resistance +6; AL LG; SV Fort +11, Ref +14, Will +11; Str 22, Dex 20, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 19

**Skills:** Concentration +10, Diplomacy +15, Hide +12, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +14, Move Silently +13, Ride +10, Search +12, Sense Motive +12, Spot +14

**Feats:** Alertness (+2 to Listen, Search, and Spot checks), Combat Reflexes (May make up to five attacks of opportunity per round), Dodge (+1 AC vs. one opponent), Expertise (May reduce chance to hit by up to 10 in order to add the same amount to AC), Improved Initiative (+4 to Init Rolls), Iron Will (+2 to Will Saves), Lightning Reflexes (+2 to Reflex saves), Power Attack (May reduce chance to hit by up to 10 in order to add the same amount to damage), Quick Draw (May draw weapon as a free action)

**Alternate Forms (Su):** The vampire can assume the form of a raven or wolfhound as a standard action. This is similar to the *polymorph self* spell, as if cast by a 12<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer.

**Aura of Courage:** Allies of the paladin standing within ten feet of her gain a +4 morale bonus on saving throws versus fear.

**Blood Drain (Ex):** If the vampire makes a grapple check and pins her foe, she may drain blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent constitution damage each round the pin is maintained. Traditionally, mirror vampires are only supposed to use this ability against evil beings.

**Damage Reduction (Su):** A vampire is supernaturally resilient, and it heals most injuries within seconds. This equates to having damage reduction 15/+1; unless the weapon used in an attack is +1 or better, the first 15 points of damage will be ignored.

**Detect Evil:** The paladin may *detect evil* at will as a spell-like ability.

**Divine Grace:** Jeseth receives a +4 bonus to all saving throws

**Domination (Su):** This is a gaze attack requiring a normal action. The target of the vampire's attack must succeed at a Will save (DC 19) or fall instantly under the vampire's influence as though affected by a *dominate person* spell cast by a 12<sup>th</sup>-level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 feet.

**Fast Healing (Ex):** As long as the vampire has hit points remaining, it will heal 5 points at the start of each round. This effect cannot heal damage caused by necromantic spells.

**Gaseous Form (Su):** As a standard action, a vampire can assume *gaseous form* as the spell. The vampire can remain in this form indefinitely, and has a flying speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability. Instead of the traditional dark mist of the normal vampire, while in this form a sacred vampire appears to be formed from cold blue light.

**Healing Touch (Su):** A mirror vampire can channel its energy into another living creature or another one of the sacred undead. This has a number of beneficial effects. It can heal 3d10 hit points of damage, restore one level lost to level drain abilities, or restore up to two points of ability damage. The vampire may use one of these three effects per round, and it must touch the creature it wishes to heal. If a sacred vampire somehow encountered a negatively charged undead creature, its touch would inflict 3d10 points of damage on the negative entity.

**Lay on Hands:** Jeseth may heal up to 40 points per day by touch. Generally she will save this ability to heal herself, while using her Healing Touch to cure others.

**Rebuke Undead:** Jeseth may Rebuke Undead up to 7 times per day, as if she were an 8<sup>th</sup>-level cleric.

**Resistance (Ex):** A vampire has electrical and cold resistance that allows her to ignore up to 20 points of damage from these sources each round.

**Sacred Undead (Su):** All sacred undead are immune to poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, and mind-influencing effects. They are not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, ability drain, energy drain, or any effects that require a Fortitude save.

**Spider Climb (Ex):** A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a *spider climb* spell.

**Turn Resistance (Ex):** Jeseth is considered to have 16 HD for purposes of resisting turn attempts.

**Spells:** 2/2; DC 12 + Spell Level

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *divine favor, resistance*

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *delay poison, shield other*

**Possessions:** Jeseth possesses two unique magical items — her sword and her armor, which are in some ways a single object. More information about these items is provided on page 80.

**Note:** Jeseth does not possess any of the weaknesses of a traditional vampire. She loves garlic, can cross running water, and is not repelled by holy symbols (she is holy). While she drinks blood — to cleanse it — she cannot Create Spawn. As a true paladin of this world she possesses the normal abilities of the class, not the altered paladin abilities described in Appendix Two — with the exception that she Rebukes undead instead of Turning them.



## KORALIAN SILVERBLOOM THE REEVE

**KEY INFO:** Koralian is assigned to be the characters' chaperone during their stay in the hamlet.

**BACKGROUND:** Koralian is the reeve of Shareth-en-La. He coordinates the work of the farmers and artisans of the hamlet. Until recently, he was the primary liaison between the townspeople and the Council of Elders, but with the rising threat from the raiders has assumed this role. This is fine with Koralian; he is a gentle soul and prefers to leave the uncivilized matters of combat and civil defense in the capable hands of the vampire. Nonetheless, he is one of the mightiest warriors in the hamlet, and he is prepared to fight if the need arises. He will grudgingly assume the roles of guide and guard for the party — he'd rather be out in the fields or home in bed, but he will always put the needs of the village before personal comfort.

Koralian is a keen judge of character, and given a little time he will come to the conclusion that the PCs are telling the truth. In addition to being a skilled laborer, he is an aspiring bard, and if the characters manage to win his favor they may end up having to listen to him sing (Note: there is a reason he doesn't have Perform on his skill list!).

**APPEARANCE:** The reeve is a massive ogre. He is nine and a half feet tall and rippling with muscle. His warty skin is a deep orange, and his golden-brown hair and beard are carefully braided. He speaks with a deep, rumbling voice — but with a cultured accent and excellent vocabulary.

**Roleplaying Notes:** The party will spend much of their time in Shareth in the company of Koralian. Use him as a chance to showcase the peaceful and civilized nature of the inhabitants of the hamlet. He should talk longingly of his work in the fields, and how difficult times have been since the arrival of the raiders. He will try to bring up poetry or literature — “This situation reminds me of Verosia's *Life in Peril* — are you familiar with her work? It is wonderful how she captures the quintessential quandary of existence — the sense of uncertainty that we carry with us from birth to the grave. Here, let me sing you a stanza ...”

“Though you are foul  
in form, I sense a noble  
spirit within you.”

### 4TH-LEVEL OGRE EXPERT

CR 5; SZ L (giant); HD 4d8+4d6+24; hp 56; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (-1 Dex, -1 size, +5 natural, +4 masterwork chain shirt); Atk melee +13 (1d12+7/crit 20/x3, greataxe); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 10 ft.; AL LG; SV Fort +8, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 24, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12

**Skills:** Animal Empathy +6, Diplomacy +6, Handle Animal +6, Knowledge (nature) +6, Profession (farmer) +6, Profession (herdsman) +6, Sense Motive +6, Wilderness Lore +6

**Feats:** Martial Weapon Proficiency (greataxe)

**Possessions:** To guard the party Koralian has put on a beautiful shirt of orcish mail and picked up the giant axe he uses to split wood.



## ARIVON FELOSIAL, VILLAGE ELDER

**Key Info:** Arivon is a member of the Council of Elders. He is opposed to letting the party speak to the Seer.

**Background:** When the mirror Seer Osai first established the community of Shareth-en-La as a base of operations for the Crucible, he was accompanied by a number of skilled goblin and orc artisans — wizards and craftsmen who believed in the mission of the Crucible, who wished to retire to a private location where they could experiment and work to create the mystical tools that might save the future. Arivon Felosial is one of the oldest and most respected members of this community. The Seer has relied on his counsel for decades, and the other villagers treat him with deference. However, his years are beginning to weigh heavily on his shoulders, and the recent attacks by the humans trouble him deeply. He is highly suspicious of the party and does not want to risk allowing them to get close to the Seer.

As a side note, Arivon is the father of Taris Felosial, the goblin farmer the PCs may have killed during “The Raiders Strike” encounter in Chapter Three. This may be a positive thing if the party saved the goblin children, or a negative thing if the children say, “These people killed our dada!”

**Appearance:** Arivon is an extremely old goblin. His eyes are almost lost within deep wrinkles. His skin is a pale yellow and seems to be peeling in places, and he has only tufts of hair. His voice is high-pitched and cracks in moments of anger. Nonetheless, he carries himself with dignity and a surprising degree of energy.

**Roleplaying Notes:** Arivon is actually quite wise. He does not trust the players because he knows that the humans and elves are up to something; what he doesn't realize is that the humans have already infiltrated the village. The character note to contrast him to Throg the priest is that he is suspicious but completely rational; he is not angry at or afraid of the party, he simply sees no reason to take a chance on their story.

“Shall we allow the  
wolf to rest amidst  
our flock?”

### 5TH-LEVEL GOBLIN WIZARD

CR 5; SZ S (humanoid); HD 1d8+5d4-6; hp 10; Init +0 (-1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Size); Atk melee +1 (1d3-1 subdual, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 8, Dex 11, Con 9, Int 18, Wis 16, Cha 14

**Skills:** Alchemy +10, Craft (leatherworking) +10, Craft (painting) +12, Craft (woodworking) +10, Knowledge (arcana) +10, Spellcraft +10

**Feats:** Brew Potion, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll

**Darkvision (Ex):** Darkvision lets goblins see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

**Spells:** 4/4/3/2; DC 14 + Spell Level

0 Level — arcane mark, detect magic x2, read magic

1<sup>st</sup> Level — color spray, magic missile, ray of enfeeblement, silent image

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — arcane lock, knock, mirror image

3<sup>rd</sup> Level — haste, slow



"Let us not be held  
prisoner by our fears."

## JEJA VERDRAGT AKA FELIENDA WATERFALL, VILLAGE ELDER

**KEY INFO:** Felienda is a moderate voice on the Council of Elders. She will advocate for the party and argue that they should be allowed to see the Seer. This is because she is actually a disguised human assassin ...

**BACKGROUND:** Felienda was always a voice of wisdom and reason in Shareth-en-La. She often sought a way to make peace with the savage elves and humans. Recently, she was even so bold as to attend a secret meeting with the leaders of the raider band; it was at this meeting that she was slowly eviscerated, and a human assassin named Jeja VerDragt was sent back in her place.

Jeja VerDragt is the younger sister of Jeseth the paladin. For years she has been honing her skills in preparation for the day she would destroy the abomination that has brought shame to her family. Using a magical hat and a daily regimen of deceptive magic, she has made her way into the hamlet right under Jeseth's nose; now she is biding her time and waiting for the right moment to destroy everything her cursed sister holds dear.

**APPEARANCE:** Jeja is a lithe human woman with a striking resemblance to Jeseth, only about a year or two younger than the paladin. A scowl habitually ruins what could be a pretty face. She is well-armed and armored.

When disguised as Felienda, she is a middle-aged female orc. She has a sturdy, solid build and a thick mane of iron-gray hair, held back by an ivory comb (actually her magical hat). Her voice is unusually soft for an orc.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** When Jeja sees the party she assumes that they are the leaders of the raiders, and that their efforts to see the Seer are part of some elaborate deception. As such, she plays up Felienda's pro-human sympathies. She will speak in defense of the characters, encouraging others to be open-minded: "Perhaps this is a sign that we can live in harmony with the humans after all."

### 5TH-LEVEL HUMAN ROGUE/5TH-LEVEL ASSASSIN

CR 10; SZ M (human); HD 10d6; hp 35; Init +8 (+4 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 21 (+4 Dex, +5 *glamered chain shirt* +1, +2 *ring of force shield*); Atk melee +9 (1d6+1+bleeding/crit 18-20/x2, *rapier of wounding*), ranged +11 (2 damage/crit 20/x2, +1 *shuriken of returning*); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Death Attack (DC 17), Evasion, Sneak Attack +5d6, Uncanny Dodge (Can't be flanked); AL LE (undetected); SV Fort +2, Ref +12, Will +4; Str 14, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 14

**Skills:** Bluff +14, Climb +10, Disable Device +12, Disguise +14, Escape Artist +12, Gather Information +10, Hide +12, Listen +10, Move Silently +14, Open Locks +10, Search +12, Spot +8

**Feats:** Combat Reflexes (May make up to four attacks of opportunity per round), Exotic Weapon Proficiency (Shuriken), Improved Initiative (+4 to Init Rolls), Quick Draw (May draw weapon as a free action), Run (run at x5 normal speed)

**Death Attack:** After three rounds of study, she may make an attack on a target with a melee weapon. If the attack hits, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 17). On a failed save, the victim dies or is paralyzed, at the whim of the assassin.

**Evasion:** If a successful Reflex save would result in taking half damage, Jeja takes no damage.

**Sneak Attack:** Jeja inflicts an additional 5d6 damage if she flanks her opponent or if her opponent is denied his Dex bonus to AC.

**Uncanny Dodge:** Jeja cannot be flanked and does not lose her natural Dex bonus to AC when she is caught flatfooted.

**Spells:** 2/2; DC 12 + Spell Level

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *ghost sound*, *obscuring mist*

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *darkness*, *undetected alignment* (in use)

**Possessions:** In addition to her magic weapons and armor, Jeja possesses a *hat of disguise* and a pair of *gloves of storing*, where she keeps her weapons. She also has a *ring of force shield*. At a moment's notice, she can transform from a peaceful orcish elder to an armed and armored assassin.



## THROG, VILLAGE ELDER

**KEY INFO:** Throg is the village priest. The son of an elf, Throg has a bitter hatred for elves, humans, and all their kin. He opposes the party and will do his best to turn the other villagers against them.

**BACKGROUND:** Throg's mother was the daughter of a wealthy merchant. While traveling with a caravan she was raped by elvish raiders, and Throg is the result of that misfortune. She died in childbirth, and Throg has never forgiven himself or his father for her death. He has dedicated his life to the orcish gods, in the hopes that he can atone for being an abomination. He will be especially hostile to the characters; ideally, the party may jump to the conclusion that he is a spy within the hamlet, as he is both half-elven and dislikes them.

**APPEARANCE:** At first glance, Throg appears to be a normal half-orc — but on closer examination, he has an unusually light build and his ears are larger than usual. He wears the brown and green robes of a priest, marked with a golden tree. Of all the inhabitants of the hamlet, he is the most unpleasant in demeanor; however, the other villagers respect his wisdom and his ties to the gods — although there are those who distrust him because of his elven blood.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** Throg has difficulty controlling his emotions; in this village of peaceful and civilized orcs, he should stand out as being angry and rude. He believes that all humans, elves, and others of their kind are evil, and he is truly terrified of the party and what he believes they represent — the end of his village. Compared to Arivon Felosial, he should seem almost irrationally aggressive.

### 6TH-LEVEL HALF-ORC CLERIC

CR 6; SZ M (humanoid); HD 6d8; hp 35; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Atk melee +6 (1d8+1/crit 20/x2, masterwork heavy mace); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Half-Orc Traits, Rebuke Undead, Spontaneous Casting; AL LG; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +10; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 16, Cha 10

**Skills:** Heal +5, Knowledge (religion) +6

**Feats:** Craft Magic Arms & Armor, Craft Wondrous Item, Iron Will (+2 Will save)

**Half-Orc Traits (Ex):** Half-Orcs have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

**Rebuke Undead:** Throg may Rebuke Undead up to 3 times per day.

**Spontaneous Casting:** Throg may drop prepared spells to cast cure spells.

**Spells:** 5/4+1/4+1/3+1; DC 12 + Spell Level. Throg's spheres are Protection and Good.

0 Level — guidance x3, resistance x2

1<sup>st</sup> Level — bless, command, divine favor, protection from evil, sanctuary

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — aid x2, desecrate, delay poison, shield other

3<sup>rd</sup> Level — dispel magic, magic circle against evil, prayer, remove curse

**Possessions:** As a rule Throg does not wear armor, but in these dangerous times he carries a mace in one hand.

*"Cursed be the day that humans were allowed within the walls of this fair village. Surely, you bring destruction in your wake."*



## THE SEER, OSAI-EN-LA

**KEY INFO:** The Seer has begun to realize the true nature of the mirror world and the war between the two halves of Charra Lyn. He recognizes that it is the destiny of the characters to destroy the mirror world.

**BACKGROUND:** The Seer Osai is a philosopher and wizard of great knowledge and power. He has spent his entire life studying the nature of magic and reality. Initially this led him to create the Crucible of Osai, to maintain the balance of energy between the worlds of magic and matter. But recently he has begun to question the nature of reality itself. He has come to the conclusion that his world is but a simulacrum created by warring powers of some sort — and he wants to see this world progress to its natural end.

**APPEARANCE:** The Seer is an emaciated orc of advanced years. He wears a rough brown robe trimmed in forest green; the hood of the robe obscures the features of his face, yet he seems to have no difficulty perceiving his surroundings. His voice is surprisingly deep and resonant given his gaunt frame; something about his tone commands silence and respect.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** The Seer is extremely solemn. Attempt to convey the idea that he has access to vast reserves of supernatural knowledge — that he sees things in his mind he can't begin to explain to the PCs. Through scrying and other spells he already knows almost everything about the players; the GM should try to finish sentences for the PCs, or answer questions before they have been fully asked.

As a side note, you might wonder whether, with all his spells, the Seer could stop the attacking raiders. Maybe he could, but the point is that he has come to realize that the world itself is against him — that he is but a pawn in a greater game. By helping the characters, he is choosing not to play Charra's game.

### 8TH-LEVEL ORC DIVINER/10TH-LEVEL LOREMASTER

CR 18; SZ M (humanoid); HD 18d4; hp 45; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk melee +8/+3 (1d3-1 subdual, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SA Spells; SQ Orc Traits; AL NG; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +17; Str 9, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 20, Wis 18, Cha 18

**Skills:** Alchemy +15, Concentration +16, Craft (jeweler) +15, Craft (sculptor) +10, Craft (weaponsmith) +10, Craft (woodworking) +15, Decipher Script +20, Diplomacy +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (planar theory) +10, Scry +15, Sense Motive +15, Spellcraft +15, Use Magic Device +20

**Feats:** Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Rod, Craft Staff, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Forge Ring, Leadership, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus: Knowledge (arcana)

**Orc Traits (Ex):** Orcs have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only. Orcs also have a light sensitivity that gives him a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

**Spells:** 4/6+1/5+1/5+1/5+1/4+1/3+1/3+1/2+1; DC 15 + Spell Level.

As a loremaster, the Seer has the spell power of an 18th level diviner. His complete spell list is irrelevant; he can cast any arcane spell that is required. If he is attacked, he will attempt to teleport away or imprison his foes in a forcecage. He has no desire to harm the characters, as he believes that they have an important role to play in the future.

**Possessions:** Just like the Seer in the prime world, the mirror Seer has a stockpile of cursed objects that he is slowly finding ways to destroy. He may be willing to give the PCs some of these objects if they ask; details are provided in Chapter Four.

*"There are powers beyond the gods. There are forces that shape the world we know, that play with fate as a child with dice."*



## ZALANTHE STARBREEZE, INNKEEPER OF THE GOLDEN MOON

**KEY INFO:** Use Zalanthe's statistics as a template for any skilled member of the village community you wish to add into the story; simply adjust the skills accordingly. Zalanthe herself is the village innkeeper.

**BACKGROUND:** Zalanthe is a fairly typical inhabitant of Shareth-en-La — skilled at her profession, intelligent, and kind. Her parents built the Golden Moon inn when the Seer Osai first established the hamlet of Shareth; now she runs it on her own. She is a friendly, gregarious soul; under normal circumstances she spends a lot of time gossiping and joking around with her customers. However, the arrival of the characters in her inn will leave her nervous and uncomfortable.

**APPEARANCE:** Zalanthe is a middle-aged female orc. Her dark hair is fairly short, but she has a few long braids twined with gold wire, and she wears a gold ring in her nose. She has a deep, cheerful voice — at least, it's cheerful when she isn't addressing one of the PCs; when she is, she becomes extremely timid and tongue-tied.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** Think of a normal, cheerful innkeeper — and then imagine how she would act if a band of ogres came into her bar and she was told that she had to serve them. The goal is to highlight the fact that in Shareth, the PCs are considered beasts — in this village of orcs and ogres, the monsters are scared of *them*.

### 2ND-LEVEL ORC EXPERT

CR 1; SZ M (humanoid); HD 2d6; hp 8; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Atk melee +2 (1d3+1 subdual/crit 20/x2, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Orc Traits; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +3; Str 12, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 12

**Skills:** Appraise +4, Craft (cook) +6, Diplomacy +4, Handle Animal +4, Profession (innkeeper) +6, Sense Motive +4

**Feats:** Alertness (+2 to Listen, Search, and Spot checks)

**Orc Traits (Ex):** Orcs have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only. Orcs also have a light sensitivity that gives her a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

"C-c-can I g-get you anything else?"



## SMUDGE, GOBLIN CHILD

**KEY INFO:** Use these statistics as a template for any unskilled member of the village community you wish to add into the story. Smudge is a goblin child (slightly older than those encountered at the farm in Chapter Three) who is curious about the party.

**BACKGROUND:** "Smudge" is the nickname of Delas Felosial, one of the grandsons of the village elder Arivon Felosial. Smudge is a five-year-old goblin with more curiosity than sense, and an incredible knack for getting into trouble. He is always sticking his little orange nose where it doesn't belong — which at the moment means the business of the party.

**APPEARANCE:** Smudge is a small goblin boy. He has orange-yellow skin and bright red eyes. He usually wears red clothing (often covered with mud from various escapades) and a small brown cap.

**ROLEPLAYING NOTES:** Think of that child who asks "Why?" any time you make a statement. Smudge is curious about everything. He's heard that humans and elves are terrible monsters, but this is the first chance he's had to see any close up. While he should bring some comedy to a situation, his innocent questions still bring home the fact that the PCs are considered monsters in this world.

### 1ST-LEVEL GOBLIN COMMONER

CR 1/2; SZ S (humanoid); HD 1d4; hp 2; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Dex, +1 Size); Atk ranged +2 (1d3-1/crit 20/x2, rock), melee -2 (1d3-2 subdual, fists); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL LG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 7, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 13

**Skills:** Climb +3, Jump +3, Listen +3, Move Silently +5

**Feats:** Alertness (+2 to Listen, Search, and Spot checks)

**Darkvision (Ex):** Goblins have Darkvision that lets them see with no light source at all, to a range of 60 feet. Darkvision is black and white only.

"Do you really eat goblins who've been bad?"

# MIRROR WORLD MAGIC

The greatest challenge of *The Ebon Mirror* is dealing with the world itself — the fact that the rules have changed and the characters don't know what to expect from moment to moment. In addition to the unexpected allies and enemies that inhabit the mirror world, players who rely on supernatural abilities or magical objects will have to deal with a few surprises ...

**Note:** All of the text here in Appendix Two is Open Game Content.

## ARCANE SPELLCASTERS

*Dafyd dodged the raider's blow and caught his breath. That was too close! Concentrating, he spoke a few words of power and made the mystic gestures that would summon a few mirror images, a quick defense to buy him some time. Three duplicates sprung out from his form, taking places at his side ... and then saw the bandit and panicked. "What, are you insane?" cried one. "I'm supposed to jump in front of that axe? I don't think so!" The cowardly clone beat a hasty retreat while the other two looked at each other, weighing the situation. The one to the left looked at the baffled bandit and then looked back at Dafyd. "I think we can work together here, pal, but I have to ask ... what's in it for us?"*

Arcane magic uses mystical formulas to produce supernatural results. But this system relies on certain constants — mystical physics, as it were, that are completely different in the mirror world. As a result the effects of familiar spells are anything but normal. This section outlines ways to twist a number of existing spells; if a character casts a spell that is not covered here, you will have to decide whether it works normally, or use these examples as a guideline for how the spell might be altered. Also remember that the spells of

NPCs work normally, since they're used to the altered physics of the mirror world.

## SIMPLE REVERSALS

In some cases the antithesis of a spell is obvious. When a sorcerer attempts to generate *daylight*, he ends up with *darkness*. If a wizard tries to *slow* an enemy, she will *haste* him instead. A list of spells that are reversed include:

SPELL	NEW EFFECT
<i>color spray</i>	<i>web</i>
<i>contagion</i>	<i>remove disease</i>
<i>daylight</i>	<i>darkness</i>
<i>enervation</i>	<i>restoration</i>
<i>fire shield — warm</i>	<i>fire shield — chill</i>
<i>haste</i>	<i>slow</i>
<i>hold person/monster</i>	<i>remove paralysis</i>
<i>hold portal/arcane lock</i>	<i>knock</i>
<i>invisibility sphere</i>	<i>invisibility purge</i>
<i>reduce/shrink item</i>	<i>enlarge</i>
<i>remove curse</i>	<i>bestow curse</i>
<i>wall of fire</i>	<i>wall of ice</i>
<i>wall of force</i>	<i>illusionary wall</i>

This system works both ways; *haste* will come out as *slow*, and *slow* will come out as *haste*. Note that this is not a perfectly equitable trade; for example, by casting a 1st-level *color spray* a caster can get the effect of a second level *web* spell. If the caster can identify these points, she can get some extra bang for her buck — but, of course, one has to take into account all the time she'll waste discovering these effects.

## ENHANCEMENTS/REDUCTIONS TABLE

SPELL	NEW EFFECT
<i>bull's strength</i>	Subject loses 1d4+1 Strength for 1 hour/level
<i>cat's grace</i>	Subject loses 1d4+1 Dex for 1 hour/level
<i>endurance</i>	Subject loses 1d4+1 Con for 1 hour/level
<i>feeblemind</i>	Subject's Int raised to 18 (unless already higher than 18); lasts 1 hour/level
<i>greater magic weapon</i>	-1 enhancement bonus/three levels (max -5); 1 hour/level
<i>mage armor</i>	-4 AC; 1 hour/level
<i>magic weapon</i>	Weapon gains -1 penalty; 1 minute/level
<i>mind fog</i>	Subjects in fog get +10 to Wisdom checks and Will saves
<i>ray of enfeeblement</i>	Ray increases Strength by 1d6+1 point/two levels; 1 minute/level
<i>resistance</i>	Subject suffers -1 penalty on saving throws for 1 minute

## ENHANCEMENTS AND REDUCTIONS

Any spell that is supposed to enhance characteristics, armor class, or saving throws instead reduces them, and vice versa. So a *ray of enfeeblement* allows the caster to empower allies from a distance instead to weakening opponents. Spells that fall into this category are listed above, along with their new effects behind the mirror.

## ALTERED PHYSICS

Some spells perform their intended function, but the physics of the spell are altered; once the caster becomes familiar with the way the spell works within the mirror, she can cause it to perform as she wishes by intentionally "miscasting" it. For example, when a sorcerer first uses *mage hand* within the mirror world, she will push things away when she tries to pull them towards her, and vice versa. *Polymorph* or other forms of shapeshifting will result in unexpected shapes — basically, the reverse of what the caster intended, like becoming a rabbit instead of a wolf. *Protection from law* will actually affect chaos, and *endure elements* intended for fire will instead provide a defense against cold. Again, once a caster has used one of these spells a time or two, she should be able to figure out how to use it properly. Spells in this category and their modified effects include:

### ***alter self***

Provides an illusionary disguise; caster will have trouble getting the desired appearance.

### ***dominate person***

Controls humanoid telepathically; victim will do the exact opposite of what he is commanded.

### ***emotion***

Arouses strong emotion in subject; the emotion will be the opposite of what the caster meant to cause. Despair becomes hope, rage becomes fear, friendship becomes hate, and vice versa.

### ***fly***

Subject flies at a speed of 90 feet; initially the caster will go in the opposite direction than he means to go every time he tries to move (this will hopefully result in a lot of embarrassment).

### ***levitate***

Subject moves up or down at the caster's discretion — but in the opposite direction of the one intended.

### ***mage hand***

Five-pound telekinesis; object moves in the opposite direction than the caster intends.

### ***magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law***

As *protection* spells, but 10-foot radius and 10 min/level; likewise, law/chaos and good/evil reversed.

### ***polymorph other***

Give one subject a new form; form is the

## THE EBON MIRROR

opposite of the caster's intention (or as close as possible).

### **polymorph self**

Caster assumes a new form, which is the opposite of the intended form.

### **protection from chaos/evil/good/law**

+2 AC and saves, counter mind control, hedge out elementals and outsiders. Chaos becomes law, good becomes evil, and vice versa.

### **suggestion**

Compels target to do the opposite of the stated course of action.

spell ("Attack *him!* He's the real one!"). Again, these duplicates only look like the character; they have the statistics listed below.

## Living Illusion

### **Medium-sized (or smaller) Variable Creature**

CR 1, SZ M or smaller (varies); HD 2d8+4; hp 15; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Dex, +2 natural); Atk melee +3 (1d6+1, attack varies by form); Face 5 ft. X 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10

## DETECTION SPELLS

Detect spells will generally detect the opposite of what they are supposed to sense: *detect good* becomes *detect evil*; *detect undead* senses living creatures; *detect poison* detects purity; and *detect magic* actually detects the *absence* of magic, which can be quite overwhelming the first time it is used. The trick is that unless the caster knows what she is trying to sense, she may be confused; the first time she casts *detect evil* — and scans for good instead — she will probably assume that what she is sensing is in fact evil. Each time a caster uses one of these spells, she should get a Wisdom roll against a DC of 20 to sense the change in the sensations. Of course, she may simply figure it out through observation — "Why are you all undead?"

In this adventure, the PCs are a special case; all PCs are considered to have *undetectable alignment* in effect while within the mirror. This means that PCs using *detect evil* or *detect good* spells will not be able to detect the alignment of other members of the party any more than the NPCs can.

## ILLUSIONS AND SUMMONING

Illusion spells are another special case. As a general rule, spells that generate illusionary images will actually create solid matter. *Change self* will function as *alter self*. Creatures created using any of the "image" spells will be living creatures; regardless of the appearance, use the statistics provided below. This is even true of *mirror image*; for entertainment value, the caster may not be in control of these clones generated by the

To keep things from getting out of hand, the size of the illusion can also be restricted to Medium-size or smaller creatures; so the 60-foot dragon the caster was trying to make only ends up being 6 feet long.

Summoning spells, on the other hand, tend to create illusions. Any sort of *summon monster* spell will simply create an illusion of the creature the caster intended to summon. This is true for any spell that creates matter, living or inanimate; this is why the "Simple Reversal" section specifies that *web* becomes *color spray* and vice versa.

## OTHER SPELLS

Many spells are not so easy to categorize. Here are a few examples of how spells might be affected by the physics of the mirror realm. Use these as guidance for any other spells characters may cast. The goal is to give spells unpredictable, interesting results — in some cases, a spell can even be more useful in its altered form than in its original form ... although it may take some getting used to.

### **animate dead**

In the mirror world, this grants control over the living instead of the dead; it functions as *dominate person*.

### **blindness/deafness**

The target gains a +5 bonus to Listen, Spot, and Search checks.

### **charm person/monster**

Instead of generating feelings of friendship, charm spells will cause intense, overpowering hostility. The target of the spell will immedi-



## APPENDIX TWO: MIRROR WORLD MAGIC

ately seek to destroy the caster, at the expense of personal safety.

### ***comprehend languages, tongues***

These spells interfere with the subject's ability to communicate. The user of *comprehend languages* cannot understand any form of spoken or written language, although she can still speak normally. *Tongues* does not affect literacy, but prevents the target from understanding or communicating in any spoken language — which will prevent the casting of any spell that uses verbal components! *Comprehend languages* only affects the caster, but *tongues* can be targeted against another creature.

### ***daze***

This induces an incredible sense of clarity; the target gains one extra action in the round following the casting of the spell.

### ***endure elements, resist elements, protection from elements***

These spells double the amount of damage received from the selected attack form, up to the amount that would normally be shielded. So *endure elements* — *cold* would cause the target to double the first five points of damage received from cold attacks each round.

### ***fireball, flame arrow, flaming sphere***

As a general rule, spells that should generate magic fire actually put out fire, much like the spell *quench*. A fireball creates an implosion of air that can snuff out a raging blaze. These spells do relatively little damage to their targets, but a victim must make a Reflex save vs. the normal DC of the spell or be stunned for 1d4 rounds due to the force of the implosion.

### ***fear, scare***

All variations of *fear* instead instill targets with a sense of courage and invincibility. This provides the subjects with a +2 morale bonus to saving throws, attack rolls, and damage for the duration of the spell.

### ***glitterdust***

*Glitterdust* powder actually makes objects invisible instead of making them easier to see. An object or creature coated with the dust can be seen with a Spot check against a difficulty of 20 or a Search check with a difficulty of 16, with a +4 bonus to the check if the target is moving. Engaging in melee combat will not remove the effect, but a shimmering outline will reveal the dusted creature's pres-

ence; an enemy receives a -4 to his attack roll when striking a dusted creature.

### ***illusionary script***

This creates a message that *anyone* can read, regardless of literacy or language barriers.

### ***invisibility***

The caster glows with a brilliant light. This will certainly draw attention to the caster, but it also provides illumination as a *light* spell. In addition, the glow is so painfully bright that it is difficult to look directly at the caster; attackers receive a -4 to any attack roll targeting the caster.

### ***light***

This causes the targeted object to absorb light, reducing the normal illumination of the area. An area of daylight will be reduced to nighttime conditions; an area that is already dim will become pitch-black. Unlike the spell *darkness*, this does not affect Darkvision or Low-light Vision.

### ***lightning bolt***

This throws out a massive bolt of rock and stone. The damage of the spell is the same, but the damage is bludgeoning instead of electrical, at it requires a ranged attack roll. The bolt continues to move in a straight line for up to one hundred feet, but will come to a stop after hitting its second target.

### ***magic missile***

This projects physical bolts as opposed to bursts of energy. The number of missiles is unchanged. Each missile inflicts 1d6 points of damage, but the caster must make a ranged roll to hit for each attack.

### ***vampiric touch***

The caster takes 1d6 damage for every two levels; the target gains this damage as temporary hit points.

A final possibility, if you can't think of a creative way to twist the functioning of a spell, is to have it perform its expected function but with different window dressing. *Ray of frost* might generate a tiny heat beam, but have the same effect in game terms. Use your judgment and keep your players on their toes. The goal here is to keep things interesting, entertaining, and challenging — and to force your spellcasters (particularly sorcerers and bards, with their limited set of spells) to rethink their usual tactics and work around these unexpected challenges.

## DIVINE SPELLCASTERS

*Sera performed her morning devotions, chanting the praises of the great Stonefather. She wove the needs of her party into her song, petitioning her lord for the power to protect and heal those in need, to bless and strengthen her allies. As always, she felt the hand of the god pass over her and envelop her, filling her with ... a cold dread? Something wasn't right here. And then the voice rang with her head, icy and unforgiving. "I grant you the strength to drive your enemies before you, to cast fear upon the weak, and to call down my wrath upon the unworthy. Slaughter all who oppose you and return them to the earth ... to my domain." The voice faded and Sera collapsed, shivering.*

Clerics, paladins, and others who draw their powers from the gods will be in for a slight surprise in the mirror world. Unlike arcane magic, divine spells will perform as expected here — the world within the mirror is a copy of the true one, and the power of the gods is as strong within as it is without. However, the *nature* of the gods ... well, that's another story. As a result, divine spellcasters will have to deal with the changes outlined below.

### CLERICS

Clerics have their positive/negative orientation reversed; a previously good cleric can only drop spells to cast *inflict* spells, while an evil one will discover that he channels healing energies when he drops a spell. A neutral cleric will possess the

reverse of her powers in the normal world. The spell domains of a cleric should also be reversed when appropriate (see table).

The Magic, Travel, Strength, and Luck domains are not affected.

For example, in the normal world, the elven deity Tyradon Starblade grants the domains Good, Chaos, and Protection. Behind the mirror, these domains are altered to Evil, Law, and Destruction. A cleric of Tyradon will discover that she can only sacrifice spells to generate *inflict* spells, and that when she tries to access her special domains, she instead ends up with these reversed domains. Note that the opposite is also true; a party of evil-doers will find that their gods have turned to good. For an example of a mirrored cleric, see Molric Drach on page 37; Molric is the mirror version of a good cleric with the Healing and Good domains.

The effect a cleric has upon undead does not change in the mirror world. While the cleric is now channeling a different sort of energy, the undead themselves have changed polarity and are powered by positive energy (see page 38 for more details). So a good cleric will still turn undead and an evil cleric rebuke or control. But make certain to tell the character that the action *feels* different. When the good cleric turns undead, she should feel the corrupting, negative energy flowing through her, eating away at the pure light that animates the undead creatures. The evil cleric should feel a warm glow as he sends peaceful vibrations out to the undead guardians. In either case, it should feel very wrong to the priest; try to make the good cleric feel guilty for destroying these noble spirits with her twisted, evil magic.

The main way to make the transition to the mirror more significant for a priest is to change the spells he receives as a result of prayer. A formerly good deity will try to encourage a curiously soft-hearted priest to follow the path of evil by giving him the tools to cause harm. A cleric of that god who prays for *remove fear* and *consecrate* might instead end up with *cause fear* and *desecrate*. The cleric should be aware of what spells he has received, so he won't end up accidentally cursing someone he means to *bless* — but he's going to have to figure out what to do with the altered selection of spells. Take some time before the session to come up with the list of spells the cleric will receive in the mirror world; see if you can

### DOMAIN REVERSALS

DOMAIN	ANTITHESIS
Good	Evil
Law	Chaos
Healing	Death
Protection	Destruction or War
Earth	Air
Fire or Sun	Water
Knowledge	Trickery
Animal	Plant

## APPENDIX TWO: MIRROR WORLD MAGIC

identify spells that player never chooses, just to give her a challenge.

There are a few divine spells that work differently in the mirror world than in the real world:

### ***animate dead***

Cannot be used in the mirror world; only the gods can create undead. Instead, clerics may be given *dominate person* — although the use of this spell is very unpleasant for the victim, and good clerics should be told that they are putting the victim through extreme mental anguish.

### ***planeshift***

Within the mirror, the gods will not grant the *planeshift* spell to their followers, nor answer prayers invoking it.

### ***summon monster and lesser planar ally***

These function normally, but remember that the creature is selected by the god, and the choice should reflect the deity's altered aspect.

### ***augury, divination, or commune***

Spells such as these may allow a character to contact her deity, but as the nature of the deity has changed, it may affect the usefulness of the data gathered by the spell. For example, a cleric who uses *augury* to ask whether he should kill a group of goblin children will certainly receive an answer of “weal” — because the god thinks that's a great idea.

## PALADINS

Paladins receive their special abilities as a result of divine favor. The altered nature of the gods results in a change of powers for the sacred warrior. The changes include:

- The paladin's innate ability to *detect evil* becomes *detect good*. However, it will take some time for the paladin to notice the change; initially he will make the assumption that what he is sensing *is* evil, since he is simply used to receiving these emanations. Each time the effect is used and he senses a good emanation he can make a Wisdom roll against a DC of 20; if he is successful, tell him that it just doesn't feel like *evil*, somehow.
- Be aware of the fact that all characters from beyond the mirror world — i.e., the other members of the party — are considered to

have *undetectable alignment* in effect as long as they are in behind the mirror. As a result, the paladin will not sense good comrades when he uses this power.

- As with good clerics, paladins turn undead, but it feels terrible.
- Paladins can only Smite good creatures.
- Paladins spread an Aura of Despair (–2 to the saving throws of all enemies within 10 feet) instead of their usual Aura of Courage.
- Instead of Laying on Hands, paladins possess a Death Touch that channels negative energy to slay an opponent. The paladin may inflict the same total amount of damage per day that he could previously heal. Using the Death Touch requires a successful touch attack, after which the paladin may channel as many points of damage into the attack as he wishes (up to his maximum daily amount).
- Replace the paladin's Remove Disease ability with the ability to use *contagion* the same number of times.
- The paladin's spell list also changes. Initially, the paladin should receive an unexpected assortment of spells, as described for the cleric. If the paladin explores this, she will discover that she can pray for the following spells:

1<sup>st</sup> Level — *cause fear, cure light wounds, doom, inflict light wounds, magic weapon*

2<sup>nd</sup> Level — *darkness, death knell, inflict moderate wounds, poison, shatter*

A paladin will not immediately sense the change upon entering the mirror. Allies of a paladin may sense a change — the absence of the paladin's supporting Aura of Courage — but they won't be able to identify the nature of the change until some time has passed. A spellcaster who has spent time with the paladin can make a Spellcraft roll each time they enter combat; if the result is greater than 20, she will be struck with the realization that she no longer feels the spiritual support she used to receive from the paladin.

Note that Jeseth VerDragt (see page 81) does not use these modified abilities; she is a true paladin of the mirror world (the trick is that to be a paladin there, you've got to die first).

For both paladins and clerics, it is important to note that the character's alignment does not

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change; it is only the alignment of the god that is different. So while a paladin has effectively become a warrior of darkness, she has no desire to do evil; however, her god will now be urging her to do so. You should play with this and try to raise doubt in the minds of religious characters. Perhaps they receive a divine vision in their sleep, questioning their unusual behavior. Is it their place to question the orders of their deity? For that matter, will a paladin be stripped of her powers if she doesn't commit evil acts? This is a good place to give players a little latitude with how they play their alignment — moral confusion is appropriate, so don't squash it by saying, "You're lawful good, you can't even think about that." The next question is what the long-term impact will be on the character. A paladin who uses his new powers for evil will be fine within the mirror, but will he be punished when he leaves it? Or is the mirror an area without consequences, giving characters a chance to explore new directions of roleplaying?

## DRUIDS AND RANGERS

Druids and rangers draw their magic from the forces of nature. Nature itself is an impersonal force, and as such these characters will always receive the spells that they ask for. However, they suffer some of the same problems as arcane casters. A druid is manipulating the forces of nature — but the operating system for nature is wired differently, and the commands used by the druid generate different results. The following spells are reversed:

SPELL	NEW EFFECT
<i>chill metal</i>	<i>heat metal</i>
<i>contagion</i>	<i>remove disease</i>
<i>diminish plants</i>	<i>plant growth</i>
<i>hallow</i>	<i>unhallow</i>
<i>neutralize poison</i>	<i>poison</i>
<i>warp wood</i>	<i>wood shape</i>

Other natural spells have more specific and unpredictable effects:

***flame strike, flaming sphere, produce flame, and fire trap***

These all extinguish flames (as per the spell

*quench*) instead of summoning them. People caught in the area of effect of one of these spells must make a Reflex save or be stunned and deafened for 1d4 rounds by the force of the implosion of air.

### ***quench***

Works just like a *fireball*.

### ***summon nature's ally***

Summoning in the mirror world works differently for druids and rangers than for arcane spellcasters. When it is first used, this spell will summon harmless creatures, like rabbits instead of wolves — basically, the most useless creature possible for the circumstances. However, with practice the caster can learn to call something he doesn't want in order to get the creature he's actually looking for.

### ***endure elements, resist elements, and protection from elements***

These spells double the amount of damage received from the selected attack form, up to the amount that would normally be shielded. So *endure elements* — *cold* would cause the target to double the first five points of damage received from cold attacks.

### ***control plants, control winds, and dominate animal***

These will generally cause the target to do the reverse of what the druid requests; again, with time, this limitation can be overcome.

### ***calm animal***

This spell drives the affected animals into a berserk rage, just like the barbarian ability of the same name.

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## PRESTIGE CLASSES

If a character in your campaign is playing a prestige class, you will have to decide how the abilities of that class are affected by the altered physics of the mirror world. Below are the effects on the standard prestige classes:

## ARCANE ARCHERS

The arcane archer's ability to enchant arrows is not altered by the mirror. Likewise, the archer can *imbue* arrows as normal, but the effects of the spell placed on the arrow will be modified as described in the section on arcane spellcasters.

## ASSASSINS

The assassin's skill-based abilities are not affected by the mirror. His arcane spells are modified just like those of a sorcerer or wizard.

## BLACKGUARDS

Generally speaking, a blackguard suffers the reverse of the changes described for the paladin. Suddenly the blackguard can *detect evil*, *Smite Evil*, and spread an Aura of Courage instead of an Aura of Fear. The blackguard should draw spells from the paladin's spell list. A blackguard does not gain any sort of ability to Lay on Hands or Remove Disease, but retains the ability to use Poison and Sneak Attack.

## DWARVEN DEFENDERS

There are no modifications to the abilities of this prestige class.

## LOREMASTERS

There are no modifications to the unique abilities of this class. However, the loremaster will suffer the effects described above for arcane and divine spellcasters, based on her original class. In addition, the Lore ability will not provide any information about the mirror world; the loremaster is only familiar with her home reality.

## SHADOWDANCERS

The *shadow illusions* ability of the shadowdancer will produce creatures of solid shadow, with statistics matching the living illusion given on page 88 (the shadowdancer still determines the shape of the illusion). Like the *dimension door* spell, the Shadow Jump ability can be used normally, but the first few times the character tries to use it the change in mystical physics will cause him to end up at the wrong location.

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## MAGIC ITEMS

*When Sera saw Dafyd's plight, she raised her rod of rulership high above her head. Calling upon its coercive powers, she shouted "Leave him alone!" The air rippled with magical energy, and as one, all of the bandits turned and rushed straight at Dafyd. Cursing, Sera reached into her bag of holding to draw out a new weapon — at least, she tried to. The bag wouldn't open, and when she glanced down she saw that it had sprouted teeth around its edges and was grinning at her, its "jaws" clamped shut ...*

Mystical artifacts have much in common with arcane magic; supernatural energies have been woven into wood or metal according to esoteric formulas in order to produce specific results. And just as with arcane magic, behind the mirror these formulas have extremely unexpected results. As with spells, this should force your players to come up with new tricks — for the old reliable tools are suddenly a lot less reliable.

Given the vast range of magic items a party may possess — including some that may be the fruits of your own imagination — it would be pointless to try to outline rules for every conceivable magical item. Instead, this section covers a few broad categories. Hopefully you can use these guidelines, and the examples given in the adventure, to determine how any specific item in your campaign will be affected. *It is important to note that these changes are only in effect while the players remain within the mirror — as soon as they return home, all of their equipment will return to normal!*

## SPELL-LIKE EFFECTS

Many magical items — including potions, rings, wands, staves, and scrolls — simply mimic the effects of a particular spell. In this case, use the preceding section on arcane magic to determine how the item will behave. Other items, such as rods and certain rings, have effects that are similar to spells but do not precisely duplicate them. In these cases, see if there is a way to roughly

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reverse the effects of the item. When possible, try to come up with an effect that can be useful, even if it takes a little imagination to make it work. For example, a *ring of free action* might paralyze the character wearing the ring; initially this will be an annoyance, but it could prove a useful tool for immobilizing a captive for transport. A *rod of withering* might actually heal beings touched with the mace head, while a *rod of flame extinguishing* could throw blasts of fire when it is invoked.

### MAGICAL ARMS AND ARMOR

Magical weapons suffer the worst of all magical items, as there are rarely any redeeming qualities to a weapon that has had its enchantments reversed. Magical enhancement actually makes armor more malleable and weapons clumsy and difficult to use; this is represented by the fact that positive modifiers become negative. That +5 *large shield* is now a -5 *large shield*, and hurts its wielder more than it helps.

Other special enchantments that have been woven into a weapon or piece of armor should be altered to become detrimental. A few examples:

#### **bane**

These weapons heal the former victim for 2d6 per hit.

#### **brilliant energy**

These weapons are nothing more than light in the mirror world, and cause no damage whatsoever.

#### **chaotic, holy, lawful, and unholy**

These weapons have their usual effect, but the alignment of the target (unless it's a PC) is reversed in the mirror world. So a formerly *holy* sword acts as if it were *unholy*.

#### **keen**

These weapons halve the chance of making a critical hit.

#### **shadow, silent moves, and slick**

These kinds of armor provide a -10 to their respective skill checks. *Silent* armor squeaks and squeals, *shadow* armor pulses with light, and *slick* armor sticks to itself.

#### **wounding**

This weapon actually heals its own injuries. When someone is struck with the weapon, they recover the damage from the blow at a rate of one point per round. This will not heal any other injuries that the target may have been suffering from.

#### **resistance**

Armor with *resistance* enchantments will double the amount of damage received from the selected attack form, up to a maximum of 10 points of bonus damage. So *leather armor of cold resistance* would cause the target to double the first 10 points of damage received from cold attacks each round.

#### **flaming, frost, shocking burst**

Weapons that normally inflict extra dice of damage will immediately inflict this bonus damage on the wielder when the command to activate the weapon is spoken (or immediately upon use, if no command is involved), and continue to inflict this damage each round until the magic is deactivated.

There are a few special abilities that could end up having useful effects — for example, you might decide that a flaming sword would behave like a *rod of flame extinguishing* — but in general the more powerful a weapon is in the prime world, the more useless it should be in the mirror world. Of course, cursed weapons actually end up being useful behind the mirror — rather lucky that the players are transporting a few of them, isn't it?

### WONDROUS ITEMS

Wondrous items are inherently the most varied magic items in form and function and thus the hardest to change. Items that mimic spells are easy to deal with, and artifacts that provide a straightforward bonus to a statistic or saving throw can simply be reversed. Other items are equally simple; a *decanter of endless water* drains fluids instead of releasing them. Some items are tricky but can be worked out; a *periapt of wound closure* may cause any injury to bleed as if caused by a weapon with the *wounding* ability. Stranger artifacts — items like the *deck of many things* — will require a little more imagination. Use your best judgment and see what you can come up with!

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