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A Lamentation of Thieves

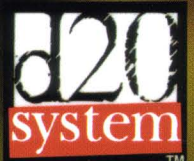
by Lance Hawvermale

A d20 adventure for 4 to 6 characters levels 1 through 12.

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A Lamentation of Thieves

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Product Update Password for **A Lamentation of Thieves**: Hawkmoon

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Prelude to Adventure

A Lamentation of Thieves is a campaign setting and a collection of adventures, as well as a sourcebook of new feats, skills, spells, monsters, and magic items. The material herein describes the features and denizens of a large geographical area, a vast tapestry through which is woven the strands of several distinct plots, each with its own possibility for adventure. More than a simple linear storyline, *A Lamentation of Thieves* presents players with the chance to set their own goals, make their own paths, and choose their own enemies. The region's NPCs work constantly to advance their particular agendas; in dealing with these folk, the heroes become entangled in quests ranging from the prosaic to the profound. One day they might help a farmer bring in his harvest before a deadly storm wipes out the crop. The next morning they might uncover a plot to assassinate a powerful noble.

Adapting the Adventures

The action takes place in the Domain of Hawkmoon, however, it can easily be relocated to any fantasy campaign. Adjust the names of people, places, and gods as appropriate. Though the adventures presented in *A Lamentation of Thieves* have been written for PCs of specific experience levels, they can easily accommodate characters of a variety of levels by simply increasing or decreasing the number and/or power of the monsters. Refer to the Encounters section of the *DMG* to find an Encounter Level (EL) that matches the PCs' level, then cross-reference this to find an appropriate number of creatures. For example, the encounter with 4 beetle-wraiths in Chapter Two is EL 9 as written, but can easily become EL 7 by limiting the encounter to 2 creatures, or EL 11 by adding 4 additional beetle-wraiths. The Advancement portion of the Main Statistics Block section in the *MM* provide tips on altering size, hit dice, and other monster statistics. Remember that adjusting the Encounter Levels also affects the adventure's overall difficulty and thus the final experience point (XP) award.

As the DM, you should have at your disposal the core rulebooks, including the *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*. Text, which appears in shaded boxes, is to be read or paraphrased to the players. New monsters, spells, skills, feats, martial arts, and magic items are detailed in the Appendix.

How to Use This Module

A Lamentation of Thieves has three distinct "levels" of storylines. At the bottom are those plots arising from casual interaction with the mundane masses, such as ranchers, blacksmiths, sailors, et cetera. Usually it is up to you as DM to initiate plots at this level. These adventures are intended for low-level characters and are described in Chapter One.

The second level concerns those plots of far-reaching importance, the resolution of which affects an entire region. Whereas the conclusion of a "level one" plot might only be meaningful to the NPCs personally involved in the conflict, the final outcome of a "level two" plot impacts the lives of dozens, if not hundreds of people. A good example of this is found in the adventure "Through the Crimson Caves," which details the struggles between the goblins

and bugbears of a hidden, magical vale. In this storyline, the fate of two entire clans hangs in the balance. There is even a chance of reviving an extinct race of otherworldly travelers!

At the third and final plot level, there is only a single storyline. This grand scheme pervades the entire region and brings into play elements from all other plot levels. The events that unfold in Chapter Three resonate throughout the Domain of Hawkmoon and all those who dwell within it—even if they don't realize it. Ripples the heroes make here might very well cause unexpected waves.

The plot levels reveal themselves in stages, so that simple matters give way to scenarios of increasing significance. While the heroes might begin their stay in the Domain by clearing out a swarm of pesky stirges, their final struggle is against forces far greater than they ever imagined inhabiting this humble region.

Starting the Adventure

The PCs are free to explore the Domain as they see fit. In fact, wilderness treks play an important role in the ongoing action, often turning into impromptu adventures in between "planned" scenarios. To present the players with as dynamic a setting as possible, simply give them a copy of the map entitled "The Domain of Hawkmoon," and let them strike out to any of the sites depicted, in whatever order they desire.

The easiest way to run the scenarios in this book is to play them in the sequence they're presented. However, there's nothing to say that the PCs can't head off immediately to the mysterious Rubicund Chasm in "Through the Crimson Caves" (designed for PCs of 9th level), only to return later and face the mad priest of "A Scent of Evil" (for PCs of 4th level). In this case, simply alter the ELs as previously discussed.

The following information is both a gazetteer of the land and a collection of corresponding adventure hooks. Many of the places detailed here are in no way connected with any particular storyline, but can quickly develop into full-fledged adventures with a little work. Other towns and locations on the map that are more closely tied to the storylines are detailed within the adventures in which they appear (e.g., the town of Swordport is described in "A Scent of Evil" in Chapter One). When administering the PCs through the Domain, keep in mind the true magic of the stage illusionist: allow the characters to roam freely, but let this be the misdirection that keeps their eyes off your other hand, with which you are deftly inserting planned scenarios with the aplomb of a magician making miracles from thin air.

Continuing the Plot

The material presented in these pages has been designed to encompass a wide range of gaming styles and many sessions of play. Again, the PCs may tackle the challenges in any order they like, and just because they've completed all the quests contained in this module does not mean they've exhausted the possibilities for adventure in the Domain. The conclusion of one storyline often gives rise to the beginning of another. For specific examples, refer to the sections labeled **Continuing the Adventure** following each adventure. One thing's for certain: in a land of thieves, the intrigue never stops.

Overview of the Domain of Hawkmoon

They say the Domain of Hawkmoon was carved with a robber's knife and bought with robber's gold. Encircled by the treacherous Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks and the Moonsilver Sea, the Domain is geographically isolated, its borders forming a natural barrier against invaders—as well as a wall to dissuade its inhabitants from leaving. The region is said to be a haven of footpads, a place of succor for criminals fleeing persecution. There is indeed a bit of truth to these rumors, as the Domain was first settled three hundred years ago by marauders seeking a refuge against the armies of those nations they'd violated. Echoes of this grim legacy can still be heard today.

At the heart of the Domain is the city of Hawkmoon, an independent city-state that answers to no foreign power. The land outlying the city—the Domain itself—is officially a protectorate of Hawkmoon but not part of the sovereign state itself. In other words, though Hawkmoon troops patrol the land, the Outfolk (as those beyond the city walls are called) are not beholden to the crown nor in any way obliged to follow its mandates. The Outfolk pay no taxes to the mayor of Hawkmoon, though they do use his city as the primary base for the selling of their crops and manufactured goods. This strange dichotomy is the result of the region's oldest and most revered tradition: *Our ancestors came here to escape authority's oppressive grasp, and we shall not dishonor them by submitting.*

The Domain of Hawkmoon, then, teeters on the brink of anarchy.

Surprisingly, there is very little violence in the area. For the most part, the denizens are hardworking folk, mainly farmers, ranchers, fishermen, and miners. Without the burden of taxes, they are able to earn enough money through their respective vocations to enjoy happy if simple lives. However, as the mayor has no hand in their affairs, it's up to them to maintain their roads, sewage systems, and other pieces of the infrastructure. As a result, there is no consistency in road upkeep or local law enforcement. Some towns have very equitable and efficient lawmen, while others are under the thumb of thugs who call themselves constables. Many towns employ foreign mercenaries as law officers. One town might impose strict penalties on gambling and prostitution, while another might be founded upon promoting such pursuits.

Murder is rare in the Domain, but robbery of various sorts is rampant. There is only one formal thieves' guild in the area, founded by a famous ex-adventurer named Sivian Ulphar, known as the Lucre King. Though the Lucre King has no direct competition from rival guilds, small independent outlaw bands abound, ranging from debonair brotherhoods of cat burglars to savage gangs of highwaymen. Many of these groups exist in a constant state of war with one another. Others are elusive professionals who consider their work as a form of art. Cattle-rustlers, grifters, safecrackers and cutpurses—the Domain has them all.

Wandering Monsters

Though some say there is no such thing as coincidence, oftentimes the PCs run into trouble that seems entirely random at the time. Whether or not there is cosmic significance to these events remains a debate for the philosophers, while the nasty business of fighting off these random encounters is left to the PCs. Refer to the *MM* for the statistics of these creatures. Roll 1d12 per five miles traveled on the following table:

1d12	Encounter
1-2	2d4 wolves
3-4	Merchant, bard, gypsies, et cetera
5-6	Truncher patrol (2d4 3rd-level warriors)
7	Highwaymen (1d6 2nd-level rogues)
8	3d6 stirges
9-10	Roll again; 1-10 = no encounter
11-12	<i>Soul sand</i> (see below)

In lieu of taxes, the merchants of the Domain find their money going to support groups of bounty hunters and trackers colloquially known as Trunchers. Part constables and part mercenaries, the Trunchers are sponsored by certain towns or business consortiums to keep the area free of those who would prey on shipping lines. Not surprisingly, the quality of the Truncher groups ranges dramatically, from the honorable to the execrable. Again, the only thing consistent from one Outfolk town to the next is inconsistency.

The Bonegarden

Marring the pleasant grassland of the Pampas, this small area of scorched earth is much like a malignant growth on an otherwise healthy body. Known as the Bonegarden, this is a place of eternal decay, a centuries-old cemetery filled with the restless corpses of the marauders who first settled the Domain. Legend holds that only convicted thieves were buried here, those who'd died while incarcerated or who were killed while trying to escape. The people of that long-ago age perpetuated an unhealthy fear of spirits, believing all too strongly in the power of the dead to haunt the days of the living. In an effort to confine the souls of the dead robbers, the people turned to their priests, who decreed the construction of a roughly circular cemetery grounds, a full mile in diameter. Upon this burial site they placed their mightiest wards, ensuring that the dead remained that way.

Unfortunately, those priests and their gods faded with time, along with their magic. Though the crumbling stone wall maintains enough residual sorcery to prevent a spirit from passing beyond the perimeter, it does nothing to regulate the souls within the circle itself. In an



Mud town

The Barstair Garden

Leatton Gaunt Wood

Druid's Grove

Sawmill

Nathumbur

Delan

Dawnmoon

Barstair Pool

Sword Port

Moonsilver Sea

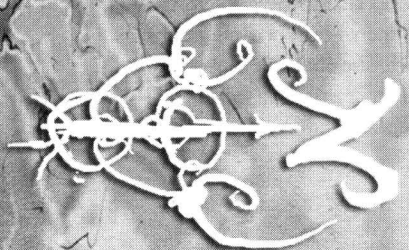
Miasmoor

Mad River

Deir Wood

Rubicund Chasm

Factory



Atawkmoon Domain
Scale  1 inch equals 20 miles
Map 1

3

ALAMENTATION OF THIEVES

effort to confine the spirits of the dead thieves, the priests unwittingly blocked them from entering the afterlife; the spells were too efficient for their own good. Now the cemetery is an incubator of undead.

The locals refer to this place as the Bonegarden, a labyrinth of mausoleums, tombs, and broken headstones, a cramped and confusing warren of old stone and older malice. Here the walking dead wage war with one another, struggling for control of the cemetery that contains them.

Using the Bonegarden: Populate the Bonegarden with undead of sufficient power to challenge the PCs. A group of low-level characters exploring the Bonegarden meets with ghouls and skeletons, while a high-level party must face the Blood Governor himself—a lich! The Bonegarden is a place of catacombs and partially pillaged tombs, and as such, it serves as the resting-place for several bizarre discoveries; in other words, insert wondrous items of your own creation, things that even experienced players find exciting. Likewise, use your own maps to represent the shallow caverns that the undead have dug to connect their burrows. The creatures have divided themselves into two distinct camps, each under the direction of a leader with the magical skills necessary to command a horde of undead. These leaders are enemies from the days of old, a pair of former friends named Ristiko and Karthe who used to lead a robber band together and share in the spoils. But a woman intervened, and the friends were doomed to an eternity of questing for her favor. With the exception of the reclusive Blood Governor himself, Ristiko and Karthe are the two strongest undead in the Bonegarden, which they have transformed into a battlefield. How their war plays out is entirely up to you. If you'd prefer the PCs handle things diplomatically, enable them to bring about an armistice by giving the woman's corpse a final resting place by clearing her tomb of interlopers. Or perhaps you decide that Ristiko was the true malefactor, betraying his friend for the woman's love. In this case, the PCs' mission is to destroy Ristiko's army so that Karthe and the woman may dwell together peacefully. To this end, they must penetrate Ristiko's lair, steal an item sacred to him, and perform a ceremony with this item under the light of the morning sun.

Mud Town

Concealed in the crags of the badlands at the base of the Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks, this cluster of shanties is a haven of outlaws, pariahs, and other social misfits. Once a prosperous mining colony, Mud Town is now a community in ruin; over twenty years ago it was buried in a massive landslide, the majority of its inhabitants suffocating under tons of rock and mud. Only a few dozen buildings survived the calamity, and they've since become the lairs of all manner of miscreants. These rowdies are under the nominal leadership of a human named Intarmu the Eye. Once the leader of a feared robber band, Intarmu is now the self-proclaimed burgomaster of Mud Town. According to rumor, the despicable Intarmu had

his eyes torn out as punishment for looking upon a nobleman's wife; he is blind and "sees" through a magical lens he wears on a headband. Under Intarmu's leadership, Mud Town has become a den of bacchanalian desires. In Mud Town, no fetish is too depraved, no need left unsatisfied.

Using Mud Town: Intarmu the Eye is actually an ogre under the cover of a *polymorph* spell placed upon him by the covey of green hags. The covey is the true controlling force behind Mud Town. The magical lens Intarmu wears is a *hag eye* that permits the covey to spy upon the town and its important personages. You can use Mud Town in a variety of ways, depending on the nature of your campaign. If the PCs are of a slightly shady bent, Mud Town is a good hideout. Trunchers often come here undercover in search of outlaws, but there are always folk willing to hide a fugitive if the money is right. Mud Town can also be a place of rowdy relaxation, its gambling houses, brothels, and taverns offering all manners of diversions considered socially taboo. If the PCs are instead righteous crusaders, Mud Town is a pit of wickedness in dire need of cleansing.

Whatever their reason for visiting Mud Town, the PCs eventually come into contact with the covey. The green hags lair in a cave a few miles away, protected at all times by **1d8 ogres** and **1d4 hill giants**. The cave is concealed by *mirage arcana*. If the PCs have come to town as fugitives or pleasure-seekers, Intarmu welcomes them, plies them with wine and games, and attempts to trick them into accepting a disguised *hag eye*. If the PCs have come to roust the criminals from Mud Town, the hags respond accordingly. They use *dream*, *control weather*, and *bestow curse* to harass the heroes. Intarmu uses his authority as burgomaster to rally the citizens against the PCs. Any citizens killed by the PCs are returned via the covey's ability to *animate dead*.

Mud Town (small town): Conventional; AL CN; 623-gp limit; Assets 35,160 gp; Population 1,129; Mixed (human 75%, half-orc 10%, dwarf 6%, gnome 4%, halfling 3%, elf 1%, half-elf 1%).

Authority Figures: Intarmu the Eye, male human Ftr8 (actually an ogre under a *polymorph other* spell).

Important Characters: Ashvor DuVajis, male half-orc Rog8 (owner of town's largest gambling pit, The Bloodhawk), Mistress Milania, female human Rog5 (owner of the Silver Slipper bordello), Tarn Portivara, male half-orc Exp7 (toxicologist and Sivian Ulphar's informant), Nisvock the Collector, male dwarf Ftr3 (junk-seller and rumor-vendor).

Others: Town guards, War2 (x 11); Com1 (x 1,114).

Weir Wood

Well removed from any civilized trade roads, the forest of Weir has for centuries grown ungoverned by druids and uncharted by woodsmen. This isolation—and perhaps a bit of dark magic from a long-forgotten curse—has allowed the Weir to become a crucible for all sorts of life forms that are usually kept in check by the hands of man. Specifically, poisonous flora abounds in this dense and murky wood.

The treetops are so thickly entwined as to cover the ground in continuous shadow, permitting the rampant growth of lichen, fungi, and myriad mosses—many species of which are quite inimical to human life. As a result, few mammals stalk the forest, save those immune to the various natural toxins. Certain creatures have adapted over the years to flourish in these environs, representing new genetic strains of common fauna: deer, rabbits, and several type of vermin have evolved into species entirely different from the ordinary members of their kind. Needless to say, someone found a way to turn a profit from these anomalous creatures. Any hunter foolish or desperate enough to brave the dangers of the Weir and bring out the body of one of these mutated animals is sure to command a high price from the sale of its strangely mottled pelt, fantastically arrayed antlers, and oddly flavored meat.

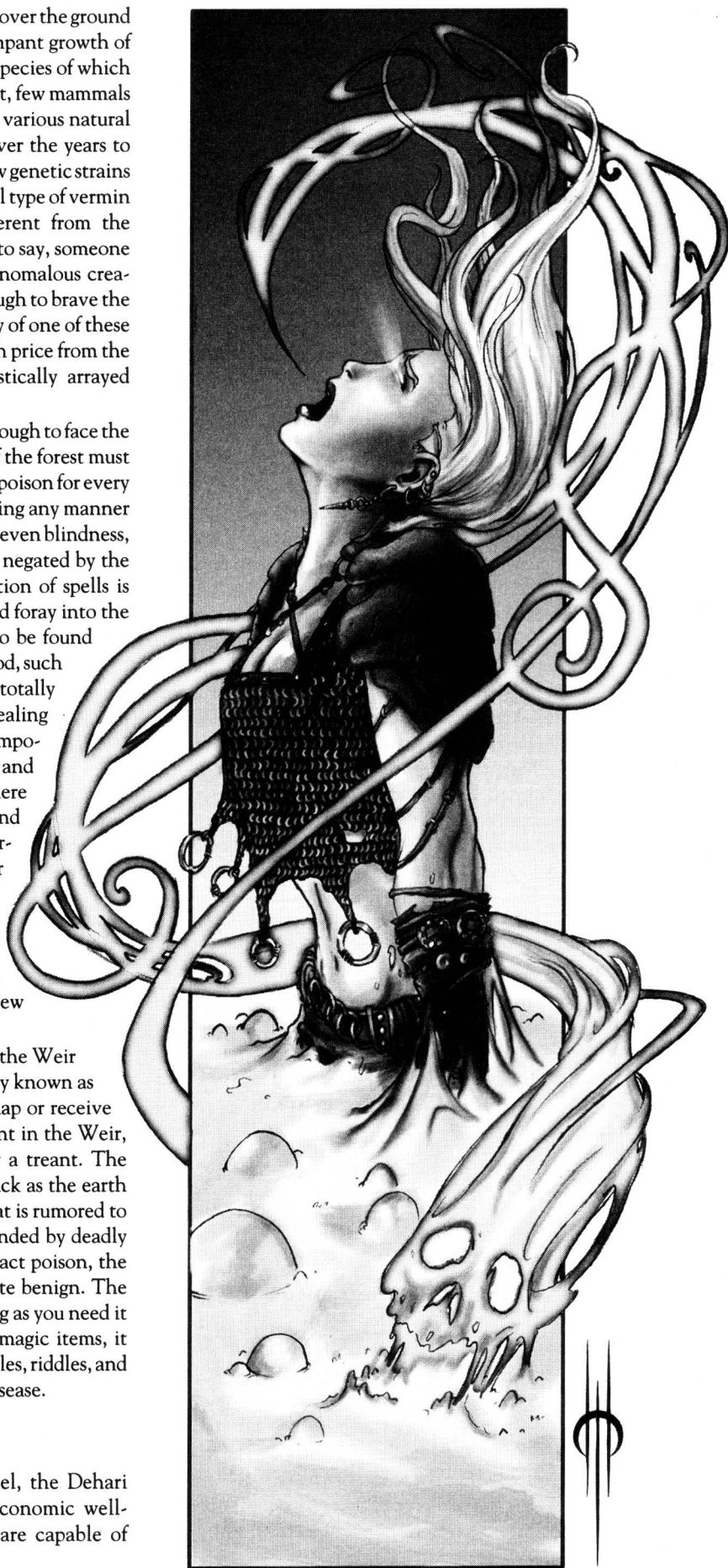
Using the Weir: Anyone courageous enough to face the deadly spores and fever-inducing pollen of the forest must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) against the poison for every 1d4 hours spent there, with failure indicating any manner of ailment: delirium, severe rashes, nausea, even blindness, paralysis, and death. These effects can be negated by the usual magical means. In fact, the protection of spells is necessary for anyone planning an extended foray into the forest. For all of its perils, there's much to be found within the Weir, including trees of rare wood, such as the ash-colored cinderheart (a wood totally resistant to fire), as well as powerful healing herbs. Nearly any kind of herbal spell component can be found here. The hooves, hides, and horns of the mutant animals fetch anywhere from 2 to 200 gp, depending on the buyer and the nature of the item. The exact appearance of these odd creatures is left to your imagination.

One special type of fungus native to the Weir is the twilight mushroom. This dangerous plant, which cannot exist when exposed to daylight, is detailed in the New Monsters section of the Appendix.

One reason for the PCs to venture into the Weir is if they discover the existence of an entity known as the Ageless Oracle. If the heroes find a map or receive instruction on how to reach a certain point in the Weir, they discover that the Oracle is actually a treant. The Oracle is a huge specimen, its wood as black as the earth into which its gigantic roots plunge to what is rumored to be the heart of the world. Though surrounded by deadly lichen and ferns coated with natural contact poison, the treant itself is not harmful, but rather quite benign. The Oracle is as old, as wise, and as forthcoming as you need it to be. It knows the location of long-lost magic items, it knows secret entrances, true names, fairy tales, riddles, and the answers to riddles. Its sap cures any disease.

The Dehari River

As the Domain's largest water channel, the Dehari plays an important role in the land's economic well-being. Even the most sizable of barges are capable of



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navigating much of the river's length, from its mouth in the Miasmoor to its headwaters north of the Forlorn Mountains. Being a major byway for merchants moving large quantities of heavy goods, the river sees a high degree of pirate activity. These river-robbers favor the marshes of the Miasmoor for their hideouts, and ply their grisly trade from small, agile rafts that are easily hidden in the tall reeds and sawgrass of the swamp. The river is nearly half a mile wide at its broadest point, making it very difficult for would-be lawmen to curtail the pirate enterprise.

Using the Dehari: The Dehari is home to pirates, but also to one form of predator that keeps these pirates from becoming too secure in their adopted sanctuary: will-o-wisps dwell in the Miasmoor. As for the river itself, any manner of freshwater creatures can be found here. The pirates are also a constant threat to water-borne PCs. No pirate is more feared than Kalabhiti, a rakshasa who's been on the local most-wanted lists for nearly a dozen years. By using his ability to mask his true form, Kalabhiti is able to change faces as it pleases him, so that even his own pirate crew cannot predict his next incarnation. Kalabhiti has proven too cunning to be apprehended by bounty hunters, his elusiveness aided greatly by a wondrous item known as the *nowhere globe*.

Whenever the *nowhere globe* is spun in its frame, it creates a magical field that acts as a more potent version of the spell *invisibility sphere*, affecting everything within a 50-foot radius. However, the *globe* must be in motion for the spell to perpetuate, thus it normally requires someone to be standing nearby to spin it when it begins to lose momentum. To his credit, Kalabhiti was ingenious enough to invent a way to keep the *globe* turning without constant supervision. Years ago, the rakshasa and his pirates besieged a grain mill on the riverbank, killed the miller and his family, and promptly set about erecting an apparatus that connected the *globe* to the gears of the mill. Now when the waterwheel turns the mechanisms inside the building, it's not the millstone that moves, but rather the *globe*. The entire mill is now invisible, the perfect hideout for Kalabhiti and his men. As long as the waterwheel keeps turning, the rakshasa's lair remains undetected. Place the mill anywhere along the Dehari you prefer (the mill is not depicted on the map, as it's invisible!). For details of the *nowhere globe*, refer to New Magic Items in the Appendix.

Soul Sand

One of the most dreadful natural features of the Domain is *soul sand*, a magical quicksand that sucks in the

life force of its victim, rather than the victim's body. *Soul sand* occurs primarily around the area of the Miasmoor, appearing as pools of thick gray liquid. Occasionally a bubble rises up from the liquid. At night, *soul sand* is nearly impossible to see (Spot check [DC 30]), although in the daylight this becomes much easier (DC 20). *Soul sand* is the bane of all living creatures.

Using soul sand: The PCs never learn the true nature of soul sand unless they spend extensive time and money researching the subject. Soul sand is not a "free-standing" anomaly like quicksand, but rather it is a portal linked to a fell plane—most likely the Abyss. Anyone who touches a pool of soul sand must make an immediate Will save (DC 15) or begin to lose contact with their very soul. The nature of the portal is such that it attempts to draw the spirit into the Abyss. A successful save means that the character mentally resists this effect. A failed save deals 1d8 points of damage and forces the character to make another Will save (DC 20) in the next round. Success enables the character to pull free, failure deals 2d8 points of damage and forces a third and final Will save (DC 20) in round three. Failing this means the PC takes 3d8 points of damage, and his body floats spiritlessly atop the "sand" as his soul is sucked into the Abyss.

At any time during the three rounds of struggle, the character's friends may attempt to "pull" him to safety using the force of their collective willpowers. For every friend lending his strength to the effort, the DC for the saving throw is reduced by 2, so that three friends assisting in the third round permits the character to attempt a Will save (DC 14). A lost soul can only be retrieved by *miracle* or *wish*. If you like, you may permit a lost PC to attempt to find his or her way out of the Abyss, but this requires extensive additional work on your part. Note that patches of *soul sand* are not depicted on the map, not allowing the PCs to know for sure when they are likely to stumble upon the next patch.

Other Areas

Not every locale depicted on the map is detailed here. As previously discussed, many of these areas not described, such as the Rubicund Chasm, appear in later chapters. Five other sites on the map are described in Necromancer Games module G2: *What Evil Lurks*, including the Druid's Grove, Gaunt Wood, the Factory, the Sawmill, and the village of Leafton. Refer to that product for more information concerning these places. They are not necessary to the adventure contained in this module and are listed on the map merely to show the correlation of locations.

Chapter One:

Four Roads to Riches

Though the possibilities for adventure in a region as large as the Domain are virtually limitless, four storylines are presented in this chapter to serve as guidelines for writing your own encounters. The plots involved in these mini-adventures are limited in scope, and each can usually be played in the course of a single gaming session. In this chapter you'll also learn of a new prestige class and several new feats for use by those who prefer to fight unarmed. These are fully detailed in the Appendix. The four storylines are summarized below.

- A body has been found in the famous Darkstar Hall. This inn and tavern, detailed in the adventure "Death at Darkstar," may very well serve as the PCs' base of operations during their stay in the Domain. The murder of a traveling mage leads to revelations of betrayal within the thieves' guild and the wonders of a long-dormant artifact. Here the PCs have the chance to learn several new feats for use with martial arts.
- A shipment of sculptor's tools has mysteriously disappeared. In "Sculpting Fate," the PCs come upon the remains of a wagon train recently attacked by highwaymen. One of the caravan's survivors enlists their aid in recovering a crate of highly expensive equipment and delivering it to the curator of a wax museum in Hawkmoon.
- In "A Scent of Evil," members of a Jubilex cult calling themselves the Murk Traders have begun a concentrated effort to expand their operation. One of the many ways they intend to do this is through a priest named Oojisho. In the sewers under the town of Swordport, Oojisho concocts a deadly toxin, with which he intends to contaminate the city's water supply.
- "Dark Sky Rising" serves as an amusing diversion between other, more serious quests. It involves a mysterious rainmaker and a town besieged by an invisible evil that lives in the clouds.

Death at Darkstar

This introductory adventure is a murder mystery designed for four PCs of 1st level, though it can easily accommodate characters of virtually any level simply by altering the experience level and abilities of the murderer. Since the storyline is primarily a classic whodunit, its successful completion requires thought rather than brute force, and thus it is appropriate for PCs of all levels.

Darkstar Hall is a good place for the heroes to use as their base of operations while traveling the wilds of the Domain. A fully detailed map is provided so that you might use the inn as a lasting location in your campaign, even after the adventures in this book have been played to their completion. Look to the Appendix for a list of new martial arts forms available for players to incorporate into their character's repertoire, should they elect to learn such skills from Lady Zan.

Adventure Background

Owned by a retired thief name Eron, Darkstar Hall is the most renowned inn throughout the Domain. The building itself is built against an ancient tower. Some say the tower was built by extra-planar beings and predates the first human settlements in the region. Others believe it to be the former home of a wizard slain by Sivian Ulphar the Lucre King, head of the Hawkmoon thieves' guild. But all agree that the tower is a repository of fading magic; even today the residue of sorcery permeates its crumbling walls.

Eron married a monk called Lady Zan, and together they established Darkstar Hall, named after the chunk of black rock on display in the common room—a rock they say is a fragment of a fallen star. Lady Zan has mastered several forms of unarmed combat and uses one of the inn's rooms as her training area. She routinely entertains guests who practice martial arts, and the inn has become something of a haven for itinerant warrior-philosophers. Many such individuals roam the Domain in search of either enlightenment or, for those less spiritually minded, one of the many caches of robber's gold said to be buried throughout the land. Lady Zan, part mystic, part matron, is friend to all who seek to hone their physical abilities.

Darkstar Hall is a grand edifice, three stories tall, with the tower extending even higher. The building is well tended; its wood painted and polished, its various pieces and parts kept in fine repair by the staff of scullery maids, porters, and groundskeepers. The inn stands at the busy Kie-Vye Crossroads, meaning that its taproom is nearly always filled with travelers, ranging from merchants to Trunchers to adventurers, of all races and dispositions; anything and anyone can be found here.

The taproom is rarely completely empty. Even during the wee hours, one barman is always on duty, in the event that a late-night patron stumbles in out of the rain and seeks to warm his throat with a mead and his hands by the fire. The inn offers two dozen beds for nightly rent, with at least two-thirds of them occupied at any given time.

Eron, Male Human Rog10: CR 10; SZ M (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 10d6; hp 33; Init +4; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); BAB/Grp +7/+8; Atk +9 melee (1d6+1, masterwork short sword, 19-20/x2) or +11 melee (1d4+4, +3 *dirk (dagger)*, crit 19-20) or +12 ranged (1d8, light crossbow plus masterwork light crossbow bolts, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.) +14 ranged (1d4+4, +3 *dirk*, 19-20/x2, range 10 ft.); Full Atk +9/+4 melee (1d6+1, masterwork short sword, 19-20/x2) or +11/+6 melee (1d4+4, +3 *dirk (dagger)*, crit 19-20) or +12/+7 ranged (1d8, light crossbow plus masterwork light crossbow bolts, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.), or +14 ranged (1d4+4, +3 *dirk*, 19-20/x2, range 10 ft.); SA sneak attack (+5d6); SQ trapfinding, evasion, trap sense (+3),

improved uncanny dodge, improved evasion; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +13, Will +5; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +14, Balance +13, Bluff +12, Escape Artist +14, Hide +19, Listen +14, Perform (story telling) +13, Profession (innkeeper) +14, Search +15, Sense Motive +14, Spot +15, Use Magic Device +13. **Feats:** Alertness, Lightning Reflexes, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Hide), Track.

Possessions: Light crossbow, masterwork short sword, masterwork light bolts (x19); +3 *dirk (dagger)*, potions of *cat's grace*, *levitate*, *sneaking*, and *hiding*, and a *ring of chameleon power*.

Personality: Eron is a passive individual who spends his free time reading, preferring adventuresome travelogues and epic poetry. Non-aggressive by nature, Eron spent his career as a rogue serving as a counter-thief; he used his skills of stealth and locksmithing to bait and capture other thieves. He is quiet but astute. He keeps a sharp eye out for potential burglars.

Lady Zan, Female Human Mnk9: CR 9; SZ M (5 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 9d8-9; hp 29; Init +1; Spd 60 ft.; AC 18 (+1 Dex, +2 Wis, +1 Mnk, +3 *bracers*, +1 *ring*); BAB/Grp +6/+6; Atk +10 melee (1d6+3, +3 *nunchaku*), or +6/+3 melee (1d10, unarmed); Full Atk +10/+7 melee (1d6+3, +3 *nunchaku*), or +6/+6/+1 melee (1d10, unarmed); SA flurry of blows, unarmed strike, ki strike (magic); SQ evasion, still mind, slow fall (40 ft.), purity of body, wholeness of body; AL LN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Hide +10, Jump +7, Knowledge (nobility) +4, Listen +12, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +5, Perform (story telling) +9, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Deflect Arrows^b, Great Fortitude, Improved Trip^b, Stunning Fist^b, Two-Weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (nunchaku).

Possessions: +3 *nunchaku*, +3 *bracers of armor*, *gloves of arrow snaring*, +1 *ring of protection*, and potions of *cure light wounds*, *alter self*, *spider climb*, and *aid*.

Personality: Lady Zan has a regal bearing. She is swift of thought and action, the result of her martial training. Seldom does she mingle with guests of the inn, and this has given her an undeserved reputation for being unapproachable. Contrary to popular opinion, she is a willing conversationalist—if the topic interests her. She enjoys discussing philosophy, spirituality, and the role of humankind in the cosmos. She has a natural instinct for protecting her home, and she does so with fearsome precision.

The Tavern's Bill of Fare

Sourtooth Lager	2 cp / tankard
Eron's mead	5 sp / tankard
Dwarven fungal wine	1 gp / glass; 10 gp / bottle
Kendian Poison	1 gp / shot; 10 gp / bottle
Laughing Noble port	2 gp / glass; 20 gp / bottle
Goat's milk and bread	5 cp
Common meal	2 sp
Hinda's fill-me-up stew	5 sp
Fresh venison and potatoes	2 gp

Adventure Synopsis

The morning after the heroes arrive at Darkstar Hall, a mutilated body is found in the privy. A chamber maid discovers the corpse of one, traveling sorcerer, a Yugin Vooshae, slumped in the latrine on the second floor, a good portion of his head caved in like a rotten melon. Yugin wears only a bloody bathrobe. Apparently at some point in the middle of the night, he was attacked and killed.

With no official constabulary on which to call to solve this crime, Eron finds himself at a loss. He stands there staring at the body, wringing his hands. Lady Zan, however, is more decisive. Shortly after the body is discovered, she orders Lors, the inn's silent custodian, to set up a vigil outside to ensure that no one leaves the property. Lors begins patrolling the grounds, turning away all travelers and keeping everyone else from leaving. Lady Zan spreads the word that she expects cooperation from all patrons in seeing this matter to an expeditious conclusion. In other words, the patrons may wander the inn as they like, so long as they remain calm and do nothing to impede her investigation. To placate them, she declares that all food and drink are free of charge until further notice. The inn's staff sets to work preparing a continuous flow of refreshments.

Lady Zan then proceeds to conduct her own inquiry into the matter. If left unassisted, she'll provoke the killer's ire and be dead by noon. Only by performing their own investigation and thus deflecting the killer's attention can the PCs prevent Lady Zan from being murdered.

Solving the Crime

At the time of the murder, there are over 20 people staying in Darkstar Hall. This includes Eron, Lady Zan, six staff members, 11 patrons, and the PCs (making a total of 19 plus the heroes). If the PCs decide that everyone is a suspect, then that leaves them with 19 people to interview. A daunting task indeed! Meanwhile, Lady Zan carries out her own investigation. She considers the PCs to be suspects along with everyone else. They must provide sufficient alibis to account for themselves at the time of the killing. If they are unable to do so to Lady Zan's satisfaction, they must track down the murderer while simultaneously defending their own innocence. The best place for them to start their investigation is at the murder scene (Area 11), where the killer left behind a few clues. Armed with this evidence, the PCs should explore Darkstar Hall, combing the building for clues and interviewing as many of the 19 possible suspects as they deem necessary.

The truth of the matter is this: a halfling thief named Branke murdered Yugin Vooshae. His motive? He discovered that Yugin was working for Master Thief Sivian Ulphar and had been under orders to steal the mysterious Star; Branke desires the Star for himself. His means? Yugin Vooshae was nearly six feet tall and was obviously struck from behind and slightly above, indicating that the murderer was at least as tall as the victim; Branke imbibed a *potion of enlarge* and struck Yugin with a mace he stole from the room of a priest named Toomba. Branke hopes that by setting up Toomba to take the fall, he'll get away clean.



However, his plan to make off with the Star is temporarily delayed when Lady Zan puts the inn in a lock-down.

To solve the crime successfully, the heroes must sift the true clues from the false ones, avert a feud between Toomba's supporters and rivals from another church, and uncover the truth about the devious Branke before he slips through their fingers.

This plot works best if you give the PCs a chance to mingle with the various NPCs before Yugin is murdered. Perhaps the characters spend their first evening at the inn down in the taproom, listening to Toomba talk about his deity, hearing Branke tell a story in front of the fireplace, meeting Leopold and his party, et cetera. Perhaps they meet Yugin himself and share a glass of wine with him, and the next morning one of the other NPC accuses them of "talking suspiciously" with the victim the night before the murder.

To help you keep track of the adventure's 19 NPCs (any one of which might be the killer, for all the PCs know), they are listed here alphabetically, along with their alleged alibi, if any. Note that those who say they were alone at the time of the murder may not have anyone to substantiate their claim, and are thus still highly suspect. For more information on these NPCs, refer to their individual room descriptions.

<u>NPC</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u>Alibi</u>
Areth	1	He was in the kitchen (false).
Branke	15	He was writing a story in his room (false).
Eron	24	He was sleeping in his room (true).
Gandir	19	He was sleeping in his room (true).
GINNA	16	She was in her room, with Tinan (true).
Hinda	2	She was with Pol, at their home (true).
Invis	13	She was sleeping in her room (true).
Kristoff	8	He was alone in his room (true).

Lady Zan	24	She was sitting on the roof in meditation (true).
Laranger	21	He was in his room with Sareth (true).
Leopold	17	He was asleep in his room (false).
Lors	10	He was alone in his room (true).
Marion	13	She was in the kitchen (false).
Pol	2	He was not on the property, but at home (true).
Rathen	18	He gives no alibi, unless forced; he was in Area 2 (true).
Sareth	20	He was in Laranger's room (true).
Shalindra	14	She gives no alibi, unless forced; she was in Area 25 (true).
Tinan	16	He was in the room he shares with Ginna (true).
Toomba	9	He was in his room (true).

Locations Within Darkstar Hall

1. Taproom

The commons room of Darkstar Hall seats 40 comfortably, and can easily accommodate up to 20 more if additional chairs are used. Add to this another 15 folk at the bar, and it's easy to see that the taproom is a bustling place on most evenings. The floor is polished hardwood, the bar is a massive slab of imported rosewood, accented with shiny brass fixtures. A deep gouge mars one end of the countertop. If asked, any of the inn's regulars tells the PCs that the gouge was made by the wayward axe of a barbarian from the Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks who got drunk one night a year ago and mistook the barkeep for the man who stole away his wife.

One of the six servants, Areth, can be found here during the PCs' investigation, scrubbing the stones in

A LAMENTATION OF THIEVES

front of the hearth. Areth has a small room in the stable. If asked where he was at the time of the murder, he says he was in the kitchen, looking for a bite to eat. In reality, he was rummaging around in Tower Level Two (Area 22), hoping to find something interesting to steal. A successful Sense Motive check opposed by Areth's Bluff check tips the PCs off to his fib. Marion the masseuse (Area 13) also claims to have been in the kitchen, and their conflicting lies might tip the PCs off that something is amiss.

Areth, Male Human Com1: CR 1/2; SZ M (5 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; BAB/Grp +0/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d4+2, dagger, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +2 melee (1d4+2, dagger, 19-20/x2); AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 8.

Skills: Bluff +2, Climb +4, Listen +4, Profession (stablehand) +7, Spot +4. **Feats:** Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Profession [stablehand]).

Possessions: Dagger, rabbit's foot, and pouch of 4 sp.

Personality: Areth is young and brash, but also cowardly and eager to please. He's convinced that no one in this world is going to help him survive, so it's up to him to steal what he can, when he can. He is impressed with adventuring types, especially male warriors, and—though he'll never admit it—he desires to be a “good boy,” and would very much like for one of the PCs to invite him to accompany them in their travels.

Two large flagstone fireplaces provide the taproom with continual warmth, even in the dreary winter months. Atop the mantles sit various souvenirs and odds and ends, trinkets left behind by travelers and mementos given to the inn's owners over the years. Practically anything could be found here; the simplest adventure hook is often a mysterious object. Examples include the following:

- a jar containing a human finger that does not decay
- a scroll case containing a message in an indecipherable script
- a sword hilt with a few inches of broken blade
- an umber hulk horn
- a snuff box that plays a haunting tune when opened

1A. Black Rock

On display in the taproom is what appears to be a chunk of glassy black stone, roughly spherical, some sixteen inches in diameter. Inn patrons refer to this simply as the Star, as it is reputedly a piece of the firmament fallen to earth and recovered by whatever mysterious personage once dwelled in the adjacent tower. When Eron bought the property, he cleaned out the tower, and while doing so unearthed what he believed to be a celestial stone. Since then, traveling spellcasters have many times attempted to divine the properties of the Star, but their magic has always been rebuffed. The only thing that's certain is that the Star is highly resistant to all applications arcane.

Unbeknownst to Eron or anyone else at the inn, the rock is actually a piece of extra-planar protomatter

known as *nullium*. As one of the foundingstones of Creation, *nullium*'s physical properties are beyond the ken of mortals. Though its applications in the building of the Prime Material Plane were surely multitudinous, only one of its traits is in any way usable by man: *nullium* absorbs magic. No spell of any kind affects the Star and all attempts at divination concerning it are in fact drawn into it and negated.

Sivian Ulphar, legendary guildmaster of the Hawkmoon thieves, came upon the truth of *nullium* quite accidentally during one of his sojourns into the Outer Planes. After learning that a chunk of *nullium* resided in his very own Domain, he promptly sent an agent to retrieve it. Upon arriving at Darkstar Hall yesterday morning, Yugin Vooshae walked straight to the Star, pretending to examine it while placing his hands upon it and surreptitiously attempting to *teleport* away with it. Of course, the *nullium* absorbed the spell and nothing happened. Yugin spent the remainder of the day watching the routine of the inn's employees so that he could gauge the best moment to lift the Star from its perch and abscond with it. Unfortunately for him, the halfling Branke decided it was time to defect from Sivian's guild; he'd steal the Star for himself and sell it for enough money to start his own thievery organization.

The Star weighs around 20 pounds. It lifts easily off its metal holder. No spell the PCs cast at it, nor weapon they bring to bear against it, can leave the faintest mark upon its surface.

2. Kitchen

All of the inn's menu is prepared here, one of the most well stocked kitchens the PCs are likely to encounter. Virtually any kind of cooking ingredient can be found here, including rare spices and seasonings. Two master chefs, a married man and woman named Pol and Hinda, are usually found here. They live in a small cottage half a mile down the road.

Neither Pol nor Hinda was on the premises at the time of the murder. During the wee hours, if a traveler wanders in and needs a warm meal, one of the chamber maids usually heats up a bowl of the day's stew, so the two chefs are not required to be at the inn at all times.

Pol and Hinda, Male and Female Humans, Com3: CR 2; SZ M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 3d4; hp 7 each; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); BAB/Grp +1/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); AL LG; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +3, Gather Information +2, Jump +7, Listen +3, Profession (cook) +5, Spot +3. **Feats:** Point Blank shot, Skill Focus (Profession [cook]), Skill Focus (Jump).

Possessions: Pol and Hinda carry nothing with them during the workday, though they keep 33 gp in their home.

Personality: Pol is a large, robust man, full of life and love for all. He is honestly anguished over the death of

someone in the very inn where he works. In his heart of hearts, he is a pacifist, and wishes that everyone could just get along. He engages the PCs in intimate discussions of nearly any topic they choose, offering them choice treats from his oven, mothering them if they show any signs of sickness, and basically treating them as saints—as he treats everyone. Hinda, on the other hand, is a little more cynical. Not so quick to extend her good wishes, Hinda speaks guardedly, half-inclined to think that the PCs themselves might have something to do with the murder. She's truly a kind person, but her husband's naïve openness sometimes needs the tempering of a watchful wife.

3. Privy

This latrine services the first floor. As it stands so near the kitchen, Hinda ensures that it is always fresh smelling so as not to offend. A burning stick of incense goes a long way to concealing the smell.

4. Dry Storage

All oversized containers are kept here, including 50-lb. bags of flour, hogsheads of tobacco, and crates of dry goods. Behind the door is a well-worn club that Hinda calls "Marla." She'll drag it out whenever the patrons in the taproom get too rowdy with their drink. Though Hinda doesn't know it, Marla is actually a *+1 club*.

5. Closet

This closet contains cleaning supplies, including mops, brooms, rags, and the like. A successful Search check (DC 12) uncovers a silver bracelet that Hinda lost months ago. Should it be returned to her, she lets down her guard a bit, deciding that maybe the PCs aren't such bad folk, after all.

6. Tower Level One

Though the ancient tower offers no clues to the murderer's identity, its four cobweb-covered levels do hold the truth as to the Star's origin, thus partially illuminating the motive behind the crime. Eron and Lady Zan use Tower Level One as a storage area. Dwarves and others with knowledge of stonework easily see the age of the rock walls and the strength of the mortar, which has held these bricks fast through the centuries. The items here include boxes of nails, tools, and lumber for the inn's upkeep, a vat of honey that Eron uses for his home-brewed mead, a crate full of old clothes, and a variety of weapons, should the need arise to defend the property from invaders: four longbows, six longswords, 200 arrows, and a masterwork short sword. The spiral staircase leads up to Area 22.

7. Well

Lady Zan permits the PCs to leave the building in order to search the surrounding grounds. The nearby stable is not detailed here, but it contains only the usual accoutrements for such a place. The brickwork of the well is tidy and freshly painted. The shaft itself drops

down 30 feet to the waterline. The water is 10 feet deep, and there it encounters a submerged stream that winds away for several miles. However, resting at the bottom of the well is a mace with a wooden handle. This is the murder weapon. The mace belongs to the priest Toomba, but Branke stole it. After slaying Yugin, Branke used his thiefling skills to slip outside and drop the mace into the well—fully intending that it is found and Toomba implicated in the crime. Descending into the well requires a successful Climb check (DC 20, DC 12 if a rope is used). Once at the bottom of the 10 feet of water, the mace is relatively easy to find if a Search check (DC 10) is made.

With the mace in hand, the PCs must determine its owner. The simplest way to do this is asking around. Any of the priests of either faction (Zahm and Quooembla) know that the mace belongs to Toomba, leader of the Zahm coterie. Zahm is the god of money and business (neutral alignment), while Quooembla is the god of wisdom (neutral good alignment). Substitute these names with deities from your own campaign. The Quooembla priests are alarmed if they learn that Toomba appears to be involved in the crime, and they call a hasty meeting to discuss their next move. As rivals to the church of Zahm, these priests stop at nothing to undermine Toomba's integrity, thus striking a blow against the church entire. Shortly after the mace's discovery is made public, Leopold, head of the Quooembla faction, demands that Toomba be placed under arrest. This incites Toomba's associates, and a shouting match ensues. The tension between the two groups escalates as the PCs progress in their investigation, so that eventually the heated words are replaced with weapons. The PCs then have the dual task of solving the murder and keeping the warring parties from tearing the inn down around their heads.

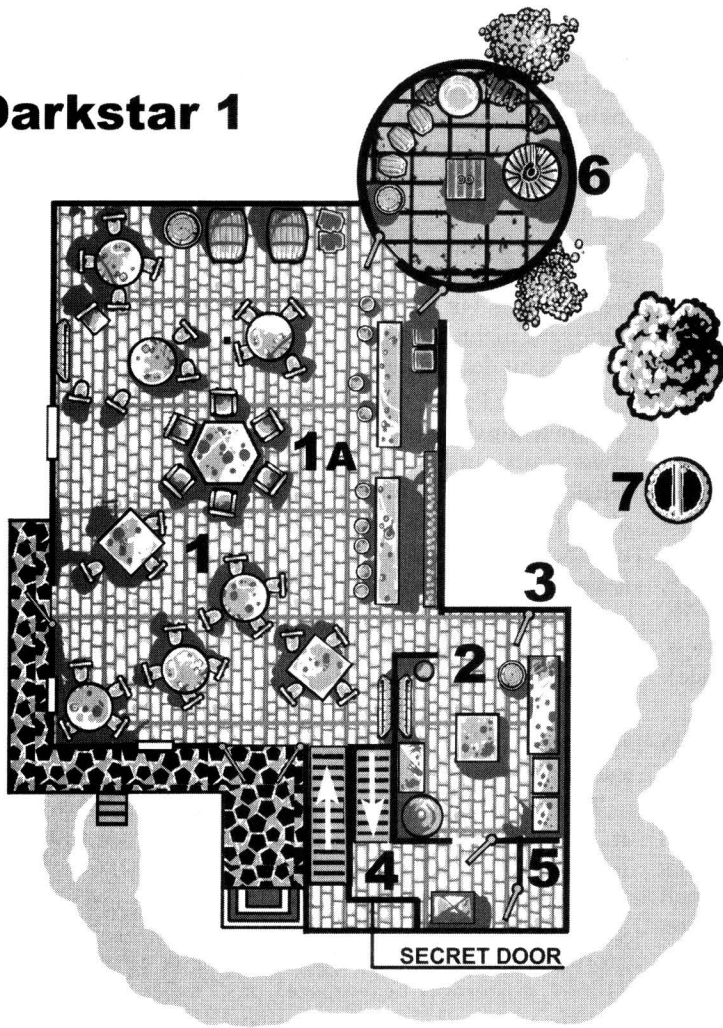
If confronted with the mace, Toomba pleads ignorance. For his full response, refer to Area 9.

8. Stateroom

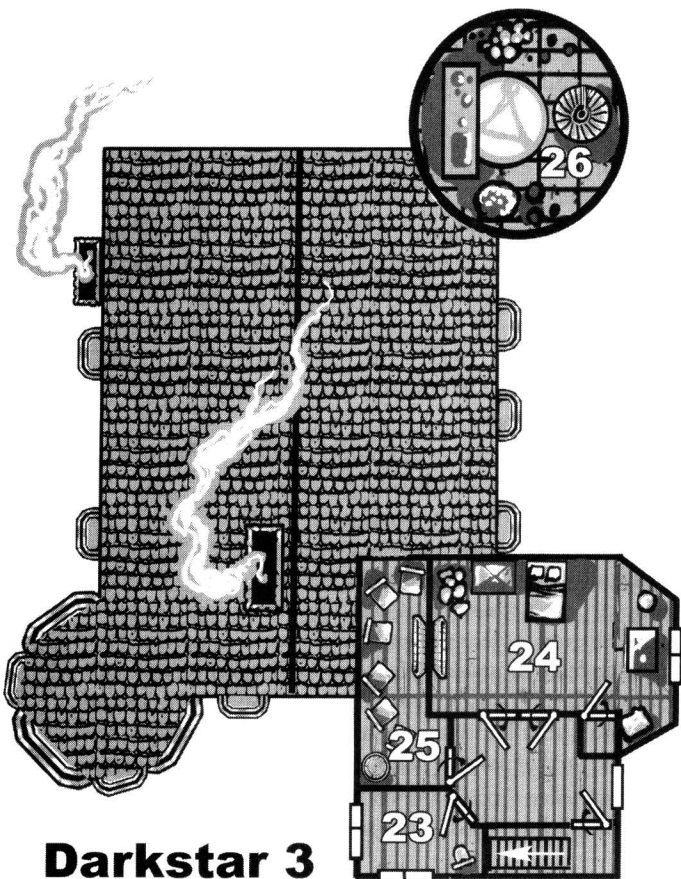
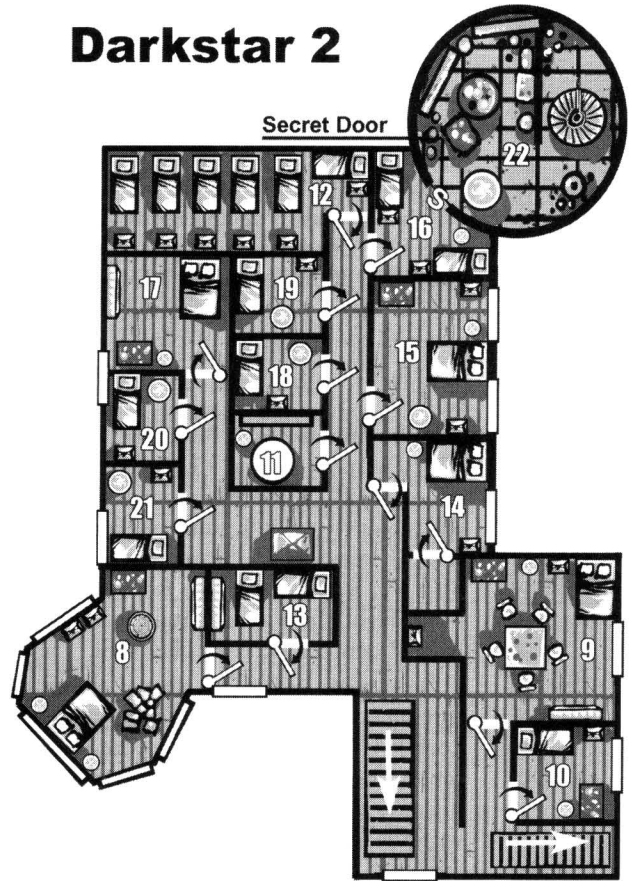
This room rents for an exorbitant 5 gp per evening, but that includes the works: hot baths, multi-course meals, fine wines, and even a complimentary massage. The appointments here are lavish, from the four-poster bed to the fresh flowers. An array of windows looks out over the countryside, and a fireplace provides constant comfort for the chilly traveler. This room actually extends out from the southwest corner of the inn, much like a glass-enclosed balcony.

The night of the murder, a foreign academician named Kristoff occupies this room. As a highly regarded sage of human physiology, Kristoff has a reputation to uphold, and rarely deigns to mingle with the commoners in the taproom. He has stopped at Darkstar Hall to give his mind a little relaxation after an intense week of scholarly debates with area pundits. After the body is discovered, Kristoff is seen skulking about, peering over the edge of the gathered onlookers, wearing his black robe and leaning heavily on his staff of sablewood. No one at the inn knows much about him, and Kristoff proves rather elusive, retreating to his room and thus

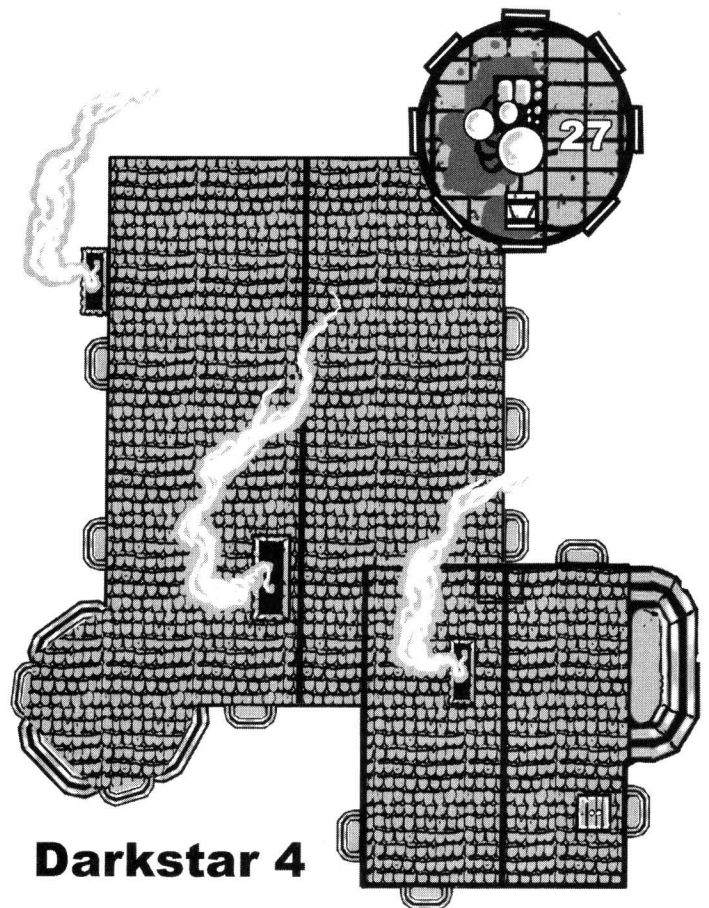
Darkstar 1



Darkstar 2



Darkstar 3



Darkstar 4

appearing as a somewhat suspicious character. He leaves his apartment only at meal times, so if the PCs want to search his room, they'll have to do so when he visits the taproom for the 20-minute intervals at breakfast, lunch, and dinner. Or they could always create a diversion to draw him from his room....

Kristoff, Male Human Exp6: CR 5; SZ M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 6d6+6; hp 26; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); BAB/Grp +4/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4+1, dagger, 19-20/x2); AL LN; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +6*, Bluff* +9*, Craft (manuscripts) +7*, Decipher Script +12*, Diplomacy +5, Handle Animal +9*, Knowledge (anatomy) +6, Knowledge (physiology) +12*, Listen +4, Perform (ballad) +9*, Ride (horses) +10*, Search +7*, Sense Motive +7*, Spot +5, Survival +3, Use Rope +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Ride). **Note:** * denotes a chosen class skill.

Possessions: Kristoff's personal things are locked in three matching trunks bearing a stylized letter "K" (Open Lock [DC 15]). Kristoff carries the keys with him at all times. The trunks contain dozens of books on anatomy, biology, and other, more obscure disciplines dealing with the functions of the human body, as well as a small sack of 55 gp, a 70 gp smoky quartz, and a 10 gp eye agate. He carries with him a dagger, potions of *levitate* and *cure light wounds*, and a *ring of feather falling*.

Personality: Though the chambermaid Marion describes him as irascible, Kristoff is really a gentle soul. Marion simply caught him after a long day of travel, and Kristoff is looking forward to finding her and apologizing. If the PCs knock on his door and request an interview, Kristoff is curt but not impolite. Though he doesn't invite the PCs inside and doesn't offer to show them the contents of his trunks, he remains personable, if somewhat reserved.

9. Toomba's Room

The priest of Zahm calls this room his own. Toomba and his three acolytes have been staying at the Darkstar for three nights now, proselytizing the travelers who pass through the inn. Toomba has a large, flat face and blonde mustache, and his blue eyes glow with righteous fire when he senses an injustice. Shortly after he learns that a man has been found dead, he also realizes that his mace is missing. Toomba rightly suspects that the murderer stole the mace and with it conveyed a malicious blow to Yugin Vooshae—a man Toomba met last night in the taproom and was seen speaking with at length. In truth, Toomba was trying to convince Yugin of the sundry splendors of Zahm's church, but witnesses might not see it that way. Toomba tells no one that his mace is missing. If the PCs interview him, they'll have to make a Sense Motive check opposed by Toomba's Bluff check to determine that he's withholding this vital bit of evidence. If asked to account for himself at the time of the murder, Toomba puffs out his chest and says that he

was here in his room, kneeling before his altar engaged in the most penitent of prayers. Anyone succeeding in a Sense Motive (opposed by Toomba's Bluff skill) realizes that he is lying. Actually he was sound asleep.

If the PCs find the mace in the well and realize that it belongs to Toomba (the priests of Quooembla loudly proclaim this fact), then Toomba confesses that yes, the weapon is his, but it was evidently stolen from his room during the night. If asked, Toomba assures the PCs that he keeps his door soundly locked at all times.

Searching Toomba's room reveals a wardrobe full of fine traveling clothes and sacerdotal garments, a locked chest containing a sack of 100 gp and a bundle of religious tracts (Open Lock [DC 13]), and a portable altar. The altar has a hidden compartment discovered on a Search check (DC 12). It contains two potions of *healing* and a love letter from someone named Estrella.

Though there is a secret door in the west wall (discovered on a Search check [DC 20]), Toomba is unaware of its existence. Eron, Lady Zan, and Lors know of the hidden portal, but they see no reason to share this information. The door leads to a small storage area, currently empty.

Toomba, Male Human Clr5 (Zahm): CR 5; SZ M (6 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 5d8+5; hp 26; Init +2; Spd 20 ft. (30 ft. base); AC 18 (+6 splint mail, +2 shield); BAB/Grp +3/+7; Atk +9 melee (1d6+4, masterwork heavy mace), or +7 melee (1d6+4, club) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); Full Atk +9 melee (1d6+4, masterwork heavy mace), or +7 melee (1d6+4, club) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); SQ good fortune (reroll 1/day), spontaneous casting, turn undead; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +8; Str 18, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 19, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +4, Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Heal +10, Listen +4, Spot +4, Use Rope +3. **Feats:** Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Scribe Scroll, Weapon Focus (heavy mace).

Divine Spells Prepared (5/4/3/2; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*clean**, *create water* (x2), *cure minor wounds* (x2); 1st—*bless* (x2), *command* (x2); 2nd—*augury*, *delay poison*, *hold person*; 3rd—*cure serious wounds*, *remove curse*.

Domain Spells (Luck, War): 1st—*magic weapon*; 2nd—*aid*; 3rd—*magic vestment*.

Note: * denotes a spell found in **Relics & Rituals** by **Sword & Sorcery Studios**.

Possessions: 75 gp, 6 silver pearls (90 gp each), light crossbow, masterwork heavy mace (currently missing), club, silver light bolts (x14), splint mail, large wooden shield, *potion of delay poison*, scroll (divine, caster level 5, *plant growth*, *searing light*), scroll (divine, caster level 1, *invisibility to undead*, *shillelagh*, *invisibility to undead*), scroll (divine, caster level 5, *water walk*, *cure serious wounds*), scroll (divine, caster level 3, *magic stone*, *augury*), *wand of burning hands* (34 charges).

Personality: Toomba is a large, stern man, who brooks no backsliding. Though honest and fair in his dealings

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with others, he pulls no punches when dealing with supporters of what he considers “evil” faiths.

10. Lors' Quarters

Lors is a quiet, gentle custodian who has worked with Eron and Lady Zan since the day they bought the property. Though he only speaks to patrons if directly addressed, Lors does at times converse with the other servants while taking dinner in the kitchen. Lors is a physical specimen, standing nearly seven feet tall, his plain homespun tunic stretching across a mountain range of shoulders. Sadly, Lors doesn't have much of an alibi; he was alone in his room, with no one to verify his story.

Lors, Male Human Com2: CR 1; SZ M (6 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 2d4+2; hp 8; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); BAB/Grp +1/+4; Atk +4 melee (1d3+3 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +4 melee (1d3+3 nonlethal, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 17, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +4, Concentration +2, Diplomacy +2, Disable Device +5, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +2, Listen +5, Perform (juggling) +1, Spot +5, Swim +7, Use Rope +5. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Skill Focus (Swim).

Possessions: none.

Personality: Lors is painfully shy. He is an honest man, but an unambitious one. Though his size, strength, and physical skills could take him down any number of worthy careers, including that of adventurer, he chooses to remain at Darkstar Hall, silently performing his duties as custodian. If one of the PCs forms a friendship with Lors, the custodian might overcome his reticence and inquire about the possibility of receiving training, perhaps in the fighting arts. Lors loves Eron and Lady Zan as if they were his parents. He has a secret crush on the seamstress, Invis (Area 13).

11. Privy

The chambermaid Invis finds Yugin Vooshae's body here at dawn. Her piercing scream awakens the characters, along with nearly everyone else in the inn. Shortly after the discovery, Lady Zan seals off the building, as described above.

Examining the body requires an Intelligence check (DC 12). Success reveals that Yugin was definitely struck from behind by a heavy, blunt object, by someone at least as tall as Yugin himself. Because of the cramped conditions in the privy room, the murder weapon couldn't have been more than a couple of feet long, as there's not space to swing a longer item. A single blow was all it took to end Yugin's life, and by the looks of it, that blow was a powerful one. The attack was well placed and efficiently delivered; the killer knew what he or she was doing. These conditions might lead the PCs to believe that Kristoff the anatomist was involved (incorrect), or that a thief—trained in the art of the sneak attack—might have delivered the fatal stroke (true).

Yugin was probably struck by someone who is right-handed, although only Kristoff can provide the PCs with this knowledge, if they ask him to examine the body.

Yugin was dressed in his sleeping robe at the time of his death. The robe is now a bloody mess. Around Yugin's neck hangs the key to his footlocker (Area 12).

12. Sleeping Room (EL 1)

There are six sets of bunk beds in this room, permitting 12 persons to sleep here. This is the room the PCs are given if they stay at the inn as guests. The charge is a mere 1 cp per night (3 cp with bath, 1 sp with one meal). Each bunk is numbered, with a corresponding numbered footlocker nearby.

Yugin Vooshae was boarding in this room at the time of his death. If the PCs met him the previous evening in the taproom, they might well know this fact. Yugin slept in bunk number six. His footlocker is locked, and the key is found on his corpse. The lock may be picked with an Open Lock (DC 13). Inside is his nondescript traveling clothes, a small pouch of 22 gp, his spellbook, and a small metal slipcase. The spellbook contains the following spells: *mage hand*, *mending*, *animate rope*, *jump*, *alter self*, *haste*, *polymorph*, and *teleport*.

The slipcase is closed with a simple brass clasp, but it is trapped so that unless the clasp is turned in the proper sequence, a hidden needle pricks the holder's finger. Only Yugin knows the sequence, so the only way to avoid the trap is to first locate it, then remove it.

Poison Needle Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1 plus greenblood oil poison); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 22.

The slipcase contains a small book that served as Yugin's notebook and ledger. As an agent of Sivian Ulphar, Yugin kept notes in this tome concerning his various assignments. He also used the book to keep track of his expenses so that he might be reimbursed upon returning to Hawkmoon. Feel free to place within the book anything to spur further adventures surrounding the fabled thieves' guild of Hawkmoon. The only entry that pertains to this adventure is the last, which details Yugin's mission to secure the Star for Sivian Ulphar. The book contains no information on the nature of the Star, only that Yugin was under orders to steal it. The PCs may learn more of the Star if they search the ancient tower (Areas 6, 22, 26, 27). Finally, Yugin has underlined one particular note to himself: **BEWARE OF TRAITOR IN GUILD! WHO ELSE WANTS STAR???**

13. Servants' Quarters

Two of the inn's six staff members sleep here. Invis and Marion are responsible for cleaning and general upkeep around the inn. Both are young, unmarried women in their early twenties. Invis is also an accomplished seamstress, while Marion is a skilled masseuse. When Yugin Vooshae was killed, Invis was in this room sleeping, and Marion was downstairs getting a snack from the kitchen—or so they claim. A successful Sense Motive check opposed by Marion's Bluff check leads the

PCs to believe that she is not telling the entire truth. Actually, she was in Leopold's room (Area 17), giving him a massage. Astute PCs remember that Areth the servant also claimed to be in the kitchen at the time Yugin was killed ... so were Areth and Marion both in the kitchen, or is one of them lying?

Invis and Marion, Female Humans Com1: CR 1/2; SZ M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 1d4-1; hp 3 each; Init -1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); BAB/Grp +0/+1; Atk +1 melee (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk (1d3+1 nonlethal, unarmed); AL LG; SV Fort -1, Ref -1, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 8, Con 8, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 11.

Skills: Bluff +2, Handle Animal +4, Jump +3, Knowledge (local) +1, Listen +3, Profession (seamstress [Invis], masseuse [Marion]) +4, Spot +2. **Feats:** Run, Skill Focus (Handle Animal).

Possessions: 2d4 sp each.

Personality: Invis is prim and businesslike, while Marion is a starry-eyed romantic. Invis firmly believes she'll be a chambermaid or serving wench until the day she dies, while Marion dreams of being swept off her feet and taken away to an enchanted land to live out her days amid elven song, sweet wine, and peppermint-scented breezes.

14. Shalindra's Room

Shalindra is a tall, elegant woman with lustrous black skin and haunted eyes. Exceedingly beautiful, Shalindra is actually a duchess from a foreign land, here at Darkstar Hall to set up trade relations with Rathen (Area 18). She has a great storm of hair, woven with beads and silver threads, and is almost always seen in diaphanous gowns of pale blue silk. She refuses to vouchsafe knowledge of her noble heritage or details of her mission. Only if one of the PCs is of particularly stately bearing does Shalindra openly converse of the murder. She otherwise remains aloof. At the time that Yugin Vooshae was slain, Shalindra and Rathen happened to be conducting a secret assignation in the Privacy Chamber on the third floor (Area 25). As their trade alliance would undermine certain powerful individuals in the Domain (namely Sivian Ulphar, who has tentacles in the shipping industry), neither Shalindra nor Rathen readily come forth with the truth, even if it's the only means of establishing an alibi. If the PCs interview Shalindra, on a successful Spot check (DC 12) they notice that her earring is an intricate affair of onyx and platinum, but she's only wearing one of them. She doesn't realize that she lost the other one (it can be found in Area 25).

Shalindra, Female Human, Ari9: CR 8; SZ M (5 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 9d8; hp 41; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 ring); BAB/Grp +6/+7; Atk +7 melee or +7 ranged; Full Atk +7/+2 melee or +7/+2 ranged; AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 18.

Skill: Diplomacy +12, Disguise +9, Forgery +7, Handle Animal +15, Intimidate +12, Knowledge (geography) +3, Knowledge (heraldry) +10, Listen +3, Perform (harp) +9, Sense Motive +10, Spot +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Im-

proved Initiative, Leadership, Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Skill Focus (Intimidate).

Possessions: 1,300 gp in assorted gemstones in silk pouch, 3,200 gp in jewelry, potions of *charisma* and *detect thoughts*, and a +2 ring of *protection*.

Personality: As previously noted, Shalindra is proud of her noble birth and guarded with her secrets. Ever since her husband died, she's been entrusted with the welfare of her small duchy. Though she would truly welcome any allies to her cause, she is not forthcoming with her trust. Only a PC of cultured upbringing and courtly deportment has a chance of scaling the walls she's constructed around her heart. Shalindra longs for a hero.

15. Branke's Room (EL3)

When the PCs finally get around to searching Branke's room, it's important to remember that the halfling is a skilled actor—he appears quite frightened by all of this grisly murder business. Though he secretly acts to impede the investigation in whatever way he can, he otherwise plays the part of a halfling afraid for his life. After all, the killer is still at large, right? It's only right that he be terrified. Branke claims to be a bard; apparently he is a poet who travels around telling stories. He's weaving just such a tale in front of the fireplace on the day the heroes arrive at the inn. After the murder, he is skittish, and he has a habit of holding on to the pantleg of the largest PC. Branke claims to have been composing a new story at the time of the murder. He shows the PCs a few pages of this unfinished tale, which is entitled, "Arsinikus and the Dragon of Gale." He asks if the PCs would mind telling him a little of their adventures, so that he could use their experiences as material for the story.

Branke's room is a mess, a fact for which he apologizes profusely. He admits to being a disheveled soul, and he can't help the fact that he strews his belongings about with little care for where they fall. Actually, the clutter helps him conceal his important possessions. Sifting through all the clothes, trinkets, toys, and traveling gear requires a Search check (DC 13), with success indicating that the searcher has found what appears to be a hand-carved whalebone flute. If someone attempts to air a tune on the instrument, nothing happens, as the flute is stuffed with a tightly rolled scroll. The scroll contains extensive notes, written in Branke's squiggly penmanship, detailing Yugin Vooshae's orders to acquire the Star on behalf of Sivian Ulphar of the Hawkmoon thieves' guild.

Branke hid a few more objects within one of the bedposts, discovered on a Search check (DC 12). After hollowing out the post, he filled it with his lockpicks, a small sack of 4 pearls (20 gp each), and two bottles, one of which is empty. The other bottle contains a *potion of enlarge* (caster level 5), and is labeled as such. Branke has used potions like these throughout his career to make up for the disadvantages of his small stature.

Creature: If Branke is present when the PCs find the items in the flute and bedpost, he holds his ground and

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waits for them to formally accuse him. Once this happens, he draws his short sword and attacks. He tries to escape if the battle is going against him. If he falls to 5 hp or less, he surrenders if escape is impossible.

Branke, Male Halfling (Tallfellow) Rog3: CR 3; SZ S (4 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 3d6; hp 12; Init +3; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+3 Dex, +1 Size); BAB/Grp +2/+2; Atk +4 melee (1d6, masterwork short sword, 19-20/x2), or +4 melee (1d4, masterwork dagger, 19-20/x2), or +7 ranged (1d4, masterwork dagger, 19-20/x2, range 10 ft.); Full Atk +4 melee (1d6, masterwork short sword, 19-20/x2), or +4 melee (1d4, masterwork dagger, 19-20/x2), or +7 ranged (1d4, masterwork dagger, 19-20/x2, range 10 ft.) SA sneak attack (+2d6); SQ evasion, racial abilities, trapfinding, trapsense (+1); AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +9, Will +4; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 14, Cha 11.

Skills: Balance +8, Bluff +6, Hide +9, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Perform (comedy) +2, Search +7, Sense Motive +4, Spot +8, Swim +3, Use Magic Device +2.
Feats: Dodge, Lightning Reflexes.

Possessions: 37 gp, masterwork dagger, masterwork short sword, and potions of *cure light wounds* and *sneaking*.

Personality: Branke lives two lives. Outwardly he's personable and insouciant, while inside he plots to acquire wealth and power by any means possible.

16. Acolytes' Room

Tinan and Ginna are lesser priests of Zahm serving under Toomba (Area 9). At the time of the murder, Tinan was awake with the lamp burning, studying his holy text. Ginna was trying to sleep and grumbling at him to turn off the light. No one in the inn is aware of the existence of the secret door leading to Tower Level Two (Search check [DC 18] to discover this door).

Tinan and Ginna, Male and Female Human Clr2 (Zahm): CR 2; SZ M (4 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 2d8-2; hp 11 each; Init -2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 8 (-2 Dex); BAB/Grp +1/+4; Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, club); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6+3, club); SQ freedom of movement (1 round/day), good fortune (reroll 1/day), spontaneous casting, turn undead; AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref -2, Will +7; Str 16, Dex 7, Con 9, Int 8, Wis 18, Cha 12.

Skills: Craft (bookbinding) +3, Disable Device +0, Heal +6, Listen +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (club).

Divine Spells Prepared (4/3; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*clean**, *create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect poison*; 1st—*bless*, *comprehend languages*, *divine favor*, and *remove fear*.

Domain Spells (Luck, Travel): 1st—*entropic shield*.

Note: * denotes a spell found in **Relics & Rituals by Sword & Sorcery Studios**.

Possessions: Each of them carries 1d12 gp, their holy items, and a club.

Personality: Tinan is seventeen years old and afraid of his own shadow. Ginna is eighteen, and she follows Toomba around for lack of anything better to do with her life. Tinan hopes that the church teaches him

courage, while Ginna spends her time daydreaming of the world beyond the mountains. She would just as soon ride away with the PCs if the chance comes up.

17. Leopold's Room

Leopold is the proud leader of the Quoembla contingent here at Darkstar Hall. He and his disciples were en route to Hawkmoon when they stopped here for rest two nights ago, only to find Toomba and his Zahm people were preaching their foolishness in the taproom! Though the churches of Zahm and Quoembla aren't exactly enemies, their priests sometimes fan the flames of rivalry. Leopold is quick to point out that the mace found in the well belongs to Toomba. If asked what he was doing when Yugin was murdered, Leopold says he was here in his room, sleeping off a little too much wine. This is a lie and is detected as such (Sense Motive versus Bluff). Leopold paid Marion for a private massage. He was getting his back rubbed (among other things) while Yugin was being murdered.

Leopold's room is quite fine when compared to the lesser apartments of the inn. The furnishing here are of the highest quality. Other than the clothes in his wardrobe, Leopold has only a single portmanteau, which is locked with a small key he always keeps with him (Open Lock [DC 14] to open). Within are several papers dealing with the church of Quoembla, as well as his personal copy of the holy text, his altar cloth, and a silver meditation bell.

Leopold, Male Human Clr5 (Quoembla): CR 5; SZ M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 5d8+20; hp 42; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); BAB/Grp +3/+5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, +2 *light mace*); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+4, +2 *light mace*); SQ feat of Strength (1 round/day), spontaneous casting, turn undead, use arcane devices; AL NG; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Balance +2, Craft (alchemy) +3, Craft (carve scrimshaw) +8, Disable Device +2, Heal +10, Listen +2, Open Lock +3, Spot +5. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Maximize Spell, Skill Focus (Craft [carve scrimshaw]).

Divine Spells Prepared (5/4/3/1; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *quick sober**, *virtue*; 1st—*bane*, *command*, *deathwatch*, *doom*; 2nd—*animal messenger*, *endurance*, *enthrall*; 3rd—*blindness*.

Domain Spells (Magic, Strength): 1st—*endure elements*; 2nd—*bull's strength*; 3rd—*dispel magic*.

Note: * denotes a spell found in **Relics & Rituals by Sword & Sorcery Studios**.

Possessions: 44 gp, ruby signet ring (250 gp), +2 *light mace*, *periapt of wound closure*, potions of *cat's grace* and *delay poison*, and a *rod of wonder*.

Personality: Leopold is anxious to see his rival Toomba taken down a notch or two, and to this end he gleefully assists the PCs in whatever way he can. He has one great motivation (rising through the ranks by expanding his list of converts) and one great weakness (women). Bound to these behaviors, he consistently engages the PCs in

theological discussion and fawns over any females among them. He spent several hours last night receiving Marion's practiced ministrations, and he does everything to keep the PCs from finding out. He rightly fears that his weakness, if exposed, would prevent him from further ascension through the ranks of the priesthood.

18. Rathen's Room

Rathen came to Darkstar Hall to meet with Shalindra (Area 14), in order that they might hammer out a trade agreement between textile merchants in Shalindra's duchy and buyers in the Domain. At the time of the murder, Rathen and Shalindra were sharing wine in the Privacy Chamber (Area 25), and they're not willing to divulge the details of their meeting in order to have an alibi, unless forced to do so to absolve themselves. Rathen came to Darkstar expecting an extended stay, determined to remain here until he worked out a deal with Shalindra. As a result, he has many trunks, valises, and bags of personal effects in his room. He considers himself above the PCs' grubby little investigation and doesn't permit them to search his belongings unless they're able to convince Lady Zan to speak with him first. His parcels contain a large amount of traveling gear, as well as four bottles of very rare wine (50 gp each) and a silver tea service (45 gp). Under no circumstances does he allow anyone to peruse his business journals.

Rathen, Male Human Exp7: CR 6; SZ M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 7d6; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; BAB/Grp +5/+5; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, +2 rapier, 18-20/x2), or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); Full Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, +2 rapier, 18-20/x2), or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); AL N; SV Fort +2, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 14.

Skills: Appraise +12, Craft (gemcutting) +6, Disable Device +5, Forgery +9, Hide +7, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +2, Perform (storytelling) +10, Profession (merchant) +10, Sense Motive +13, Spot +2, Survival +10, Use Magic Device +8, Use Rope +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Martial Weapon Proficiency (rapier), Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Sense Motive).

Possessions: 6 pearls (50 gp each), light crossbow, 20 light bolts, +2 rapier, *potion of cure light wounds* (x2).

Personality: Rathen is a 50-year-old human merchant with absolutely no interest in the PCs or their investigation. He cares only for his business, which hangs perilously close to bankruptcy. He must begin bringing in a higher quality of product, and he can't afford to pay Sivian Ulphar's corrupt harbormasters their usual import taxes. Rathen is very refined, and appears rather distracted; his mind is always on his business affairs. He knows that defying the Lucre King is dangerous work indeed.

19. Gandir's Room

Gandir is a dwarf with the misfortune of having been seen arguing with Yugin Vooshae the evening before the murder. During a game of cards in the taproom, a little too much of Eron's homemade mead caused Gandir to

take offense at something Yugin said. Several people overheard the heated dispute. Gandir's alibi is weak—he was by himself in his room—but he claims he couldn't have killed Yugin in such a manner, because of the difference in their heights. Yes, Gandir uses the club as his chosen weapon, and Yugin was slain with a bludgeon of some kind, but the cramped conditions of the privy and Yugin's size would have made it unlikely that Gandir was the perpetrator. Or so he claims.

Gandir, Male Dwarf (Mountain) Exp3: CR 2; SZ M (4 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 3d6+12; hp 20; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); BAB/Grp +2/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d6, club); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6, club); SQ darkvision (60 ft.), racial abilities; AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 19, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +4*, Bluff +6*, Concentration +5, Craft (stone carving) +3*, Disable Device +2*, Disguise +5*, Gather Information +3*, Intimidate +4*, Knowledge (agronomy) +5*, Knowledge (horses) +5*, Listen +3, Profession (groom) +4*, Spot +4, Tumble +8*. **Feats:** Alertness, Skill Focus (Tumble).

Note: * denotes a chosen class skill.

Possessions: 42 gp, heirloom masterwork club, backpack full of groom's tools.

Personality: Gandir is very defensive. As the only dwarf in the inn at the time of the homicide, he feels outnumbered, and soon begins complaining of the PCs' prejudiced attitudes, regardless of how politely they treat him. Gandir is not a likable fellow.

20. Sareth's Room

Sareth is one of Leopold's two disciples. He is a half-fanatically loyal to the cause of Quooembla. Once the mace is found in the well, Sareth is very vocal in his belief that the duplicitous Toomba is responsible for Yugin's death. Sareth backs up his words with force of arms. He was playing cards in Laranger's room when Yugin was murdered.

Sareth, Male Half-Elf Clr1 (Quooembla): CR 1; SZ M (4 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 1d8+1; hp 9; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; BAB/Grp +0/+1; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, masterwork light mace); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, masterwork light mace); SQ generate protective ward (1 hour/day), low-light vision, racial abilities, spontaneous casting, turn undead, use arcane devices; AL NG; SV Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14.

Skills: Concentration +3, Diplomacy +3, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +3, Perform (lute) +3, Search +3, Spellcraft +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Great Fortitude.

Divine Spells Prepared (3/2; save DC 12 + spell level): 0—*detect poison, guidance, light*; 1st—*magic stone, obscuring mist*.

Domain Spells (Magic, Protection): 1st—*sanctuary*.

Possessions: 12 gp, masterwork light mace, holy items.

Personality: Sareth is a true believer. He has unswerving faith in Quooembla and Leopold, and goes to any length to defend them. He is so single-minded that it is nearly impossible to draw him into a discussion that

doesn't involve his religion. His only other interest lies in the equestrian arts.

21. Laranger's Room

Laranger is the second of Leopold's two disciples. He is older than Sareth, and somewhat wiser. Though he firmly believes that Toomba has something to do with Yugin's death, he isn't as vehement in his argument. Interestingly enough, Laranger lost the use of his right arm in a climbing accident when he was young. He was here in his room, losing at cards to Sareth, when Yugin was killed.

Laranger, Male Human Clr3: CR 3; SZ M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 3d8+6; hp 30; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); BAB/Grp +2/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, +2 *light mace*); Full Atk +6 melee (1d6+4, +2 *light mace*); ALNG; SV Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 15.

Skills: Concentration +8, Craft (calligraphy) +2, Heal +5, Listen +4, Profession (bookkeeper) +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +3. **Feats:** Dodge, Heighten Spell, Improved Initiative.

Divine Spells Prepared (4/3/2; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—create water (x2), light, virtue; 1st—bless water, command, magic weapon; 2nd—speak with animals.

Domain Spells (Magic, Strength): 1st—endure elements; 2nd—identify.

Possessions: 3 sapphires (20 gp each), +2 *light mace*, holy items.

Personality: Though a follower of Quoembla, Laranger has tempered his faith with a veteran's wisdom; he doesn't force his theology down anyone's throat, and he's quite willing to discuss alternate religions with those who believe in them. He sees Sareth as a narrow-minded youth, and Leopold as an over-ambitious blowhard.

22. Tower Level Two

The spiral staircase leads to a landing that Eron uses much like an attic; he stores old papers here, receipts, and other records. The room is covered in dust. There is a heavy stone door here (Hardness 8; hp 35; Break [DC 30]) leading to what was once a wizard's library. The door is locked (Open Lock check [DC 18] to open), and only Eron has the key. The staircase continues up to Area 26, and down to Area 7.

The PCs must bring their own light source to pierce the darkness in the library. The newest of the books here is at least 200 years old, and most are written in an outdated form of Common that a modern reader can't always comprehend (Intelligence check [DC 18] to understand any particular passage). The books include several dozen volumes of history and geography. Be prepared to present the players with a brief summary of the history of your campaign world and its physical features. Likewise, for the volumes on theology and the biographies of important figures from the past. One volume is an account of the life of a poet-rogue named Navarro, whose name crops up again in Chapter Two.

If you don't want to unbalance your game by letting your players come across a hoard of spellbooks, then assume that Eron has removed these and sold them for a nice profit. Otherwise this room contains all manners of magical tomes, as well as books concerning the art and practice of summoning beings from other realms. In particular, one set of texts deals with the properties of light, and they include several "light-like" spells, ranging from *dancing lights* to *prismatic sphere*.

The PCs glean several important facts by perusing these books. The tower was built at some indeterminate time in the distant past. The wizard who most recently occupied the tower was named Azikeznon. The tower was overrun with monstrous vermin when Azikeznon came upon it some 200 years ago. The wizard rid the tower of these beasts and made it his home. He was fascinated with light and how it could be manipulated by magic to a variety of effects. Most importantly, Azikeznon theorized that light was the basis of most common life forms. He hoped to construct a machine that could harness the power of light. To this end, he spent his tenure here in the tower summoning extraplanar beings in hopes that they could provide him with the knowledge he sought. One of them directed him to a material known as nullium, a piece of protomatter that was one of many building blocks used during Creation. The books fully explain the nature of nullium. Refer to Area 1 for more information on this rare element. Azikeznon's notes confirm his receipt of a sample of nullium. It's up to the PCs to make the connection between nullium and the Star.

23. Martial Arts Training

This room is empty save for a bundle of mats rolled against the far wall. These are training mats for use during sparring sessions. The PCs might spend a lot of time here if they opt to study under the tutelage of Lady Zan. For more details, see Martial Arts Forms in the Appendix.

24. Eron and Lady Zan's Quarters

This room is the grand apartment of the inn's owners. The walls are freshly painted, the paneling of rich imported wood, and the framed art and crystal vases are testaments to the inn's success. Feel free to stock this room with any kind of wonders you see fit, as Eron and Lady Zan were both accomplished adventurers before they became innkeepers. They happily permit the PCs to search this room during the course of the investigation, though they keep a sharp eye on their possessions; after all, the Domain is a haven of thieves, and one can never be too careful. The art pieces are very valuable (at least 200 gp each).

If the PCs ask Eron and Lady Zan to account for themselves at the time of the murder, neither takes offense to the question, understanding that the heroes are only doing their job. Eron says he was asleep. Lady Zan says she had gone onto the roof and slipped into a fugue of deep and refreshing meditation.

A ladder in the back of the closet leads to the roof. Lady Zan often uses the roof as a place to seek the silence of her soul.

25. Privacy Chamber

Groups may rent this comfortable room when they seek to conduct meetings in an area secure from spies and magical eavesdropping. The fee is 5 gp per night. If the PCs think to ask Eron or Lady Zan, they learn that the room was indeed rented out at the time of the murder (Shalindra paid for the room, but that doesn't necessarily mean she actually set foot in it; perhaps she rented it just to provide herself with an alibi). The entire room is protected by a permanent magical field that blocks scrying and prohibits sound from leaving, thus also warding against mundane eavesdroppers. Shalindra and Rathen were sealing a business pact in this room at the time of the murder. Evidence to this fact is found under one of the leather chairs on a successful Search check (DC 12). The searcher discovers an elaborate earring made of onyx and platinum (50 gp). Observant PCs remember Shalindra was wearing only one earring the last time they saw her.

26. Tower Level Three

The wizard Azikeznon used this room as his summoning chamber. The floor is adorned with a conjuring circle, the walls painted with runes of protection and containment. Though it is likely that Eron has removed any magic items that Azikeznon left behind, the PCs could, at your option, discover a few unusual items here.

The staircase descends to Area 22. A ladder accesses Area 27.

27. Tower Level Four

The highest room of the tower is made almost entirely of windows. Dominating the room is a strange and elaborate mechanical contraption, a vastly complex assembly of wheels and tubes, with eight large lenses facing the eight windows. The design of this fantastic gearwork monstrosity is beyond the PCs' ken, but an Intelligence check [DC 18] permits them to discover a repository in the center of the device. This repository has an interior that is roughly spherical, as if it might be the womb for a globe-shaped item.

With the guidance of entities not of this world, Azikeznon constructed this apparatus shortly before he died. When activated, the machine fires a ray of intensely bright light through one of its eight lenses. In effect, the tower is a lighthouse. After the Star is placed in the repository, the machine may be engaged (Use Magic Device check [DC 18]). Once its gears are running, the tubes flush with liquid, and the machine is capable of accepting practically any light-based spell. The spell is cast into the machine itself. The nullium sucks the spell into the repository, breaking it down into its most basic elements. However, before the Star fully absorbs these elements, certain pieces of the machine intercept them, reorganize and amplify them, then fire

them out through the lens and the window to a point up to 5 miles away. Essentially, any arcane spell that you deem to have light as its basis (such as *color spray* or *hypnotic pattern*), may be cast into the machine and have its range greatly enhanced. The exact area of the spell's effect is up to you; it can affect whatever radius you deem appropriate, and its power may be enchanted in a similar fashion.

Concluding the Adventure

Give the PCs approximately half a game day to find the killer. Awakened at dawn by the screams, they have 12 hours before their window of opportunity closes. If they fail to learn the killer's identity by late that afternoon, you have several options for ending the adventure. If they accuse the wrong person, that NPC is taken into custody by a band of Trunchers and hauled off to stand trial; Branke gets away clean. Optionally, Lady Zan tires of the heroes' bumbling and takes matters into her own hands, in which case she too ends up dead or incapacitated. Finally, Branke might simply slip away from the inn unnoticed, with or without the Star.

If the PCs name Branke as the murderer and successfully subdue him, everyone at the inn breathes a collective sigh of relief. Eron and Lady Zan award the heroes with free rooms and meals for as long as they like (within reason). That night, a party is held in the taproom in honor of the PCs' accomplishment. If he survived the ordeal, Branke is handed off to a group of Trunchers and taken away for trial. The heroes later hear that he receives a life sentence to the penal ship *Pariah*. They encounter him there later, should you play through the events in Chapter Three. If Branke escapes, he becomes a recurring villain, to be used as you see fit. Regardless, the heroes receive a fond welcome whenever they return to Darkstar Hall. Award each PC a bonus of 200 XP if Branke is arrested, and 100 XP if Branke is accused but manages to slip away.

Continuing the Adventure

If the secret of nullium is revealed to the world at large, many of the Domain's powerful personages make a play to obtain it. Wealthy merchants, esteemed sages, and of course greedy thieves plot to secure the Star, either by hiring mercenaries or coming after it on their own. If Eron manages to keep the Star safe, the various belligerents attempt to locate samples elsewhere, including the Outer Planes. The PCs might be employed to protect the Star, or they might be hired to steal it, or to track down a suspected nullium deposit in the dreadful Forlorn Mountains. There is much adventure to be had and coin to be earned when the great nullium rush begins!

Another option for future quests could involve Shalindra and Rathen's attempt to secure a trade agreement, bringing them into direct conflict with Sivian Ulphar's organization. The PCs could work for or against either side of the issue.

Sculpting Fate

This adventure, designed for four PCs of 3rd level, takes place anywhere in the Domain you desire. You can insert it at any time in the campaign. Even though the action deals indirectly with the museum curator Elias Fellspar, the heroes never encounter him personally, so the adventure is still viable even if you've already played "The Soul of Vengeance," in which case Fellspar might very well be dead. If that's the case, his position as museum owner now belongs to someone else, and the events described here unfold virtually unchanged.

Adventure Background

As has been discussed, bandits roam the countryside throughout much of the Domain. One such group of brigands, led by the famous outlaw Sussun Li'argo, fell upon a common merchant convoy only an hour before the PCs arrive on the scene. Li'argo and his band killed five men, including three traders and two hired guards, and then carried off the wife and daughter of the caravan's leader. The leader of the caravan, a man named Rithero, was gravely wounded. Thinking him dead, the bandits rode off, carrying anything they thought they could use or sell. Li'argo led his minions to a cave he recently discovered, only to find the cave occupied—the creature inside attacked the bandits, killed several, and made captives of the rest.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs come upon the wrecked caravan and find Rithero on death's door. If they apply their healing arts to him, Rithero is grateful. But even if he dies in their arms, the trader lingers just long enough to tell what he knows: the despicable Sussun Li'argo was responsible for the ambush. Compelled by either altruism or the promise of a reward, the PCs seek out the bandits, but along the way they encounter a mysterious soothsayer who reads their future. The outcome of this fortune-telling actually determines the type of creature that awaits them in Li'argo's cave. The PCs find the cave, dispatch the creature, rescue Rithero's family, and return the stolen goods. Depending on the difficulty of the final encounter, Sussun Li'argo may ally himself with the heroes in hopes that, by doing so, the PCs let him go free.

On the Road

When the PCs are traveling, read the following when they crest the next hill.

A ruin lies at the base of the hill. Smoke roils from what appears to be a jumble of overturned carts and wagons. The bodies of men and horses lie scattered about the road, along with the pillaged remains of the goods this caravan once carried. Even as you watch, the first flurry of crows descends upon the carnage and begins picking through the bodies.

A successful Spot check (DC 15) reveals what seems to be a moving human figure in the middle of the wreckage. This is Rithero. The heroes are

3d20 yards away, and Rithero dies in 1d4 rounds unless given medical treatment.

Rithero, Male Human Com3: CR 2; SZM (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 3d4; hp 9 (currently 0); Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); BAB/Grp +1/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); Full Atk +3 melee (1d3+2 nonlethal, unarmed); AL NG; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 14, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +8, Handle Animal +10, Knowledge (trade routes) +6, Listen +8, Spot +8, Use Rope +11. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Handle Animal), Skill Focus (Use Rope).

What Rithero Knows: If the heroes are unable to heal Rithero, he holds on long enough to relate the gist of his melancholy tale. If fully revived, Rithero curses the outlaws and sets off after them on foot, with or without the PCs' help. Rithero says he was paid to deliver a load of chandlery supplies (blocks of wax, wicks, et cetera), along with a small crate of expensive sculptor's tools. He and his small convoy were en route to the city of Hawkmoon when bandits beset them upon. Rithero recognized the bandit leader as none other than Sussun Li'argo, notorious highwayman. The bounty on Li'argo currently stands at 400 gp, payable at the constabulary headquarters in Hawkmoon. Rithero beseeches the PCs for aid. If they refuse, he sets off alone in search of Li'argo and is never seen again. Later the PCs hear that his body was found on the road. If instead they agree to assist Rithero in rescuing his wife and



daughter, a successful Survival check (DC 15) indicates the hoofprints of the fleeing outlaws. A PC with the Track feat may follow these trail signs away from the road and into the sweeping grasslands.

Sussun Li'argo and his band of cutthroats can be anywhere on the map you desire; the PCs' quest could take anywhere from hours to days, in any type of terrain. It is suggested that the heroes encounter the Seeker after a hard ride (or walk) of at least 6d8 miles (3d8 on a successful Survival check (DC 12), as they find the swiftest route possible). For every five miles traveled, roll 1d12 and refer to the Wandering Monsters listed in the previous chapter to check for chance encounters. The PCs should make several Survival checks to keep on the right trail. Feel free to harry them with strong winds, rains, and other natural impediments. Regardless of the route they take, their hunt should prove an arduous one.

The Seeker

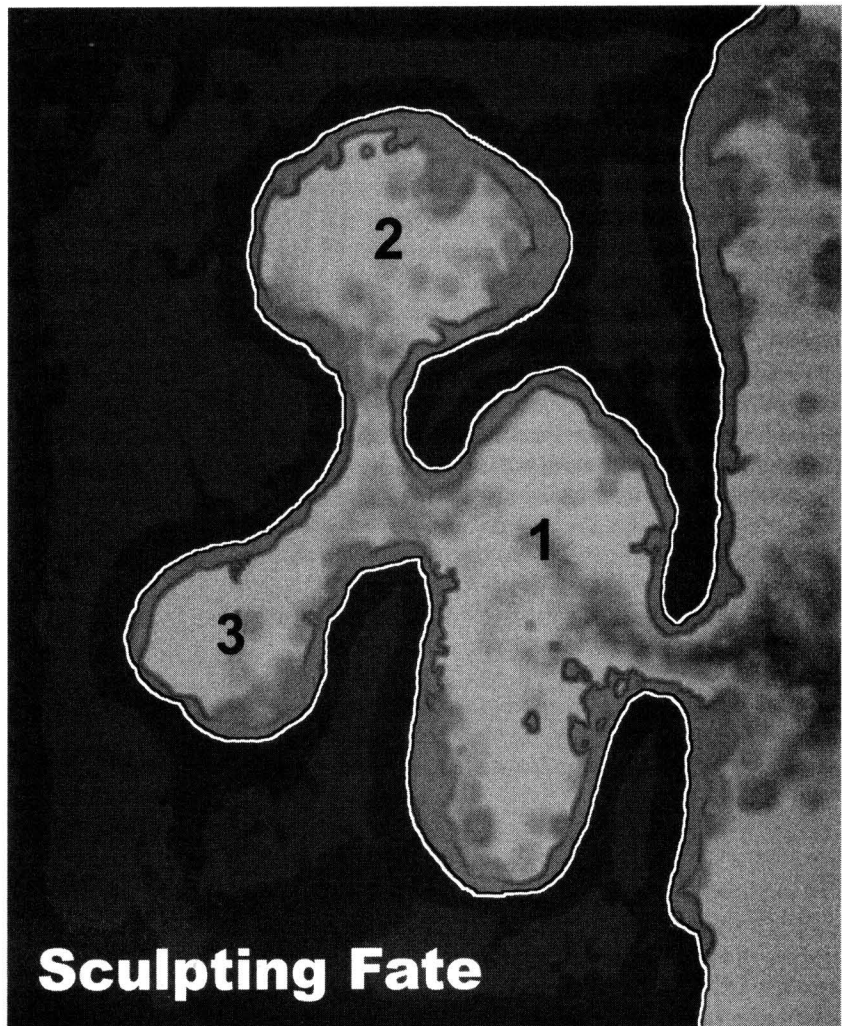
At some point during their charging pursuit of Li'argo's band, the PCs come across a strange sight: a wild-eyed, unwashed man is apparently milking a goat. The goat is black, with gleaming, ivory like horns. It wears a silver bell around its neck, and it's pleasantly chewing grass while the man hunkers down and works it for milk, which he directs into a battered wooden bucket.

This odd scene is no mirage. It is, in fact, precisely what it appears to be. Far from any civilized town, a dirty traveler has stopped to milk his goat. This man calls himself the Seeker, as he long ago forgot his real name. Vacillating between protracted periods of morose babble and fleeting moments of startling intelligence, the Seeker is something of a prophet. Indeed, he has been touched by the gods, made to walk the world as an infrequent seer. Most of the time he speaks only nonsense; his stated goal in life is to find a greener pasture in which his goat might enjoy finer grass. But the cloud of his dementia is sometimes pierced with random lightning bolts of clairvoyant insight. The Seeker experiences just such an epiphany shortly after the PCs arrive.

Play the Seeker like a deranged old man during the first few minutes of his conversation with the PCs. He answers questions with senseless answers, he lapses into muttered monologues, he rants, weeps, and shakes his grimy fists at the sky. The heroes learn only that his goat is named Quinby. The goat, though it may appear to be special, is quite mundane. The Seeker offers nothing useful whatsoever in way of information. He pokes the largest PC warrior in the chest, tries to

fondle a wizard's wands, scolds obvious rogues for their deviant behavior, and harangues clerics for following false gods. In every way he is a nuisance and a boor. Just when the PCs are about to ride off in frustration, the Seeker asks them in a reasonable, respectful voice to have a seat and heed his counsel. Suddenly the fog clears from his eyes. He beams with a new and frightening sense of purpose, as if his next words might very well alter the trajectory of human history.

Deciding Destiny: The Seeker invites the heroes to sit and lend an ear. He then commences to clearing away a patch of grass, exposing the bare earth beneath, talking all the while about the fickle hand of fate and how he feels its touch at the most unexpected times. Meanwhile, make a secret Wisdom check for each of the PCs. The hero who generates the highest roll on this check becomes the object of the Seeker's divinatory magic. Optionally, you may pick any PC you like, or roll for a random selection. The old man points at this PC, rattles off several curious aphorisms, and declares that this person should now state one simple question he or she would like to have answered concerning events of the near future. Refer to the divine spell *divination* for rules on adjudicating the Seeker's power. Once the question is stated, the Seeker casts a handful of rune-engraved rocks onto the patch of earth. After several seconds of quiet study, he provides the PC with an answer appropriate to *divination*. This is the perfect chance for you to introduce a vital piece of information concerning events in your campaign world.



LAMENTATION OF THIEVES

Once this first bit of prophesying is complete, the Seeker turns all five stones facedown and asks a second individual to picture in his mind the object of his current quest. As soon as the PC confirms that he is visualizing Sussun Li'argo, Rithero's family, or the stolen supplies, the Seeker instructs him to select one of the stones. These stones are depicted as a Player's Handout, and should be cut out or photocopied for use in the soothsaying. The image on the stone decides what foe the PCs meet in the upcoming encounter. Spread the "stones" face-down on the gaming table and have the player select one, then refer to the following table:

Spider: "Avoid the webs of danger." The creature in Li'argo's cave is an aranea.

Web: "Beware ensnarement from the darkness." The creature in Li'argo's cave is an ettercap.

Wing: "The song of the sky shall tempt you." The creature in Li'argo's cave is a harpy.

Horn: "The hoof shall trample and the horn impale." The creature in Li'argo's cave is a minotaur.

Fang: "Infernal servants beset you." The creature in Li'argo's cave is a quasit.

The Seeker relates the information in quotation marks, above. He does not know what type of creature guards the cave; that information is for you alone. Once the reading is complete, the Seeker begins to ramble incoherently, talking more to his goat than anyone else. Nothing the PCs can do short of casting *wish* or *miracle* can restore the Seeker to his senses; he is an instrument of higher powers, and best left to his own inexplicable destiny.

Armed with the Seeker's insights, the heroes set off in search of Li'argo's cave, using periodic Survival checks to find their way. Again, the trip may be as long as you desire, placed within any type of terrain. Use the Wandering Monster table as necessary. When the PCs finally come upon the hideout, refer to the map entitled "Sculpting Fate."

1. The Bloodbath (EL4)

Obviously a battle was very recently fought in this low-ceilinged cavern. Two or three human corpses are strewn about in varying degrees of dismemberment. It's up to you to tailor the description of the carnage according to the type of creature that dwells here. For example, if the Seeker's augury indicated an aranea, then the corpses are covered in sticky webs. If, however, a harpy is the chosen foe, the bodies bear claw and teeth marks.

When the PCs arrive, the creature is moments away from slaying Sussun Li'argo, who is tied to a wooden pole in the middle of the cave. The creature attacks the heroes immediately, and Li'argo calls out for them to cut him loose, promising to aid them in their efforts to kill the monster. Li'argo remains true to his word, doing what he can to defeat the creature, but making a desperate run for freedom as soon as the battle is over. He attempts to mount one of the PCs' horses and head off into the hills. He fights if they pursue him, but surrenders if he falls to 4 hit points or less.

Sussun Li'argo, Male Human Rog4: CR 4; SZ M (6 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 4d6+4; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); BAB/Grp +3/+2; Atk +2 melee; Full Atk +2 melee; SA sneak attack (+2d6); SQ evasion, trapfinding, trapsense (+1), un-

canny dodge; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 9, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Appraise +7, Balance +7, Climb +5, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +1, Swim +3, Tumble +7, Use Magic Device +3, Use Rope +6. **Feats:** Iron Will, Run, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Aranea: CR 4; hp 19; see the MM.

Ettercap: CR 4; hp 27; see the MM.

Harpy: CR 4; hp 31; see the MM.

Minotaur: CR 4; hp 39; see the MM.

Quasit: CR 3; hp 22; see the MM.

2. The Lair

The creature sleeps here. The cave stinks and is strewn with refuse appropriate to the creature's type.

Treasure: 2,080 sp in burlap sacks and three wooden crates of sculptor's tools (each crate weighs 40 lbs.); furthermore, searching through the mess (Search check [DC 15]) reveals a *wand of cure light wounds* (5 charges), and Li'argo's +2 *morningstar*.

3. The Prisoners

Rithero's wife and daughter are tied up in the room, soon to be meals or playthings for the creature. Their names are Miskia and Velendria, respectively. Consider their statistics to be those of 1st-level commoners. They are quite scared, but more or less in good health.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs' primary goal is to rescue Rithero's family. This is worth an additional 100 XP each. Secondly, they should see to the return of the stolen sculpting equipment (50 XP each). Rithero and his family are eternally grateful, though they can offer little in the way of monetary compensation. However, Rithero becomes a solid contact, to be used in the future as you see fit. If the heroes capture Sussun Li'argo and present him to the proper authorities at Hawkmoon, they receive a reward of 400 gp for their efforts (75 XP each). They also have the chance to meet Elias Fellspar, if they see that his supplies are safely delivered. Fellspar thanks them for their efforts on his behalf and gives them each a free pass to view the museum exhibits. Refer to Chapter Three for more information on Fellspar and his diabolical museum.

Continuing the Adventure

If Sussun Li'argo escapes, he returns later in the heroes' careers, either to rob them or to ally himself with them, depending on how they treated him. If he is incarcerated, he eventually escapes and confronts the PCs; again, his attitude depends upon the circumstances of his capture. If the PCs deliver the tools safely to Elias Fellspar's doorstep, the old museum curator calls upon them later for other small but dangerous jobs, such as guarding caravans and collecting rare curios for his House of Wax. This gives them a chance to get to know Fellspar, so that they are entirely comfortable with him by the time they are high enough level to face the challenges found in Chapter Three.

A Scent of Evil

Though this scenario takes place in the city of Swordport, you may relocate it to any city in the Domain. It is best suited for four PCs of 4th level.

Adventure Background

A deadly stew is brewing under the city of Swordport. Winding beneath the city streets is the town's antiquated sewer system, and occupying a certain corner of these muck-encrusted avenues is a human priest named Oojisho. Driven to near madness by dreams of toxicological mayhem, Oojisho is preparing to unleash a catastrophe upon the unsuspecting citizenry above. Oojisho is a member of a clandestine organization known as the Murk Traders. As an elite priest of the ooze-demon Juiblex, Oojisho is using his talents to spearhead the Murk Traders' latest plot: the befouling of the Swordport water supply and the eventual release of a plague agent on the coast.

Their noses lead the heroes into this scheme quite literally. A passerby smells something putrid coming from a clogged sewer drain, most likely the remnants of a wererat nest recently cleared out by the city militia. Probing the cistern system, the PCs encounter an alarming number of oozes, mosses, and jellies, and perhaps fall prey to a gelatinous cube which Oojisho keeps as a pet at the bottom of a septic reservoir. If they investigate too closely, Oojisho begins to fear discovery and promptly attacks.

Swordport (large town): Conventional; AL LN; 3,000-gp limit; Assets 427,000 gp; Population 3,855; Mixed (human 85%, dwarf 9%, gnome 2%, halfling 1%, elf 1%, half-elf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Oro Gulina, male dwarf Rng7 (head of the town oligarchy).

Important Characters: Vindis Nelgaunt, male human Rog10 (Sivian Ulphar's agent, posing as the dockmaster), Gabriel the Unbending, male human Ftr7 (captain of the guard), Lady Janil, female half-elf Rog4 (guildmistress of brothels)

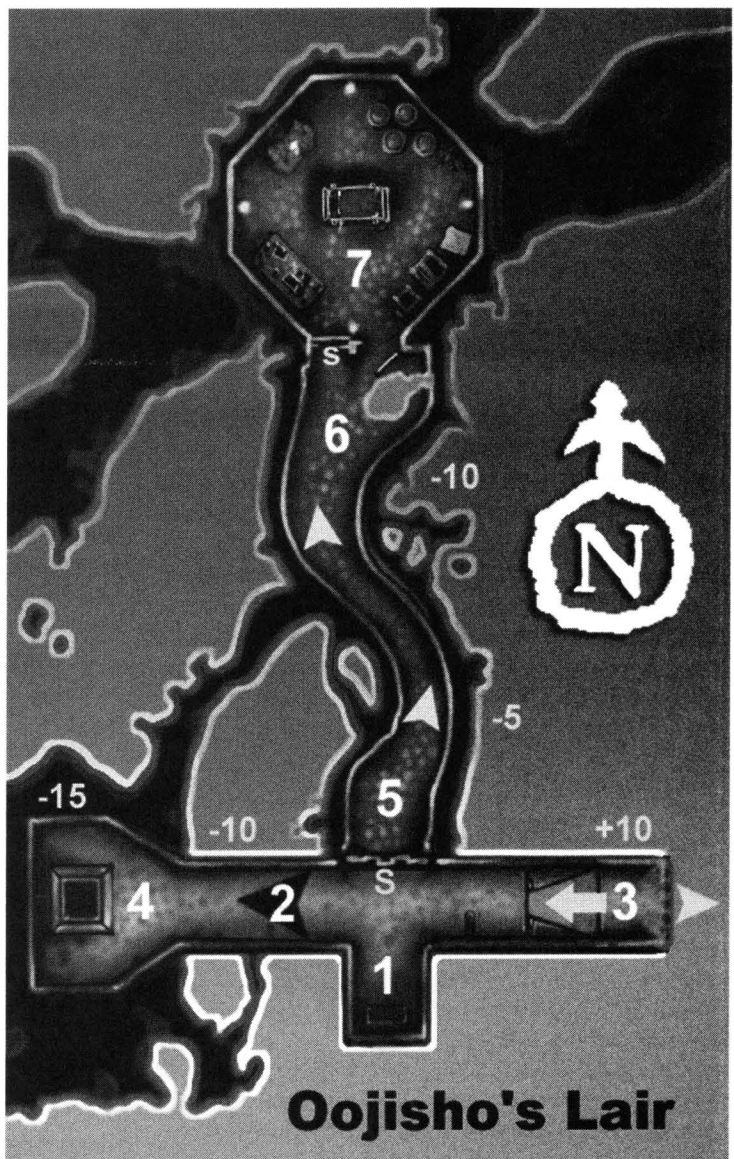
Others: Town guards, War2 (x 50); Com1 (x 3,801).

Notes: Swordport is a rollicking coastal city, the gateway to the Moonsilver Sea. It is the second most important urban area in the Domain, a natural rival to Hawkmoon. Intrigue between the two cities is rich.

Character Hooks

Several methods exist for embroiling the player characters in Oojisho's machinations, depending on the nature of the campaign:

- One of the PCs smells something unnatural emanating from a nearby sewer grate. This is the easiest means of inserting the heroes into the adventure. A little legwork



on their part uncovers news of a wererat nest recently cleaned out by the Trunchers. By the smell of things down there, the exterminators may have missed a rat or two.

- The heroes are entreated by a local merchant to solve the riddle of a mysterious scent lingering behind his shop and driving away his patrons. He relates the story of the wererat infestation, and warns the PCs to proceed into the depths with caution. He's willing to pay each character 50 gp if they can prevent his customers from avoiding him on account of the stench.
- A local sage has found evidence of possible water contamination and either hires or begs the heroes to investigate. He requires a large water sample from a certain cistern.

Keyed Locations

1. Sewer Entrance

Other than Oojisho's private quarters (Area 7), there are no sources of illumination in any of the sewer cham-

bers. The heroes must provide their own light. When they reach the bottom of the ladder, read or paraphrase the following:

The walls of this sewage tunnel are lined in aging, moss-encrusted stone. The air is heavy with moisture, and the sound of dripping water echoes down the passages that lead both east and west. The ceiling is a mere six feet high. The stones which comprise the floor are slippery, and footing is made even more dangerous by a shallow stream of wastewater which gurgles down the center of the hall, running from east to west and giving off a terrible stink. A few feet down the eastern corridor, a wooden lever is mounted halfway up the wall.

The characters stand in a secondary runoff tunnel of the city's main sewer network. When water reaches a certain level in the pipes, the overflow passes through the bars (Area 3) and runs down the passage to the cistern (Area 4). This allows excess waste to collect in the cistern, preventing clogged pipes and eventual flooding. The smell of feces is so powerful here that anyone who spends more than 10 minutes exploring must make a Constitution check (DC 15) to keep from becoming nauseous (-2 to all attack rolls and ability checks until the character breathes fresh air for a full hour).

Characters with the ability to detect sliding walls and/or changes in elevation note the slight gradation in the angle of the floor. This angle becomes more pronounced as the heroes near Areas 2 and 3.

The lever on the wall serves two purposes. Pulling the lever causes a stone barrier to slide across the grate at Area 3, stopping the flow of water; engaging the barrier is necessary if the heroes are to investigate the trapdoor in the bottom of the cistern (see Area 4). Additionally, Oojisho has rigged the lever to a gong hidden in a hollow space in the wall. Anyone pulling the lever sounds the gong and alerts Oojisho to their presence. The Murk Trader promptly prepares an appropriate greeting for the heroes. The gong's activation device can be detected with a successful Search check (DC 25) and disarmed with a successful Disable Device attempt (DC 20).

2. Sloping Passage

It doesn't take a dwarf to tell that this part of the hallway definitely slants downward. The stone floor is slippery enough to force a Dexterity check (DC 15) from anyone who tries to navigate it normally; anyone who fails to approach this area with caution must make an immediate check or go sliding headlong into the cistern at Area 4.

3. Sewer Runoff

A set of rusty bars separates this area from Swordport's main sewer pipes. Unless the heroes engage the stone-work barrier, a shallow stream of water pours over the rim of the channel on the far side of the bars, running toward

the cistern at Area 4. The bars (Hardness 10, hp 30) themselves are secured to the wall by an ancient padlock (Hardness 10, hp 5) that has long since rusted into impregnability; it cannot be picked. Beyond them lies the labyrinthine expanse of the city's sewer network, a rat's nest of crisscrossing passageways and unpredictable switchbacks. Detail this area as necessary.

4. Cistern (EL 6)

The transparent nature of the gelatinous cube which lairs here renders it effectively invisible to anyone looking down into this limestone shaft from above (Spot check [DC 18] to notice the cube). If the gate at Area 2 remains open, water drains into the shaft and trickles down the sides within inches of the gelatinous cube, collecting on the bottom of the cistern. The murky water maintains a depth of about six inches at the cistern's bottom due to a series of tiny drainage holes. The water is black enough to conceal the trapdoor in the center of the floor. The PCs can only find the door by physically searching the floor beneath the gunk—not a pleasant prospect, considering the unidentifiable chunks floating in this fetid stew—or by throwing the lever at Area 1 and arresting the water flow, consequently revealing the door. Climbing down the slippery walls is a tricky proposition (Climb check [DC 18]).

Creature: The gelatinous cube all but fills the final 10 feet of the cistern, its bulk pressed against the sides of the pit. A small open space underneath the creature allows the sewage to collect, concealing the trapdoor. Anyone sliding into the cistern from Area 2 plunges down 25 feet, landing squarely atop the gelatinous cube. The fall inflicts 1d6 points of damage, and the character is considered engulfed (see below). The difficulties of battling the cube are exacerbated by the fact that at least one of the PCs may be standing on top of it. Anyone who climbs down the shaft unaware of the monster's presence may find themselves engulfed. Sounds of combat in the cistern are sure to rouse Oojisho's attention. The cube cannot climb out of the cistern.

Gelatinous Cube: CR 3; hp 54; see the MM.

Once the gelatinous cube has been dispatched, the heroes may probe the floor beneath the muck. A successful Search check (DC 12) reveals the trapdoor. Opening the trapdoor exposes the ghouls lying below.

Creature: Below the trapdoor is the source of the virulent smell which pervades the city streets above. Four mutilated corpses have been stuffed down here, the leftovers of Oojisho's experiments in toxicology. The Murk Trader has harvested various tissue samples from these moldering bodies, using them to test the efficacy of his plague agent. The unholy circumstances surrounding the deaths of these former citizens of Swordport corrupted the normal process of spiritual transfiguration. Since the time of their deaths, these four bodies have siphoned enough dark power from the Lower Planes to become ghouls. Remember that the PCs may be caught flat-footed by the ghouls when they

pull open the trapdoor. The stomach-twisting smell of the ghouls' decayed bodies is so intense that anyone within 10 feet must make a Constitution check (DC 15) to avoid suffering a -2 penalty on all attack rolls and ability checks. The nausea wears off after the character breathes fresh air for at least five full rounds.

Ghouls (4): CR 1; hp 14 each; see the **MM**.

Possessions: Though Oojisho stripped his victims of their belongings before depositing them here, he overlooked a silver locket bearing the inscription, "To my beloved Marsten. Wear this pendant and it shall keep you safe." The locket is worth 150 gp. See **Continuing the Adventure** for more information on the locket.

5. Winding Passage

This narrow passage descends 10 feet before reaching the entrance to Oojisho's chamber. Water drips from hairline cracks in the ceiling and runs in murky rivulets along the floor.

6. Hidden Entrance (EL 2)

The only visible door in this area is false, opening onto a stone wall. Anyone who opens this door activates a gas trap. A successful Search check (DC 20) reveals the secret door which leads to Oojisho's personal chamber.

Trap: Oojisho's experiments into biological contaminants led to the invention of an organic nerve gas that he has loaded into a special sac and hidden in the wall. Opening the false door causes the sac to expel the foul purple gas, enveloping everyone within five feet of the door. Failing the initial Fortitude save causes the temporary loss of 2d4 Constitution points, which return at the rate of one point per hour. Failing the second saving throw causes blindness as the result of severe damage to the tender tissue of the eyes. Blindness is permanent until magically healed.

Blindness Gas Trap: CR 3; magic device; location trigger; no reset; spell effect (*blindness*, 5th-level wizard, DC 13 Fort avoids); multiple targets (all within 10-ft.); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

7. Secret Shrine (EL 6)

This large, hexagonal room reeks of fungus and decay. Four torches in dented iron sconces reveal what appears to be a combination of sleeping chamber and work room. To the northwest is a bed made of soiled rags. A laboratory table stands to the southwest, while several large, sealed casks stand opposite them in the northeast. A blood-splattered altar dominates the center of the room. The walls are covered in moss and slime.



ALAMENTATION OF THIEVES

If he has been warned of the PCs' arrival, Oojisho hides under the pile of sleeping rags. He waits until one of the heroes begins to investigate the rags, then launches a surprise attack, trying to catch his prey flat-footed. Oojisho is armed with a strange weapon of his own creation. Made from a modified bellows, the weapon is filled with fluid which is sprayed through a nozzle at the target by squeezing the dual handles. Oojisho has filled the weapon with a living gray ooze.

Creatures: Oojisho uses his bellows for his initial attack, then discards the weapon and resorts to spellcasting. Once discharged from the bellows, the gray ooze attacks normally.

Oojisho, Male Human Clr4 (Jubilex): CR 4; SZ M (6-ft. 1-in. tall); HD 4d8+8; hp 26; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 chainmail); BAB/Gra +3/+2; Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (gray ooze, bellows, range 10 ft. up to 50 ft.); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, quarterstaff) or +3 ranged (gray ooze, bellows, range 10 ft. up to 50 ft.); SA bellows; SQ darkvision (60 ft.), disease immunity, poison immunity, rebuke undead, spontaneous casting; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +4, Will +5; Str 9, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 7.

Skills: Concentration +9, Craft (alchemy) +6, Craft (poison) +10, Heal +7, Knowledge (toxicology) +7, Listen +0, Spellcraft +10, Spot +0. **Feats:** Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bellows), Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative.

SA: First attack uses bellows filled with gray ooze (see below).

SQ: As a follower of Jubilex, Oojisho has been granted darkvision, as well as full immunity to all natural poisons and diseases.

Divine Spells Prepared (5/3/2; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*detect magic, guidance, cure minor wounds (x2), resistance*; 1st—*cause fear, doom, protection from law*; 2nd—*darkness, silence*.

Domain Spells (special - extra domain abilities included above): 1st—*obscuring mist*; 2nd—*fog cloud*.

Possessions: green and black chain mail armor, bellows, quarterstaff, bloodstone ring (75 gp), pouch containing 25 gp.

Gray Ooze: CR 4; hp 29; see the **MM**.

Treasure: The PCs may investigate the room after dealing with Oojisho. Hidden in the sleeping rags is a single piece of unworked alexandrite (300 gp), discovered on a successful Search check (DC 15). The worktable is cluttered with bottles, beakers, and other such equipment, valued at 200 gp if sold to an alchemist. One of the vials contains a dose of black adder venom, while a tightly sealed glass dish holds two doses of malys root paste. Refer to the section on Poisons in the **DMG** for details of these poisons. Also on the table are the raw ingredients for brewing a variety of toxins; at the DM's option, a PC with the Heal skill has a 50% chance of finding any particular herb here. On a successful Search check (DC 21), the heroes discover a sliding panel in the side of the altar. Hidden within the altar is the small cache that Oojisho has

accumulated: 400 gp, an alabaster statuette of Jubilex (150 gp), and a black-bladed dagger with a pommel cast in the shape of a skull. This is actually a *dagger of venom*. The Murk Trader's journal is also here, in which he writes of his experiments with human bodies and his plans to adulterate the Swordport water supply. Optionally, the journal contains specific information on the headquarters of the Murk Traders, should the DM decide to continue this storyline in the future.

Finally, unsealing one of the casks reveals 50 gallons of contaminated drinking water. Oojisho has infected each of these barrels with a plague agent that enters the body through contact with the skin. Anyone touching the befouled water must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or suffer severe chest cramps resulting in the loss of 2d4 Strength points. A second successful Fortitude save (DC 15) prevents an additional loss of 2d4 hit points. Anyone drinking this water must make the same saving throws, albeit at DC 20.

Continuing the Adventure

If the PCs are successful in cleaning out the sewers, they earn the gratitude of the city officials, forming alliances that might pave the way for future employment on behalf of Swordport. Additionally, Oojisho's journal contains vital information concerning the mysterious Murk Traders, an organization bent upon poisoning the world in order to make it habitable for their fell deity, so that he might one day swim up out of the infernal cesspool and finally lay claim to the Domain of Hawkmoon. Optionally, the book mentions the imprisonment of Jubilex's avatar within a distant mountain known as the Devil's Finger. Refer to the Necromancer Games module *Chaos Rising* for more information on the Slime Lord's current predicament.

An interesting adventure could develop if the PCs discovered the locket around the ghouls' neck in Area 4. In life, this man's name was Marsten. He was the beloved of a woman called Rayalia DeFae, who was said to be as beautiful as the dawn. That was one year ago. Since the day Marsten disappeared (he was assistant guildmaster of the Sewermen's Guild, killed one morning during a routine inspection of the city drainage system), Rayalia has become a recluse, locked away in her manor house. If the PCs inspect the locket, they find inscribed upon it in tiny letters the name of the craftsman who made it. If they track down and question the craftsman, they learn that the locket was custom made for a woman named DeFae. Asking around leads the heroes to Rayalia's dilapidated home; though once renowned for her elegant lawn parties, Rayalia no longer receives visitors. Though still shadowed with grief, Rayalia is grateful for the PCs' efforts and glad to know at last what become of her lover. Over the course of the next few weeks, she begins to draw from her malaise, until she one day resumes her place in society. Aware each PC a bonus of 300 XP.

Dark Sky Rising

Best suited for a group of four imaginative PCs of 5th level, this adventure offers the heroes a colorful, somewhat perilous interlude between their other, more important missions.

Adventure Background

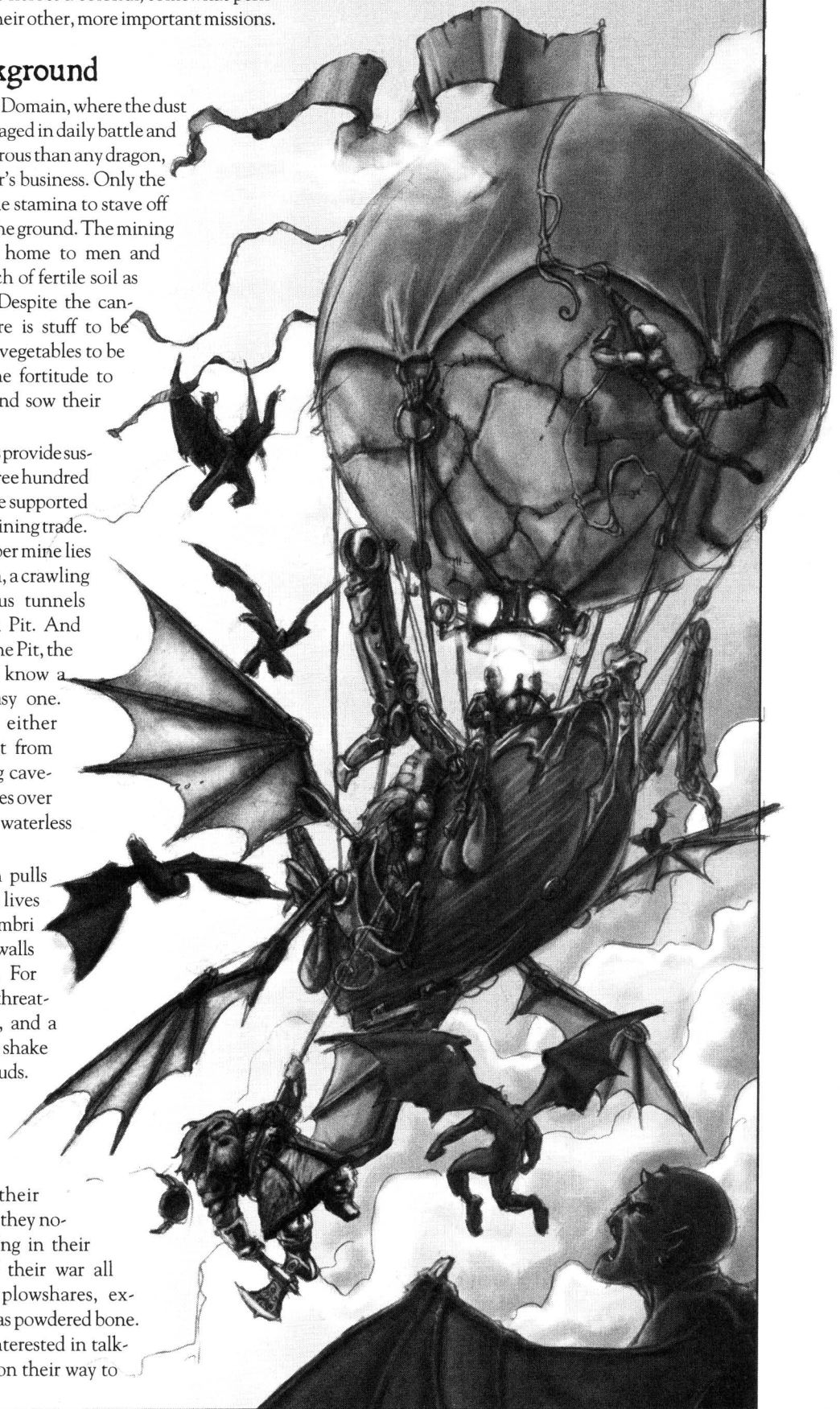
In the arid parts of the Domain, where the dust is a living beast to be engaged in daily battle and the weather more dangerous than any dragon, farming is an adventurer's business. Only the hardest of souls have the stamina to stave off the elements and work the ground. The mining town of Nathumbri is home to men and women who hold a patch of fertile soil as valuable as diamonds. Despite the cantankerous climate, there is stuff to be grown in the black soil, vegetables to be raised by those with the fortitude to turn the hard ground and sow their hopeful seeds.

These doughty farmers provide sustenance to the town's three hundred residents, all of whom are supported in some fashion by the mining trade. The region's largest copper mine lies a half-mile south of town, a crawling labyrinth of treacherous tunnels known as the Scorpion Pit. And thanks to the copper of the Pit, the denizens of Nathumbri know a good life, if not an easy one. Their days are spent either coughing the mine-dust from their lungs and avoiding cave-ins, or bending themselves over a plow and cursing the waterless sky.

The lodestone which pulls the adventurers into the lives of the people of Nathumbri emanates from the rustic walls of the Roughshod Inn. For the skies have gone dry, threatening to ruin the town, and a rainmaker has arrived to shake his dowsing rod at the clouds.

The Heroes Approach

As the PCs guide their thirsty horses into town, they notice the farmers struggling in their fields, the casualties of their war all around them: broken plowshares, exhausted oxen, soil as dry as powdered bone. None of the farmers is interested in talking. Nor are the miners on their way to



the shafts. Grubby and work-worn, the miners amble to the Scorpion Pit believing themselves to be only days from ruin. Nathumbri lies too far from the normal trade routes to expect regular shipments of food, so if the farmers can't produce, then entire families starve. The mood at the 'Shod is no livelier. Seeing the welcome sight of a drinking-house, the PCs most likely stop to wet their weary throats. Once inside, they see a homey place of dark wood and rich tobacco smells, of ready hospitality and neighborly cheer. Yet even this cheer is forced. The owners of the inn, Cadfry and Lynhild, see the fate of the town written in the dust which blows through the crack beneath their door. They greet the PCs with the best smiles and beds they have to offer, but it is evident their spirits are nearly broken. Everyone in town, it seems, suffers from the same malaise.

Everyone Save Pelopidas Skye.

Pelopidas Skye—gnomish inventor, storyteller, sailor of airships and keeper of dreams—has arrived in Nathumbri only hours ahead of the PCs, his colorful buckboard bowed with the weight of his wonderful balloon. After surveying the situation, Pelopidas immediately sets about his trade. He unloads his wagon, and with the help of a special magic item that reproduces a beholder's biological levitation gas, he inflates his fantastical bag. Cadfry and Lynhild stumble from the 'Shod to find the inflating balloon, rising lifelike from the ground, swelling into the sky like a haphazard dream. The canvas of the bag is a patchwork of color, inked with imponderable languages and calligraphic threadwork. Once the balloon is filled half an hour later—its gondola tugging against the cables which hold it captive to the ground—then Pelopidas announces his prospectus: in exchange for a minimal sum, he ascends to the heavens and tremble the clouds until they rain.

Nathumbri (village): Conventional; AL LG; 200-gp limit; Assets 8,550 gp; Population 846; Mixed (human 68%, dwarf 21%, gnome 7%, halfling 1%, elf 1%, half-elf 1%, half-orc 1%).

Authority Figures: Ranger Lord Ordri Ironboot, male human Rng5.

Important Characters: Zatmenye Detov, male human Com4 (merchant); Patia, female human Clr2 (Muir/healer); Callisto, male War4 (watchman); Ohja, male dwarf War2 (junior watchman); Cadfry and Lynhild, male and female human Exp5 (owners of the Roughshod Inn), Brutton, male dwarf Exp 4 (owner of the Scorpion Pit mine).

Others: Town guards, War1 (x10); Com1 (x828).

Up, Up, and Away... (EL7)

Pelopidas the gnome owns two magic items which make his enterprise possible. The first of these is a *bellows of beholder gas*, which manufactures an artificial form of the very gas which beholders produce to propel themselves above the ground. The second item is a large basket of *silver iodide dust*, which Pelopidas himself created in his alchemical lab. When tossed into a suitable patch of clouds, the *dust* produces rain in the area immediately below (refer to New Magic Items in the Appendix for more information). Armed with these two items, Pelopidas takes to the sky in front of

the gathered townsfolk, his balloon a fabulous banner against the clouds.

Halfway up the trouble begins.

Creatures: Unknown to the citizens of Nathumbri, their home is currently plagued by a nasty group of elemental air vermin, also known as dusters. These dusters entered the region from the Elemental Plane of Air through a vortex in the form of a dust devil. Being both scavengers and cowards, the dusters found the fare around the town plentiful and easily acquired; they've since grown fat off the labor and fear of the unsuspecting townsfolk. If allowed to remain, they'll be the doom of Nathumbri.

Mephits, Dust (4): CR 3; hp 13 each; see the MM.

Normally solitary, the dusters of Nathumbri have banded together for the good of the whole, having found themselves removed from their natural habitat and now dependent upon numbers for their continued survival. Aside from tearing holes in the fabric of the balloon itself, the dusters' most effective weapon is their personal zone of obscurity, which they've learned to use in concert with one another to the benefit of all.

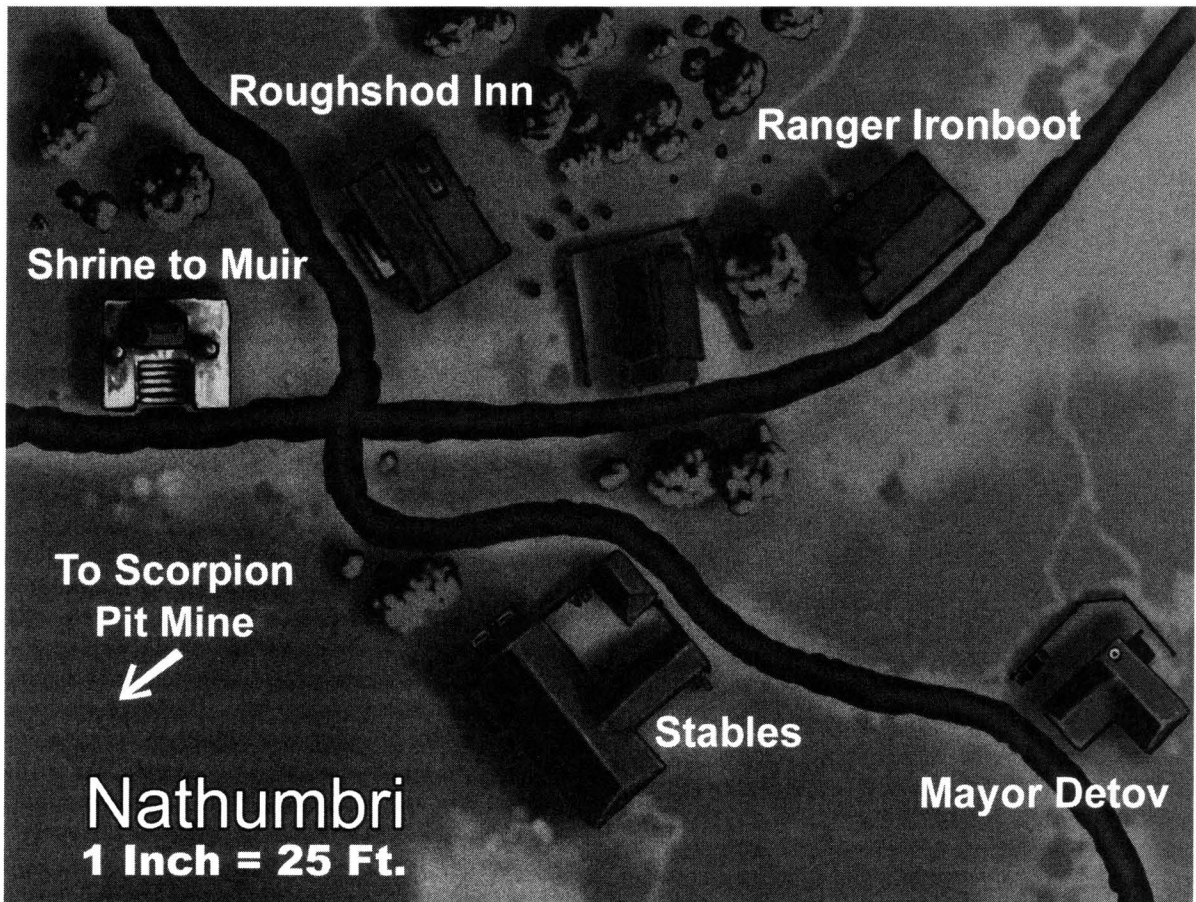
By setting his balloon adrift in the clouds, Pelopidas inadvertently intrudes upon the dusters' domain. Occupying a desolate crag not far away, the dusters notice the balloon's ponderous advance and fall upon it most greedily. They attack Pelopidas and his uncertain airship, hungry for whatever he might have on board. Their first action is to assault the airship with *wind wall*. From the ground, the PCs can make out few details; suddenly it seems as if the balloon is caught in a dusty gale, and Pelopidas begins flailing his arms madly about and the balloon rushes back to earth at a startling velocity.

Somehow Pelopidas manages to land without any undo bodily harm, toppling from the gondola and shouting about wind spirits. It takes a calm head and steady hand to console him, but even then, the gnome refuses to put himself again in harm's way. The town, he says, has to trust its fate to the gods.

Of course, the city fathers are quite desperate, willing still to pay 500 pieces of their favorite gold to anyone who can sprinkle the magic dust upon the clouds. And if he's asked, Pelopidas can be persuaded to permit the PCs to take his balloon into the sky... for a twenty percent cut of the profits.

Just Don't Look Down

Operating a balloon (Hardness 2, hp 40) is not so easy as it sounds. Accurate maneuvering of such a vehicle requires an appropriate skill, such as Handle Balloon or Profession (Balloon Handler). Barring this, any PC can successfully turn, dive, or ascend in the balloon by making an untrained skill check (DC 15), modified by Dexterity; the balloon is guided by the deployment of five bags of ballast which hang from the rim of the gondola, as well as by a line attached to the top of the balloon, permitting gas to be released for rapid course changes. The balloon moves vertically and horizontally at a speed of 20, with poor maneuverability (clumsy), and can be made to move any direction by tugging ropes which in turn open apertures at the bottom of the ballast bags, releasing sand and—at least in theory—altering the



trajectory of the balloon. As soon as the PCs ascend to a height of 500 feet, the pesky dusters cast *wind wall* at them and attack. They direct their sorties first against the PCs in the gondola and then, if necessary, against the balloon itself.

Keep in mind several factors when running balloon versus duster combat:

- The dusters' superior maneuverability provides them with a +2 bonus to their initiative rolls.
- The dusters prefer to swoop in, attack, and fly away before their adversaries can react; this makes it difficult for the PCs to estimate the exact number of enemies they face, and could provide a challenge for even a powerful party. They alternate between their breath weapon and *blur* in order to keep the heroes guessing.
- The dusters pull back if they lose more than half their hit points, but only for a few rounds while their fast healing ability regenerates their injuries. Then they fly back into the fray.
- When fighting from the balloon's basket in the midst of a hard wind, the PCs likely experience unusual combat modifiers, such as penalties for fighting while precariously balanced (–2), missile fire from a moving platform (–2), and any other unique factors the DM deems appropriate. The positions which the adventurers put themselves in during such a fray are impossible to predict, and the DM should not dissuade them from even so daring an act as climbing up onto the balloon itself, or

dangling from the ballast bags, or any other action of dubious wisdom.

Make this experience a wild and memorable one for the PCs, with perilous aerial acrobatics, dive-bombing elementals, and all manners of precarious stunts, unexpected wind gusts, and clever enemy combat tactics. The dusters tear holes in the undercarriage of the gondola, chew through guy-wires, and generally make the party's ride as dangerous as possible. For every 4 hp of damage the dusters deliver to the balloon itself, 50 feet of altitude is lost as more precious gas escapes. The PCs might soon find themselves taking a "crash" course in emergency balloon landing!

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs are forced to land with a battered balloon while the dusters still hold the sky, then the plaguing of Nathumbri continues unchecked, until another means can be found to deal with this unusual threat. Perhaps the adventurers establish some sort of ground defense, lying in wait for the next duster invasion. On the other hand, if the dusters are killed or flee the area, then the PCs are victorious and have secured the future of Nathumbri. All that remains is to put the balloon back in the sky, fertilize the clouds, and wait for the rain. Handshakes and good ale are generously administered.

Pelopidas offers formal balloon lessons for any who desire such training, and that night's meals at the Roughshod Inn are on the house. Whatever the outcome of the struggle, the rainmaking adventurers are certain to be glad to once again have the safety of the ground beneath them!

Chapter Two: Caves and The Hidden Vale

Through the Crimson Caves

Best suited for four PCs of 9th level, this storyline involves an extended wilderness exploration. The action takes place in an area of mountain-enclosed hinterlands called the Frostfields, a remote region of bleak wastes, flesh-rending temperatures, and indescribable solitude.

Adventure Background

During his rise, as the Domain's most powerful and influential thief, Sivian Ulphar the Lucre King brought about the deaths of many potential rivals, including an accomplished burglar named Navarro. Upon Navarro's death, the Domain of Hawkmoon lost one of its greatest poets. The enigmatic Navarro was both a thief and a lyricist. Upon his death, only one piece of his work remained unpublished; Navarro died before he could deliver the *Nine Plus One Paragraphs* to his publishers in Hawkmoon. After cremating their master's body, Navarro's apprentice thieves divided the text's ten chapters among themselves. These chapters, known as the Paragraphs Poetica, have since passed through many hands and been the objects of countless quests.

The Paragraphs deal with such esoterica as philosophy and theology, also containing numerous sketches of traps and ways to disable them. They allude to the resting-places of various rare and wondrous items that Navarro encountered during his long career as a thief. In one of the Paragraphs is inscribed the true name of a demon that calls itself Kinazbo. An arctic ranger named Arak once owned this particular Paragraph, but a year ago he ventured through the Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks to the mysterious Frostfields, and was never seen again. The Frostfields are a desolate, wintry region, bearing one incredibly strange geographical feature: at the foot of the mountains is a canyon where all the ice is as red as if it were carved from a ruby; the river that courses through the canyon is the color of blood.

Adventure Synopsis

The adventure begins with the PCs in pursuit of the Paragraph Poetica that once belonged to the ranger Arak, a quest which leads them across the wastes of the Frostfields to a long-forgotten cavern complex and the headwaters of a strange crimson river—Arak's last known destination. The caves themselves are built into the walls of a vast and mysterious gorge known as the Rubicund Chasm, at the bottom of which flows a river of icy red water. On the far side of the caverns, the heroes locate the river's headwaters in a mystical land called Shilmagar.

Shilmagar is a verdant and magical place lit by an artificial sun and moon that shine from within a special tower. With a little exploration, the heroes discover the secret of the valley: an otherworldly race of sentient

What are the Skree?

The Skree are scholars hailing from a far-off planet. There is a race of learned creatures, existing only to further themselves along the path toward enlightenment. In appearance, they resemble giant beetles with glistening carapaces. The Skree are driven by an intense and sometimes dangerous curiosity. Their experimentation in magic and mechanics has led to both brilliant discoveries and horrific disasters. They are a benign race, pacifists by nature, cooperating with any beings they encounter in order to gain a more complete understanding of the multiverse.

beetles who call themselves the Skree created this realm to inhabit when their own grew too cold to support life. One of the byproducts of their potent arcane efforts is the river that colored the legendary Rubicund Chasm. The Skree's own powerful magic proved their undoing, however, all but wiping them off the face of the world. While exploring the Skree towers, the PCs help protect a tribe of beetle-worshipping bugbears from extinction at the hands of a massive goblin clan. They may also plunder the forgotten Skree city for its treasures, and they have a chance to acquire bits of lore concerning the vanished Skree, perhaps giving that lost race a second chance at life.

Of course, no one knows of the Skree. Most folk who are aware of the Rubicund Chasm avoid it unconditionally, believing it to be the birthing place of demons. If the heroes ask around before setting off in search of the red river, they're able to find a few battle-hardened adventurers in the region of the Igdanvor Forest that have seen the Chasm, but never ventured into it. Speculation abounds as to the Chasm's origins, each rumor more fabulous than the last.

Character Hooks

Several means exist for involving the PCs in this scenario:

- The heroes' homeland is under siege from a demon called Kinazbo. The lost Paragraph Poetica contains, among other things, Kinazbo's true name. Discovering this name helps the heroes gain ascendancy over the demon and save their home from being overwhelmed by the creature's dread horde.
- A thief working for Sivian Ulphar employs the PCs to locate the Paragraph, in which is contained a sketched map of a certain vault or treasury. Optionally, a wizard hires the PCs to find the Paragraph, which supposedly holds the secret to a rare spell formula.
- The heroes require a certain magical item, spell, or chart, and only the Paragraph Poetica can lead them to what they desire.

Regardless of the method used for embroiling the heroes in this adventure, they should be given means of locating the Rubicund Chasm, as the Frostfields are a featureless barren offering no landmarks for the rare traveler to gauge his progress. If under the employ of an NPC, the party is provided with a map, indicating the location of a cave entrance in the Chasm a few miles from the southern edge of the ice field as depicted on the Domain of Hawkmoon overland map. If seeking the Paragraph Poetica of their own accord, the PCs acquire a map in any fashion the DM desires.

Southward Bound

Unless the PCs possess magical means of travel, the trip to the Frostfields through the Scar-in-the-Sky should be a lengthy and arduous one. Though the exact details of such a journey are not detailed here, you should take the time to develop a series of relevant encounters, keeping in mind the feral and highly dangerous nature of the mountains. Encounters within these peaks can become an adventure unto themselves.

Read or paraphrase the following text when the heroes eventually reach the ice field.

You stand on the edge of a white wasteland. The Frostfields are an arctic desert, the ferocity of the wind equaled in intensity only by the unimaginable depths of the cold. Most of the ground is covered by several feet of solid ice, ranging in color from ash-gray to blinding white. Ugly, colorless plants poke up from the rare patches of exposed earth, their thorny stems coated with hoarfrost. The land itself is featureless and flat until encountering the mountains that surround it on all sides.

The weather is the PCs' immediate foe. Anyone with the temerity to strike out unprepared across the ice is subject to the effects of the extreme temperature, which drains the body of 1 Constitution point per hour, affecting even those characters bundled up in cold-weather gear. Only the direct warmth of fire or magic prevents this loss of Constitution points. Unprotected characters lose 2 Constitution points per hour, as well as 2 points of Strength. If either ability score reaches 0, the character is debilitated and slips into hypothermia, losing an additional point per round until he or she freezes to death at -10.

Anyone with exposed flesh must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) once per hour. Failure means the character has contracted frostbite, suffering 1d6 hit points of damage. At the DM's option, frostbite renders that area of the body numb and immobile until sufficiently warmed. Horses and other sturdy mounts face the same effects, albeit twice as slowly. Wise PCs frequently break for camp, building a fire which returns lost points at the rate of 1 per 20 minutes.

The wind plays havoc on combat, imposing a -4 penalty on all missile fire. Additionally, for every two miles the heroes journey across the ice, they stand a chance of encountering one of the doughty denizens of this brutal realm. Roll 1d12 and consult the following table. On any result of 9 or higher, no encounter occurs. On a roll of 1-

8, apply the suggested encounter or insert one of your own. Statistics for these monsters appear in the *MM*.

1d12	Monster	# Appearing	EL
1-2	Polar Bears	2	6
3-4	Frost Worm	1	12
6-6	Winter Wolves	2	7
7-8	Frost Giant	1	9

Edge of a Red Abyss

Plunging down 400 feet into the frozen earth and spanning a distance of no less than 300 feet is a dangerous ravine known as the Rubicund Chasm. With walls of sheer ice broken intermittently by wind-carved cliffs, the Chasm poses a serious challenge to the most experienced mountaineer. Rubicund Chasm is one of the unexplained wonders of the Frostfields, as its walls are made of strange red ice, as if stained with blood. The redness permeates all the ice around the mighty flume, giving no clue as to how it came to exist. The walls are also extremely slippery, and the occasional handhold is generally a blade of ice honed to a fine edge by the whetstone of the wind.

However, the Chasm isn't the only wondrous sight. A fantastic river of crimson water runs through the canyon. The river is sluggish, clogged with hunks of red ice—like blood clots. It emerges from a tunnel in the east and oozes slowly westward like a great bleeding wound. The river originates in the fabulous glen called Shilmagar. However, because it runs underground, following the river to the glen is nearly impossible. Unless the PCs possess extraordinary means of protecting themselves from the heart-stopping temperature of the water, not to mention breathing during the extensive trip through the water-filled passage, they are forced to follow the river via the caverns.

Barely visible in the Chasm's northern face (opposite the PCs), about 380 feet down, where the river emerges from the ground, is a small cave entrance (Spot check [DC 20] to recognize). The ranger Arak was last seen striking off into the darkness of this cave. Spanning the river in front of the cave is a rickety rope bridge. The rope has been dyed red and is thus invisible against the canyon walls and the river below. In order to reach the bottom of the gorge, cross the bridge, and eventually enter the cave, the heroes may use either magical or mundane means of travel, although the latter involves a harrowing series of ability and skill checks as ropes, crampons, ice axes, and belaying lines are used to facilitate the 400-foot descent to the south end of the rope bridge. Simply climbing down the wall unaided is difficult, if not altogether impossible. After making a Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) to find an area with sufficient handholds, four successful Climb checks (DC 26) permit the PC to reach the bridge. Without handholds to provide purchase, four Climb checks (DC 35) are needed.

If the PCs happened to bring along 400 feet of rope, they might think to anchor one end at the top of the chasm and simply lower themselves down. However, the tricky winds and the sharp ice conspire to fray and quickly sever the rope. A Wilderness Lore check (DC 20) allows the heroes to position their rope in an area safe from this effect before they find out the hard way.

Anyone who fails a Climb check or loses their grip on the rope plummets to the crimson river, sustaining 1d6 points of damage for every 10 feet of the fall (maximum 20d6). The river is so cold as to require a submerged PC to make an immediate Constitution check (DC 18). Failure indicates a loss of 1d4+1 Constitution

points per round until the character either freezes to death or is pulled from the water. A hero who makes a successful Constitution check still takes 1d2 points of Constitution damage per round. Lost ability points return at the rate of 1 per minute if the PC is able to find a fire or other suitable source of warmth.

A sample series of checks for aided climbers might go something like this: One of the PCs makes a Use Rope check (DC 12) to belay all climbers. The lead climber attempts a Climb check (DC 18) to descend every 100-foot increment. If he's successful, all other climbers make Climb checks at (DC 10) for every 100 feet. If the leader fails his check, the DC for all other climbers increases to 15. Any failed roll means that the character is falling, and the nearest climber must make a Strength check (DC 15) to arrest the fall. If this check also fails, then that character is also pulled loose, and the next climber must make a Strength check (DC 20). This 5-point progression continues until someone succeeds in his ability check or the entire team is yanked from the canyon face.

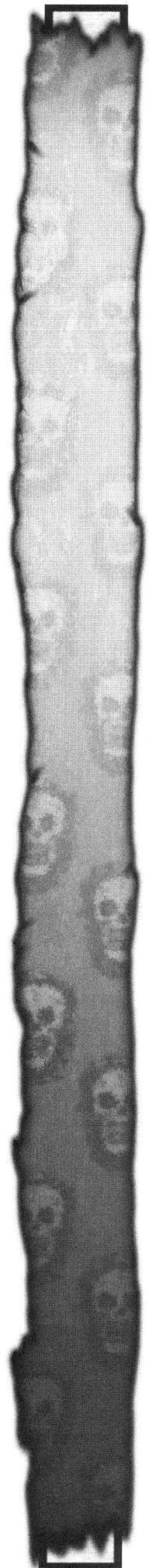
When the heroes reach the narrow ice ledge at the bottom of the gorge, they clearly see the cave on the north side of the river, as well as the bridge that leads to it. Though the 150-foot rope bridge sways precariously in the wind, it remains relatively safe (Dexterity check [DC 12] to avoid slipping and falling 20 feet to the river). If you think the party has had it too easy up to this point, feel free to stage an encounter with arctic bugbears or a yeti on the bridge. Fighting on the swinging span results in a -4 penalty to all attack rolls. Anyone who misses an attack with a slashing or bludgeoning weapon must make an immediate Dexterity check (DC 15) or be carried over the side of the bridge by their own momentum.

If anyone takes a sample of the unnatural red water for purposes of scientific or magical investigation, they find it completely unadulterated, despite its appearance. No explanation can be found for its foreboding sanguine color.

The Maw of Darkness

Once the PCs have reached the end of the rope bridge, they may enter the caverns and pursue the river to its headwaters. The course of the river has altered many times through the years, forming these icy caves, which range in color from pale pink to fiery scarlet. The PCs encounter the underground river one time during their journey, but for most of their spelunking, they must depend on the distant sound of running water as proof that their goal lies beyond these tunnels. They also get some help, cryptic though it may be, from one who has passed this way before.

Besides being an adventurer *par excellence*, Arak the ranger also fancied himself something of a poet, in the tradition of his idol, the great Navaro. In several places throughout the caves, Arak carved directions into the ice in the form of verse. Each of these couplets was meant to aid him, or anyone else, should this treacherous path again be chosen.



Cavern Features

Beyond the cave entrance, the darkness is impenetrable. Those with darkvision have no problem discerning their companions, but the remainder of their surroundings is a uniform black color. The PCs need a light source, and whatever they choose is hampered by the magic ingrained in the ice. The sickly red surface soaks up the light, halving the effective radius of torches, lanterns, et al. Thus a torch has an illumination radius of 20 ft., and the *daylight* spell is reduced to a 30-ft. radius.

Besides dimming the light, the icy surface provides poor footing for the weary traveler. All attacks and Reflex saves suffer a -2 penalty, due to the slick conditions.

Finally, while the floor is relatively smooth, the ceilings are a maze of jagged ice stalactites, formed by the river that once flowed through here. These outcroppings are securely frozen in place, but a large explosion of heat, such as that produced by *fireball* or *wall of fire*, has a 20% chance of dislodging many of them. The subsequent rain of ice deals 3d10 points of damage to everyone in the cavern when it plummets to the ground, a Reflex save (DC 15) indicating the PC has jumped clear of the falling debris.

Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings are 15 ft. high throughout the caverns.

When describing the atmosphere of the caverns to the players, keep the tone lonely, ominous, and alien. Instead of the raging wind of the ice field, darkness now becomes the PCs' most constant companion. On the open plain, a traveler has the stars to keep him company. In here, beneath ten million tons of earth and ice, the silence is deeper. The air seems colder, damper. A person has time to think, to conjure images from nightmares that haunt him the entire trip. Even dwarves feel a slight uneasiness when passing through this queer red icy darkness. The distant sound of dripping water must be a lie, because every surface is frozen solid. The caverns are as red and unnatural as the river that formed them. No one feels quite at his or her ease.

Refer to the appropriate map when the heroes enter the cave.

Keyed Locations

1. Tongue of White (EL 4)

The light dims noticeably as soon as you step into the mouth of the cave. The cliff behind you offers a commanding view of the Rubicund Chasm and the eerie red river that runs through it. In front of you, the waning light illuminates a large cavern with four distinct passageways, like fingers leading into darkness. The floor is smooth and slick, but the walls and ceiling have been carved like a massive, multifaceted crimson gem by years of flowing water. The light reflects in strange patterns off the many surfaces, distorting your sense of depth and distance. You can discern a large patch of white ice in the middle of the otherwise red cavern, lying between you and the tunnels beyond.

Though there are actually five tunnels leading from this room, only four are readily apparent. Three of these angle slightly upward, terminating in dead ends (Areas 3, 4, and 6); over the years, the ice slowly built up on the floor until these passages became sealed off at the far end where floor and ceiling meet. The "thumb" of the hand-shaped chamber is a hidden tunnel, obscured from sight by a combination of optics and debris. Light reflects off the pile of stones in this area to make it appear as if the PCs are looking at a solid wall. A casual glance reveals the passage on a Spot check (DC 25). Otherwise, the tunnel is located on a Search check (DC 18) if the heroes actively inspect the area. Scratched into the ice just inside the entrance is the first of Arak's clues, found on a Search check (DC 15):

The mouth of darkness swallows light

Tread soft the quiet tongue of white

Arak's metaphor of "quiet tongue of white" alludes to the creature that makes this cave its home. The creature lies quiescent until the PCs draw near.

Creature: The patch of white ice is not ice at all, but actually a rare form of arctic ooze. Arctic ooze has the same abilities as its cousin, gray ooze, with one exception: its touch inflicts a bone-chilling cold that causes paralysis in 1 round and death after 5 rounds, unless the freezing process is arrested by bringing the victim into close proximity with a major heat source, such as a campfire. The heat of a single torch isn't enough to warm the victim sufficiently.

Arctic Ooze: CR 4; hp 30; see the Appendix.

2. Hidden Hall

Anyone traversing this downward-sloping passage must make a Dexterity check (DC 15) or slip and fall, taking 1d2 points of damage. At the far end of the tunnel is a 40-foot pit, the bottom of which is covered in ice shards. A fall into the pit deals 5d6 points of damage. Midway down the pit is a small crawlspace that leads to the passage to Area 7. Because of the mirror effects of the red ice, the opening is difficult to see from the top of the shaft (Spot check [DC 20]). Anyone who descends slowly into the pit easily spies this narrow tunnel. Climbing the walls without a rope is tricky, requiring a successful Climb check (DC 27). The tunnel itself is a little over 3 feet wide, forcing most PCs to crawl on their hands and knees until it broadens after a few feet, eventually leading to Area 7.

3. Icy End

The tunnel peters out after a short distance, the result of seismic activity, the shifting river, and the ever-increasing amount of ice.

4. Coins of the Dead

The passage comes to an end in a narrow place where the floor meets the ceiling, evidently the point of a cave-in some time in the distant past. Half buried under a mound of rocks is what appears to be an apelike humanoid, its fur coated in red ice.

This corpse is all that remains of a yeti that had the misfortune of being trapped here when a portion of the ceiling gave way. If the PCs "take 20" to excavate the body, they find a small pouch made of woven hair, frozen into the flesh around its neck. Inside the pouch are 6 featureless, coin-size disks of strange red crystal.



Rubicund Chasm and Caves

River

Dragon
in Ice

Dead
Giant

Waterfall and
Red Pool

Yeti Layer

Pit

Ice
Patch

12

9

10

4

5

3

2

1

8

7

These are actually pieces of Skree currency, given to the yeti by the bugbears of Shilmagar.

5. Mudslide

The passage before you slopes noticeably downward into even deeper degrees of darkness. Oddly enough, there is a strange and unexpected warmth seeping through the ground here. Within a few steps, you are standing in 6 inches of red-black mud. Pink water drips from the ceiling, adding to the mire.

This passage is a natural trap. A small underground hot spring provides the warmth that melts the ice. Unfortunately, the spring has created a muddy bog. The uncertain footing requires anyone who steps in the mud to make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid slipping, hitting the ground, and sliding down the steeply angled passage in a wave of red mud. Beyond the reach of the heated spring, the passage is once again slick with ice and continues downward until it empties into a deep sinkhole. Anyone who fails a second Reflex save (DC 20) slides over the rim of the pit and falls 40 feet to the bottom. The mud provides a bit of a cushion, so that anyone who falls takes only 3d6 points of damage.

The bottom of the sinkhole is beyond the heating effects of the spring and thus the icy chill quickly freezes the fresh red mud. The mud solidifies in 2 rounds, effectively trapping anyone still standing in the bottom of the pit. A Strength check (DC 20) is required to break free once the mud freezes, or the PC may “take 20” to chip away at the mud. The slick walls are extremely difficult to Climb (DC 30).

Midway up the pit is a rough-hewn tunnel leading to area 9, difficult to see from the top or bottom of the pit (Spot check [DC 22]), but easily detected if a PC is climbing the pit wall.

6. Echoes of the Past

The end of this passage contains the remnants of a campsite. The PCs find the bones of a small fowl, a few scraps of jerky, and a whetstone left behind by the tunnel’s former occupant. Other than these few items, the only thing of note about the tunnel is its uncanny acoustical effect; even a soft whisper is greatly amplified, ringing off the walls for the extent of the tunnel.

7. Fur and Fury (EL 10, EL 11 w/Remorhazes)

The tunnel leading down from the pit in Area 1 slopes steeply downward until it opens into the cavern described below.

The river has carved another wide chamber from the mountain. The floor is of rippled red ice and rises at a slight incline until it nearly touches the ceiling at the far end of the room. Directly across from you stands a 15-foot wall built entirely of rust-red ice. It looks as if rough blocks of ice have been mined from the earth and stacked to form a barrier. At various intervals, the wall seems to have melted. What heat source could melt so large a wall, you cannot guess, but it has succeeded in piercing the wall at the southern end, where a gaping hole waits.

The wall was built by the yeti that inhabit this cave, to protect themselves from the pair of mated remorhazes in Area 8. If the PCs inspect the wall, read the following:

There are actually two walls here, another having been built behind the first. This wall is also pierced with unnatural openings, allowing access to the north. The two walls form a hallway running to the west and opening to another cavern. Covering the ground midway along this hall, the ice on the floor appears irregular, as if overgrown with thick, ruddy lichen.

Upon closer inspection, the patch of irregular ice is revealed to be a pelt of some type. This pelt once belonged to a yeti, the tough, apelike creatures of northern legend. The resident yeti family uses this hide to cover the crude pit trap they hope catches their tormentors, the remorhazes. The PCs should have little trouble discerning the trap through investigation (Search check [DC 12]), but as soon as their attention is focused on the pit, the yeti attack from a pile of rocks on the south side of their lair.

Trap: The pit trap is simple and poorly concealed, but if anyone should fall into the pit during the battle with the yeti, they take 2d6 points of damage. Anyone in danger of being forced into the pit should make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid it. If the PCs engage the yeti in combat, the remorhazes come to inspect the sounds of combat and arrive after 4 rounds. If the PCs defeat the yeti, they can inspect the lair, which serves as both living and sleeping quarters for the yeti.

Creatures: The 8 yeti are a small family consisting of 1 male, 3 females, and 4 young. They are always vigilant, for fear the fiery beasts may attack them at any time. The yeti stand behind the rocky barricade they have built (75% cover provides +7 AC bonus and +3 to all Reflex saves), hurling icy rocks at their enemies. After 3 rounds, their rocks are depleted and they leap over the wall onto any remaining opponents, trying to position themselves to use their gaze attack (see below). For statistical purposes, a yeti is similar to a standard ape, with the addition of a paralyzing gaze and resistance to cold. Their abundant fur is deep red rather than white, the result of years of genetic adaptation to this area.

Yeti (8): CR 4; hp 26 each; see the *Tome of Horrors* by Necromancer Games.

Treasure: Though yeti do not put value in gold and other treasure, searching the chamber reveals many items taken from other adventurers, including virtually every type of climbing and spelunking implement. There is also 90 feet of rope, though anything found here has a 50% chance of being in such a state of disrepair as to be useless. Because of its extraordinary insulating properties, a yeti pelt is worth 300 gp to the right buyer.

8. Fire in the Hole (EL 9)

This tunnel is smooth and round, as if it has been bored into the ice by some fiery mole. The ground is slick and the footing is treacherous. The tunnel follows no logical course as it winds its way deeper into the mountain, opening into a chamber containing several large eggs. The walls tremble with the sounds of distant running water.

This chamber belongs to the remorhazes and has been hollowed out by the intense heat of these exothermic creatures. The remorhazes have carved many such tunnels, one of them leading to Area 11.

Creatures: Though remorhazes are by nature solitary beasts, these two recently mated, and the male has not yet left the lair.

ALAMENTATION OF THIEVES

Moments after the PCs arrive here, the remorhazes enter from another passage, howling at the intrusion. Other than the two eggs (which could fetch up to 1,000 gp each if the right market is found), the remorhazes have no treasure.

Remorhazes (2): CR 7; hp 75, 70; see the *MM*.

9. Cryptic Clue

Though this cavern is empty, one of Arak's couplets is carved near the opening of the western passage.

Fur and furnace to keep them warm

Avoid them both to keep from harm

The verse refers to the creatures found in Areas 7 and 8.

10. Frozen Grave (EL 7)

Though this chamber was evidently once large enough to accommodate a small contingent of giants, the red earth has since consumed most of it in a massive collapse. All that remains is the white, ice-covered body of what appears to be a frost giant, dead and well preserved; the ice that coats the body is obviously not the same as that which comprises the caves themselves. The giant's head lies under the rubble of the cave-in, though its torso and legs are still visible. Encrusted in the ice beside the giant is a massive greatsword.

This chamber was once the lair of the creature in Area 12—a mature adult white dragon. However, most of the cave was destroyed during the dragon's battle with a frost giant explorer. The white frost covering the giant's body is not the unnatural red ice of the caverns, but the effect of the dragon's breath weapon. Her lair demolished, the dragon was forced to move deeper into the caves. All that she left behind was the giant's sword. If the PCs spend half an hour cutting away the icy carapace or melt it with magical means, they may claim the sword. However, disturbing the sword invokes the wrath of the giant's spirit, which lingers restlessly over the place of its death.

Creature: The frost giant haunts this cave as a **spectre**, manifesting itself if the PCs tamper with either its body or its sword. The spectre appears as a ghostly double of its former self, although its eyes are now red pits and its "skin" is blue and cracked from the damage inflicted upon it by the dragon.

Spectre: CR 7; hp 45; see the *MM*.

Treasure: The giant's sword is called the *Fang of Glorthaak*. It once belonged to Glorthaak the Score-fingered, a notorious human warrior from a foreign land. Glorthaak was known as the "Score-fingered" because he had two sets of arms. His battle prowess was terrible to behold, as he could fight with four weapons at once. His weapon of choice, however, was an oversized greatsword, large enough to accommodate his four hands. The *Fang of Glorthaak* requires a Strength of 20 to wield and is considered a huge +2 *greatsword* (base 2d8 points of damage) that also protects its wielder as per a *ring of warmth*.

11. Black Rain

You stand on the southern shore of an underground lake of cold water the color of blood. Across the wide expanse of water, a red waterfall crashes down from 50 feet overhead. The water apparently drains into the ground under the lake, only to emerge as the river you

saw in the chasm. Where the water has splashed onto the rocky wall near the bottom of the falls, the ice has frozen into almost lifelike shapes. Though it would take an artist years to carve such a depiction, the splashing water appears to have formed the sculpture without a human touch. One of these sculptures, extending from the top of the falls across the cavern wall, is what looks like a large net. The net reaches from the floor to the cliff from which the water plummets. At its center is the distinct form of a large scarab beetle. The whole construction is made entirely of red ice.

The only exit from this cavern is found at the top of the waterfall. The PCs have traveled downward a considerable distance and now have to climb back up to find an exit from the caves. To get there, the PCs must climb the slippery yet sturdy net of ice (Climb check [DC 25]) or use magic to reach the top of the falls. The net and the beetle were formed by the water splashing up from the waterfall. The image is perfectly formed from the magic instilled in the river by the Skree. The bugbears of Shilmagar consider this a holy site, though they only occasionally venture here. There is nothing else notable about the ice sculpture except the words that are carved onto the beetle itself.

Up and up without a breath

The end is near, so too death

The last of Arak's messages can be found by searching the beetle itself (Search check [DC 18]), indicating that the way to Shilmagar is at the top of the waterfall. The couplet also refers to the sleeping inhabitant of Area 12, who is better left undisturbed.

Once at the top of the waterfall, the PCs face a true mountaineering challenge. The river emerges from the rock, so the heroes are unable to follow it. The only way out of the caves is by climbing the 75-foot ice wall to a rift in the top of the cave. Though the wall is almost a perfect vertical ascent, there are a few hand- and footholds to provide purchase for a patient climber. Unless the PCs can reach the top of the wall with the assistance of magic, they must rely on pitons, ropes, and ice axes. Even with these implements, the Climb checks (DC 35) are made. Each climber must make at least 2 checks to attain the summit.

If the heroes clear the rift, they see what appears to be a pale white glowing sphere, like a tiny moon, hanging in the sky to the north. A half-mile march brings them to the edge of Shilmagar.

12. Let Sleeping Dragons Lie (EL 11)

This cavern is vast. Nearly 300 feet directly overhead, a huge hole in the ceiling apparently opens onto the outside world. Dim light filters down from above. The air is fresher here, and almost feels a little warmer. Nevertheless, as you peer into the darkness, an unaccountable feeling of despair settles over your heart, like hoarfrost coating a stone. You cannot explain the source of this feeling, though you sense that it originated from somewhere deeper in the cavern.

The light from above is very weak, as it shines from the Moonsun Spire of distant Shilmagar and must fight the dimming power of the ice as it makes its way through the cavern. If the PCs climb through the orifice at the top of this chamber, a final half-mile hike brings them to the ledge overlooking Shilmagar.

To the northeast, the remainder of this huge cavern awaits unseen. If the PCs venture toward the rear of the cave, there is a chance they see a glimmer of gold frozen in the ice (Spot check [DC 20]). If they actively search this area, they easily discern this glint for what it is: a mound of sparkling treasure encased in a sheath of blood-colored ice! Much to their horror, however, they quickly realize that the treasure's custodian is also here, a huge reptilian monstrosity covered in a thin husk of red ice.

Creature: This is Blizzarethia, the Scourge of the North. Many years ago, Glorthaak chased her from her home in the Scar-in-the-Sky. As a young and wounded dragon, Blizzarethia made her way to this arctic waste to nurse her wounds and her memory. As she grew in stature and power, she forgot about the trespass of Glorthaak until the Frost Giant king, Horuskt, came to her mountain not long ago, bearing Glorthaak's mighty sword. After slaying the giant, Blizzarethia plucked the offending sword from her bosom and cast it defiantly to the ground. In her rage, she destroyed her lair and was forced to relocate. She made but one venture beyond the caves before she lay down to sleep, which she has been doing for quite some time. During her slumber, the water trickled down over her hulking body and formed a nearly opaque shell around her.

Though the PCs may believe that Blizzarethia is dead—motionless and frozen as she is—she is actually only sleeping. However, her blindsight sense is dampened by the ice, permitting the PCs to investigate the chamber without being detected, unless they are unnecessarily noisy or simply eager for a fight. Whether or not Blizzarethia awakens is a matter entirely up to the PCs. If they decide that wisdom is indeed the better part of valor and flee without trying to wrest any of the treasure from the ice, the dragon maintains her sleep. However, if the heroes think they're up to

the challenge the dragon happily obliges them.

If someone foolishly attempts to wake the beast or pilfer her gold, make an opposed Listen check for the dragon, with the DC depending on whether or not the heroes are attempting to be silent or actively trying to rouse her. If she awakens, she bursts from the ice in a single round, spewing the same blast of cold that claimed the giant in Area 10. If the PCs fell the dragon, they may claim her treasure.

White Dragon, Mature Adult: CR 11; SZ H Dragon (Cold); HD 21d12+105; hp 251; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 60 ft., burrow 30 ft., fly 200 ft. (poor), swim 60 ft.; AC 28 (-2 size, +20 natural); BAB/Grp +21/+37; Atk +28 melee (2d8+8, bite); Full Atk +28 melee (2d8+8, bite), +22 melee (2d6+4 [x2], claws), +22 melee (1d8+4 [x2], wings), and +22 melee (2d6+12, tail slap); Face/Reach 20 ft./10 ft.; SA breath weapon (cold cone 50 ft., Reflex DC 25, 7d6), crush (2d8+12), frightful presence (210 ft., Will DC 21); SQ blindsight (210 ft.), cold subtype, damage resistance (10/+1), *freezing fog* (DC 21), icewalking, immunities, keen senses, other spell-like abilities (DC 21, *fog cloud* [3/day], *gust of wind* [3/day]), spell resistance (20); AL CE; SV Fort +17, Ref +12, Will +13; Str 27, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Bluff +22, Concentration +26, Diplomacy +22, Knowledge (the North) +22, Listen +24, Search +22, Spellcraft +22, Spot +24. **Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (bite).

Arcane Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 6/6; save DC 11 + spell level): 0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*; 1st—*mage armor*, *shield*, *true strike*.

Treasure: If the heroes spend 1d4+1 hours chipping away the ice, they unearth the entirety of the dragon's hoard: 28,562 gp, 6 moonstones (610 gp each), and a *horn of fog*.



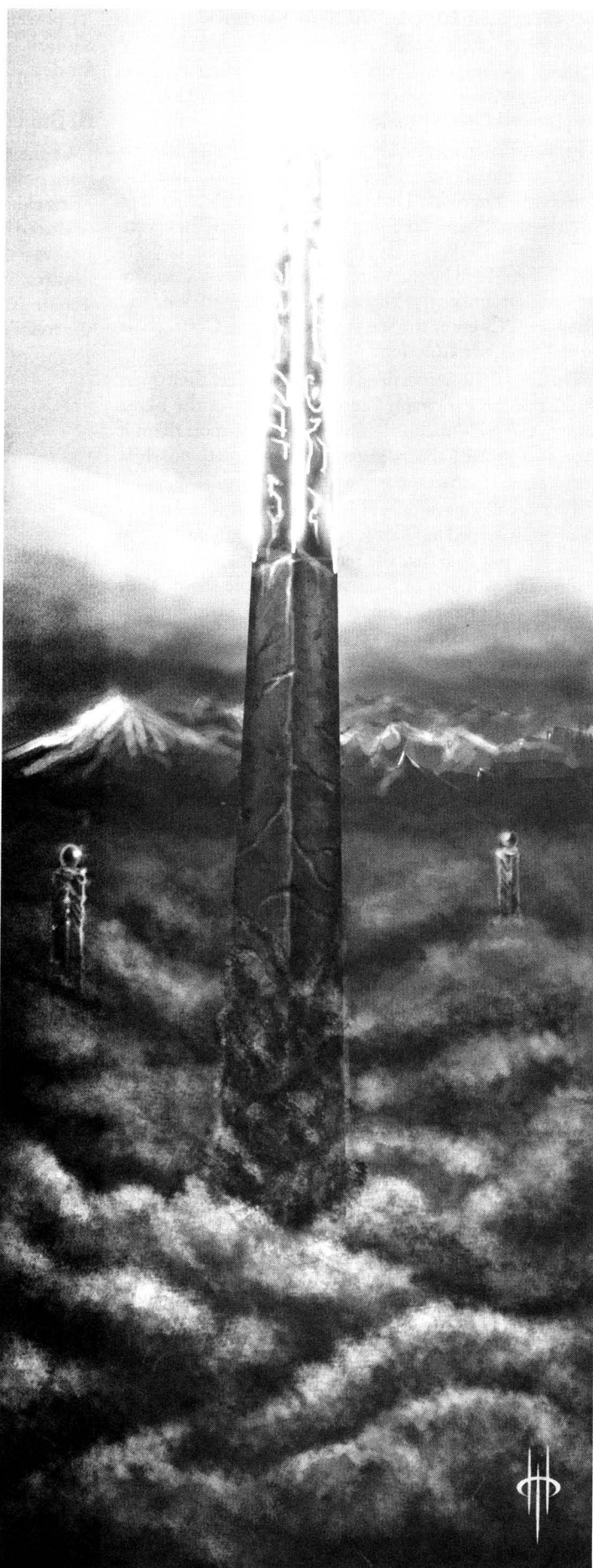
Valley of Wonder

Read the following when the PCs finally emerge from the caverns and step out onto the ledge that overlooks Shilmagar:

Surely, you must be dreaming. Either that, or you have stepped through a portal to an alternate dimension, because the lands you now look down upon from your high and icy vantage point bear no resemblance to the frozen caverns behind you. Instead, a warm and lush jungle lies before you, a place of towering green trees, exotic fragrances, multi-colored plant life, and flocks of orange-feathered birds swooping across a perfectly blue sky. Brooks of clear water meander through the trees, and the jungle teems with the sounds of wildlife. The headwaters of the strange red river appear to be a lake that glitters in the sunlight. A herd of gazelle emerges from the jungle and strolls languidly across the savannah.

In the center of the valley stands the single tallest tower you have ever seen. It must rise at least half a mile into the sky! The tower is so tall, in fact, that it obviously could not be standing without the aid of potent magic. From the tower's summit glows a powerful golden light that bathes the vale in pleasant springtime warmth. Though the mountains around the glen are locked in ice, this area remains a comfortable, life-producing temperature, all due to the incredible heat emanating from the tower's peak. This artificial sunlight also illuminates what seem to be four smaller red towers that rise over the trees. These lesser towers twinkle in the sun as if made of nothing less than polished ruby. Vines crawl up the sides of these gemstone towers, as if intent on claiming them for the jungle. At the base of the ice mountain on which you stand, on the very edge of the savannah, is what looks to be a collection of primitive huts.

Refer to the Shilmagar map. Here at last is the hidden vale, known to students of myth as Shilmagar. Though located near the world's polar caps and hemmed on all sides by ice, the valley abounds with life, thanks to the energy of the Moonsun Spire; for twelve hours the Spire glows with the light of the sun, following this with twelve hours of pale moonlight. When the PCs arrive, the Spire is in its sun cycle. Shortly after they arrive, the light begins to dim, to be replaced by a milky radiance very much like that of the moon. Though the planet's actual sun is unseen six months out of



the year at these latitudes, the Spire has turned the glen into a place of localized vivacity, home to hundreds of mammal species, from birds to small burrowing animals. The valley has a diameter of 50 miles. Essentially, Shilmagar is a primeval forest virtually unsullied by man.

In fact, Shilmagar's only sentient inhabitants are two tribes of humanoids: the Rynog goblin clan and the Catterclaw bugbears. How these two competing tribes came to dwell here, no one is certain; perhaps they were driven across the ice fields by predators hundreds of years ago, or lured here by the valley's creators. Regardless, the goblins outnumber the bugbears nearly four-to-one, and when the PCs enter the scene, they find the Catterclaws on the verge of extinction.

Though all the heroes need to do to complete their quest is retrieve the Paragraph Poetica from one of the Skree towers, the gods of charity smile favorably upon them if they also protect the bugbears from destruction, while avoiding an internecine war with the Rynogs.

To enter Shilmagar, the PCs must carefully descend the moderately sloped mountain of ice. Once they set foot on the grass, they find that the temperature increases appreciably. The wonders of Shilmagar lie before them. They may follow the river to Damask Lake (Area A), investigate the huts (Area B), or set off into the jungle toward the mysterious red towers (Area C).

Keyed Locations

A. Damask Lake

This body of water bears literal evidence of the Skree's misguided magic. In an attempt to keep Shilmagar's water clean and free of contaminants, the Skree introduced a self-replicating, magical cleansing agent into the lake. Though this potent arcane additive does indeed render inert any possible toxin, it has an obvious side effect—it stains nearly anything it touches. The Damask appears very much like a lake of blood. Over the eons since the Skree created the ever-flowing river, it has seeped southward into the once-white ice fields, dyeing them permanently red. Though human and demihuman skin is not susceptible to this discoloration, practically every other type of organic material is affected, including goblin and bugbear flesh. (Of course, you are free to include humans and demihumans among those affected by the dye, although the effect is permanent until cleansed with *dispel magic* or similar efforts.)

Schools of freshwater fish swim in placid Damask Lake, every species a different hue of red. The lake magically perpetuates itself, providing a constant flow into the ice fields to the south. Though the heroes might suspect otherwise, the water is perfectly safe to drink. In fact, it's quite possibly the best water they've ever sampled.

The opacity of the water impedes vision beyond the depth of a few inches. However, if the PCs enter the lake and swim down 60 feet to the bottom, a Search check (DC 25) leads them to a submerged Skree artifact. As interstellar traders, the Skree acquired this item from a group known as the Kwalish. The Skree supplemented the machine with magic, augmenting

its powers. The device is known as an *apparatus of Kwalish*. See the Wonderous Items section of the DMG for details.

B. Bugbear Village (EL 12)

Of the 40 bugbears that reside in these mud and fabric huts, only 16 are capable of effective combat, the others being elderly, infirm or young. Several have been seriously wounded in recent conflicts with the goblins. Over the last few years, relations with their goblin neighbors have disintegrated. In response, the bugbears have constructed a crude wooden palisade around their two dozen huts. Read the following when the PCs approach:

As you near what appears to be a small village, it becomes apparent that the inhabitants are making preparations to expel invaders. A wall made of sharpened tree trunks surrounds the encampment, one encircled by a ring of thorny bushes, providing a double barricade around the camp. Inexpertly fashioned crossbows are mounted at strategic points along the battlement, and every now and then a vaguely humanoid shape is seen moving behind the wall. Chimney smoke rises from the village, followed by the metallic clamor of a blacksmith at work in a forge.

How this encounter develops depends entirely upon the PCs' intentions and method of approach. Other than their goblin enemies, the bugbears have never laid eyes on a humanoid before, but their initial fear can be assuaged if the PCs present themselves in a peaceable manner. More than anything, the Catterclaws want to survive. If they believe the PCs have been sent to defend the village (as agents of the "Beetle Gods," perhaps), or if the heroes present them with sufficient gestures of goodwill, the tribal leaders tell their warriors to stand down, immediately beseeching the newcomers for aid against the evil goblin horde. For such a parley to take place, the heroes must be able to communicate with the bugbears. If nothing else, creative players can find a way to use a combination of sign language and pictures drawn in the dirt.

After inviting the PCs into his hut, the tribal chieftain, Moghar, explains that his people have been subject to repeated goblin ambushes, and though they are individually larger and stronger than the goblins, they haven't enough warriors to withstand the continued waves of attack. The goblin king is said to be especially fearsome, garbed as he is in "the armor of the gods."

Moghar believes that the four towers were once the home of the "Beetle Gods." As long as the goblins control the towers, the bugbears have no hope of defeating them. Chief Moghar implores the PCs to strike at the heart of the goblin clan and secure the Beetle God legacy for the bugbears. Unfortunately, he has nothing to offer as payment for such services, other than the thanks and friendship of his tribe. The result of this offer hinges entirely upon the PCs' response.

Of course, the heroes are under no obligation to negotiate with the Catterclaws. If they attack the bugbear village, the warriors defend their families to the death.

A LAMENTATION OF THIEVES

Note that the Catterclaws have red flesh and red fur, the result of drinking and bathing in the magical river.

Bugbears (16): CR 2; hp 16 each; see the **MM**.

Moghar, Bugbear chieftain: CR 2; hp 27; other statistics as per the **MM**.

C. Jungle

The jungle's undergrowth is so thick and the canopy of trees so intertwined, entering this place is like walking into a world without earth or sky. Indeed, every step falls on spongy layers of humus, vines, grass, and fallen leaves, while overhead the densely woven treetops obscure all but a few golden slivers of light. Modify movement rates and vision as necessary.

In order to establish a dynamic ecosystem, the Skree introduced several parasites, vermin, mammals, reptiles, and avians to the jungle they created. Roll 1d20 and consult the following table for every half-mile the PCs travel through the jungle. On any result of 13 or higher, no encounter occurs. On a roll of 1-12, apply the suggested encounter or insert one of your own. Statistics for these monsters appear in the **MM**.

1d20	Monster	# Appearing	EL
1-2	Giant ants, soldier	4	6
3-4	Assassin vines	2	5
5-6	Leopards	2	4
7-8	Apes	4	6
9-10	Giant constrictor snake	1	4
11-12	Tiger	1	3

D. Tower of Tranquility

Rising at least 75 feet above the jungle floor, dwarfing the tallest of the trees, is a round tower made of seamless translucent stone, very much like red crystal or ruby. The tower is approximately 30 feet in diameter. Though vines and other foliage have woven a thick matting around its base, bearing testament to the years the structure has stood untended, the tower otherwise shows no sign of age or wear. Its glassy surface is free of scratches. Although you have the impression that the tower is truly ancient, it gleams in the light of the false sun as if only erected this morning. There are no windows, doors, or other apertures, except for what appears to be a single circular opening near the tower's summit, some 70 feet overhead.

When the Rynog goblins discovered these abandoned towers a century ago, they spent months contriving a means to enter them. They had not the climbing skills to scale the utterly sheer surfaces, nor had they sufficient rope to assist their ascent. After considerable weeks of weaving rope from jungle vines, they encountered their second dilemma: how could they anchor the rope in a window that was 70 feet off the ground? Finally they designed a bow and arrow powerful enough to carry the rope, and a few intrepid "volunteers" were sent inside to reconnoiter the building. Though the goblins eventually found a tower suitable for settlement (Area Tower G), their initial sojourn into the forsaken Skree strongholds proved disastrous. This is the

first tower the goblins entered some hundred years ago. They have not ventured inside since.

The red crystal is not of this world. It is impervious to all physical attacks, though magic affects it as if it were standard crystal. Trying to climb the smooth tower wall without a rope is impossible. The easiest means of reaching the aperture is by magic, though innovative players can find other means of getting themselves inside. The first character to reach the window frightens the flock of birds that nests here, causing them to rush out in a feathered wave. This sudden explosion of activity forces anyone at the window to make a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid being startled and losing his grip on the rope or window ledge. Once the birds clear out, the PCs may enter the tower. The opening is a perfect circle 3 feet in diameter. Darkness reigns inside. Refer to tower cutaway diagram.

D1. Upper Landing

The Skree constructed their towers for purposes of defense. By using the spell *spider climb*, these beetle-creatures easily ascended the smooth walls, while the high position of the entrances prevented other creatures from dropping in unannounced. Both intelligent and benign, the Skree had no interest in conquering or exploiting those around them. They desired only to live in a peaceful environment where they could practice their magical arts undisturbed. They alighted on this planet at the end of a journey from a distant world and immediately used their most potent spells to create the Moonsun Spire and occasion the growth of life in the valley. Though the Skree had long life spans, they were not immortal. Their elders died and the unwary among them were killed by predators. They used the Tower of Tranquility to house their dead.

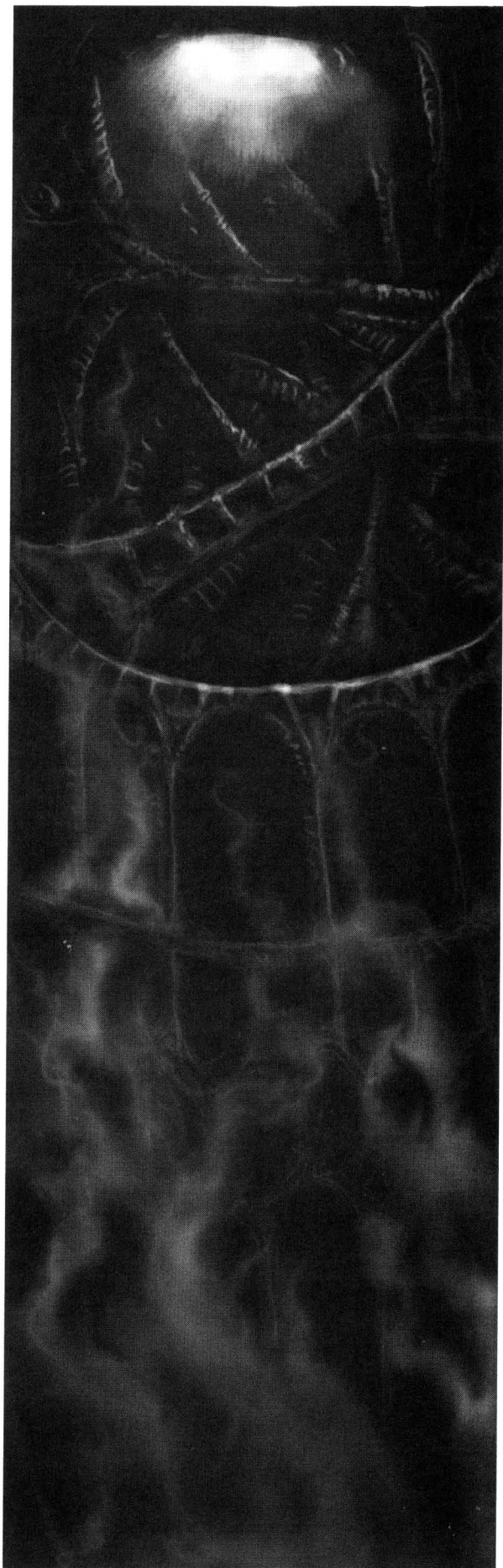
The PCs find this area thick with bird droppings, bits of dirt and clay, powdered eggshells, and innumerable feathers. The walls are caked with dried mud, the ceiling crowded with nests of every size and variety. There is a single opening in the center of the floor.

D2. Shaft of the Dead (EL 9)

As shown on the map, the majority of this tower is a hollow tube. At the mouth of the opening to Area D1, the Skree anchored one of their special nets of high-tensile silver thread. This netting runs down the center of the tower all the way to the bottom, permitting access to the dozens of platforms along the walls. Each platform holds at least one interred Skree, bound in a net shroud of variegated threads. Affixed to each platform is a red crystal nameplate bearing the dead creature's name in the Skree's nearly indecipherable script. The heroes can use the netting to climb down the length of the shaft and investigate the platforms. The netting is as resilient as a standard rope (Hardness 0; hp 2; Break [DC 23]).

Though the PCs feel a decided air of peace and stillness in this chamber, all is not as the Skree intended. Perhaps due to the powerful magic they wielded in their life, the Negative Energy Plane has poisoned a few of the dead. They haunt the tower as wraiths.

Creatures: As the PCs descend the netting, 2 beetle-wraiths float toward them and attack, while 2 more move to block the exit to D1. Though these creatures cannot



spawn undead from the spirits of their victims, treat them as standard wraiths, with the exception of their appearance—oversized beetles composed of darkness, with smoldering red eyes.

Beetle-Wraiths (4): CR 5; SZ M Undead (Incorporeal); HD 5d12; hp 50, 39, 30, 27; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 60 ft. (good); AC 15 (+3 Dex, +2 deflection); BAB/Grp +2/—; Atk +5 melee (1d4, incorporeal touch plus 1d6 permanent Con drain, ignores armor); Full Atk +5 melee (1d4, incorporeal touch plus 1d6 permanent Con drain, ignores armor); SQ daylight powerlessness, incorporeal, undead, unnatural aura, turn resistance (+2); AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +6; Str —, Dex 16, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 15.

Skills: Hide +11, Intimidate +10, Jump +4, Listen +12, Search +10, Sense Motive +8, Spot +12. *Feats:* Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

The PCs may explore the tower if they defeat the beetle-wraiths. Impress upon them the bizarre nature of the platform, the nameplates, and the red crystal itself. This is an alien environment, and astute players rightly assume that the tower's original builders were not of this world. Decrypting the nameplates is impossible without the aid of magic or the Decipher Script skill (DC 25). The plates bear such appellations as "Inosphor" and "Qualiora." The largest platform, twice as wide as any of the others, serves as the final resting-place of one of the Skree's great sage-kings. In addition to a nameplate, which reads "Phirilune IV," this shroud bears a second inscription. Translated into Common, the text reads, "We call upon the memory of home." This is the activation phrase for the portal in Area F2.

Treasure: Lying on the platform is an odd metallic ring-shaped device. The ring is made of red steel. It is 6 inches in diameter and about an inch thick. It is completely seamless and featureless. In addition, on the platform is a small sack woven of silver thread. The sack contains 21 chips of reddish metal (Skree coinage). The ring is actually a *visionband*, a magical device that the Skree wore on their bodies, enabling them to see through the atmospheric mediums of most of the worlds they explored. Activating the *visionband* causes it to emit a strange purplish light in a cone 30 feet long, and 15 feet wide at its far end. Anything within the cone is seen as if being viewed in normal daylight conditions. In other words, the *visionband* permits perfect viewing through mundane and magical darkness, fog, smoke, and other environmental conditions. Underwater objects are not obscured because of the water. Invisible objects are also made apparent. This viewing effect lasts for 10 minutes per use. There is enough energy in the *visionband* to power it for another 25 applications. A successful Bardic Knowledge check (DC 30) or Use Magic Device (DC 25) allows the PCs to intuitively or accidentally discover how to operate the *visionband*: the user must trace his finger around the *visionband*'s perimeter, making a complete circle. The item may also be activated in other ways, permitting the light output to be altered for a different effect (see Area G2 for details).

Resting at the bottom of the shaft are the rotting skeletons of a dozen goblins, their sparse gear (spears, slings, et cetera) littering the floor around them. A search

of the bones with a Search check (DC 18) produces a small vial on a chain; this is *the fletcher's thorn warden* (see New Magical Items in the Appendix). Any PC who takes at least 20 minutes to conduct a thorough search automatically uncovers the item.

E. Tower of Erudition

This tower appears similar to tower D. Paraphrase the above description, with one significant alteration: about 20 feet up the tower, an anonymous artist has used plant dye to paint the image of a savage goblin warrior with a pair of beetles above its head. Though the goblins gained access to this tower 100 years ago, they were so frightened by what they encountered inside that they never entered it again. If questioned, the goblins refer to this tower as the "place of the steel beetle." Refer to the tower cutaway map when the heroes enter the building.

Er. The Sentinel (EL 10)

This tower houses the bulk of the Skree's accumulated knowledge. However, to reach the library proper, the PCs must first overcome its guardian.

Creature: Straddling the opening to the tower's lower levels is what appears to be a large beetle built of the same red crystal as the tower itself. The Skree built and programmed this magical construct to serve as the tower's custodian, keeping the place free of dust and vermin. Since the departure of its creators, the construct has carried on its duties in ruthless fashion; not a flake of dust is allowed to settle in the vast library below, nor are any intruders permitted access. The construct has slain every goblin that has ever tried to enter the building, thus they avoid it unconditionally. Attached to the construct's underbelly is a small collection of tools and cleaning rags. Its metal legs have been enspelled so that it can climb walls as a the standard Skree did via use of *spider climb*. It otherwise behaves as a lesser iron golem.

Skree Golem: CR 8; SZ M Construct; HD 9d10+20; hp 69; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 30 (-1 Dex, +21 natural); BAB/Grp +6/+12; Atk +12 melee (2d8+6, slam); Full Atk +12 melee (2d8+6 [x4], slam); SQ construct traits, damage reduction 10/—, magic immunity; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +4; Str 23, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1.

SQ—*Magic Immunity (Ex)*: Immune to all spells, spell-like abilities and supernatural effects; electricity effects slow it for 3 rounds, with no saving throw; fire cures one point of damage for each three points it would otherwise deal.

E2. Library

Though the Skree are a race of philosophers, known throughout their home star system as thinkers of unsurpassed scholarship, the bulk of their science remains inaccessible to the PCs, stored as it is in magic/mechanical receptacles. A broad silver net runs down the length of the tower, connecting the platforms of the various levels. Each platform bears a "bookshelf" of sorts; thousands of fist-sized globes are racked on the shelves according to some imponderable cataloging system. The globes are made of red crystal, festooned with tiny beads that occasionally flicker with the remnants of a dying light. There are two methods

for extracting information from the globes. First, the user touches the proper sequence of lights (each globe represents over one million possible light combinations, and no two globes are encrypted with the same sequence), and the desired information flows into the user's mind in standard Skree symbols. Alternately, a successful Use Magic Device check (DC 22) causes the globe to disgorge a random series of pictures into the user's mind, giving him a glimpse at the messages stored inside. The magic of the globes is weakening by the day, so that in another two months, they go completely dark and all knowledge of the Skree is lost.

The PCs could literally spend months here and barely tap the wellspring of the Skree's recorded history. Feel free to plant any type of information here, detailing as necessary the Skree annals and their flight from their home planet. Each successful application of Use Magic Device should reveal one of the following pieces of lore pertinent to this adventure:

- Extraterrestrial beetles known as the Skree created Shilmagar. The Skree were sages and traders who fled their home world when it became uninhabitable. They chose this secluded spot near the Domain because it was far removed from civilization. They erected the Moonsun Spire and gave life to the land. They called this place Shilmagar.
- The Skree's primary construction material is a material much like red crystal, albeit far more damage-resistant. The red crystal may be cut, shaped, and joined with a spell known by Skree craftsmen. The spell is called *skreeshape*.
- In an effort to purify their drinking water, the Skree cast multiple spells upon the nearby lake. Unfortunately, a byproduct of the decontamination was the deep crimson color the lake assumed in its pure state. Skree historians recorded the canyon to the south was eventually stained by the river that drained the lake. (Incidentally, this event is a metaphor for the entire Skree existence; though they had good intentions, their plans often outstripped their magical prowess, eventually culminating in a debacle approximating self-genocide.)
- Though the Skree emigrated when their homeland began to freeze, they brought with them the means to return to their native land, should it one day be possible to restore their planet to its former state. They allude to this transportation device as "the Red Circle." It is apparently kept within one of the four towers.
- Finally, one of the globes records the end of the Skree's tenure in Shilmagar. It seems as if the might of their own magic again got the better of them. While trying to develop an inoculation against a local biological disease, the Skree healer-sorcerers inadvertently introduced a plague agent into the colony. Within a year, the population had been reduced to less than twenty adult Skree. The last recorded message describes the Skree's attempts to "retreat into a state of somnolence" in hopes of outlasting the deadly epidemic.

F. Tower of the Red Circle

This building houses one of the final secrets of the extinct Skree, as well as a possible means of revivifying them as a race. Though they were forced to flee their

distant home when it began to cool as a result of slipping away from its star, the Skree didn't completely sever all ties with their ancestral abode. Practitioners of both magic and physics, the Skree forged several teleportation devices of sufficient power to convey them across entire galaxies. These devices usually took the form of colossal rings. One such ring is stored within this tower, its magic dormant until activated by the proper command.

Fr. Tool Storage (EL 3)

The equipment necessary to sustain the fantastic Skree inventions were many and manifold, a large sample of which is kept here. This landing is crammed with odd hand tools appropriate for use by creatures with six legs, including pincers, hammers, screwdrivers, bolt cutters, and dozens of others—all of them powered by a magic that has long since faded. Larger apparatus are also found here: indescribable machines for firing engines, elaborate glassworks for chemical distillation, and coils of cable that once carried a magical current that gave these implements a semblance of life. One of these items is actually an animated object that attacks the PCs if they approach.

Creature: The Skree invented many devices to assist them in their daily lives, and quite often, these items were magically animated to improve overall efficiency. This particular contraption consists of a tall four-wheeled cart with a pair of articulate arms, each of which is currently fitted with a circular saw blade.

Rolling Blade, Large Animated Object: CR 3; SZ L Construct; HD 4d10+30; hp 52; Init +0; Spd 60 ft.; AC 14 (-1 size, +5 natural); BAB/Grp +3/+10; Atk +6 melee (1d8+3, blades); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+3 [x2], blades); Reach 10 ft.; SQ construct traits; AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +1, Will -4; Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Treasure: Though the PCs can find an astonishing array of otherworldly craftsmanship in this chamber, one item is of particular interest. A Search check (DC 20) uncovers a hand-held tool about 8 inches long with a knob at either end. This is a *skreestick*, holding 26 charges of the spell *skreeshape* (see sidebar).

Fz. The Red Circle

This portion of the tower is dominated by a mighty red crystal ring, standing over 10 feet tall. It is impossible to say whether the tower was built around the ring, or the ring was assembled within the existing structure. Either way, the object nearly fills the tower, leaving only a narrow walkway around its base.

The Red Circle is a major artifact and cannot be harmed by any means available to most player character groups. Inscribed at the ring's base is a series of activation glyphs. If the command phrase from Area D2 is uttered aloud in the Skree tongue, a portal opens within the ring like a great eye dilating, and a current of warm air rushes over the PCs. When the colored mist finally dissipates, the heroes behold what appears to be a jungle thawing from an ice age. Though there are no signs of animal life in the world beyond the portal, plants have already begun to return to their natural state.

New Spell: *Skreeshape*

Transmutation

Level: Sor/Wiz 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Sight

Target: 1-ft. cube of red crystal

Duration: Permanent

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Depending on the caster's desire, the spell either cuts through the red crystal like a razor through a piece of cloth, or joins edges of red crystal together to form a seamless whole. In this sense, it is much like the spell *stone shape*. One application of the spell is sufficient to work a cube of red crystal two feet wide; it would take two applications to fashion a man-sized suit of armor, but only one to make a weapon the size of a longsword. The effect is permanent.

The Skree home world has shifted position again, bringing it back in close proximity to its star, where it remains for the next several millennia. It is only a matter of time—perhaps another year or so—before the planet is again suitable for habitation by insect and mammal alike. At this point, the PCs may want to investigate this new world; such a sojourn is beyond the scope of this adventure, to be detailed as you deem appropriate. The easiest way to keep the heroes from venturing through the portal is to bar entry to any non-Skree. Otherwise, you now have at your disposal an entirely fresh world for the PCs to explore.

If the heroes reinvigorate the Skree held in stasis in Area G2 and inform them of what lies beyond the portal, the Skree realize that their salvation may at last be at hand. See below for details. For more information on the Skree, refer to the Appendix.

G. Occupied Tower (EL 9)

This tower has been transformed into the stronghold of the Rynog goblins. A staircase made of wood and vines is connected to the tower, spiraling all the way around it and permitting access to the opening at the top. The goblins have built their village around the tower's base, a hodge-podge collection of huts and bivouacs, animal pens and workshops. The entire place reeks of offal and unwashed goblin flesh. If the goblins are unaware of the PCs' approach, they're busy with crafts and husbandry, though the warriors among them are always prepared to repel a possible bugbear assault.

Player characters familiar with the goblin race note one anomaly: the Rynogs all have skin the color of fire.

Creatures: Of the 200 goblins here, 64 are combatants. Attacking the entire horde at once is a dangerous proposition for even the most rugged band of heroes, as the goblins have learned a lot about fighting opponents who

hold a size advantage. Their skirmishes with the bugbears have taught them the value of using large numbers to overwhelm a superior enemy. The goblins attempt to swarm any attackers and wrestle them into submission. Refer to the rules for Grappling in the **PHB** if the goblins try to overbear the heroes. In the event of a major battle, five warriors rush up the spiral staircase and into the tower to defend the king.

Goblins (64): CR 1/4; hp 4 each; see the **MM**.

Possessions: light mace, 6 darts, small studded leather armor, small wooden shield.

Gr. Messy Landing

If any goblins fled the battle to protect their king, they meet the PCs on this landing amidst heaps of trash and building supplies. The Rynogs have decorated this area with garish graffiti and other “artwork,” and the floor is strewn with all manners of crude weapons and tools. A narrow rope ladder is attached to the opening in the floor, permitting access to the lower chamber.

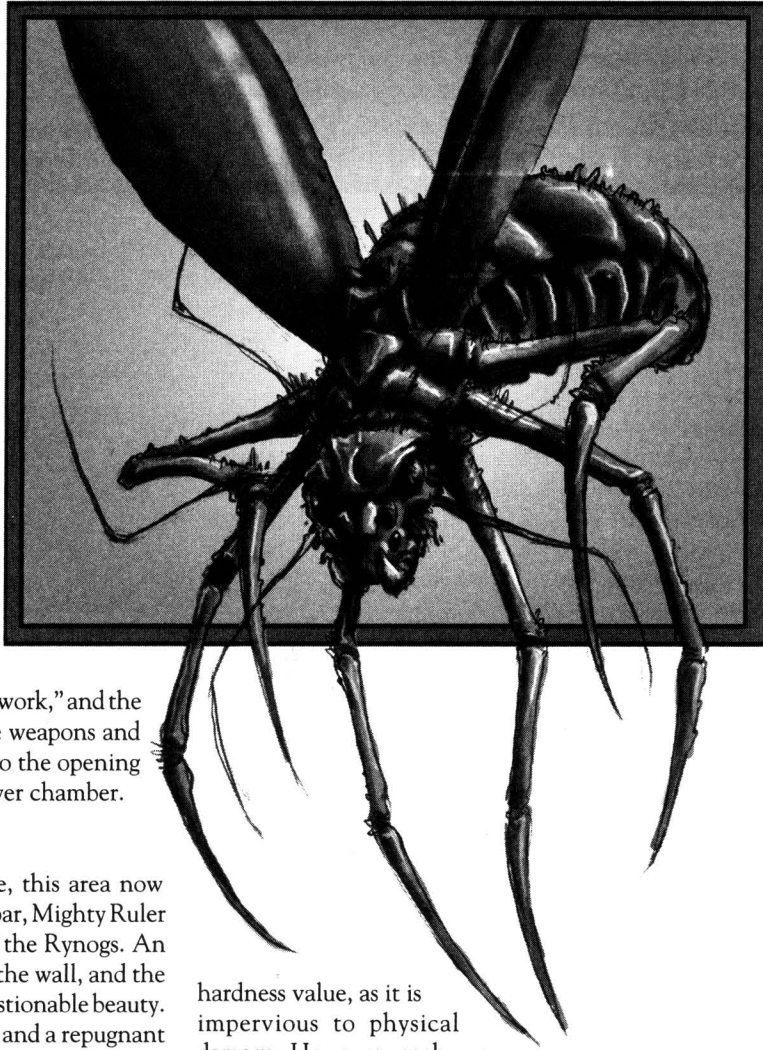
Gz. The Goblin King (EL 5)

Once the living quarters of the Skree, this area now serves as the throne room for Thrats Ironbar, Mighty Ruler Favored of the Beetle Gods and King of the Rynogs. An assortment of coarse tapestries hangs on the wall, and the floor is covered in hand-woven rugs of questionable beauty. A throne made of logs stands to one side, and a repugnant stench fills the room. If warned of the PCs’ presence, King Ironbar hides beneath a mound of soiled rags, hoping to catch the invaders unawares and slay them with his “flame of the Beetle Gods.” Ironbar wields a *visionband* that has been fitted with a special control coupling, permitting the light to be focused as a narrow, deadly beam. A strike from the beam deals 3d10 points of heat damage and drains 3 charges from the *visionband*. Ironbar has also found and learned to use a *skreestick*. He’s managed to make a suit of red crystal plate mail that renders him all but invincible in combat against his bugbear enemies.

King Thrats Ironbar, Male Goblin Ftr4: CR 5; SZ S (4 ft. tall); HD 4d10+4; hp 35; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 37 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +25 red crystal full plate); BAB/Grp +4/+4; Atk +6 melee (1d8, morningstar) or +6 ranged (3d10, focused *visionband*, touch); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8, morningstar) or +6 ranged (3d10, focused *visionband*, touch); SQ darkvision (60 ft.); AL NE; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +7, Craft (red crystal) +2, Hide +6, Jump +7, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Spot +2, Swim +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (*visionband*), Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (morningstar).

Possessions: morning star, red crystal full plate, focused *visionband* (30 charges), *skreestick* (12 charges). The red crystal material of Ironbar’s plate mail has no hit points or



hardness value, as it is impervious to physical damage. However, each successful strike by a *skreestick* reduces Ironbar’s AC by 5 points, until the armor completely falls away after 5 strikes.

Treasure: The PCs may search the chamber as soon as they dispatch Ironbar. A successful Search check (DC 20) through the refuse around the throne uncovers a grimy satchel fastened with a simple lock (Open Locks [DC 12]). Inside the satchel are several inoperable Skree tools and a few shiny stones that caught Ironbar’s eye, as well as a bleached human skull and a scroll case made of varnished sandalwood. Inside the case is a single sheet of paper nearly 3-feet long when unrolled. This is the Paragraph Poetica. The skull is all that remains of the ranger Arak after Ironbar’s minions were through with him. Also behind the throne are two blocks of red crystal that Ironbar was intending to use as armor for his personal bodyguards. Each block is a 1-foot cube, weighing 50 lbs., enough to manufacture a like weight of plate armor.

The true treasure, secreted under the floor, is found on a Search check (DC 22). Ironbar was unaware of this trapdoor in the floor of his throne room, beneath which is a shallow niche holding the enshrouded bodies of two adult Skree, their biological systems held in abeyance by a spell similar to *temporal stasis*. If revived via *dispel magic* with a successful Caster Level check (DC 20) or similar methods, the Skree slowly return to life and readily engage

the PCs in conversation. Their names roughly translate to Isspian and Hiloon; they were the last two Skree left unaffected by the terrible wasting disease which claimed their brethren. Though they use caution when dealing with the PCs, their initial reticence quickly fades if the heroes make an effort to convince them of their good intentions. They have been asleep for nearly 500 years. They are eager to hear whatever news the PCs can provide.

Isspian and Hiloon, Male and Female Skree Sor10: CR 10; SZ M Outsider; HD 10d4+10; hp 45; Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural); BAB/Grp +5/+5; Atk +5 melee (1d6, bite); Full Atk +5 melee (1d6, bite); SQ: spells, tremorsense; ALLN; Fort +5, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 18.

Skills: Alchemy +14, Climb +8, Concentration +16, Hide +5, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (physics) +11, Listen +5, Move Silently +9, Spellcraft +16, Spot +5.
Feats: Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Spell Penetration.

Sorcerer Spells Known (Cast Per Day: 6/7/7/6/4; save DC 14 + spell level): 0—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound, light, mage hand, mending, open/close, read magic, resistance*; 1st—*comprehend languages, magic missile, shield, spider climb, unseen servant*; 2nd—*alter self, Mel's acid arrow, see invisibility, web*; 3rd—*invisibility sphere, lightning bolt, summon monster III*; 4th—*minor creation, and polymorph self*; 5th—*teleport*.

Possessions: Isspian and Hiloon both wear small sacks of lightweight silver thread, in which they carry a visionband (60 charges) with control coupling, a skreestick (60 charges), and an arcane scroll inscribed with the Skree runes for the spells *fabricate, spider climb, and teleport*.

Reading the Paragraph Poetica: What lore does the fabled Paragraph Poetica contain? The options are nearly limitless, with only a few of the possibilities listed here: the true name of the demon Kinazbo, unique spell formulae, diagrams of traps Navarro encountered during his tenure as a thief, blueprints of vaults and safe houses, poems and bits of doggerel, and a description of a collection of wondrous items known as the Bells of Heaven (see Chapter Three for more details of the Bells and their legacy). To lend a sense of realism to the game, prepare in advance several player handouts to represent sections of the Paragraph Poetica, such as maps and sketches. If you're not up to composing an epic poem to serve as an example of Navarro's work, feel free to borrow from the classics; Byron's "The Prisoner of Chillon" is a good example of poetry from the Romantic era, one with which the players may not be familiar.

H. Moonsun Spire

This incredible edifice is 2,500 feet tall! Though only 10 feet wide, the tower is able to stand fast because of the heavy magic that fortifies it. The tower has no doors of any

kind, being simply a straight pillar of red crystal nearly half a mile high. The tower is hollow, but empty. If the PCs somehow reach its summit, they discover a simple glass globe mounted on a metal bracket. The globe has been permanently enchanted to radiate light nearly as powerful as the sun for a period of 12 hours, followed by a like period of "night," during which a pale moon-colored glow emanates from the globe. The globe cannot be removed by anything less than a *wish*. If taken from its bracket, it ceases to function.

Concluding the Adventure

If the heroes route the goblins and scatter them to the jungle, they earn the undying respect of the Catterclaws. Moghar throws a great feast in their honor and bestows upon them such favors as beaded necklaces, antler-handled knives, and feathered headdresses. If the PCs resuscitated Isspian and Hiloon, the Skree thank them profusely, though there's little they can give the heroes in the form of a monetary reward. The bulk of their goods have been lost over the five centuries they've been asleep. If the PCs are looking for payment, they'll have to follow the Skree through the gate in the Red Circle and brave whatever strange and horrible creatures now roam the planet. If nothing else, Isspian and Hiloon offer to *teleport* the PCs back to their homes, as both Skree are accomplished sorcerers and would be glad to save the heroes a fatiguing journey.

Once they return home, the heroes may use the information in the Paragraph Poetica as they see fit. The Paragraph is a good way to introduce new spells or adventure hooks into the campaign.

Continuing the Adventure

The heroes now have several new lanes of adventure lying before them. If they activated the portal in the Red Circle, they have the entire Skree homeland to explore. If the Skree are to reestablish a presence there, they need assistance in fending off the dangers inherent in a world recently released from the grips of an ice age. Perhaps while the Skree were away, other, less peaceful races arrived in their absence. The Skree are ill equipped to deal with such perils, and they offer to trade many odd and wonderful items in exchange for the PCs' assistance. Such items are, of course, held inside the vaults on the Skree planet, so the heroes need to commit to an extended expedition if they're to claim their reward.

Shilmagar presents many possibilities for adventure, limited only by the nature of your campaign. Other than the ubiquitous birds and animals, what else dwells here? Possibilities include Skree golems with flight capabilities and perhaps a xenophobic djinni that has adopted part of the jungle as his home. Whatever the djinni is doing here, he certainly is not in the mood for interruptions....

Chapter Three:

The Soul of Vengeance

The events in this chapter are best suited for four PCs of 12th level.

Adventure Background

The master storyline of *A Lamentation of Thieves* is a tale of revenge. Twenty years ago the mayor of Hawkmoon hired a team of explorers to expunge a nest of humanoid raiders from the fortified ruins of an ancient iron foundry. Though the raiders were vanquished and an unexpected fortune discovered beneath the ruins, most of the explorers were slain in the endeavor. Of the original dozen, only four—battered and bloody—reached the dungeon's final chamber. With tears of awe glistening in their eyes, they beheld a treasure that even the oldest of elves had forgotten: a collection of 12 oversized sapphires known as the Bells of Heaven.

The four survivors returned to Hawkmoon, rich beyond the ken of normal men. Each man owned three Bells of Heaven, which were valuable both as gemstones and as objects of magical power. As precious jewels, they were worth a fortune. As magic items, they could be used either for great good or terrible evil, depending on the desires of the owner. The expedition's dashing, dark-skinned leader, Sivian Ulphar, sold all three of his Bells. With the profits, he bought a thousand allies in the underworld and used them to gain ascendancy over the city's notorious thieves' guild. His wealth surpassed only by his prowess as a burglar, Sivian laid rightful claim to the title of Hawkmoon's most powerful citizen. With the help of his younger sister, whom he appointed assistant guildmaster, Sivian extended the tendrils of his organization to the far reaches of the Domain.

Sivian's friend, Elias Fellspar, also sold his entire collection of Bells. Fellspar had served as the expedition's chief scholar. His knowledge of esoterica ranked him as one of the region's foremost sages. The oldest and arguably wisest member of the party, Elias used his riches to fulfill a simple childhood dream: he opened a wax museum. Charmingly eccentric, Elias now lives a quiet and comfortable life, carving his wax statues and telling the tale of the Bells of Heaven to any that ask.

The expedition's two spellcasters, a dwarf wizard named Paraxus and a half-orc sorcerer known only as the Mechanician, decided to become partners to further their magical studies. Each sold two of his Bells, retaining a pair between them to use for research into the higher aspects of spellcasting. They jealously guarded their Bells, carrying them on their persons at all times. Paraxus and the Mechanician combined their massive resources to construct what they intended to be the single most extraordinary house of magic in the known world. As the only two demihumans in the original party, Paraxus and the Mechanician were

naturally drawn to each other, and their burgeoning distrust of humans prompted them to build their fortress well away from the Hawkmoon environs, somewhere deep within the Forlorn Mountains. It was suspected that they used the power of the Bells to slay the denizens of the surrounding area, including one entire clan of mountain dwarves. None who entered the region ever came out to tell the tale.

Deep within the bowels of his lavish underground palace, Sivian Ulphar began to suspect that wealth and fame had rotted the hearts of his former companions, just as the sun spoils fruit left too long beneath its light. He feared that the dwarf and half-orc would one day use their power to spread blight upon the Domain. Though lesser thieves had tried and failed to locate the stronghold and plunder its riches, Sivian was confident that his sister's team could find and penetrate the fortress, and then discover the Mechanician's innermost secrets.

Alas, Sivian was mistaken. The attempted operation was entirely thwarted, all participants killed in the Forlorn Mountains. Sivian's sister was never seen again. That was five years ago. The heroes learn that a handful of others have attempted to follow her trail since then, most of them foreign thieves looking to try their hand at locating the half-orc's legendary home. Rumor has it that the mayor himself sent a unit of specialists into the mountains, but this effort too was doomed.

One year later, the story took another strange turn. On a rare visit to Hawkmoon, Paraxus's disguise was foiled at a most inopportune moment. He was found standing over a mutilated corpse. He was charged with murdering a local prostitute, found guilty, and sentenced to the lifelong gulag of the penal ship *Pariah*. During their stay in the Domain, the PCs occasionally hear bards relating the story of the trial, though details of the case are sketchy. Some people wondered if the half-orc had framed Paraxus in order to keep intact the secret location of their mountain fastness. Regardless, men in high places still fear the unknown arts being practiced in the Forlorn Mountains. Fortunately, the elusive Mechanician keeps to himself, and the domain of Hawkmoon remains a relatively peaceful place. This is the status quo when the PCs become entangled in the tale.

The pivot upon which the storyline turns is this: of the original expedition two decades ago, there were not eight people slain, but *nine*. Unbeknownst to his companions, Elias Fellspar was killed in the dungeon just before the party reached the final chamber. He immediately returned from death as an undead abomination known as a *bhuta*. He blames the group's leader, Sivian Ulphar, for the debacle that led to his current state. For twenty years, he has stoked his hatred, looking for an opportunity. Though he ap-

appears as a kindly if slightly befuddled museum curator, this is nothing but clever artifice to conceal his true intentions. Revenge glitters in his heart like stars in a black sky.

Adventure Synopsis

Elias Fellspar hires the PCs to seek out the imprisoned Paraxus and learn the whereabouts of his Bell of Heaven, ostensibly to prevent it from falling into the wrong hands. When the dwarf was arrested, he didn't have the gemstone with him. Fellspar rightly suspects that the dwarf hid the Bell before venturing to Hawkmoon that fateful day, and with his subsequent imprisonment, the Bell has remained sequestered away four long years. Fellspar tells the PCs that he must prevent the Mechanician or some other equally untrustworthy type from laying claim to the stone. He asserts that the Mechanician would use the Bell to further increase the powers of his fell magic, perhaps endangering the entire Domain. Fellspar wants the PCs to recover the Bell so that it can be turned over to the proper authorities for examination. In reality, Fellspar has discovered that the Mechanician has imprisoned the soul of Sivian's sister within the gem via the spell *trap the soul*. Fellspar intends to use the Bell to exact a long-overdue revenge.

Fellspar of course does not reveal to the PCs that he is actually a bhuta; in fact, he is quite personable, even charming. He tells the PCs of the prison barge *Pariah*; Paraxus is incarcerated there, with his head full of secrets. The PCs set out across the Moonsilver Sea and contrive a means to sneak aboard the prison ship. After conducting a bit of hasty diplomacy with several warring factions of inmates, the PCs seek out Paraxus himself—only to find him dead. The dwarf was killed a year ago under mysterious circumstances. However, the PCs locate a single clue that Paraxus left behind. This clue is a riddle that, if solved, reveals the location of the Bell of Heaven.

Unaware of Fellspar's intentions, the heroes head back to the wax museum with the Bell in hand. However, Sivian Ulphar's minions intercept them, and the PCs find themselves in a tense parley with the guildmaster himself. Though he does not know the Bell contains his sister's trapped spirit, the guildmaster is certain that Elias is conducting some kind of perfidious operation. Sivian encourages the heroes to scour the depths of the house of wax to discover Elias's true intentions. The gloomy Waxworks underneath the museum turns out to be a horrifying place, where tallow golems come to life and waxen shrouds cover the corpses of those unfortunate enough to have crossed Elias Fellspar's unforgiving path.

If the heroes survive the ordeal, they have the chance to put the shackles on one of Hawkmoon's most dangerous citizens, as well as restore Sivian's sister to life.

The House of Wax

The PCs visit Fellspar's museum two times, once as employees, and a second time as infiltrators.

Character Hooks

Using either of the following means, you should have little difficulty netting the PCs with Elias's ever-growing web of evil:

- Elias Fellspar has heard that the heroes are out for hire. He asks them to meet him in the museum.
- An NPC friend suggests that the heroes speak with Fellspar about a possible job; if they're not motivated by greed alone, the NPC mentions that Fellspar needs help purging a threat to the city.

To the Museum

The museum's normal operating hours are not like those of other businesses, but rather from sunset to three in the morning. Elias Fellspar is a paranoid fellow and keeps all doors and windows stoutly locked at all other times throughout the day. His museum contains many dreadful secrets that he fully intends to keep to himself. As he and his staff work late at night, they usually sleep during the afternoon, at which times the building's defenses are considered to be on alert. PCs who visit the museum at times other than standard business hours find the place sealed tight; they must either wait until the museum opens for the evening, or break in (which may be the case if they are here to investigate the premises at the behest of Sivian Ulphar). During non-business hours, consult the passages marked **Alert** for additional information. It is likely that the heroes visit the museum twice, the first time as Elias Fellspar's potential business partners, and the second time as his enemies.

Refer to the House of Wax map. When the PCs approach the museum, read or paraphrase the following:

Occupying a busy street corner in the city's bustling market district, Fellspar's House of Wax draws a continuous stream of visitors, most of them eager children dragging their parents behind. Known throughout town as a place of strange sights and curious artifacts, Fellspar's museum is popular among travelers, its image enhanced by the building's foreboding architecture; with its angular roof adorned with grotesque statuary, the museum casts a sinister shadow on the street below. The wooden walls are stained a deep black, the windows are heavily curtained to shut out the light, and an iron column as thick as a tree trunk bears a sign with the words **FELLSPAR'S HOUSE OF WAX AND WONDERS** painted the color of dried blood. The museum parlor is accessed by a pair of heavy double doors. One of the doors is held ajar by what appears to be a human skull. A candle burns behind the skull's eye sockets.

The skull is not real, but a fake made of hardened clay. During non-business hours, the doors are securely locked. If the PCs approach at some time other than five P.M. to

ALAMENTATION OF THEIVES

three A.M., they find the museum closed. Otherwise, the doors stand open, revealing the parlor.

Ironbound Wooden Door: 3 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 20; Break (DC 28); Open Lock (DC 28). Failure to successfully pick the lock releases a small mallet within the door. The mallet strikes a bell, the sound of which is heard by those in the upper level on a Listen check (DC 20), and by those in the lower level (DC 28). The mallet may be detected (Search check [DC 18]) and removed (Disable Device [DC 20]).

Keyed Locations

1. Parlor (EL7)

Beyond the double doors is a small, comfortable room, the floor covered entirely in a well-worn red carpet, the walls hung with mirrors of various designs. Behind a large teak desk sits a woman so thin and pale that she appears likely to shrivel and turn to dust. Her dull brown hair hangs listlessly in her face, and her corpse-like features are twisted into a parody of a smile. One hand holds a quill pen, the other rests on a large open book. The woman stares straight ahead, her eyes without luster—and then you realize that this woman is made of wax! A clever sculpture she is indeed, right down to the fine white hairs on her arms. As you're examining the lifelike lashes on her dead eyes, a door in the south wall opens, and through it steps a middle-aged man in an ill-fitting black suit. A pair of spectacles perches upon his wrinkled nose. "Well met," he says. "I am called Risvane, and it is my sincerest pleasure to welcome you to the tomb of wax cadavers and the courtroom of wax kings, Fellspar's House of Wax, menagerie of the misshapen, hall of the hideous."

As he stated, this is Risvane, elder tour guide and Fellspar's accomplice in matters both noble and nefarious. Though he isn't aware of the full extent of his employer's plan, Risvane knows that a band of brave souls is needed to recover the Bell of Heaven. Once the heroes state the purpose of their visit, Risvane asks them to sign in, as all visitors must do, though he waives the usual fee of 1 cp for entering the museum. After all, the heroes aren't here for a tour! Signing in involves taking the quill from the wax dummy's hand, an experience, which is harmless, but perhaps a little disconcerting. After everyone has autographed the ledger, Risvane conducts him or her through the south door.

Alert: Risvane sleeps in this room on a cot he keeps in the closet. If he hears an intruder, he hurries off to inform Elias Fellspar. If caught unawares, he fights rather than runs, but continuously shouts out a warning.

Creature: Not only does Risvane attack and raise the general alarm, but he also shouts through the doorway into the street, hoping to rouse passersby into bringing help. He afterwards explains to the constables that he and his employer were subject to a brutal and unprovoked assault at the hands of the PCs.

Risvane, Male Human Ftr7: CR 7; SZ M (6 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 7d10+21; hp 59; Init +4 (Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; BAB/Grp +7/+11; Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+8, +2 *longsword*, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+8, +2 *longsword*, 19-20/x2); AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 18, Dex 10, Con 16, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +1, Handle Animal +5, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Listen +9, Spot +3. **Feats:** Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (*longsword*), Weapon Specialization (*longsword*).

Possessions: +2 *longsword*, pouch containing 52 gp and a love letter from a woman named Rosalind.

Personality: Risvane is cold and austere, businesslike at all times. He is a slave to money, and his loyalty is thus firmly in Fellspar's possession. He is unaware that Fellspar is actually a bhuta.

2. Closet

This small room contains Risvane's cot, as well as various cleaning supplies and a stock of spare candles, torches and the like.

3. Privy

This narrow, smelly place serves as the only latrine in the building. Though a clay pot of incense burns here, the fumes do little to conceal the stench.

Alert: The incense isn't burning, and the subsequent odor is nearly overpowering. Anyone who spends more than a minute here must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) or become nauseous and suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls for the next 1d4+1 minutes.

4. Waiting Room

This room is lined with chairs and benches. Visitors wait here before entering the Grand Showroom. During business hours, this room is occupied by 2d4 common townfolk, at least half of whom are children. One of the children, Turvin, is fascinated with the heroes, intrigued by their strange gear and clothes. Turvin peppers the PCs with all manners of childlike questions concerning their weapons, quests, and of course whether or not they've seen any dragons. If the PCs take the museum tour, Turvin follows them, constantly chattering away. If Risvane has led the PCs here, he asks them to wait for a few moments while he speaks with the museum's owner. He enters the Office (Area 5), closing the door behind him. Five minutes later, he returns to conduct them into the Office for their parley with Elias Fellspar. Refer to **The Meeting**, below.

Alert: Every day after locking up the museum, Risvane sets a ward in this room in the form a tripwire across the curtained threshold to Area 7. The tripwire is so fine as to be noticed only a Spot check (DC 22), or located on a Search check (DC 20). The tripwire runs through the floor to the Waxworks below, sounding a series of chimes that are heard throughout the facility on a Listen check (DC 12). The tripwire may either be stepped over or removed (Disable Device [DC 15]).

5. Office (EL 3)

With the exception of the meeting between the PCs and Elias Fellspar, this room is always considered to be on **Alert**.

The office is tidy, if somewhat plain. The walls are bare, save for a single framed certificate that appears to be a license to conduct business here in the city. A large, heavy table rests in the center of the floor, surrounded by just enough chairs to accommodate Elias and the PCs. A desk is also here, quite clean and well kept, along with a tall cabinet and a brass brazier on four long support legs. The coals of the brazier are burning, providing the room with pleasing warmth. A bright blue curtain serves as a partition between this room and the Private Quarters.

Alert: Like Elias Fellspar himself, this room is not so mundane as it appears to be. Three items of note exist here, including an animated guardian, a trap, and an all-seeing eye.

Creature: The brazier comes to life whenever someone enters this room without either Fellspar or his aide, Risvane. It fights until either all adversaries flee the room (it doesn't pursue into either area 4 or area 6), or until its own destruction.

Animated Brazier, Medium Animated Object: CR 3; SZ M Construct; HD 2d10+20; hp 31; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 14 (+4 natural); BAB/Grp +1/+2; Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam plus 1d6 fire); Full Atk +2 melee (1d6+1, slam plus 1d6 fire); SA fire; SQ construct traits; AL N; SV Fort 0, Ref 0, Will -5; Str 12, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SA—*Fire (Ex)*: Each slam also deals fire damage; refer to the section on Catching on Fire in the **DMG** for rules needed.

Trap: The cabinet contains a variety of mundane supplies, including cleaning agents, ledgers, receipts, et cetera. Fellspar has protected it with a special version of the *fire trap* spell he commissioned from a local wizard. The *fire trap* is permanent, and Fellspar may turn it on and off with a command word that only he knows.

Fire Trap: 5-ft. radius of fire (1d4+16 points of damage); Reflex save (DC 20) for half damage; Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

The Eye: If the PCs move the framed certificate, they behold a gruesome sight. Embedded in the wall is what appears to be a single, large human eye. The eye seems to be alive; it is moist, a little bloodshot, and occasionally it blinks a pale eyelid. The eye is the result of a strange spell that involved melding a human eye with a nonliving thing—in this case, the museum wall. The eye has X-ray vision and sees through the certificate into the Office. It also has darkvision, as well as 7 ranks in the Spot skill. In addition, what the eye sees, Fellspar sees. So long as he is within the building, Fellspar knows the moment the Office is infiltrated. By concentrating, he sees through the eye and watches any activities performed in this room. Destroying the eye (Hardness 2, hp 6) has no effect on Fellspar himself.

The Meeting

After offering the heroes some simple refreshments, Fellspar tells them much of the story found in the **Adventure Background**, omitting only those details that would

impugn him. He mentions Sivian Ulphar, now known as the Lucre King. He speaks of their discovery of the Bells of Heaven and the wealth that discovery brought them. He concludes his soliloquy by stating his belief that the Mechanician plans to use Paraxus's Bell of Heaven for some malign plan, if he is able to lay claim to it. The PCs must get to it first. Once aboard the prison ship, they must coerce or convince the dwarf to reveal the gemstone's location. In exchange for this information, the PCs should give Paraxus whatever he asks in return, even if that means abetting his escape from the ship. Fellspar believes that releasing the dwarf from imprisonment is a small price to pay for the evil that can be averted by the acquisition of the Bell of Heaven and the defeat of the Mechanician's unknown scheme.

By now the PCs should have heard rumors of the *Pariah*, so they know their task is not be an easy one. Fellspar is a wealthy man and offers the heroes 3,000 gp each to accept the challenge. He's willing to go as high as 5,000 gp each if the PCs are particularly persuasive (or if they succeed in a Charisma check [DC 22]).

If the heroes agree to Fellspar's proposition, they may set out for the seacoast whenever they like. Fellspar recently paid city judiciary employees for a log of the *Pariah*'s course through the Moonsilver Sea. He gives the PCs the approximate current location of the ship, though he knows nothing about its defenses. If the PCs want to conduct research on the *Pariah* before setting out for her, or if they are ready to seek out the ship right now, proceed to the second part of this chapter, **Ship of Perdition**. You return to the House of Wax after the PCs secure the Bell and meet with Sivian Ulphar.

6. Private Quarters

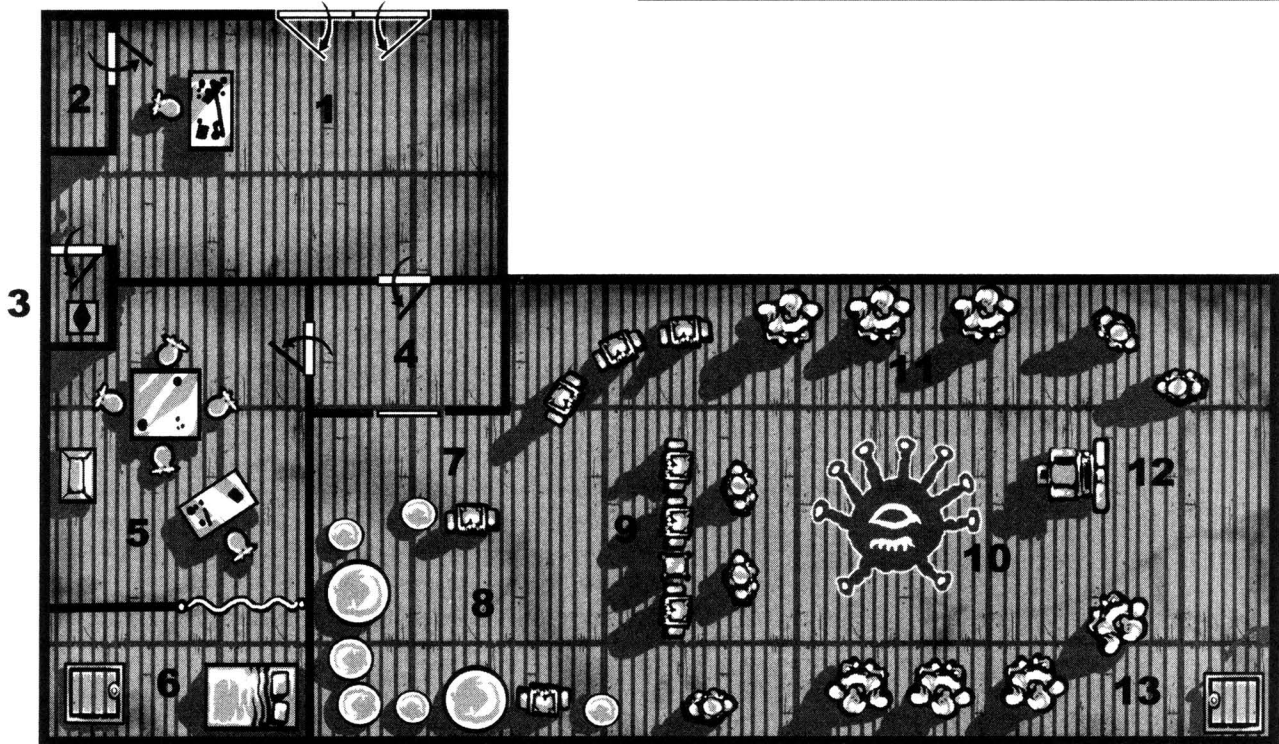
Like the Office, this room is always on **Alert**. Obviously, the room's occupant is quite fastidious, as everything is clean and organized. The bed has been made, the floor swept, the wood polished. A doublewide wardrobe stands in the corner. Fellspar keeps almost nothing of value here, preferring to hide it underground in Area 17.

The wardrobe contains a huge collection of clothes. The garments are of the finest quality and the latest styles. There are nearly 20 pairs of shoes and an alarming number

Creepy Features!

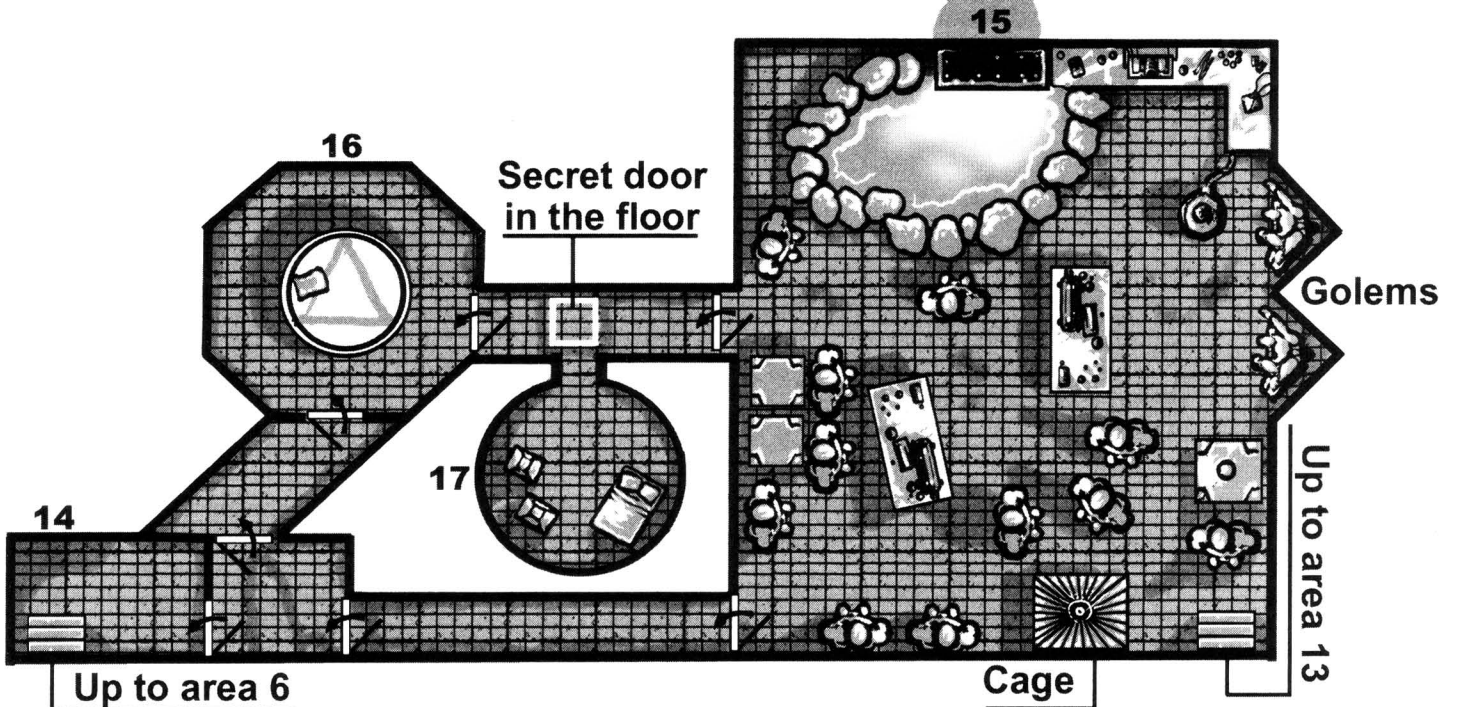
When the PCs first enter Area 7 and begin exploring the museum exhibits, impress upon them the eerie nature of the chamber, the lifelike expressions of the statues, and the way the waxen eyes seem to follow them when they move. The museum has been designed to thrill its visitors, and as such presents a unique environment for adventuring. The lighting is dim, and the floor and walls are all painted black. Small, dulled lanterns give off unhealthy blue glows, further lending to the ambience. Faux cobwebs have been strung about the ceiling. All in all, a walk through the Grand Showroom should be an unsettling experience.

Wax Museum



Trapdoor to area 14

Trapdoor to area 15



Up to area 6

Cage

Up to area 13

Golems

Secret door
in the floor



of colored scarves. Obviously only a very wealthy individual could afford such sartorial excess. Together the clothes are worth nearly 5,000 gp. Crammed in amongst them is a *robe of scintillating colors* that likely goes unnoticed unless someone casts *detect magic* and conducts an examination of the wardrobe.

Alert: As this chamber is always on Alert, it remains the same regardless of when it is visited.

7. Grand Showroom

Before you is the grand exhibit hall, full of dozens of eerie wax people in a variety of poses. The vast room is dark, intermittently lit with soft pools of lamplight near each of the silent statues. The exhibits range from the mundane faces of commoners to the hideous visages of creatures that are half-man and half-monster. Some are sculpted to appear in the acts of walking, working, and other forms of movement, while many are cast as tall and straight as pillars, gazing sightlessly into the shadows. All of these wax statues have been carved with skillful precision, so that it almost seems as if you gaze upon a room of living, breathing beings. Only their eyes, dull and lifeless, betray this illusion. A path consisting of a threadbare blue carpet winds between the statues.

The exhibit directly in front of you appears to offer a greeting at your arrival. A man and a woman, arms linked, smile down at you from their wooden dais. They've been carved to appear as if wearing flowing white garments and golden crowns. Perhaps they represent some long-dead king and queen. Whoever they are, they seem happy enough to see you. The blue carpet path leads to the east. One of the woman's fingers has been broken off, like a candle snapped in half. As you watch, a black bug crawls around the man's face.

This is one of the oldest exhibits in the museum. If the PCs are taking a tour through the museum, Risvane tells them that they look upon a likeness of Prince Andrin and Lady Ervana, who hailed from a faraway land and died hundreds of years ago at the conclusion of a long and bittersweet romantic disaster. Elias Fellspar, who carved all the statues here in the museum, heard stories of Andrin and Ervana when he was a child, and as an adult immortalized them in wax.

Actually, this is Anin and Rana, and they were not always statues. They were once

alive. Rana was Fellspar's lover. He caught her one night with Anin, murdered them both, and sealed their bodies in wax cocoons. Fellspar has perfected this process of funerary encasement, so that it is nearly impossible for a viewer to look upon the statues and see anything but wax dummies. If one of the PCs actually chips away at the waxy coating, which is nearly an inch thick, he or she is permitted an Intelligence check (DC 18) to realize that these are not standard museum mannequins. Fellspar refers to the process as "envelopment." Others aside from Anin and Rana have been enveloped, as described in the Waxworks.

Note that not all of the figures in the room are described here. In fact, there are dozens of statues filling the room. Detail them as you like, perhaps including likenesses of prominent figures from your own campaign world.

8. The Knights (EL 11)

Seven statues of armored warriors occupy this area of the showroom. Some are designed to appear bloody and battered as if fresh from battle, while others are garbed in waxen finery, as if they might be attending the king's ball. One or more of these figures could represent famous knights from the history of your world, and are recognized as such.

Alert: Three of these men-at-arms are not really sculptures at all, but a new form of monster called *tallow golems*. Fellspar created the golems with the help of a hired sorcerer, an unfortunate man whom Fellspar "enveloped" after the golems were created. Fellspar commanded the golems to stand here unmoving, serving as fine exhibits. They are only to move if someone enters the showroom after the bell has sounded to announce the hour of three A.M. and the closing of the museum. If the PCs have returned to the building to investigate Fellspar, they only "activate" the golems under two conditions: (1) they enter the room at a time other than normal business hours, or (2) Fellspar learns of their plans (perhaps via the magic eye in area 5) and gives the golems the command to move and attack. If such a command is given, the golems prowl the showroom for several minutes in search of a target, then proceed mindlessly down the staircase at area 13 to the Waxworks below.

Creatures: For more information on tallow golems, including an explanation of their special abilities, refer to the Appendix.

Tallow golems: CR 8; hp 55 each; see the Appendix.

9. Missing Statue

The only things to be seen on this display pedestal are two waxen feet, broken off at the ankles. There is no evidence of the rest of the statue. If asked, Risvane says that a museum visitor accidentally bumped into the piece. The statue was ruined, but no other harm was done. Though this story is true, the sight of the severed feet might cause discomfort and feelings of uncertainty in the heroes, feelings which Risvane does nothing to assuage.

10. The Beholder

This carving of a beholder is Fellspar's masterpiece. The sheer size and detail of the monster always elicit gasps of

astonishment from those who look upon it. As the showroom's *piece de resistance*, the beholder commands the attention of everyone in the room, towering above the other sculptures and emanating such lifelike menace that it seems only seconds away from turning its multiple eyestalks upon the viewers and letting loose a barrage of magical effects. However, despite its realism, the beholder is nothing but a wax rendering—a brilliant one, but wax nonetheless. PCs who've witnessed the tallow golems come to life, however, might be more than a little wary of the beholder.

11. The Thief

There are many statues occupying the showroom—beggars, nobles, figures of myth—but this chap is perhaps the ugliest. Though human, his features are so distended and ill proportioned that he is even more loathsome to behold than the homeliest of half-orcs. The figure is dressed much like a burglar, in a black bodysuit and soft boots, with his fist wrapped around several delicately carved lockpicks. The bag at his feet is quite real and full of sugary treats. Whenever conducting children through the museum, Risvane always stops here to give them a bit of "plunder" from the thief's sack.

Actually, this man was enveloped. His name was Wavnor, and he had the bad luck of selecting the museum as a target for his thievery. Fellspar caught him in the Waxworks and, knowing he couldn't let the man live with the secrets he saw there, he ordered the golems to attack. He then enveloped the dead man's body in a waxen carapace, but only after bludgeoning his face in a fit of childlike spite, hence the man's misshapen facial features.

12. The Skeleton King (EL 14)

This sculpture, which appears as an armored skeleton wearing a crown, sits upon an imposing throne, also carved of wax. A sword rests in the skeleton's lap.

Alert: Fellspar wears a special circlet that allows him to control this creature, which is actually a monster known as a **skeleton warrior**. Fellspar commands the warrior to attack if he knows the PCs have come to investigate the building. If the PCs confront Fellspar without passing by the skeleton warrior, Fellspar activates it and summons it to do battle. For further details on Fellspar's response to an invasion, see **Battling Fellspar**, below.

Creature: Additional information on the skeleton warrior is found in the Appendix.

Skeleton Warrior: CR 14; hp 78; see the *Tome of Horrors* by Necromancer Games.

Possessions: jeweled crown (fake jewels, 15 gp), +2 full plate, +2 bastard sword

13. The Adventurers (EL 10)

The statues in this area look very much like a team of explorers, with carefully carved ropes, belts, boots, and swords. Such detail has been rendered in the sculptures that their cloaks appear torn and their weapons nicked and scratched. A scruffy black dog stands beside one of the adventurer's legs.

Alert: Not all of these figures are dummies. The group's wizard and barbarian are actually **tallow golems** and respond as those in Area 8. The dog is also a tallow golem, created by Fellspar in a moment of rare good humor.

Creatures: These golems have been charged with guarding a trapdoor in the corner. The dog is a less-powerful version of the tallow golem, capable of a single bite, without the chemisorb special attack. This trapdoor opens onto a spiral staircase leading down 35 feet to Area 15.

Tallow Golems (2): CR 8; hp 55 each; see the Appendix.

Tallow Golem Dog: CR 5; SZ S Construct; HD 6d10; hp 35; Atk +7 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA improved grab (grapple +3).

14. Lower Landing (EL 6)

This unadorned room contains only a ladder leading up 35 feet to area 6 and a bucket half filled with stale water. The walls, however, bear rather impressive bas-relief sculptures depicting explorers in various poses, often battling monsters. These renderings, executed by Fellspar himself, cover nearly every square inch of the walls. There are roughly three dozen carved figures, ranging from floor to ceiling and flanking the room's extents.

Creatures: The bas-relief figures on either side of the north door are actually animated columns, which come to life and attack whenever someone other than Elias or Risvane attempts to pass through the door. See the Appendix for more details.

Animated Columns (2): CR 3; hp 27 each; see the Appendix.

15. Waxworks (EL 14)

You stand in a vast, well-heated chamber, 40-feet wide and 50-feet north-to-south, with a ceiling at least 20-feet high. The room is filled with giant wooden vats, stacks of wax blocks, cluttered work tables and other, less recognizable components of the wax-worker's trade. A dozen finished sculptures stand around the room in various postures. Two huge metal cauldrons discharge steam into the air, flames rolling beneath them as their liquid contents are agitated to a boil. Each breath draws in a new aroma; the open containers against the western wall no doubt contain spices used to scent the wax. The chamber's northern end holds what appears to be a large, rock-walled pool, fed by an underground spring. The water of the spring enters the room through a wide copper pipe, and from there falls directly upon a waterwheel some six feet in diameter. The movement of the waterwheel causes the rotation of several gears attached to a strange mechanism built over a steel worktable. On this table, half concealed within the machine, is what appears to be a man-shaped wax sculpture. Between the roaring of the flames under the cauldrons and the grinding of the waterwheel and gears, the entire room shakes with sound. Two clay sculptures occupy alcoves in

the east wall. The statues have been carved in the likeness of human adventurers. Finally, there is a cage against the south wall. A figure slumps within the cage, and a hulking humanoid rattles a key in the lock.

This room is always on **Alert**.

This room is Fellspar's primary lair, where he carves his sculptures and does away with the bodies of his slain enemies. As much is transpiring in this chamber when the PCs arrive, the room's contents are described individually. Familiarize yourself thoroughly with the operations here before play.

Waxworking Devices: The vats, tables, molds, and various tools are worth 3,000 gp if the right buyer can be found. All told, these objects weigh 2,500 lbs.

Finished Sculptures: These 12 statues represent people from all walks of life. They can be likenesses of any prominent NPCs in your campaign. The workmanship is masterful. Nine of the 12 are mundane, while the others are tallow golems (see **Creatures**, below).

Cauldrons: These two giant kettles contain boiling wax. They are mounted on mobile racks, so that they can be rolled across the room and tipped over to spill their contents into the proper mold. A Strength check (DC 14) is required to move one of the full cauldrons. A splash of hot liquid wax deals 1d8 points of damage. Dumping several gallons on a victim deals 3d8 points of damage, while complete immersion deals 5d8 points of damage per round.

Pool: The water in the pool is four feet deep. It drains through a series of small pipes. The water is cool and quite safe to drink.

Waterwheel and Mechanism: Fellspar uses this device to envelop his enemies. The apparatus has two power sources, one mundane, one magical. The waterwheel begins the process, pumping and stirring the proper chemicals and mixing them with the wax from the cauldrons. Then the magic of the apparatus takes over, coating anything placed inside of it. Fellspar feeds a body into the machine's mouth, and the arcane forces within seal the body in an all but permanent sheath of wax. Living beings can be enveloped as easily as corpses, suffocating as soon as they run out of air. The apparatus (Hardness 8, hp 75) may be shut down on a successful Disable Device check (DC 28) or by dealing to it its entire hp points in damage, causing it to lose all power.

Man in Mechanism: Currently a victim is half-way to being fully enveloped. His name is Abacor, and he's paralyzed. Unable to move, he can only lie there as Fellspar's aide feeds him into the machine. Wax covers him up to the waist. If freed, he swears eternal loyalty to the heroes. Abacor was serving as Fellspar's shipping agent, but after he lost yet another load of goods to highway robbers, he found

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himself facing Fellspar's childish wrath. Abacor was in charge of hiring the wagons in "Sculpting Destiny," which appeared in **Chapter One**. Despite the fact that the stolen goods might have been returned, Fellspar was not placated; he nonetheless ordered Abacor's death.



Clay Sculptures: Refer to **Creatures**, below.

Cage and Humanoid: The creature tending the cage is Fellspar's aide, an ogre mage named Bo-Wen. Having just locked up another victim, Bo-Wen is feeling particularly proud of himself when the heroes arrive. He is likely caught flat-footed by their sudden appearance, unless he's heard the sounding of the alarm. The victim is a woman named Diluna. She is Abacor's consort, and had the misfortune of being with him when he came to the museum to tell Fellspar that the shipment had been robbed by bandits. Consider Abacor and Diluna to be low-level commoners.

Creatures: The clay statues are in fact clay golems. If the PCs have met Sivian Ulphar, they quickly recognize his face carved on one of the golems. The other is a perfect replica of Elias Fellspar himself. Three of the 12 wax dummies in the room are tallow golems. The golems, clay and tallow alike, step out of the alcoves and attack anyone other than Fellspar and Risvane. The ogre mage, Bo-Wen, also throws himself into the fray.

Bo-Wen, Ogre Mage: CR 8; SZ L Giant; HD 5d8+15; hp 37; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 40 ft. (good); AC 18 (-1 size, +5 natural, +4 chain shirt); BAB/Grp +3/+12; Atk +7 melee (3d6+7, huge greatsword, 19-20/x2) or +2 ranged (2d6, huge longbow, crit x3, range 100 ft.); Full Atk +7 melee (3d6+7, huge greatsword, 19-20/x2) or +2 ranged (2d6, huge longbow, crit x3, range 100 ft.); SA spell-like abilities; SQ regeneration (2), spell resistance (18); AL LE; SV Fort +7, Ref +1, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills: Concentration +11, Listen +10, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10.
Feats: Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative.

SA—Spell-Like Abilities (Ex): At will—*darkness* and *invisibility*; 1/day—*charm person*, *cone of cold*, *gaseous form*, *polymorph*, and *sleep*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

CHAPTER THREE: THE SOUL OF VENGEANCE

Possessions: huge greatsword, large chain shirt, *wand of lightning bolt* (28 charges), huge longbow, and 20 arrows.

Clay golems (2): CR 10; hp 60 each; see the MM.

Tallow golems (3): CR 8; hp 55 each; see the Appendix.

Tactics: The ogre mage dives into the pool and uses the rock wall for 50% cover (+4 AC and +2 Reflex save bonus) while he fires charges from his *wand of lightning bolt*. He shouts a command word to one of the tallow golems, causing it to use one of the cauldrons as a weapon; the golem pushes the wheeled cauldron at the PCs, attempting to dump boiling wax on them. Bo-Wen also shouts to rouse Fellspar, who arrives 1d4 rounds later after imbibing a *potion of invisibility*. The EL becomes 18 if Fellspar joins the fray.

16. Conjuring Chamber (EL 4)

This room is obviously used by someone engaged in the arts of conjuration. The center of the floor is comprised of a circular wooden platform perhaps three inches high. The platform is painted white, with runes of summoning and abjuration stenciled along the edge. A thin book lies upon the platform. Three black, unlighted candles stand in pools of hardened wax, also on the platform. What appears to be a ceremonial knife rests between the candles.

Living in a land of thieves, Fellspar has taken great pains to protect himself from interlopers. Once a skilled adventurer, Fellspar has several resources at his disposal. Several months ago, he spent a staggering amount of coin to oversee the capture and transportation of a **mimic**. All of the items in this room are artifice, designed to fool trespassers. Only the mimic is real.

Creature: The raised platform is actually a mimic that attacks anyone standing upon it.

Mimic: CR 4; hp 61; see the MM.

17. Fellspar's Boudoir

This room is only accessible via a secret door in the floor of the hallway directly to the north. As a former adventuring rogue, Fellspar knows that it's safer to hide a secret door in the middle of a hallway rather than in a room; adventurers love to ransack rooms, but hallways are sometimes overlooked. It's nearly impossible to notice the secret door casually when moving down the hall (Spot check [DC 30]), though a determined inspection might meet with better results (Search check [DC 25]). The secret portal reveals a ladder leading into a short passage south, at which point a second ladder leads up to the floor of Area 17.

Treasure: Nearly everything in this room is treasure, as Fellspar keeps most of his mundane possessions in Area 6. The following items are seen upon entering the room:

Trunk #1: Locked (Open Lock [DC 28]). Trunk contains +3 *breastplate*, a +4 *scimitar*, and an intelligent +3 *nunchaku* named Takana (Int 16, Wis 14, Cha 17, Ego 13; empathy, NG, Sense Motive +12, grants user free use of the feat of Sunder). These are items that Fellspar picked up during his days as an adventurer, but for which he never found a suitable use.

Trunk #2: Locked (Open Lock [DC 28]) and trapped with a Poisoned Razor Trap: no attack roll necessary (1d4 points of damage plus poison [Fortitude save DC20; 1d8 Dex/no secondary]; Search [DC 25]; Disable Device [DC 25]). Trunk contains 818 pp.

Wash basin on nightstand: This is a *bowl of commanding water elementals*. During the heyday of his thieving career, Fellspar stole this item from a wizard's tower.

Bed: This lavish bed, its sandalwood posters carved with beautiful gold-inlaid arabesques, is worth 2,250 gp if it can be hauled out and sold. It weighs 400 lbs.

Book: This hefty tome is Fellspar's journal, chronicling his career as a burglar and his role as rogue-scholar in the expedition that led to the recovery of the Bells of Heaven. The book is a vital clue in the PCs' investigation, as it offers a full account of Fellspar's existence—most prominently his death in the dungeon and subsequent return as a bhuta. The book's latter chapters are the dark and gruesome contemplations of a half-mad, undead recluse, bent upon extracting revenge on the man he blames for the corruption of his mortal spirit. Nearly every sentence is one freighted with ill will toward Sivian Ulphar. Each chapter further implicates Fellspar as a criminal. Fellspar also records how, by spending a fortune on divination spells, he learned that Sivian's sister, Madriel, was imprisoned in Paraxus's Bell of Heaven. As soon as the heroes read this, they should realize that the gemstone they hold is actually Madriel's prison. Fellspar intended to release the woman, hold her captive, and use her to wreak a terrible revenge upon his enemy. If the PCs attempt to free Madriel from captivity, refer to **Fellspar Defeated**, below.

Battling Fellspar (EL 17)

Once he becomes aware of the PCs' illicit entry into the museum, Fellspar prepares to eliminate them, single-handedly if necessary. If the skeleton warrior has not been destroyed, Fellspar's first action is to send this creature after the intruders, hoping to wear them down. Fellspar hides in Area 17 whenever the skeleton

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warrior is in “active” mode so that he can control it undisturbed. If the heroes defeat the warrior, Fellspar leaves Area 17 and closes in on their position, using Move Silently to sneak up on them. He quaffs his *potion of invisibility* and attempts to attack one of them from behind.

Fellspar fights only for 1d4 rounds, then uses one *teleport* in his *ring of spell storing* to flee to Area 17, where he imbibes a *potion of healing*, followed by a *potion of haste*, and pads silently down the hall to rejoin the battle. Keep in mind that Fellspar is a veteran of many battles. He knows all the tricks. He uses *teleport* a second time if he falls below 15 hit points.

Elias Fellspar, Male Human Bhuta Rog10/ Ftr5: CR 17; SZ M Undead (6 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 10d6 + 5d10 + 1d8; hp 79; Init +7 (Dex, Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (+3 Dex, +3 natural, +6 *bracers of armor*); BAB/Grp +12/+14; Atk +17 melee (1d8+5, +3 *longsword*, 19-20/x2), or +18 ranged (1d6+3, +3 *shortbow*, 19-20/x3); Full Atk +17/+12/+7 melee (1d8+5, +3 *longsword*, 19-20/x2), or +18/+13/+8 ranged (1d6+3, +3 *shortbow*, crit 19-20/x3); SA crippling strike, death grip (1d6+3 points of damage, no speaking), improved grab (grapple +23), sneak attack (+5d6); SQ evasion, find target, gentle repose, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+3); AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +11, Will +5; Str 15, Dex 16, Con -, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 13

Skills: Bluff +7, Climb +16, Craft (wax sculptures) +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +13, Gather Information +18, Handle Animal +4, Hide +5, Jump +4, Knowledge (arcana) +2, Knowledge (local) +10, Listen +11, Move Silently +16, Open Lock +12, Ride (horses) +11, Spot +15, Use rope +4; **Feats:** Alertness, Dodge, Far Shot, Improved Critical (shortbow), Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Shot on the Run, Skill Focus (Gather Information).

Possessions: +3 *longsword*, +3 *shortbow*, +2 *arrows* (x 12), *potions of haste* (2 doses), *healing* (1 dose), and *invisibility* (2 doses), a *ring of spell storing* (*prismatic spray*, *teleport* [x2]), and one arcane scroll (caster level 9) containing the spells *minor sentience* and *perpetual motion*, which are detailed in the Appendix.

Fellspar Defeated?

If the heroes returned to the museum at the behest of Sivian Ulphar, the defeat of Elias Fellspar concludes *A Lamentation of Thieves*. All that remains to be done is to free Sivian's sister from imprisonment in the Bell of Heaven. To accomplish this task, the gem must be smashed,

thus releasing the woman's spirit. The Bell (Hardness 5, hp 10, Break [DC 15]) is rather fragile.

Breaking the Bell causes Sivian's sister to appear. She is a small-framed woman with pale yellow hair, colorless eyes, and a constellation of freckles on her cheeks. After shaking off her disorientation, she introduces herself as Madriel Ulphar. The last thing she remembers is sneaking through a mountain valley on her way to the concealed tower of Paraxus and the Mechanician. She was ambushed and sealed inside the Bell, where she has dwelled for the last five years.

Madriel, Female Human Rog12: CR 12; SZ M (5 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 12d6+24; hp 73; Init +8 (Dex, Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); BAB/Grp +10/+10; Atk +9 melee, or +13 ranged; SA sneak attack (+6d6); Full Atk +9/+4 melee, or +13/+8 ranged; SA sneak attack (+7d6); SQ evasion, improved evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+4), slippery mind; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +12, Will +8; Str 11, Dex 19, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 15, Cha 12.

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +16, Climb +15, Jump +9, Listen +2, Profession (astrologer) +14, Sleight of Hand +12, Search +14, Spot +2, Swim +14, Tumble +19. **Feats:** Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Track.

Possessions: none.

Personality: Madriel is reserved, perhaps even a little cold, but her frosty veneer thaws a bit after she has known a person for awhile. She loves acrobatics and athletic competition. She is quite levelheaded but not afraid of the occasional risky operation.

By liberating Madriel, the PCs earn the eternal gratitude of the Lucre King. This could take the shape of gold (up to 5,000 gp each, depending on the affluence of your campaign world), favors, land grants, or noble titles. At the very least, Sivian becomes the heroes' ally—an event that might prove more harmful than beneficial, considering the enemies that Sivian has made over the years.

What becomes of the Mechanician? The mountain stronghold constructed by Paraxus and the Mechanician is not detailed in this adventure. For all intents and purposes, the Mechanician remains beyond the PCs' grasp. Locating and penetrating his lair is a task not to be attempted by characters of less than ultra-high experience levels. The exact nature of this unassailable castle might be explored in future Necromancer Games products, but, as always, you are free to design it at any time. Perhaps the heroes join forces with Sivian Ulphar himself, and together they seek out the most infamous wizard's tower in history....

Ship of Perdition

If the heroes accept Fellspar's quest, they are well advised to prepare themselves every way they can for the coming mission. As Fellspar indicated, the dwarf named Paraxus is now serving a life sentence aboard the *Pariah*. This section deals with the specifics of that vessel.

Researching the *Pariah*

Before they hire a boat to take them across the Moonsilver Sea, the PCs may want to conduct a little research on the *Pariah* itself. Other than the ship's current course, Fellspar knows very little beyond the basic facts. If the PCs don't think of it themselves, Fellspar suggests that they investigate the ship before they set sail. Possible sources of information include judges and other members of the judiciary, lawmen, thieves, sailors, smugglers, sages, and adventurers. Make a Gather Information check and compare the results below, using the DCs listed as the minimum needed to learn the particular information adjacent:

DC 12: The *Pariah* is a huge ship with a multi-leveled hold below deck. The prisoners are both male and female, and all of them serve a life sentence; once aboard the ship, an inmate never leaves. The ship is funded through the mayor's coffers, the guards paid with money from the Hawkmoon vault. Folk sent here are of two types: thieves who are considered incorrigible, and murderers. The ship sails endlessly, never pulling into a harbor. Its guards are rotated in longboats sent from shore, and the same such boats bring in routine supplies.

DC 18: Many famous criminals have been incarcerated on the barge, including Xiang the Razor, a serial killer responsible for over a dozen murders, and Giltandium, also known as the Thief of Tears. Xiang was a deadly pit-fighter who had a habit of killing and mutilating people in all the towns he visited on the gladiator circuit. Giltandium, once called the Uncatchable, was indeed caught by Sivian Ulphar, who considered him a potential rival to his guild and saw that he was sent away to the prison barge. If the PCs captured Branke the halfling in Chapter One, they learn that he too has been sentenced to life aboard the *Pariah*.

DC 23: At least 60 guards are on board the ship at all times. They are a mixed lot, men and women of all races who are brave or desperate enough to tend the inmates on the *Pariah*. Theirs is a dangerous duty, for which they are handsomely paid and fairly well trained. A guard serves full-time for a period of two weeks, at which time he has one week of shore leave. The guard rotation is such that longboats come and go once per week, with approximately 30 guards leaving while an equal number arrives to take their place. Many of the guards are honest folk, while quite a few are only one step up from criminals themselves.

DC 28: There are four "levels" of the ship. The top level, which is known simply as the Foredeck, or "topside," is restricted-access. Only guards and trustees are permitted on the Foredeck. The Foredeck is mostly a large rectangular area, with an aft wheelhouse. Subdeck One has rooms for guards and cells for the less violent offenders. The

deeper one journeys in the ship, the more despicable the inmates that are housed there. Curiously, the ship has neither sails nor oars. Its motive power is provided by a colossal wheel affixed to the stern. No one knows what mysterious force moves the wheel and pushes the barge through the water.

DC 33: Apparently, the guards don't have everything completely under control aboard the *Pariah*. Subdeck Three borders on anarchy; most of the guards are afraid to go down there. The hatches to Subdeck Three are sealed off unless food is being dropped down. Entering Subdeck Three is like venturing into hell. The only thing that keeps the convicts from escaping are the powerful spells that have been placed on the ship, preventing all attempts to breach the hull.

DC 38: The ship is captained by a tyrant named Ibrahim Queel, a man both obsessive and cruel, no better than the inmates he oversees. As warden of the prison ship, Queel's word is law, and rumor has it that he's using the *Pariah* to attend to a personal agenda. He is believed to be a spellcaster of some kind, using his powers to ensure the loyalty of his underlings and the complete subservience of the convicts.

Getting Aboard the *Pariah*

Elias Fellspar provides the PCs with the ship's approximate location on the Moonsilver Sea, but it's up to them to secure a means to travel there. They may hire a ship, but few captains are willing to transport them if it becomes apparent they intend to sneak aboard the *Pariah*, which of course is highly illegal. It is said that any sailor who abets an escape attempt earns life inside the *Pariah* for himself. Most NPCs don't want to take the chance. However, if the PCs produce a plausible story for their journey, they should be able to find a ride. They only need to get close enough to the prison barge to use rafts or longboats for the final mile or so. Alternately, they could swim the remaining distance. The lookouts on the barge are equipped with spyglasses, permitting them to see the approach of any large vessel.

Another option is for the PCs to try to board the ship "legally." They could do this by posing as inspectors working for the mayor of Hawkmoon, or other important dignitaries. The guards often entertain important people, not finding it terribly odd if the PCs present the proper paperwork to come aboard. To maintain the ruse, the PCs have to make several Bluff checks, opposed by the guards' Sense Motive skill.

Magic is perhaps the most efficient way to reach the ship, which is cruising some 50 miles off the coast at the time the adventure begins. However, the ship is warded against *teleportation*, *dimension door* and the like, as discussed in the Ship Details sidebar. Because of these wards, magic only gets the characters to the ship's waterline, not actually aboard her. For that, they'll have to rely on climbing up the hull, which is difficult at best, as the sheer wooden planks are wet and slippery (Climb check [DC 30] without a rope, or [DC 15] if a knotted rope is hooked or fastened to the gunwales). Alternately, *levitate* or similar magic can be used to ascend to the Foredeck, though once

on the deck itself, no form of transportation or "movement" magic is possible. Refer to the sidebar.

The Guards (EL variable): There are 60 guards aboard the *Pariah* at all times. The guards are divided into three ranks: Jailors, Bailiffs, and Commanders. Though these individuals are placed at certain keyed locations on the map of the ship, they respond quickly and professionally to any distress call, converging on the source of trouble. Each guard wears a bosun's whistle around his neck to sound such a call. It takes 1d3 rounds for a guard to run up or down one deck level and reach any area on that deck. In other words, if an alarm is sounded in the Wheelhouse, a guard on Subdeck Two requires 2d3 rounds to make it topside and reach the wheelhouse. If none of the hatches are manned topside by a commander or warden Queel it is impossible to guards to travel between the sub decks and the main deck. PCs who cause trouble could easily find themselves facing dozens of guards at once. If the heroes sneak aboard, be prepared to make continuous opposed Move Silently and Listen checks to see if the guards notice them. To determine the final EL of a battle with any number of guards, simply note the number and CR of the guards involved, then refer to the information on determining Encounter Levels in the DMG. Try to stage all battles with the guards so that the EL matches your current needs; if the adventurers are 10th level and you want to give them an even fight, present them with 6 Jailors and 2 Bailiffs (EL 10). Throwing a Commander into this mix raises the EL to 11. It's easy to tailor any combat by mixing in an assortment of guards.

The guards do not part with any information regarding the ship or its denizens, so it's likely that the PCs have to deal with the inmates themselves in order to discover anything of value concerning Paraxus. Such interaction may prove quite complicated, as several inmates are acceptable to cut deals with the PCs; some can be trusted, some cannot. The heroes might very well form an elaborate tangle of relationships as they meet and barter with the ship's inhabitants.

Tactics: The guards are not fools. In fact, the very nature of their job demands that they be both vigilant and decisive. Only if they're fighting for their lives do they attack when outnumbered. Otherwise, they always wait until their numbers are at least twice that of an adversary. Their usual method is to have one guard attack an enemy while a second dives for the enemy's legs and attempts to grapple him.

Jailors, Male and Female Human War3 (30): CR 2; Size M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 3d8+6; hp 19 (each); Init +1; Spd 20 ft., 30 ft. (base); AC 16 (+1 Dex, chain mail); BAB/Grp +3/+5; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, longsword, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, longsword, 19-20/x2); AL LN; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +2; Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 12, Cha 11.

Skills: Intimidate +5, Knowledge (the *Pariah*) +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +2, Search +3, Spot +3, Swim +5. **Feats:** Expertise, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: longsword, chain mail, assorted keys.

Ship Details

Though the *Pariah* is made of wood, layers of protective spells have been placed upon her over the years, preventing the use of any type of magic that affects distance and movement (e. g., *blink*, *dimension door*, *ethereal jaunt*, *fly*, *haste*, *jump*, et al). Other transmutation spells such as *gaseous form*, *rope trick*, and *vanish* function normally.

The ship's hull can be damaged from the outside as per very thick wood (hardness 5, hp 60, break DC 35). However, because of the staggering magic implanted within it, the hull is nearly impervious to all attacks made against it from *inside* the ship (hardness 15, 60 hp, magic weapon required to damage). The interior walls, known as bulkheads, are difficult but not impossible to damage (Hardness 5, hp 30, Break [DC 23]). Cell doors and hatches in the Subdecks are made of iron (Hardness 10, hp 60, Break [DC 28]). All shackles, manacles, leg irons and similar tethers are quite stout (Hardness 10, hp 20, Break [DC 26]).

No open flames are permitted on the barge, for fear of fire. There are no torches to be found anywhere. Small, durable lanterns are hung every 20 feet or so throughout the Subdecks, throwing puddles of dirty light in a 15-foot radius. Many parts of the ship are thus thick with shadow. There are portholes on Subdeck One but none on Subdecks Two and Three. The portholes are 6 inches in diameter. All Subdecks are quite cramped, only adding to the oppressive atmosphere. The stench in the lower levels is at times nearly overpowering. There is a clearance of 6 1/2 feet between the deck (floor) and overhead (ceiling) in any given passageway, cabin, or cell, with exceptions noted in the individual room descriptions. The letter G on the map indicates the post of a pair of guards, any combination of Jailors, Bailiffs, and Commanders.

Bailiffs, Male Human War5 (20): CR 4; SZ M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 5d8+5; hp 30 (each); Init +5 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., 30 ft. (base); AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 chain mail); BAB/Grp +5/+8; Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, longsword, 19-20/x2), or +6 ranged; Full Atk +9 melee (1d8+3, longsword, 19-20/x2), or +6 ranged; SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +1; ALLN; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Intimidate +9, Jump +9, Listen +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: longsword, chain mail, assorted keys.

Commanders, Male and Female Human War7 (10): CR 6; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 7d8+21; hp 61 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft., 30 ft. (base); AC 18 (+1 Dex, +2 chain mail); BAB/Grp +7/+10; Atk +13 melee (1d8+5, longsword, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +13/+8 melee (1d8+5, longsword, 19-20/x2); AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +2; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +9, Listen +3, Ride (horses) +6, Spot +3, Swim +7. *Feats:* Cleave, Power Attack, Skill Focus (swim), Weapon Focus (longsword).

Possessions: +2 longsword, +2 chain mail, assorted keys.

Keyed Locations

1. Foredeck

This is the primary deck, open to the air, just like the top decks of most ocean-going vessels. The wood is kept well oiled and free of grime; the brightwork routinely polished. Note that the *Pariah* is equipped with neither sails nor oars, although it does possess a single mast. From the arms of this mast hang “crow’s cages” containing the skeletons of inmates who’ve tried unsuccessfully to escape. It is quite an eerie sight.

The absence of sails gives the guards an unobstructed view of the deck. It is very difficult to move around without being seen by the guards who walk regular patrols around the Foredeck. All patrols carry at least one spyglass.

2. Hatches

These round valves are three feet in diameter, revealing metal ladders to Subdeck One. The valves are kept locked at all times. Each Commander has a key to each hatch, as does Warden Queel. The hatches cannot be unlocked or opened from below (when the guards want to move up through the decks, another guard must open the hatch from above). A guard on Subdeck One wanting access to the Deck must bang on the valve until one of the Commanders lets him up.

Steel Hatch: 2 in. thick; Hardness 10; hp 60; Break (DC 28).

3. Cargo Doors

These massive doors, set into the deck, permit large quantities of goods to be lowered into Subdecks One and Two. These doors are almost never used. They are barred on the top to prevent prisoners from opening them from below.

Cargo Door: 4 in thick; Hardness 5; hp 40; Break (DC 25).

4. Weapon Racks

Each guard, regardless of rank, holds keys to the weapons racks. These arms are held in place by a simple wooden crossbar. Each rack holds 6 longswords, 2 light crossbows, and 40 light bolts. Stacked on the deck nearby are 6 small steel shields.

Weapon Rack: Hardness 5; hp 15; Break (DC 18).

5. Lifeboats

Each lifeboat is large enough to hold 10 medium-size creatures. The boats are shackled to the gunwales. It takes 1d4 rounds to lower a boat to the water’s surface. Optionally, the ropes that hold the boats may be cut away for a quicker release.

6. Wheelhouse

This cabin serves as both the guard command center and the steering room. Ibrahim Queel is here 25% of the time.

When he’s not present, he leaves one of the 10 commanders in charge. Additionally, there are always 2 **Bailiffs** and 4 **Jailors** here, for a total of 6 guards. This room is lined with desks, the drawers of which are crammed with sea charts, weather information, and nearly endless receipts, invoices, and manifests for food and supplies. The more sensitive documents are kept in the Warden’s Cabin (Area 21). There are also plenty of spare weapons, including 12 longswords and 6 light crossbows with hundreds of bolts. The windowless wheelhouse can be locked from the inside in the event of an emergency.

There are three items of note here. First, fastened to one of the bulkheads, is a pull-chain attached to a giant bell on the outside of the Wheelhouse. This is a fog-warning device, which is rung almost continuously during inclement weather. Secondly, in the center of the room is the large wooden wheel that is used to steer the ship. Note that the man working the wheel cannot actually see the progress of the ship through the water. He relies upon prearranged coordinates and a nearly continuous relay of information from the guards on the Foredeck. This procedure was intentionally arranged to keep all hands alert. No one is ever lax in his or her duties. In the event of a storm, Warden Queel takes control of the ship, and because of his special skills he never has to worry about running aground. See Area 21 for more details of this mysterious personage.

Finally, in the corner of the room is a hatch. Underneath is a short shaft, 3 feet wide, that leads down to the Paddle Wheel. See Area 7.

Commander (1): hp 61; see above.

Bailiffs (2): hp 30 (each); see above.

Jailors (4): hp 19 (each); see above.

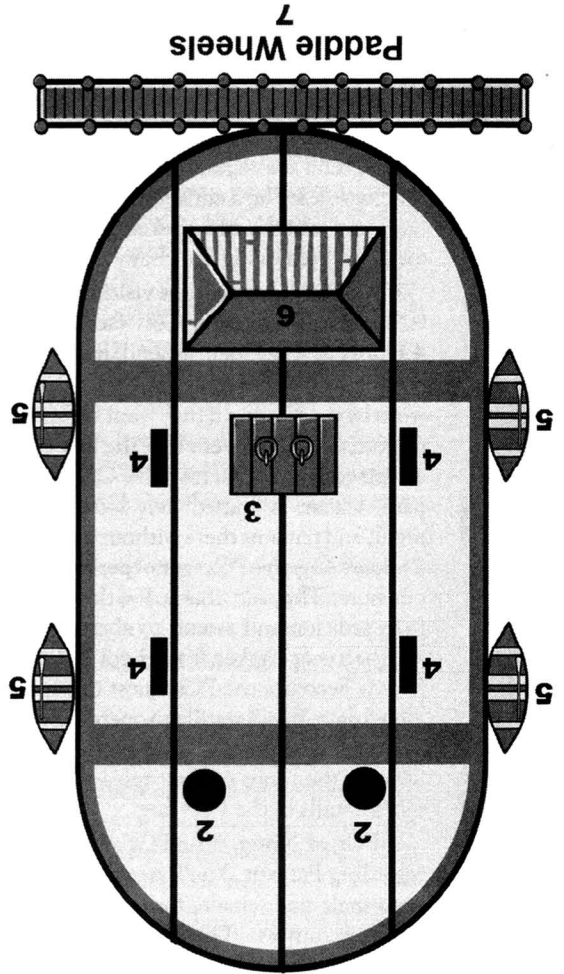
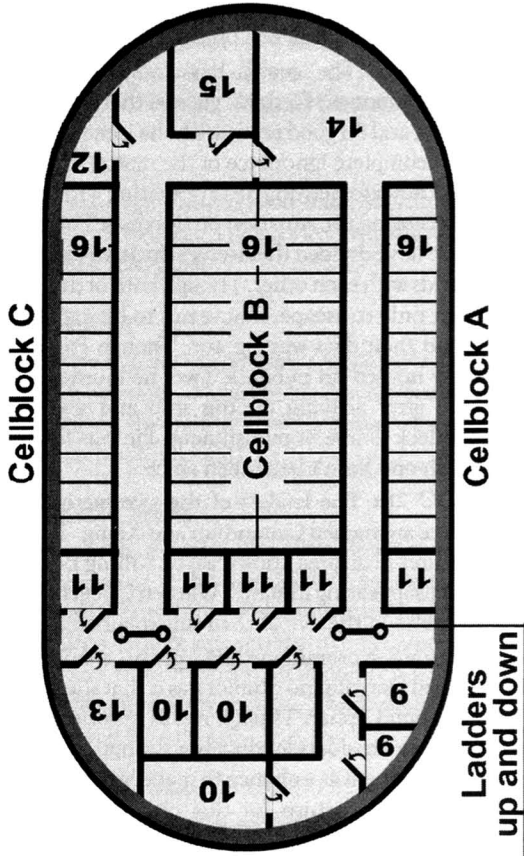
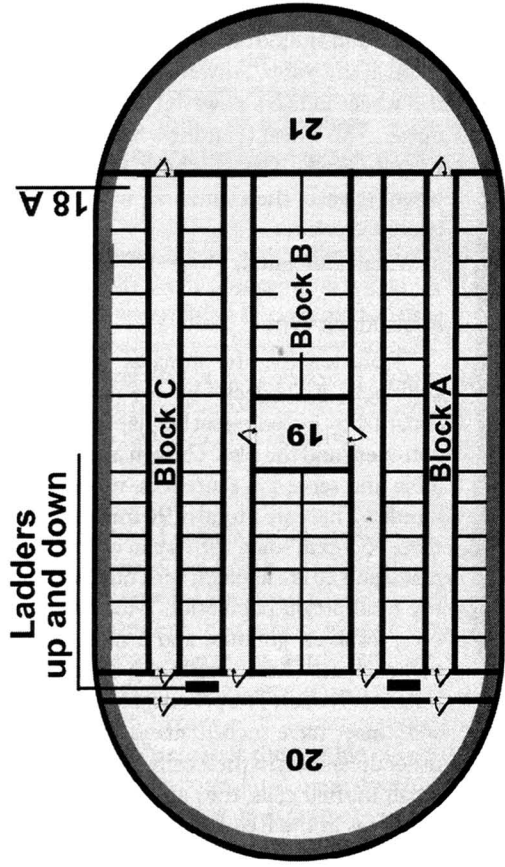
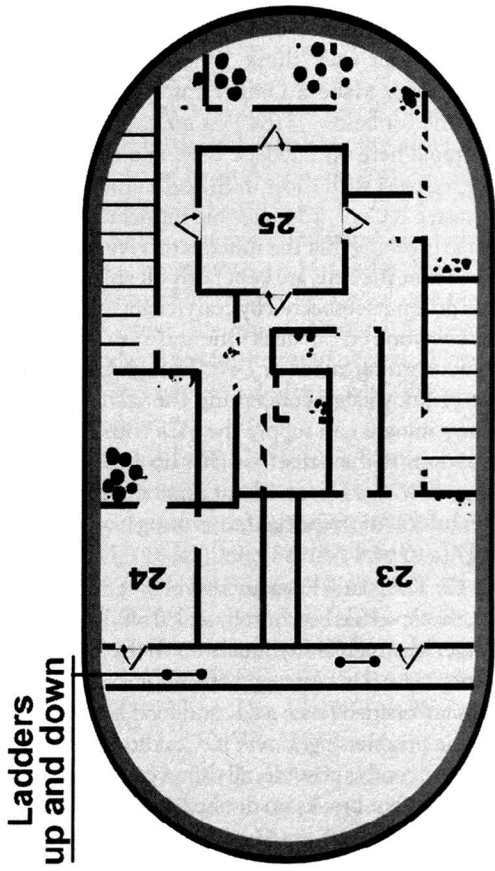
7. Paddle Wheel (EL 7)

The Paddle Wheel is 10 feet below the railing on the Foredeck. To reach it, the PCs must either make a Climb check (DC 15), resort to magic, or use the shaft in the Wheelhouse.

Anyone climbing down the shaft from the Wheelhouse or the railing from the Foredeck finds themselves on a short plank only inches from a giant, spinning wheel. The plank shakes with the vibration of the moving wheel, and anyone standing on it is subject to the constant spray of water that is flung up by the moving paddles. A Balance check (DC 15) is required every round for anyone on the plank, as the ship is moving and the wheels are churning, making for treacherous footing. Failing the check causes the PC to fall into the wheel. The moving paddle wheel deals 4d8 points of damage, as the character is slung around in one big revolution and plunged underwater, where he must make a Swim check (DC 12) to fight the current that traps him under the barge. A Swim check is required each round. One success is sufficient to clear the undertow and reach the surface. Refer to the swimming and drowning rules for more information.

This great wheel is not connected to any kind of engine the PCs can see. It is powered by an imprisoned water elemental. Warden Queel captured the elemental during one of his forays into the Elemental Plane of Water. The elemental has been bound into service, forced to move

Pariah



around and around on the paddle wheel, driving the *Pariah* through the water. Anyone casting *detect magic* notes that the wheel radiates powerful abjuration and conjuration magic. The wheel (Hardness 8, hp 50) may be sabotaged with a Disable Device check (DC 25). Destroying the wheel releases the elemental, who promptly attacks the nearest creature.

Water Elemental, Huge: CR 7; hp 155; see the *MM*.

8. Subdeck One

Traditionally, the inmates quartered in the three cellblocks of Subdeck One are the least violent of those aboard ship, including cat burglars, safe-crackers, cutpurses, con-men, and the like. Though all are considered incorrigible and serve life sentences, none of them is guilty of murder. There are a total of **90 inmates** here, some two and three to a cell, some with a cell of their own. Seventy are males and 20 are females, with humans comprising 85% of the total prison population. Most of the others are half-orcs, dwarves, gnomes, and a more than a few halfling pickpockets. There is only one elf aboard the *Pariah* (see Subdeck Three). The prisoners of Subdeck One are treated well; most have such items as paper, quills, paints, and other diversions in their cells. Though they must eat their meals in their cells, they are let out twice a day to stretch their legs in the Rec Area on Subdeck Two. At 10 A.M. and 4 P.M., cellblock A is taken to the Rec Area for one hour, then marched back. Cellblock B moves out next, and then cellblock C.

This deck, like the others below it, is almost always a chaos of noise, as inmates talk, shout back and forth between the cells, play lewd music on hand-made instruments, send messages, sing, bang on the cell doors, and otherwise keep up a constant racket. Ten percent of these men and women are trustees, charged with delivering meals and removing the chamber pots.

If the PCs have come as visiting dignitaries, one of the Commanders summons Corv (see below), **2 Bailiffs**, and **4 Jailors** to show them around. If the PCs have infiltrated the ship through stealth, they must don the gray coveralls worn by the trustees if they want to have a chance of going unnoticed. In the event that the heroes are captured, they are placed into separate cells. One of them, perhaps the party leader, is immediately locked in solitary confinement, and remains there without food or water for the next 24 hours. Captive PCs are not permitted to contact anyone on shore. They are charged with various crimes, ranging from sedition and assault to abetting an escape attempt. All their gear is taken from them and given to the warden. It now becomes the PCs' quest to contrive an escape. If, after 5 days, they are still prisoners of the ship, Queel comes to one of them in the middle of the night, ostensibly to "discuss the terms of their release." Refer to Area 21 for more details of the PC's fate.

NPCs of Note: Wise PCs ask around for intelligence regarding Paraxus. You'll need to prepare several names, both male and female, for the various convicts that the PCs encounter. These individuals range from the backstabbing to the trustworthy, from the meek to the maniacal. Play these folks for all they're worth! For the

promise of favors in return, some of the inmates might tell the heroes that they think Paraxus is being held on Subdeck Two. Make a Gather Information check and consult the list below. If the PCs are captured, they'll be incarcerated here on Subdeck One, and they'll have the chance to speak with those in the cells around them. The head trustee is Corv, a 54-year-old former cat burglar now in charge of seeing that the inmates receive their meals on time and that the cells are kept fairly clean. Corv is one of the few prisoners respected by convict and guard alike. He knows everyone on Subdeck One and a fair amount of the gossip concerning Subdeck Two. Though Corv is the best source of knowledge concerning the status quo aboard ship, any inmate can supply the PCs with the following information, if the bribe is right; no inmate, not even Corv, parts with a favor without a favor in return. Make a Gather Information check. If consulting Corv, consider all these DCs to be 4 points lower.

DC 12: The guards have no control over Subdeck Three. In fact, that level has been totally sealed off. The inmates are in charge. It's a regular nightmare down there, and the gods only know who is in command and what they're up to. The hatches are opened twice a day and food is dumped down, where the prisoners fight over it. Conditions on the other decks are as good as possible, all things considered. Warden Queel is fair, but brooks no disobedience.

DC 18: Inmates have been disappearing. Once every week or so, word gets around that someone passed away during the night—despite the fact that they were perfectly healthy the day before. The guards are probably getting rid of troublemakers. There is indeed a prisoner named Paraxus. He's a dwarf with a cell on Subdeck Two.

DC 23: The guards have nothing to do with the disappearances. Certain guards that are known to be honest and on good terms with the inmates have admitted their complete ignorance of the matter. Perhaps the warden knows something he isn't sharing with his underlings. Concerning the situation on Subdeck Three, the inmates there have divided themselves into two camps, constantly at odds with each other. Though both of these small armies want only to escape, that seems to be impossible, so they spend their days waging war. Though Paraxus was originally housed on Subdeck Two, he murdered a guard not long after arriving on the ship and was sentenced to Subdeck Three as punishment. He was forced down the hatch and hasn't been seen since.

DC 28: The leaders of the two factions in Subdeck Three are named Giltandium and Xiang. They settle their disputes in an area known as the Killing Box. In regards to the disappearing inmates, Warden Queel has visited many of them on the eve of their unexplained departure.

Another prominent NPC of this subdeck is a woman named Donjala Ino. Rumor has it that she is a former lover of Sivian Ulphar. Though not as knowledgeable as Corv, she easily considers lending her strength to the PCs' cause; she sees them as a chance to make her escape. She pledges anything in return for this opportunity. She attempts seduction first, then bribery. If neither ploy works, she becomes enraged and does what she can to thwart the heroes at every turn.

ALAMENTATION OF THEIVES

Corv, Male Human Rog8: CR 8; SZ M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 8d6+8; hp 39; Init +7 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); BAB/Grp +6/+7; Atk +7 melee or +9 ranged; Full Atk +7/+2 melee, or +9/+4 ranged; SA sneak attack (+4d6); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+2); AL N; SV Fort +3, Ref +11, Will +5; Str 13, Dex 17, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 17, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +12, Bluff +11, Climb +11, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +11, Escape Artist +14, Gather Information +11, Hide +5, Intuit Direction +12, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +10, Move Silently +5, Spot +6, Tumble +14, Use Magic Device +6, Use Rope +7. *Feats:* Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility.

Possessions: none.

Personality: Helpful and polite, Corv seems quite content with his lot in life.

Donjala Ino, Female Human Rog10: CR 10; SZ M (5 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 10d6-10; hp 34; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 Dex); BAB/Grp +7/+7; Atk +7 melee (1d4, dagger, 19-20/x2); Full Atk +7/+2 melee (1d4, dagger, 19-20/x2); SA sneak attack (+5d6); SQ evasion, slippery mind, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+3); AL CN; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +8; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Balance +13, Climb +13, Decipher Script +11, Disable Device +13, Disguise +14, Forgery +13, Hide +9, Listen +3, Move Silently +16, Sense Motive +16, Spot +3, Tumble +17. *Feats:* Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Weapon Focus (shortbow).

Possessions: makeshift dagger.

Personality: Of mercurial temperament and unpredictable actions, Donjala is both an asset and a liability. She takes great risks to assist the heroes, but if she realizes they aren't going to help her escape, she goes berserk.

9. Jailors' Cabins

The Jailors relax here while not on duty, sharing the rooms between the 30 of them. They always keep the doors locked (Open Lock [DC 22]).

10. Bailiffs' Cabins

The 20 Bailiffs share these comfortably appointed rooms. Sundry items of a personal nature are kept in footlockers here. Like the Jailors, the Bailiffs keep their doors locked at all times (Open Lock [DC 25]).

11. Commanders' Cabins

The 10 Commanders are quartered here when not overseeing the operation of the ship. Each Commander is likely to possess 6d10 gp and any kind of minor magic item. One of them, Murgo, is quite susceptible to bribes, and the inmates have bought him off. So far, his duplicity has gone unnoticed amongst his fellow guards. These doors are locked (Open Lock [DC 28]).

12. Solitary Confinement

The prisoners refer to this small chamber as "the captain's closet." Its walls are lined in metal. It has no light, no heat,

no furniture, only a dented waste pail. There is not enough room to lie down. Unruly inmates are locked in here, sometimes for periods up to three days. A successful Search check (DC 25) reveals a "shiv," or homemade knife, wedged in the seam between the deck and the bulkhead.

13. Ship's Stores

This door is locked (Open Lock [DC 28]); all guards hold a key. This cramped, smelly room is where food is kept. A prisoner's diet consists of water, ship's biscuit, smoked fish, and dried peas. These items are stored here in quantity. One Jailor is always here, along with a cook and 1d3 inmate trustees. Ship rats are also a problem, so the cook's one-eyed cat, Squid, usually prowls here in search of dinner.

14. Surgeon

This door is locked (Open Lock [DC 28]); the surgeon, the warden, and all Commanders hold a key. The ship's surgeon, a veteran mariner named Pothinuph, is a cleric of the sea god, Lusph. Pothinuph has served aboard the Pariah for 17 years, almost as long as the warden himself. Inmates with minor wounds and illness are brought to him almost every day. He doesn't know why certain convicts are disappearing, but he suspects that the warden is running a racket of some kind. However, Pothinuph does not part with this information for less than 100 gp.

Pothinuph, Male Human Clr7 (Lusph): CR 7; SZ M (5 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 7d8+21; hp 57; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; BAB/Grp +5/+7; Atk +7 melee or +5 ranged; Full Atk +7 melee or +5 ranged; SA rebuke water creatures, turn fire creatures, turn undead; SQ healing spells (+1 caster level), spontaneous casting; AL LN; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +8; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12.

Skills: Concentration +10, Forgery +2, Heal +10, Jump +4, Listen +3, Profession (surgeon) +9, Spellcraft +2, Spot +3. *Feats:* Extend Spell, Extra Turning, Improved Unarmed Strike, Power Attack.

Divine Spells Prepared (6/5/4/3/1; save DC 13 + spell level): 0—create water (x3), cure minor wounds (x2), detect magic; 1st—cure light wounds (x3), obscuring mist; 2nd—change self, cure moderate wounds (x2), shatter; 3rd—cure serious wounds (x2), water breathing; 4th—control water.

Domain Spells (Healing, Water): 1st—cure light wounds; 2nd—fog cloud; 3rd—water breathing; 4th—cure critical wounds.

Possession: large supply of surgical tools and healer's salves, potions of *neutralize poison* (x2), and *wisdom*, and a ring of the ram.

Personality: The surgeon is cautious and tight-lipped.

15. Ship's Supplies

This door is locked (Open Lock [DC 28]); only the Commanders and the warden hold the key. All non-food and non-weapon equipment is kept here, including ropes, shackles, prisoner clothing, leg-irons, extra lumber, tools, and anything else you deem appropriate.

16. Cellblocks

These cells are divided into three separate cellblocks: A, B, and C. The daily routine for most of these inmates is as follows:

6:00 A.M.	Trustees deliver breakfast (oatmeal and bread)
10:00	Cellblock A to Rec Area
11:00	Cellblock B to Rec Area; Block A returns
12:00 P.M.	Cellblock C to Rec Area; Block B returns
1:00	Block C returns; trustees deliver lunch (fish and pickled vegetables)
4-6:00	Repeat cycle to Rec Area
7:00	Trustees deliver dinner (fish and potatoes)
9:00	Head count and lights out

Inmates, Male and Female (mixed races) Com6 (90+): CR 5; SZ M; HD 6d4; hp 15 each; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 11 (+1 Dex); BAB/Grp +3/+5; Atk +5 melee, or +4 ranged; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +3, Will +3; Str 15, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +6, Jump +6, Listen +3, Profession (chosen) +11, Spot +3, Swim +4, Use rope +5; **Feats:** Martial Weapon Proficiency (improvised weapons), Point Blank Shot, Run, Skill Focus (chosen Profession).

17. Subdeck Two

Security is tighter here. There are no trustees roaming around. The smell of human sweat and feces is much worse, as there are no portholes to let in fresh air. The whole deck is dingy, dark, and cramped.

NPCs of Note: Dealing with the denizens of Subdeck Two is risky business. The prisoners here are more dangerous than those on the level above are, and more desperate. Bribes must be bigger in order to garner useful information. If the proper deal is made, the convicts show the PCs to the former cell of Paraxus; since the dwarf was transferred to Subdeck Three, his cell has been unoccupied. See Area 18A for further details of what Paraxus left behind.

The two dominant personalities on this deck are Darrakor and Siblybis, a human barbarian and a derro fighter, respectively. The other inmates refer the PCs to one of these two individuals. Darrakor's wife is trapped in Subdeck Three. Together they used to raid villages, but they were captured by the Trunchers and gulaged here. The barbarian's wife, Yinda, accidentally fell down the hatch to the lower level when the prisoners there tried to escape during one of the food drops. Regardless of what cover the PCs use during the investigation of the ship, Darrakor beseeches them to assist him. He asks that they enter Subdeck Three and bring Yinda back up. In exchange he offers information and his fighting arm, if needed. If the PCs for whatever reason intend to enter the lower level and can't produce a feasible infiltration plan on their own, Darrakor offers to arrange a diversion, permitting the PCs to scramble through the hatch while the guards are occupied elsewhere.

Siblybis also has a deal to make with the PCs, should they be brought to his attention. The derro, a former poisoner in the employ of a would-be overlord, wants only

to escape, and he forms any alliance to do so—but he also break any alliance if it forwards his cause. He believes the secret to escaping lies with Warden Queel. He suggests that the PCs break into Queel's quarters, as he is convinced that the warden must be hiding a magical transportation device of some kind. How else would he be making off with the vanished inmates? Once they've discovered what the warden is up to, the PCs are to free Siblybis and get him off the ship. In return for these services, the derro promises anything, whatever he believes the heroes truly want. He offers himself as an indentured servant, he offers information about important people in the Domain, he offers to undertake any quest. Just how truthful he is in his deal making is up to you. If all else fails, he simply attacks, hoping to win favor with the warden by killing the meddling PCs.

If Branke the halfling from "Death at Darkstar" was captured and sentenced to the *Pariah*, he too is on this deck. If Branke recognizes the PCs, he makes trouble for them in any way he can; optionally, he approaches the heroes and tries to convince them that he's been reformed by his stay in this horrible place. He wants to redeem himself (or so he claims). To this end, he offers whatever aid he can, always looking for a way to turn the situation to his favor. If the PCs have boarded the ship under false identities, Branke trades this information to the warden in return for a cell on Subdeck One—one deck closer to freedom. Queel then takes matters into his own capable hands, summoning a mass of guards to arrest the intruders. If necessary, the warden lends his own strength to the fight. See area 21 for Queel's statistics.

Branke, Male Halfling (Tallfellow) Rog3: hp 12 (see Chapter One)

Darrakor, Male Human Bbn10: CR 10; SZ M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 10d12+30; hp 95; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); BAB/Grp +10/+14; Atk +14 melee (1d10+6, greatclub); Full Atk +14/+9 melee (1d10+6, greatclub); SA rage (3/day); SQ fast movement, uncanny dodge, trap sense (+3), damage reduction 2/—; Fort +12, Ref +5, Will +4; ALCN; Str 19, Dex 14, Con 17, Int 5, Wis 12, Cha 16.

Skills: Climb +8, Jump +7, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +13, Survival +14. **Feats:** Cleave, Endurance, Great Fortitude, Power Attack, Skill Focus (Swim).

Possessions: iron bar used as makeshift greatclub.

Personality: Angry and dangerous, Darrakor is driven by the desire to rescue his wife. He remains true to any agreement made as long as it leads to his wife's freedom.

Siblybis, Male Dwarf (Derro) Ftr12: CR 12; SZ M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 12d10+24; hp 92; Init +8 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+4 Dex); BAB/Grp +12/+14; Atk +14 melee (1d4+2, knife (dagger), 19-20/x2); Full Atk +14/+9/+4 melee (1d4+2, knife (dagger), 19-20/x2); SQ darkvision (30 ft.), racial abilities, spell resistance (18), sunlight vulnerability; AL NE; Fort +10, Ref +8, Will +5; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Climb +17, Craft (poison) +8, Disable Device +6, Jump +17, Listen +3, Search +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4, Swim

+9, Use Rope +6. *Feats:* Alertness, Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Critical (shortsword), Improved Critical (greatclub), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack, Two-Weapon Fighting.

Possessions: knife (dagger), carved wooden flask containing one dose of ingestive poison made from fish blood, cleaning solvents, and paint chipped from the cell bars (failed Fortitude save [DC 20] from the poison results in wracking stomach cramps and nosebleeds; 1 point of permanent Con damage and 1d6 temporary Dex damage/no secondary effect).

Personality: The derro is intelligent and conniving.

18. Cellblocks

These cells are very similar to those of the upper deck, albeit the living conditions are worse.

Inmates, Male and Female (mixed races) Com6 (60+): hp 15 each; see Area 16 above.

18A. Paraxus' Former Cell

This cell has been empty ever since Paraxus was sent below three weeks ago. There is nothing here now but a straw pallet and a metal waste pail—or so it seems. A successful Search check (DC 20) means that one of the PCs happens to look up, and the light happens to fall just a certain way, revealing a series of charcoal marks on the ceiling. As the heroes eventually learn, Paraxus is dead, a victim of the Killing Box on Subdeck Three. However, he rendered on the ceiling of his cell a complex drawing that is itself the information the PCs require to locate the Bell of Heaven.

By borrowing the waste pails from his neighbors and standing on them, the dwarf was able to draw upon the ceiling two distinct pieces of information. The first of these is a set of numbers. Though the PCs may not immediately recognize it, these numbers represent the exact coordinates of where Paraxus buried the chest containing the Bell. It's up to you to supply these coordinates, depending on where you wish the chest to be located in your own campaign world. For example, the PCs might see the following numbers: 36 07 11 / 97 04 10. This actually stands for 36 degrees, 7 minutes, 11 seconds north, by 97°, 4', 10" west. Putting an "N" and "W" after each set as a clue is useful, if you expect your group of having trouble figuring out the true nature of the numbers.

The second piece of information appears in the form of the following lyric:

*Right before you lies the key
to open any door.
Center your mind on what you see
not what you've seen before.
Down through time a secret sealed
kept forevermore.
Above all else watch your step
lest free the dogs of war.
Left here for you, heaven's belle
if brave and true thou be.
Turn the wheel upon the door
and set our prisoner free.*

Deciphering this riddle aids the PCs in opening the buried vault that houses the gemstone. The heroes might believe that the "prisoner" mentioned in the poem is Paraxus himself, though he is actually referring to Madriel Ulphar (as he hints by using the word "belle" instead of "bell"). In fact, the riddle makes no sense at all until it is matched with the symbols that appear on the vault door. For details, refer below to **Digging Up the Bell**.

19. Guard Station

This room is always kept locked. **2d6 guards** of various types are stationed here at all times. Inside are several tables, decks of cards, dice, food and drink, books, writing instruments, and spare weapons.

Jailors (2d6): hp 19 each; see the introduction above Area 1.

20. Rec Area

This large area contains benches, mats, card tables, and other devices to give the inmates a few diversions during the few hours they are released from their cells each week. During recreation time, the area is a zoo of sound, gambling, singing, arm-wrestling, and the occasional brawl. Inmates make deals here, surreptitiously swap homemade weapons and liquor, and generally take out their frustrations on one another. This is where it all happens, a rowdy congregation of men and women who'd just as soon cut out someone's tongue than speak to them. PCs mingling here should be on their guard.

21. Warden's Cabin

The door to this room is always kept securely locked (Open Lock [DC 28]). Only Queel holds the key. The cabin is lavish, with throw rugs, pillows, candles, mirrors, tea services, and much more (see *Treasure*, below). The furniture is bolted to the deck to keep it from moving during foul weather. The desk drawers are full of mapping instruments worth 200 gp. A huge rack on the bulkhead holds charts, atlases, ship's logs, prisoner records, and massive bound map-books called *waggoners*. The prisoner records chronicle everyone who's ever been incarcerated aboard the *Pariah*. Next to the names of missing prisoners is written the word DECEASED.

The Captain's Secret

Ibrahim Queel, warden of the prison ship *Pariah*, is not actually a man at all, but a powerful genie. Specifically, he is a **marid** from the Elemental Plane of Water. Known in that aquatic realm as Queel, he adopted the name Ibrahim upon assuming the guise of a human male. Queel uses the *Pariah* to funnel slaves to the Plane of Water; he is the reason that inmates have been disappearing. Using his ability to *plane shift*, Queel smuggles a prisoner to his contacts once every few weeks. He is paid handsomely for his troubles, albeit not in coins, but rather in favors and other intangibles. His enterprise is such a success on his home plane that he is building up quite a reputation among his peers. Queel hopes to use his popularity one-day to ascend in the genie ranks.

If the PCs were captured in their attempt to liberate Paraxus, Queel brings one of them here after they've spent 5 days locked up and spirits him away with *plane shift*. The PC becomes a slave to the watery inhabitants of the Elemental Plane of Water, a fate that is left for you to outline.

In human form, Ibrahim appears as a salt-scarred old sea dog, wearing a haggard blue woolen coat. He seems to be in his mid-sixties, with unruly iron-gray hair and hard white whiskers. His arms are tapestries of faded tattoos. He is often seen leaning against the gunwales, using an old scrimshaw knife to carve figurines from shark bones. He always casts the completed figurines into the sea, supposedly to placate Lusph, god of the ocean. Queel is in his cabin 25% of the time.

Battling Queel (EL 13)

Few foes the PCs have ever faced are as singularly powerful as Queel the marid. He stops at nothing to prevent the PCs from exposing his plan. His biggest fear is mutiny. If the guards discover Queel's true identity, the marid's kidnapping plan is foiled, and he'll be forced to abandon the *Pariah*. His strategy in battle is almost always the same: eliminate obvious spellcasters first. If reduced to half of his hit points, Queel makes his escape via *plane shift*, but only long enough to call in a few favors on the Plane of Water. He returns to the *Pariah* as soon as possible, fully healed and possibly with 1d4 water elementals and/or lesser marids to back him up.

Ibrahim Queel, Marid Genie: CR 13; SZ H Outsider (Water) [18 ft. tall]; HD 21d8+42; hp 169; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 improved Initiative); Spd 20 ft., fly 40 ft. (perfect), swim 40 ft.; AC 22 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +9 natural, +4 ring); BAB/Grap +21/+36; Atk +26 melee (2d6+10, slam); Full Atk +26/+21/+16/+11 melee (2d6+10, slam); Face/Reach 10x10 ft./15 ft.; SA spell-like abilities, water's fury, water mastery; SQ amphibious, darkvision (60 ft.), plane shift, telepathy, water walk; AL CN; Fort +14, Ref +13, Will +14; Str 25, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +17, Concentration +20, Craft (scrimshaw) +22, Craft (wood carving) +22, Escape Artist +19, Intimidate +50, Knowledge (astronomy) +19, Knowledge (Elemental Plane of Water) +20, Knowledge (navigation) +19, Listen +20, Move Silently +19, Profession (sailor) +17, Sense Motive +19, Spellcraft +21, Spot +20. **Feats:** Combat Casting, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Spring Attack, Power Attack.

SA—*Spell-Like Abilities* (Sp): At will—*create water*, *ethereal jaunt*, and *purify drink* (same as *purify food and drink*, but only affects liquids); 5/day—*control water*, *obscuring mist*, *wall of fog*, and *water breathing*; 2/day—*detect evil*, *detect good*, *detect magic*, *liquid form* (same as *gaseous form*, but changes into water instead of gas), *invisibility*, *polymorph self*, and *see invisible*.

Once per year a marid can cast *wish*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 20th-level sorcerer (save DC 12 + spell level).

SA—*Water's Fury* (Su): Line of water, 5-feet wide, 5-feet high, and 60-feet long, once per round; damage 1d6 and blindness (as the spell) for 1d6 rounds. Reflex save (DC 18) negates.

SA—*Water Mastery* (Ex): A marid gains +1 attack and damage bonus if both it and its opponent touch water. If the opponent or marid is land-bound, the marid suffers a -4 penalty to attack and damage. (These modifiers are not included in the statistic block.)

SQ—*Plane Shift* (Sp): A marid can enter any of the elemental planes, the Astral Plane, or the Material Plane. This ability transport the marid and up to six other creatures, provided they all link hands with the marid. It is otherwise similar to the spell of the same name.

SQ—*Telepathy* (Su): A marid can communicate telepathically with any creature within 100 feet that has a language.

SQ—*Amphibious* (Su): A marid can breathe both air and water.

SQ—*Water Walk* (Su): The marid can continuously walk on water as the spell cast by a 20th-level sorcerer. It can suppress or resume this ability as a free action.

Possessions: pearl necklace (6,000 gp), keys to all doors and hatches, +4 *ring of protection*, and the *fortified spyglass of blighting* (see the Appendix for details).

Treasure: The captain's room is full of booty, heaped about in open coffers and on display: 2,780 gp in loose coins, a decorative golden sword hilt with a falcon design (50 gp), a wrought silver ring of exceptional workmanship (67 gp), a silver choker with a small sapphire pendant (96 gp), an 8-inch ivory statuette of a warrior leaning on his sword (100 gp), a silver locket with platinum filigree depicting a rose (297 gp), a large wool tapestry depicting a battle (309 gp), a small gold statuette of a maiden on a unicorn (350 gp), a large gold cloak pin in a dragon design (731 gp), a 10-inch platinum statuette of a warrior with elven armor (3,987 gp), *potions of ghoul touch* and *hiding*, and a *bag of tricks* (rust).

22. Subdeck Three

Welcome to hell. Subdeck Three exists in a state of borderline anarchy. Only the ferocity of a certain powerful few keep the rest from killing one another in a mass melee. PCs who come to this deck are instantly part of the ongoing war. They must either choose sides immediately or become fodder for both. Those below constantly watch the hatches, so that any activity is automatically noticed. The inmates attack the PCs even as they are dropping down the hatch, giving them no time to orient themselves.

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Truly, entering this level is very much like descending into one of the Lower Planes; dirty hands reach up and drag the PCs down. The heroes must survive long enough to gain audience with one of the two leaders. They can accomplish this by holding off the swarming convicts for at least three rounds; if the prisoners see their fellows getting killed, they back off and await instructions from their respective leader.

When administering this level, play upon the sense of oppression and the ever present "kill or be killed" atmosphere. The prisoners are like rats in a steel cage, unable to get out, spending every hour of every day fighting over the food allotments. There are few lights on Subdeck Three, as the lanterns have been plundered and are now in the hands of the leaders. The walls are blackened and battered, the result of months of constant pounding by people trying in vain to break through them. Shadows dart here and there. The meek are now half-mad lackeys of the strong. Everyone is an enemy of everyone else.

The ultimate roleplaying feat would be for the PCs, through leadership and muscle, to bring the two factions together. If they can seal an armistice between the two sides, anything can happen: they could storm the upper levels, they could take over the ship, they could bring about any number of unexpected outcomes. Encourage the players to try anything and everything. The encounter with the convicts on this level is a nebulous one, and thus no one clear path is detailed here. The PCs could become subjects of one of the two leaders, or perhaps leaders themselves. Calculate the EL of any fight with the prisoners according to whatever their numbers happen to be at the time.

Inmates, Male and Female (mixed races) Com6 (50+): hp 15 each; see Area 16.

NPCs of Note: Of all the prisoners on board the *Pariah*, only Giltandiun is innocent of the charges that brought him here. He was an accomplished thief in his former life—one of the very best in the world, as a matter of fact. However, his own success proved his undoing. Sivian Ulphar the Lucre King had Giltandiun framed for a triple murder, fearing the elf's growing reputation. That was six years ago. The elf has been here ever since. Known as the Thief of Tears, Giltandiun now commands one of the two factions bat-



ting for control of Subdeck Three. His sworn enemy is Xiang the Razor.

Xiang is a corruption of the human spirit encased within a mortal body. He is a savage killer who seeks only to dominate those around him. His dream is to take over the ship and butcher everyone who refuses to swear fealty to him, then sail to the mainland and lay siege to the city of Hawkmoon.

The PCs come to this deck to find Paraxus or Yinda, or both. It doesn't take long for them to learn that Paraxus is dead. Xiang cut off his head in the Killing Box; it's still there on display if the heroes need evidence of the dwarf's demise. As for Yinda, she was forced to become Xiang's concubine after he kidnapped her from under Giltandiun's care. The elf had befriended her shortly after she fell down the hatch, but he lost her to one of Xiang's vicious raids. Giltandiun is certainly the PCs' best chance of getting out of here alive. Xiang is their biggest obstacle.

Giltandiun, Male Elf (Gray) Rog12: CR 12; SZ M (4 ft., 7 in. tall); HD 12d6+12; hp 61; Init +10 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+5 Dex, +3 mismatch armor); Atk +10 melee (1d6+1, club), or +15 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); Full Atk +10/+5 melee (1d6+1, club) or +15/+10 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2, range 80 ft.); SA sneak attack (+6d6); SQ low light vision, racial abilities, evasion, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+3), improved evasion; AL CG; SV Fort +5, Ref +16, Will +6; Str 13, Dex 22, Con 12, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 15.

Skills: Balance +18, Climb +15, Escape Artist +19, Forgery +13, Gather Information +17, Hide +10, Intimidate +12, Jump +15, Listen +18, Move Silently +10, Ride (horses) +10, Search +14, Sleight of Hand +15, Spot +18, Swim +14. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Skill Focus (Spot), Weapon Finesse (dagger).

Possessions: makeshift light crossbow, light crossbow bolts (x10), steel pipe used as club, homemade armor of mismatched pieces of metal and leather (same stats as studded leather armor).

Personality: ever alert, Giltandiun exists in a constant state of readiness. He makes quick decisions. Though secretly good of heart, he's been forced to submerge his kindness under a protective façade of ruthlessness.

Xiang the Razor, Male Half-Orc Ftr10: CR 10; SZ M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 10d10+20; hp 84; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); BAB/Grp +10/+11; Atk +13 melee (1d4+3, razor, 17-20/x2); Full Atk +13/+6 melee (1d4+3, razor, 17-20/x2); AL CE; SV Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +4; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 5.

Skills: Jump +7, Listen +1, Spot +1, Swim +5. **Feats:** Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (razor), Improved Critical (razor), Im-

proved Initiative, Power Attack, Quick draw, Weapon Finesse (razor), Weapon Focus (razor), Weapon Specialization (razor).

Possessions: Six razors strapped to various parts of his body.

Personality: Xiang is a mindless, sociopathic killing machine. He lives but to satisfy his own primitive needs. He long ago gave up all hope of escape. Fighting is his pastime.

23. Giltandiun's Zone

Subdeck Three is a warren of cells with smashed walls, barricades of refuse, and makeshift defenses, creating a mazelike domain. Every day the various areas change hands as the two warring factions struggle for ultimate control. Currently **20 inmates** swear fealty to Giltandiun, though these numbers are constantly in flux. On average, the men and women aligning themselves with Giltandiun tend to be less violent than those under Xiang, and perhaps a bit more trustworthy. They are dispersed randomly throughout the zone.

PCs making their way through the zone must crawl on their knees through narrow openings cut in the cell walls, only to climb across rickety scaffolds connecting the next row of cells, all the while on the lookout for the inevitable ambush. Most of the cell doors have been removed and are now used as blockades against attack. The prisoners have rigged homemade armor from scraps of metal and wood, festooning their armor with spikes, studs, and other intimidating decorations. Their improvised weapons are often quite ingenious; Giltandiun's crossbow is a good example of such workmanship, being made of wood from a smashed chair and steel from a cell door; he bribed a guard for a lute string that now serves to propel his hand-fashioned bolts.

24. Xiang's Zone

Those areas of the ship controlled by Xiang's forces are very similar to those of Giltandiun, with a few minor differences. Most importantly are the inmates themselves; though **30 men and women** serve Xiang, they do so mostly out of fear, rather than respect. Thus their morale isn't as strong as Giltandiun's troops, and they are more likely to switch sides if a battle is turning against them. They are desperate and depraved, partaking of every vice imaginable. Their weapons are usually made from the bones of their fallen enemies, such as a club made from a femur embedded with human teeth. Those most loyal to Xiang, his oldest cohorts, call themselves the Nine Hells. However, there are currently only eight members of the Nine Hells, as one of them was recently slain over the outcome of a dice game.

PCs sneaking through this zone might believe that they are crawling through the depths of the Lower Planes. There is nothing good here. Shadows

leap across the narrow halls, and convicted murderers lurk around every corner. The inmates here have taken to adorning their bodies with grotesque tattoos. They shave their heads in an effort to keep the lice infestation at a minimum. They are malnourished and bereft of hope. Any captured PC provide these animals with hours of amusement.

25. The Killing Box

This area has been cleared out to make room for a gladiatorial arena, the brutal centerpiece of life on Subdeck Three. Here the two factions bring their champions, or perhaps just those too weak to be kept alive any longer. The inmates form a circle around the two combatants, agreeing to a momentary truce. Bets are placed (food and makeshift weapons are the primary currencies), and the fight is on. There are no rules. The winner is the last man standing. It is very likely that the PCs find themselves contestants in this bloody game. If their stay on this deck turns out to be a protracted one and they've yet to earn the good graces of either Giltandiun or Xiang, then they are expected to fight for their lives here in the Killing Box. Their first opponents always are warriors of one level lower than the PC. After that, feel free to throw anyone at them you desire, even Xiang, who has killed nearly 20 men so far in the Box. For the first few minutes of the fight, no weapons are allowed, but then a pair of razors is tossed into the ring, or perhaps spiked clubs or chains. These fights are usually extremely bloody affairs.

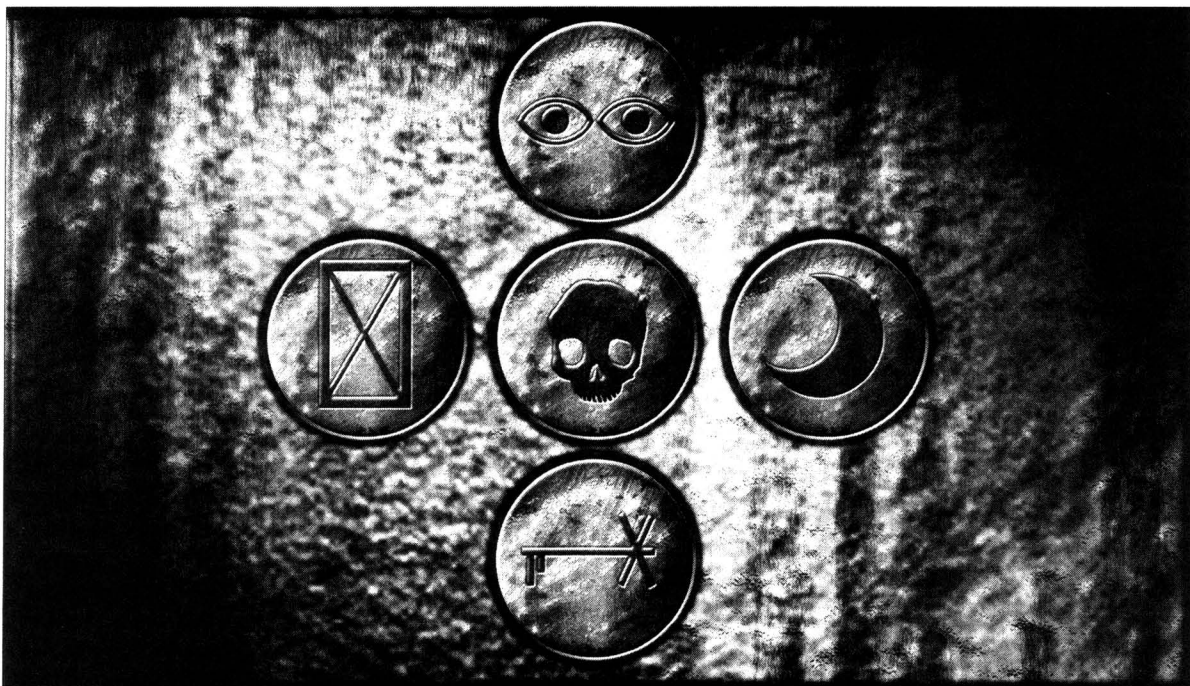
Digging Up the Bell

Regardless of whether or not the PCs seek to alter the situation aboard the *Pariah* by interfering in the

lives of the guards and inmates, their primary mission remains unchanged. As soon as they acquire the information on the ceiling of Paraxus's cell, they may leave the ship (assuming they can find a way to do so), and follow the coordinates to a lonely stretch of wilderness anywhere you deem appropriate. The exact location is left unspecified, though it should be somewhere far removed from civilization. After entrapping Sivian's sister, Madriel, in the Bell of Heaven, Paraxus sealed the gemstone in a vault and sealed the door with a magic lock. He then used *teleport* to transfer the vault into the wilderness and *dig* to assist in its burial. The vault has remained there ever since, 10 feet below the surface.

The PCs must first put their picks and shovels (or their spells) to work on the area noted by the coordinates. There they find a steel cube six feet on a side. The cube weighs 2,500 lbs. (Hardness 10, hp 500, Break [DC 50]). Paraxus was very wealthy and invested heavily in the vault's defenses. It is warded against all forms of magical penetration, such as *knock* and *passwall*. It has a single door bearing the diagram below.

There is a round crank, or wheel, attached to the door. The wheel does not turn unless the symbols are touched in the proper order. The clue to the proper sequence is found in the poem that Paraxus left behind. Read the first word of every other sentence: Right, Center, Down, Above, Left, Turn. The PCs must touch the five symbols in the right order, then turn the wheel, as indicated. Failure to do so discharges a *disintegrate* spell from the wheel. The PC touching the wheel must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be annihilated; on a successful save, the PC takes 5d6 points of damage. Inside the vault are two chests, both of which are locked (Open Locks [DC 28]). The larger chest contains 6,500 gp. The smaller chest holds the Bell of Heaven, wrapped in protective layers of purple silk.



The exact properties of the Bell are not described here. It's up to you to determine how best to use this gemstone in your game. The Bell is quite valuable, but the final price varies from one campaign to the next, likewise does the Bell's capacity to enhance a wizard's spellcasting abilities. Perhaps the stone increases the number of spells that can be memorized each day, enhances the potency of those spells, or alters them in some other bizarre manner. In any case, the Bell of Heaven should be considered a minor artifact.

Once the PCs have the Bell in hand, they should head back to the city of Hawkmoon to complete their arrangement with Elias Fellspar.

An Intervention of Thieves (EL 17)

Shortly after the PCs arrive in Hawkmoon, Sivian Ulphar ambushes them. The heroes should be on their way to the House of Wax, the Bell of Heaven in their possession, when Sivian and his minions spring an ambush and surround them. Sivian has been spying upon Elias Fellspar, and he fears that the old museum curator is up to no good. He wants to confer with the PCs. To this end, he has arranged a little "reception" for them upon their return to the city. At some point before the adventurers reach the House of Wax, five black-clad figures sweep across their path and attempt to encircle them.

Take special care with this encounter, as it is likely that the PCs respond to the appearance of thieves with drawn swords and sizzling spells. The first few seconds of contact between the two groups should be very tense, as neither side knows quite how to deal with the other. Though Sivian's men pounce upon the PCs from the shadows, they do not immediately attack. Astute players note this and respond accordingly. Sivian's men wear solid black, including masks, with smoke-gray scarves around their necks. Though their looks are intimidating, their intentions are not necessarily malign. If the PCs refrain from attacking, Sivian holds up a gloved hand in an obvious request for a truce.

Sivian Ulphar is, of course, in disguise. His hair is currently blonde, with silver showing through at his temples. He wears a beret and a long, tattered gray scarf. His black leather armor looks new, the same color as his eyes. Riding easy on his hip is a black-hilted rapier. He walks soundlessly, approaching an obvious party leader and asking in his wispy voice for a momentary parley. If the PCs agree, Sivian takes them aside and confides in them his growing mistrust of his old friend, Elias Fellspar. For several months his men have been spying upon the wax museum. Sivian believes that Fellspar's intentions are not honorable ones. If Fellspar seeks the Bell, it certainly isn't to turn it over to the authorities, but rather to use it to further his own designs. However, Sivian has no proof, only speculation. It is likely that he is aware that the PCs ventured to the *Pariah* and retrieved Paraxus's Bell; after all, Sivian is the most well informed man in the Domain. He congratulates the heroes on their success, and even goes so far as to impart a little information of a personal nature. He tells them of his attempt to locate the hidden stronghold Paraxus shared with the Mechanician. He also tells them that his sister

died in the effort. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 15) permits the PC to sense that Sivian is wrought with guilt over his sister's death. Eventually he proposes that the PCs do indeed return to the House of Wax, albeit this time as infiltrators. He wants to know what Fellspar is up to, and the PCs are his best chance of finding out. Sivian says they can keep whatever they find inside; he'll make sure the local law gives them a wide berth for the next few days. More importantly, he promises to return the favor in the future, should the PCs succeed in proving Fellspar's criminal intentions. Moreover, a favor from Sivian Ulphar is akin to a boon from the gods. If the PCs accept, Sivian summons one of his associates to heal any injuries the heroes might have, and then wishes them well in their pursuit. He suggests that they sneak inside the wax museum in order to catch Fellspar off guard.

Remember that this is the guildmaster thief, the Lucre King himself, one of the most infamous men in all the Domain. Roleplaying such a figure should be both challenging and satisfying. Sivian is at once arrogant and cautious, proud and unassuming. He is a paradox in a black cape. His most prized possession is his *amulet of proof against detection and location*.

Though he doesn't ask them for it, there is a chance that the PCs might want to hand the Bell over to Sivian, thinking that he is better disposed to deal with its potentially dark magic. In this event, Sivian eventually discovers that his sister is imprisoned inside, and responds to the heroes as indicated in **Fellspar Defeated**.

When the heroes are ready, they may assault the House of Wax in whatever way they choose. Refer to the first part of this chapter for full details of the building's defenses.

Ambushers, Male Human Rog5 (4): CR 5; SZ M; HD 5d6; hp 18 (each); Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 armor, +2 Dex); BAB/Grp +3/+3; Atk +3 melee (1d6, short sword, crit 19-20) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, crit 19-20); Full Atk +3 melee (1d6, short sword, 19-20/x2) or +5 ranged (1d8, light crossbow, 19-20/x2); SA sneak attack (+3d6); SQ evasion, uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+1); AL N; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skill: Appraise +8, Balance +10, Climb +8, Decipher Script +10, Forgery +10, Intimidate +8, Listen +3, Search +8, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot +4, Tumble +8, Use Magic Device +6, Use Rope +5. **Feats:** Endurance, Point Blank Shot, Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand).

Possessions: leather armor, longsword, black clothing, and a pouch containing 2d10 gp and 1d4 gems worth 10-60 gp each.

Sivian Ulphar, Male Human Rog17: CR 17; SZ M (6 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 17d6+34; hp 101; Init +10 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 26 (+6 Dex, +5 leather armor, +5 ring of protection); BAB/Grp +12/+12; Atk +13 melee (1d8+1, +1 rapier, 18-20/x2), or +21 ranged (1d6+3, +3 shortbow, 19-20/x3); Full Atk +13/+8/+3 melee (1d8+1, +1 rapier, 18-20/x2), or +21/+16/+11 ranged (1d6+3, +3 shortbow, 19-20/x3); SA sneak attack (+9d6); SQ defensive roll, evasion, improved evasion, slippery mind, improved uncanny dodge, trapfinding, trapsense (+5); AL

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N; SV Fort +7, Ref +19, Will +9; Str 11, Dex 22, Con 14, Int 13, Wis 18, Cha 17.

Skills: Balance +26, Bluff +23, Craft (alchemy) +3, Craft (calligraphy) +15, Escape Artist +26, Forgery +9, Gather Information +23, Hide +9, Knowledge (Domain of Hawkmoon) +11, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Open Lock +24, Search +10, Spot +26, Use Magic Device +15. *Feats:* Alertness, Dodge, Improved Critical (shortbow), Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Mobility, Spring Attack.

Possessions: +5 leather armor, +3 shortbow, +1 rapier of defending, +1 arrows (x 14), +3 arrows (x 13), potions of glibness, cure serious wounds (x2), levitate, invisibility, delay

poison, and hiding, scroll (arcane, caster level 7, *halt undead, haste, improved invisibility, fear*), scroll (arcane, caster level 5, *spectral hand*), scroll (arcane, caster level 1, *mount*), scroll (arcane, caster level 7, *improved invisibility, detect thoughts, displacement*), scroll (arcane, caster level 8, *knock, stinking cloud, mage armor*), wand of color spray (12 charges), wand of magic missile (caster level 5, 26 charges), +5 ring of protection, ring of invisibility, and an amulet of proof against detection and location.

Other Carried Wealth: 32 gp, 10 gems (1,600 gp star ruby, 1,300 gp black pearl, 1,200 gp red garnet, 1,000 gp violet garnet, 170 gp deep green spinel, 150 gp smoky quartz; 100 gp coral, 60 gp Bloodstone).



Appendix

Four sections of new material are detailed here, including martial arts, magic items, monsters, and spells.

Martial Arts Forms

Many factors define the spiritual philosophy and martial style of the unarmed combatant. His native land, his mentor, his religion, and his political views are just a few of the factors that contribute to the combatant's personal code. Nowhere is this code expressed more visibly than in the character's chosen *fighting form*. By incorporating a martial form into your character's background, you not only add color to his personality, you unlock adventure hooks and acquire new feats specific to the form of your choice. Realistically, a martial artist from the icy regions of the world fights in a completely different manner than one trained in a jungle monastery. Use these martial styles to add color and diversity to your campaign.

Unlike prestige classes, these forms are not new classes unto themselves, but rather means of defining your unarmed warrior or monk in ways beyond the bounds of character class. Though the forms listed here are directed at monks, any characters capable of fighting unarmed may use these forms, subject to DM approval. Lady Zan of Darkstar Hall charges a training fee of 10 gp per week, though she might be inclined to waive this fee if the PCs brought Branke the murderer to justice.

Each form is presented in the following format:

Favored Weapons: Though most of the monks detailed below prefer to attack without weapons, many martial forms are historically associated with certain weapons.

Requirements: The skills, feats, ability scores, or other factors required to practice the form.

New Skills: Skills associated with the form. These skills are not granted as bonuses when the form is selected, but they may be acquired through the usual means.

New Feat: A new feat exclusive to the form. At the DM's option, these feats may be available to practitioners of other forms.

History: A brief summary of the form's origins.

Flavor: The "feel" of the style, or the general attitude of its practitioners and the atmosphere they create when executing their form.

Bear Claw

Favored Weapons: handaxe, light hammer, and shortspear

Requirements: 7 ranks in Intimidate

New Skills: Craft (scrimshaw)

History: Developed in the frozen southern mountain range known as the Scar-in-the-Sky Peaks, Bear Claw was formed out of necessity. During hunting expeditions and barbarian clan wars in the mountains, shortspears were the weapons of choice. However, once a spear was thrown, combatants were left weaponless. A hand-to-hand style was needed as a form of secondary attack, one that depended on strength rather than speed. Eventually Bear Claw was adapted to use hammers or axes as weapons, but the true masters of the form still prefer to crush opponents with their hulking bodies.

New Feat:

Crushing Clasp (General)

You engulf your enemies in a breath-rending grasp.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +4, Str 20+

Benefit: With a successful grapple attack, you secure your opponent in a bear hug, squeezing the breath out of him. The attack does normal damage instead of unarmed damage. Additionally, if you can maintain your grapple longer than your opponent can hold his breath, you render him unconscious. Refer to the drowning rule on page 85 of the *DMG* for details on holding your breath.

Flavor: Especially favored by half-ogre monks, Bear Claw relies on the stability of the practitioner. Footing is treacherous under arctic conditions, as the environment decreases mobility and often demands the use of snowshoes and bulky clothing. Therefore, Bear Claw monks prefer to stand immobile and utilize locks and holds to force their opponents into submission. Members of the frigid mountain monasteries hold lengthy competitions to determine the strongest among them. The winner is given the honor of slaying the bear that supplies the feast. Of course, he must fight the bear unarmed. As a form of meditation, Bear Claw monks carve intricate sculptures, usually from yeti bone. They find this delicate handiwork a contemplative contradiction to their brutal fighting style, a dichotomy that helps them maintain the balance between body and spirit.

Blind Beggar

Favored Weapons: club, jo stick, and quarterstaff

Requirements: Blind-Fight, proficiency in one of the form's favored weapons

New Skills: Profession (Beggar)

History: Legend holds that the father of Blind Beggar was a half-orc named Giltesh, who grew up on the streets of Hawkmoon and spent his early years suffering at the prejudice-heavy hands of the local gangs and neighborhood ruffians. Giltesh went blind as the result of a particularly nasty beating, and spent the rest of his life developing a way for people to protect themselves against such aggression. Blind Beggar is the result of his

New Feat:

Weightless Step (General)

You move with care and stealth.

Prerequisites: 7 ranks in Move Silently, Dex 16+

Benefit: By moving at half your normal speed, you enjoy the benefits of the 1st-level divine spell *pass without trace*.

life's work, a form that combines extremely subtle footwork with a practiced ability to sense opponents without the need for sight.

Flavor: Practitioners of Blind Beggar have taken a blind man's cane and transformed it into the symbol of their form, as well as a deadly weapon. Students must perform their style for a full hour on a floor covered in rice paper; only by leaving the paper unorn are they permitted to graduate from their master's tutelage. Blind Beggar relies upon the imagery of the rapidly moving cane to intimidate the enemy. The form is comprised of complicated exercise routines, each based upon an ideogram of the written orc language, and each more intricate than the last. There are seventeen ideogram exercises in the form. Each is like a deadly dance, with a flashing club being the centerpiece of the art. Monks of Blind Beggar delight in sparring, and regularly compete in grand tournaments.

Dragon Tear

Favored Weapons: any small melee or small-ranged weapon, hand crossbow

Requirements: Speak Language (Draconic)

New Skills: Knowledge (Criminal Underworld)

History: Dragon Tear originated in the Forlorn Mountains. Humans have dared to enter the perilous Forlorns only once, to destroy the first shadow dragon. It is written that upon the dragon's death, its oldest daughter, a beast of numberless years, cried a thousand tears. Each tear became a half-dragon monk of terrible might. The monks expelled the humans from the Forlorns and then spread into the world, instructing anyone who would follow in the mysteries of their secretive and magical art. Since that day, Dragon Tear has always relied upon the surprise attack.

Flavor: Dragon Tear monks prefer to attack from an unexpected position, attempting to catch their enemies flat-footed. When forced into direct combat, they attack where their opponent is the weakest. They are masters of ambush and subterfuge. Dragon Tear is a favorite style in the urban underworld.

New Feat: Shadow Walk (General)

You are able to travel swiftly through the shadows.

Prerequisites: 8 ranks in Hide, Dex 16+

Benefit: This feat enhances the Hide skill, and can only be performed in shadowy areas, such as outdoors at night, or indoors where only candles or torches provide light. You may travel from shadow to shadow at your normal speed, rather than the limit of one-half speed as described under the Hide skill.

Dwarven Thunderhand

Favored Weapons: none

Requirements: 7 ranks of Craft (any), Improved Unarmed Attack (or Monk's Unarmed Attack), Strength 16+

New Skills: Craft (Smelting)

History: Also known as Candlefist, Dwarven Thunderhand is linked to the forge, from which flow all lasting creations. Developed in the subterranean smithies of an ancient dwarf clan, Candlefist originated as a means of expressing the creative energy of the craftsmen/warriors who labored there. Through prayer, practice, and unforgiving physical conditioning, Thunderhand monks hardened their hands, just as they hardened steel in the forge. By coupling brute strength with agility, these monks created a martial form that became feared among all enemies of the dwarves. No novice was permitted to test himself in battle until he could grip a burning candle in his fist and then use that fist to shatter stone without extinguishing the flame.

Flavor: An odd and uncommon style exclusive to dwarves, Candlefist monks delight in the latent power of the hands. The palm is the channel through which the soul's energy is focused. The hands craft and create, destroy and caress. Artists of this style are said to possess the ability to focus the sum of the energy in their hands, and by visualizing a desired effect, manifest that effect through their fingertips. Candlefist monks prefer to face an enemy head-on, pounding him down with rapid, punishing blows.

New Feat: Hands of Uncreation (General)

You rupture objects with an unarmed-ranged attack.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +3, Improved Sunder, Wis 13+

Benefit: By focusing your inner energy into the hands, you cause small objects to rupture when you clap your palms forcefully together. The result of this feat mimics the 2nd-level arcane spell *shatter* in all respects, except that it requires no material or verbal components. This feat requires incredible amounts of internal strength, and thus may not be used more than once per day.

Knot Maiden

Favored Weapons: rope, chain

Requirements: Monk level 7th+, 8 ranks of Use Rope

New Skills: Perform (Contortion)

History: Knot Maiden is a relatively new martial form, developed only 300 years ago by a bard named Aimasen. The orphaned daughter of an itinerant tinker, Aimasen grew up in a circus known as the Song & Sorrow Traveling Shadow Show, earning a

**New Feat:
Sinuous Body (General)**

You can manipulate your body to fit through small spaces.

Prerequisites: 7 ranks in Escape Artist, Dex 19+

Benefit: By spending 2 rounds bending your limbs, dislocating joints, and compressing yourself to the limits of your flexibility, you may fit your body into a space as small as 4 cubic feet, or squirm through openings as narrow as 12 inches. If you are a Small creature such as a halfling, reduce the minimum opening dimensions by 25%. You move at quarter your normal speed while contorted, you may not engage in combat or cast spells, and you lose all Dexterity bonuses to AC. One round is required to unfold yourself without risk of injury (1d6 points of damage).

meager living as a sideshow act known as the Knot Maiden. As the result of a gruesome family curse, Aimasen was born without a spine, a condition that enabled her to twist her body into freakish dimensions. When not entertaining the crowd, she wore layers of cumbersome braces so that she could walk. One night the circus pitched its tent in a town less receptive to physical misfits; Aimasen was attacked and severely beaten. Upon her recovery, she collaborated with the circus's strongman to create the Knot Maiden form of self-defense.

Flavor: Fighting someone proficient in Knot Maiden is like fighting a cobra. Knot Maiden practitioners bob and weave, duck and sway, always staying just out of their opponent's reach until the time is right to strike. Their favorite attack is the Mantis Leap, followed by a quick backward jump. They always prefer unexpected, sudden strikes, rather than head-on combat. Many Knot Maiden monks wear elaborately decorated belts and corsets in honor of the form's founder.

Quill and Bells

Favored Weapons: none

Requirements: Perform (Bells)

New Skills: 10 Ranks of Knowledge (anatomy), 7 Ranks of Craft (bells)

History: The origin of Quill and Bells lies in a mist-shrouded mountain monastery called the Far-Near Fastness. The monks of Quill and Bells are renowned for their acumen in bell manufacture; to this day the monastery's bells of all varieties command high prices around the world, capable of producing sounds of almost preternatural clarity and tone. The bell-casters of the monastery developed the Quill and Bells form in accordance with the pathos of their brotherhood. Though Quill monks tend toward pacifism, they also recognize the need for self-preservation. To this end, they have per-

**New Feat:
Clarion Strike (General)**

You disable an opponent's limb in a successful grapple attack.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4, Stunning Fist (or Monk's Stunning Attack), Wis 20+

Benefit: After performing a successful grapple attack, you immobilize one of your enemy's limbs unless he makes a successful Will save (DC 20). By applying pressure to certain vital areas on the enemy's body, you effectively paralyze the arm or leg of your choice, rendering it useless for 1 round per your experience level.

fect the arts of anatomy, viewing the human body as a complex series of bells of varying notes. Strike the body in the proper place and it "rings" in a certain, predictable manner. Quill monks refer to this outlook as "holistic resonance."

Flavor: Quill and Bells artists stand straight-shouldered and flat-footed, waiting to be attacked, just as the bell waits to be struck. These monks seek to disable an opponent as swiftly as possible, with an economy of movement, as a bell's clapper must sound only once to produce a note. The most famed Quill and Bells attack is to lock the arm or leg of an attacker and quickly disable the limb by applying a nerve-touch to a center of bodily power.

Seven Silver Carp

Favored Weapons: trident

Requirements: 5 ranks in Swim

New Skills: Cliff Dive [General]

Skilled cliff-divers may safely dive from heights greater than those listed under falling damage in the "Obstacles, Hazards, and Traps" section of the DMG. They may substitute the required Swim or Tumble check with their Cliff Dive skill. Their initial check is made at DC 10 (instead of 15), and they require only 5 feet of water for every 30 feet of the dive.

History: Once there was a fisherman who fell in love with the daughter of a powerful noble. The couple was secretly married, but as they made their escape in the fisherman's small dinghy, an

**New Feat:
Aquatic Combat (General)**

You attack without penalty when under water.

Prerequisites: 7 ranks in Swim; Dex 18+

Benefit: You've spent countless hours learning how to fight effectively when submerged under water, so that you suffer no attack-roll penalties for unfavorable environment in such conditions.

errant wave caused the vessel to capsize. The young bride was lost at sea. According to legend, the fisherman dedicated his life to being a thorn in the side of Lusph, god of the ocean, whom he blamed for the disaster. To this end, he stole seven magical carp from a pool inside the local church of Lusph. He used these rare and wondrous items to barter with the merfolk; they recovered the body of his beloved in exchange for the artifacts. During his stay with the merfolk, the fisherman learned their battle tactics, so that he might be better equipped to deal with the minions of his sworn foe, Lusph.

Flavor: Silver Carp monks have learned to use the water to their advantage. Though they fight normally on dry land, the inherent grace of their martial form is revealed when they engage in melee beneath the waves. Having adapted themselves to the natural resistance that water imposes upon the body, these monks guide their weapons with efficiency and accuracy. Many of them speak the language of the merfolk and wear tokens of the sea, such as coral and shells. They tend to feel awkward in most dungeon environments.

Wind Foot

Favored Weapons: none

Requirements: Mobility, any good alignment

New Skills: Knowledge (Philosophy)

History: On a fine summer day many moons in the past, a halfling named Dalius decided that enough was enough. For 100 years, he had inhabited the same Gaunt Wood cottage, dwelling in peace and study, yet he was constantly harassed and trod upon by every creature larger than a gnome. To protect his beloved home, he developed a style of self-defense never before considered. If the tales are true, Dalius was able to defeat any foe merely by demonstrating the futility of violence.

Flavor: Believing in the sanctity of life, Dalius did not incorporate a single attack in his martial form. Every movement in the form is fluid, designed only to redirect the energy of the enemy. Because of the small stature of its creator, Wind Foot depends heavily upon the use of momentum, specifically that of the attacker. Throws are commonplace throughout the form, even for the smallest practitioner. So complete is the defense of the Wind Foot monk that opponents often cannot even find a weakness in order to launch an attack. Dalius is rumored to have said, "Size and speed matter not. The open heart, the outstretched hand, these alone defeat oppression."

New Magic Items

Presented here are details of the new wondrous items introduced in *A Lamentation of Thieves*.

Fletcher's Thorn Warden

Once upon a time a human woman named Patralika fell in love with an elf called Faelirun the Fletcher, a master bowyer whose products earned him a fortune in both the elven and human lands; wealthy buyers came from all parts to visit his small workshop in the Gaunt Wood. Mages especially loved his bows, as these items proved much easier to enchant than any other masterwork bows. Sadly, one spring afternoon while testing his latest creation, the Fletcher accidentally killed his wife. Unaware that she was coming out to the woods to join him, he wasn't paying particular attention to the direction of his practice shots. It is said that every tree in the forest shed its leaves that day—like tears.

During his extra-planar quest to return Patralika to life, the Fletcher was instructed to fashion an "item of penance" and then give that item away to the next stranger he met on the road. The *fletcher's thorn warden* is that item. The Fletcher spent seven months in the Happy Hunting Grounds (aka. the Beastlands) creating the *thorn warden*, and since then it has passed through many hands, protecting its owner from harm. Though the *thorn warden* is currently encased in a capped glass vial on a chain, it can be removed and carried in the

New Feat: Deflection (General)

You are able to redirect an opponent's attacks harmlessly away from you.

Prerequisites: Base Attack Bonus +3, Dodge, Dex 18+

Benefit: As a full-round action, you may concentrate solely on defense, forfeiting your attacks but gaining a +6 dodge bonus to AC for that round. Alternatively, as a standard action you may attempt to channel an incoming attack away from you, possibly guiding it into any other enemy that you threaten. If your opponent fails to strike you with his attack, make a standard attack roll as if you were trying to strike his weapon. This usually provokes an attack of opportunity, even for a monk or a character with Improved Unarmed Strike. Consult the Special Attacks and Damage section of the PHB for details. If successful, you redirect your opponent's momentum into any space you threaten. Make an attack roll with a -2 penalty (to account for the general awkwardness of the maneuver). If your adjusted roll is higher than your target's AC, the target takes the base damage appropriate to the weapon type of your original opponent (do not apply any modifiers for Strength, et cetera).

hand, sewn into an article of clothing, or anything else of that nature. The *thorn warden* is a roughly teardrop-shaped wooden thorn, barely half an inch in length and quite unassuming in appearance. When the word *queliath* is spoken ("beloved"), the *thorn warden* becomes active for a period of 10 minutes, during which time it glows with a pale blue light. It may be activated once per 24 hours.

When glowing, the *thorn warden* protects its owner from missile weapons and ranged spells such as *fireball* and *lightning bolt*. It does not protect against such disasters as avalanches and falling debris. Sensing approaching arrows, *fireball* spells, et cetera, the *thorn warden* causes a dome of impenetrable thorns to form instantly around the owner. The thorny dome has a diameter of 3 feet and a height of 7 feet. No more than a single person may ever benefit from this protection; if another character attempts to cling to the owner of the *thorn warden* in order to benefit from its defenses, the dome cannot manifest itself. The dome persists for as long as the threat is active, (i.e., to stop an arrow, the dome would appear, block the arrow, and disappear again in one or two seconds). The dome provides 75% cover for the person being shielded (+7 AC, +3 Reflex).

Against spells that produce fire, electricity, and the like, the dome makes a Fortitude saving throw as a 3rd-level fighter. If successful, the protected character sustains only 1/2 damage. For example, against an incoming *fireball*, the dome makes a successful save and the character also makes a successful save, so the character takes half of half damage, resulting in one-quarter damage. The dome protects only against "elemental" damaging spells, such as ice, flames, and lightning, but not such things as *ray of enfeeblement*. If it blocks more than 50 points of damage during any 10-minute interval, it is destroyed.

Moderate conjuration; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *wall of thorns*; Price 18,000 gp; Cost 9,000 gp + 720 XP.

Fortified Spyglass of Blighting

This strange item was fashioned by Ulumor, a mariner-mage who pirated the Moonsilver Sea in a bygone age. From Ulumor it passed to a psionicist named Zatmenye, who used it to bargain for his life when the marid named Queel caught him in the act of trying to break out one of the *Pariah's* inmates. In its compact form, the *spyglass* is 10 inches long. When telescoped, the item is either 19 inches long (partially extended) or 26 inches long (fully extended).

The *fortified spyglass* is nearly indestructible, hence its name (Hardness 10, hit points 200, Break [DC 45]). It may be swung as either a standard club (partially extended) or as a greatclub (fully extended), dealing the usual damage for such weapons, with a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls. Ulumor needed an item that could be used as an improvised weapon when the situation required it.

The item's sturdiness aside, Ulumor's plan was to create something capable of bringing harm to crewmen of enemy ships. To this end, he enchanted the *spyglass* so that any humanoid viewed through it could be struck with a curse. This functions as per the 3rd-level divine spell *bestow curse*. This power may be called upon once per day. Used as an optical device, the *spyglass* grants a +4 bonus to all Spot checks. Its lenses are fashioned from parts of a roc's eye.

Faint necromancy; CL 6th; Craft Wondrous Item, *bestow curse*; Price 13,045 gp; Cost 6,675 gp + 510 XP.

Nowhere Globe

This spherical item usually appears as an actual globe, up to two feet in diameter, resting on a pivot in a metal frame. Whenever the *nowhere globe* is spun, it creates a magical field that acts as a more potent version of the spell *invisibility sphere*, affecting everything within a 50-foot radius. However, the *globe* must be in motion for the spell to perpetuate, thus it normally requires someone to be standing nearby to spin it when it begins to lose momentum. If the *nowhere globe* stops moving, the enchantment ends.

Faint illusion; CL 5th; Craft Wondrous Item, *invisibility sphere*; Price 27,000 gp; Cost 13,500 gp + 1,080 XP.

Silver Iodide Dust

Casting this *dust* in the sky causes rain clouds to form. 2d4 hours later, rain falls in a 2-mile radius from the point where the *dust* was deployed. The rain persists for another 2d4 hours per application. One application of *silver iodide dust* is contained in a bag weighing 35 lbs. The *dust* must be dispersed from cloud-level, so the user must possess a means of reaching such altitudes, be it by magic or winged mount.

Moderate transmutation; CL 11th; Craft Wondrous Item, *control weather*; Price 1,650 gp; Cost 825 gp + 66 XP.

New Monsters

Some new monsters mentioned in the adventure are detailed here.

Animated Column

Medium Construct

Hit Dice:	5d10+20 (47 hp)
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	20 ft.
Armor Class:	15 (-1 Dex, +6 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+3/+4
Attack:	Longsword +4 melee (1d8+1)
Full Attack:	Longsword +4 melee (1d8+1)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Shatter weapons, darkvision 60 ft., construct traits, resis- tances, magic immunity, damage reduction 10/—
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 13, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Environment:	Any land and underground
Organization:	Solitary
Challenge Rating:	4
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	6-10 HD (Medium); 11-15 HD (Large)

An animated column is 7 feet tall and weighs around 1,500 pounds. Its body is shaped as a beautiful woman of smoothly chiseled stone, usually used as an architectural support or decorative piece. Often animated columns are found supporting archways. They wield a variety of weapons, which are themselves carved to resemble stonework.

Combat

An animated column attacks using its weapon, usually a longsword.

Shatter Weapons (Ex): Any weapon that strikes an animated column must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 12) or shatter into pieces.

Construct Traits (Ex): Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Resistances (Ex): Animated columns receive a +4 bonus on saving throws against all spells.

Magic Vulnerability (Ex): An animated column is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows: a *transmute rock to mud*, *stone to flesh*, or *stone shape* instantly slays an animated column if it fails its saving throw. A *transmute mud to rock* heals all of its lost hit points.

Construction

An animated column's body is chiseled from a single block of hard stone, such as granite, weighing at least 1,500 pounds. The golem costs 30,000 gp to create, which includes 1,000 gp for the body. Assembling the body requires a successful Craft (sculpting or masonry) check (DC 13).

Caster Level: 10th; **Craft Construct** (see the **MM**), *geas/quest*, *limited wish*, *polymorph any object*, *shatter*, *caster must be at least 10th level; Price 15,000 gp; Cost 8,000 gp + 800 XP.*



Bhuta (template)

When a person is murdered, the spirit sometimes clings to the Material Plane, refusing to accept death. This spirit maintains possession of its original body and seeks out those responsible for its murder. It never rests until those responsible are slain. It becomes a creature that exists only for vengeance, unable to pursue any goal unrelated to revenge. It forsakes all former friends and alliances.

Since the transformation into unlife is almost instant (occurring within 1d2 hours after death), the bhuta appears as it did in life. Close inspection (Spot check [DC 20]) reveals slight decay, and the body still shows signs of any trauma suffered prior to death (wounds, disease, burns, or the like). However, outwardly the bhuta appears as a normal creature of its race.

The bhuta sustains itself on a diet of flesh, preferring that of humans, elves and other intelligent humanoids, but the meat of any mammal suffices. A steady consumption of meat permits the bhuta to perpetuate its preserved physical state. If it goes without eating meat, even for a single day, it loses its gentle repose ability. If destroyed, the bhuta's body decays rapidly, rotting to an unrecognizable lump of bone and dried sinew within 3d4 minutes.

A bhuta speaks Common and any other languages it knew in life.

Creating a Bhuta

"Bhuta" is a template that can be added to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the "character"). The character's type changes to "undead." The bhuta uses all the character's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Same as the character + 1d8

Speed: Same as the character.

AC: The bhuta has +3 natural armor or the character's natural armor, whichever is better.

Special Attacks: A bhuta retains all the character's special attacks, gaining those listed below in addition.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the bhuta must hit an opponent with both

claw attacks. If it gets a hold, it can use its death grip ability. The bhuta has a grapple bonus of +6.

Death Grip (Ex): A bhuta deals 1d6 (plus 1.5 x Str mod.) points of damage per round with a successful grapple check (grapple bonus +6) against a Large or smaller creature. Because the bhuta grasps the victim's throat, a creature in its grasp cannot speak or cast spells with verbal components.

Special Qualities: A bhuta retains all the character's special qualities and those listed below, and also gains the immunities of an undead type (refer to the Introduction section in the MM).

Gentle Repose (Ex): When it first rises from the dead, the bhuta is preserved as if by *gentle repose* for a period of 14 days. After that time, its body begins to decay and it takes on an appearance similar to that of a ghoul or zombie, unless it fortifies itself with a daily diet of meat.

Find Target (Sp): As long as the bhuta and its killer(s) are on the same plane, the bhuta can track its killer(s) unerringly, as though guided by *discern location*.

Saves: Same as the character

Abilities: Same as the character, but being undead, it has no Constitution score.

Skills: Bhutas gain a +6 racial bonus to Bluff checks. Otherwise, the skills are the same as the character.

Feats: Same as the character.

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Same as the character +2

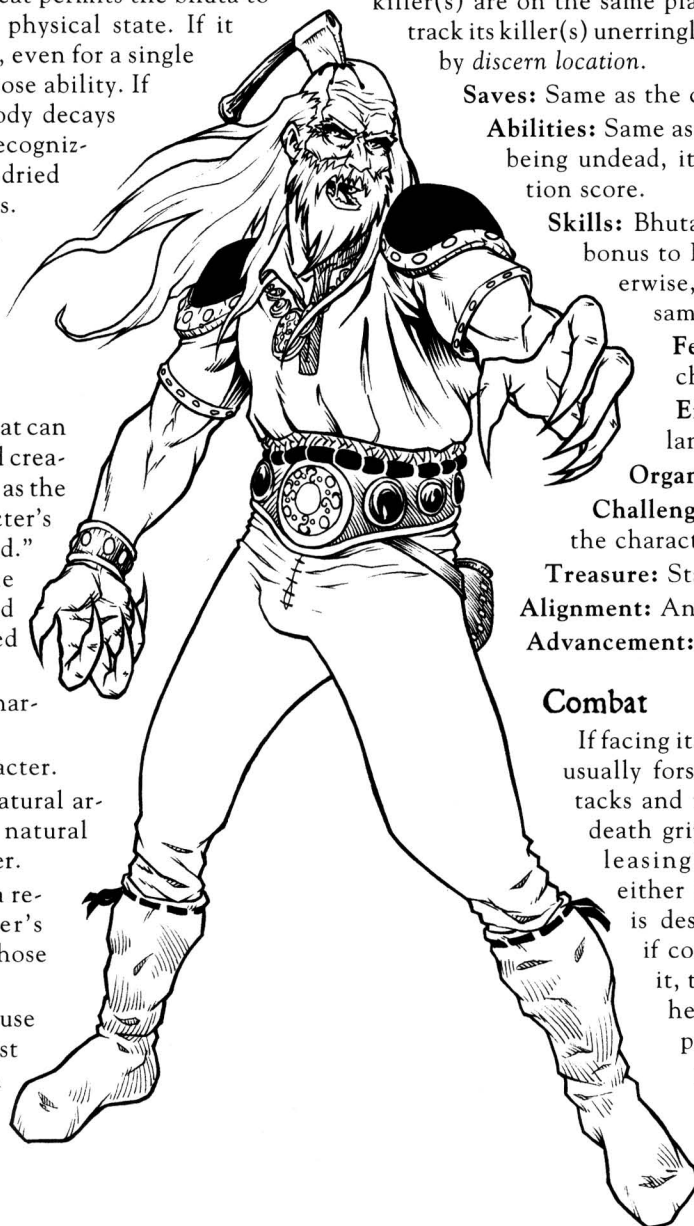
Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Any evil

Advancement: By character class

Combat

If facing its killers, the bhuta usually forsakes all other attacks and in its rage uses its death grip ability, only releasing its hold when either it or its opponent is destroyed. However, if combat goes against it, the bhuta does not hesitate to retreat, picking a more opportune time in the future to exact its revenge.



Skeleton Warrior (template)

The skeleton warrior is a lich-like undead lord that was once a powerful fighter of at least 10th level. Legend tells that skeleton warriors were forced into their undead state by a powerful demon prince that trapped their souls in a golden circlet. A skeleton warrior's sole purpose is to search for and regain the circlet containing its soul.

A skeleton warrior appears as a fleshless creature dressed in the same type of armor and clothes worn during life. Its equipment usually shows signs of wear and age.

A skeleton warrior speaks Common and any other languages it knew in life.

Creating a Skeleton Warrior

"Skeleton Warrior" is a template that can be added to any humanoid creature (referred to hereafter as the "character"). The character's type changes to "undead." The skeleton warrior uses all the character's statistics and abilities except as noted here.

Hit Dice: Increase to d12

Speed: Same as the character.

AC: The skeleton warrior has +4 natural armor or the character's natural armor, whichever is better

Special Attacks: A skeleton warrior retains all the character's special attacks, gaining those listed below in addition. Unless otherwise noted, saves against these abilities have a DC of 10 + (1/2 the skeleton warrior's HD + the skeleton warrior's Charisma modifier).

Fear Aura (Su): Skeleton warriors are shrouded in an aura of fear. Creatures with less than 5 HD within a 30-foot radius must succeed at a Will save or be affected as though by *fear* as cast by a sorcerer of the skeleton warrior's level.

Damage Reduction: Skeleton warriors have damage reduction 15/+1.

Find Target (Sp): The skeleton warrior can track and find the possessor of its circlet unerringly, as though guided by *discern location*. It can also find the last person to possess its circlet using this ability.

Special Qualities: A skeleton warrior retains all the character's special qualities and those listed below, and also gains the immunities of an undead type (refer to the Introduction in the *MM*).

Darkvision (Ex): Range 60 feet.

Turning Immunity (Ex): Skeleton warriors cannot be turned or controlled by clerics of any level or alignment.

Spell Resistance (Su): Each character gains SR 20 +1 per level above level 10.

Saves: Same as the character

Abilities: A skeleton warrior gains +4 to Strength and +2 to Wisdom and Charisma, but being undead, has no Constitution score.

Skills: Skeleton warriors gain a +8 racial bonus to Intimidate checks and a +6 racial bonus to Sense Motive and Spot checks. Otherwise, the skills are the same as the character.

Feats: Same as the character.

Environment: Any land

Organization: Solitary

Challenge Rating: Same as the character +2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Any evil

Advancement: By character class

Skeleton Warrior's Circlet

The transformation into a skeleton warrior traps the character's soul in a golden circlet. Anyone possessing one of these circlets may exude control over the skeleton warrior whose soul is contained therein as long as the controller and skeleton warrior are within 300 feet of one another. In order to establish or maintain control, the controller must wear the circlet on his head and spend one full round concentrating on the skeleton warrior. If the controller is interrupted during this time, he must succeed at a Concentration check to establish control. The controller cannot wear any other item on his head while wearing the circlet. Doing so causes the circlet to cease functioning until the other headgear is removed. Note that the skeleton warrior can still detect the location of its circlet even if the controller wears something on his head to temporarily nullify the circlet's powers.

While wearing the circlet and within 300 feet of the skeleton warrior, the controller can see through the skeleton warrior's eyes and force it to act (attack, search, etc.). This is called "active" mode. While the skeleton warrior is in active mode, the controller himself cannot take any other action except a 5-foot step.

While controlling the skeleton warrior, the controller can place it in "passive" mode. In this mode, the

skeleton warrior stands motionless and inert. The controller cannot see

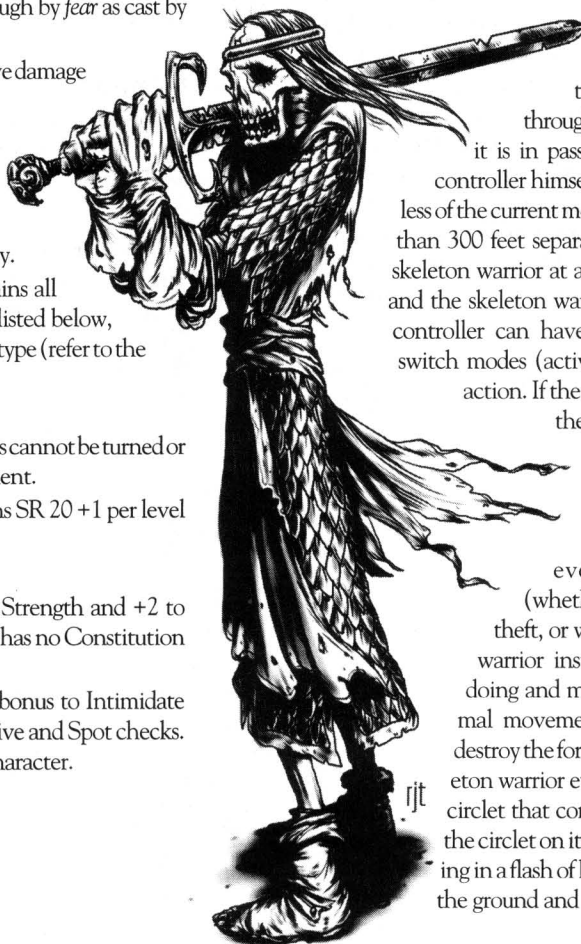
through the warrior's eyes while

it is in passive mode, though the controller himself is free to act. Regardless of the current mode, if a distance greater than 300 feet separates the controller and skeleton warrior at any time, control is lost and the skeleton warrior is free to act. The controller can have the skeleton warrior switch modes (active or passive) as a free action. If the circlet is removed from the controller's head at any

time, control is broken

and the skeleton warrior is free to act.

Should the controller ever lose the circlet (whether through accident, theft, or whatever), the skeleton warrior instantly stops what it is doing and moves at double its normal movement rate to attack and destroy the former controller. If a skeleton warrior ever gains control of the circlet that contains its soul, it places the circlet on its head and dies, vanishing in a flash of light. The circlet falls to the ground and crumbles to dust.

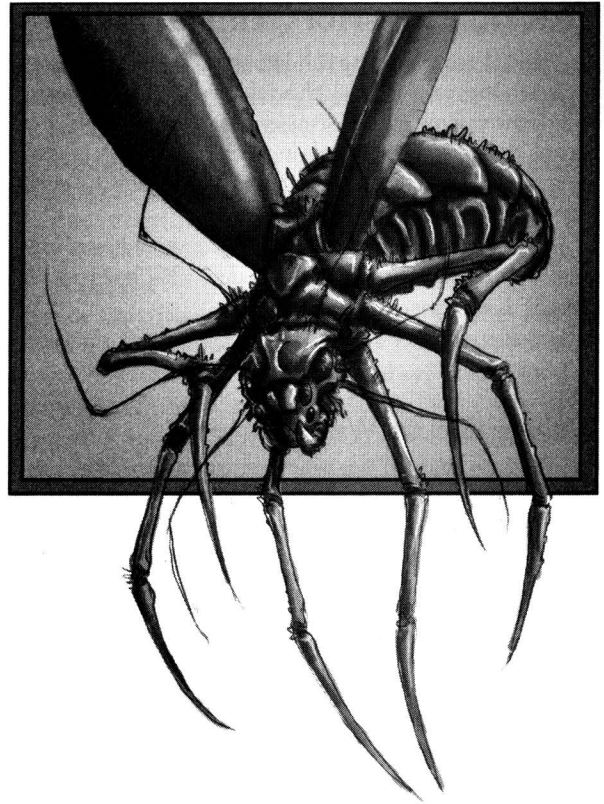


Skree

Medium Outsider

Hit Dice:	1d4+2 (4 hp)
Initiative:	+6
Speed:	30 ft.
Armor Class:	16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+1/+1
Attack:	Bite +0 melee (1d6)
Full Attack:	Bite +0 melee (1d6)
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Qualities:	Spells, Tremorsense
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4
Abilities:	Str 11, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 20, Wis 15, Cha 16
Skills:	Concentration +5, Hide +4, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Knowledge (physics) +7, Listen +3, Move Silently +4, Spellcraft +9, Spot +3.
Feats:	Improved Initiative
Environment:	Any land
Organization:	Community (10-2,000)
Challenge Rating:	1
Treasure:	Standard
Alignment:	Lawful Neutral
Advancement:	By character class

The Skree are a race of sentient beetles from a distant planet. Their bodies are comprised of elytra, or hardened front wings, horned heads, and three pairs of legs on their body, or thorax. They use layered antennae as sense organs. Their chitinous shells are a pink color in their youth, darkening to a deep burnished red in their later years. They are extremely intelligent, their culture advanced both technologically and socially. All Skree have a minimum of at least one level as sorcerer, their favored class. Generally speaking, they advance one experience level per decade, to a maximum of 20th level at



200 years of age, at which time they undergo funerary rights and leave the mortal realm for the Great Unknown.

Combat

A Skree prefers to use spells in combat, though it attacks physically with a single bite.

Spells (Sp): All Skree are sorcerers of level 1 to 20.

Tremorsense (Ex): Skree can automatically sense the location of anything within 60 feet that is in contact with the ground.

Tallow Golem

Medium Construct

Hit Dice:	10d10+20 (75 hp)
Initiative:	-1
Speed:	20 ft.
Armor Class:	13 (-1 Dex, +4 natural)
Base Attack/Grapple:	+7/+9
Attack:	Slam +9 melee (1d8+2)
Full Attack:	2 slams +9 melee (1d8+2)
Damage:	1d8+2
Space/Reach:	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks:	Chemisorb, improved grab
Special Qualities:	Construct traits, cold immunity, fire vulnerability, damage reduction 10/bludgeoning
Saves:	Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +1
Abilities:	Str 15, Dex 9, Con —, Int —, Wis 11, Cha 1
Environment:	Any land and underground
Organization:	Solitary or gang (2-4)
Challenge Rating:	8
Treasure:	None
Alignment:	Always neutral
Advancement:	11-15 HD (Large)

The tallow golem is a humanoid construct composed entirely of wax. It stands about 6 feet tall and usually bears no facial features, unless the creator chooses to render a lifelike "wax dummy," in which case the golem can appear quite real indeed. Wizards who specialize in

the creation of tallow golems refer to themselves as "chandlers." Unlike other golem-sculptors, chandlers consider their work a form of art. The golem wears whatever clothing (if any) that its creator desires, usually rags or trousers. It has no possessions and no weapons. The golem cannot speak or utter any sound. It moves slowly, but relentlessly.

Combat

A tallow golem attacks by pounding its foes with its massive fists.

Chemisorb (Ex): After a successful grapple, the tallow golem adheres to the victim. Contact of this nature causes the chemicals within the golem to break down and absorb any living substance, dealing 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage per round. Additionally, this causes skin discoloration. The victim must make a successful Fortitude save or lose 1 point of Charisma permanently.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the golem must hit a Medium-size or smaller creature with its slam attack. If it gets a hold it may use its chemisorb attack.

Construct Traits (Ex): Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, ability damage, ability drain, or death from massive damage.

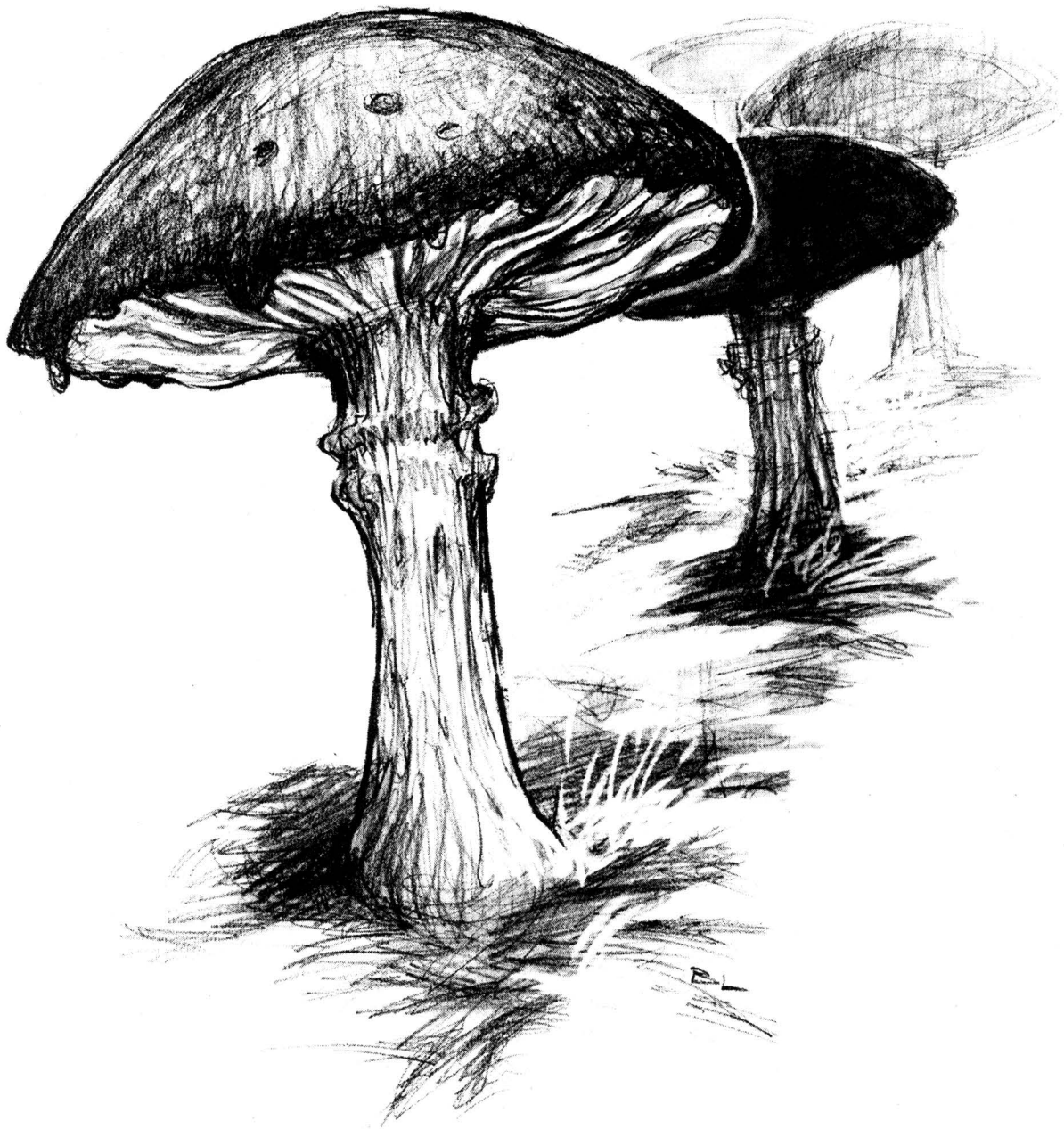
Cold Subtype (Ex): Tallow golems have cold immunity, taking double damage from fire except on a successful save.



Twilight Mushroom (CR 7)

Technically not a monster, a twilight mushroom is considered a hazard, as per the DMG. Twilight mushrooms appear as purplish-black fungi about four to six inches in height. They grow in patches of 5-10 mushrooms and are only found in damp, dark underground areas and in certain enchanted outdoors areas, such as the forest of Weir. Twilight mushrooms sense vibrations and burst forth a cloud of noxious and choking dust when a living creature comes within 10 feet. All those in the area must

succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 2d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. Another Fortitude save (DC 15) is required 1 minute later—even by those who succeeded at the first save—to avoid taking 1d6 points of temporary Constitution damage. Even if either (or both) saves succeed, the affected creature is disabled (treat as stunned) for 3d4 rounds from fits of choking and coughing. Sunlight renders twilight mushrooms dormant and cold instantly destroys them.



New Spells

Minor Sentience

Transmutation

Level: Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 hour

Range: Touch

Target or Targets: 1 object of medium size or smaller

Duration: 1 day/level

Saving Throw: Special

Spell Resistance: None

Elias Fellspar's former adventuring companion, the Mechanician, created this spell. The exact formula for *minor sentience* is now in circulation throughout the Domain, as it was "acquired" from Fellspar by a Hawkmoon pickpocket named Reteeks Verde. When cast on a non-magical, mechanical object, this spell creates a low-level (4-5) intelligence in the apparatus. The object becomes capable of understanding basic, uncomplicated instructions, much the same way a necromancer gives instructions to skeletons and zombies. For example, the wizard might command a lock, "Do not open until I return at midnight," or a book might be instructed to hold itself shut, thus requiring a Strength check (DC 15) from anyone attempting to open it. The object is not capable of movement beyond its normal abilities; in other words, though a book could be made to hold itself shut, it could not be instructed to walk. A suit of plate mail armor, however, could move if commanded to do so.

While the object has intelligence, it has no capability to learn. Once a command has been given, it is extremely difficult to change the object's orders. Therefore, much thought should be given to the

nature of the order, as it is followed to the letter, not necessarily the intent. Additionally, while the object can understand commands, it has no way to communicate in return, unless aided with a spell such as *magic mouth*.

This spell affects one object of medium size or smaller.

Perpetual Motion

Transmutation

Level: Wiz 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 10 min

Range: Touch

Target or Targets: 1 object

Duration: 1 week/level

Saving Throw: Special

Spell Resistance: None

This spell, created by the Mechanician as a gift for his sculptor friend, Elias Fellspar, gives a power source to non-magical carvings and sculptures, as well as other devices capable of motion. Once the spell is cast, the device functions under its own power for 1 week per level of the wizard who cast the spell. After that time, the creation quickly powers down. Multiple castings of this spell do not lengthen its duration, though it can be made permanent with the spell *permanency* (minimum 14th-level caster, cost of 2,500 XP).

Each casting of Perpetual Motion can affect 1 medium-size or smaller target, with no more Hit Dice than half the level of the wizard casting this spell.

Once the creation is in motion, it is no longer considered a magical device. *Dispel magic* does not affect an object under *perpetual motion*, nor does the sculpture cease to function in an *antimagic field*.

Legal Appendix

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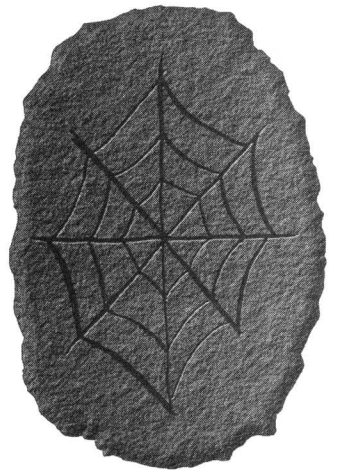
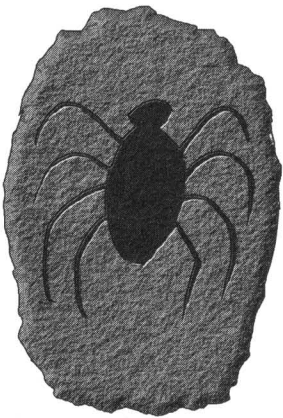
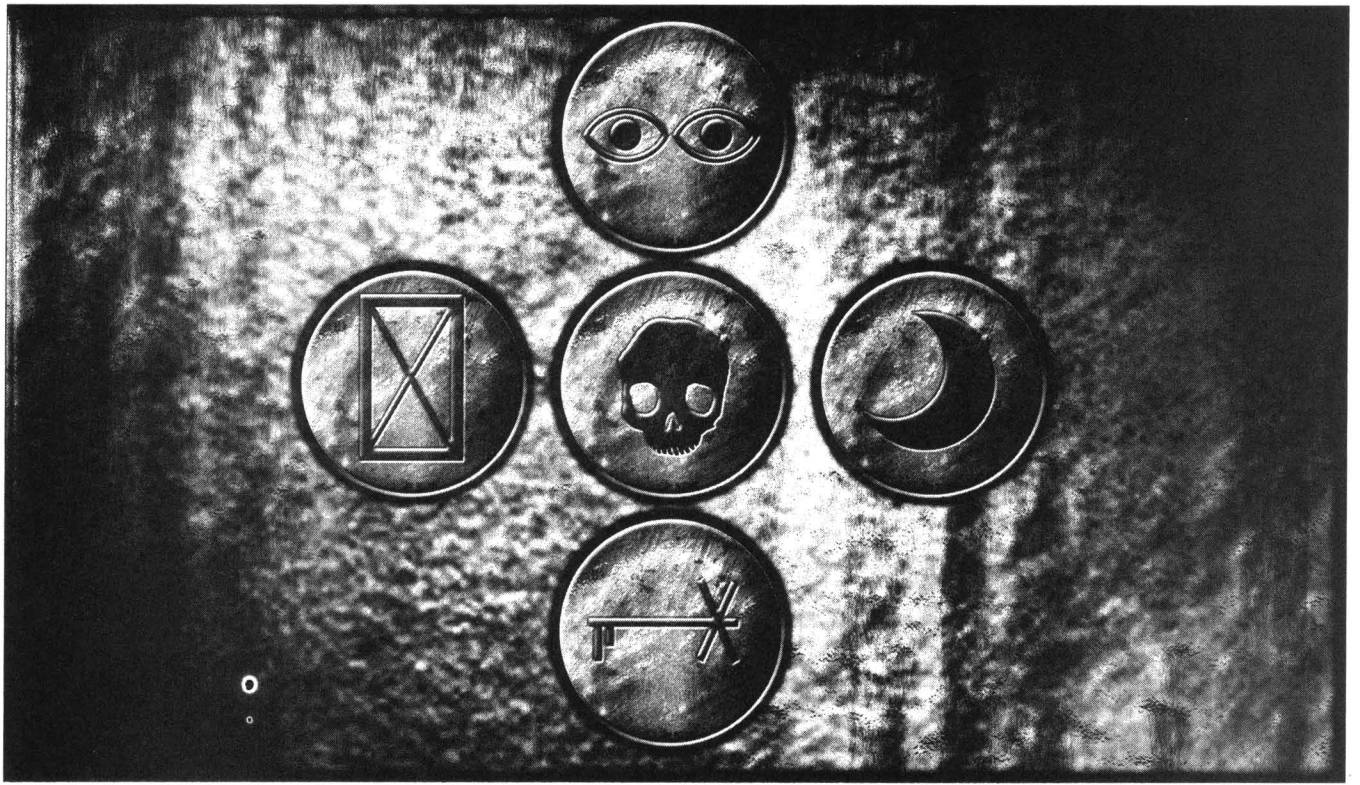
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