

BLOODHOLLOW

An Adventure for 4 7th level characters

Preparation	2
Adventure Summary	3
Player Hooks	3
The Orc Express	7
Survivors	8
The Black Hand	10
Bloodhollow	17
The Meat Shop (LEVEL 1)	18
The "Kitchen" (LEVEL 2)	25
The Mess Hall (LEVEL 3)	31
Skies of Blood (ROOF LEVEL)	35
Optional Climax: A WOMAN'S TOUCH	38
Bloodhollow Destroyed	40
Concluding the Adventure	42

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Bloodhollow

PREPARATION

“Bloodhollow” is a d20 Game System adventure designed for 4 7th level characters. Parties of greater numbers or levels can easily accommodate the adventure by increasing the number of orcs, minotaurs and vampire spawn in their appropriate sections. Parties of lower levels may be ill-advised to partake in this adventure, as they may be lacking the magic and/or magical equipment necessary to deal with some of the foes they encounter (especially Crythos and the vampires), although lower-level parties of more than 4 members or who are equipped with potent magical equipment should be able to survive the adventure. This adventure involves a great deal of combat (primarily against undead foes), magical dangers, and underground traps: therefore, the party should include at least 1 cleric, 1 spell caster (wizard or sorcerer), 1 rogue and 1 fighter-oriented class (fighter, paladin, barbarian, etc.). This adventure is also designed for a PC party that is predominantly of Good alignment. This adventure is designed to take a party of 4 8th level PCs to the 9th level of experience.

This adventure is meant to be adapted into any existing campaign setting. Tulan Lei, Keeldraga and the Ridgeback Road lie on the southwestern coast of a large ocean or sea, though this is not mandatory (as the Elder Gate used by Pike’s crew, the Black Hand, can carry them any distance to Bloodhollow). The DM should feel free to substitute Tulan Lei or Keeldraga for any cities in her existing campaign (see below for guidelines on the cities).

The adventure is site oriented, starting on the road, moving to Pike’s Lair, and then into the meat of the adventure, in Bloodhollow itself. While some degree of creative thinking is necessary to escape some of the more deadly traps and tricks of Bloodhollow, as well as in discovering the truth about the fortress and how to deal with the lich Crythos, this adventure is largely based around combat. For that reason, careful judgement in balancing encounters is mandatory – the DM should feel free to adjust any combat situation as they see fit, either to make things easier on the party or to up the stakes if the PCs seem to be having too easy of a way with things.

“Bloodhollow” is meant to be challenging, and in the end the party should be thankful they have come away with their lives (let alone all of their limbs in tact). The DM is encouraged to push the envelope in making the PCs feel as much dread as possible; after all, the greater the challenge, the greater the glory.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Llandrix Taivorkan was the greatest threat that the world has never heard of. A powerful syrines devil with aspirations to dominate the Lower Planes, Llandrix was in the process of making her plans for domination when a holy order of lawful knights (the Order of Dawn) discovered her plans to start a Planar war via some of her demonic servitors. Llandrix had made plans to deal with denizens of the Prime Material Plane, as well, in the form of the Skydaggers, 6 powerful, flying fortresses with the ability to move at great speeds while remaining invisible, allowing her demonic minions to launch themselves unto their unsuspecting prey. Llandrix made a pact with a powerful lich, Malath, who would provide her with the knowledge of the Prime Material Plane, as well as his undead abilities to produce a seemingly endless legion of troops at her disposal.

Thanks to the intervention of the Order of Dawn, as well as a group of Archons wishing to forestall a Planar War that would spread unto the Prime Material Plane, Llandrix and Malath found themselves defeated before they could ever really begin. Malath was obliterated, Llandrix was imprisoned in a pocket dimension on the fringe of the Outer Planes, and the Skydaggers were destroyed. All, that is, but one.

Hundreds of years later, a powerful arch mage known only as Aram Crythos happened upon the last remaining Skydagger, which he has then dubbed Bloodhollow, so named for the vast amounts of human blood it requires as fuel both to fly and to keep itself masked invisible. Crythos is a vile, evil man haunted by insane visions since birth—he is convinced that he is the messiah of a new dark age, the man who will plunge the world into darkness and who will rule from on high with a throne of flesh and a crown of skulls. It is a vision he has nurtured for years, and which led to his interest in the magical arts, specifically necromancy. For several months, Crythos has used Bloodhollow as his base of operations, moving from place to place, instigating chaos and plague in his wake, though thus far his actions have not caused any wide scale damage, and thanks to his already reclusive nature and the abilities of Bloodhollow to keep him masked from the world’s watchful eye, his activities have remain unchecked. Crythos has a large following of evil loyal creatures, including a family of minotaurs, several powerful mercenaries, some captive trolls and even a medusa. He has entered into an agreement with a small group of mercenary slavers who keep him

well stocked with human food for both his minions and his fortress, and he was even devising a plan to take over a nearby duchy with the aid of a magical plague, which he would release from and maintain with the aid of his fortress.

Then, things started to change. Just a week before the start of this adventure, Bloodhollow started moving on its own volition, flying down the coast and into the heart of a wicked sea storm. Crythos is confounded as to how to regain control over the fortress, which he has always suspected was somewhat sentient to begin with, but he is also not quite ready to give up his newfound seat of power.

In truth, Llandrix—though imprisoned—is very much alive, though the pocket dimension she is imprisoned in renders her all but powerless, and incapable of communicating communication with the outside world. She and Malath, however, had established a form of magical control over all of the Skydaggers when they were created, a control that spanned planar boundaries. Now that Crythos has reanimated Bloodhollow, she has slowly been wresting its control away from him, and now her takeover is all but complete. Using her mental link with the fortress, Llandrix is slowly unleashing the undead energies Malath used to create it, using Crythos himself as the vessel, spreading them across the fortress like a plague and slowly corrupting its new inhabitants, warping their minds to do her bidding and transforming them into undead minions. By reanimating the fortress and re-establishing the link to the demonic Llandrix, Crythos has inadvertently created a sort of planar rift in a random location. Now Llandrix is moving Bloodhollow closer to the rift, in the hopes that its proximity will shatter the walls of her prison, and allow her to return to finish what she started so many centuries ago.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

The PC party are to become involved with these strange events when they are on the road, far between the nearest towns (and, consequently, any sign of help). The PCs stumble upon a band of pilgrims being assaulted by the slavers in Crythos' employ, led by the nefarious Elias Pike. After rescuing what few of the pilgrims they can, the PCs then track Elias to his lair, where his close circle of mercenaries, as well as a small band of orcs, lie in wait. Once the slavers have been dealt with, the PCs discover, deep inside the lair, the portal leading directly to Bloodhollow.

At Bloodhollow, the PCs have to fight and think their way through Crythos' lethal defenses and undead minions. After working through 3 distinct levels of the fortress – The Meat Shop, the Kitchen, and the Mess Hall – the PCs should have gathered enough clues to know what is going on. They should also know that they must defeat Crythos on the roof of the fortress if they are to prevent Llandrix from being released and beginning her campaign of conquest anew. The adventure ends with the escape of the PCs back to safe land and the destruction of Bloodhollow.

PLAYER HOOKS

This adventure is written as if the PCs are simply wandering east along the Ridgeback Road – wandering, or else on their way to their next planned adventure – when they literally stumble upon Crythos' plot (or, more accurately, the plot stumbles onto them). If a *deus ex machina* seems too blatant or unrealistic for the campaign, there are a number of possible character hooks:

- The PCs have heard of a large number of kidnappings happening in the area, though no one is quite sure who is responsible or how they are managing to remove so many people from sight and remain undetected. Nearly 40 people have disappeared from the combined areas of Tulan Lei and Keeldraga (see below), and thus far no evidence has been found.

- A PC either knows, is related to, or has been hired to find one of the kidnapping victims (though please note that Pike and his band are unlikely to have apprehended anyone extensively rich or powerful). Crythos made it very clear to them what the people are being used for, and above all things Pike is attempting to maintain a low profile, so the person in question is more likely to be commoner or fellow adventurer than a Princess or a rich merchant.

- The PCs are bounty hunters, and have specifically been hired to hunt down and bring Elias Pike, a known mercenary and kidnapper, to justice, for the healthy reward of 10,000 gp. Their clues have led them here, to the Ridgeback Road falling between Tulan Lei and Keeldraga.

- Several churches (specifically those of good alignment) are alarmed at a growing force of evil energy in the Halath Sea. Numerous parties have been sent to investigate the areas immediately surrounding the Halath Sea in order to determine the cause of the disturbance, a roaming aura of evil

that seems to be growing larger and stronger by the day. Among these parties is the PC party, who are investigating the area to the west of the sea when they stumble upon the plot.

- If none of these devices work, the DM should feel free to devise one of her own. Otherwise, the DM may feel free to run the adventure as is, in which case the PCs are simply suffering from a bad case of “wrong place, wrong time”.

The following details are what everyone knows about the area:

- Tulan Lei is a small, elegant city, renowned for its crafts guilds, large population of artists, and school of magic. It is a relatively peaceful place that maintains an open door policy for all outsiders, though the people of Tulan Lei generally keep to themselves.

- Keeldraga is a large, militant town, lying directly on the southern borderlands to goblinoid/humanoid territories. The people of Keeldraga are gruff and direct, and nearly every good produced in or imported out of Keeldraga is directly tied to their struggles against the Skull Kicker Horde (a conglomerate force of orcs, half-orcs, ogres and hill giants, all supposedly led by a vicious human barbarian). A nice place to visit... well, maybe not.

- The Ridgeback Road is a major trade highway connecting the two cities, spanning over 100 miles from Keeldraga in the north to Tulan Lei on the southwestern coast of the Halath Sea. Numerous side roads branch off to the west, into the mainland, though the more direct route to the Sea to the east remains overtaken by the Oakweed Forest. The road is heavily patrolled near both of the cities, but despite the fact that numerous villages and trading outposts line the road, it is relatively unprotected. Luckily, monstrous activity in this area is fairly weak, though the recent kidnappings have given rise to some voice that the two cities need to expend more resources ensuring that the Ridgeback Road remains safe for travelers.

- In the past several weeks, some 40 people have vanished between the two cities. All evidence points to bandits of some sort, but the lack of manpower available on the road, Tulan Lei's policies of non-involvement and Keeldraga's preoccupation with the Skull Kicker Horde to the north has prevented any thorough investigation from taking place. Armed militias of farmers and artisans from the villages and trading posts have taken to patrolling the roads, though the kidnappings have continued unabated.

- Rumors of a dark, evil presence in the sea has everyone in an uproar, though the stories of what this “evil” is vary greatly. Some claim it is a ghost ship, spreading plague and death in its wake; others maintain it is a gateway to Hell that has yet to completely open; still others say it is the God of the evil Horde, from the north, come to aid the vile horde's plans of conquest and plunder. In truth, no one knows what it is, if it truly exists, or what all of the fuss is about.

The PCs should be coming east along the Ridgeback Road, either returning to either of the afore before mentioned cities or else coming upon the area for the first time. As none of the adventure actually takes place in or around the cities, only the barest of details are provided below; the DM should feel free to embellish the sites as she sees fit should the PCs wish to visit them after the adventure to purchase equipment, gather rumors, etc. Consequently, as the adventure begins the PCs may be returning east on the road on an errand or mission for a contact they have in either of the two cities

Tulan Lei (small city): Unconventional (Magocracy); AL NG; 15,000-gp limit; Assets 5.6 million gp; Population 7523; Mixed Population (79% humans, 14% elves, 5% dwarves, 2% gnomes)

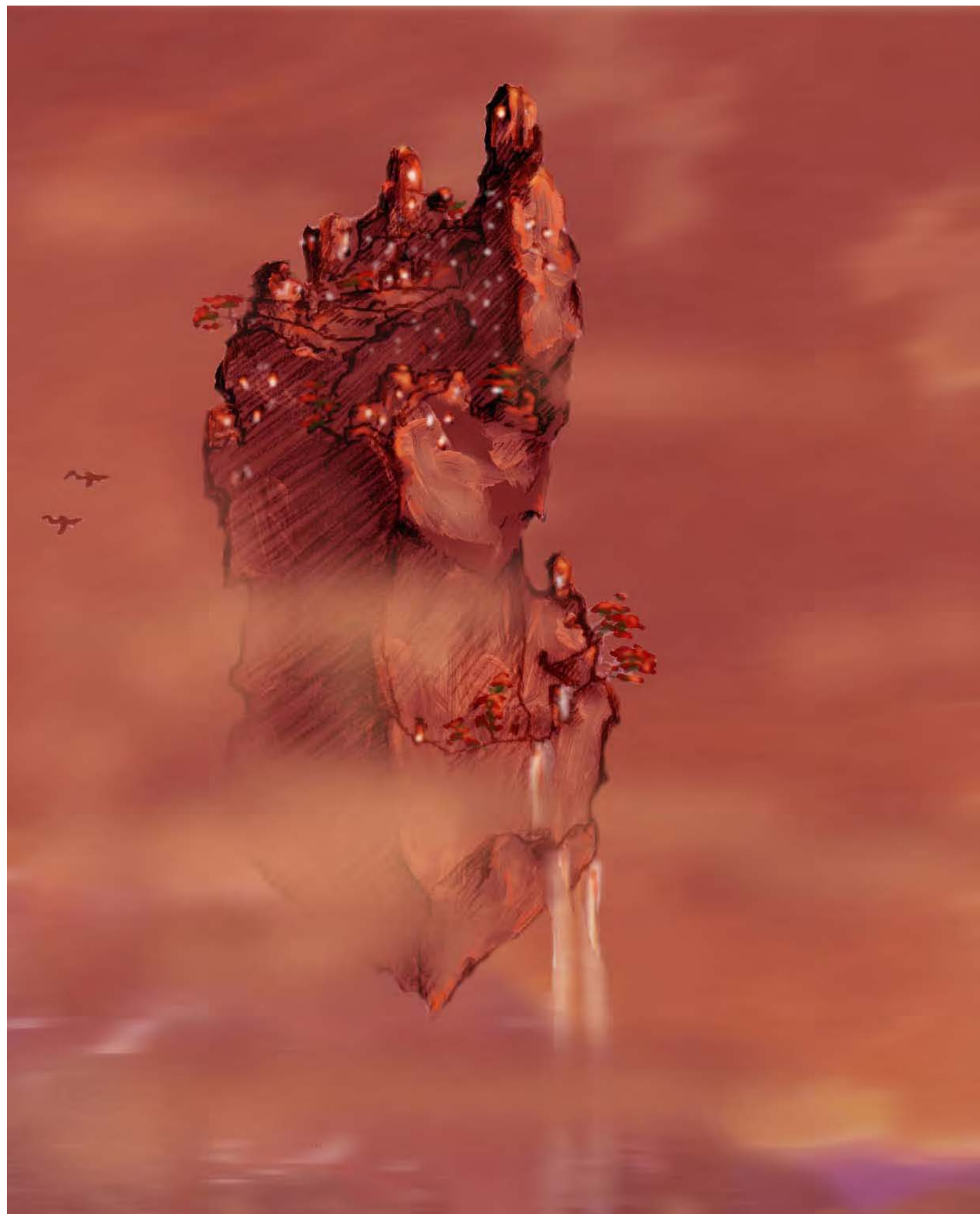
Authority Figures: Soraj Cordrannen, male human Wiz13

Description: Tulan Lei is a grand, opulent city that tries very hard not to act like a grand, opulent city. New construction is limited, despite the high population: most all of the city's inhabitants live in the city walls in cramped spaces, especially among the lower classes. The city delights itself on its beauty, majesty and attention to the arts, especially pottery, painting and magic. Tulan Lei is a magocracy, ruled by a Overseer and a ruling Council of 9 other wizards. People in Tulan Lei are calm and reserved, as is the city as a whole. People looking for a disreputable place to get into drunken fist fights and make black market deals had best look elsewhere, for such a thing is far too uncivilized for the elegant people of Tulan Lei.

Keeldraga (large city): Conventional; AL CG; 40,000 gp limit; Assets 36 million gp; Population 18,456; Isolated Population (91% humans, 7% dwarves, 2% elves)

Authority Figures: Duke Karl Hungrordge, male human Ftr14

Description: Keeldraga is a large, loud, smelly place with more than its fair share of problems. For the past 3 years, Keeldraga has lived under the shadow of the Skull Kicker Horde, a massive conglomerate federation of goblins, orcs, half-orcs





Bloodhollow

and hill giants who have been raiding against and terrorizing the city and its surrounding communities almost without pause. Trade has been injured with any of Keeldraga's northern partners, though the city still manages a bustling internal trade and a good flow of ores and minerals exported both to Tulan Lei and to the countries in the west. Though this conflagration has only lasted 36 months, to Keeldragans it feels as if it has been much longer.

Nearly every able bodied man is expected to enter the military, for even with the city's mighty population, the Horde always seems to have more bodies on hand for the weekly battles.

Living under the threat of siege has become so commonplace that many outsiders to come into Keeldraga think the city's inhabitants completely insane — where else could flaming pitch falling against the city walls and cries of "OK, time to die again!" be acceptable, weekly occurrences?

The PCs should not have much time to spend in either of these cities: the above information is for some background info only, and the DM should feel free to expand upon it. Rather, the real adventure starts as the PCs are traveling east along the Ridgeback Road, heading towards the north-south crossroads.

THE ORC EXPRESS

The adventure begins around midday, as the PCs are riding east along the Ridgeback Road. Read the following text:

The road is quiet. A dull, tangerine sun hangs low over the bank of molten clouds to the east, cutting a swath across the fields of brightly colored, waist-deep grass that extends to the north and south of the road. A few chirping birds and noisy, sleepless crickets color the air, and the inbound breeze from the Halath Sea carries with it the faint taste of salt. It has been over an hour since you passed the last farmhouse, though the farmer there told you that closer to the junction of the north-south road, which connects Keeldraga and Tulan Lei at the midway point, there is a trading post where you can possibly pick up more provisions and equipment. Except for the birds and the clatter of your own movement, the scene is relatively silent. Up ahead, a good hundred yards away, the road melts into a lightly wooded glade, which seems to extend for some distance to the east.

Have all PCs make a Listen and Spot skill check (DC 15 each). Succeeding at the Listen check allows the PCs to hear the faint sound of rapidly approaching wagons on the road ahead. Succeeding at the Spot check allows the PCs to notice a thick plume of black smoke rising from the trees, roughly a mile down the road. Once they've had time to mull this over, read the following:

With a crash, a lone wagon comes hurtling out of the forest ahead. Twin thundering horses fly down the road in a frenzy, hooves chopping up mounds of dirt as they run. The wagon is badly damaged, with one wheel looking as if it is about to break off and a good dozen crossbow bolts protruding from its left side. The wagon is also apparently without a driver, until you spy a lone little girl sitting up top, her arms covering her face as she cries out in fear.

Following shortly behind the wagon is a brown-cloaked rider, leaning dangerously close to the wagon in an attempt to gather the reins of the wagon's horses. Both wagon and rider are traveling dangerously fast, but not so fast as the second wagon. An ugly brute of a creature commands the second vehicle, his dull grey skin

layered beneath dark yellow and purple armor, his porcine face a depiction of vile ugliness. The creature cackles gleefully as he drives the horses of his wagon faster and faster, closing in on its prey. This ugly creature's wagon seems only slightly more in control than the first, and all three, wagons and rider, are racing towards you at an alarming speed.

Torak Cagrath, the rider, is a warrior who, along with a good number of his friends, decided to relocate their families away from the war-torn Keeldraga and to the safer city of Tulan Lei. They were all aware of the risks in coming down the Ridgeback Road, especially with the recent string of kidnappings, but they decided it was an acceptable risk in comparison to waiting to be slaughtered by the Horde. Now that the Black Hand — Elias Pike's band of kidnappers — has attacked them, they have certainly changed their minds.

After the fighting began, Corgaith Turnblow, a friend of Torak's, took to his wagon and attempted to flee with his wife and child. His wife was rendered unconscious by an orc's crossbow bolt, and Corgaith shortly followed, leaving the wagon thundering out of control with only his 7-year-old daughter, Caryis, at the helm. Shortly after, Torak sped after her to try and save her life, with five orcs racing after them, one at the helm of a wagon (which is an adrenaline charge for the easily entertained orc). The other four are following on foot as fast as they can.

Caryis is a 0-level commoner, with but 1 hit point and AC 8. If she is rescued and Torak survives, they enlist the PCs aid in helping the rest of their band.

Creatures (EL 3): The group pursuing Torak and Caryis consists of 5 orcs, 1 of which is attempting to drive a wagon.

Orcs (5): CR 1/2; Medium-Size Humanoid (6 feet tall); HD 1d8; hp 8 each; Init. +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14 (+4 scale mail); Atk +3 melee (1d12 + 3, greataxe, crit x3), or +1 ranged (1d10, heavy crossbow, crit 19-20); SQ darkvision 60 feet, light sensibility; AL CE; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will -1; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Skills: Listen +2, Spot +2. **Feats:** Alertness.

SQ – Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a *daylight* spell.

Possessions: greataxe, heavy crossbow, 10 bolts, 1d10 gp.

Bloodhollow

Torak, Male Human War2: CR 2; Medium Humanoid (6 ft. tall); HD 2d8 + 2; hp 14; Init. +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd. 30 ft.; AC 13 (+3 studded leather); Atk. +4 melee (1d8 + 3, crit x3, battle-axe), or +2 ranged (1d10, crit x3, longbow); AL CG; SV Fort +4, Ref +0, Will +0; Str 15, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 15, Wis 11, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +2, Handle Animal +2, Intimidate +2, Jump +2, Ride +2, Swim +2, Profession (Woodcarver) +2, Craft (Woodcarving) +2. *Feats:* Power Attack, Improved Initiative.

Possessions: battle-axe, longbow, 35 arrows, studded leather armor

Horses (5): CR 1; Large Animal; HD 3d8+6; hp 19 each; Init +1 (Dex); Spd. 60 ft.; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +2 melee (1d4+1, 2 hooves); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 13, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6. *Skills:* Listen +6, Spot +6.

Tactics: The PCs begin this encounter in a dangerous spot. The first wagon, with Caryis at the helm, is roughly 200 feet away, but the horses are running at full speed (240 ft./round). Thus, within 1 round the horses and the first wagon are within melee range. Torak attempts to grab the reins in the 1st round, which is a Ride skill check (DC 15). On the following round he attempts to stop the horses, a Handle Animal skill check (DC 15). Should the PCs attempt to aid, use these same DCs should Torak fail. A PC attempting to stop the horses while on foot have a much more difficult time, requiring a Ride skill check (DC 20) to even grab the reins; failure means the PC must make a Reflex Save (DC 15) or else be trampled by both horses (4d4 + 4 damage).

Meanwhile, the orc driving the wagon continues pushing his team forward, attempting—in inimitable orc fashion—to ram the first wagon with his own wagon. Luckily for the party, the orc does not have the Handle Animal skill, and so each round the DM should roll 1d6 to determine the actual direction that the second wagon travels (1-2 = veers 45 degrees to the right, 3-4 = straight ahead, 5-6 = veers 45 degrees to the left). Should the wagon stray too far off course, the orc jumps down, suffering 2d6 damage due to the horses' speed. If, however, the wagon rams a PC, that PC is allowed a Reflex Save (DC 15) to jump out of the way. Failure means the wagon strikes them full on, inflicting 4d4 + 4 damage from the horses' hooves and 2d6 damage from the impact of the wagon. If the orc survives the fall, he ferociously attacks the PCs.

Finally, the four remaining orcs run at full speed until they are about 60 feet away, at which point two hang back and attack with their crossbows while the other two rush forth to commence with melee.

SURVIVORS

Assuming that both Torak and Caryis survived the encounter, Torak is very grateful to the PCs for helping them, but he implores them to come back with them — he is the leader of a party of 25, heading south for Tulan Lei that was just minutes ago ambushed by a large band of orcs, led by human mercenaries. His party was attacked about a mile away before Caryis' parents attempted an escape.

One mile up the road, at the point from which the PCs may have detected the smoke plume earlier, they find the following:

Three more wagons lie decimated on the road, two smashed into splinters, their contents — barrels of wine and water, preserved rations, mounds of clothing and artisan's equipment — spilt and ruined across the road, while the third burns away in black smoke and hot red flame. Many members of the caravan didn't fare much better — as you approach, you see 5 bodies, their bones and skin smashed into a bloody morass against the trees and across the dirt road. There are only about a dozen or so survivors, it seems, several of them injured. Whatever was happening seems to have ended by the time you come to the scene of battle. The survivors — mostly men, dressed in light armor and yielding bloodstained axes and swords — roam about, moving the dead under blankets and helping the women and a pair of children get to the last standing wagon, itself suffering from a broken wheel. Another pair of women is putting out the last of the burning wagon's blaze.



The Ogre Express

1 Square=5 feet

If Caryis is alive, she runs to one of the women, her aunt Kyleara. Kyleara convinces Caryis that her parents indeed are not dead, only slightly injured; Caryis hugs her aunt before tugging at the other children to go and sit with her.

Read the following:

"Torak," one of the men says. He is a tall, blonde-bearded brute of a human, with twin battle-axes strapped across his back and a third, stained with dried gore, held steadfastly in his hands. "They made off with 6 of our own. Keegan, Julak, Olyssa, Davri, Juleine and Crogak. That won't do, Torak."

"What do you want us to do?" Torak argues back. "Risk the lives of those few of us left to go and get them?"

"We will not let them die in some slime-infested orc lair!" the man shouts. "And we will not allow that madman Pike to terrorize us like this! My cousin vanished down, here, Torak, and I know Pike was responsible!"

A verbal fight escalates, with the man, Garuk, as well as 2 other warriors (all with the same statistics as Torak, above) adamantly arguing that they follow the kidnapers. Torak, who feels responsible for the event, as it was his idea for them leave Keeldraga and get to safety, argues against this course of action, as it would only result in more of their lives being lost.

Needless to say, Torak is right — the Black Hand would slaughter a group of 2nd level warriors, no matter how determined. (This would be a good point at which to refresh the PCs knowledge on the area, as either Torak, Garuk or Kyleara would be all too happy to tell the PCs of the problems in Keeldraga, the lures of Tulan Lei and the threat of the Black Hand and their leader, the infamous Elias Pike.) The PCs may intervene here and cool the argument, but only so long as a viable solution that would please both parties can be found. In truth, Garuk also sees the wisdom in Torak's words, though he is loathe to admit it, as that would show fear on his part and an unwillingness to commit and do what is right — rescue their captured family and friends and take revenge upon the Black Hand. The obvious solution, of course, is for the PCs to volunteer to investigate Pike's trail for them, since it is fresh.

Torak can describe their attackers: over a dozen orcs, an orc wicca adept or shaman dressed in horrid blue and orange robes, and 2 humans, a blonde, heavily scarred human fighter with blood red leather armor, and an elven woman of fair skin and long, flowing dark hair, who cast spells. After attacking, the kidnapers set off due east.

Typically, Pike is much more careful to conceal his tracks, but his elven wizard/lover Taerith detected the PC party approaching, and Pike has no wish to get himself killed. Since the Black Hand had collected 6 hostages (exactly how many they were told to acquire by Crythos), Pike ordered his force back to their lair, where they would go back through the Elder Gate as soon as Taerith could open it (a ritual that typically takes an hour or more). Furthermore, Pike's last communication with Crythos was unusual: the wizard, who is typically very patient, demanded at least another 6 sacrifices as soon as possible. Pike is beginning to grow afraid of the warped mage, and has no desire to get on his bad side.

Torak has heard rumors that the kidnapers slay their victims in some bizarre, cannibalistic ritual, so if the PCs do volunteer to follow the Black Hand to their lair, they had best hurry.

THE BLACK HAND

Luckily for the PCs, because Pike and the Black Hand had to leave in such a rush, they did not cover their tracks very effectively. The PCs may make a Wilderness Lore check (DC 8) to track the Black Hand, due to the short amount of time that has passed since their attack and due to the large number of creatures in the party. As noted above, Pike isn't very worried about being followed at this point, since he is going to have Taerith take all of the Black Hand through the Elder Gate.

Should the PCs wait a day to track the Black Hand, they receive a full 6 hours of rain overnight, increasing the DC for tracking the Black Hand to 14. Additionally, if the PCs wait until morning, the Elder Gate is no longer be active, and the PCs then have to devise a means of opening it themselves (see area BH7, below, for details).

Pike's lair is roughly an hour to the east, through green forest that gradually thins as one goes along. Pike has requisitioned the orc lair of his minions and made it into his own base of operations. When the PCs are approaching the lair, read the following:

Falling sunlight pierces the thick glade. Large boulders, many of them covered with moss and vines, jut out of the otherwise serene landscape like bruises. Up ahead, through the unusually thick and silent shadows looming beneath the overhanging trees, you see a small, jagged hill of dark grey stone, with a single entrance, like a yawning maw. All is silent, and still.

Unless otherwise noted, all areas within the Black Hand's lair are lit by torchlight. All walls are rough hewn stone (Break DC 50, Hardness 8, 540 hp), and all doors are strong wooden (Break DC 23, Hardness 5, 20 hp). All ceilings are 20 feet high.

BH1. Entrance

Thick, moldy piles of refuse – primarily old clothing and long-ruined leather goods – litter the floor of the 15' wide entryway. Twin torches hang on brackets at a Y-shaped junction up ahead. The air smells of mold, rot and decay.

A PC with the Track Feat may make a Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 11) to determine that over a dozen beings were through this area recently. Most of the tracks took down the eastern branch of the corridor, while 8 more sets of human-sized prints went down the western branch. There is a trap hidden in the refuse.

Trap (EL 2): Hidden in the refuse is a tripwire, which Pike and his band carefully avoid because they use the caves so frequently. Stepping on the hidden tripwire causes two hidden panels layered with spikes to fly out of the eastern and western walls; the panels close against one another, trapping whoever is stuck in the middle. The panels continue to inflict secondary damage, noted blow, until a Strength check (DC 18) is made to escape.

Spiked Panels Trap: CR 2; +14 melee; 4d6 (crit x2), secondary damage 1d4/round; *Find:* Search DC 21; *Disable:* Disable Device (DC 21).

Development. If the trap is sprung, the orcs in areas BH2 and BH3 get Listen skill checks (DC 15) to know that the PCs are here, and they act appropriately (see below).

BH2. Slave Pens

The door to this room is not locked. Read the following:

This oddly shaped, roughly oval chamber stretches approximately 15' wide x 30' long. The walls are dark, rough-hewn stone, layered in moss and filth. The entire room reeks of

putrescence. A large, battered metal cage, 5' wide by 10' long, occupies the eastern wall, while the rest of the room is covered in old slime, bodily waste and corroded shoes and boots. The cage is empty, though the room is occupied by five more of the smelly beasts you encountered in the forest, grey-skinned humanoids with tusks and greataxes.

Creatures (EL 3): There are 5 orcs in the room.

Orcs (5): hp 8 each; see "Orc Express" for full details.

Tactics: If the orcs hear the PCs set off the trap in area BH1, they are all waiting by the door, ready to smash the first thing that steps through. Orcs are not brilliant tacticians, and they are not particularly quiet, so a successful Listen skill check (DC 15) made outside the door reveals to the PCs that there is something waiting for them on the other side.

Development: If the battle in either this room or area BH3 goes on for more than 3 rounds, Synder, the orc sorcerer in area BH5, activates the trap in area BH4 and has his combat spells cast upon himself (see Area BH5 for details). If the battle goes on for more than 5 rounds, the orcs from Area BH3 also come to join the battle.

BH3. Treasure Room

The door to this room is not locked. Read the following:

This semicircular chamber stretches 20' by 30'. It is mostly bare, save for some piles of refuse, several old, battered looking treasure chests, and an extremely large trap door occupying the majority of the eastern end of the room. Three of the ugly, foul-smelling beasts you encountered in the forest are here, unloading bags of coins from the chests.

The PCs have a chance to sneak up on the orcs in this room. Unless the orcs heard the PCs set the trap off in area BH1 (and they are at -2 to this check, since they are making so much noise with the coins), they are unprepared for combat, needing a round to take up arms when the melee begins.

The trap door is made of strong wood (Break DC 23, Hardness 5, 20 hp), but has no apparent handle. A Spot skill check (DC 20) reveals a wooden handle, similar to a portcullis

lever, hidden in a niche on the wall north of the trap door. Throwing this switch reveals a shallow area, inside of which lie the Black Hand's treasure horde and the 2 huge skeletons that protect it.

Creatures (EL 2): There are 3 orcs in the room. **Orcs (3):** hp 8 each; see "Orc Express" for full details.

Tactics: If at all possible, one of the orcs activates the trap door (a standard action). The orcs then attempt to drive the PCs closer to the opening, as 1 round after the door opens the two huge skeletons contained therein emerge and attack the PCs. (Of course, once the PCs are dead, the skeletons then attack the orcs, but orcs rarely think that far ahead...)

Treasure: There are 1,234 gp in the combined bags lying on the floor and in the chests.

Development: If the battle in either this room or area BH 3 goes on for more than 3 rounds, Synder, the orc mage in area BH 5, has activated the trap in area BH4 and has his combat spells cast upon himself (see Area BH 5 for details). If the battle goes on for more than 5 rounds, the orcs from Area BH2 also arrives to join the battle.

Area BH3a. Treasure Room.

This 15' x 20' area houses the majority of the Black Hand's treasure hoard, as well as its defenders, 2 huge skeletons who attack anything and everything they see, starting first with the PCs.

Creatures (EL 4): There are 2 huge skeletons in the pit, which rise up and attack the PCs with huge long swords.

Huge Skeletons (2): CR 2; Huge Undead (16 feet tall); HD 4d12; hp 26 each; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft.; AC 13 (-2 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk. +4 melee (huge long sword, 2d8 + 4, crit 19-20); SQ undead, immunities; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; AL N; Str 18, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

SQ – Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning & disease. Not subject to critical hits, sub dual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

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

Tactics: The pit is 20 feet deep. If possible, the skeletons may attempt to grapple and pull PCs into the pit for 2d6 falling damage.

Treasure: There are 2,754 gp and a *holy longspear* +2 buried within the coins that make up the bottom of the pit.

BH4. Door.

This door is nondescript, but it is locked with a good lock, which may be opened with an Open Locks skill check (DC 26). If Synder is aware of the PCs approach (see above), then the trap outside the door is already active.

Trap (EL 3): Unlocking the door without the key (which Synder himself, on the other side of the room, happens to hold) causes a 10' x 10' block of concrete up above to slam down on the area just in front of the door. The trap resets itself immediately, and can be deactivated by jamming the pressure plate activated by the lock mechanism.

Stone Block Trap (CR 3): +20 melee (6d6, crit x3); **Find:** Search (DC 23); **Disable:** Disable Device (DC 27).

BH5. The Blue Orc

Read the following:

This rapacious chamber looks entirely out of place in comparison to the areas you have just battled through. The roughly 15' by 15' chamber is well furnished, with a massive oak bed along the west wall and a sturdy mahogany desk on the east wall. A thick black-bear rug covers the center of the floor, and a large chest glittering with gold and gems stands opened in the northeast corner. A single, sturdy door stands opposite you in the northern wall.

Read the following only if Synder is unaware of the PCs approach:

A tall, bizarre looking creature stands before you. It is similar to the smelly brutes you have been fighting, though it dresses a bit more opulently, wearing flowing, gaudily colored robes. Its skin is painted pale blue, and its thick hair, teeth and claws are as black as night. Its bright red eyes focus on you as you enter; your entrance genuinely surprises it, it would seem.

Synder took control of the group of the orcs the PCs have been battling some time ago, though it was only recently that he met Elias Pike and Taerith... and then he started making real money. Though he despises humans by his very nature, Synder knows a good deal when he sees it, and the

amount of money he has made helping the human duo capture helpless peasants and wayward travelers has convinced him to put his normal prejudices aside. Regardless, Synder knows that something strange is afoot with Pike's employer, the man called Crythos, and he has little desire to discover what that is. Synder is not willing to give up his treasure, either, but he may be willing to parley if he thinks that he can get away with all of his money.

Creature (EL 4): Synder, an orc sorcerer.

Synder, male orc Sor4: CR 4; Medium

Humanoid (5 feet, 5 inches tall); HD 1d8 + 4d4 + 8; hp 27; Init +4 (Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (studded leather +3); Atk +4 melee (1d8 + 2, shortspear, crit x3); SA spells; SQ Regeneration 2, SR 18; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will +6; Str 14, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 16.

Skills: Concentration +6, Listen +5, Spellcraft +4, Spot +4. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative.

SQ – Light Sensitivity (Ex): Orcs suffer a -1 penalty to attack rolls in bright sunlight or within the radius of a daylight spell.

Spells (6/7/4): 0 – daze, detect magic, disrupt undead, ghost sound, mage hand, resistance; 1st – charm person, mage armor, magic missile; 2nd – invisibility

Possessions: studded leather armor, *wand of ice storm* (11 charges), 220 gp worth of gems in a belt pouch

Tactics: If Synder is alerted to the party's presence, he begins this encounter *invisible*. Despite his dislike of humans and demi-humans, Synder is no fool, and has no desire to be killed by humans while working for other humans (the irony is far too sickening for him to digest). If the party appears badly injured or weak he attempts to get the drop on them with his wand of ice storm, quickly followed by his charm person spell and, if necessary, his spear. Synder focuses any attacks upon fighters and the like first, relying on his good Will save to protect him from spell casters.

If the PCs appear formidable and somewhat healthy, however, Synder carefully watches them. He does not attack unless he is sure he can win, and if pressed, he makes every attempt to flee, though he is loathe to leave his treasure behind.

If taken by surprise, Synder most likely negotiates for his life, as a ruse if nothing else. He only strikes if he is sure he can win; otherwise, he willingly surrenders his treasure and everything he knows to the PCs (though he searches for a means of escape and revenge at the earliest opportunity).

Treasure: In Synder's open treasure chest is 2,401 gp, 143 pp, 2 silver chalices encrusted with tiny sapphires (1300 gp each), and a *potion of cure critical wounds*.

Development: If Synder is negotiated with or taken alive, he is willing to tell of how he and his band of orcs and he were recruited by the infamous Elias Pike several months ago. Pike and his lover, the elven sorceress Taerith, needed aid in kidnapping and transporting people – humans or demi-humans, they didn't care what type, age, race, etc. – to their employer. Though it took him some time, Synder eventually learned that the name of the employer was Crythos, and that he needs the prisoners for some sort of dark magical device, though Synder is at a loss to explain what that device is or why these prisoners are so important.

In the past few days, however, things have gotten even stranger. Pike and Taerith have been pushing the Black Hand to collect as many prisoners as possible, though every day that they have embarked on a hunt there was a specific number they needed; when that number was filled, they would quit, Pike would give them money, and they would wait until the next day. Whenever Pike and Taerith are not leading the Black Hand on raids, they are behind the door that leads from Synder's own quarters. He has heard them casting strange magics there, and he suspects that they communicate with their employer, Crythos, through all hours of the night. Synder is almost positive that they must also possess some means to magically teleport their prisoners, as well, for he has never seen a prisoner emerge from beyond that door, and he has never met this Crythos (and isn't completely sure that he wants to, for that matter).

Synder can also tell the party that, to his knowledge, Pike and Taerith are alone in the room. He has never ventured into their quarters before, and certainly doesn't intend to start now. Not for a bunch of humans.

BH6. Pike & Taerith

This door is sealed by an *arcane lock*, thereby making it nearly unbreakable (Break DC 33). Once the PCs are inside, read the following:

This massive chamber is as cold as the inside of a tomb; for a moment, you think that's exactly what it is. The 50' by 30' chamber is wrought of cold, dark stone. The area is deathly cold and quiet. A large staircase leads from the northern border of the room, carrying up 5' to a smaller dais, upon which sits what appears to be a

gigantic black mirror. The crackle and hum of magical energy swirls through the air. Two small beds, lying respectively in the southeastern and southwestern corners of the room, as well as a small table and chest, are all that comprise the furnishings of the chamber. The room has two occupants. The first, a ravenously attractive high elven woman, wears her incredibly long hair in a braid that reaches to her knees. She is dressed in black and crimson robes, and her fingers and wrists are adorned with expensive looking jewelry. The second is a tall, muscular man, dressed similarly in black and red, though his attire comprises of studded leather armor. His short blonde hair meets his temple at a network of bizarre runic symbols; a long, jutting scar traces its way over his left eye and down to his jaw line. A glaive lies strapped across his back, and he tenses with fury as you enter the room.

The above is assumed that the PCs pursued the Black Hand here directly after the battle on the Ridgeback Road, in which case Pike has just returned from delivering the 6 prisoners the Hand captured to the gate guards at Bloodhollow. Adjust the above description if the PCs are delayed in getting to the Black Hand's lair. Pike and Taerith are still there, as Crythos would not grant an audience to the Black Hand and refused them admittance into Bloodhollow, but the portal is cold and inactive (and requires some magical experimentation on the PCs' part to activate: see below).

Neither Pike nor Taerith are interested in negotiation. They both know what Crythos will do to them if they allow his lair to be uncovered. Unfortunately, there is no way they can destroy the Elder Gate, or close it if it is already open, so they must rely on their abilities and hope to slay the PCs to protect their employer (and, consequently, themselves).

Creatures (EL 7): Elias Pike, a 4th level fighter/1st level rogue, and Taerith, a 5th level wizard.

Elias Pike, male human Ftr4/Rog1: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (6 ft. 2 in. tall); HD 4d10 + 12 plus 1d6 + 3; hp 52; Init + 7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+3 Dex, +5 magical studded leather); Atk +11 melee (glaive, 1d10 + 9, crit x3); SA sneak attack; AL NE; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 17, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 14.

Skills: Climb +3, Diplomacy +4, Disable Device +4, Disguise +4, Escape Artist +4, Hide +4, Intimidate +6, Listen +4, Move Silently +4, Ride +5, Search +4. **Feats:** Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Power Attack.

SA – Sneak Attack: +1d6

Possessions: glaive +3, studded leather armor +2, 2 potions of cure serious wounds

Taerith, female elf (high) Wiz5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (5 ft. tall); HD 5d4 + 10 plus 3; hp 27; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 17 (+3 Dex, +3 bracers of armor); Atk +1 melee (quarterstaff, 1d6 + 1); SA spells; AL NE; SV Fort, Ref, Will; Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 17.

Skills: Alchemy +6, Concentration +8, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Ride +3, Scry +4, Spellcraft +8. **Feats:** Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Still Spell, Toughness.

Possessions: quarterstaff +1, wand of lightning bolt (13 charges), bracers of armor +3, ring of protection +1.

Spells in Spellbook: 0 – all, 1st – alarm, cause fear, color spray, mage armor, obscuring mist, ray of enfeeblement, shocking grasp, spider climb; 2nd – arcane lock, bull's strength, invisibility, melf's acid arrow; 3rd – dispel magic, lightning bolt.

Spells Prepared (4/4/3/2): flare, mage hand, ray of frost, resistance; 1st – color spray, mage armor, shocking grasp, spider climb; 2nd – bull's strength, invisibility, melf's acid arrow; 3rd – lightning bolt (x2).

Tactics: When the PCs attempt to open the door, Taerith immediately casts *bull's strength* and *spider climb* upon Pike, followed by *mage armor* and *invisibility* on herself, in that order and assuming presuming that she has time. Pike and Taerith work well together as a team, concentrating their efforts on one opponent until they fall, starting with fighters. Pike uses mobility to his advantage, keeping at a 10' distance from opponents so that he may use his glaive and avoid their attacks; if Taerith has time to cast *spider climb* on him, he takes to the walls and ceiling, trying to keep out of range of his opponents' melee weapons. Taerith casts her most powerful spells first, using *lightning bolt* to strike at Pike's opponents without injuring him. She follows up with her wand, and then with *Melf's acid arrow*, *color spray* and, if she is pressed to melee, *shocking grasp*. This should be a difficult encounter, but not an impossible one. Under no circumstances do either of these NPCs surrender, unless charmed.

Treasure: Besides the personal treasure carried on their persons, Pike has a locked chest (Open Locks DC 30) containing 4,300 gp, 4 *potions of cure moderate wounds* and a *long sword of shocking* +1. Taerith's spellbook is hidden in a secret cache underneath her desk (Search DC 26). In addition, Taerith's notes are littered about her desk (see below).

Development: If the fight gets too close to the Elder Gate in area BH7, the flesh golem bound in the ceiling drops down and attacks (see below).

Taerith's notes are of great interest. They are written in Common, and outline the number of people taken hostage by the Black Hand over the course of the past several weeks (36 in all, not counting the 6 the Hand took in the battle on the Road). The name of their employer is evident, as is the fact that he evidently needs these prisoners to keep Bloodhollow working. Taerith's concerns over the events on Bloodhollow over the past several days are captured in the most recent entry into her journal:

There is something that Crythos is not telling us, and I am beginning to think that it is better if we do not know. He is changing — the last time we saw him, he had grown more gaunt and pale, a feat for one as deprived of sun as him, and he has an edginess and uneasiness about him that I am unused to. He is typically so calm and reserved, I cannot help but wonder what has gone wrong with his magical fortress. He has been asking for specific numbers of prisoners to be taken — the number always changes — and his impatience with the amount of time it takes us to retrieve these prisoners has increased. There is something else...it may be my imagination, but the last time we visited Crythos on Bloodhollow, it seems to me that it had picked up speed from the last time we had visited, when it had been faster than the time before that...it is the folly of humans, and especially human wizards, to never know when to quit. I think the good Crythos has gotten himself in over his head. Of course, I feel guilty of that myself now, for I fear that if Pike and I do not dissolve our relationship with this madman soon, we will be the first to discover what terrors he has inadvertently unleashed...

A Knowledge (Arcana) skill check (DC 25) reveals some information about the name Bloodhollow. All the PCs know is that it is the name of a flying stronghold, supposedly possessed of the ability to hide itself from its enemies. This stronghold was one of several used by a now-forgotten demoness who had declared war upon humanity several centuries ago. The fortresses were destroyed, though some speculate that if any of them had survived, they could possibly be used by the demoness to increase her own power, or even release her from her prison. If the PCs know of Bloodhollow, then the name Llandrix may be remembered with another Knowledge (Arcana) skill check at DC 30. Remembering her name also allows for recollection of the name Malath, and then the PCs essentially have the entire story.

BH7. The Elder Gate

The Gate is a massive mirror, about 15' wide by 20' tall, wrought of black metal with an even darker face. It is a special teleportation portal, which transports any who step through it directly to the Meat Shop level of Bloodhollow. The item reeks of evil — paladins and good aligned priests shall feel queasy being in its presence, especially when it is active. The ritual to open the Gate is complex and time-consuming, requiring an hour or more, though it does not actually involve the expansion of any magic. Rather, there is an intricate, all but invisible series of runes carved into the metal frame of the mirror, all of which was must be touched in a specific order over the course of an hour in order to open the Gate. If the PCs came to the Black Hand's lair immediately after the battle on the Ridgeback Road, the Gate is still active, and all they need to do is step through (though this brings problems of its own: see below). Otherwise, a Knowledge (Arcana) skill check (DC 27) is required to activate the Gate; referencing Taerith's notes adds +4 to this roll, and retries are allowed, though the PCs waste 3d20 minutes getting to the point where they botched the ritual if they fail their roll.

Crythos has enchanted the gate so that only certain beings are allowed to pass through. Anyone who attempts to pass through the active Gate who is not accompanied by Pike, Taerith or Crythos himself is attacked by a flesh golem hidden in a large secret compartment in the ceiling (Search check DC 25). The flesh golem descends and attacks viciously, gaining a +2 on its first attack from a charge bonus.

Creature (EL 7): One flesh golem. It attacks until destroyed, focusing on any PCs attempting to pass through the gate.

Flesh Golem: CR 7; Large Construct (8 ft. tall); HD 9d10; hp 69; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +10 natural); Atk + 10 melee (2 slams, 2d8+5); SA berserk; SQ construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 15/+1; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +3; Str 21, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

SA – Berserk: When a flesh golem enters combat, there is a 1% cumulative chance every round that its elemental spirit breaks free and goes berserk. The uncontrolled golem goes on a rampage, attacking the nearest living creature or smashing some object smaller than itself if no creature is in reach, then moving on to spread more destruction.

SQ – *Construct*: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, critical hits, sub dual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ – *Magic Immunity (Ex)*: Flesh golems are immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. Fire and cold-based effects slow them (as the spell) for 2d6 rounds, with no saving throw. An electricity effect breaks any slow effect on the golem and heals the golem of 1 point of damage for every 3 points of damage it would otherwise inflict.

Development: Once the PCs have defeated the golem, and possibly reactivated the Gate (which stays open for 4 hours at a time), they may pass through. Read the following:

You feel cold ripples of molten light creep across your flesh; the black void of the mirror is as cold as a grave. Your insides turn to ice as you pass through a viscous substance that seeps into your skin and through your pores, filling you with a vast numbing chill that blankets your senses in dull pain. Then, nothingness.

No, the PCs haven't just died – they've just crossed over to the flying fortress from Hell.

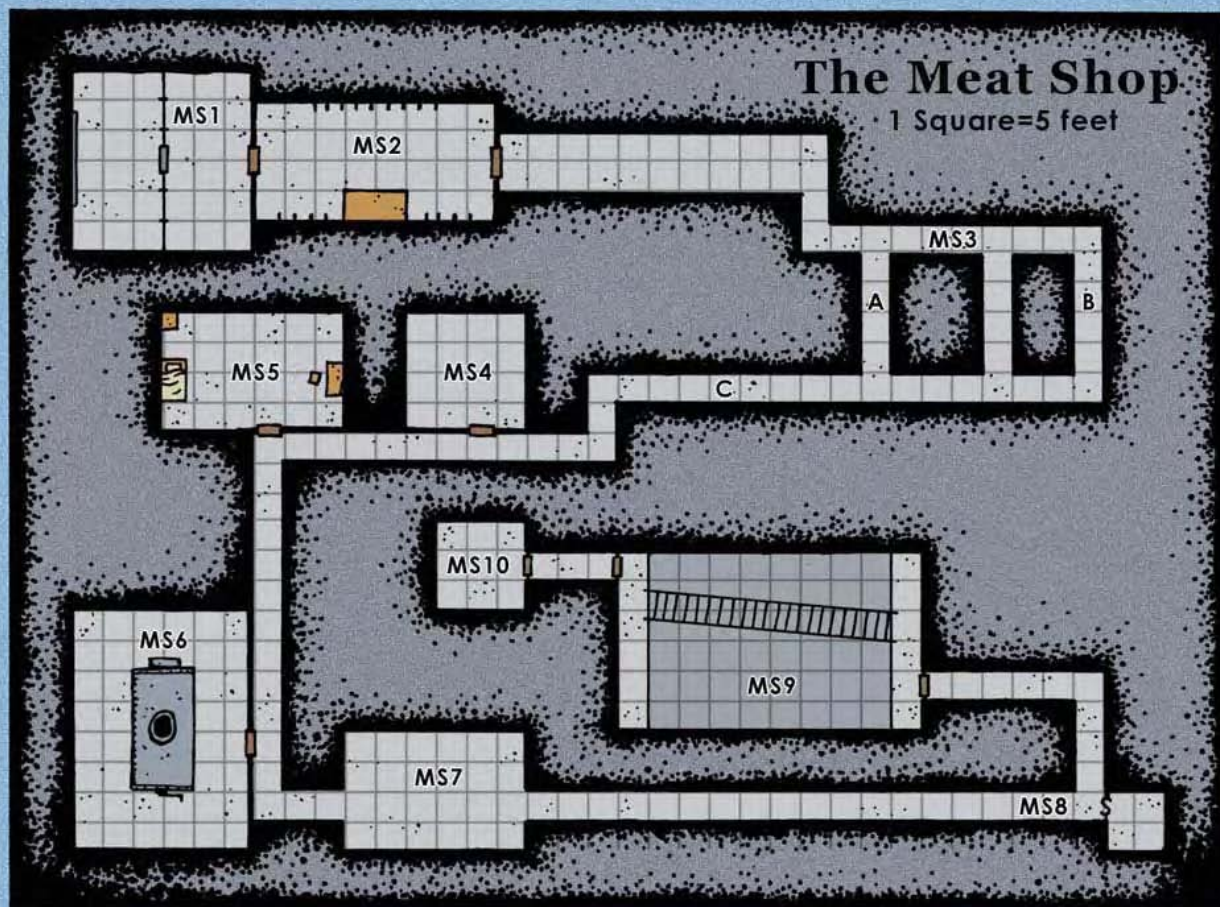
BLOODHOLLOW

In the time since Pike and Taerith last spoke with Crythos, and by the time the PCs arrive in Bloodhollow, things have gone from bad to worse on the magical fortress. By the time the PCs step foot inside, nearly every creature on board (with the exception of the trolls in area MS9 and the goblin adept in area K3) have become undead. This is due to Malath's corrupting magic, which still holds the fortress together and gives it its magical abilities, and Llandrix' recent awakening of these latent powers. With the exception of Crythos, the majority of the creatures on board have no knowledge of their new state, though some (especially the medusa in area K4) are beginning to suspect that something has happened to them. Crythos is aware of his new undead state, and has been driven almost completely mad by the fact that he has been transformed into a lich. With Malath's life force transferred from the forge in area K4 into Crythos, Crythos has become the lifeblood of Bloodhollow. Without him it cannot survive, and vice versa. Although Crythos would like to see

Bloodhollow itself destroyed, he has little control over the situation, especially since he is unable to die: His life force, should he be killed, is merely transported into the forge in area K4, and he returns again in his undead state in 1d4 days, ensuring that Llandrix seals her victory. In the meantime, Crythos is going increasingly mad, and struggling for control – though he wishes to die and to see Llandrix' plan destroyed, he is still partially under her control, making his behavior somewhat erratic. (See details on Crythos in the section "Skies of Blood (Roof Level)", below.)

From the outside, Bloodhollow appears as a 100' high, 150' wide by 200' long squat, stone fortress. It is wrought of dark black stone, and has no land or base upon which it sits. Bloodhollow is constantly *invisible*, even when magics or weapons are employed from within upon creatures or objects outside of the tower. Bloodhollow also moves with near silence, making it extremely difficult to hear as it approaches.

Bloodhollow



At this time, Bloodhollow is flying just over 5 miles above the surface of the Halath Sea (or whichever body of water the DM chooses to place it over), about 5 miles away from the coastline. It is heading towards the storm created by the planar rift Llandrix is trying to widen. Assuming that the PCs followed Pike and Taerith directly to their lair after the battle on the Ridgeback Road, Bloodhollow is 18 hours away from the nexus of the storm; if the PCs delayed in pursuing, it may be much closer by the time they arrive.

Furthermore, there are several unique effects that Bloodhollow may have on the PCs and their encounters here:

- The proximity of Bloodhollow to the rift may have a detrimental effect on the PCs, especially paladins and good-aligned clerics. Every hour spent on Bloodhollow requires a Will Save; the DC is $[10+(20-\text{Distance from rift in miles})]$. For example, if Bloodhollow is 10 miles away from the rift, the Will Save DC is 20 $[10+(20-10)]$. Failing the Save means that the PC is shaken until a *remove fear* or similar spell effect is laid upon them. Failing this Save multiple times (such as when another hour passes, assuming the PCs are in Bloodhollow that long) results in the penalties of being shaken to stack. Each failed Save requires another *remove fear* spell to remove the effects.

- Luckily for the PCs, one must spend at least 1 week on Bloodhollow to be so corrupted by its presence that they begin to turn undead; should that happen, the PCs must make a Will Save (DC 23) every time they are damaged in combat. Failure means that the wounds cannot be healed, and in fact begin to blister and puss. Once they have been reduced to 0 Hit Points in this fashion, they rise in 1d4 hours as a vampire under Crythos' control. PCs who leave Bloodhollow before this happens may have their wounds healed normally.

- Due to the high level of undead energy present here, all undead in Bloodhollow have Turn Resistance +4.

The time given before Bloodhollow reaches Llandrix' prison is generous, for if the PCs delay too long in destroying or bargaining with Crythos they may end up at the planar rift and be forced to deal with one of Llandrix' devilish servitors firsthand (see "Optional Climax: A Woman's Touch", below, for more details). If the DM wishes to increase tension or run the optional climax as the finale to the adventure, she should reduce the distance that Bloodhollow begins from the rift.

PCs may make a Wilderness Lore skill check (DC 20) to realize that the structure they are in is moving. Dwarves get a +2 racial bonus to this roll.

Unless otherwise noted, all areas within Bloodhollow are completely unlit. The air is rank and stale, with little breathable oxygen, and until one gets past the Kitchen level the air remains uniformly hot, murky and uncomfortable.

THE MEAT SHOP (LEVEL 1)

This is the first level of Bloodhollow, followed by the Kitchen, the Mess Hall and the Roof. Having traveled through the Elder Gate, the PCs find that they have been transported directly inside the main gate, where Pike and Taerith normally go to deliver prisoners to the vampiric minotaurs who act as guards on the lower levels (see below). Consequently, until the PCs reach the top of Bloodhollow, they may have only the vaguest inkling that they are on a flying fortress (unless, of course, they were able to determine such from the clues they found in the Black Hand's lair).

The Meat Shop, or lower level, is the first line of defense against outside intruders. As a result, the majority of this level consists of the slave processing plant (where humans and demi-humans are turned into fuel for the fortress), a troll storage, and a network of deadly traps. Note that Bloodhollow is telepathically linked to Llandrix herself, so she is aware of the PCs arrival. Llandrix cannot act against the party directly, especially since she's using a large portion of her energies bringing Bloodhollow to her, but she can alert Crythos. Crythos, in turn, activates the defense mechanisms located in area MS3. He also makes sure that Selezia, the medusa guardian in the "Kitchen", and the zombies in the mess hall (MH1) are aware of the PCs presence and appropriately prepared.

MS1. Gatehouse

The PCs have been transported to this room. Read the following:

The air is hot and humid. Several noises assault your ears all at once: boiling water, torches burning beyond the walls, the distant splash of water. There is so much sweat in the air that you can barely breathe: it is a cage of heat. The room that you are in is entirely dark: all of the sounds are emanating from the other side of the door. The first thing you notice is that you must be on some sort of vessel, perhaps a ship, for the room rocks back and forth, and above the din of boiling and crackling you can hear the sound of roaring waves. There is nothing to see: no matter how hard you try, your eyes cannot penetrate the thick, swelling darkness around you. Just then, a different sound comes from behind the wall

directly ahead of you, that of metal grating, followed by an ear-piercing, and all too brief, scream of pain.

There is nothing at all in the room except for a hefty iron portcullis blocking the way forward through the door. The gate is iron (Lift DC 25, Break DC 30, Hardness 10, 60 hp). The Elder Gate, appearing identical as it did in Pike's lair, is directly behind them, though they may not know this. 4 rounds after the party has arrived here, Crythos becomes aware of their presence, and deactivates the Elder Gate to prevent the PCs escape.

If the PCs use a light source to brighten their way, they see the room more clearly:

The 30' by 30' room you are in is bare, save for a rusty iron portcullis blocking the way. A large, single door in the portcullis seems to be the only means of passage. Beyond the portcullis is a large steel door in the opposite wall. Behind you is a strange black mirror, identical in every way to the mirror you just passed through, its dark face swirling in a whirlpool of shadows, throbbing with the low growl of pent up magical energies.

The door to the portcullis may be picked with an Open Locks skill check (DC 26). There is nothing else of interest in the room. The door to the room beyond is not locked.

MS2. Minotaur

If the PCs listen at the door, they hear another brief round of screams, as well as the continued sound of metal grating on metal, like some sort of mechanical device.



Once they move ahead, read the following:

The room beyond the door is long and narrow, roughly 40' by 20', and apparently a larder of some sort, for various pieces of meat hang from large iron hooks all up and down the walls. Disturbingly, the meat seems to be of the human variety, and it has yet to be cured: arms, legs, torsos renovated of their appendages, even internal organs lie messily stuck to the wall, many still dripping their juices in long streams onto the blood-covered floor. There is a large beast in the room, with a vaguely human torso and an enormous bull-like head. It is a good 9 feet tall, bulging with sinewy muscles, with glowing red eyes and long black claws. Its horns and fur are also black, giving it a nightmarish appearance. The smell of death in the room is almost overpowering. The creature is hauling the torso of a male human body from one side of the room to the other. The body was apparently taken away from a bizarre device that vaguely resembles a torture rack, except that it also resembles some sort of press, with numerous blades placed on the upper half, which apparently lowers down onto the table.

The creature was originally a member of a gang of minotaurs that Crythos had compelled into his service. Now, with the corrupting presence of Malath's evil magic, they have all become vampires. The vampiric minotaur attacks the PCs as soon as they are detected, and fights until it is destroyed, at which point it retreats in gaseous form to the Mess Hall (area MH1, below).

Creature (EL 6): There is one vampiric minotaur, which fights until destroyed.

Vampiric Minotaur: CR 6; Large Monstrous Humanoid (9 feet tall); HD 6d12; hp 51; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +11 natural); Atk +12/7 melee (huge great axe, 2d8 + 10, crit x3), +7 melee (gore, 1d8 +3) or +7 melee (slam, 1d8 + 7); SA charge 4d6 + 10, domination, energy drain, blood drain, create spawn; SQ scent, natural cunning, damage reduction 15/+1, turn resistance +4, cold/electricity resistance 20, gaseous form, spider climb, fast healing; SV Fort +6, Ref +9, Will +5; AL CE; Str 25, Dex 14, Con -, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 12

Skills: Bluff +8, Hide +8, Intimidate +7, Jump +10, Listen +17, Move Silently +8, Search +15, Sense Motive +8, Spot +17. **Feats:** Alertness, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack.

SA – Charge (Ex): A minotaur typically begins a battle by charging at an opponent, lowering its head to bring its mighty horns into play. In addition to the normal benefits and hazards of a charge, this allows the beast to make a single gore attack that does 4d6+6 points of damage.

SA – Domination (Su): A vampire can crush an opponent's will just by looking into his or her eyes. This is similar to a gaze attack, except that the vampire must take a standard action, and those merely looking at it are not affected. Anyone the vampire targets must succeed at a Will save (DC 14) or fall immediately under the vampire's influence as though by a dominate person spell cast by a 12-th level sorcerer. The ability has a range of 30 ft.

SA – Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures struck by the vampire's slam suffer 2 negative levels.

SA – Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round the pain is maintained.

SA – Create Spawn (Su): A humanoid or monstrous humanoid slain by a vampire's energy drain attack rises as a vampire spawn 1d4 days after burial. If the vampire instead drains the victim's Constitution to 0 or less, the victim returns as a spawn if it had 4 or fewer HD and as a vampire if it had 5 or more HD. In either case, the new vampire or spawn is under the command of the vampire that created it and remains enslaved until its master dies.

SQ – Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, sub dual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ – Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire can assume gaseous form at will, as the spell cast by a 5th level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

SQ – Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire can climb sheer surfaces as though with a spider climb spell.

SQ – Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire heals 5 points of damage per round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. Once at rest in its coffin, it rises to 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 5 hit points per round.



SQ – *Natural Cunning (Ex)*: Although minotaurs are not especially intelligent, they possess innate cunning and logical ability. This makes them immune to maze spells, prevents them from ever becoming lost, and enables them to track enemies. Further, they are never caught flat-footed.

Note: These vampiric minotaurs do not have the *children of the night* or *alternate form* abilities. They have become vampires by the undead power of Bloodhollow alone, and the transformation was not perfect.

Tactics: The minotaur fights until destroyed. It then assumes gaseous form and retreats to the Mess Hall (see below).

The press is used for dissecting body parts in a neat and orderly fashion they are then taken to the meat grinder in area MS6 (see below). If possible, the minotaur may attempt to grapple a PC, and then hold them in the press and activate it. The press takes a full 2 rounds to descend, at which time anything stuck underneath it suffers 4d6 piercing damage.

MS 3. Gauntlet

Since Crythos, by now, is well aware of the PCs' intrusion, he has activated all the traps in this stretch of corridor to prevent them from making any progress. There are 3 traps here, marked A, B & C on the map.

Trap A: Four 12-inch long iron spikes pop out from the side walls, attempting to skewer PCs at the chest and knee level. Once the blades are protruding, nearly two dozen smaller blades pop out of each individual larger blade. A complex clockwork mechanism in the walls then sets the blades spinning into motion. The trap is triggered by a pressure plate on the floor, and can be avoided either by carefully stepping or jumping through the whirling blades or else deactivating or avoiding the pressure plate.

Spinning Blades Trap: CR 6; +15 melee (1d4 spinning blades for 3d6 damage each); Reflex Save (DC 20) avoids; *Find*: Search (DC 22); *Disable*: Disable Device (DC 25).

Trap B: A tiny opening in the west wall spouts form a 15' long jet of concentrated acid. The trap is triggered by a pressure plate on the floor, though the mechanism is fairly easy to disable.

Acid Jet: CR 3; 1 ft. wide, 15 ft. long jet of acid (4d6, 2d6 for 2 rounds following); Reflex Save (DC 16) avoids; *Find*: Search (DC 25); *Disarm*: Disable Device (DC 21).

Trap C: A pressure plate on the floor in this long hallway triggers a large round sphere of iron, approximately 6' in diameter, to launch out of the far wall and fly down the hall towards the PCs.

Iron Ball: CR 3; no hit roll necessary (6d6); reflex Save (DC 23) avoids; *Find*: Search (DC 25); *Disable*: Disable Device (DC 26).

MS 4. Equipment Shed

Read the following:

This 20' by 20' room is stacked with ends and odds. A pair of canoes, some rudimentary boat and seafaring equipment, and miscellaneous equipment seem to be make up the bulk of the room's extremely disheveled offerings.

This room contains not much of exceedingly interesting value, though it is stocked with a good amount of ship equipment. Several old canoes, a small anchor, a good 300' of rope, fishing bait, poles, fishing nets, hooks and winches, a small folded sail, barrels filled with sand and empty buckets are all of any interest here; characters may search for more, but there is little of value.

MS 5. Crythos' Old Quarters

Read the following:

This room was obviously someone's living quarters, though it appears to have suffered from disuse, for the 30' by 20' area is layered in dust, filth and refuse. There is a small table and stool, a chest in the corner and a bed; the bed doesn't appear to have been used in ages, though the candle on the desk has been recently burned, and there is a book, quill and jar of ink on the desk. There are no other apparent exits from the room.

Crythos visits down here every once in a great while, though he hasn't actually slept in quite some time. Aside from an old compass and a single *pearl of power* in the unlocked chest, there is nothing of value here.

MS 6. Meat Shop.

This door is locked, and may be opened with an Open Locks skill check (DC 25). PCs may notice that the door is exceedingly cold to the touch. Once they have it open, read the following:

A more grotesque sight would be difficult to find. This large, 30' by 40' chamber is numbingly cold. Sheets of ice coat the walls, covering the congealed blood that has frozen both there and along the floors. Large, heaping piles of bloody refuse, which you can only ascertain used to have once been humans, take up the majority of this room. In the center of the room is a large

mechanical device, long and thick with a conical tube on top and a grated hole in its side. Two more of the bull-headed monstrosities you faced earlier are here, stuffing cold, dissected human parts into the top of the device and applying the turn of a crank in its side, transforming the parts into the sinewy piles of meat.

This is where humans are processed for “food” for Bloodhollow; after being suitably dissected here, the meat is taken to the “Kitchen”, where it is fed into the furnace of the living fortress.

Creatures (EL 8): The two creatures are vampire minotaurs.

Vampiric Minotaurs (2): CR 6; hp 51 each; see area MS2, above, for details.

Tactics: If, for some reason, the minotaurs decide to try and shove a PC into the meat grinder, the PC suffers 3d6 damage per round. The grinder apparatus is quite sturdy (Break DC 30, Hardness 10, 90 hp).

The ice in the room forces any PCs not flying or levitating to make a Balance Check (DC 15) every round or slip and fall. The cold of the room is not sufficient to cause damage to the PCs unless they spend more than 30 minutes in here, in which case they need to make a Fortitude Save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) every 10 minutes. Failing this Save means the PC takes 1d6 points of subdual damage for each failed Save. The PC also suffer from frostbite or hypothermia (treat as being fatigued).

MS 7. Furniture Storage

Read the following:

The passageway widens to 20' across for a 30' long section. This area is apparently a sort of storage area for the furniture and decorative ship items that have been abandoned or else simply unused. Numerous chairs, couches, bed-frames and mirror frames are tossed in large piles along both sides of the wall. Works of art, some of them very expensive looking, a few figureheads to boats, a pair of life-boats, and even a small anchor make up the numerous items found in this place.

After Crythos took over Bloodhollow, before all of the problems began with maintaining control over the stronghold, he had his minions clear out the contents of the ship. Lacking anywhere better to remove them to, this stretch of hall has become their permanent home. There is nothing of any real value in this area.

MS 8. The Long Hall

There is a secret door hidden in the southeast corner where the hallway wraps around back to the west. The door is difficult to detect (Search DC 30) because of the great pains Malath took when he constructed the fortress to ensure that his secret weapon would not be detected. If the door is found, or when the PCs pass the door and are 20' or less down the eastern corridor, read the following:

A 20' tall section of wall grinds slowly open, releasing the putrid stench of what must be a century of rot and dust. Beyond is a pitch black chamber, though you can make out the vague outline of what appears to be an incredibly tall warrior.

That warrior is an iron golem.

Creature (EL 13): One iron golem, who emerges from the room and attacks.

Iron Golem: CR 13; Large Construct (12 ft. tall); HD 18d10; hp 99; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft. (can't run); AC 30 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +22 natural); Atk +23 melee (2 slams, 2d10 + 11); SA breath weapon; SQ construct, magic immunity, damage reduction 50/+3, rust vulnerability; Save Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +6; AL N; Str 33, Dex 9, Con -, Int -, Wis 11, Cha 1.

SA – Breath Weapon (Su): First or second round of combat-cloud of poisonous gas, 10-foot cube directly in front of the golem lasting 1 round, free action every 1d4+1 rounds; Fortitude save (DC 17), initial damage 1d4 temporary Constitution, secondary damage death.

SQ – Construct: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, disease, and similar effects. Not subject to critical hits, sub dual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ – Magic Immunity (Ex): An iron golem is immune to all spells, spell-like abilities, and supernatural effects, except as follows. An electricity effect slows it (as the slow spell) for 3 rounds, with no saving throw. A fire effect breaks any slow effect on the golem and cures 1 point of damage for each 3 points of damage it would otherwise inflict. The golem gets no saving throw against fire effects.

SQ – Rust Vulnerability (Ex): An iron golem is affected normally by rust attacks, such as that of a rust monster or a *rusting grasp* spell.

Tactics: How are 8th level characters supposed to deal with an iron golem? In all likelihood, they shouldn't — this would be one of those times where “live to fight another day” may be exactly the credo that needs to be adhered to, though this encounter could run many different ways. If the PCs feel they are up to the challenge, then they may decide to go toe to toe with the golem, though they may find that this opponent, especially with its



breath weapon, may cost them a party member or two before they can dispatch of it. If they run, then the PCs find themselves with an entirely new set of problems (see below). Unless the PCs detect the secret door before it is opened, they are 20' or so past the door before the iron golem appears.; this leaves them with only one way to run – farther down the corridor. The PCs may attempt to dodge back past the iron golem to escape, though this is inadvisable for 3 reasons:

- 1) The PCs run headlong into the golem's poisonous gas cloud,
- 2) The PCs suffer attacks of opportunity from the golem as they try to dodge under its feet and back the way they came, and
- 3) The PCs can't escape back through the Elder Gate, since Crythos has since sealed it (though they probably aren't aware of this – see above). So, unless the PCs are feeling very confident, they most likely run, in which case the golem gives pursuit. This, of course, only leads them to...

MS 9. The Black Bridge

The door to this room is not locked. Read the following:

The door opens to a large chamber, some 30' wide and 50' long. You are standing on a ledge, 5' deep into the room; a similar ledge and door await you on the other side. The central 40' of the room is a deep pit, spanned by a rickety iron bridge roughly 5' across. The floor of the room is made up of what is unmistakably oil; from the looks of it, it is likely several feet deep. One of the by now familiar horned, undead monstrosities stands before you, bearing a lit torch while standing near the center of the bridge. A long, bizarre metal pulley system, not altogether unlike a manually fed conveyor belt, runs the length of the ceiling directly over the bridge. Near where the minotaur is standing is a hollow metal rack, supported by chains that hang down from the pulley system; the rack seems capable of moving back and forth along the ceiling, rolling from one ledge to another. The rack is filled with fresh meat, of origins you care not to imagine. In the pit itself, 6 trolls are jumping up as high as they can, trying to reach the meat being presented to them.

The trolls are among the only creatures on the ship that have not transformed into undead; Crythos is unsure of why this is, though he guesses it is related to their regenerative abilities.

Regardless, the minotaurs in Crythos' service have always kept the trolls in line by keeping them locked in this pit of oil, threatening to set them ablaze if the trolls do not cooperate.

Luckily for the PCs, the pit is 40' deep; even trolls have difficulty jumping that far, so unless things go terribly wrong the PCs shouldn't have to worry about the trolls at all. Things may, of course, go terribly wrong, as the minotaur attacks the PCs on sight.

Creatures (EL 10): One undead minotaur, and 6 trolls.

Vampiric Minotaur: CR 6; hp 51; see area MS2, above, for details.

Trolls (6): CR 5; Large Giant (9 feet tall); HD 6d8 + 36; hp 63 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd. 30 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, +2 Dex, +7 natural); Atk + 9 melee (2 claws, 1d6+6), + 4 melee (bite, 1d6+3); SA rend 2d6+9; SQ regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft.; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; AL CE; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5. **Feats:** Alertness, Iron Will.

SA – Rend (Ex): If a troll hits with both claw attacks, it latches onto the opponent's body and tears the flesh. This attack automatically inflicts an additional 2d6+9 points of damage.

SQ – Regeneration (Ex): Fire and acid deal normal damage to a troll. If a troll loses a limb or body part, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed limb instantly by holding it to the stump.

Tactics: This can get ugly...with the iron golem hot in pursuit, the PCs are not likely to dally here very long. Since the trolls can't reach them, they should actually have a fairly smooth time of things...unless the oil gets ignited. If that happens, the room becomes ablaze. Those who fall into the fire suffer 4d6 damage (no saving throw) and run the very real risk of catching on fire (characters falling into this burning pit have a DC of 28 to avoid catching ablaze). The flames won't leap up much more than about 20 feet (enough to engulf the trolls), but it can still make the going difficult. The room is treated as being basked in abysmal heat.

There are several quick ways out of the room. The first is to fly, levitate, or spider climb one's way across. The second is to take the bridge, which requires a Balance check (DC 15) each round of movement to move 1/2 one's normal movement without losing his or her balance; failing the check by 5 or more means that the PC falls, either into a nest of rabid, angry trolls or into a nest of rabid, angry, burning trolls. If one were to try and break the bridge, it is Hardness 10, has 65 hp, and has a Break DC of 26.

The third option is to try and take hold of the sliding rack, which first needs to be retrieved via the chains, and ride it all of the way across. A PC needs to make a Climb check (DC 10) to hold on without falling, and the PC needs to make an additional Jump check with an effective +15 bonus and no limit on their running jump distance; this will determine how far they move using the pulley. This tactic can become extremely inconvenient if the rack stops halfway across the room...

The last option is to climb along the walls, although this would be extremely time consuming and is difficult, for with the exception of the pulley system on the ceiling there are few to no handholds or footholds (Climb DC 25). If one were to climb along the actual pulley system (not the mobile rack), the DC is only 18, but the PC doing so would have to make a Climb check (DC 31) every time the rack slid back or forth along where they were holding on to avoid falling into the pit.

The iron golem is able to fit in the doorway, and continues to pursue the PCs; if the room turns ablaze, the golem is healed of damage! This should be a tense encounter, but there are several things the PCs can do, such as destroying the bridge once they've crossed it, to ensure that the golem cannot make it across. In any case, once the PCs get through the door on the other side, the golem does not pursue, and returns to its post in area MS 8.

MS 10. Elevator.

Read the following when the PCs open the door to this area:

The room is stone, roughly 15' by 15'. There are no other apparent exits, and the room is featureless save for a pair of metal levers on the far wall.

This room is operated by a complex system of pulleys and gears (Malath had quite a few dwarven vampires in his service when he constructed Bloodhollow for Llandrix). Pulling the right-hand switch causes the gears to haul the room upwards, on to the "Kitchen". Pulling the left-hand lever at this point does nothing, as the party cannot go any lower in Bloodhollow.

The elevator goes all the way up the third level, The Mess Hall, though the party finds it worth their while to explore the second level as there are some powerful magical items there that may be of use, not to mention the furnace, which is in many ways as much of the center of Bloodhollow's power as Crythos himself (see "Skies of Blood (Roof Level)", below, for more

details). Additionally, the elevator may be stopped at any point by returning the lever to the halfway position (each lever has three positions clearly marked on the wall in red ink). The elevator is the one safe haven the PCs find in Bloodhollow; as long as they are here, none of the fortress' denizens molest them. This can be handy if the PCs wish to take a few hours to sleep and allow their spellcasters to regain spells: while this has the disadvantage of placing Bloodhollow closer to the planar rift and allowing any slain minotaur vampires to regenerate in their coffins in the Mess Hall (see below), if the PCs are in dire need of spells and rest it could only benefit them in the long run.

THE "KITCHEN" (LEVEL 2)

This, the second level of Bloodhollow, is named such for what it used to be — now, it is merely a stopping point for some of Crythos' more powerful lieutenants, a recreation area for his minotaur soldiers and, most importantly, the location of the furnace area where the liquefied bodies of the dead are fed as fuel into Bloodhollow.

K1. The Chapel

Read the following:

The air is suddenly very quiet when you enter this 20' by 20' room, which looks to be a chapel of some sort. Tall black candles stand in silver stands at each of the four corner of the room; in the northwest corner is a tall altar decorated with hundreds of tiny candles set around a tall, lifelike statue of a beautiful woman with small horns and large bat-like wings, otherwise garbed in little more than a bed sheet. Three robed men are standing before the altar, heads lowered; upon hearing your entrance, they all snarl with fanged teeth and fly across the room to attack.

The men are vampire spawn, and they attack without hesitation.

Creatures (EL 7): 3 vampire spawn.

Vampire Spawn (3): CR 4; Medium Undead (6 ft. tall); HD 4d12; hp 26 each; Init +6 (+2 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +5 melee (slam, 1d6 + 4 and energy drain); SA charm, energy drain, blood drain; SQ undead, +2 turn resistance, damage reduction 10/silver; cold and electricity resistance 10, gaseous form, spider climb, fast healing 2; SV Fort +1, Ref +5, Will +5; AL CE; Str 16, Dex 14, Con -, Int 13, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Bluff +8, Climb +8, Profession (priest) +10, Hide +10, Jump +8, Listen +11, Move Silently +11, Search +8, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11. **Feats:** Alertness, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes.

SA – Charm (Su): This is similar to the vampire's domination ability, but the save DC is 14, and the effect is similar to a charm person spell cast by a 5th level sorcerer. A charmed victim allows the vampire spawn to drain his or her blood.

SA – Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a vampire spawn's slam attack receive a negative level. The Fortitude save to remove the negative level is DC 14.

SA – Blood Drain (Ex): A vampire spawn can suck blood from a living victim with its fangs by making a successful grapple check. If it pins the foe, it drains blood, inflicting 1d4 points of permanent Constitution drain each round the pain is maintained.

SQ – Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, sub dual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ – Gaseous Form (Su): As a standard action, a vampire spawn can assume gaseous form at will, as the spell cast by a 6th level sorcerer, but can remain gaseous indefinitely and has a fly speed of 20 feet with perfect maneuverability.

SQ – Spider Climb (Ex): A vampire spawn can climb sheer surfaces as though with a spider climb spell.

SQ – Fast Healing (Ex): A vampire spawn heals 2 points of damage per round so long as it has at least 1 hit point. If reduced to 0 hit points or lower, a vampire automatically assumes gaseous form and attempts to escape. It must reach its coffin within 2 hours or be utterly destroyed. Once at rest in its coffin, it rises to 1 hit point after 1 hour, then resumes healing at the rate of 2 hit points per round.

Development: A PC with Knowledge (Arcana), or a bard using their Bardic Knowledge ability, may recognize the figure depicted in the statue as Llandrix (DC 30). If they have not discovered her identity already, they may now be able to put together most of the pieces of the story, sans the fact that Bloodhollow is heading towards Llandrix. At this point, however, this fact might be intuitively obvious.

K2. Gathering Hall

Read the following:

This large chamber looks like a combination between a gambling hall and a flop-house. It is roughly 60' long and 30' wide; large stone pillars run along the length of the room, acting as supports, while the room itself is littered with barrels, tables and chairs. Playing cards and coins are scattered on the tables as well as a few of the barrels, but aside from that it looks to not have been occupied for some time.

Bloodhollow

There are 132 gold pieces scattered on the tables and barrels. Closer inspection of the room reveals a few dead mice, and little else. There is truthfully little to see or do here. This area was had been used by Crythos' human servants and apprentices as a recreation area, but since all of them have become vampire spawn, this area has largely fallen into disuse.

Trap (EL 7): There is, however, a powerful trap here. Beyond the last line of pillars is a magical aura that casts a powerful curse laid by the lich Malath. Once the area is passed, the curse affects everyone in a 10' square area directly in front of the door to area K3. All in the area must make a successful Will Save (DC 26) or else be reduced to 1 inch in height. This effectively makes the characters ineffective combatants, and also renders them extremely vulnerable to the other denizens of the kitchen area (see below). Those PCs affected do not necessarily realize what has happened to them; what they notice is a sudden change to their surroundings, as the door at the far end seems no longer to be there, and they are instead in another place, a massive chamber where the ceiling is so far up that it almost seems to be the sky. They can hear almost nothing, for there is a monstrous din, like the repeated eruption of a volcano directly inside of their heads, that makes it difficult for them to concentrate or even walk in a straight line. Indeed, every few seconds the ground is taken by a tremendous tremor, so much so that it throws every one of them off their feet again and again.

If you plan on using this encounter to its fullest potential, it is recommended that you affect all of the PCs, but it is not necessary. If you choose to shrink all of the PCs, simply ignore the Will Save and have the spell affect everyone automatically. If that is the case, then the PCs are about to have some fun with their new size.

A Spellcraft skill check (DC 21) determines exactly what has happened to the PCs, as well as the fact that there is little they can do about it. Spells cast by the PCs to counteract the curse have no effect on bringing them back to normal size. Because of their incredibly small size, the PCs magic is also greatly reduced in scale, effectively making it ineffective against human-sized magic. Similarly, spells they would normally be invulnerable to or else suffer reduced effects from – such as *sleep* – affect them due to the fact that they don't even have the Hit Dice of a puppy. The only way to reverse the effect is to have a normal-sized human cast any of the spells that would normally counter-

act a *bestow curse* spell cast upon them (*break enchantment*, *limited wish*, *miracle*, *remove curse*, or *wish*) or else they can read the spell from a normal sized spellbook or scroll.

Shrink Curse: CR 7; curse (shrink); Will Save DC 26 negates (DM's option)

Creatures (EL 6): If the PCs remain their normal size, there are no further encounters for them in this area. If they are shrunk, well...now comes the fun part: if the PCs linger too long, they find themselves the target of the rats (now, to the PCs, quite LARGE rats) that are extremely hungry. The rats, of course, are alive, though very hungry due to the lack of edible food (all of Bloodhollow's inhabitants either don't eat, or feast upon human flesh, and leave very little left over for the rats in the latter case). The stats given for the rats here reflect a representation of the rats in what is, to the PCs, a gigantic form. Normal sized PCs do not even have to deal with the rats.

Rats (2): CR 4; Large Animal (5' tall to cursed PCs); HD 6d8+18; hp 45 each; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 40 ft. (on cursed PCs scale); AC 11 (-1 size, +2 Dex); Atk +4 melee (bite, 2d6+3); SQ scent; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +1; AL N; Str 23, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 2.

Skills: Balance +10, Climb +12, Hide +18, Move Silently +10. **Feats:** Weapon Finesse (bite).

K3. The Kitchen

How this room appears varies depending on what size the PCs are. Read the following to normal sized PCs:

This horrid, rank room appears to be a kitchen, though it has the smell and grotesque feel of an abattoir. The 15' by 15' chamber is covered in blood, only some of it dried; you can only ascertain that this is where the majority of the victims dispatched in the lower areas are sent after they have been slain. Human appendages litter the long counter occupying the north and east walls of the room; most of these remains have been chopped or minced into what appears to be dinner ingredients. There are numerous cooking knives, a large cutting board with a rusty meat cleaver, and a large open basin filled with murky water. On the south wall are a half dozen meat hooks protruding from the wall, all of them stained with dried black ichor, though thankfully the hooks are devoid of any meat. The entire room carries a foul blend of smells – death and onions, human blood and parsley. There is a sealed iron door in the south wall.

There is a small ugly creature, with dark red skin and dark grey robes, wearing an apron. His yellow teeth are stained with blood, and he is happily chopping up a pile of disgustingly rotted fish with a small meat cleaver and placing the pieces into a large iron pot on the counter. He is singing in a terribly high-pitched voice, and doesn't seem to be aware of your arrival.

To cursed PCs who are only 1 inch tall, the room takes on a slightly different appearance. Read the following:

The room you are entering might as well be an entire country. The massive stone floor take up a few miles of space; the ceiling seems to be the sky, at least 1000' high. The enormous level of noise makes it difficult, when you first enter, to determine exactly what kind of room this is. You hear what sounds like the roar of a volcano, louder here than in previous areas. You also hear a horrid, wailing moan, something like the mass death cry of a hundred people dying at once, until you realize that it is actually just someone's voice, singing very badly. Massive piles of

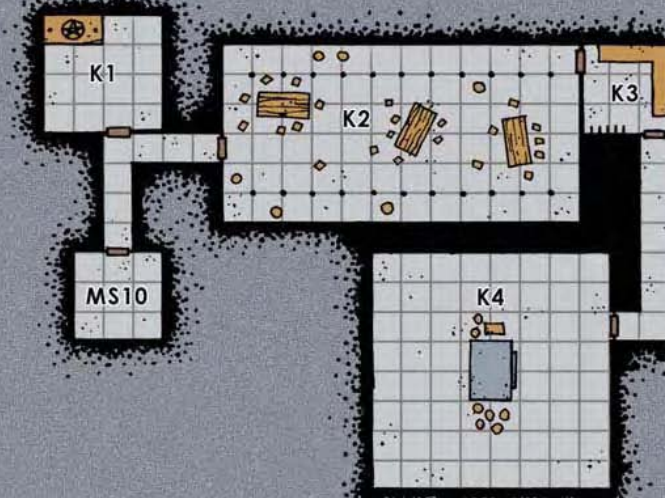
debris litter the floor in this enormous chamber: mounds of white flesh, gooey lakes of viscous blood, bread crumbs the size of boulders. The smells in here are overpowering, so bad, in fact, that it is difficult to breathe. You smell seafood of some sort, crab and lobster, you think, as well as the decaying scent of human meat. The most powerful odor in the room is that of blood, human blood, but you have never smelt it at such a massive intensity before, at such an overwhelming level. If you were normal sized, you imagine that there would have to be a lake filled with fresh blood to produce the same stench as you are now experiencing.

High up above to your right, as you enter the gigantic room, you see enormous meat hooks as long as war galleys. To the north and east, the room is surrounded by a large counter, itself some 360' off the ground; you see massive appendages, human arms and feet and heads, as well as cutlery blocks stuffed with blades that are the size of dragons — cleavers, chopping knives, even

Bloodhollow

The Kitchen

1 Square=5 feet



a paring knife is the size of three wagons. Standing at the counter is a massive humanoid figure, garbed in a dark grey cloak, so tall that he would dwarf the greatest mountain giant you have ever encountered by over 20 times. It appears to be a shifting mountain, a mountain made of old, dirty cloth, with enormous, gnarled dark red feet with warts and banyans the size of catapult stones. It is his singing that you hear, so loud and horrid that you're sure your eardrums are about to bleed. Suddenly, he grabs a meat cleaver off of the counter, which generates a noise something like a dragon's breath, and then chops, which rings like twenty fireballs detonating at the same time and place. You see something fall out of the sky, roughly the width of an open flag, leaving long trails of green slime behind it. It isn't until it crashes into the ground with a thunderous boom that you see that it is a fish head, with eyes nearly as large as any of your torsos.

Treasure: Sitting on the counter is a spell scroll with the spells *break enchantment*, *cure critical wounds*, *dismissal* and *raise dead*, all cast at 12th level. Despite his adept training, Gurganash has not actually noticed the scroll's presence, and consequently has it stuck in a pile of old recipes and scribbled notes he has made, so the scroll may be difficult to locate without a *detect magic* spell.

Creatures (EL 3): Gurganash is a recent addition to the staff of Bloodhollow. Strangely, Gurganash is not undead, having not been in Bloodhollow long enough to become corrupted. Gurganash was a former member of the Black Hand who, when he was caught stealing from Taerith, was in danger of being executed by Pike before Crythos snatched him to use as a cook and general servant. Crythos, in one of his more stable moments since becoming undead, decided that Gurganash, a 3rd level goblin adept, would make an excellent apprentice. Gurganash isn't exactly a keen edge, himself; he enjoys the smells of death and decay (his hope is to someday become a specialized necromancer wizard), and enjoys chopping up the bodies and making the disgusting meals that Crythos has recently come to enjoy.

Gurganash, male goblin Adept3: CR 3; Small Humanoid (3' tall); HD 3d6; hp 14; Init +1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +1 bracers of armor); Atk +1 melee (dagger, 1d4-1, crit 19-20); SA spells; SQ darkvision 60 ft.; SV Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +0; AL CE; Str 8, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Skills: Alchemy +3, Concentration +3, Profession (Cook) +3, Spellcraft +3. **Feats:** Alertness.

Possessions: dagger, bracers of armor +1, *potion of cure moderate wounds*.

Spells (3/2): 0 – cure minor wounds, detect magic, ghost sound; 1st – burning hands, sleep

Tactics: How this battle runs depends largely on whether the PCs are *cursed* or not. A group of normal sized PCs have no difficulty with Gurganash whatsoever; a group of tiny PCs, however, may. Gurganash defends himself to the best of his ability, though his favored tactic, if faced by normal sized PCs, is to run.

If the PCs have been *cursed* and shrunk to one inch height, then there is a good chance that Gurganash does not even notice the PCs... though he is allowed a Spot skill check (DC 15) to see them when they enter the room. If he does detect them, Gurganash does not simply run over and squash the PCs (which he could do quite easily), but instead casts a *sleep* spell upon them. Though 8th level PCs normally would not be affected by this spell, as described above their diminutive state effectively makes them barely 1/4 HD creatures, so a sleep spell not only affects them, but it does not allow a save, either. While this may seem unfair, it is a useful tool for getting them into hot water, so to speak...

K3A. The Counter

This area is only explored if the PCs are *cursed* and if Gurganash casts *sleep* upon them. The spell has a duration of 3 minutes, long enough for Gurganash to pick the PCs up and place them on the counter and throw them into the stuffed bread he is preparing.

When the party awakens, they will not be happy. The first thing that they discover is that they are suffocating, as they are buried in some sort of horrid sludge. They can tear their way free in 1 round (no roll necessary); as they do so they feel their way through some sort of hard cloth, which tears without a sound as they break free. The PCs find that they are covered in all sort of nastiness: green slime, red juices, large chunks of red and green and grayish matter. After a moment, they realize that they are on a giant piece of soft bread, and that the substances covering them are mashed vegetables, tomatoes, and, unfortunately, chunks of human flesh and blood. They are on what appears to be a gigantic cut board, which measures about 410' long and 280' wide by a measurement they are used to.

Also on the counter are a number of toothpicks which measure just over 10' long, a 30' x 30' slice of bread, a 10' x 40' pickle, a butcher's knife about 90' long and 25' wide at its largest point, and

a bowl about 40' tall and 60' in diameter. Another 170' to the north of the PCs bread is a massive collection of paper and parchments, haphazardly jumbled in a messy pile. As the PCs clean themselves off they see that they are not the only thing moving on the table: the dipping sauce inside of the bowl, a tasty combination of garlic powder, boiled milk, guava juice and human brain matter, has been left sitting a bit too long, and has become evilly enchanted and animated by the corruptive power of Bloodhollow. It is, for all intents and purposes, black pudding, and it seeks out anything else moving on the counter.

Luckily for the PCs, Gurganash was called away by Selezia (see below), so he is not here to watch the PCs struggle for their lives. He returns in 11-20 (1d10 + 10) rounds.

Creature (EL 7): The special sauce.

Special Sauce (Black Pudding): CR 7; Huge Ooze (to shrunken PCs); HD 10d10 + 60; hp 115; Init -5 (Dex); Spd 20 ft, climb 20 ft.; AC 3 (-2 size, -5 Dex); Atk + 8 melee (slam, 2d6 + 4 and 2d6 acid); SA improved grab, acid, constrict 2d6+4 and 2d6 acid; SQ blind sight, split, ooze; SV Fort +7, Ref -2, Will -2; AL N; Str 17, Dex 1, Con 19, Int -, Wis 1, Cha 1.

SQ – Blind sight (Ex): The sauce's entire body is a primitive sensory organ that can ascertain prey by scent and vibration within 60 feet (of the reduced scale).

SQ – Ooze: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning and polymorphing. Not subject to critical hits.

SA – Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the special sauce must hit with its slam attack. If it gets hold, it can constrict.

SA – Acid (Ex): The special sauce secretes a digestive acid that dissolves organic material and metal quickly. Any melee hit deals acid damage. The sauce's acidic touch deals 50 points of damage per round to wood or metal objects. The opponent's armor and clothing dissolve and become useless immediately unless they succeed at a reflex Save (DC 19). The acid can dissolve stone, dealing 20 points of damage per round of contact.

A metal or wooden weapon that strikes the special sauce also dissolved immediately unless it succeeds at a Reflex Save (DC 19).

Constrict (Ex): The special sauce deals automatic slam and acid damage with a successful grapple check. The opponent's clothing and armor suffer a -4 penalty to Reflex Saves against the acid.

Split (Ex): Weapons deal no damage to the special sauce. Instead the creature splits into two identical sauces, each with half the original's hit points (round down). If the sauce has only 1 hit point, it cannot further split.

Tactics: A PC may make a Spot check (DC 15) to see magical writing on one of the massive pieces of parchment; if the PC is capable of reading divine scrolls, she recognizes it for what it is. Once the PCs defeat the special sauce, their most intelligent course of action is to get to the scroll and read it. This is difficult, of course, and requires several things.

First, the party must navigate through the other papers. Moving a single parchment requires a DC 15 Strength check, but the PC may only move it up to their normal movement rate in a single round. The PCs have to remove 2 other parchments at least 70% off of the top of the divine scroll to be able to cast the spell (each parchment should be moved 60', at least).

Second, a PC capable of casting divine spells must make an Intelligence check (DC 15) to be able to read the words at such a massive size. This takes 3 full round actions; if a roll is failed, the PC may retry, though the clock is reset to the 1st round and still requires a total of 3. The PCs may not take 10 on this roll.

Third, they have to hurry. When Gurganash returns, it takes him 1d4 rounds to realize that the PCs are gone from the cutting board and that the special sauce is no longer in its bowl. Once he realizes this, he grabs the rusty meat cleaver and attempt to chop the PCs down. Due to their diminutive size, the PCs enjoy a +8 bonus to AC; unfortunately, if he hits, Gurganash inflicts 4d8 slashing damage (x3 on a crit). Consider Gurganash to have in excess of 600 hit points for this encounter; the point is not for the PCs to fight a gargantuan goblin cook, but to cast the spell on themselves and return to normal size. The scroll automatically returns the PCs to normal size; once that is done, they can deal with the goblin.

Development: Gurganash knows only the basic layout of Bloodhollow, but if properly intimidated he can give the PCs the following information:

- The door leading away to the south goes to what he calls the "furnace", where the bodies are fed as food to Bloodhollow. It is guarded by a medusa named Selezia.

- The next deck up is the Mess Hall, where most of the vampires on board keep their coffins. It is a single large room with some smaller adjoining rooms containing what he believes to be treasure. They can access the next level by taking the elevator.

- He's not sure how to get to the top, but he believes that is where Crythos, the wizard who is in command of the fortress, spends most of his time.

Gurganash is a weasel and a coward; aside from the information he gives the PCs, he is not of much use to anyone. He's really not even a good cook, even by Crythos' questionable standards.

K4. The "Furnace"

The door to this room is locked, and only Crythos and Selezia have keys. The lock may be picked with an Open Locks skill check (DC 28), or the door may be broken down, but it is iron (Hardness 10, Hit Points 60, Break DC 28). Once they are inside, read the following:

The room you have come into is, despite all appearances, incredibly cold. A blazing fire burns from a forge in the center of the room, but the flames it gives off are nearly freezing. The chamber is 40' by 40'. In sharp contrast to most every other area you have seen in this place, the walls and floor of this room are pristine. There are several barrels of red liquid sitting near the furnace, as well as a sealed crate. There are no apparent exits from the room.

This is the furnace, the undead receptacle into which Selezia, Crythos' summoned medusa servant who is quickly turning undead herself, keeps Bloodhollow happily fed. Every day, Selezia is forced to feed the furnace the blood and some liquefied remains (heart, brain) of a certain number of human-sized creatures (Bloodhollow communicates the number it needs to Crythos on a daily basis); this keeps Bloodhollow running at its minimum level of power. Crythos has forbade her to give it more, though it is difficult, since Bloodhollow magically compels him to obey it. Luckily, although Bloodhollow has exuded its aura of undeath over every creature on board, it has only attempted to exercise mental domination over Crythos.

This entire area should be treated as being under the effects of an *unhallow* spell, cast by a 9th level caster and with a *bane* effect attached. Selezia is on the far side of the forge; by this time, she undoubtedly knows the PCs are here, and is waiting for them. Though she is slowly transforming into an undead creature, Selezia has not taken on any undead traits.

Treasure: In a secret cache in the wall, found with a Search skill check (DC 25) are 8 *potions of cure critical wounds*, 2 *potions of lesser restoration*, a *holy long sword* +2, a *staff of healing* (21 charges) and a *wand of fireball* (6th level, 8 charges). In addition, there are 7 pieces of fine jewelry worth 1,500 gp each and a large ruby worth 5,000 gp.

Creature (EL 7): Selezia, a medusa.

Selezia, Medusa: CR 7; Medium-Sized Monstrous Humanoid; HD 6d8 + 6; hp 33; Init +2 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk +8/3 ranged (short bow, 1d6, crit x3), or +6/1 melee (dagger, 1d4, crit 19-20), or +3 melee (snakes, 1d4 and poison); SA petrifying gaze, poison; SV Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +6; AL LE; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 13, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +11, Disguise +11, Move Silently +9, Spot +10. **Feats:** Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Weapon Finesse (snakes).

SA – Petrifying Gaze (Su): Turn to stone permanently, 30 feet, Fortitude Save (DC 15).

SA – Poison (Ex): Snakes, Fortitude Save (DC 14), initial damage 1d6 temporary Strength, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Strength.

Tactics: Selezia attempts to mask her presence for as long as she can. When first encountered, she is wearing a heavy cloak of brown wool. If possible, she would like to be surrounded before she throws back her hood, so that she may use her gaze attack on as many PCs as possible. Otherwise, after she has made her initial gaze attack she attempts to move out of melee range and strike at a distance with her bow.

Development: Selezia was summoned by Crythos some time ago, and the two made a pact where he would provide her with jewels and wealth in exchange for her following his orders. Crythos has kept his part of the bargain, so Selezia has kept hers, even if the circumstances have been a bit unusual for the past few weeks.

Selezia knows that Crythos discovered the fortress several months ago, shortly before she entered his employ. If she is taken alive and properly intimidated, Selezia can explain how the fortress, Bloodhollow, requires to be fed the blood and liquefied human components. If that doesn't happen, the structure starts to lose its ability to fly and remain invisible, and in the end Bloodhollow may simply crash into the ground.

If the party chooses to attack the forge itself, they may stumble upon part of the solution to the adventure rather quickly. The forge has Hardness 20 and 40 hit points; it cannot be broken easily (Break DC 40). The forge cannot actively defend itself, though it summons all of the zombies in area MH1 (see below) to come to its defense. If destroyed, Bloodhollow slowly starts to sink, though not at as quick of a rate as if when both the forge and Crythos himself are destroyed (see "Bloodhollow Destroyed", below, for more details). In the end, the forge needs to be destroyed as well as Crythos, for the forge is essentially Crythos' lichdom phylactery (see the section "Skies of Blood (Roof Level)" for more details).

THE MESS HALL (LEVEL 3)

This rather small level has but one purpose: living space. All of the vampires and vampire spawn the PCs have encountered thus far, as well as quite a few they have not encountered, keep their coffins in the main chamber of this level. Additionally, Crythos keeps his quarters here, though he is not here when the PCs arrive.

MH 1. Sleeping Area.

The only way to access this area is to ascend the elevator (Area MS 10, above). The elevator stops on its own, as it cannot ascend past the 3rd level of the fortress. Characters who activate a *detect evil* spell notice that the strongest concentration of evil energy in Bloodhollow is coming from directly above. As the PCs begin their ascent, they pass through an area with a darkness spell in effect along the elevator shaft. The conditions do not continue in area MH1, but the PCs have to restore their own light conditions. In the meantime, the elevator arrives and actually empties out into the center of a gigantic chamber. Via a complex mechanical design, the walls of Area MS 10 stop just below the floor of Area MH1: only the floor of the elevator continues to ascend, and become the center section piece of this new area. Before the PCs activate a light source, they smell blood and decay, and they notice what an unearthly quiet the room is gripped in. Once they activate a light source, read the following:

The area is massive, some 130' by 180' feet. It is the same dull grey stone that makes up the rest of the fortress, washed with dried blood and black stains of some sort. There is a simple wooden door in each of the four corners of the room. Between the walls are coffins, at least two dozen of them, all wrought of dark mahogany, their doors sealed shut.

But the coffins are hardly what concerns you. What concerns you are the undead – you count ten or more – surrounding your immediate vicinity. Many seem to have been paladins or knights, bearing swords, armor and distorted, inverted or mutilated holy symbols of known churches. Their hair color and style vary, though most of them have long, waxy black hair. What is similar between them all is the presence of their dead grey eyes, their waxen, luminous flesh, and their opened, fanged mouths, dripping blood, gums drawn back, all craven want and hunger. The creatures are a good 8 feet tall apiece,

their arms and armor enormous, and they begin lumbering slowly towards you with a look of need buried behind their dead eyes...

Luckily, these aren't vampires, but large zombies, specifically paladins from a good aligned church (the DM should make the holy symbols and armor worn by the zombies match a prominent church from her campaign) who came when they discovered Bloodhollow's reanimation to attempt to stop it. Crythos had the bodies enlarged, then managed to make the effect permanent with Bloodhollow's magic, and then had all of the bodies reanimated as zombies.

Creatures (EL 8): There are 12 large zombies.

Large Zombies (12): CR 1; Large Undead (10 feet tall); HD 4d12 + 3; hp 40 each; Init -1 (Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +3 natural, +5 huge breastplate); Atk +4 melee (greatsword, 2d8 + 4, crit 19-20); SQ undead, partial actions only; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; AL N; Str 17, Dex 8, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1.

Feats: Toughness.

SQ – Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

SQ – Partial Actions Only (Ex): Zombies have poor reflexes and can perform only partial actions. Thus they can move or attack, but can only do both if they charge (a partial charge).

Tactics: Talk about getting ugly.... Despite the fact that they are only zombies, the 10 foot reach of the dozen large undead in this room could make the functional area of this combat close up extremely quickly. That, coupled with the fact that these zombies are wearing armor and equipped with huge weapons, doesn't make the battle any easier...this is going to be brutal, ugly, and extremely challenging. But the PCs have something going in their favor...the magical items from the Kitchen. The *staff of healing* and *wand of fireballs* should both come in exceptionally handy in a battle of this scale: if they're lucky, the PCs can deal with several of their opponents before they are even attacked.

This should be a long, brutal, drag down, go-for-the-jugular slugfest. If the PCs are having too difficult of a time with it, the DM might offer them to chance to retreat, into one of the peripheral rooms (see below) or back down the elevator,

Bloodhollow

which can be activated again by hitting one of the levers on the eastern wall. (The elevator descends 2 rounds later, and takes 2 full rounds to return to the Kitchen level). If, on the other hand, the PCs are mopping up too easily, the DM should feel free to throw more at them — these coffins each house a vampire spawn or a vampiric minotaur, though Crythos is trying to keep them all contained at the moment so that the PCs may reach him (see “Skies of Blood (Roof Level)”, below, for details on why Crythos would want to do this). At the DMs option, any number of these spawn or minotaurs can make an appearance in order to make the battle a bit more interesting. Otherwise, the zombies should be challenging enough.

In the end, the PCs almost certainly want to destroy the coffins, which would be most advisable. Once the battle is done, they may inspect the peripheral rooms.

MH 2. Treasure Trove

This room is only 20' by 20', filled with Crythos' personal treasure. The treasure is kept in small chests around the room, though only the entrance is guarded by a trap. The door is locked, and may be opened with an Open Locks skill check (DC 30).

Treasure: There are 7043 gp, 253 pp, 100 small gems (worth 50 gp each), a vial of *oil of timelessness*, *bracers of health +4*, a *ring of protection +3*, and a *lion's shield +2*.

Trap (CR 5): A supercharges blast of frost screeches out of a small opening above the door when it is opened. The trap may be disarmed by disabling the jet and blocking the aperture.

Cold Blast: CR 4; 1 ft. wide, 5 ft. long jet of acid (7d6); Reflex Save (DC 24) avoids; *Find:* Search (DC 25); *Disable:* Disable Device (DC 25).

MH 3. Magic Items Hold

This 20' by 20' room contains Crythos' collection of magical items. The door is locked, and may be opened with a successful Open Locks skill check (DC 30). The items are stored in racks and on tables about the room.

Treasure: The following magic items may be found in the room: a suit of *elven chain +4*, a *small wooden shield +3*, a *bastard sword +3*, a *brilliant energy dagger +3*, a *scabbard of keen edges*, *bracers of armor +3*, a *potion of cat's grace*, a *potion of bull's strength*, a *scroll of dispel evil (14th level)*, and a *rod of thunder of lightning*. (Yes, it's a lot, but the PCs have been through Hell and they're going to see even worse before it's all over...)

Trap (EL 8): A symbol of death is cast over the inside of the doorway, triggered by anyone who walks through. The DC to Save is 23.

MH 4. Crythos' Room

Strangely enough, this 20' by 20' is not locked, but then it doesn't contain anything of any monetary or magical value, either. What it does contain is a tantamount to Crythos' ever growing insanity. When the PCs enter, read the following:

This was evidently once a bedroom, though it appears to have been quite some time since it was used as such. The bed, dresser and large mahogany desk must have been opulent and grand at one point, but they have since been decimated — the desk has been reduced to splinters, the expensive sheets ripped to shreds, the fine silk clothes torn into so many hundreds of fragments that it is impossible to count them all. Long claw marks decorate the walls, moving wildly in all directions, as if some caged animal were trapped in here and decided to have its way with its prison. There is a strange, erotic statue in the center of the room, a mesh of flesh and steel, writhing human bodies being enveloped into a large obelisk littered with strange runic markings. Different parts of people are stuck inside of it — leaving arms, legs, heads, and other things jutting out — and while the faces are obviously in pain, they seem to be smiling as well, a strange dichotomy that originated from what was obviously a warped and twisted mind.

This, needless to say, was Crythos' room, and the obelisk shape is the only vision he has had of what is waiting for him on the other side of the planar rift — Llandrix' prison. Crythos sculpted the statue a few days ago, using various spells (*mage hand*, *telekinesis*, *polymorph any object*, etc.). Crythos is not only undead, but also now completely insane, and has taken to random shifts in his mood. (For more on Crythos, see below).

Development: One interesting find in the room is what remains of Crythos' personal diary. Though most of the several hundred pages have been torn out, there are fragments remaining that any PC who can read Common can easily decipher. The excerpts are presented in order from first to last.

Excerpt 1: ...three levels altogether, plus a sizeable roof area that, if necessary, I can have outfitted with siege equipment, though I normally tend to avoid that sort of thing. This fortress was designed by a madman, I'm sure of it: several of the areas seem to have no functional use. I cannot ascertain the purpose of several of the more unusual contraptions here, including the massive meat grinder and the bridge over an empty room on the first level, and, strangest of all, the forge on the second level. At first I assumed this was a dwarven relic of some sort, though the more I have investigated the more skeptical of this idea I am becoming. Regardless, the fortress flies, and from what I have been able to ascertain it remains invisible most of the time. This should be the perfect home, indeed, and will suit my plans...

Excerpt 2: ...remarkable. The "forge" on the middle level of this fortress is the power source for the entire structure, and it radiates magic so strongly that I was practically overwhelmed by it when I cast a spell to detect its enchantments. Without access to a good library of arcane knowledge, save my own, I am hard pressed to determine its exact origins or, for that matter, exactly what it is. I am growing concerned, however, for the fortress' ability to maintain its altitude in the sky and to remain invisible seem to be ebbing, and I am...

Excerpt 3: ...incredibly dangerous. I have no desire to abandon this stronghold, though everything I have found tells me that I should. I have been without a real home for so long...I must do everything I can to maintain this one. I have done worse things that consigned a few people to death in my life, so I should not be disturbed by what I had to do to "feed" the power source of this fortress. What disturbs me the most, however, is how I found out...how this knowledge came to me. It was too easy. It was almost as if someone — or something — wanted me to know. Pike has always served me well in the past, and the nearby land seems to have more than its own share of political and military issues, so I am confident that, should we need to feed the fortress again to keep its magical powers maintained, we should have little trouble.

In the short term, at least...I'm not sure how long we could...

Excerpt 4: There is a point in one's life, regardless of what position, or lack thereof, one holds, that they should question their own actions. Most people will come to realize, when that liminal moment arrives, exactly what must be done. But necessity and desire are bitter rivals, and, in my case, there has rarely been any contest between the two. My wants and desires have been the driving forces behind my life for as long as I can remember, ever since I first acquired magic, ever since I discovered how easy it was to manipulate others around me and take what I wanted. I would like to say I am a very intelligent man, but that would not explain what I am still doing here. This fortress — this blood drinking, soul cursed fortress whose name, Bloodhollow, I have uncovered at last — is moving of its own accord. I do not know where it is taking me and my minions, but I know that I must stop it. A wise man would abandon this cursed place immediately; but I am not wise. I am confident that my own intelligence and command of the arcane arts will prevail, and I will regain control of this vessel, one way or another.

Excerpt 5 (written in a shaky hand): ...frightened...yes, I am frightened. I have never been so frightened in my life. I'm not sure if I've ever really been frightened before. I must flee, but to flee would be to admit defeat. And, to be honest, I'm not sure if I can. I contacted Pike a few days ago, told him we needed more sacrifices for Bloodhollow. I know it well, now. This place speaks to me in my dreams, shows me images of vast, godless places and evil, twisted realms where the human mind would explode were it ever truly exposed to them firsthand. Something is happening to me...to my servants. We are changing, and I am unsure of what I can do to stop it. That Bloodhollow is taking us to meet its creator is unquestionable. I do not know her name, but I know her face. I have allowed some of my guards to build a shrine to her, for they love her, they feel her presence here, in these walls, in the air, as much as I do myself. I know a part of me is still in tact; a part of me is still sane. If I could only find it...

Bloodhollow

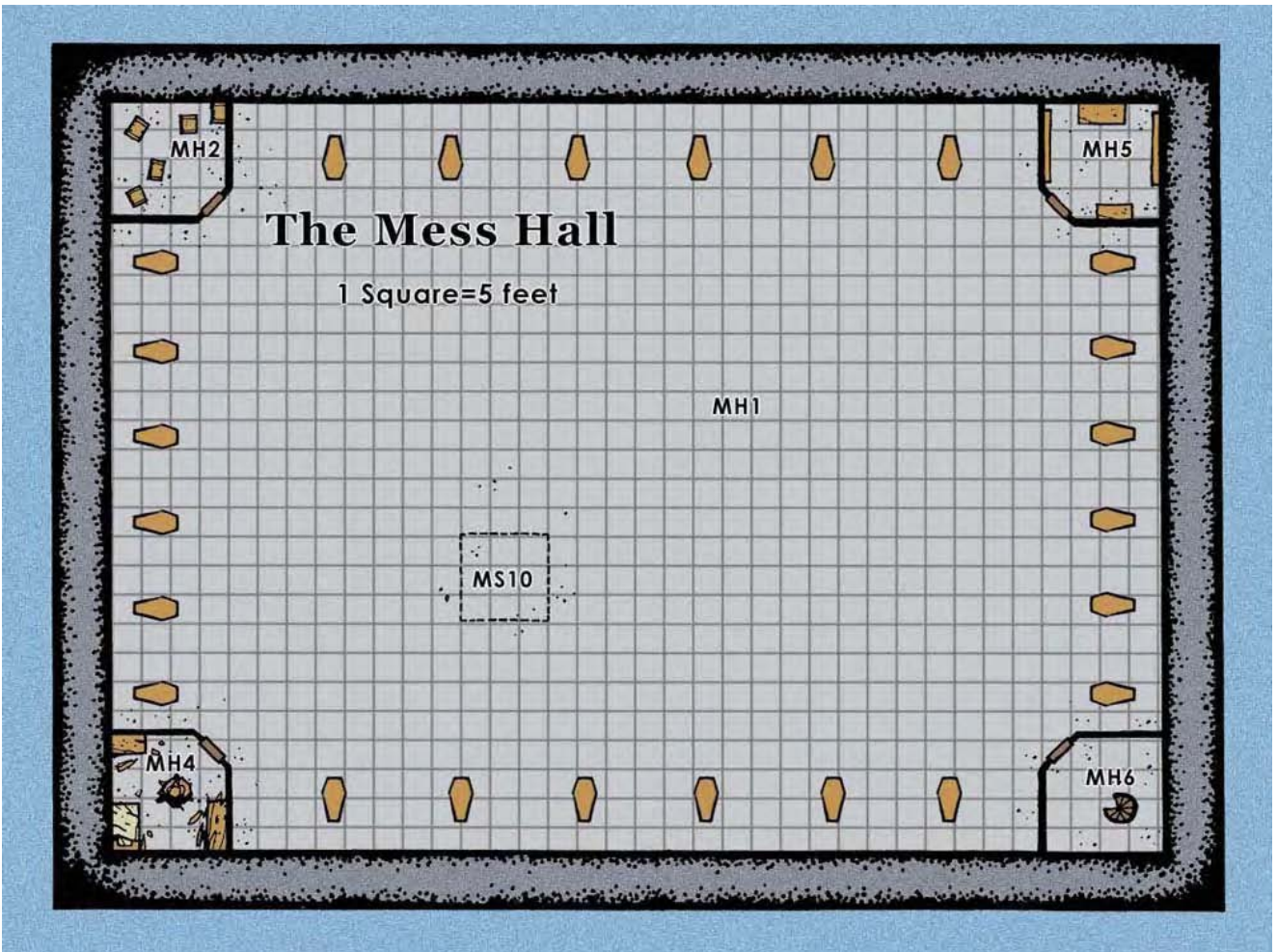
Except 6 (written in near gibberish):
 ...gone...we are...lost...she is waiting...she will bathe the world...in blood...I am a prisoner here. I am a prisoner of my own pride. Pride killed me. Pride I knelt to and kissed even as she ravaged my soul and took me...I threw myself upon a blade, but I am still here...am I dead?...can I die?...I am a part of Bloodhollow, and it is a part of me...I cannot kill Bloodhollow...I am dead. I must be killed. I am dead. The fortress is flying into the storm. Then everything will be dead...as dead as me...all die...

Combined with the information that the party has already gathered up unto this point, they should have the basic idea of what needs to be done. Crythos must be destroyed, for so long as he is alive Bloodhollow remains. This is due to the fact that Malath, the lich who originally built Bloodhollow, has essentially used his phylactery – Bloodhollow’s “furnace” – and transferred his life force into Crythos. The extremely unorthodox nature of this transfer has not been entirely successful, however, for while Crythos is now indeed

a lich, he retains a small amount of his own free will (though the process has driven him mad). In the end, both Crythos and the forge need to be destroyed, though in which order this occurs in depends upon what the PCs choose to do.

MH 5. Stairwell.

This 20' by 20' room contains a simple spiral staircase that leads up to a stone trap door. The door is not locked or trapped, and beyond it lies the roof of the fortress, where Crythos can be found.



SKIES OF BLOOD (ROOF LEVEL)

This, the roof of the fortress, is where Crythos can be found, though he (thankfully) does not end up being the challenge the PCs are probably expecting. Depending upon how close to the planar rift Bloodhollow currently is, the PCs may have no trouble dealing with the fortress' ultimate destruction at all. Ultimately, the party needs to destroy Crythos (which may be easy) and destroy the forge (which may not be easy).

When the PCs emerge onto the roof, read the following:

The rush of the strong, ocean wind catches you unawares for a moment as you make your way onto the roof of the flying fortress. The air is thick with electric cobalt clouds, so heavy and dense they might be land masses encroaching on all sides of the fortress' roof. Though the fortress' roof is some 200' to a side, for a moment you feel the twang of nausea that accompanies being at what feels to be an incredible height. Judging by the force of the wind, the fortress must be flying at a fairly fast speed, as the dark clouds careen and ebb all around you, lit occasionally from within by silent explosions of vibrant white lightning. The roof of the tower is nearly featureless, save for a low wall that surrounds and serves as a border. The black stains of old blood are everywhere, layered like thick paint. In the distance, seething in a roiling mass, is a dark storm of crimson clouds, exploding with fiery light, violently churning and flowing across the floor of the sea like a plague of animate blood.

A lone figure stands upon the tower, nearly 100' away. It is a tall, thin man, dressed in a thick, flowing cloak of crimson and black. He appears bald, until he turns and you are able to see his face. He has flesh, but it is gaunt and pale, withered almost to ruin, pasted so tightly across his skull that it might as well not be there at all. Wicked, blood red light burns where his eyes should be, and his grim visage appears to be pulled back in a perpetual smile of pain. His hands are folded neatly behind his back, and though he has not addressed you, you are weighed down by an almost certain fear that he knows you are there.

Depending upon Bloodhollow's actual distance from the planar rift (the violent red storm described in the passage above), the DM may need to modify the above passage. Unless the PCs have taken entirely too much time, Bloodhollow should not quite be at the rift just yet, though it may be very close.

Crythos, besides having been transformed into an unwilling lich, has also been denied the power of speech or telepathic communication. He has no means to pass on to the PCs what he wishes them to do: to slay him. Though an evil person by nature and by now almost completely insane from the transformation that has taken hold of him and from Malath's corrupting presence spreading through his body, Crythos knows that the rift waiting ahead, and whatever it has to bring to the world, are not what he wished for. In a way, Crythos is attempting to make amends, though he is sure that if he tries to strike against Bloodhollow himself, he will surely certainly be destroyed before he can do any real damage to the structure; He also fears that attempting such will lead Bloodhollow to steal even more of his free will away, and he is desperate to cling to what last bastion of humanity he possesses. Likewise, Crythos cannot destroy himself, for the forge — his phylactery — would then bring him back to unlife. He is also aware, at this point, that so long as he lives, Bloodhollow lives; and so long as Bloodhollow lives, the vile woman waiting on the other side of the planar rift wins.

Crythos is an incredibly powerful opponent — he would be an even match for a party of four 17th level PCs, but he could almost certainly slay a party of 8th level adventurers easily. Luckily, all he plans to do is goad the PCs into attacking him, at which point he'll let them do their worst.

Creatures (EL 8): Crythos, an unwilling lich.

Crythos, Lich Wiz15 (Human): CR 8 (normally 17; see below); Medium-Sized Undead (6 feet, 2 inches tall; HD 15d12; hp 99; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+1 Dex, +5 natural); Atk +7/2 melee (touch attack, 1d8 + 5, plus paralysis); SA fear aura, paralyzing touch, spells; SQ turn resistance +4, damage reduction 15/+1, immunities; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +12; AL NE; Str 11, Dex 13, Con -, Int 20, Wis 16, Cha 18.

Skills: Alchemy +18, Concentration +18, Bluff +5, Hide +8, Knowledge (Arcana) +18, Knowledge (Criminal Underworld) +12, Listen +8, Move Silently +8, Search +8, Sense Motive +8, Scry +18,

Bloodhollow

Spellcraft +18, Spot +8. *Feats:* Alertness, Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Dodge, Empower Spell, Enlarge Spell, Improved Initiative, Quicken Spell, Leadership, Scribe Scroll

SA – Fear Aura (Su): Liches are shrouded in a dreadful aura of death and evil. Creatures of less than 5 HD in a 60-ft. radius that look at the lich must succeed at a Will Save (DC 21) or be affected as though by fear as cast by a 15th level sorcerer.

SA – Paralyzing Touch (Su): Any living creature Crythos touches must succeed at a Fortitude Save (DC 21) or be permanently paralyzed. Remove paralysis or any spell that can remove a curse can free the victim. The effect cannot be dispelled. Anyone paralyzed by a lich seems dead, though a Spot check (DC 20) or a Heal check (DC 15) reveals that the victim is still alive. This power works in conjunction with Crythos' damaging touch.


SQ – Immunities (Ex): Crythos is immune to cold, electricity, polymorphing and mind-affecting attacks.

SQ – Inability to Communicate: Crythos may speak only to cast spells. Any spell he casts which is deemed by Bloodhollow to be an attempt to communicate inflicts great pain upon him (3d6 damage, which is healed again in 1d4 rounds), in addition to the spell automatically being interrupted and failing. Even simple hand gestures bring him pain, and the pain causes any such gesture or clue he gives to be misconstrued unless an onlooker makes a Sense Motive skill check (DC 30).

SQ – Bloodhollow Link (Su): Crythos can see and hear any creature within Bloodhollow by concentrating for 1 round. This ability acts as true seeing, allowing him to detect most any form of concealment. Crythos may not read thoughts, but if he concentrates on a creature for 3 rounds he can hear their speech and all sounds within a 30 foot radius of that creature. This ability also allows Crythos to control the Elder Gate, and to activate it or reactive it as a free action. This latter ability has no range.

Roof Level

1 Square=5 feet

Trap door 

Spells Prepared (Remaining) (6/5/5/5/5/4/3/2/1):
0 — *detect magic, detect poison, mage hand*; 1st — *burning hands, magic missile*; 2nd — *Melf's acid arrow, detect invisibility*; 3rd — *lightning bolt (x2)*; 4th — *contagion, ice storm*; 5th — *animate dead, greater shadow conjuration*; 6th — *geas/quest, repulsion*; 7th — *Bigby's grasping hand*; 8th — *horrid wilting*; 9th — none

Tactics: Note that Crythos has abandoned all of his magical equipment (the PCs have it), has destroyed his spellbook (it was among the refuse found in Crythos' bedroom, area MH4), and has cast nearly half of his spells in the past few days and not prepared any more (hence the low number of spells listed above), all resulting in his being presented with a lower Challenge Rating. At this point, Crythos is in control of his actions, and he does everything in his power to entice the PCs into attacking and destroying him. His first option would be to cast *geas/quest*, but since he is incapable of communication, that spell is essentially useless to him. Rather, he uses his combat spells in as non-lethal a fashion as he possibly can, in every attempt to bring the PCs to him to slay him permanently. He does not use his Dodge ability, does not cast spells on the defensive, and essentially makes no effort to defend himself. On the other hand, Crythos is not sure if the PCs understand why he wants to be destroyed, and is afraid that if he presents too easy of a target that they will not attack him out of suspicion. Every time the DM feels that Crythos is acting in a way that may arouse suspicion as to his true motives in the battle, he should roll a Bluff check for Crythos, and allow the PCs to make an opposing Sense Motive check. If the PCs win the roll, they determine that Crythos is attempting to goad them into killing him. Crythos attempts to allow the PCs to live, but if he believes that killing or seriously injuring a member of the PC party will cause the remaining PCs to more actively seek his destruction, then he'll do such.

If, for whatever reason, the PCs refrain from killing Crythos, he flies into a rage and makes every attempt to obliterate the party, convinced, at the last, that he must seek some method of self destruction. As noted above, Crythos is incapable of communication, including any hand gestures aside from those required to cast spells. His thoughts, however, can be read, and so the use of a *detect thoughts* or similar spell may be the best weapon the PCs have to determine that Crythos wishes them to destroy him, and that his wishes are genuinely good for the PCs and for the world at large.

Development: If Crythos is destroyed and the forge has already been destroyed as well, proceed to the "Bloodhollow Destroyed" section. The PCs have effectively destroyed Bloodhollow, and thereby prevented Llandrix from returning to the Prime Material Plane. Alternatively, if Bloodhollow is too close to the planar rift when Crythos is destroyed, the PCs must face Llandrix' messenger, as detailed in the "Optional Climax" section.

If Crythos is destroyed but the PCs did not destroy the forge, proceed to the "Optional Climax" section, below, as Llandrix' devilish manhunter arrives to discover what is going on in Bloodhollow.

If the party does not destroy Crythos, whether they destroyed the forge or not, then proceed to the "Optional Climax".

Bloodhollow

OPTIONAL CLIMAX: A WOMAN'S TOUCH

Run this section of the adventure if either Crythos or the forge on the Kitchen level were not destroyed, or if Bloodhollow is within 5 miles or less of the planar rift at the end of the adventure. If the PCs destroyed both Crythos and the forge, the DM should proceed instead to the "Bloodhollow Destroyed" section, below.

Though Llandrix is not yet quite powerful enough to escape from her prison as of yet, the magical forces generated by Bloodhollow and the proximity of her former outpost to the planar rift that leads to her mystical prison allow Llandrix, at this point in the adventure, to send through one of her trusted servants, a hamatula devil, to deal with the only problems remaining that can stand in her way: Crythos, and the PCs (in that order).

Exactly when and where Llandrix's servants appear is left largely up to the DM, but the following guidelines should be used, depending upon what exactly Llandrix' killer needs to accomplish:

- If Crythos was destroyed but the forge remains, Crythos is reanimated, since the forge serves as his phylactery and contains his life force. Though Bloodhollow has been weakened in the meantime, in 1d4 days Crythos is whole again and Llandrix is able to breach the walls of her prison. If this is the case, her servant must protect the forge and eliminate any threat facing it; in this case the PCs. It hunts the PCs down and attempts to destroy them. It makes very clear to the PCs why there are to be destroyed if they are not planning on destroying the forge already. (The devil, of course, insists that they were planning to destroy the forge whether they are willing to admit it or not.)

- If Crythos has not been killed, Llandrix needs him alive. If the forge has been destroyed in this case, then the need for her servants to protect Crythos from harm becomes paramount. If he is destroyed and the forge is gone, then his life force has no place to return and he is destroyed. Since he is linked to Bloodhollow, the fortress' integrity shortly follows and Llandrix is unable to escape. In this case, the hamatula must apprehend Crythos and destroy the PCs. Crythos does his best to defend himself in this situation, and is now faced with the dual challenge of avoiding his devilish hunter and goading the PCs into killing him.

- If the PCs have succeeded, and both Crythos and the forge have been destroyed, then the hamatula appears only because Bloodhollow had come too close to the planar rift. At this point there is little it can do to halt Bloodhollow's destruction, but it can enact revenge upon the only possible responsible party: the PCs.

Creatures (EL 8): One large hamatula devil. Very mean, very ugly, and very much afraid of what Llandrix will do to it if it fails.

Hamatula: CR 8; Medium-Sized Outsider (7 feet tall); HD 9d8+9; hp 69; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 22 (+12 natural); Atk +12 melee (2 claws, 2d4 + 3, plus fear); SA spell-like abilities, fear, improved grab, impale 3d4+4, summon baatezu; SQ damage reduction 10/+1, SR 23, immunities, resistances, see in darkness, telepathy; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +8; AL LE; Str 17, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +13, Hide +12, Listen +15, Move Silently +12, Search +13, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15. **Feats:** Alertness, Cleave, Power Attack.

SA – Spell-Like Abilities: At will — *animate dead*, *charm person*, *desecrate*, *doom*, *hold person*, *major image*, *produce flame*, *pyrotechnics*, and *suggestion*; 1/day — *order's wrath* or *unholy blight*. These abilities are as the spells cast by a 9th level sorcerer (DC 10 + spell level). A hamatula can *teleport without error* (self plus 50 pound objects only) at will as the spell cast by a 12th level sorcerer.

SA – Fear (Su): A creature hit by a hamatula must succeed at a Will Save (DC 14) or be affected as though by *fear* cast by a 9th level sorcerer. Whether or not the Save is successful, that creature cannot be affected again by that hamatula's fear ability for one day.

SA – Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, the hamatula must hit with a claw attack. If it gets hold, it can impale the opponent on its barbed body.

SA – Impale (Ex): A hamatula deals 3d4+4 points of damage to a grabbed opponent with a successful grapple check.

SQ – Summon Baatezu (Sp): Once per day a hamatula can attempt to summon 2d10 lemures with a 50% chance of success, or another hamatula with a 35% chance of success.

SQ – Immunities (Ex): Baatezu are immune to fire and poison.

SQ – Resistances (Ex): Baatezu have cold and acid resistance 20.

Bloodhollow

BLOODHOLLOW DESTROYED

Assuming that both Crythos and the forge were destroyed by the PCs, Bloodhollow itself is soon to follow. The PCs see signs of this rather quickly – read the following:

The entire fortress shakes violently, as if it had just struck something. After a moment, with only the reverberating echo of the cacophonous lightning outside, the fortress jolts again. All at once the world seems to end. Great cracks appear in the floors and ceiling, some over a foot wide, all emanating a dark, blood red ooze that carries with it the sounds of human agony – cries, screams, moans of writhing pain. Large chunks of stone begin falling from the ceiling, and as each second passes the fortress becomes riddled with more and more of the great cracks.

Each PC must make a Reflex Save (DC 15) to avoid being knocked down by this initial damage wrought upon Bloodhollow by the loss of its life force (this is really just for dramatic effect). The PCs have 30 rounds to escape from Bloodhollow before it is destroyed. The easiest way to escape from Bloodhollow would be simply to *fly* or *levitate* away from the fortress and down to the sea, though this option may not be available to the PCs. Though they may not know it, if the PCs destroyed Crythos, his final gift to them was to reactivate the Elder Gate in area MS1: all the PCs need do is pass through it, and they are returned to the Black Hand's lair and safely out of harm's way. (If the PCs used *detect thoughts* or a similar ability to determine Crythos' motives, his dying thought reveals this information.) Otherwise, if the PCs do not consider this possibility, they are on their own.

Each round, Bloodhollow sinks closer to the ground, at the rate of 1 mile every 6 rounds, so that on the 30th round it is at sea level and crashes into the ocean just as it inevitably comes apart at the seams. If the PCs destroyed the forge before proceeding onwards to destroy Crythos, then Bloodhollow has already begun to sink, though at a much slower rate (1 mile for every half hour of time elapsed since its destruction). This should get the PCs closer to the ground so that they do not suffer quite such an impact. The DM should use her best judgment in determining whether any plan for escape on the PCs part is viable or not, using the following guidelines:

· The exterior walls of Bloodhollow are DC 20 to climb. Falling from a great height could spell the end of a PCs adventuring career.

· The water below is rough, choppy and very much in motion, a fact that may help PCs who jump or fall into it. The water below is nearly 1,500 feet deep (they are 5 miles out to sea, after all). Thus, if a PC falls from Bloodhollow into the sea, the first 20 feet of the fall inflicts no damage, the next 20 feet are treated as subdual damage, and all remaining feet fallen are treated as normal damage (1d6 per 10 feet fallen). If a PC intentionally jumps into the sea from the falling Bloodhollow, they take no damage at all on a successful Swim or Tumble check (DC 15) if the water is at least 10 feet deep for every 30 feet fallen (in this case they could fall up to 4,500 feet and suffer no damage). However, the DC of the check increases by 5 for every 50 feet of the fall (so, in the example above, the DC for a 4,500 foot fall would be 105...not recommended).

· Due to Bloodhollow's slow falling rate, the PCs could wait until it was nearly to the surface of the sea before they decide to jump, although this could spell new trouble for the PCs when it explodes.

In any case, if the PCs are still within sight of Bloodhollow at the end of the 30th round (i.e. if they did not return to the Black Hand's lair via the Elder Gate), read the following when the fortress touches down on the sea:

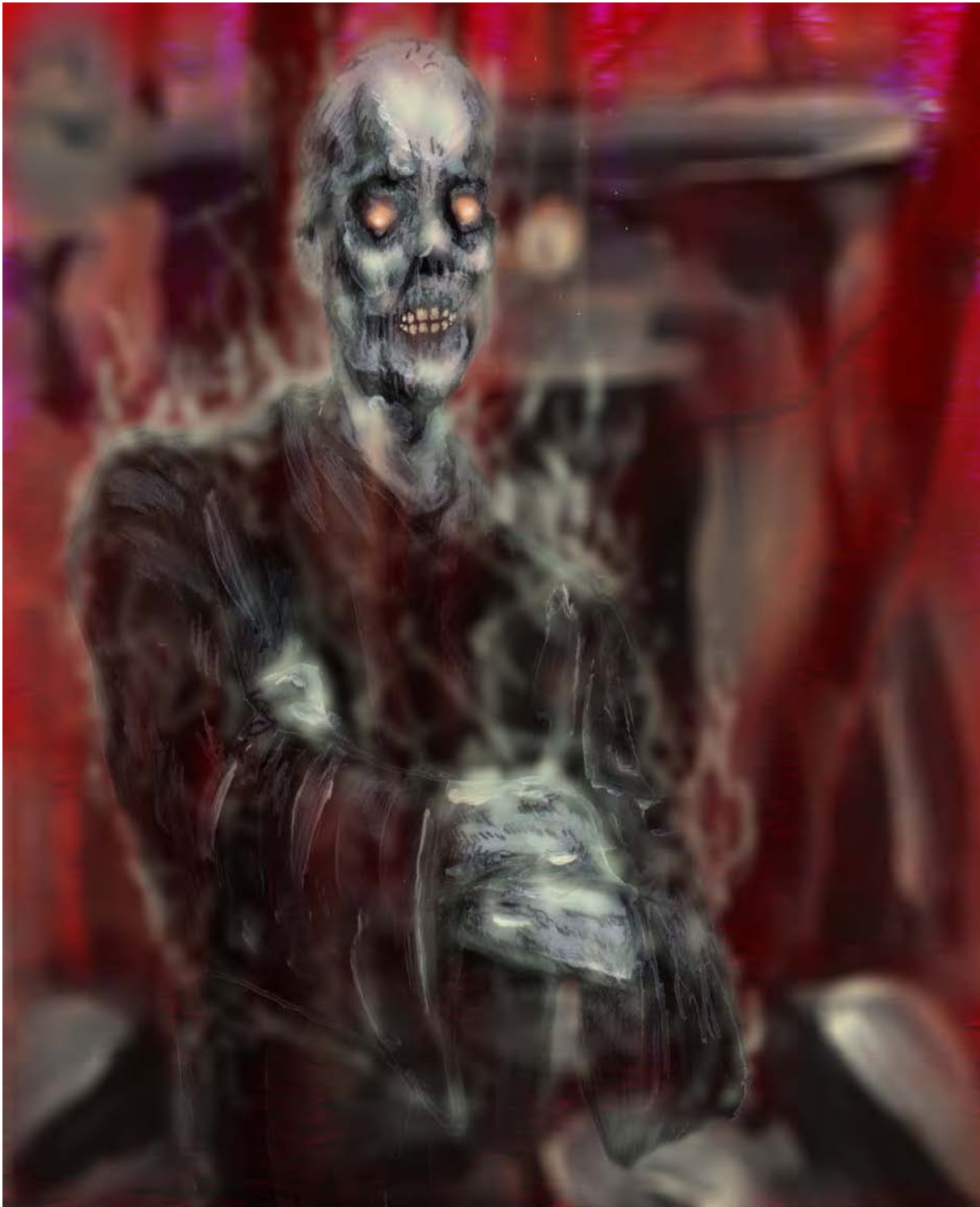
The fortress is nearly in ruin. Massive fissures and seeping cracks, each billowing forth streams of brightly colored crimson light, have spread all over the fortress' face. Large chunks of flaming rock litter the sea beneath the fortress moments before it falls. Barely a second before the fortress – billowing smoke and launching chunks of its face into the sky – touches down on the sea, the entire structure ripples. All is still and silent, just for a moment; then the explosion comes. Enormous chunks of stone fly in every direction and the fiery blast from within nearly blinds you as the structure flies apart. For a moment you think you see something – a male human face, ancient and bearded – form from the smoke and ash flying through the air, its visage twisted in agony as the structure is destroyed. Then, as quickly as it had appeared, it is gone, and with the exception of some chunks of flaming rock quickly vanishing into the water, there is little sign that the fortress had been there at all. Even the bizarre crimson storm, so violent and torpid just moments ago, has suddenly faded, leaving a calm, if overcast, sky.

Bloodhollow

PCs within 100 feet of Bloodhollow when it explodes take 15d6 damage from the explosion (half impact from the fragments, half from fire, Reflex Save DC 20 for half damage). If the PCs jumped from Bloodhollow and are out in the sea, they must begin making Swim checks to stay afloat; since they are 5 miles away from the shore, they may have a difficult time returning to land. (Kind DMs can have a fishing boat or a sailing

vessel happen by to aid in the PCs rescue. DMs in a more malicious frame of mind may opt to have a pirate or slave trading vessel come by instead. Or maybe a very hungry giant fish...)

If the PCs used the Elder Gate to return, Crythos had enchanted the gate so that upon the PCs exit from Bloodhollow, the Gate would forever seal (so they do not take any damage from the ensuing explosion).



Bloodhollow

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

Bloodhollow

All may not have gone well...if the PCs successfully destroyed Bloodhollow and live to tell the tale, they should be proud of themselves: this was an extremely taxing adventure that probably worked them to the edge of their reserves, if not beyond. If Bloodhollow was not destroyed, the PCs have some worrying to do. Llandrix is far from a planetary threat, regardless of what she'd like to think, but she is a powerful adversary with a good number of devilish followers, and she is eager to enact revenge upon those who attempted to halt her return. Even if Bloodhollow did make it to the planar rift and Llandrix escapes from her prison, however, forces of good (specifically archons) know that she has returned, and it won't be long before she is destroyed permanently or else placed in an even more secure prison.

This adventure could be used as springboard for any number of future adventures:

- Llandrix, regardless of the outcome of the adventure, now wants revenge upon the PCs for foiling/attempting to foil her plans, and she may send out devilish assassins to dispatch the PCs. Hell hath no fury like a woman scorned, and Llandrix has been known to carry a grudge for a very, very long time...

- Perhaps Bloodhollow isn't the last of the Skydaggers, and Llandrix is waiting to lure someone — maybe even the PCs — to one of her other existing fortresses so that she may return it to her. It almost worked once, so it may work again, especially if the PCs believe they are going to the Skydagger to destroy it, when in reality they are somehow being duped into activating it for Llandrix.

- Pike and Taerith had numerous friends and contacts, many of which won't be happy with the PCs for dispatching such a loyal and effective mercenary companion. Numerous old friends of the couple — mercenaries, bounty hunters, pirates, slave traders, maybe even an evil sorcerer or two — may come looking for those responsible for the deaths of their old friends.

- Though destroyed, numerous magical scholars may be willing to fund an excavation adventure to recover fragments from Bloodhollow for research into its obscure magical properties. Unfortunately, now that it is destroyed, most of it has fallen into the sea, and the PCs may need to discover a way of traveling down into the depths (possibly at risk of disturbing whatever may lie down there) to recover any of the evil fortress' remains.

- The Skull Kicker Horde, from north of Keeldraga, may become a greater threat, taking the evil aura from the sea as a sign from their dark God that it is now time to strike upon the land of humans and demi-humans. (Everyone loves a good invading Horde...)

- Finally, the PCs may have a bit of trouble getting back to land (if they are stranded in the sea after the destruction of Bloodhollow), and they could be picked up by pirates or slave traders, leading to an all new adventure.

Encounter Level Chart

Summarized below are the Encounter Levels (EL) for all of the encounters in "Bloodhollow"

Area	Encounter Description	EL
Ridgeback Road	Orcs (5)	3
BH1	Spike Trap	2
BH2	Orcs (5)	3
BH3	Orcs (3)	2
BH3a	Huge Skeletons (2)	4
BH4	Stone Block Trap	3
BH5	Synder, Orc Sor4	4
BH6	Pike (Ftr4/Rog1) & Taerith (Wiz5)	7
BH7	Flesh Golem	7
MS2	Vampiric Minotaur	6
MS3	Spinning Blades Trap	6
MS3	Acid Jet Trap	3
MS3	Iron Ball Trap	3
MS6	Vampiric Minotaurs (2)	8
MS8	Iron Golem	13
MS9	Vampiric Minotaur, 6 Trolls	10
K1	Vampire Spawn (3)	7
K2	Shrink Trap	7
K2	Rats (Gargantuan)	6
K3	Gurganash, Male Goblin Adept3	3
K3a	Special Sauce	7
K4	Selezia, Medusa	7
MH1	Large Zombies (12)	8
MH2	Cold Blast Trap	4
MH3	Symbol of Death	8
Roof	Crythos, Lich Wiz 15	8
-	Hamatula Devil	8

In addition, the DM should award each PC an additional 1000 XP for surviving what is a fairly difficult adventure without much time for pause or break.

Bloodhollow



Bloodhollow

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