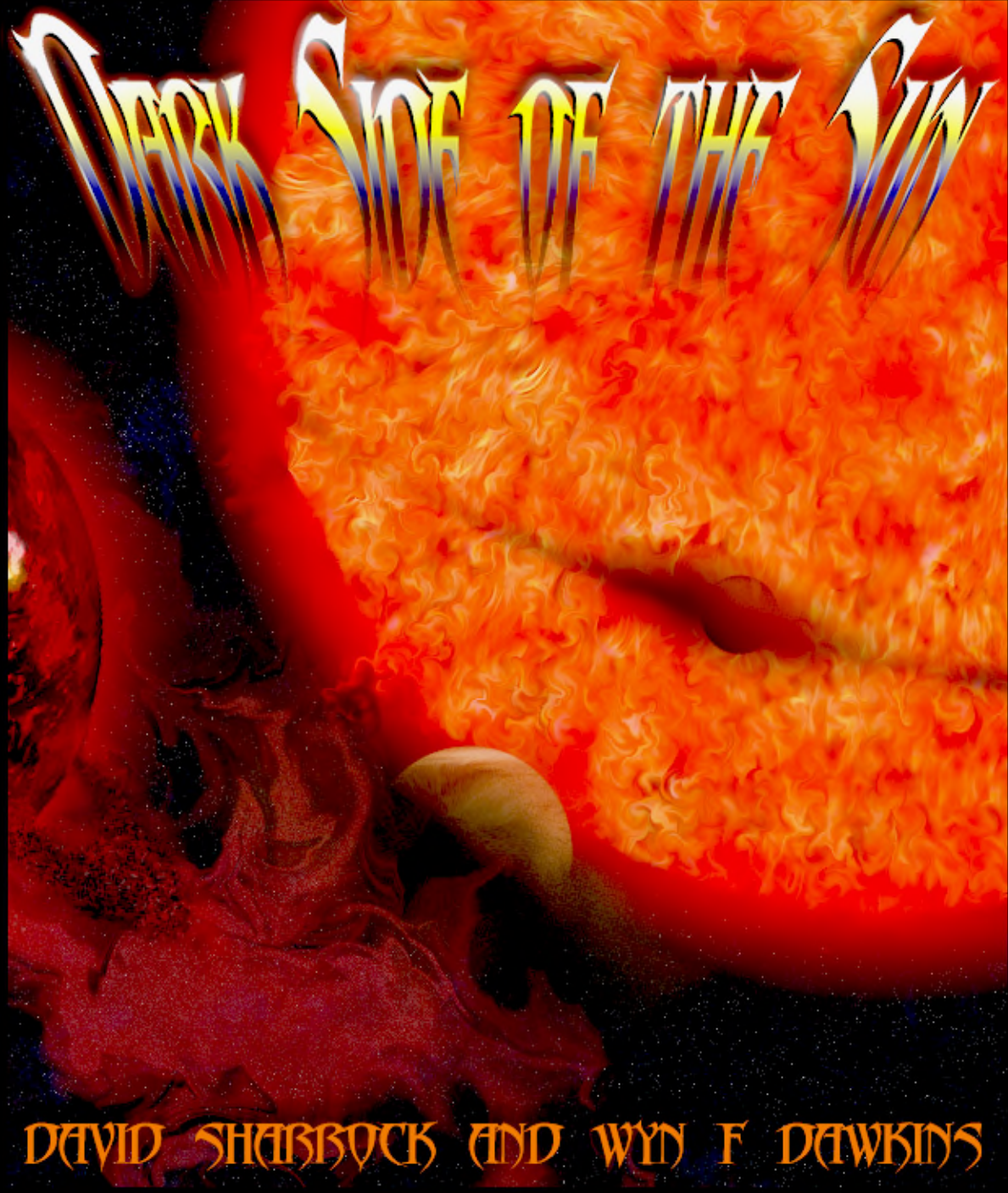


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OPUS

operandi

DARK SIDE OF THE SUN

Chronicle Adventure Module 1

A d20 adventure by David Sharrock & Wyn F Dawkins
for 4 to 8 characters of levels 3 to 6 Challenge Rating 5/6



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Introduction

Opus Operandi is a fantasy campaign setting for the d20™ system, built and explored entirely through adventure modules. The setting has been designed in this piece-meal fashion in order to avoid the usual overload of information placed upon GMs and players when introducing a game group to a new fantasy world. An explanation of the world in brief is provided at the end of each adventure, for the GM to print and keep handy behind his/her GM screen. This single page reference sheet is all the GM needs in order to run an Opus Operandi game. Everything else the GM needs can be found in the d20™ system reference document.

There are no limits or set order in which to play the Opus Operandi adventure modules, however some adventures will be more suited to certain experience levels than others. Where applicable, challenge ratings are supplied.

Author's Foreword

Dark Side of the Sun introduces an interesting new twist to the Opus setting which is sure to inject your campaign with some uniqueness. This is a very non-linear format, so be prepared for that make-it-up-as-you-go-along element. Where possible we've tried to cover most eventualities.

David Sharrock/Wyn F Dawkins.

Chronicle Series

Each Opus adventure highlights and introduces a different aspect of the Opus world. Dark Side of the Sun explores an historical aspect of Opus and is the first in the Chronicle series. Other sets include the Pantheon series (introducing one of the Opus religions) and the Locus series (focusing on an Opus location).

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CHRONICLE INFORMATION

Thaumaturgos

Thaumaturgy is a word embedded in legend. Magic users of Opus refer to their art as thaumaturgy. Items resonating with magical energies, spell scrolls or items imbued with magic are known as thaumaturgic artefacts. Thaumaturgy is even the name given to the goddess of magic, sorcery and illusion.

Earheart and Graya Thaumaturgos were surprisingly unassuming wizards, given the magnitude to which their name has grown in the centuries since their death. Identical twins and both members of the wizarding Order of Mohan, the pair were young sorcerers, each eager to learn, but unwilling to share their discoveries with other wizards. Their peers recognised them as magic users of considerable skill, and men of many qualities, but unlikely to achieve greatness, particularly in the fields of magic they endeavoured to study. The brothers lacked any compunction to confer with the gathered minds of their own order, and in so doing lost out on a great well of arcane knowledge which might otherwise have provided them with the vital methods and spell-crafting techniques their flawed experiments sorely needed.

Where most of the order occupied impressive stone towers or enigmatic citadels constructed on high peaks in the Greymist Mountains, the Thaumaturgos twins lived in a small wooden hut in the middle of Marshdown swamp, an impish familiar and the occasional passing local their only company. There they developed spells based on their favoured subject, gravity and the energy force they named 'gravitas'. In their efforts the twins were largely successful, and many of the levitation or anti-gravity based spells used by modern-day magic users have a firm basis in the early works of Earheart and Graya, though very few magic users are actually aware of the fact.

One day, a prominent member of the Order of Mohan was approached by a woodsman local to the swamp in which the brothers lived. He seemed agitated and spoke of bright lights and strange sounds in the depths of the swamp, specifically in the region where the wizard brothers' hut was known to be situated. He knew of the Order, and of the twins being members. He numbered among those rare individuals who considered themselves friends to the brothers, and thus had they told him where to go should a violent or unexpected fate befall them.

Sensing trouble, the wizard called other members of the Order to his side and together they stalked into the depths of the swamp, there to discover the laboratory of the twins apparently empty of all furnishings. The walls, ceiling and floor were smeared in a strange red mass which oozed and trickled with the consistency of congealed blood. The brothers were conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, upon testing the substance, the wizards were horrified to discover that this mass constituted the remains of the pair, each mixed with wood, metal, glass and fabric reduced to mere particles, so that the result seemed like a paste spread thickly upon every visible surface.

A search of the house ensued and revealed, among other things, the nature of the twins' most recent experiments and a variety of newly constructed spells. The wizards were tentative in testing each spell, afraid they would suffer the same fate as Earheart and Graya. Eventually, however, and through cautious trial and error, they identified the spell responsible for the wizard brothers' annihilation and endeavoured to test it themselves. The wizards of Mohan wished to understand the nature of the magics the Thaumaturgos twins had been dabbling in and sought to recover as much of the brothers' work as they could, testing it with safer methods and in so doing compiling a steady picture of the spell responsible for their deaths. From this spell came numerous other spells and the crafting of a single magical artefact, the Orb of Evocation. The Orb was activated and the magic of Thaumaturgos tested. A secret was revealed.

So great was this revelation that the name Thaumaturgos would soon become synonymous with magical discovery and excellence. In crafting their spell, though the casting had killed them, Earheart and Graya had unveiled the foundations of one of the most astounding secrets ever to be uncovered through sorcerous dabbling.

Nobody knows what became of the wizards of Mohan, though it is likely they eventually suffered the same fate as the twins. The true nature of the secret was never fully revealed, or passed on, though a select few were probably privy to limited versions of the truth. Through these few, rumours somehow filtered down to the

general populace of Opus, and rumours became a kind of truth, embedded in the collective memory of a world, languishing as uncertain yet fantastic tales in folklore and myth, emerging in the words of bardsong, or appearing in the occasional line of mythical poetry.

Thaumaturgy is the craft of magic and evocation is the tapping of potent and mystical energies. Both terms derived from the time of the twins and the unveiling of a great but long forgotten secret.



Player Introduction

The party are travelling in the shadow of the Greymist Mountains when they happen across a small settlement named Stantionbridge, a village of diminutive thatched cottages huddled together within a wooden palisade upon a circular island, surrounded on one side by a natural moat in the shape of a horseshoe, and sheltered on the other by the jagged wall of the Greymist Mountains. A large raft, which must be called from the inner bank by ringing a large bronze bell situated on the outer bank, ferries visitors across the moat, which itself joins a river running south into the mountains.

The village is a welcoming spot and the local tavern (The Turning Mere) serves decent food, making a nice change from the trail rations to which the party have probably grown accustomed. The barman is a bear of a man named Oberon Fordkeeper who runs the tavern with his two wide-shouldered sons Frith and Penfirth and his wife Meredrieth. He welcomes the group into his premises and serves them free ales as a symbol of friendship. In return he asks them for news of the outside world and any locations they may have passed through on their way to Stantionbridge.

The group may be surprised to learn that they are not the only strangers to visit the village this day when Oberon points out a cloaked figure seated on the far side of the bar. Local patrons are giving him a wide berth and he sits alone, sipping carefully from a flagon of ale.

The figure spies the party and suddenly leaps to his feet, hurrying from the tavern by a back door. Oberon explains that the stranger came to Stantionbridge earlier that day, accompanied by a group of ruffian types who, at this time he believes, are resting and watering their horses behind the tavern. Normally, the guards who operate the ferry would never allow such a group of obvious cut-throats passage across the moat,

but this worthy and his cohorts somehow managed to convince them to let him in. Oberon wonders if the shifty stranger isn't some kind of wizard and he gained access across the moat by using magic on the guards.

The front door of the inn bursts open at this moment and the stranger enters. A group of thugs accompanies him, each man brandishing a weapon of some sort. They glare at the player characters with unconcealed menace.

Read aloud to the players:

His voice barely louder than a whisper, the stranger sneers, "so, here are Agrovar's pets at last, scurvy dogs upon my heel. Taller than I expected, which, I suppose, is why you have done well to cover such a distance in so short a time." you are struck by the dark colour of his face and the sharpness of his features. There is something of the hawk about this man, with his hooked chin, beaky nose and beady eyes. His hair too, thick and lustrous, flows away from his head like the downy feathers of a bird and his cape billows around him like nothing less than a pair of long black wings, albeit wings more akin to that of a bat than a bird.

Even as the party profess their innocence and try to explain that the stranger has them mistaken for somebody else, locals will scramble out of the way and the thugs will draw weapons. A fight is unavoidable as the PCs' protests fall on deaf ears.

Oberon Fordkeeper will vault the bar and join the fight on the side of the player characters. He will attack the stranger, who will subsequently deal him a mortal blow, killing him outright. The stranger will then turn and flee, his cohorts closing ranks behind him to prevent the PCs giving chase.

Once the battle is won and players have rushed out of the tavern to find the stranger, they will learn that an agitated man dressed in a black cape was seen racing out of the tavern just moments before. He promptly transfigured into a great bird of prey and rose into the air, flying south toward the mountains.

At this point the players will have a motive to give chase, but no lead to go by (unless one of the thugs has been spared for interrogation- see below). Even the best tracker among the player characters could not follow a bird. However, Frith and Penfirth are enraged by the murder of their father and soon deem to set off along the Mohan trail into the mountains to find the evil 'shape-shifter' and bring it to justice. It is likely the players will opt to take up with them on their journey, however if they do not, they will shortly be approached

by Meredrieth, beside herself with grief for her dead husband and terrified for the fate of her sons. She will beg the PCs to follow Frith and Penfirth into the mountains, to watch over them and make sure they come to no harm. If players are feeling in a particularly mercenary mood, she will offer them a handful of emeralds as payment for their trouble, and promise more if they bring her sons safely back to the village.

If the players decide to stay in the village for a while longer, or explore the surrounding countryside instead of chasing the bird, they may hook up with Agrovar the dwarf - see below.



GM Overview

This adventure introduces the players to a historical aspect of the Opus setting by sending them on a dungeon crawl in search of a lost artefact, the Orb of Evocation, whose potent magical powers will present them with a startling revelation and inject an exciting twist into their game.

The artefact itself was buried many centuries ago by the wizards of Mohan, an alliance of magic users responsible for developing the magical spells of the Thaumaturgos brothers as described in the Chronicle on page 4. The wizards soon discovered that the magic of the Orb harboured an astonishing secret and feared the secret would be used by the power mongers of Mohan for evil purposes. The Orb was subsequently buried in a deep tomb on the outskirts of the Greymist Mountains, along with the remains of the Thaumaturgos brothers themselves.

The caves around the burial chamber were fitted with various devious traps designed to prevent would be thieves finding and taking the Orb. Chambers surrounding these caves were then populated with an assortment of magical creatures who would guard the traps and prevent easy access into the tomb. The entrance to the caves was covered and all trace of its location removed from the records of the Order. The wizards never spoke of it again, though rumours surrounding the Thaumaturgos brothers, the order of Mohan and the mystical Orb of Evocation endured, long after the wizards themselves had taken the secret resting place of the artefact to their graves.

In the time since, many treasure hunters have sought the caves leading to the tomb of the orb. None have

Note: this is a non-linear adventure, so it is not essential that the players hook up with Frith and Penfirth, nor that they follow the shapeshifting bird into the mountains. It is, however, necessary to furnish the party with the initial plot hook battle in the Turning Mere. If the group decide not to visit the tavern, they will cross paths with the stranger and his thugs while exploring the village and the battle will take place then. In this instance, the barman and his two sons Frith and Penfirth, will emerge from the tavern at the sound of fighting. Oberon will ask a local what has happened, and the local will tell him that the stranger and his thuggish cohorts attacked the player characters without justification. Oberon will promptly draw a weapon and wade in to help the PCs, at which point he will be killed by the stranger. His sons will also help in the fight, but should escape unhurt.

succeeded. But recently, a parchment of notes, penned by treasure hunter on the trail of the Orb, came to light in the northern district of Carthidge. Here it passed through the hands of two treasure hunters, Canker Dern, an evil wizard whose life has been spent attempting to locate the Orb, and Agrovar the dwarf, a paladin who knows little of the Orb's history or power but who recognises the sound of an expensive magical item when he hears it.

By coincidence, Canker and Agrovar are age-old enemies, sworn to battle one another whenever they meet. Now the pair have set off in search of the lost tomb and will stop at nothing to locate and claim the Orb of Evocation for themselves. Having learned that Canker is also on the trail of the Orb, Agrovar is now more determined than ever to find the item and keep it from the evil wizard's clutches.

The entrance to the tomb, once buried and forgotten, has since been eroded away by the presence of water flowing down through a natural culvert formed several centuries ago by the movement of a particularly vast glacier in the Greymist Mountains. The entrance is now open, but hidden underwater, specifically in the moat of Stantionbridge village where the waters culminate in a small circular mere and drain into a

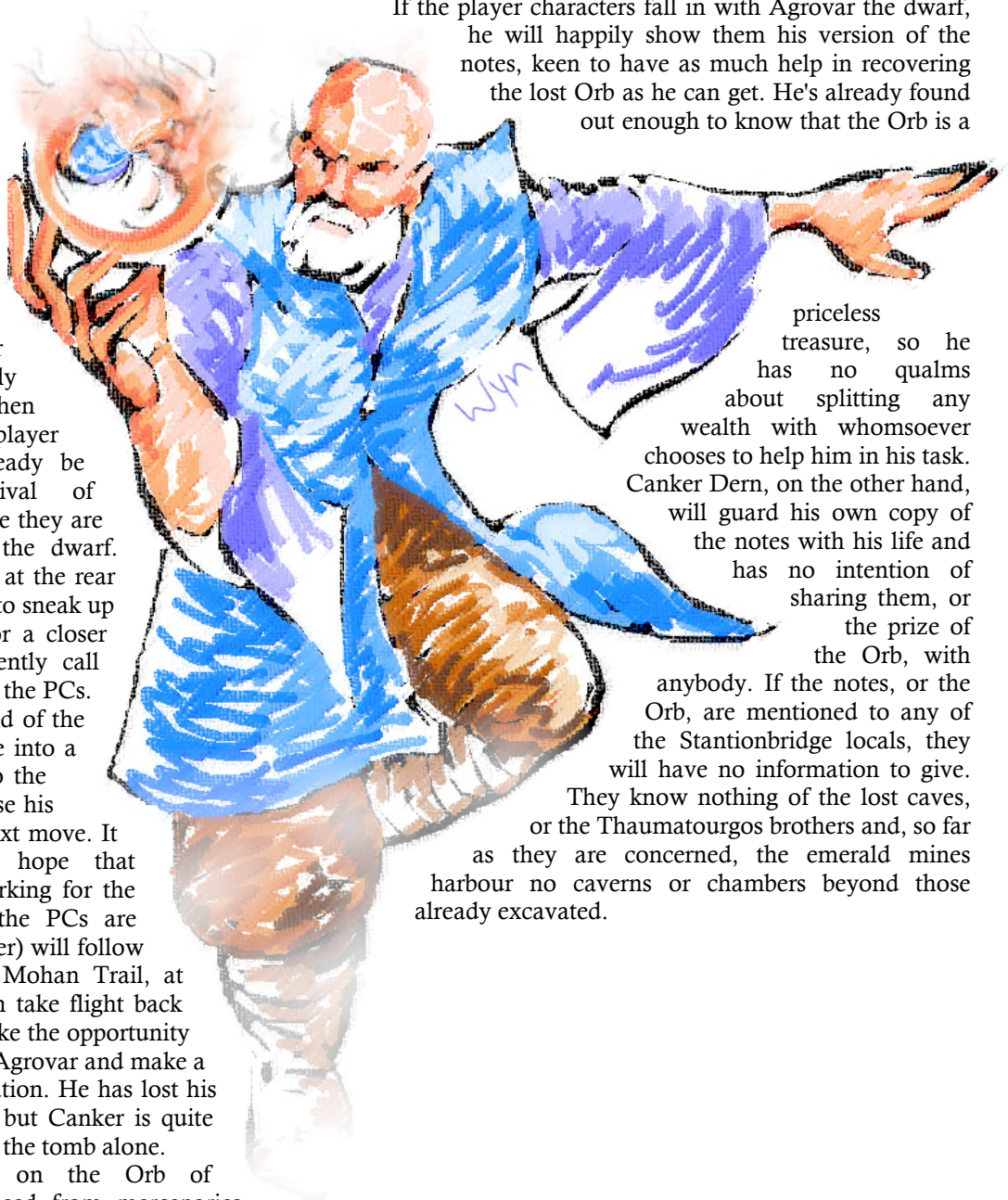
subterranean cave. This cave marks the entrance hall into the tomb.

To access the tomb, any would be treasure hunter would need to throw caution to the wind and dive into the mere, there to be swallowed by the whirlpool draining water into the entrance hall of the caves. Though this may seem suicidal, it is in fact quite possible to manage without drowning. Once the water has passed out of the mere and through the drainage hole in the bottom of the moat, it pours into a lake, the surface of which is level with the floor of the cavern. Anyone falling into the well will be pushed under by the force of the tumultuous waters cascading down on them from above, but will then be free to swim away from the epicentre of the falls and surface at the edge of the well.

Both Agrovar and Canker Dern know Stantonbridge is an important location, but neither knows the precise location of the tomb entrance. When the pair arrive, their initial (erroneous) guess will be that the emerald mine at the rear of the village is actually part of the tomb. When Canker encounters the player characters he will already be anticipating the arrival of Agrovar and will assume they are linked somehow with the dwarf. His mercenaries will be at the rear of the tavern, preparing to sneak up to the emerald mine for a closer look. He will subsequently call them to arms and attack the PCs. When he flees at the end of the battle he will transfigure into a black hawk and fly into the mountains, there to nurse his wounds and plan his next move. It is Canker's eventual hope that Agrovar (and those working for the dwarf, among whom the PCs are now presumed to number) will follow him, Canker, into the Mohan Trail, at which point Canker can take flight back to Stantonbridge and take the opportunity to find the caves before Agrovar and make a head start in his exploration. He has lost his mercenary bodyguard, but Canker is quite confident he can survive the tomb alone. Canker Dern's notes on the Orb of Evocation were purchased from mercenaries

touting a variety of old scrolls to patrons at a back-alley bar in the city of Carthidge. When Canker read these particular notes his enthusiasm to purchase them from the mercenaries (who had quite obviously stolen them from some unknown source, and who clearly had no clue as to their significance) made it painfully obvious to the mercenaries that they should charge a high price. They also refused to hand over the scrolls immediately, arranging instead to meet Canker the following day where they could be sure the city militia would not be watching the transaction. In fact, during the interim, the mercenaries copied out the writing on the scrolls, realising that here was something worth selling more than once. Thus, the content of the scrolls was to fall into the hands of Agrovar the dwarf, just a day later.

If the player characters fall in with Agrovar the dwarf, he will happily show them his version of the notes, keen to have as much help in recovering the lost Orb as he can get. He's already found out enough to know that the Orb is a



priceless treasure, so he has no qualms about splitting any wealth with whomsoever chooses to help him in his task. Canker Dern, on the other hand, will guard his own copy of the notes with his life and has no intention of sharing them, or the prize of the Orb, with anybody. If the notes, or the Orb, are mentioned to any of the Stantonbridge locals, they will have no information to give. They know nothing of the lost caves, or the Thaumaturgos brothers and, so far as they are concerned, the emerald mines harbour no caverns or chambers beyond those already excavated.

The Notes

(The next page should be printed and given to players)

Written in scrawl:

*The Orb of Evocation- prized artefact, priceless
Magical object of abjuration
Twin brothers of Thaumaturgos
'Gravity of the situation?'
Ask Ulnar the wizard - Wizard Order of Mohan
Thaumaturgos- lived in Bleaktonne swamp?
Last resting place of the Orb, hidden, secret caves,
buried to keep from power mongers of Mohan
Stantionbridge important, secret resting place
Somewhere in the Greymist Mountains (is
Stantionbridge in the Greymist Mountains??)
Follow the river to the last resting place (what is
last resting place??!)
What does the Orb do?
The Mohan Trail- are the caves hidden on the
Mohan Trail?
Getting to the trail - go to Stantionbridge (!) Ring
the bell for the ferry and cross the moat. The door
unto the Mohan Trail stands at the rear of the
village.*



Outcomes

The following is a list of possible plot hooks for snagging the players into the adventure. Any one or a combination of a few should have the desired effect.

One of Canker's thugs is spared and interrogated. He claims to be a mercenary from the northern region of Carthidge, hired by the stranger, a wizard by the name of Canker Dern, to accompany him down from the north to the Greymist Mountains, there to help him explore an ancient cave system and recover a lost artefact. The thug has no knowledge of the particulars of the plan, and doesn't know the location of the caves, but he does know the artefact is highly prized. A second group, led by a dwarven paladin named Agrovar, is also travelling down from the north, having

learned of the artefact's location and set off to recover it at precisely the same time as Canker. The thug believes Canker mistook the player characters for Agrovar's men, or at least assumed them to be some kind of advance party hired by the dwarf to stop Canker before he could reach the caves. Other than this, the thug has very little additional information to impart. Once his interrogation is over, he will probably be locked up by the villagers and tried for the murder of Oberon Fordkeeper, then sent north by caravan to face justice in Carthidge. Taking the thug to Carthidge could be an adventure in itself, and the villagers may attempt to charge the PCs with the task (since they were involved in the fight and therefore partly to blame for the barman's death). In this case, we recommend the GM introduce the Opus adventure, *Escape From Carthidge* and *Chains In The Dark*, which can be played along the way through the region of Paravelly.

The PCs take up with Frith and Penfirth Fordkeeper, or agree to help Meredrith Fordkeeper by following them, and head off into the mountains. The GM should refer to *The Mohan Trail Scenario*.

The PCs stay in Stantionbridge a while longer. The GM should refer to *The Barbarian Horde Scenario*.

The PCs stay in Stantionbridge for several days. The GM should refer to *The Barbarian Horde Scenario* before pursuing the following encounter: Agrovar's dwarven adventurers, accompanied by Agrovar himself, arrive in Stantionbridge three days after the barman's murder. Agrovar will be most distressed to hear of Canker's evil act, and will endeavour to compensate the village by vowing to hunt down the evil wizard and exact revenge on behalf of the barman and his family. When Agrovar learns of the brothers Frith and Penfirth, he will set forth along the Mohan Trail immediately, intent on finding both them and Canker before he continues on his quest for the caves. (See Agrovar's Dwarfs in the NPC section). The PCs may opt to accompany Agrovar's group at this stage. If the barman and the Fordkeeper brothers are not part of the adventure, Agrovar will be most interested to hear of the PCs' encounter with Canker Dern, but will not venture into the mountains in search of him. Instead he and his fellow dwarfs will set about negotiating with the head of the village for a chance to inspect the emerald mine. Since the villagers value their mine above all else, the dwarfs' request may be turned down. Little does he know, the mine is not the site of the lost caves anyway.

The players learn of Ulnar the wizard from Agrovar's notes. Of all the villagers, Mortise the fisherman is most familiar with Ulnar, being the only one who routinely trades with the wizard (although he only appears to trade, in fact he has other motives for his deliveries to the Talus Citadel - see Stantionbridge

gabreal's notes

Thaumtry of the situation?

The Orb of Evocation prized artefact,
priceless magical object of abjuration

← Twin brothers of Thaumaturgos
Ask Ulnar the wizard * Wizard Order of Mohan

Did Thaumaturgos live in Bleaktonne swamp?
Last resting place of the Orb, hidden, secret caves, buried to
Keep from power mongers of Mohan

Stantionbridge important

are in the Greymist Mountains (is Stantionbridge in the Greymist Mountains??)

Follow the river to the last resting place (what is last resting place??)
secret resting place?

What does the orb do?

The Mohan Trail - are the caves hidden on the Mohan Trail?
Getting to the trail - go to Stantionbridge (!) Ring the bell for the
ferry and cross the moat. The door unto the Mohan Trail stands
at the rear of the village.

details, location 9), and if the PCs ask locals about the wizard, they will likely be deferred to Mortise who may offer to act as guide in return for payment. The GM should refer to *The Wizard of Talus Scenario*.

The players discover the site of the lost caves and explore, with or without Agrovar the dwarf, though the chances of them finding the cave entrance without him are extremely slim. The GM should refer to *The Tomb of Thaumaturgos Scenario*.

The players show no interest in pursuing the matter of Canker or the murder of Oberon Fordkeeper, or, the PCs have completed their adventure and returned to Stationbridge. The GM should refer to *General Rumours* for a collection of alternative adventure seeds.



CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

The Greymist Mountain Region

Stationbridge

Stationbridge is a friendly, but isolated mining settlement, often the target of wild creatures and lawless barbarians who roam freely in the wide sweeping plains of the Jejune Flatlands to the north. The village is well protected by the mountains at its back and the moat and river. A contingent of two guards man the ferry raft, which is large enough for two wagons, plus horses. The raft is conveyed across the moat using a winch which itself is attached to a sturdy rope spanning the moat from one bank to the other. If the rope were cut while the raft was in motion, the raft would be set adrift and unable to cross. The current flows fairly quickly from south to north, so the raft would drift anti-clockwise around the moat until it either grounded on the outer bank or coasted full circle and stopped on the western side of the village. Here the water pools in a small mere which itself empties into a subterranean reservoir (the entrance to the lost cave of the Orb of Evocation- see above). A whirlpool spins permanently in the centre of the mere, which could cause problems for anyone trapped on the drifting raft but which is not powerful enough to suck the raft

underwater.

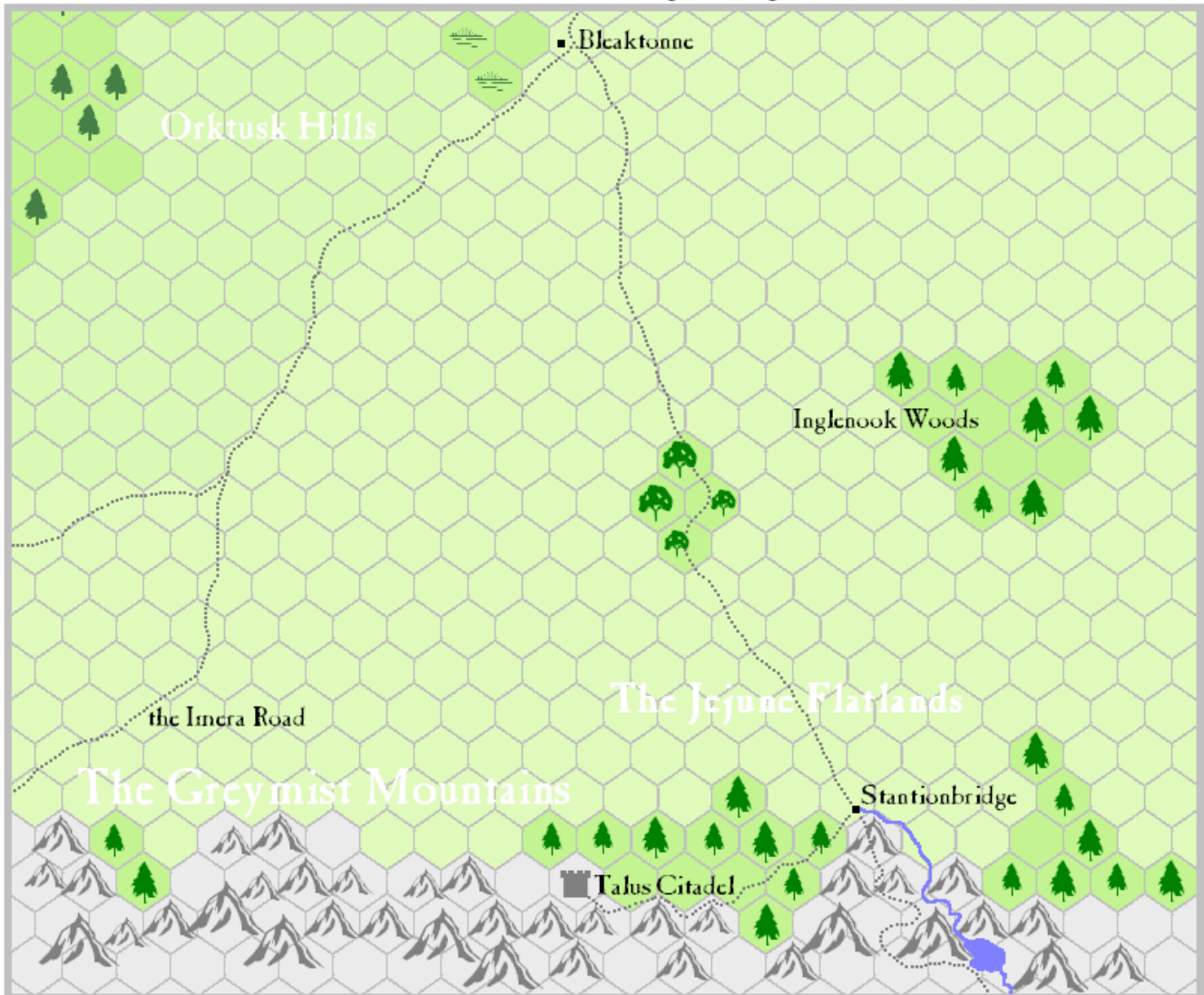
The raft is too large and too ungainly to steer or manoeuvre using conventional methods. Two small jetties used for offloading and boarding the raft stand on respective sides of the moat. A bronze bell mounted on a wooden post stands on the outermost jetty and visitors or villagers must ring this in order to call over the raft. At night, the raft will only come if a password is yelled out. By day, the guards are usually able to see who stands upon the jetty well enough to decide whether crossing the river is worth the risk. The area directly in front of the moat and the village is a vast open tract of land, with no places for attackers to hide from the approaching ferry, so anyone who wants to cross must stand exposed and visible. The guards will usually be out of sight on the inner bank, where they spend much of their time in a small hut next to the arrival jetty. This hut, unlike the buildings inside the village, is made of stone, the roof flat and surrounded by crenulations. A ladder inside the building leads to the roof where the guards can go in the event of an attack and where they can fire down on intruders with an assortment of bolts and arrows stored there for just such an eventuality.

Stationbridge village stands on the top of a man-made escarpment, the houses and buildings grouped together within a high palisade constructed from sharpened wooden stakes. Two watch towers stand at the front of the palisade and between them stands the main gate, a hefty wooden door which can be thrown shut and locked at a moments notice. Both the palisade and gate display evidence of past attacks, the wood scarred and scorched in places where flaming arrows and hand-held weapons have bitten deep.

The buildings within the village are made from a mixture of clay and mud, most of the roofs thatched with dried grass harvested from the Jejune Flatlands, and a handful sporting clay-tiles. Most of the thatch looks clean and new, the houses underneath well maintained. In fact, almost all of the buildings in Stationbridge have recently been re-thatched and rebuilt after a massive attack by barbarian hordes where flaming rocks and torches were fired over the fence by wooden trebuchet brought to bear on the outermost bank of the moat. Quite where the barbarians managed to procure the trebuchet is unknown, but of considerable worry to the inhabitants of Stationbridge who, previously, have had nothing worse to contend with than arrows and slingshot. Various meetings have been held in the village over how to deal with the increasing intensity of the barbarian attacks, and most villagers are in agreement that the thatch should be replaced with baked clay tiles. Efforts to do this are already evident in the newly constructed rooftops adorning a couple of buildings.

1 hex = 5 miles

Stantionbridge District



The party may also observe the ongoing construction of some kind of conveying mechanism being built on the western side of the village. When finished and operational, this mechanism will convey buckets filled with water up the bank of the escarpment and through a hatch in the wooden fence to the waiting hands of villagers, who will then be able to pass the buckets along a human chain to the source of any fire. Before now, the gathering of water has taken too long and fires have simply raged unchecked until their source of fuel is spent. In most cases, this has meant the destruction of thatched roofs, and some of the building beneath, though the clay and mud of outer walls is fairly impervious to fire, so the basic structures of most affected buildings have remained undamaged.

Behind Stantionbridge can be found the doorway into the Mohan Trail, a winding path which chews a

snaking route into the craggy mountains and rises steadily across the flanks of Greymist. This trail, treacherous and crumbled in many places, eventually descends into the Kingdom of Mohan where it crosses the downs of Shiredawn until arriving at the northern gate of Mardor, capital city of Mohan.

Few travellers come from this direction, for the mountains are perilous, and filled with many enemies. A hefty wooden gate stands where the trail meets the rear of the village, a fortified doorway guarded at all times by at least one villager standing on the adjacent watchtower. This door rarely comes under attack, serving to keep out wandering creatures and wild animals more than anything else. Orcs and goblins sometimes launch sporadic and half-hearted attacks on the door. In these instances villagers will range along the two ledges overlooking the trail where it cuts a deep

1hex = 1mile

Stantionbridge District



channel into the mountains and rain stones and arrows down upon the would-be invaders. This method is extraordinarily effective and has even been used to see off ogres and trolls.

The village of Stantionbridge is home to just fifteen human families and is therefore a frail patch of civilisation in the middle of so much wild wasteland. For this reason the fortifications and defences are of paramount importance to the inhabitants who spend much of their time maintaining, fixing and improving on the measures in place. The rest of their time is spent weaving, preparing food and toiling in the emerald mine. There is a single metalsmith in the village, with a crude yet operational forge which provides the community with minor metalwork, including hinges, swords, arrow heads, belt buckles, picks, shovels and so forth. Most trade within the village is based on food, clothes and services. Currency is rare in Stantionbridge,

except where visitors seek to trade their gear, in which case the village treasury - the destination of all emeralds sourced in the mine - may be raided in order to procure much needed items. The village trades routinely with farmers in the distant north and sometimes with the swamp-dwellers of Bleaktonne, the former trading grain for emeralds, the latter trading food for clothes and weapons. Player characters who present the villagers with something particularly interesting or useful, may find themselves trading it for an entire emerald stone worth a small fortune in gold. In this respect, the villagers have very little concept of monetary worth.

Halain Dervish is the leader of Stantionbridge, being the eldest of the original founding family. He lives in the largest building, and the village treasury is situated in a large metal safe in the undercroft beneath this house. The treasury, filled with gems from the emerald

mine at the rear of the village, is the reason for the barbarian raids.

The Stantionbridge community is polytheic, worship encompassing Jetava, Lorka, Drom, Thagma, Almighty Sen, and Gaya with respectful recognition of Gorum (god of the dwarves) and Ethrayall (goddess of elves). Villagers attend the temple situated at the rear of the village at least once a day to offer prayers and oblation to whichever deity is in particular favour. During the winter months the villagers focus on Jetava, praying for mild weather and for the moat to remain unfrozen. The worst barbarian attacks have occurred when the waters have turned to ice and the village's main defence is no longer a barrier against the invading hordes. Most of the village's food supply also comes from the moat, in the form of fish and crustaceans. However, the loss of the moat does not necessarily spell doom for the villagers, who also source grain from the farmlands of Paravelly, far in the north, and meats, vegetables and fruit from the swamp-dwellers of Bleaktonne. When they are really desperate they will hunt wild hart in the alpine woods below The Talus Citadel, though this is rare because few villagers possess decent hunting or tracking skills.

In the summer the villagers focus most of their attention on Almighty Sen, whom they believe has a general divine influence over the other gods. The names of individual gods may be evoked by villagers at appropriate moments. 'By Almighty Sen' is a popular phrase used to convey enthusiasm or surprise. 'By Jetava's Grace' is a term used when hoping for divine favour, and 'by Lorka's will' is a traditional precursor to any hopeful wish, such as "by Lorka's will we shall harvest many emeralds this season" or "by Lorka's will shall the barbarian hordes leave us in peace this week."

The Jejune Flatlands

The sweeping plains of the Flatlands are home to the barbarian hordes of Jejune, lawless creatures devoid of morality who live in nomadic caravans, moving ceaselessly across the plains, attacking anything and anyone unlucky enough to cross their path. There are actually six barbarian tribes, the Soza, Efgar, Uhrtuk, Jegga, Mengol and Mansard. All six are engaged in a constant war with one another, fighting over everything from hunting grounds to physical prowess. All six are also eager to get their hands on the emerald mine at Stantionbridge, which has become something of a trophy irrespective of its monetary worth. In truth, the barbarian tribe who succeeded in taking the mine could spend their newfound wealth on superior weaponry and reinforcements, using both to destroy

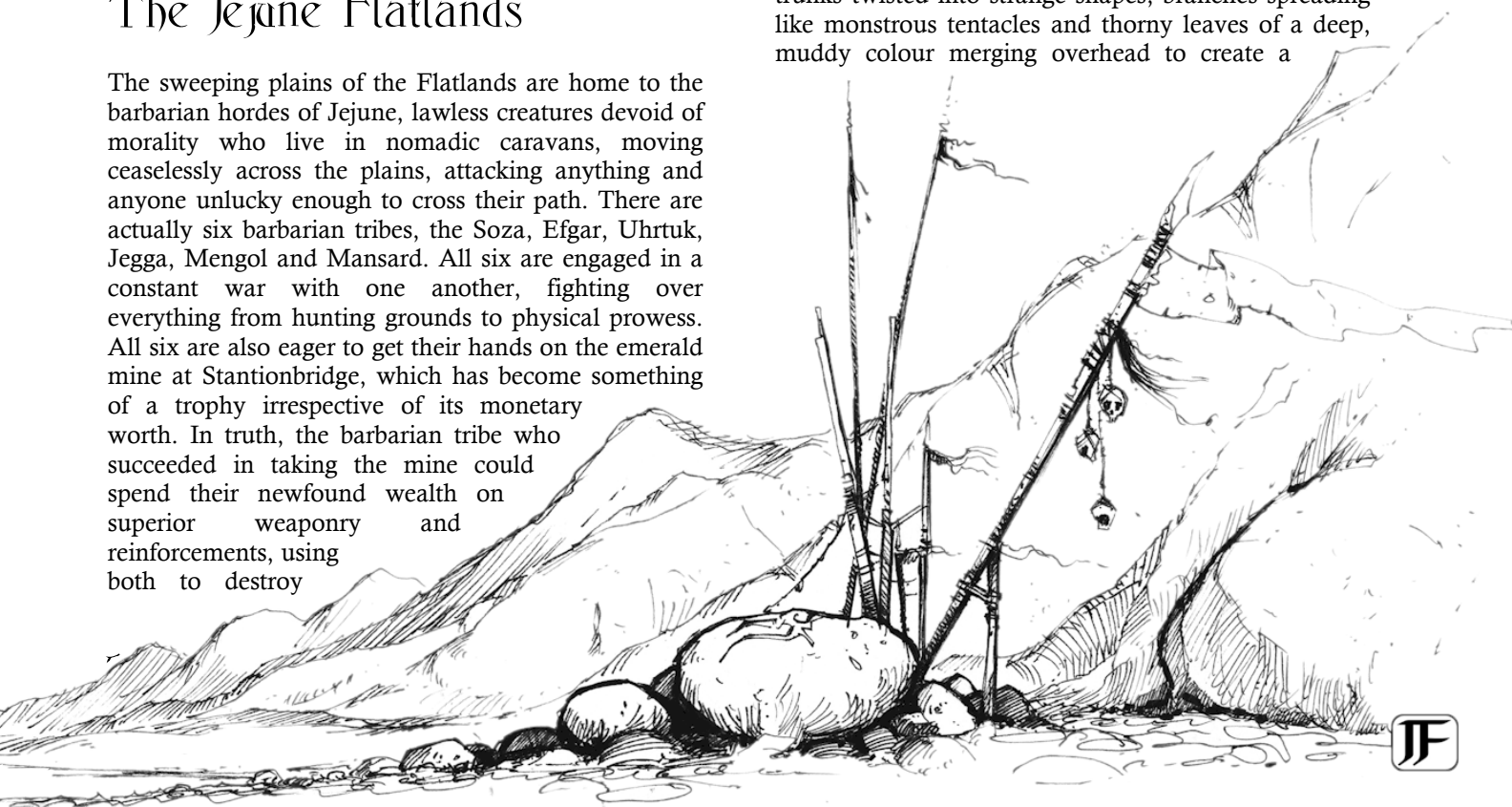
the other five tribes once and for all. But the Jejune barbarians lack such simple guile and see the mine as nothing more than a prize, to be taken before it can fall into the hands of an enemy clan.

The plains are vast, and anyone crossing them without sticking to the road from Bleaktonne is unlikely to meet the barbarians unless they are very unlucky (4% chance on d100 covering the entire journey). At night scouts roam the plains and may spot camp fires. In this instance an attack before daybreak on the PC camp is extremely likely (1-18 on 1d20). Anyone travelling the Ingleford road (the main road joining Stantionbridge and Bleaktonne), by day or night, risks coming under attack from barbarian raiding parties (1-16 on 1d20, one roll covering the entire journey). This will usually involve 1d20+10 barbarians mounted on horseback. The barbarians sometimes spare the lives of those they rob if their victims hand over goods, gold and any other items of value without fighting back. The barbarians know that most travellers on the road are merchants or traders and killing them would simply cut off all possibility of robbing them again at a later time. If the PCs are quite obviously adventurers or show belligerence in handing over what the barbarians merely consider to be a form of 'fealty' for crossing their territory, the barbarians are less likely to show mercy.

Inglenook Woods

A small area of dense woodland to the north east of Stantionbridge, Inglenook is a cursed region, the site of an ancient magical battle between wizard enemies, it is now home to various magical creatures who thrive upon the dark energies still prevalent within the woods.

The trees here are huge, with bark as black as night, trunks twisted into strange shapes, branches spreading like monstrous tentacles and thorny leaves of a deep, muddy colour merging overhead to create a



thick canopy through which no light can penetrate. The floor of the woods are covered in various types of moss and fungus, many of which are poisonous to touch and fatal to eat.

Almost all the wild animals living in Inglenook are of the dire variety, including badgers, bats, weasels, boars, rats and wolves. An enormous Dire Wolverine pack also live here, though they tend to keep to the heart of the woods where they hold dominion over the lesser animals, and rarely venture beyond the perimeter of Inglenook's tree-line.

Bleaktonne

Some twenty five miles south of the Paravelly Farmlands, and almost one hundred miles north of Stantionbridge, is the town of Bleaktonne, a collection of rough-hewn houses and buildings raised on stilts above the swampy waters of Marshdown. The people of Bleaktonne are a strange breed and largely keep themselves to themselves. They are hostile to outsiders, but used to seeing travellers on the Idlingford road.

Despite their reserved attitude to strangers, the Bleaktonnians understand the need to trade with nearby settlements. Their main export is meat, vegetables and fruit harvested from the swamps. The Ongo is a gooey orange fruit which grows only on the vines of certain swamp trees and is traded routinely with both the people of Stantionbridge and the farmers of Paravelly in return for clothing and equipment (the people of Bleaktonne have little use for gold or emeralds). The swamps are also home to a variety of edible creatures including an unusual species of marsh-chicken, but the Bleaktonnians source most of the meat they trade by hunting wildlife on the plains to the north and east of their village, favouring boar, oxen and wild hart.

Orktusk Hills

the Orktusk hills are a wilderness where only the fearless, the brave or the foolhardy dare to tread. The hills are home to many dangerous creatures and several clans of feral centaur are known to live on the southern edge of the region.

Talus

The citadel of Talus is home to the powerful hermit wizard Ulnar, a healer and scholar known to the people of Stantionbridge as an enigmatic ally upon whom they can call in times of dire emergency. The citadel is actually a wooden mansion constructed on a jutting outcrop of stone overlooking an alpine forest on the lower mountain slopes of Greymist. Sometimes

sick or injured villagers will be taken to the wizard's home for healing and recuperation. He is a goodly magic user, welcoming to travellers who approach him in a friendly manner but ruthless with those who show him aggression or seek to cause harm to him or his home. Though most believe Ulnar lives alone, this is not the case. Beneath his mansion is a large network of caverns within which live a colony of lepers. This unfortunate tribe of social outcasts are cared for by Ulnar whose magical studies are almost entirely focused on finding a cure for their disease. The lepers are rarely seen, though they move freely in the forest beneath the citadel, and sometimes visit the mansion itself. Whenever villagers from Stantionbridge or passing travellers attend the citadel, the lepers hide from view in the caves. (See also NPCs/Enemies).

The Greymist Mountains

The largest mountain range on the continent, stretching from Derroton to Lakmarr in South Opus, the mountains act as borderlands between the North Opus Grasslands, the Kingdom of Mohan and the wilderness of Imera. All three were once mighty empires, but war and ruin has long since seen the vanishing of men, dwarves, elves and halflings from the worlds of the north and the lush countryside of Imera. Now only Mohan remains as a seat of culture, though even the borders of the kingdom seem to shrink with each day, creatures of chaos and evil infringing ever further into the domain of the king.

The mountains are wild and dangerous. On the outer reaches of the mountains stand craggy peaks of sharp grey flint, difficult to traverse and treacherous for the uninitiated. Further in, the mountains grow ever taller, their summits covered in snow and ice where temperatures plummet and raging storms erupt without warning.

Various trails and tracks lead through the mountains, ancient byways fallen into disuse and disrepair since the demise of the three great empires. Some of these roads only pass halfway through the mountains, ending abruptly at the edge of a cliff where once a bridge spanned an impassable chasm, or a wall of stone where an avalanche has buried the way ahead. Others cross the entirety of the mountains, but are well known by local creatures who monitor the trails for unwary travellers or set traps upon the road.

The Alpine Forests

Dense woodland of fir and larch grow on the outermost slopes of Greymist, creating a vegetation buffer between the rising foothills and the plains of Jejun. The forests contain the usual wild animals and wandering monsters, including the occasional goblin or

ogre. Wild hart inhabit the woodland in great numbers, providing additional food source for Stantionbridge in times of need, though the villagers lack hunting skills and fear also the Dryad who dwell among the firs.

Though the Alpine Dryad pay little heed to those who hunt for hart or game, they have been known to attack huntsmen carrying axes in the past, mistakenly believing them to be lumberjacks intent on felling trees.

Rumours Abound

The Player Rumours page should be printed, along with the map, and handed to players when they enter Stantionbridge. Some rumours are specific to this adventure module, others refer to other adventures in the Opus series and some are simply adventure seeds relating to the general region around the village and the mountains.

The area upon which Stantionbridge is founded has long been associated with rumours of an ancient artefact of great power, said to be hidden in secret caves somewhere within the region. The artefact, known as the Orb of Evocation, is believed to be a priceless magical jewel originating from a time of great sorcery. None have ever located the caves. True rumour: CR 3/5

Strange lights and noises have been seen late at night by locals living in the Paravelly Farmland region to the north of Bleaktonne. (Opus adventure module: Chains In The Dark) True rumour: CR 5/6

The Stantionbridge emerald mine has been forced to close due to the sudden appearance of a strange, tentacled creature in the entrance shaft. (The creature is a dark mantle. See NPCs/Enemies.) True rumour: CR 1/2

The swamp town of Bleaktonne has been suffering visits from a strange winged beast. The creature is said to sing a strange song which seems to have a hypnotic effect on the townsfolk, causing them to wander into the swamp and become lost. (The winged beast is a harpy - see NPCs/Enemies. She has been entrancing townsfolk late at night by flying over the rooftops and singing her magical song. The hapless Bleaktonnians have been sleep-walking, trance-like, out of the town and the harpy has been drawing them to their deaths in the treacherous bogs and quicksands of the marsh.) True rumour: CR 4

A travelling fighter from the west, recently passing through Stantionbridge, claimed to have fought and killed a blue dragon living in the Babax Desert.

(Partly true. A blue dragon named Rubicon lives in the Babax desert, and the fighter did witness the dragon first hand, but he did not kill, or even fight the creature) Partially True Rumour: CR-

Several villagers speak of their friend with grave concern. He set out for the northern city of Carthidge several months ago, looking to buy metal-ore for use in the village smith. But he has not returned, and this is most unlike him. The village has never before traded with Carthidge, but recent success in the mines has prompted them to consider spreading their wings further than Bleaktonne and Paravelly. The villager's greatest worry is that the barbarian hordes of Jejune intercepted him as he made his way north. (The unfortunate villager is now serving time in Carthidge Fortress- Opus adventure module: Escape From Carthidge. The GM will need to adapt one of the NPC characters in that module to fit the description of the missing villager). True: CR 1/3

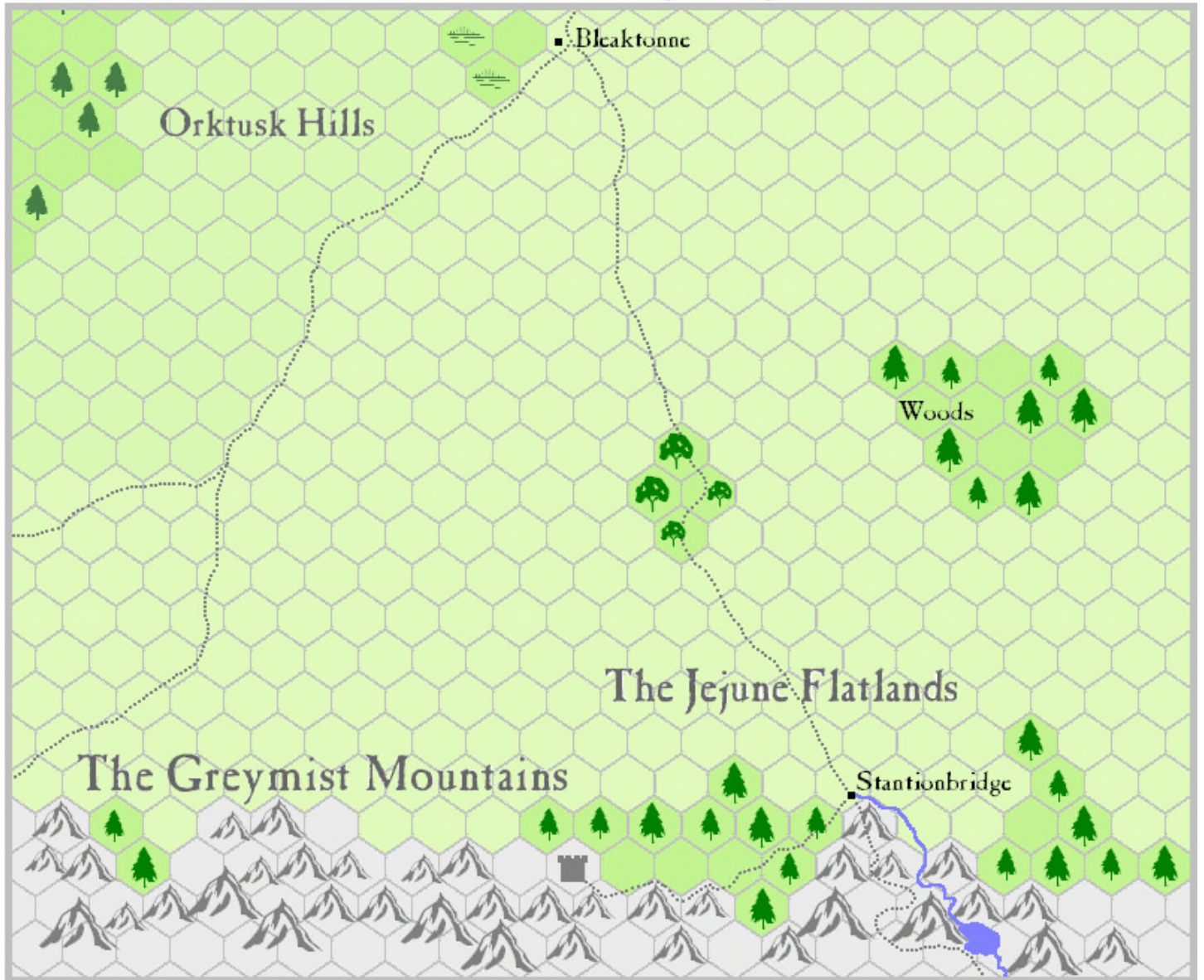
Inglenook woods is said to be haunted by the ghost of a long dead wizard. Many strange creatures have been seen there, in particular a pack of enormous wolves, each creature said to be twelve feet in length, with huge shaggy heads and thickset bodies covered in downy grey fur. (See notes above on Inglenook Woods) True rumour: CR 4

The woods that grow on the lower slopes of the Greymist Mountains in the shadow of the Talus Citadel are rumoured to be home to a tribe of undead zombies. Hunters tracking deer within the woods have seen the creatures moving around near caves set into the cliff directly beneath the citadel, home to the mighty wizard Ulnar. Rumours abound that the wizard, once a goodly healer known well to the folk of Stantionbridge, has turned to the side of evil and the zombies are under his control. (The 'zombies' are the lepers who have colonised a cave beneath Ulnar's home, see notes on the Talus Citadel above). False rumour: CR-



1 hex = 5 mile

Stantionbridge District



Rumours

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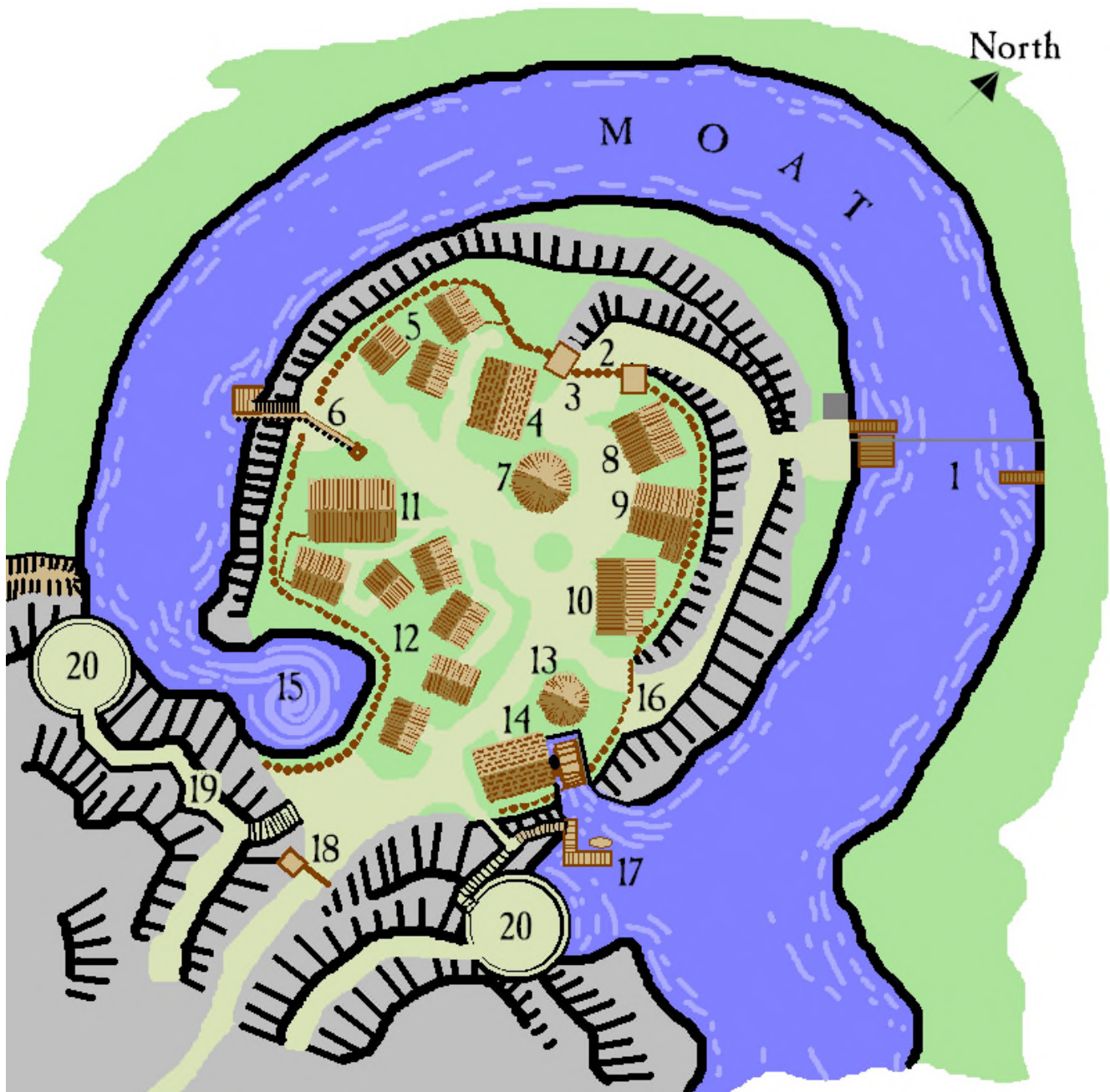
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Stankionbridge

Map and Key Details

1 The Crossing

A small wooden jetty positioned on each bank provides a platform from which to board the raft which conveys visitors and villagers across the moat. A bronze bell mounted on a wooden post stands on the outermost bank. If the bell is rung the guards who occupy the stone building on the inner bank will emerge and bring the raft across. The raft is large enough to house two wagons, plus horses and operates by way of a rope (which spans the moat) and a winch.

2 The Main Gate

A large wooden door which can be closed and barricaded at a moments notice, sealing the village within the palisade of sharpened wooden stakes. A steep shingle covered road leads up to the gate and two tall watchtowers on either side of the door offer guards a good view over both the road and the area directly beneath the escarpment.

3 Watchtowers

Manned at all times by at least one guard in each tower. The men of the village take it in turns to stand guard in the towers, using a round-the-clock shift system.

4 The Turning Mere

Tavern and inn owned by Oberon Fordkeeper, his two sons Frith and Penfirth and his wife Meredith. The tavern, its name referencing the whirlpool in the moat, is a welcoming spot for visitors and serves good food and home brewed ale. Stables at the rear of the building provide space for horses or wagons.

5 Homes

Homes to some of the Stantionbridge villagers. Small, but well maintained buildings with thatched rooftops and clay/mud brick walls.

6 Water Conveyer

A newly constructed water convecting mechanism for bringing buckets laden with water up from the moat at speed. The buckets are then passed along a human chain and used to douse fires. The mechanism is unfinished and still needs work. The villagers may be prepared to pay player characters an emerald or two if they can get the mechanism working. (Appropriate Craft roll required, DC 20).

7 Forge

Home and forge of Stokescroft Hammerblow the metalsmith, his young daughter Apple and his wife Lucia. Stokescroft can manufacture minor metalwork items, like hinges, door handles, belt buckles, stirrups and arrow heads, and if pushed can also craft slightly larger items like swords or shields, though his skills are limited and such items would be of low quality.

8 Manor

Home to Halain Dervish, his daughter Ethy, his two sons Bram and Pein, and his wife Edmie. Halain is the leader of Stantionbridge, being the eldest member of the original founding family. He is a calm, magnanimous individual, eager to serve his community and determined to beat the barbarians who seem intent on destroying everything he holds dear.

9 Fishmongers

Stantionbridge relies on Mortise Edgbaston and his five sons (Mortise the Younger, Gan, Griot, Nirvan and Pandit) for most of its food. These accomplished anglers spend much of their time fishing the river Motep or trawling the moat for crustaceans and useful algae. They trade much of what they catch with other villagers in return for services, clothing, tools and other items of worth. The algae they find is stored in jars and given to the wizard Ulnar. Many years ago, when Mortise's wife Aglan fell pregnant with their youngest son, Gan, complications during labour cost Aglan her life and nearly the life of her newly born son. Mortise took Gan to Ulnar who cast healing magic and saved the child. Ever since that day, Mortise has attempted to repay Ulnar by providing him with as much algae as he needs. Ulnar uses the stuff in his magical experiments.

10 Mansion

The largest house in the village belongs to Quent Harshbreadth, foreman at the emerald mine. Quent is a blunt, plain speaking man with huge calloused hands and a flattened face covered in scars and bruises. Most of the time his skin is black with dust, as are his clothes, leather hauberk and tin helmet. He is responsible for keeping the mine operational and maintains the rota which decides who works in the mine and when. Quent is unpopular with most of the villagers, most of whom have been yelled at or insulted by him at some point in the past. But he is an essential member of the community and therefore afforded appropriate respect.

11 Temple

Little different to the other buildings in Stantionbridge, this unassuming temple is where the villagers go to pay their respects to their gods. The temple will be occupied by at least one villager and the priest Chela Vedas, a pious individual with an uncanny memory for scripture.

12 Villager Homes

A collection of clay-brick houses with thatched roofs, home to some of the fifteen families living in Stantionbridge.

13 Grain Store

An empty house with a hole in the floor which leads to a cave. It is extremely cold within the cave, and here the village hoards its winter stores of meat, grain, cheese and vegetables. Mortise the fishmonger also uses the store to keep jars filled with strange algae which he sources in the moat. The door to the Grain Store is locked at all times. Only Halain Dervish, the Miller Quern Headrace, and Mortise hold keys.

14 The Millhouse

The water wheel attached to the side of the mill powers a great grinding wheel which crushes wheat to make grain for bread and flour. The wheat is purchased in bulk from the Paravelly farmlands with every fresh harvest. The mill is run by Quern Headrace, his son Terracotta and his wife Mirvus.

15 Mere

Here the moat culminates in a small mere which drains into a subterranean river. A powerful whirlpool spins permanently in the centre of the mere. Anyone unfortunate enough to fall into the moat will be pulled by strong currents into this whirlpool and will eventually be dragged underground where they will fall into a deep subterranean lake. Eventually they will surface in a large cavern- the entrance to the lost caves of the Orb of Evocation. The GM should refer to **The Tomb of Thaumaturgos Scenario**.

16 Ambush Gate

This barricaded gate is concealed from view, built to look like part of the palisade wall. It provides villagers with a means to escape the compound if the main gate is blocked or captured. It also provides an ambush spot for flanking enemies approaching the village along the main road leading up to the front gate.

17 Jetty

Mortise Edgbaston's six fishing boats and the miller's rowing boat are moored here, tethered to a wooden post at the end of the jetty. The miller only ever uses his boat to reach the millwheel situated in a deep watercourse just to the left of the jetty, and only when he needs to exact repairs or unblock the watercourse. For the most part this jetty is only used by Edgbaston and his family.

18 The Rear Gate and Watchtower

This locked gate, barricaded and fortified with a single watchtower, blocks the way into the Mohan trail, a long winding path which cuts a deep channel into the mountains before climbing across the treacherous spine of Greymist to the Kingdom of Mohan. The door acts to keep predators and enemies out of the village, rather than villagers away from the trail. If PCs pass through the gate. See **The Mohan Trail Scenario**.

19 Mine

Entrance to the emerald mine. A horizontal shaft leads deep into the low tunnels of the mine. The mine is currently closed due to the appearance of an aggressive Dark Mantle in one of the lower tunnels. If the Dark Mantle has been dealt with, at least two villagers, overseen by the foreman Quent Harshbreadth (see location 10) will be digging away at the latest seam. A rail track runs along the floor of the main shaft, a hefty iron wagon attached to the track and filled with 1d4 emeralds worth 6d20gp each.

If the Dark Mantle is still at large, PCs may be able to earn a few emeralds by getting rid of it for Quent. This might also be a good excuse for players to investigate the mines and rule them out as a possible entrance to the lost caves.

20 Turrets

These high turrets provide a vantage point overlooking the two innermost arms of the moat. In the event of barbarian attack, the villagers will use the turrets, firing arrows or bolts and throwing stones down on any attackers who come within range of the far bank. The easternmost turret stands taller than its western counterpart, but is the weakest spot in the village, being constructed on the bedrock of the mountains and undefended by the full width of the moat. In an attempt to make the turret more secure, the villagers have dug a deep trench at the foot of the cliffs and have filled the ditch with sharpened wooden stakes.

The Barbarian Horde Scenario

If PCs remain in Stantionbridge for more than a day, they will be woken late at night by the sounds of shouting voices and running feet. The village has come under attack by a barbarian horde and the villagers are rallying one another to the defences.

If PCs are afforded a view of the ground beyond the moat, they will see many crackling fires and the shadowy figures of the barbarians moving to and fro (1d20+180 barbarians). Every so often an attack may start a fire in the thatched rooftops of Stantionbridge's buildings. If the water conveying mechanism is operational at this point (it will only be working if the PCs have fixed it, see Stantionbridge Details, location 6) a human chain can be formed and the fires doused, otherwise the flames will take hold and the affected buildings will burn. Only the rooftops and contents of the buildings will burn as the clay brick of the walls is largely impervious to fire.

The GM should refer to the following list of attacks until the barbarians are either defeated, successful in gaining entrance into the village (at which point Stantionbridge's defeat is assured and the smart PC will do his/her best to flee), or give up and return to the Jejune Flatlands. Either roll 1d10 for events to occur randomly, or execute each attack in turn, returning to the start of the list after the tenth attack in the sequence.

1) The barbarians have two trebuchet (catapult) which they fire simultaneously. Each trebuchet fires a ballistic object (usually a stone doused in oil and aflame) as per light catapult rules (below). There is a 15% chance a missile will hit one of the buildings within the village, setting the thatch on fire. Even if the water conveying mechanism is working (see Stantionbridge details, location 6) the villagers will be unable to douse the flames sufficiently to put out the fire. The barbarians have brought a supply of 25 missiles. Once their supply runs out, they will stop using the trebuchet.

A light catapult is a large engine capable of throwing rocks or heavy objects with great force. Because the catapult throws its payload in a high arc, it can hit squares out of its line of sight. To fire a heavy catapult, the barbarian operating the machine makes a special check against DC 15 using only his base attack bonus

(see NPCs/Enemies for barbarian stats), Intelligence modifier, range increment penalty, and the appropriate modifiers. If the check succeeds, the catapult stone hits the square the catapult was aimed at, dealing the indicated damage to any object or character in the square. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save take half damage. Once a catapult stone hits a square, subsequent shots hit the same square unless the catapult is re-aimed or the wind changes direction or speed.

If a catapult stone misses, roll 1d8 to determine where it lands. This determines the misdirection of the throw, with 1 being back toward the catapult and 2 through 8 counting clockwise around the target square. Then, count 3 squares away from the target square for every range increment of the attack. Loading and setting the catapult requires one full round, with four barbarians working to pull back the winch and reset the mechanism. If less barbarians are able to perform this operation, the round increases by 1 increment for each missing barbarian.

2) A contingent of 2d20+5 barbarians start to shimmy along the rope spanning the moat, hanging upside down with ankles crossed, pulling themselves forward hand over hand.

If PCs attempt to cut the rope, they will be stopped by villagers who know this will cause the raft to drift free. Instead they will be encouraged to throw stones at the barbarians in an attempt to knock them into the moat (use rules for standard sling). Alternatively, PCs may use their own ballistic weapons.

3) The barbarians launch two boats, each filled with 6 warriors, across the moat to meet the jetty at location 17 (see Stantionbridge details).

The barbarians come under cover of darkness and with no lights. They will be spotted by a lookout on the easternmost turret at location 20 when they are halfway across the moat. Once this attack has been used it cannot be used again.

4) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

1d4 land in thatch and start fires. For each PC in the open roll 1d10, on a roll of 1-2 the PC is struck by an arrow. (1d6 piercing damage, critical x3 +1d4 burns damage).

5) A barbarian has swum the moat under cover of darkness and comes ashore at the water conveying mechanism, clambering up onto the wooden platform there then hurrying up the steps.

He will smash the mechanism with his club before attacking the first villager he meets. If the platform in question is guarded, he will probably swim around to the north and climb ashore at the first opportunity, attacking any defenders guarding the ferry station.

6) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

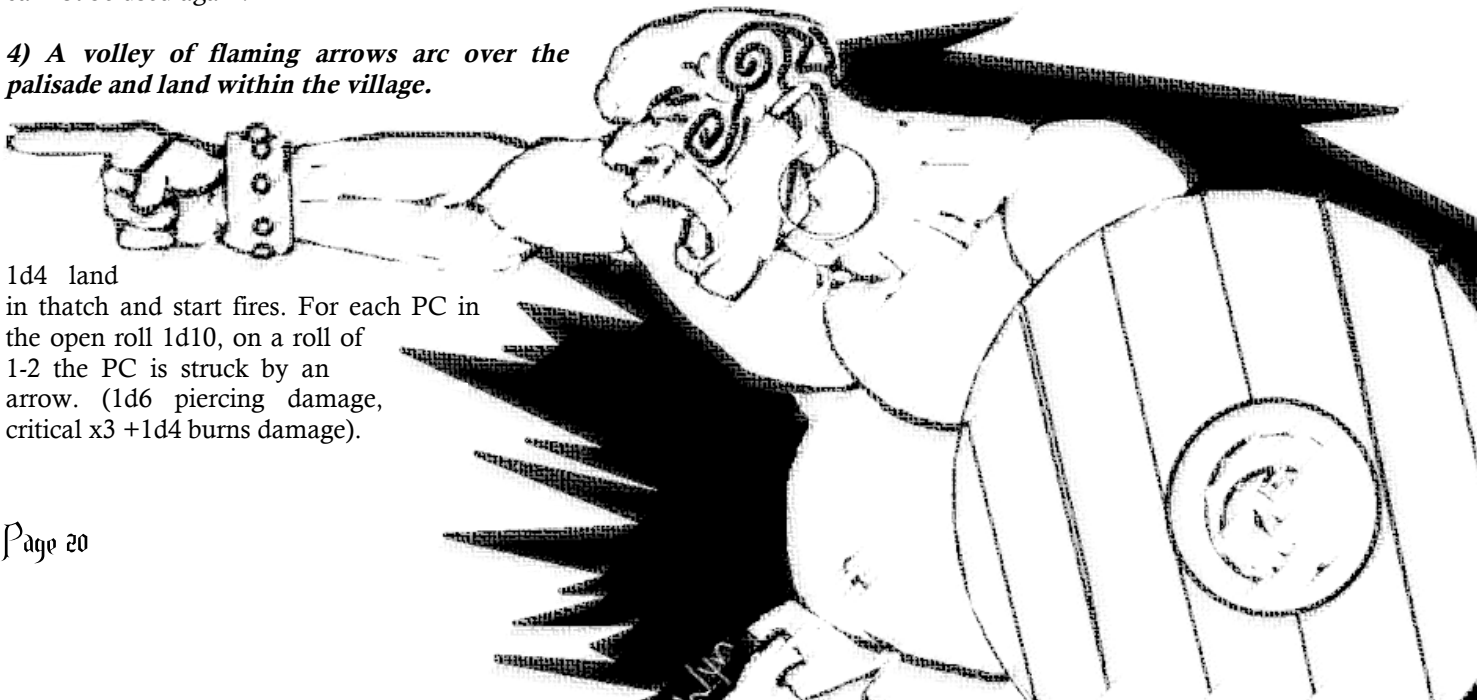
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7) 1d10+10 barbarians gather at the foot of the westernmost turret (location 20, see Stantionbridge details) under cover of wooden shields.

The lookout posted on this turret will fire down arrows on the attackers, but a sniper will shoot the defender, leaving the turret open to attack. Seizing their chance, the barbarians will throw three grappling hooks up onto the battlements, swing across the ditch filled with stakes and start to climb the wall.

8) Barbarians launch four rafts from the outermost bank of the moat, punting the rafts across the moat's narrowest point, west to east (directly opposite location 5, see Stantionbridge map).

This location marks a blind spot in the village defences, with the palisade blocking all view of the boats, and the high bank of the escarpment at this point preventing any ground defence. The rafts will be steered upstream to land on the first available patch of grass. 18 Barbarians will then stream toward the path leading to the front gate and launch an all out attack. Any defenders situated at the ferry station will be ambushed



from behind, the barbarians rushing through the narrow channel between the defensive hut next to the jetty and the steep wall of the escarpment. Once this attack has been executed, it cannot be used again. (i.e., roll again).

9) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

1d4 Land in thatch and start fires. For each PC in the open roll 1d10, on a roll of 1-2 the PC is struck by an arrow (1d6 piercing damage, critical x3 +1d4 burns damage).

10) It would seem the barbarians have gotten their hands on some arcane scrolls.

They possess the following spells and the ability to use each spell only once. If things are going well for them, the barbarians will likely save their spells.

List of barbarian spells

Flare - blinding light bursts across the sky above Stantionbridge. Successful Fortitude save required, or victim dazzled for 1 minute (6 rounds). Sightless characters/characters already dazzled are unaffected.

Ghost Sound - a ghoulish shriek fills the air, causing all villagers to abandon their posts and run for shelter. Only Halain Dervish, Mortise the fishmonger and Quent Harshbreadth will remain stalwart and man their positions. The spell should have no noticeable effect on PCs.

Summon Monster I - summons an extraplanar monster. If the barbarians want to attack defenders standing on jetties, in boats or on the ferry raft, they will summon a Fiendish Octopus, if the gates to the village have been breached, they will summon a Fiendish Giant Scorpion (small) and if the gates are not yet breached and an ally fighting from the air would be useful, the barbarians will summon a Fiendish Hawk which will fly over the palisade wall and attack the first character it sees. See NPCs/Enemies for monster details. This spell can only be used once, so the barbarians will choose the nature of the summoned monster with care.



The Mohan Trail Scenario

The Mohan trail is a rugged mountain path leading across the Greymist range to the kingdom of Mohan and, eventually, the capital city of Mardor. For purposes of this adventure module, the trail is a set scenario, with a definitive boundary at which point the PCs will need to turn back in order to continue the adventure. If the GM is playing a loose, non-linear game, then the PCs should be allowed to pass beyond location 8 on the trail map unheeded. At this point the trail will become a narrow, crumbling ledge following the outer contours of the mountains before climbing sharply into the snowline. Here the trail will vanish beneath thick drifts of snow and PCs will need to cross the mountains and hook back up with the path on the far side of Greymist. This will require tracking or survival skills.

General Mountaineering Information

(Adapted from the d20 SRD)

The three mountain terrain categories are alpine meadows, rugged mountains, and forbidding mountains. As characters ascend into a mountainous area, they're likely to face each terrain category in turn, beginning with alpine meadows, extending through rugged mountains, and reaching forbidding mountains near the summit. The Mohan trail passes through terrain classed as 'alpine meadows' even though the path is surrounded on all sides by mountainous ground. If the player characters ever choose to leave the path, their movement should be appropriately affected as though travelling over 'rugged mountains'.

Stealth and Detection

As a guideline, the maximum distance in mountain terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 4d10×10 feet. Certain peaks and ridgelines afford much better vantage points, of course, and twisting valleys and canyons have much shorter spotting distances. Because there's little vegetation to obstruct line of sight, the specifics on the map provided are your best guide for the range at which an encounter could begin. As in hills terrain, a ridge or peak provides enough cover to hide from anyone below the high point. It's easier to hear faraway sounds in the mountains. The DC of Listen checks

increases by 1 per 20 feet between listener and source, not per 10 feet.

Avalanches (CR 5/7)

The combination of high peaks and heavy snowfalls means that avalanches are a deadly peril in many mountainous areas. While avalanches of snow and ice are common, it's also possible to have an avalanche of rock and soil. Some avalanches may be triggered deliberately by enemies, or mischievous creatures.

An avalanche can be spotted from as far away as 1d10×500 feet downslope by a character who makes a DC 20 Spot check, treating the avalanche as a colossal/large/medium creature depending on the size of the rockfall or a colossal creature only in the case of a snow-avalanche. If all characters fail their Spot checks to determine the encounter distance, the avalanche moves closer to them, and they automatically become aware of it when it closes to half the original distance. It's possible to hear an avalanche coming even if you can't see it. Under optimum conditions (no other loud noises occurring), a character who makes a DC 15 Listen check can hear the avalanche or landslide when it is 1d6×500 feet away. This check might have a DC of 20, 25, or higher in conditions where hearing is difficult (such as in the middle of a thunderstorm).

A landslide or avalanche consists of two distinct areas: the bury zone (in the direct path of the falling debris) and the slide zone (the area the debris spreads out to encompass). Characters in the bury zone always take damage from the avalanche; characters in the slide zone may be able to get out of the way. Characters in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried (see below). Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Those who fail their saves are buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he or she must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

The typical avalanche has a width of 1d6×100 feet, from one edge of the slide zone to the opposite edge. The bury zone in the centre of the avalanche is half as wide as the avalanche's full width.

To determine the precise location of characters in the path of an avalanche, roll 1d6×20; the result is the number of feet from the centre of the path taken by the bury zone to the centre of the party's location. Avalanches of snow and ice advance at a speed of 500 feet per round, and rock avalanches travel at a speed of 250 feet per round.

Mountain Travel

High altitude can be extremely fatiguing—or sometimes deadly—to creatures that aren't used to it. Cold becomes extreme, and the lack of oxygen in the air can wear down even the most hardy of warriors.

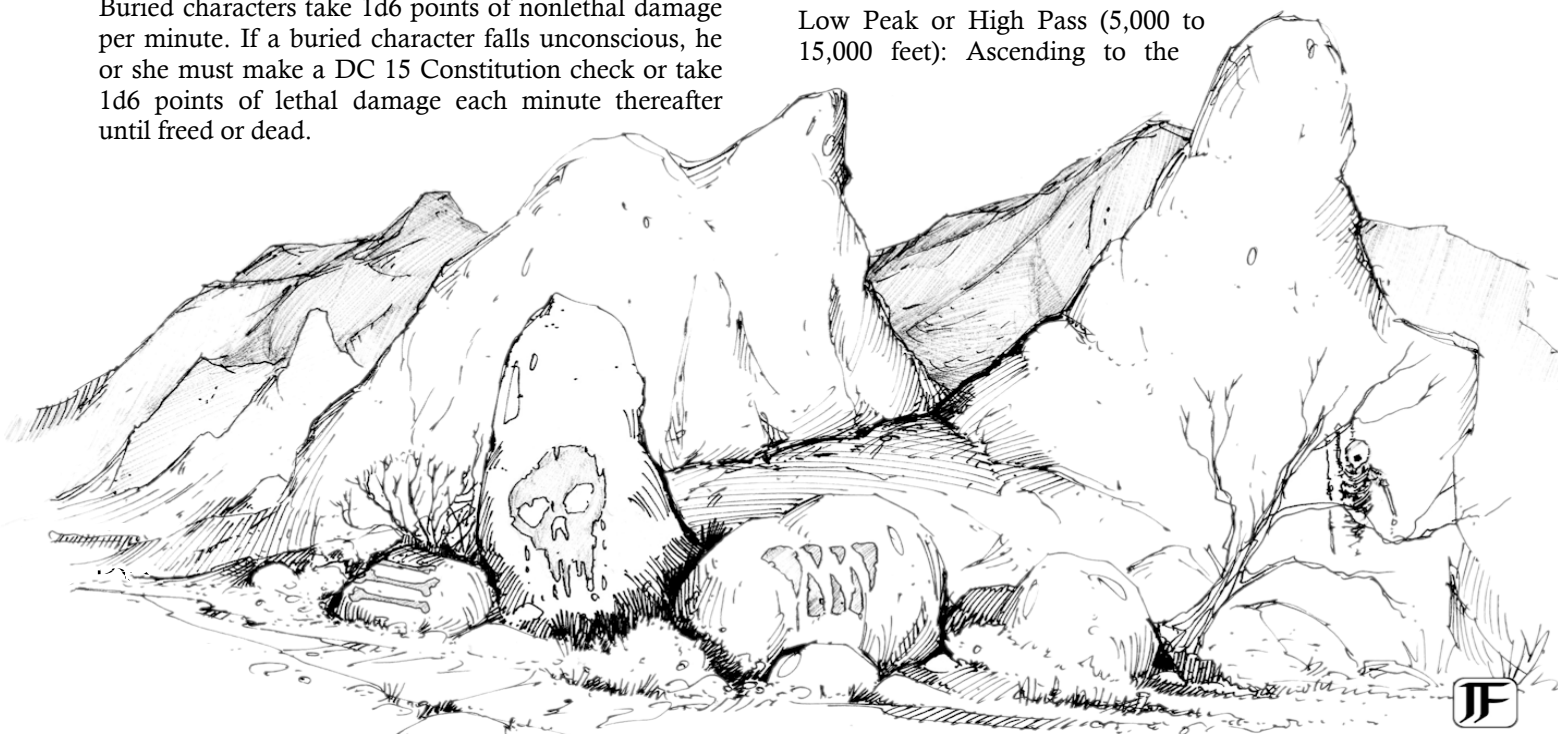
Acclimated Characters: Creatures accustomed to high altitude generally fare better than lowlanders. Any creature with an Environment entry that includes mountains is considered native to the area, and acclimated to the high altitude. Characters can also acclimate themselves by living at high altitude for a month. Characters who spend more than two months away from the mountains must reacclimatise themselves when they return. Undead, constructs, and other creatures that do not breathe are immune to altitude effects.

Altitude Zones

In general, mountains present three possible altitude bands: low pass, low peak/high pass, and high peak.

Low Pass (applicable to the mapped section of the Mohan trail) is a zone consisting largely of alpine meadows and forests. Travellers may find the going difficult (which is reflected in the movement modifiers for travelling through mountains), but the altitude itself has no game effect.

Low Peak or High Pass (5,000 to 15,000 feet): Ascending to the



highest slopes of low mountains, or most normal travel through high mountains, falls into this category. All nonacclimated creatures labour to breathe in the thin air at this altitude. Characters must succeed on a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or be fatigued. The fatigue ends when the character descends to an altitude with more air. Acclimated characters do not have to attempt the Fortitude save.

High Peak (more than 15,000 feet): The highest mountains exceed 20,000 feet in height. At these elevations, creatures are subject to both high altitude fatigue (as described above) and altitude sickness, whether or not they're acclimated to high altitudes. Altitude sickness represents long-term oxygen deprivation, and it affects mental and physical ability scores. After each 6-hour period a character spends at an altitude of over 15,000 feet, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1 point of damage to all ability scores. Creatures acclimated to high altitude receive a +4 competence bonus on their saving throws to resist high altitude effects and altitude sickness, but eventually even seasoned mountaineers must abandon these dangerous elevations.



The Mohan Trail Map and Key Details

1 The Gate into Stantionbridge

This barricaded gate prevents wandering creatures gaining access to Stantionbridge. It is locked at all times. A guard will usually be posted on the wooden watchtower overlooking the trail.

2 The Old Mountain

Tracker's Hut

This ruined house once belonged to Ebrair the mountain guide. Ebrair died many years ago, and has since risen as a zombie. He wanders around the ruins, feeding on whatever small morsel he can catch. When he hears the PCs approach he will lurch inside the house and hide himself. The interior of the hut is damp and dilapidated. A wooden table covered in half-eaten meats and the rib cages of rats stands next to a rusty stove and a broken chair. A bedraggled curtain of red velvet covers the doorway into Ebrair's

old bedroom. If one of the party opens the curtains, they will find Ebrair lurking behind.

3 Canyon Bridge

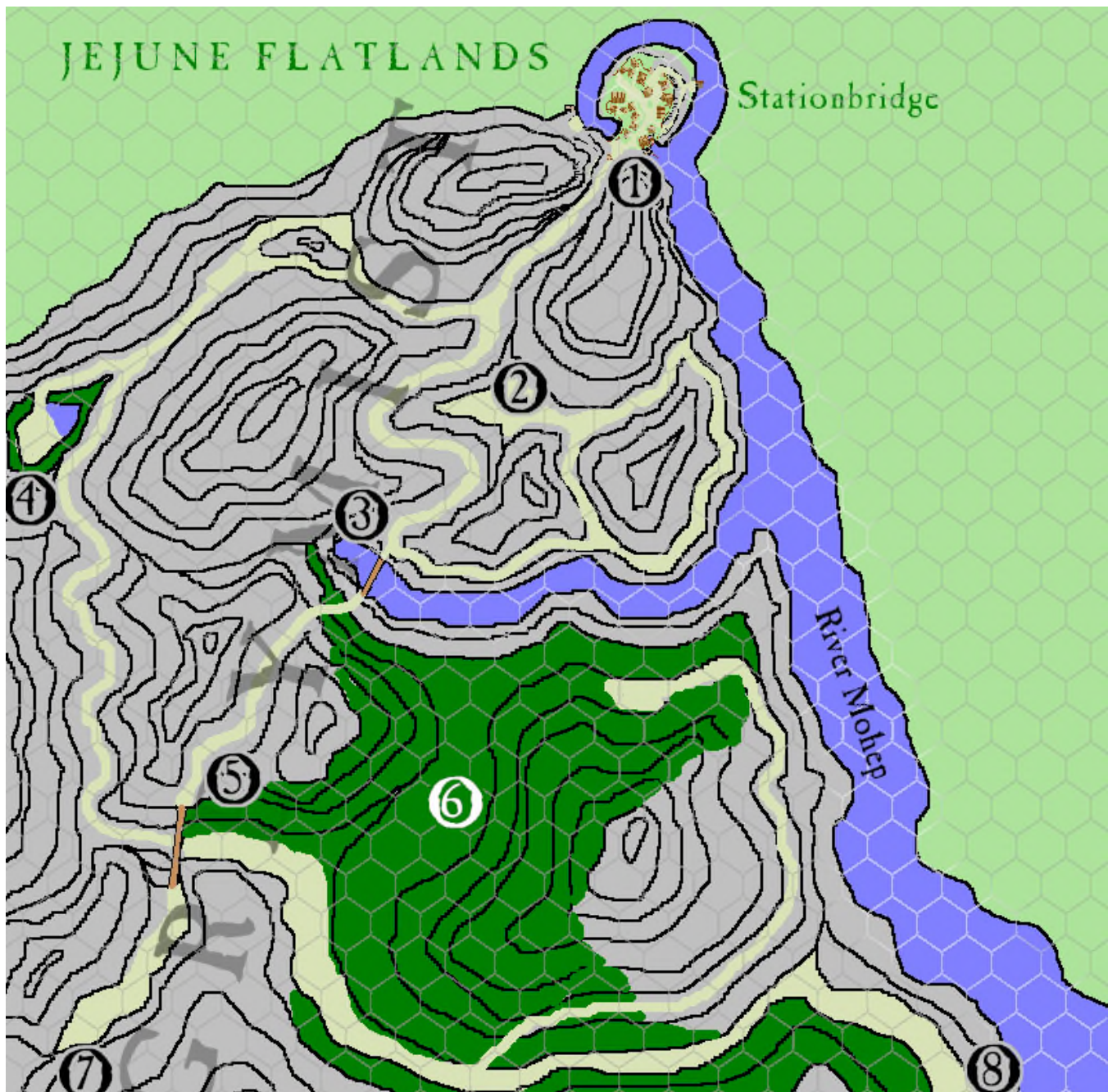
An arm of the river Mohep runs along the floor of a deep canyon, ending in a spectacular waterfall which cascades into the dark belly of a chasm. A rickety rope bridge spans the gap and would appear to be the only way across. In fact, the bridge is old but quite solid and will bear up to six characters at a time before it starts to creak and groan as the rope strains against the excess weight. The bridge is likely to break (1-15 on d20) if more than eight characters attempt to cross at once.

4 Goblin Gully

The path dips down into a deep, oval-shaped gully with high walls covered in dense foliage and trees. At the base of the gully is a veritable garden of Eden, the floor covered in a soft, spongy moss, will-o-wisps flitting to and fro above the surface of a crystal clear pool. A huge willow tree grows from the bank of the pool, its curtain-like leaves and branches trailing in the water and upon the bank, creating a natural chamber within which anyone who rests will feel strangely tranquil. PCs may bathe in or drink the water and benefit from its magical healing powers (1HP per character who bathes, +1HP if they also drink the water).

As the PCs make to leave via the only exit point, they will hear a cackling coming from somewhere above and will spy the faces of six goblins peeking over the edge of the gully. The goblins will proceed to hurl down insults, followed by sharp stones (treat as a ranged attack as per slingshot, 1d2 bludgeoning damage per successful strike). As the PCs reach the top of the gully, the goblins will turn tail and scarper. They may appear again from time to time, but always out of reach and always somewhere above the travelling PCs from where they can hurl down more stones. They may also take great delight in setting traps for the party, dislodging large boulders from precarious perches above the trail, or setting off rockfalls and miniature avalanche just as the party are passing beneath.





5 Encounter At the Bridge

The same event should occur here, whether the PCs are converging with the bridge itself, or travelling the path passing beneath the bridge some forty feet below.

The brothers Frith and Penfirth (see Player Introduction) have been ambushed halfway across the bridge by Canker Dern in bird form. He is repeatedly bombarding them from the air, lashing out with sharp talons and pecking at them with his beak. If the PCs attempt to bring Canker down with an arrow or bolt, he will fly to the far side of the bridge and transfigure into human form. Here he will draw a sharp dagger and begin sawing through the rope holding the bridge in place. Frith and Penfirth will be unable to reach either side before the rope snaps, and unless the PCs can do something, they will both fall to their deaths.

See NPCs/Enemies and use the Fiendish Hawk stats for Canker Dern in bird-form. If he finishes the brothers, he will transfigure again and fly away, this time heading back toward Stantionbridge. As he flies overhead he will laugh down at the PCs (and Agrovar, if the dwarf is present)

"fare thee well fools. I return to Stantionbridge to take the prize. Pleasant journey!"

6 Woodland

The side of this mountain is covered in dense woodland, home to a clan of goblins and various nocturnal animals, including bears and wolves. During the day the creatures of the woods remain out of sight, but if the party camp anywhere near here at night they risk a 90% chance (d100) of encountering a wandering animal or a goblin raiding party. See NPCs/Enemies.

If the group enter the woods there's a 90% chance (1-18 on d20) the goblins who live here will hear them and track them down (allow 1d6 goblins for each character level). The goblins know their own hunting ground well and will ambush the PCs, surrounding them on all sides, cutting off any chance of retreat.

7 Rockfall

The path ends at a solid wall of fallen rocks and boulders. If PCs climb over this obstacle they will discover the rocks have been deliberately placed here to form the wall of an ogre's nest (see NPCs/Enemies). There's a good chance (1-13 on d20) the ogre will be waiting for them on the other side of the wall (having already heard them approach) if they explore this location during the day. At night the nest will be empty, the ogre's meagre possessions, a few gnawed bones and some straw bedding, betraying his recent presence. The nest smells awful, and anyone entering to fight the ogre within must make a Fortitude save or suffer the effects of nausea (automatic fatigue) until they leave. The trail ends here, more rocks having fallen across the path on the other side of the ogre's nest and destroyed any possibility of proceeding safely beyond this point. If PCs opt to continue from here the terrain becomes classed as 'rugged mountains' and climb checks will be required. The ground will slope upwards at ever steeper degrees until eventually the party will need to climb vertically. At this point the terrain becomes 'forbidding mountains'. Higher up they will meet the snow line, and all that entails.

8 The Rest of the Trail

Here the trail straightens into a single path which rises sharply into the mountains proper. Here the terrain becomes classed as 'forbidding mountain' and movement is affected appropriately. The trail bypasses all vertical ascents by climbing in a zigzag fashion. Such pathways are incredibly dangerous, crumbling at the edges and sometimes no wider than half a foot. Eventually the path will enter the snowline and disappear under drifts of powdery snow. Characters who lack survival or tracking skills will need to make their best guess as to the continuing direction and location of the path and hope they hook up with the trail again when it emerges from the snowline on the far side of the Greymists.



The Wizard of Talus Scenario

The 'hermit wizard' Ulnar lives in a large wooden mansion constructed on an outcrop of rock overhanging an alpine forest some thirty miles west of Stantionbridge. He is a benevolent character, friendly and peace-loving, though local superstition and rumour have dealt him an unfair hand and most who live in the region around Stantionbridge, and indeed the villagers themselves, believe the wizard was once goodly, but can no longer be trusted.

The probable reason for this would be sightings of the lepers, collectively known as the Elgar people, who live in caverns beneath the citadel home of the wizard. Hunters in the woods around the caves have spied the Elgar and mistaken them for undead zombies and ghouls, spawning rumours that the woodland is haunted. Upon hearing such hearsay most have invariably reached the conclusion that the wizard must be involved.

In fact, the lepers are just as benign as Ulnar himself. They have chosen to live deep in the woods and caves of Greymist, cut off from the outside world where the ravages of their disease cannot be witnessed and there is no danger of contaminating the fit and healthy. This altruistic self-exile has greatly touched Ulnar, who has taken the lepers to his heart. He spends most of his time these days conjuring potions and crafting spells in an attempt to find a cure for their disease. So far he has been unsuccessful, but he refuses to give up trying, certain there must be some combination of magic capable of relieving the lepers of their miserable plight.

A wagon trail - two tracks gouged in the earth with a tussock of grass between - leads from Stantionbridge, through the alpine woods and into the lower slopes of Greymist before arriving at the foot of a long staircase. These steps climb to a plateau upon which the Citadel of Talus stands. This enormous wooden house is five stories high and topped with an assortment of baroque spires, gothic-style turrets and crooked rooftops, all surrounding a single roof of grey shingles, a sweeping affair which curls up in four extravagant loops at each corner and which rises to a steep pinnacle at its dead centre, mirroring the craggy mountains serving as a picturesque backdrop to the house. The walls are formed from wood but plastered in a surface of white clay, the facets broken up by long wooden beams painted a deep black and decorated with runes edged in

gold. Here and there are rows of small windows surrounded by black wooden shutters, glass grey with age, cobwebs glittering in the corners. Several tall chimneys protrude from the apex of the main roof and smoke trails lazily into the sky from the tallest of these. Visitors approaching from the road may fancy they can see shapes and faces moving in the smoke.

To reach the citadel, visitors must climb the steps to the plateau. Here they will find themselves in a magnificent garden, surrounded by neatly trimmed lawns, babbling streams, abundant mountain ferns, topiary hedges and flowering trees. A grey gravel path cuts a perfectly straight line through the gardens and ends at a grand staircase. This leads to the front door of the house, an enormous portcullis made of wood and reinforced with iron bars.

Ulnar will know of the PCs' approach long before they arrive in his garden, and as they head for the portcullis it will start to rise slowly, revealing the wizard who stands in deep shadow on the other side.

An Interview With Ulnar

Ulnar is a gracious host and welcoming of visitors. If he is threatened, or he deems the behaviour of his guests to be in any way insulting, he will dismiss them with a flick of the wrist and a casual spell. They will find themselves teleported outside the citadel and back in the garden, the portcullis now firmly closed (*spell equiv. Teleportation Circle 9th level Wizard*).

The wizard will invite the party into his reception hall, a vast and luxurious room containing a long dining table and chairs more befitting the throne room of a king than the dining chamber of a wizard. Windows five times as tall as a man and furnished with dusty velvet drapes, overlook the majestic vista of the Greymist Mountains. Ulnar will lead the group through double doors and out onto a semicircular balcony of grey stone overlooking a deep canyon thick with fir trees and vegetation. A table stands on the balcony surrounded by chairs carved from ivory. Here Ulnar will bid the group sit, rest and refresh themselves. With a clap of his hand, Ulnar will summon a small meal of delicate tasting pastries and goblets filled with wine. As the PCs eat and drink the wizard will enquire as to the purpose of their visit.

As the group talk, every so often they will spot movement in the dining room behind them; hunched figures dressed in dull brown robes shuffling to and fro, cleaning ornaments and statues, or simply watching the PCs, their faces hidden in shadow. These, of course, are members of the leper colony, some of whom are employed by Ulnar as casual cleaning staff, but many of which have just wandered into the citadel, as they

are oft wont to do, and are showing a curious interest in the wizard's guests. The more mischievous GM may afford a PC the occasional glimpse of a ruined face, parchment coloured skin or bloodshot eyes beneath the cowl of the figures' robes.

Whatever questions the PCs may have, Ulnar has important information with regard to the Orb of Evocation. Use the list of likely answers below as a guide to Ulnar's knowledge and impart as much as you believe the players need in order to figure out some of this adventure's enduring mysteries. Each phrase or word is accompanied by a paragraph which you should read aloud to players. If the players ask a question or raise an issue for which there seems to be no response, you should make up an answer as you see fit.



Stantionbridge

"I know the village well. I have been there many times, though not in the last fifty years. I find the current collection of locals somewhat superstitious and possibly a little too gods-fearing for their own good. I do, however, have a soft spot for Mortise the fishmonger. He came here some years ago after the birth of his youngest son. You may know the story. His wife perished during labour, poor thing, and the boy was himself upon the brink of death. It was a simple matter to recover him from the brink and now, I believe, he is as fit and healthy as his four brothers. Mortise comes by from time to time, bringing algae samples from the moat around the village. Some of those algae have unusual medical properties."

The Lepers

"They are the Elgar" Ulnar says, in a matter-of-fact tone. He beckons one of the shadowy, cloaked figures who shuffles out of the huge dining room and onto the balcony. "They live in the alpine woods, in caves beneath the citadel to be more specific. I have need of staff, however, in such a large house. My dear, please remove your cowl," the wizard says. The figure complies, revealing a face ravaged as though by the talons and fangs of rabid wolves. The eyes, though obviously feminine, are bloodshot and jaundiced, red rimmed and sorrowful. The mouth droops horribly, lips distended beyond the outline of the face. The nose is squashed, as though smeared, across the flesh of the creature's right cheek, and one ear seems to be missing. "She is Aleel," Ulnar explains, extending fingers covered in extravagant rings and taking the creature's malformed hand in his own, "a leper. All the Elgar are lepers. Don't worry," he hastens to add upon seeing the looks on your faces, "it is no longer contagious. My magical experiments have thus cured the disease so far, but only so far. Try as I might I can do nothing to relieve the disfigurement or sores, nor the occasional death." The wizard looks sad as he dismisses the girl. She pulls her hood over her face and shuffles back into the building.

Gabreal

"I seem to remember speaking with a man of that

name once. A cleric, seeking treasure in the mountains."

Gabreal's Notes

(Ulnar will ask to look at the notes) "Intriguing. I believe these belonged to a cleric I once met travelling in the mountains." He returns the note with an enigmatic smile. "How did you come by these notes?"

Ask Ulnar The Wizard (from the notes)

"Here I am," Ulnar grins, a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "what question would you ask? I am at your disposal until such time as I become indisposed. When that may be, I cannot say."

Priceless Magical Object of Abjuration (from the notes)

"There is only one priceless magical object of abjuration in Opus. It is the Orb of Evocation." Ulnar folds his fingers in his lap and smiles serenely.

Abjuration (generally)

"This is an object imbued with the magical elements of a spell, a magical item, if you will," Ulnar holds up his hand, displaying many glistening rings, "magical rings. Each serves a different purpose and contains a different spell. Truth be known, I rarely use them these days- but they are abjured objects. Magical by nature, but possessing of an ability to create the effects of a specific spell."

Thaumatourgos/Thaumaturgu

"Well now," Ulnar chuckles, "that is quite a question. Thaumaturgy, of course, is the study of magic. Indeed, you all know that Thaumata is the goddess of magic, she of sorcerous magnificence, may her robes forever shimmer and her manna bring good fortune to us all. But Thaumata was not always known thusly. Once she was Sorcera, goddess of spell-craft. Before this she was known as Sorestus, goddess of the art, as magic once was known. Thaumaturgy, also, was not always known to be so. Sorcery was long the common term for the practising of magic. Much changed when the brothers Thaumatourgos crafted the orb and gave

unto Opus the great secret of Evocation." Ulnar sits back and takes a sip from a silver goblet of wine.

The Thaumaturgos Twins

"It is an ancient story, I am sure you know at least some of it, perhaps only in part? It has a particular resonance for me because, you see, I was there."

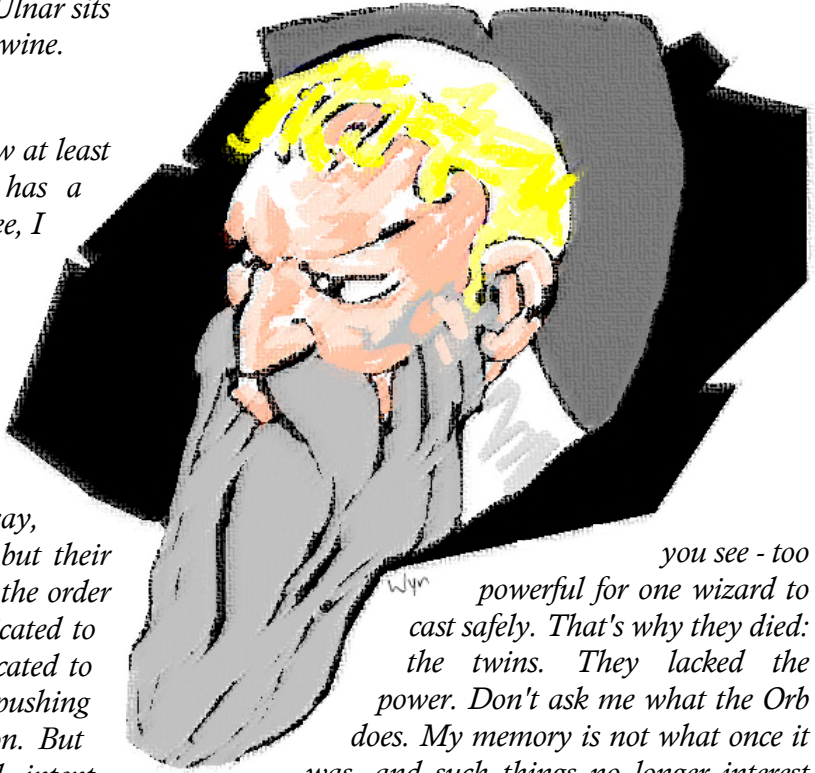
"The Thaumaturgos twins were wizards of intermediate skill. To give them higher credit would be tempting, but erroneous. In truth, they were never more than mere artisans, dabbling with their craft in no great way. That is to say, their intentions, their goals, were great, but their abilities were not. They were members of the order of Mohan, a brotherhood of wizards dedicated to the king of the kingdom of Mohan, dedicated to the study of magical effects, dedicated to pushing forth the boundaries of magical limitation. But the twins, for all their charisma and intent, disliked the company of other wizards and kept to themselves in their swamp home of Marshdown, to such an extent that we of the order oft forgot they were members at all." Ulnar laughs at this, "it was to be their undoing, for their magic went horrendously wrong- you see. They were spread like butter upon toast. We buried them in their tomb not within a sarcophagus but within a glass jar," he laughs once again, "a sad truth, though it makes me laugh after all these years. In our efforts to decipher the scroll spells of the twins, we of the order learned the secret."

The Secret

It was a long time ago - six hundred years. My old brain has aged somewhat since then and I fear to tell you I have all but forgotten the nature of the secret. Something to do with a great force, a mirror and the sun. Beyond that," he shrugs and smiles, "it is the curse of being ancient, memory like a sieve and flesh like dry hessian."

Orb of Evocation

"A mystical orb, black as pitch- about the size of your fist. We crafted it, we of the order of Mohan, in order to contain the magic of the twins, for there was much to be contained! It was powerful stuff,



you see - too powerful for one wizard to cast safely. That's why they died: the twins. They lacked the power. Don't ask me what the Orb does. My memory is not what once it was, and such things no longer interest me anyway, though I remember the force of it; the power of it; the tremendous, terrifying energy! Forces, energies, power; all the folly of youth and worlds I have long since lost. As I grow older, people matter to me more than furthering wizardry. I have the Elgar to worry about. They are my world now."

The Order of Mohan

"It is long since I heard that phrase used," Ulnar clears his throat, stands and raises one hand, as though addressing the mountains themselves, "for the king and the kingdom, we members of the order of Mohan do solemnly swear oath that our combined powers shall never be used for ill, nor the downfall of Mohan. Long live the king!" The wizard chuckles as he resumes his seat, "ah it feels good to slip back into an old outfit sometimes, don't you agree?"

The Lost Caves

"That which is lost, is only lost until it is found. Look here," Ulnar slips a ring from his finger and tosses it casually over the balustrade of the balcony. "A prized ring of mine. It falls hundreds of feet to the woodland below. There it will lie among the bracken and the twigs. It is lost now to me, but not

to the bracken and twigs." He snaps his fingers and the ring reappears in place on his right thumb, "I'm rather fond of this ring, if you'll excuse the extravagance."

Keep From Powermongers of Mohan
"Did I recite the oath of the order?" Ulnar asks, (if not, he will do so, see The Order of Mohan). "We kept our oath, we wizards of the brethren. It is a shame that the kingdom did not keep its oath. We remained of the order and of Mohan to the end, but we lost our love for the kingdom when imperial war and blood became of paramount importance. It is why we buried the Orb of Evocation. To keep them from using it."

The Mohan Trail

"A road leading from Stantionbridge to Mohan. Have you been to Mohan? Lovely place. Beautiful in the summer."

Caves Hidden in the Mohan Trail?

"I would imagine there are many caves hidden in the Mohan trail," Ulnar nods. "The ground rises and falls like waves upon the tide of time, and hollows shall form. Lucky for the bear that they do, for where otherwise would the poor fellow live?"

Barbarians

"Yes," Ulnar looks sad, "they personify the dirge of men. And here, in our midst, the beautiful minds of the Elgar hide in darkness. They lack the bright face and fierce temperament of the plains-men, but their hearts are no less human. I would trade a thousand barbarians for a single Elgar."

Marshdown/Bleaktonne

"A quiet little village of swamp folk, some way north if I recall."

Inglenook Woods

"A small woodland, some distance west of Bleaktonne if I'm not much mistaken."



Ulnar's Responses to Rumours

The area upon which Stantionbridge is founded has long been associated with rumours of an ancient artefact of great power

"Yes, I would imagine so. The Orb of Evocation. We crafted it to contain the magic of the twins. They would have done well to do the same. They might have lived longer. Instead they kept their work to themselves and ended their days as so much goo on the walls. Well, we can but hope we will have a happier ending ourselves, eh?" He chuckles.

Strange lights and noises have been seen late at night by locals living in the Paravelly Farmland region.

"That does sound odd. I have not been in the vicinity of Paravelly in many long moons. Strange things seem to be eclipsing the usual. Bizarre noises and lights cast doubt upon the solidity of the norm. Though I have always believed, one should value the vista before ones own eyes before trusting in the second hand yarn of a local gossip."

The Stantionbridge emerald mine has been forced to close due to the sudden appearance of a strange, tentacled creature in the entrance shaft.

"How very unfortunate. Have you investigated this yourselves?"

The swamp town of Bleaktonne has been suffering visits from a strange winged beast.

"A creature of dark malevolence harangues the north," Ulnar closes his eyes, chants under his breath for a moment then gasps, "yes, yes. I see her clearly. Black against the sunset. She spreads her wings wide across the Marshdown, her song is terrible as the banshee's wail, but she does not portent death, she hungers it." The wizard opens his eyes and sighs deeply. "The poor folk of Bleaktonne appear in need of help. But I cannot leave the Elgar."

A travelling fighter from the west, recently passing through Stantionbridge, claimed to have fought and killed a blue dragon living in the Babax Desert.

"The dragon's name is Rubicon. She is a

magnificent beast, quite beautiful, startlingly violent." Ulnar dismisses the rumour with a wave of his hand, "any man could brag that he has destroyed a dragon. Only the immortal, only the divine or the fiendish could actually undertake the deed. Such creatures do not generally 'pass through' anywhere, not unless the place they pass is left in a steaming crater, a blackened pit of charred remain and smoking bones. Did Stantionbridge resemble such a vision after this fabled dragon-slayer passed along his way?"

Several villagers speak of their friend with grave concern. He set out for the northern city of Carthidge several months ago, looking to buy metal-ore for use in the village smith. But he has not returned, and this is most unlike him.

"I have heard tidings of the evil in Carthidge, this is not the first such story to meet mine ears. Avoid the city, unless go there you must beyond all choice. Many who enter the curtain wall of old Carthidge do not return in this day and age. They languish instead within the jail of the fortress. This, I fear, is where your missing man shall be found."

Inglenook woods is said to be haunted by the ghost of a long dead wizard. Many strange creatures have been seen there, in particular a pack of enormous wolves, each creature said to be twelve feet in length, with huge shaggy heads and thickset bodies covered in downy grey fur.

"You describe the wolverine. But I know nothing of wizards, long dead or long lived, in connection with the woods. It is an ugly place, as woodlands go, but spectacular enough by the light of a decent sunrise and some morning mist. Some have oft said the same of me!" Ulnar laughs.

The woods that grow on the lower slopes of the Greymist Mountains in the shadow of the Talus Citadel are rumoured to be home to a tribe of undead zombies.

"Zombies? No. I am sure I would have noticed," Ulnar smiles to himself.



The Thaumaturgos Tomb Scenario

The caves leading to the tomb of Thaumaturgos were covered many hundreds of years ago, but have since been eroded by the flow of water running down from the river Mohep and are open once again. The river culminates in the moat surrounding the village of Stantionbridge, curving around the escarpment upon which the village stands in the shape of a horseshoe then ending at a small swirling mere. Here the water drains into a rift in the bottom of the moat, the true entrance to the tombs (See also Stantionbridge Details and Map).

Anyone who wishes to enter the tomb will need to plunge into the mere and allow themselves to be dragged under by the permanent whirlpool spinning in the centre of the pool. A column of water cascades through the rift and into an open cavern beneath the mere, dropping some sixty feet into a small subterranean lake. Characters who drop through the rift will be driven underwater by the force of water falling upon them from above and carried 1d20 feet under the surface plus an additional 2 feet for every 50lbs in weight they carry, including the weight of their own body. If the weight of gear and/or armour is unknown, the GM should impose 1ft for every item ten medium sized objects carried (limited only to the type of gear characters are likely to carry in backpacks, satchels and pouches). Metal weapons such as swords, and armour including worn armour (chain, scale, banded etc.), helms and/or shields must be discarded by the PC otherwise they will continue to sink. Removing an item of worn armour will take one full round. Removing specific items from a backpack without discarding the whole backpack will also take one full round. Removing a full suit of armour will take 3 rounds. Discarding helms, shields and weapons counts as a free action. For every round spent discarding items, the PC will sink a further 2 feet. This way the player and GM should be able to calculate the depth the character plunges before he/she can begin to swim back up to the surface of the underground lake.

Characters can swim upward at a rate of 1 foot per round for every 5 points of Strength rounded down to the nearest 5 (5,10,15,20 etc.). They can hold their breath for 60 seconds/6 rounds plus an additional 10 seconds/1 round per Con modifier (or negative ten seconds/round if the Con modifier is a negative level). If the character cannot reach the surface in time they

will breathe in water and start to drown. For every foot left to swim upward, the character loses 1d6 HPs of non-lethal damage. If HPs reach zero the character falls unconscious and eventually drowns. If the character manages to break the surface, all HPs are restored.

Once the character has broken the surface of the underground lake, they can move freely using a normal Swim check at DC 10. For purposes of recovering discarded gear, or rescuing sinking characters, the lake should be considered bottomless. The bowl within which the lake resides is actually a vertical shaft many hundreds of feet deep. Discarded gear will continue to sink until it hits the bottom at which point it will be sucked by strong currents into various fissures, finally being fried when the water expels into a magma filled reservoir at many thousands of feet depth. This should only be relevant if PCs have the ability to breathe underwater. Even in this instance, they will only be able to chase discarded gear or sinking characters so far before water pressure forces them to turn back.



The Caves

Map and Key Details

Each cavern includes a room description which the GM should read aloud to players.

1 Subterranean Lake

A large cavern with vaulted ceiling rising to an apex some sixty feet above and filled with the thunderous roar of water. Here a thick column of water falls through a natural hole in the roof, cascading down to a large underground lake in the centre of the cave. The lake is approximately ninety feet wide, turbulent in the centre where the water pours in, but calm beyond this point. Though many tonnes of water must be pouring in through the roof every second, the surface level of the lake remains constantly flush with the ground of the cavern, suggesting the water is draining at a precisely equal rate somewhere below. The bank of the lake is covered in stalagmites large and small, some so small they hardly rise beyond mere bumps in the uneven ground, some so tall that where they taper to a point they meet the downward pointing tip of a stalactite attached to the roof. These conical columns of stone, and the walls surrounding them,

are covered in a strange red algae which seems to pulsate and glow, giving off an eerie crimson glow and enough light by which to see. Here and there, dotted around the room like macabre statues and bathed in the same red light, you can see a variety of skeletons, some dressed in armour, others merely naked bone covered in ragged clothing, flesh stripped away by the passage of time. All are seated on the floor, or propped in awkward kneeling positions, as though they had slumped to their knees and died where they fell.

Peering toward the walls of the cavern you can see two very definite caves, one ten to twelve feet wide and twenty feet high, the other much narrower but just as tall.

Characters able to see in the dark will have perfect vision in this cave. All other characters will have their line of sight reduced by 10 feet but should still be able to see well enough to move around without lighting lanterns.

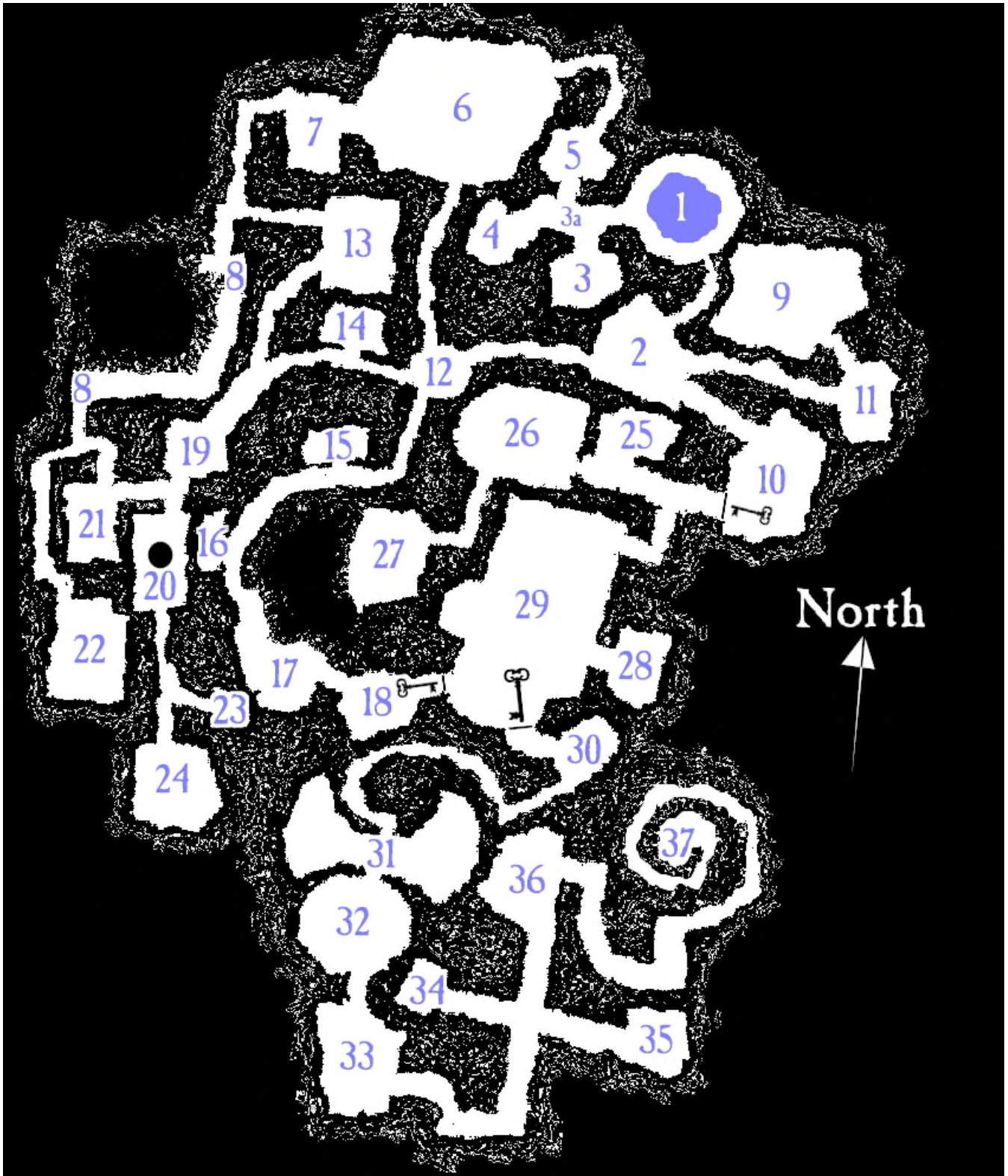
The lake harbours no perils, though it is filled with fish and crustaceans that have fallen in from the moat above. The skeletons are nothing more sinister than the putrefied corpses of previous tomb-raiders, or victims of the whirlpool in the moat, trapped in the caves and starved to death.

2 Room of Electric Burning

All the passageways leading to this room slope down at a steep angle before opening out some fifty feet above the floor of a huge pit. The various doorways are at a uniform height, but there are no ways to reach one doorway from another.

A vast cavern opens before you, the roof so high it resides in total darkness somewhere above. The floor, a chamber-wide pit some fifty feet below the level of the opening where the passage terminates, is also shrouded in shadow. Dotted about the shadows you can see ten or twelve tiny red dots, like rubies glistening in the dark. They could be rubies, but for the fact they seem to be moving around. Every now and then a pair wink out then return.

The walls here are covered in the same red algae, but less so than before, making the darkness deeper somehow. You can hear the steady drip dripping of water, a rhythmic, staccato sound that echoes around the great space before you.



Suddenly the hairs on the back of your neck prickle and you feel a tingling sensation crawling across your skin. The room seems to tremble and a grumbling sound emanates from somewhere high above. Light bursts in on the cavern, illuminating the rugged walls and arched roof of a huge chamber. For the briefest moment you see strange, squat, dog-like shapes crawling across the floor of

the pit, maybe five or six of them, spines unnaturally long, forelimbs more human than dog, heads hidden under a shaggy mane of blue fur from beneath which peer two red eyes filled with a burning malevolence - the 'rubies' you saw before. A blast of electric-blue lightning as thick as a man's arm forks down from the middle of the roof and grounds on a point in the dead centre of the cave

floor. With a shocking bang the lightning is spent and the light is gone.

A jagged after burn of blazing blue dances on your retina as you scour the floor of the cave for a better look at the creatures lurking down there. But you can see nothing. Only shadow and the deliberate movement of those red, blinking eyes. You fancy you hear some of the creatures murmuring and cackling under their breath, but the sound is short-lived.

There seem to be three other doorways in the walls of the cavern around you, three caves, all at the same height as the one you currently occupy and all with no discernable method of reaching them.

This is the room of electric burning. The creatures squirming across the floor are Barghest, lupine fiends that can take the shape of a wolf or a goblin but which resemble a mixture of the two in their natural form. If the Barghest spot the PCs, they will change into goblins and try to scale the walls to reach their prey. The Barghest feed on blood and souls, growing stronger the more they devour. As the PCs explore this area they will hear the creatures muttering to themselves in Infernal. They can also speak Goblin and Worg. (See NPCs/Enemies for creature stats).

The lightning blast is a magical eruption of energy which comes from a tiny crystal 'manna sink' situated in the dead centre of the roof. Every minute (6 rounds) the charging crystal releases its pent up energies in the form of the lightning which grounds with a second crystal set in the middle of the pit floor. The lightning will also barb outward and ground with any metallic object occupying the cavern, excluding anything situated on the threshold of the four doorways or in the passageways beyond. Thus, any character traversing the room and wearing metal armour or carrying metal items (remember to include belt and backpack buckles, coins and metal jewellery) will be struck by a fork of lightning when next the crystal expends its energy.

Each strike acts in much the same way as a 3rd level Wizard/sorcerer Lightning Bolt spell, but without the Reflex save, since the lightning is grounding on the metal the PC wears/carries and is not aimed at them per se. Each minor bolt will cause 3d6 points of electricity damage. If a character steps over the crystal in the floor of the pit, or reaches down to pick it up when the bolt is firing, they take full damage from the main lightning blast (10d6 points of electricity damage).

The lightning bolt sets fire to combustibles and

damages objects in its path. It can melt metals with a low melting point, such as lead, gold, copper, silver, or bronze. If the minimum damage that could be caused to an interposing barrier would shatter or break through it, the bolt will continue through the barrier, as if the barrier were not there; otherwise, the bolt will not fire at all, the connection between the two manna sinks being broken.

3 The Bronze Key

Situated on a hook on the far wall of this large square cave is a huge bronze key the size of your hand. As far as you can tell, the room is empty.

If the key is taken, a moment will pass, followed by an ominous rumbling. Heavy iron portcullis (Hardness:10, 45HPs) fall over the entrance to this room and the thresholds of rooms 1, 4 and 5 as well, effectively cutting off rooms 3 and 4, restricting access to rooms 1 and 5 and creating a virtual cage between the four rooms (3a).

The walls in rooms 3 and 4 will suddenly appear to move. 1d10+4 ghouls, divided as equally as possible between the rooms, will seem to appear from nowhere, emerging somehow from the grey stone of the walls and advancing on those trapped within each respective room. If nobody is in room 4, the ghouls will shuffle across the chamber, reach through the bars of the portcullis and groan loudly. (See NPCs/Enemies for ghouls stats).

Simultaneously a small hole will slide open in the roof of the central chamber (3a) and a thin trickle of water will start to pour into the room. Every now and then a shocker lizard will drop through the hole (up to a maximum 2d6+6 lizards) and land in the growing pool of water on the floor of the cave with a small crackle of electricity and a complaining squeal.

The lizards are about half a foot in height and a deep blue in colour, with large amber-coloured eyes. They stand on four legs, two long back limbs and two skinny forelimbs, but when they move they lift themselves up to full height and dash forward in a mad whirl of legs and webbed feet, emitting a series of loud clicks as they run.

Shocker lizards know of no transition between running and standing still. At any given time, they will either be doing one or the other.

As soon as a lizard hits the ground it will sprint off in a frenzied fashion, electricity arcing off it in every direction. For each PC occupying chamber 3a and each new lizard arrival, roll 1d20. On a roll of 1-3 a shocker

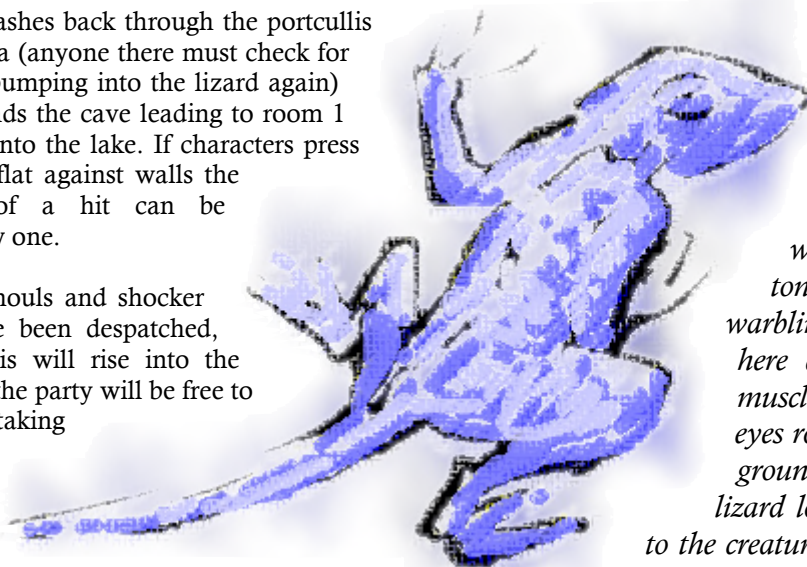
lizard will accidentally bump into the PC in their enthusiasm to rush across the room (Reflex save DC 12 applicable for PCs, but not ghouls). The PC will take 2d8 points of non-lethal electricity damage from the subsequent electric shock. If the PC attempts to retaliate, the shocker lizard can fire its shock effect up to five feet in any direction and will use this as a defence mechanism, causing a further d8 points of non-lethal electricity damage, but this time with a half Reflex DC12 save. Shocker lizards prefer to avoid combat and will run away from, rather than turn and fight, an aggressor.

Once the above has been determined, the GM should roll 1d4 for each lizard. On a roll of 1 the lizard runs into room 1, races around the lake and dives into the water. It will miss anyone standing in that cave. On a roll of 2 the lizard runs into room 3, on a roll of 3 it runs into room 4 and on a roll of 4 it runs into room 5.

If a lizard runs into an occupied room (except room 1), roll 1d20 for each character/monster present. On a roll of 1 a Shocker will dash into them, causing appropriate damage (Reflex save DC 12 applicable for PCs, but not ghouls). Ghouls hit by a shocker lizard will instantly burst into flame and start to burn for 1d6+6 HPs per round. They will continue to attack or move normally even as they burn, but as soon as all HP are depleted they will drop to the ground. PCs fighting a burning ghoul will take an additional 1d4 burns damage on a successful hit.

The GM should make a note of the number of shocker lizards and the direction each one takes. Lizards that dash into room 5 will find the doorway on the far side and keep going, continuing into cavern 6 where they will find the nearest shadowy corner and hide (Hide +11). Lizards that run into rooms 4 or 5 will continue running around like mad things and the GM should continue to roll 1d20 per lizard for each character/monster in the room. On a roll of 15-20 the lizard dashes back through the portcullis into room 3a (anyone there must check for the risk of bumping into the lizard again) and then finds the cave leading to room 1 and jumps into the lake. If characters press themselves flat against walls the d20 risk of a hit can be decreased by one.

Once the ghouls and shocker lizards have been despatched, the portcullis will rise into the ceiling and the party will be free to move on, taking the bronze key with them.



4 Empty cave

The ghouls lurking unseen in the walls of this cave will remain hidden unless the key is taken from the wall in room 3.

5 Empty cave

6 Lair of the Lizard

A vast square cavern with three exits. The same strange red algae covers walls and ceiling, affording you enough light to see by. Plumes of hot steam vent from fissures in the floor of the cavern, jets of grey mist that shoot several feet into the air before evaporating. Several hundred shocker lizards occupy the cave, favouring areas around the fissures. Their curious clicking language fills the air, which is charged with electricity and muggy with heat from the steam vents. A cloying dampness settles on your clothing and skin as soon as you enter the cave; a close humidity which seems to press in from all sides, suffocating and claustrophobic.

There are many hundreds of shocker lizards in this cave, small blue reptiles with big yellow eyes, each glowing with an electric blue light and crackling with pent up energies. The creatures, each no taller than your knees, seem to be clumped together near the fissures and you can see clear channels running between them where you may tread safely. Provided the reptiles stay where they are, you should be able to weave your way through them to one of the other exits.

A lizard close to you glances around with a quick snap of its neck, yellow eyes turning toward you. It picks up one back leg and slaps the ground repeatedly with a webbed foot, clucks its tongue and emits a strange warbling sound. A few other lizards here and there seem to tense, the muscles in their legs bunching, their eyes rolling. One or two also slap the ground with their feet. But then the lizard looks away and a calm returns to the creatures. You sense one wrong move

could set off a mass panic, leading to chain reaction of mad, dashing lizards.

PCs must tread very carefully through this room. The lizards are skittish creatures, prone to panic. If one feels threatened it will leap onto its hind legs and race away. This one will set off every other lizard in the cave, leading to a mass eruption of dashing creatures, each capable of dealing any PCs caught in their midst 2d8 non-lethal points of electricity damage. If this happens while the party are traversing the room, they will take a minimum 10d8 points non lethal damage plus a further 4d8 damage if they fail a Reflex save DC 15.

Players should use Move Silently as an opposed check against the Shocker Lizards' collective Listen skill +4. One roll should be made for every ten feet traversed. The cavern is approximately 100 feet wide, meaning a PC travelling between east and west doorways must make 10 rolls, while a PC travelling from east to south or west to south, must make 5 rolls. On a failed roll one lizard will sense the passing PC and bolt in the opposite direction. All lizards it leaps over will react in the same way, until eventually the entire cavern is in an uproar. For each round the PCs stay in the cavern after the initial lizard bolts, the GM should impose an increment of +1 to all HP damage, representing the ever increasing numbers of moving lizards.

7 Room of Bones

This largish cavern is square in shape, thick pillars of a strange, irregular shape, rising from the floor to support the arched ceiling overhead. As your light passes over the interior of the room, you realise the reason for the irregular shape of the pillars. Each is made from human skulls, thousands crammed one atop the other to form a solid mass so dense that its strength seems capable of supporting the roof.

The roof too, you see now, is formed from human skulls which leer down with sightless sockets and permanent rictus grins. The walls are made from more skulls, while the floor consists of a matrix of bones, each criss- crossing the one below to create a macabre weave effect.

*The eye sockets of a skull in the dead centre of the nearest pillar suddenly blaze with a strange green light. The jaw moves with a jerky motion and a deathly voice issues forth. **"What do they want?"***

Another skull, this time embedded in a nearby

*wall, seems to come to life, its own eyes glowing red, jaw rattling as it speaks, **"they seek the prize of kings, hidden by the treacherous wizard scum!"***

***"They dare not tread through the room of bones,"** a new voice rasps, and now you see a third skull speaking. Others seem to be coming to life, more eyes blazing in the shadows.*

"Test us, tomb raiders,"** the original skull sneers, **"step lightly upon our ribs and feel us crunch beneath your feet. We will embrace you. We will bite you! Come, test us."

Each skull is under the influence of a fourth level wizard Animate Undead spell. The skulls have been commanded to spit wrathful insults at anyone appearing at either of the doorways. They will taunt the PCs in an attempt to goad them into entering the room. Anyone setting foot on the floor will begin to sink into the bones which have the same cumulative effect as a pit of quicksand. The victim should be considered 'helpless' at this point, with an effective Dex of zero. They will be sucked down at a rate of 1 foot depth for every combat round. Thus a 6ft character will last 6 rounds before vanishing beneath the bone floor. If huge amounts of strength are applied in an attempt to tear the victim free, the victim's legs or feet will simply be ripped from their sockets. A 6th level wizard Anti-Magic Field spell protects the room. The field suppresses any spell or magical effect used within, brought into, or cast into the area, but does not dispel it. The field has been carefully constructed within the walls of the room, thus the animated skulls remain unaffected, albeit protected from magical attacks by the effective barrier of the field.

Time spent within the chamber will count against all suppressed spell's durations. Summoned creatures of any type and incorporeal undead wink out if they enter the room. Time spent winked out counts normally against the duration of the conjuration that is maintaining the creature. A normal creature can enter the room, as can normal missiles. Furthermore, while a magic sword does not function magically within the area, it is still a sword (and a masterwork sword at that). The spell has no effect on constructs that are imbued with magic during their creation process and are thereafter self-supporting (unless they have been summoned, in which case they are treated like any other summoned creatures). Elementals, corporeal undead, and outsiders are likewise unaffected unless summoned. These creatures' spell-like or supernatural abilities, however, may be temporarily nullified by the field. Dispel magic does not remove the field.

The skulls will cackle madly if anyone becomes ensnared in the bone-quicksand. When all attempts to get the victim out have failed, the skulls will offer to release him if one of the PCs makes an offering to the room of bones. Offerings must be in the form of a bone sacrifice and the skulls will take nothing less than a whole hand or foot which must be severed and thrown into the room. The skulls will not accept a hand or foot of the sinking victim, only that of someone who stands safely on the threshold of the room.

If a sacrifice is made (see below for damage results) the sinking PC will be released and all life will seem to fade from the skulls. The sacrificed body part will sink into the bones and vanish from view. A PC who attempts to cut off his/her own body part must make a DC18 Will save or lose their nerve.

Severed Sword-hand - 4 negative points to base attack bonus, -1d6 permanent points to Dex, 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins.

Severed Non Sword-hand - 1 negative points to base attack bonus, -4 negative points for all two handed weapon attacks, -1d6 permanent points to Dex, 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins.

Severed Foot - 1d10 permanent points to Dex, movement rate decreased by a factor of three. No running feats/abilities such as bull rush apply. Penalties for Jump, etc. 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins. The victim will need to walk on a crutch.

It is possible to cross the room by climbing on the walls

and shimmying around to the opposite doorway, however, the skulls will do their best to hamper any attempt by biting at the fingers and feet of the PCs as they climb, causing 1d6 HP damage overall. Anyone wearing metal gauntlets and/or metal solarets (armoured shoes) can make the climb unscathed.

8 The Chasm

The tunnel opens into a huge cavern. You find yourself standing at one end of a narrow, crumbling ledge which runs around one corner of a deep chasm-like pit whose sheer walls drop into unfathomable depths and deepest shadow below. At the other end of the ledge is an exit.

A light shimmers in the air, a few feet away directly above the ledge. The light seems to twist and drift like mist. Whorling shapes within the mist resolve themselves into an incorporeal figure, a young human male dressed in rags, his flesh semi-transparent so that you can see the inner workings of organs and blood vessels moving within his body. The spectre's eyes are a uniform milky white, and its mouth is twisted into a permanent grimace. A deathly chill seems to fill the air around you, fingers of icy cold travel the length of your spine.

Suddenly, the air above the chasm shimmers and fills with hundreds more ghostly characters, varying in shape, size race and class. Some are barbarians, others adventurers like you. You can see clerics, bards, wizards and knights, but also orcs and goblins, a few gnomes and even an ogre. The ghosts hang in the air, all eyes turned on you.

*The ghostly spectre whispers as it floats slowly toward you, **"in the dark where shadows grow, into the pit the robbers go."***

The spectre will attempt to attack using its numbing, life draining touch. It is bound to the confines of this chamber and the pit (the bottom of which, some thirty feet deep, is filled with previous victims whose lifeless bodies may be worth investigating for items of equipment and treasure, but only if the spectre is despatched first), and cannot follow victims beyond the two doorways. When the room is unoccupied, the spectre will simply vanish. It can go anywhere within the room, including into the pit.

The spectre is incorporeal, so barriers, obstacles or shields will not hinder its progress.

Any victim slain by the spectre will become a ghost, joining the many previous victims now bound eternally to haunt the pit. These ghosts are non-aggressive and incapable of attack, being little more than wisps of memory and soul.

If the spectre is killed a collective sigh of relief will rise from the gathered ghosts who will slowly dissipate into the air, their souls laid to rest at last. At the GM's discretion, one or two more goodly souls may remain behind to help the PCs in their efforts to retrieve the Orb, vanishing to the after life when the task is complete.

9 The Sinking Room

A wide cavern with a high, arched ceiling, smooth, slippery walls and a floor which seems to comprise entirely of a vast iron grill. The air here is so hot that even as you stand upon the threshold of the doorway you begin to sweat and your eyes begin to sting. The reason for the heat is obvious, when you glance down through the bars of the grill and see a swirling red lake of boiling magma, churning and bubbling in a huge lava-lake some thirty feet below.

On the far side of the cavern, hooked to the wall and shimmering in the rising heat haze, hangs a large silver key, easily the size of your hand.

Reaching the key without magic will entail stepping out onto the grill. The metal is extremely hot and will cause 1d4 burns damage to anyone with bare feet. But this is not the most perilous aspect of the grill.

The whole floor is supported at various points around the walls beneath by stone wheels. Any weight placed on the floor will cause the grill to sink at a rate of 5 feet per round (every 10 seconds). Simultaneously a heavy iron portcullis (Hardness:10 HPs 45) will drop across the doorway, blocking access into and out of the room. The grill will stop just one foot above the lava and remain there until the weight is removed. Anyone standing on the grill at this point will start to roast (1d10+5 HP damage per round). Remember that the blocked door and the silver key are now approximately thirty feet above and cannot be easily reached. The walls are slippery with a slimy fungus, affording no foot or handholds for climbing.

Simply removing weight from the grill floor will cause it to rise again. Taking the key from the wall will also cause the grill to rise. When the grill reaches its original position, the portcullis will crank back up and the trap will reset.

10 The Stone Forest

Many pillars support the strange stone ceiling of this huge cavern which resembles nothing short of a forest clearing. The pillars have been carved to resemble tree trunks and the uneven floor is covered in sinewy, twisting roots of stone. The roof is the most impressive aspect of the room, consisting of thousands, possibly millions, of intricately carved leaves and branches, each meticulously sculpted from the very bedrock of the roof itself. Closer inspection of nearby pillars reveals the bark-like surface is even detailed with tiny insects and drooling sap.

In the centre of the cave stands a grey stone altar covered in carved vines, and upon which stands a single red candle. Even as you watch, a flame gutters on the wick of the candle, and a fresh light illuminates the room. Where the light falls, colour seems to bathe the stone and lend sudden realism to the carvings. The tree trunk pillars become brown and organic, grass seems to grow amid the stone roots and browns, greens and other earthy colours riffle through the canopy. Wherever you look the forest seems to come to life.

Finally you find yourself looking upon what must surely be some kind of illusion. A forest clearing, complete with shafts of sunlight filled with drifting motes, filtering down from a sky above the treetops. The pleasant sound of birdsong and the rustle of leaves shifting collectively in a light breeze reaches your ears, even though you know neither could possibly be heard in this deep underground cave. The altar is the only thing that seems the same as before, though now the vines growing over its surface look real enough.

On the far side of the cave, now framed by tangled roots and vines, you can see a large wooden door furnished with a huge door handle shaped like a cross between a lion's head and a woman's face. Beneath the handle is a bronze-plated keyhole big enough for a key the size of your hand.

The door is locked, but can be opened using the bronze key from room 3. If the players enter the room, you should read the following

You hear a roar, followed by the heavy padding of

feet on the floor of the cave. Suddenly, a huge creature appears from behind one of the pillar-like-trees, apparently emerging from thin air. Similar in size to a horse, the creature has a tawny lion-like body with powerful limbs and muscular flanks. Great falcon wings are folded above its back while its feline face, framed by a sleek mane of brown hair, is strangely feminine.

"Who enters the wild wood?" the creature asks, her sultry voice deep and powerful so that it seems to reverberate in your skull and echo from every surface of the cave. "Know that all envoys of the king of Mohan die by my claws. Are you envoys of the king?"

The creature is Asslaya a Gynosphinx and mate to Azuerl the Criosphinx who occupies room 18. Both creatures belong to a remote demiplane paradise where they have been granted a life of peace and solitude together by the wizards of the Order of Mohan in return for guardianship of the tomb. They pass into the material plane when the flame of the candle standing flickers to life and calls them couterminos point (creating a between the two planes). The creatures to guard the Orb of Evocation and the tomb of the Thaumaturgos brothers and will execute this oath above all other considerations with one exception: if either creature fears the other is in danger, they will retreat and allow passage into the tomb.

Asslaya will only attack those who purport to be sent by the king, but if she suspects the characters of lying, or trying to pull the wool over her eyes, she will react accordingly. She is a powerful creature and players should avoid a fight with her if at all possible.

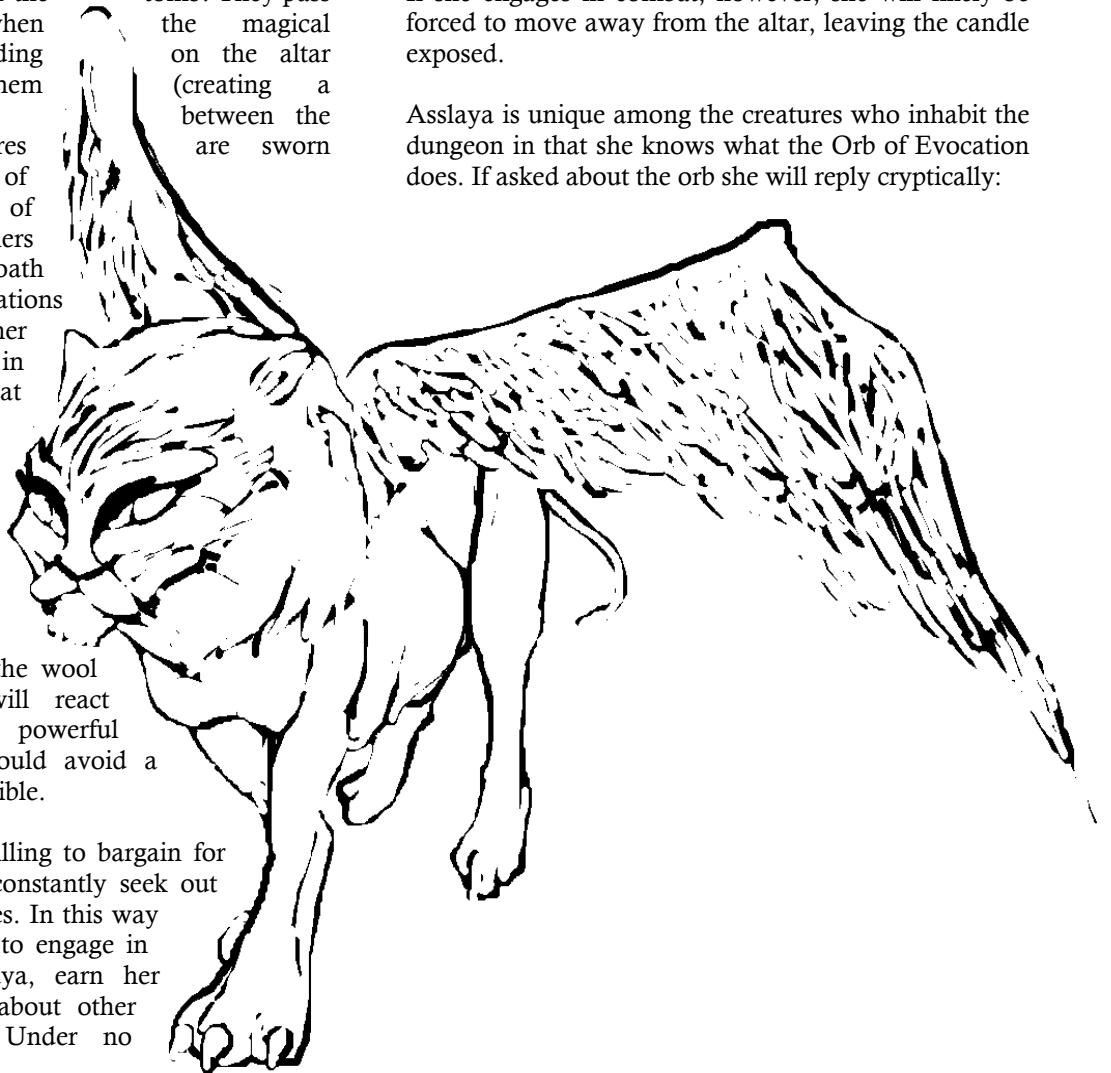
Gynosphinx are often willing to bargain for treasure or service and constantly seek out new intellectual challenges. In this way the players may be able to engage in conversation with Asslaya, earn her trust or even find out about other rooms in the caves. Under no

circumstances, however, will Asslaya yield the doorway into the tombs. Her sole purpose here is to prevent anyone, even those with a key, from stepping through the door. She will do everything in her power to perform this duty and no amount of bargaining or smart talk will change this. If she fails in this task, her time in the paradise demiplane will end and she will be banished permanently to the material plane.

There is a simple way to get past Asslaya, and it is a method she is aware of and one she will take great pains to prevent. This is a failsafe, imposed on the magic of the room by the wizards who built it. If the candle on the altar is snuffed out, the forest and Asslaya will vanish. The candle will reignite within ten seconds, so PCs will need to be swift if they wish to use this time to open the door. Though Asslaya is strong, even she cannot break down the door which can only be opened using the key and which automatically locks when closed.

Asslaya will guard against the use of this failsafe by roaming sentinel-fashion around the altar, making certain to keep herself between the candle and the PCs. If she engages in combat, however, she will likely be forced to move away from the altar, leaving the candle exposed.

Asslaya is unique among the creatures who inhabit the dungeon in that she knows what the Orb of Evocation does. If asked about the orb she will reply cryptically:



"It evokes passage to the dark side of the sun. Taking the road means that you may never return to the world you know, so take care."

She will not elaborate and may become suspicious of the PCs' motives if they press for more information.

The locked door can be opened using the bronze key from room 3 (Hardness: 6, HPs: 20). The door is strengthened with a magical enchantment which rebuffs all spells cast against it directly back onto the caster at double strength.

11 Empty Cave.

This cave stands empty, save for a few stalactites.

12 Crossroads.

A circular cave with a conical roof which tapers to a very fine point. Four exits lead in four different directions.

13 The Room of Compulsion

You are in a large cavern, roughly square in shape, the walls covered in stone carvings and friezes which seem to depict some kind of story. You can see another exit to the right/left of the one you entered by.

The GM should request a DC15 Will save from all players whose characters are present in the room. Any who fail will be affected by a compulsion spell designed to turn them on their fellow adventurers. Afflicted characters will attack all other characters, afflicted or otherwise, and will continue to do so until the enchantment is broken with magic, or they are forcibly removed from the room.

If PCs get the chance they will see that the frieze tells the story of two male wizards who seem to be identical twins. Each section of the frieze shows a different scene:

1. The twins are shown receiving scrolls from a group of other wizards.
2. The twins are seen concocting potions in the middle of what looks like a swamp
3. The twins look shocked by an explosion between them. One twin is holding something in one hand, which at first may look like a snail-shell, but which upon closer inspection will seem more like a swirling vortex in the air.
4. A group of wizards are seen mourning over two identical sarcophagi.
5. A group of wizards stand in a circle. Another of the swirling vortex snail-shell type objects hangs in the air above them, this one larger than the one in

the previous carving.

6. A wizard holds a small orb in one hand and another of the swirling vortex in the other. Other wizards are standing nearby, reaching toward him. He seems to be surrounded by a circle.
7. A sun with two crescent moons on either side and a wizard below. The orb stands on a pedestal in front of him.

14 Cavern of Vengeful Creatures

You step into an empty cavern, roughly rectangular in shape, with no other visible exits. Ranged around the room, some half hidden behind stone columns, others in full view, are various statues depicting an eclectic assortment of wild beasts. These range from natural animals, including a wolf, blood dripping from its fangs, a dog with lolling tongue and a docile expression on its face, a pig rooting around in mud and a goat chewing on what looks like a piece of fabric, to more monstrous creatures, including a hideously realistic giant spider, its huge forelimbs wrapping some unidentified prey in silken web, a gigantic rat with beady eyes and an evil expression on its face, a snake-like Grick, its tentacles splayed, beaky jaws wide open as it seems to emerge from an aperture (actually just a shallow alcove) at the back of the cave, and a giant owl perched upon a stone carving of a branch, its wings spread wide, talons clutching what looks like a small vole.

Each statue is carved from stone, and impressively realistic. The eyes are formed from gemstones which reflect the light of your lantern in an eerie way, giving you the distinct impression that the statues are in fact alive, and watching you.

The statues are not alive, nor are they watching the PCs. However, if any of the gemstones are removed from any of the statues, the PCs will contract a variety of magical effects specific to each different statue. The effects of each statue stack, so a PC with the traits of the wolf can also have the traits of a spider and a dog, for example. Effects will prevail until a magical cure can be found (any spell designed to break a compulsive magical effect). Some effects can be resisted on a successful DC18 Will save. See below for specific details.

Wolf - when the PC next becomes hungry, he will begin to suffer a bloodlust that he will find hard to ignore (DC18 Will save). On a failed roll, they will attack the nearest character, be that friend or foe, and

attempt to bite them. This characteristic will prevail until a magical cure is found. The most likely solution will be to provide plenty of cured raw meat upon which the affected character can gnaw during mealtimes.

Dog - The PC will become pathetically loyal to another random member of the party for 1d4 hours each day (DC18 Will save covers the full duration per day). The GM should either choose a PC at random, or roll a dice equivalent to the number of players then allocate a digit to each player sitting around the table in a clockwise fashion. During his period of dotting loyalty, the player character will follow his 'master' without question and act in a very dog-like fashion, panting and scratching behind his ears one minute, leaping up at his master or chasing an imaginary tail the next. The PC will retain all human characteristics as well, but they will exist alongside his new canine traits. Once the d4 period of hours is up the PC will return to normal and will probably be extraordinarily embarrassed by their own behaviour. During the period of loyalty, the affected PC must do anything their master asks of them, even if their player disagrees with the command.

Pig - Whenever the PC sees mud, or anything remotely resembling mud (quicksand, damp soil etc) he will be filled with a mad desire to roll around in it, snorting like a pig and rooting about with his nose. The PC resists on a DC18 Will save. Furthermore, the PC will suffer a strange craving for raw vegetables at mealtimes, particularly turnips and swedes. The sloppier and more disgusting the meal, the more the PC will enjoy eating it. The player should be encouraged to inject this new trait into their PC regardless of Will saves.

Goat - The PC will suffer a continual, gnawing hunger in the pit of his belly and a strange compulsion to eat anything and everything for 1d4 hours every day. He will chew fabric, grass, his own leather armour, in fact anything he can get his hands on. And he will need to do this all the time, with respite coming only at the end of the rolled period. Usual DC18 Will save to resist.

Giant Spider - The PC will no longer gain satisfaction in eating anything other than live prey. He will become depressed suffering a temporary reduction of 1d4 points in Wis, the reduction lifted only if he manages to eat a live meal (any animal will do- birds, rats, rabbits etc.) The 1d4 reduction and a general depression in the character's mood will prevail until this happens. If the character misses a live meal the following day, the reduction and depression will recur. Will save does not apply to the Spider trait.

Giant Rat - The PC becomes a carrier of The Shakes. Anyone who touches him will contract the illness. The Shakes causes twitches, tremors and fits, has an

incubation period of 1 day (thus the illness will emerge one day after the PC is touched) and causes 1d8 Dex damage for the duration of the illness. Affected PCs should make a Fortitude saving throw each day in order to avoid incurring damage for that day. If the victim rolls two consecutive saves in a row they have recovered from the illness. Dex points can be healed magically, or at the rate of 1pt per day provided the PC gets adequate rest and food.

Note: the recovery of lost points occurs even during the period of illness, so 1pt of Dex can be recovered each day regardless of the Fortitude save. The carrier of the Shakes benefits from their new affliction by being immune to the effects of The Shakes. No Will save for this trait.

Grick - The character will begin to find they are only comfortable when resting in the smallest nook or sheltering in the tiniest hole their body can fit into. They will instantly gain the Dark vision ability, but will also suffer an irrational terror of being under the open sky. They will prefer being indoors, but given the choice would sooner be underground than anywhere else and will endeavour to achieve this wherever possible. Thus, given the choice between a journey over open plains or a dungeon crawl, the PC will choose the dungeon crawl every time. They will always be on the lookout for caves to duck into and stones to hide under. When travelling under an open sky they will need to make a DC18 Will save or suffer a panic attack which will cause them to scream in terror and curl up into a tight ball. The victim should be considered paralysed for 1d4 hours thereafter, after which point they should make another Will save to recover from their panic attack and function normally.

Giant Owl - The character will gain the uncanny ability to turn his head 360 degrees in any direction, but at the same time he will no longer gain sustenance from regular foodstuffs and must hunt live prey which he must devour while still alive and raw. Any non-living food the PC swallows will cause him to regurgitate and suffer 1d4 hours of nausea (automatically fatigued). There is no Will save for this trait.

15 Unseen Foe

A narrow cave with a low ceiling and no other visible exits. The cave appears to be empty.

But is not. This room contains an invisible, magical creature similar to an Unseen Servant (as per 1st level Wizard spell) but with the ability to attack anyone who enters its domain. The servant cannot leave the room and pursue its victim into the passage beyond, but it may pick up rocks from the ground and throw them at the victim. (See NPCs/Enemies for stats).

16 Lair of the Grick

You spy an opening in the wall of the passage ahead, but then you hear the sound of something slithering around beyond the opening and stop in your tracks.

A creature suddenly slides into view, blocking the way ahead. It resembles a long fat snake about 8ft in length judging by what you can see of its body protruding from the cave. But where a snake's head should be are instead a mass of squirming tentacles, a small beaky mouth nestled at their centre. The mouth opens and the creature emits a menacing hiss. It slides toward you, tentacles writhing.

This Grick has made a nest in cave 16 and laid some eggs which it will assume the PCs are after. If the PCs retreat, the Grick will also fall back, returning to its cave and remaining there until the next time it hears approaching footsteps.

See NPCs/Enemies for stats. If the Grick kills any of the party, it will attempt to drag them back into its lair to feed on at a later time.

Room 16 itself comprises the lair of the creature. The floor is covered in a variety of materials including torn fabrics and dry straw. A small circular gathering of straw contains five Grick eggs, which may be valuable to collectors of such things. As the eggs are reptilian, they are inedible. Anyone consuming the gooey stuff inside will suffer nausea and -1d4 Con points. If the lair is searched, PCs are likely to find 1d10 GPs, 2d20 SPs, 3d20CPs and several pouches containing things like tobacco, tinder twigs etc. These items are the uneaten remains of the Grick's previous victims.

17 The South Cave

You enter a vast cavern, the ceiling so high it is shrouded in darkness, the walls so distant their contours are barely described by the reach of your lantern light. The far side of the cave consists of a huge pit, on the other side of which you can see a ledge and another exit. On this side of the pit you can see another doorway opposite leading to a dark passage. The pit is approximately 100ft in diameter and too deep for you to see the bottom.

If this is the party's first visit to room 17, they will come under attack when they are halfway across

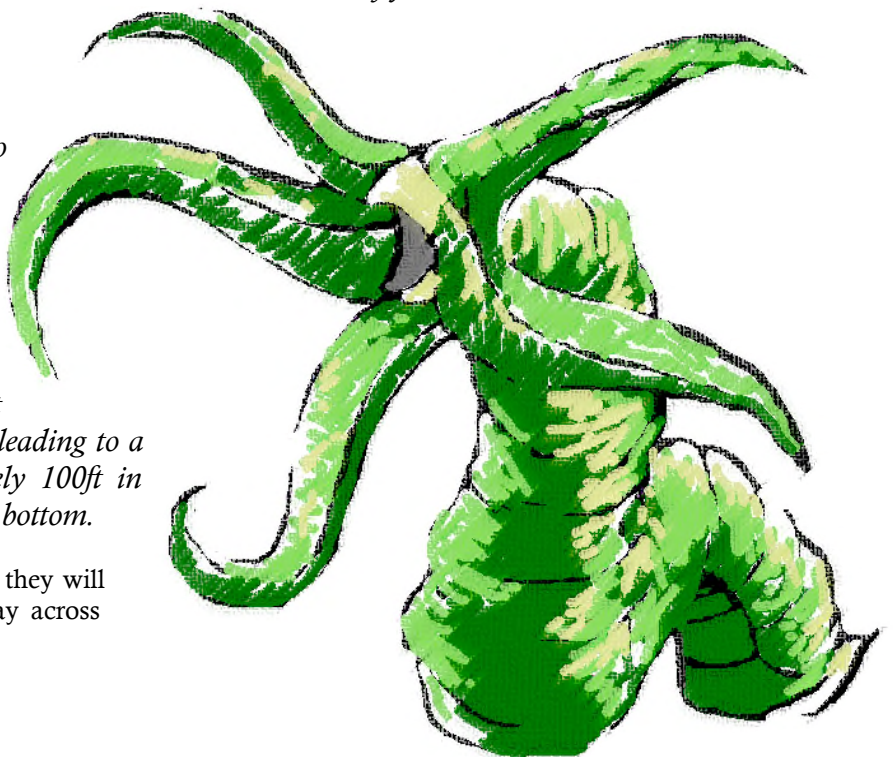
the cave from Canker Dern who occupies the far ledge (room 27) and who has armed himself with a repeating heavy crossbow (1d10 piercing damage, 19/20x2 Critical, range 120ft). See NPCs/Enemies and the Stationbridge introduction for details on Canker Dern.

The evil wizard has gained entry to the tomb chambers by turning into a hawk and flying across this pit, thus avoiding the guardian sphinxes. He knows Agrovar the dwarf will soon find out how to get to the tomb and guesses he will favour the less intelligent of the sphinxes in gaining access to the locked chambers, so he's set himself up here to watch the far ledge and lie in wait for his enemy, planning to launch an ambush when the dwarf (or anyone he assumes to be working with the dwarf or competing for the Orb of Evocation) comes along.

Canker has a store of 50 bolts which he will exhaust before he resorts to spell casting. If his quarry move out of range he will give up and head back into the tomb to try and break through the main door. He will fail because he doesn't possess the golden key and this door is impossible to break.

18 The Room of the Wild Mountains

You approach a large cavern furnished with several thick pillars which support a high arched roof. In the centre of the chamber is a grey stone altar upon which stands a single candle. On the far side of the room you can see a solid looking door made of wood. The door handle is fashioned to resemble the face of a lion and beneath this is a huge keyhole which could comfortably accommodate a key the size of your hand.



If the players enter the cave:

A flame suddenly gutters on the wick of the candle which casts a dim light about the room. Wherever the light falls it seems to illuminate a strange, incorporeal scene showing mountains in the distance, blue sky and clouds. Then you realise, the scene is not the incorporeal element here, the cave is. Now the light seems to be casting a strange transparency upon the stone of the cave walls, roof and pillars, making it seem as though the room were situated on a high, rocky plateau surrounded outside by a vista of tall mountains capped with snow and a deep azure sky overhead. Soon the walls have faded altogether and the scene is complete. You can hear the sound of birdsong and feel a cool breeze on your skin. The sun is warm on your face and the smell of mountain dew fills the air.

The altar and candle remain, but seem oddly out of place. The door also remains, now situated in the side of a rocky outcropping and framed by lichen and ivy.

"Who enters my paradise?" A deep voice growls from a point directly in front of you. As you watch, a form seems to materialise out of thin air. A large creature the size of a horse, with huge falcon wings upon its back and the body of a muscular lion. Its face, framed by a shaggy mane of brown fur, is strangely human, with sloping eyes, a small mouth filled with fangs and a flat nose like that of a snake or lizard. "Be you envoys from the king of Mohan? I am sworn to slay such visitors. Such is my duty. Speak or begone."

The creature is Azuerl, a Criosphinx and mate to Asslaya the Gynosphinx who occupies room 10. Both creatures belong to a remote demiplane paradise where they have been granted a life of peace and solitude together by the wizards of the Order of Mohan in return for guardianship of the tomb. They pass into the material plane when the magical flame of the candle standing on the altar flickers to life and calls them (creating a couterminos point between the two planes). The creatures are sworn to guard the Orb of Evocation and the tomb of the Thaumaturgus brothers and will execute this oath above all other considerations with one exception: if either creature fears the other is in danger, they will retreat and allow passage into the tomb. If they fail in their task to keep the inner sanctum of the tomb safe, they will lose the right to occupy the

paradise demiplane, thus Azuerl is highly motivated to keep invaders from the locked door in this room.

Azuerl is less intelligent than Asslaya and shares none of her enthusiasm for intellectual pursuits. Instead he prefers to spend most of his time wandering in the wild lands of the demi-plane, exploring the mountains, the forests and the plains. Occasionally he seeks Asslaya, a task which may take him many months of wandering. The demiplane is timeless, so both Azuerl and Asslaya are immortal for so long as they occupy the plane. When they appear in the material plane they become bound to the passage of time like any other creature, but they cannot appear by their own choice, only by the arrival of others into either of their two rooms.

Azuerl will have less to say than Asslaya and will have less patience for characters who presume to question him about this or that. He is charged with defending the tomb from robbers sent by the king of Mohan, but if he suspects the PCs have come to raid the tomb and take the Orb of Evocation for some other reason, he will attack them anyway.

Being a typical Criosphinx, Azuerl is fond of treasure and gold which he hoards in caves dotted around his demiplane. He may be persuaded to part with information, or spare the PCs lives, if they offer to give him all their treasure. Under no circumstances will the party be able to persuade Azuerl to let them open the locked door. He would sooner die in battle before letting them do this.

Unlike Asslaya, Azuerl does not know what the Orb of Evocation does, and nor does he care to know.

The locked door can be opened using the silver key from room 9 (Hardness: 6, HPs: 20). The door is strengthened with a magical enchantment which rebuffs all spells cast against it directly back onto the caster at double strength.

Like Asslaya, Azuerl can be banished for ten seconds from the material plane simply by snuffing out the candle on the altar. At this point the cave will rush back into existence and the mountain scene will vanish, taking Azuerl with it. The candle will reignite after ten seconds, at which point an enraged Azuerl will return to deal with the characters.

19 Chambers of the Wight, room 1

You step into a wide cavern, roughly square in shape, with a low slung roof. The corpse of a long-dead human male is secured to the far wall by manacles which hold it at the wrists and ankles. The stench of the putrefying corpse fills the air, forcing you to cover your mouth and nostrils with a

free hand. As you step forward, your foot lands on what you at first assumed to be the blackened soil floor of the cave, but which you now realise, with sudden horror, is a carpet of bluebottle flies. The flies rise from the floor as one collective mass and fill the cave with a deafening buzz. They get in your eyes, your mouth, your ears, and no amount of swatting will clear them away.

Above the roar of the flies you hear a low clanking sound and peer as best you can in the direction of the sound to see the dead corpse has been released from its manacles and is now standing on the far side of the room, swaying slightly in the hectic cloud of flies, its eyes glowering at you with a dark malevolence. From its desiccated flesh, pocked all over with holes and tears in the skin, crawl yet more flies.

The creature lurches forward, hands rising as if to throttle the very air and, swatting with annoyance at the flies, moves slowly toward you.

The wight will lurch toward the PCs with the intention of attacking them, and this, combined with the repulsive cloud of flies, may prompt the party to retreat into the passageway. If so, the following should be read aloud to the players:

You turn to retreat from the hellish vision of the corpse as it staggers toward you, but stumble when your foot snags on something on the floor. Looking down you see a fleshless hand has broken through the loose earth of the passage floor and is clutching at the air, making a grab for your ankle.

More arms are bursting through the ground up ahead, each in a different state of decay. And further along the passageway still you can see a corpse has pulled itself halfway out of the ground, its skeletal torso, arms and head already free.

The ghastly creature lifts its chin and glares at you with milky white eyes, even as another hand gropes to the surface a few feet behind it.

These are the Wight's progeny, previous victims who have become spawn of the wight and whose buried forms are now clutching toward the surface in order to defend their master. Given the opportunity, the wight will join any dead PCs or NPCs to the ranks of these unfortunate undead slaves.

The PCs will need to choose whether they try to fight their way through the spawn to the relative safety beyond, or whether they turn at this point to fight the wight himself. (See NPCs/Enemies for stats). The GM should alter the number of spawn to suit experience, with a guideline of 1d4 spawn for each character level.

If the group opt to fight the wight in the room of flies, they will lose one half of their base attack bonus because of the sheer number of flies buzzing around the place, reducing visibility and forcing combatants to squint to keep the insects out of their eyes. A successful Concentration check, DC 15, will negate this penalty. The Wight is unaffected by the flies.

20 Chambers of the Wight, room 2

A huge empty room with a stone pit at its heart. The pit, surrounded by a low retaining wall no higher than half a foot, is relatively shallow, being no deeper than four feet.

Beneath the ground lurk the spawn of the wight who resides in room 19. The spawn will remain hidden until the party encounter the wight and his room full of flies, then, if the PCs retreat to this cave, they will burst up through the floor and attack. See room 19.

The spawn will not emerge from the pit, but will instead try to drag or push their victims into it. The retaining wall is a deliberate design, intended to trip unwary feet and send victims sprawling into the hole. The floor of the pit is actually a thirty foot depth of water covered in a membrane of sludge-like muck. More progeny lurk under the surface and will drag down anyone who falls in, drowning them and joining them to their undead ranks.

21 Chambers of the Wight, room 3

A wide cavern with a low roof of uneven stone and a floor covered in packed earth.

More spawn of the Wight who resides in room 19 lurk under the ground in this room. They will remain hidden, even as the party travel overhead, until their master is roused in the room of flies. See room 19.

22 The Chain Devil

Here is a large cavern with walls covered in grey slate tiles decorated with all manner of runes and hieroglyph. The floor, too, is tiled, and so is the ceiling. From the latter hang a number of iron chains and shackles, dangling from iron eye hooks, each ending in a shard of jagged metal, a hook or a

spiked ball. One, furthest from the doorway where you stand, ends in a huge gold key the size of your hand. The chains swing gently and in an ominously random fashion, the air filled with the sound of rattling links and jangling metal. There is no draft in this underworld place, thus the chains should be motionless.

On the far side of the room, set into the wall some three feet above the floor, is a circular alcove surrounded by keystones and roughly the same height as an average sized man. Within the alcove a strange green film covers the wall and seems to shimmer with an odd inner-light. This bizarre green substance seems to be translucent like water, but moving like some kind of inert gas, suspended impossibly in place by who knows what magical energies.

A low thrumming sound can just be heard and felt beneath the constant clanking of chains. Every now and then you feel certain this thrumming takes on a different pitch and becomes the sound of an impossibly deep voice speaking to you in an archaic language.

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The mist is an extraplanar portal, but can only be used by the chain devil who possesses this room. A solid stone wall lies beyond its surface. The wizards of the order of Mohan never intended to summon such a dastardly creature to protect the Orb of Evocation, but in their haste to create guardians, they inadvertently gained the chain devil's attention and rather than make of the creature an eternal enemy, they chose instead to bind it to the dungeon where it would, at the very least, have access to numerous wandering victims.

The chain devil, Kyton, is an evil being who will emerge from the portal when the PCs leave this room. He thrives on the fear of those he stalks, and will take great delight in frightening the party long before he materialises fully before them and launches an attack. The wizards have granted the chain devil a number of additional special skills including incorporeality-at-will (the chain devil cannot fight while incorporeal, but can be harmed if attacked), outright invisibility and the ability to cast minor illusion spells.

To begin with the chain devil will simply watch the progress of the group as they travel through the caves, using his invisibility skill to move unseen. But when there is a lull in activity, or they stop to rest, he will execute one of the following scare tactics (use in order,

or roll 1d6 for a random action. Kyton will only use each tactic once).

Roll=1: The PCs hear a sudden clanking sound in the passageway outside the room they currently occupy. When one or all of the group go to investigate, you should read the following passage:

Some way down the passage stands a dark, shadowy figure with its back to you. It appears human in shape and size, but chains wrap it like a shroud, every length ending in a hook or a blade, or a heavy spiked ball. The chains seem to slither and slide over the creature's grey flesh as though they were alive.

The creature turns slowly to face you, chain encased face lowered, eyes closed, bald head a mass of vicious scars sewn closed with thick leathery twine. The eyes click open and meet your own gaze instantly. The eyes are a pale red, piercing and infinitely cold. To your amazement the chains seem to melt away and you find yourself staring into your own features. It is your face, but the wry smile playing about the lips harbour an alien wickedness far beyond your own capabilities.

All characters present and within 30ft of the creature, will need to make a Charisma based DC15 save against the chain devil's 'unnerving gaze' attack. A failed roll will result in the character being unnerved. They will take a -2 penalty on all attack rolls if ever they meet the chain devil in battle and will suffer a -2 penalty on any Charisma based rolls for a duration of at least 1d6+2 days.

Roll=2: A character (chosen at random) hears the rattle of chains behind and glances around in time to see the back of a dark and shadowy figure wrapped in chains vanishing into the wall.

Roll=3: Characters hear the rattling of chains and sense a sudden drop in temperature. They feel an indistinct presence of evil within the vicinity, but cannot place the precise location.

Roll=4: The GM should read the following passage:

[To random player], you have been gazing at a shadow in the corner of the room when you suddenly realise you are looking at the outline of a man hunched over and partially hidden in the dark. Just as you realise this, the figure rises, but simultaneously vanishes. Before he disappears

completely you spot a pair of pale red eyes staring at you from the darkness of the figure's face. Everybody present suddenly senses a deep, thrumming tremor, not entirely heard and not entirely felt, but somewhere in between. It is identical to the sound you heard in the room of chains. But this time a suggestion of words within the sound is unmistakable. Words, definitely, but nothing you can understand.

The words are spoken in infernal, and are merely offensive threats and insults uttered by the chain devil in an attempt to frighten his prey. If he has heard the PCs refer to one another by name, he may pepper his diatribe with their names in an effort to further unnerve them.

Roll=5: The PCs are walking along a passage/room when they spot a chain link on the floor. When they pick it up, it seems to turn into something made of living flesh. It pulsates and throbs, before putrefying in their hands, the outer skin desiccating and dissolving, revealing gory tissues within. Blood will stream over the PC's hand as the thing liquefies and turns into a bloody mess. This is an illusion. A few moments later the gore will be gone. Any blood on the PC's hands will vanish.

Roll=6: The PCs spot what looks like a small white doll made from chain-linked metal, dangling by its neck from the roof of the passage/room by a length of steel wire. You should read the following passage aloud

The doll is made from chain-linked metal. Its face is a horrible thing of indescribable ugliness with pits for eyes and nostrils and a jagged gash for a mouth. Its tiny hands are furnished with long hinge-jointed fingers ending in sharp needles, and its body is oily and covered in etched runes. As you study the strange doll, you are certain you hear the distant sound of clanking chains and jangling metal; the suggestion of a deep thrumming, a subtle tremor in the ground and a sensation of malignancy that makes you want to get as far away from these caves as you possibly can. Mercifully the feeling is short lived, and the mysterious tremor soon subsides.

The doll is an illusion visible only to the party. It will vanish eventually, so if a PC stows the doll in his gear or carries it with him, it will mysteriously disappear at some point and the PC will never know where it went.

When the PCs reach the tomb of Thaumaturgos brothers and if they try to use the gold key from this

room, the chain devil will manifest and attack once and for all.

23 Caged Beast

This narrow passageway ends at a doorway barred by an iron gate, vertical rungs set with some apparent permanency into the floor and ceiling of the doorway. The area beyond is in total darkness. A headless skeleton sits bolt upright in front of the gate and a ribcage lies on the floor just in front of you. A musty, bestial smell permeates the air here and you can hear what sounds like the deep breathing of a sleeping animal coming from beyond the gate.

If anyone comes within a foot of the bars they will be spotted by the undead dire bear curled up in the pitch-dark lair beyond. The bear will leap to its enormous feet and rush at the bars, buckling them outward with the sheer weight of its massive bulk. A great forelimb covered in patches of fur and dead hairless flesh in equal measure, will thrust through the bars and the bear will try to seize the character in sharpened talons. The character must make a DC 15 Reflex save in order to leap backward and away from the claws. If they fail, the bear will grasp them and slam them up against the gate where it will try to bite them. It will fail, since it cannot possibly get its huge muzzle through the bars, but the PC will suffer 1d6 HP bludgeoning damage (from being crushed against the bars) and 1d4+5 slashing damage (from the claws) nonetheless. The PC will need to succeed against a standard grapple attack in order to pull themselves free of the bear's grip, or suffer further damage from its claws. See NPCs/Enemies for undead dire bear stats.

If the character manages to wrest themselves free, the dire bear will become enraged, slamming repeatedly into the bars, buckling them outward and roaring so loudly that dust and debris will rain down from the roof of the tunnel. The creature has been locked in its tiny cell for many hundreds of years and only occasionally enjoys the odd encounter with a wandering victim, so when a moment like this breaks the monotony, the creature tends to make the most of it. The bars are magical and will resolve themselves back to their original state once the bear calms down and returns to its nest. They are buried in the floor and ceiling to a respective depth of nearly twenty feet, so there is little chance of the bear tearing them out of their stanchions, and even less chance of it bending them sufficiently wide enough to get through the gap. Even if it does somehow manage to squeeze through, it will never fit down the narrow tunnel.

If the bear is killed, the gate somehow bypassed and the



creature's lair searched, the investigators will find a small hoard of torn clothes, dented armour, helms filled with fleshless skulls and the odd useful spoil, such as iron gauntlets (useful once the skeletal hands within are removed) and 2d6 random weapons, including swords, crossbows, daggers, and saps. 2d6 pouches, each containing 1d20GPs will also be found if the PC uses their Search skill.

24 The Face of Belagorse

At first this huge square cavern seems to be empty and affords little of any immediate interest. The grey stone roof is arched and furnished with stalactites, the floor uneven and rocky. On the far side of the room a flight of stone steps rises in a gentle curve to a stone ledge some twenty feet above. You can see no other exits up there, or indeed any visible reason to want to climb the staircase.

A single wedge shaped rock rises in the centre of the room, looking oddly familiar, but for some time, though you stare at it and attempt to identify the nature of its familiarity, you don't make the

connection. Then it hits you- the rock looks like a huge nose. The two mounds in front of it resemble nothing less than the undulations of a brow, and you're willing to hazard a guess that the vague dip in the floor on the far side of the room is very much like the line of a mouth.

Indeed, when looked at from the ledge above, the indents, bumps and rocks on the ground resolve themselves into a huge face some ten feet wide and fifteen feet long. If the party climb to the ledge and look down, the eyes of the face will crumble open to reveal stone eyes beneath. The eyes will regard the group and the rocky mouth will somehow shift into the shape of a smile, the ground around it cracking, but sealing over straight away, as though the earth were somehow breaking then quickly repairing itself in order to create the smile.

When the face speaks it does so very slowly and in a deep, booming voice, the stone around the mouth breaking and sealing so quickly that it looks almost like an inert rockslide.

"Well, well, well," the face booms, the hard granite

eyes somehow managing to twinkle with life, "small people of the Elterland. It has been many long years since small people visited the parlour of Belagorse. Many many long years. I have spent many of them asleep, so I have, I believe, lost count with regard to the precise number. But I know that it has been many many. As much as that, I am sure I know. What are your names little folk?"

Belagorse is a friendly elemental construct from the Earthly plane. He is perfectly happy being little more than a face in the ground, enjoying the darkness of the cave and the feel of stone around him. He never grows bored, primarily because he has about as much perception of the passage of time as the average boulder.

Belagorse has been here ever since these caverns were formed many millions of years ago, eroded away by a mixture of lava and water. He remembers well the formation of the caves, though he has long forgotten why he chose to leave the Earthly plane for the floor of this cavern.

He will also remember the wizards of the order of Mohan. They are the 'small people' he often refers to when he speaks of previous occasions when he enjoyed visitors. The wizards were most intrigued by Belagorse and saw no harm in telling him what they were doing in the caves and why they had decided to do it. Thus, Belagorse has a unique angle on the background story. He knows the whole thing, though even he doesn't know exactly what the Orb of Evocation does, nor why or how the Thaumaturgous twins died.

Belagorse will tell the PCs that the tomb containing the remains of the twins is guarded by two sphinx, but that the sphinx are lovers and can be played one against the other if the characters are smart. The PCs will need three keys, one silver, one bronze and the most important golden key. Belagorse doesn't know where the keys are, but he knows they are crucial in gaining access to the inner sanctum of the tomb.

Eventually the elemental will tire of telling stories and speaking to 'small people' and will request an opportunity to enjoy a "short nap". The party may not realise the slim grasp Belagorse has on the nature of time, however. They will witness him close his eyes with a satisfied, "hummmm" and see him fall asleep, but they will never see him open his eyes again and any attempts to wake him up will meet with abject failure. Belagorse will not rouse from his nap for another two hundred years. At which time he will be most perplexed to find the group have gone without saying goodbye, and will cluck his stone tongue in disappointment.

25 Room of Scrolls

The walls of this huge square cavern are lined with row upon row of scroll cases, each case containing hundreds upon hundreds of rolled up parchments. Letters etched into metallic plates fixed to individual shelves suggest the scrolls are categorised in alphabetical order, A through to Z. Furthermore, a plaque at the top of each case provides a subject.

None of the words scribed onto these plaques mean anything to you. Not only are they written in some unknown tongue, they seem to be words no language would readily use in an everyday context. Most are at least thirty letters long, with multiple instances of Qs and Zs.

An ancient and dust covered ladder mounted on small metal wheels is attached to the cases. This looks like it can be moved to and fro to gain access to the higher shelves. But the wood looks suspiciously grey and rotten and the wheels are so thick with rust you doubt they would turn if the ladder were pushed.

The scrolls in this room contain the collected studies of the wizards of the Order of Mohan, placed here to be preserved and protected from the ravages of time. The order possessed its own bizarre language, which it used to encrypt its spells and prevent their use by other wizards. Only a spell designed to translate magical languages will decipher this coded script and even then the spells are so complex that understanding the translation would be very difficult.

Unfortunately most of the scrolls have suffered the effects of erosion and time, despite being stored here. If touched, 19 out of every 20 scrolls will crumble to dust. The ones that survive will require a painstaking reconstruction of the parchment material before they can be read. If they are simply unrolled, the stale parchment will crack and break into pieces.

Combined, the scrolls within this chamber provide the magical combination of spells now stored as a single entity within the Orb of Evocation. Anyone who possesses the orb possesses the ability to evoke a magical effect in a single, simple spell that would otherwise require the arduous recital of every scroll in this room, in precisely the right order and with precisely the right hand movements, incantations and rituals.

26 Cavernous Chamber

A vast empty chamber with a high vaulted roof covered in an array of spectacular stalactites. The floor of the room is perfectly flat and smooth, littered with bones and debris and signs here and there that previous visitors have set up and stamped out camp fires. There are two exits through two open apertures in the cavern walls.

27 The North Cave

At first this looks like another huge cavern with a high arched roof and a smooth expanse of stone floor. But then you notice a suspiciously uniform edge to the floor about eighty feet on the far side of the cave. Approaching this you discover that you are actually on a vast ledge overlooking a deep chasm, the bottom of which is too far away and too dark to discern. Some twenty feet below the level of the ledge upon which you stand, on the far side of the chasm and some hundred feet or so distant, is another wide ledge. Here you can make out two doorways in walls on either side.

This is the other half of the great pit. Players may have already visited the southern side (location 17) in which case the ledge they currently occupy will be the one from which Canker Dern shot at them with his crossbow. If this is the case they may find signs of Canker's presence in the form of fumbled crossbow bolts, or discarded food. If they haven't had that encounter, Canker will have given up waiting for them by now and will be in room 28 (see below).

28 Canker's Retreat

You enter a low ceilinged antechamber, the floor paved with flagstones, walls covered with grey slate tiles and the stone ceiling furnished with thick wooden beams. A large altar stands in the middle of the room, the sides covered in runes and glyphs, the surface draped with a thick red cloth edged with gold tassels. Resting on the altar is a grubby jar stoppered with a cork. The jar seems to be filled with some kind of red viscous fluid.

"All that remains of the great Thaumaturgos brothers," says a snide voice from a shadowy corner of the room. The owner of the voice steps forward and you find yourself face to face with Canker Dern, the shape-shifter from Stantionbridge. "But

this is not the treasure I came for, and nor is it the prize you seek. you and I want the same thing. So let us put our differences aside and work together. If you can breach the door into the inner sanctum, I know how to survive the traps protecting the Orb of Evocation. What do you say?"

If Agrovar the dwarf is with the group, he will attack Canker at this point (see NPCs/Enemies). PCs will need to decide whether their loyalty to the dwarf is more important to them than finding the Orb, or learning more from Canker about the story behind the orb. If the latter two are more important they may need to rescue the wizard from the dwarf.

Remember that even Canker doesn't know the nature of the orb itself, or the secret it supposedly harbours. Nor does he have any knowledge of the traps beyond the gold door. He merely wants to see if the PCs can open the door, at which point he will turn on them if he can. If he cannot (if the PCs have been smart and bound his hands or taken similar precautions), he will continue to bluff them into believing he has some knowledge that will help them eventually and will continue to give them information about the Thaumaturgos brothers.

The jar on the altar, of course, contains the remains of the Thaumaturgos twins. All that was left of them after their magical experiments went hideously wrong.

29 The Tomb

The door opens onto a vast, cathedral-sized chamber with a vaulted ceiling some seventy feet above your heads. Unlike the caves you've seen so far, this room has clearly been worked by craftsman. The walls are tiled with an ochre-coloured slate and decorated with colourful pennants and tapestries. Arched tympanum, decorative recesses containing candle-sticks as tall as a man and dripping with long fingers of tallow, line the walls, with two at the southern end of the room, harbouring doors. The intricate stonework, corbels and trefoil vaults within the ceiling above are truly staggering in design, with archways dividing into smaller archways, interlacing with larger ones and intersecting with the overall curve of the roof to create an eye-twisting effect.

You can see various exits around the room, with two open archways in the east wall, two doors furnished with keyholes in the south wall and a wide shouldered arch in the west wall opening onto

some kind of shrine.

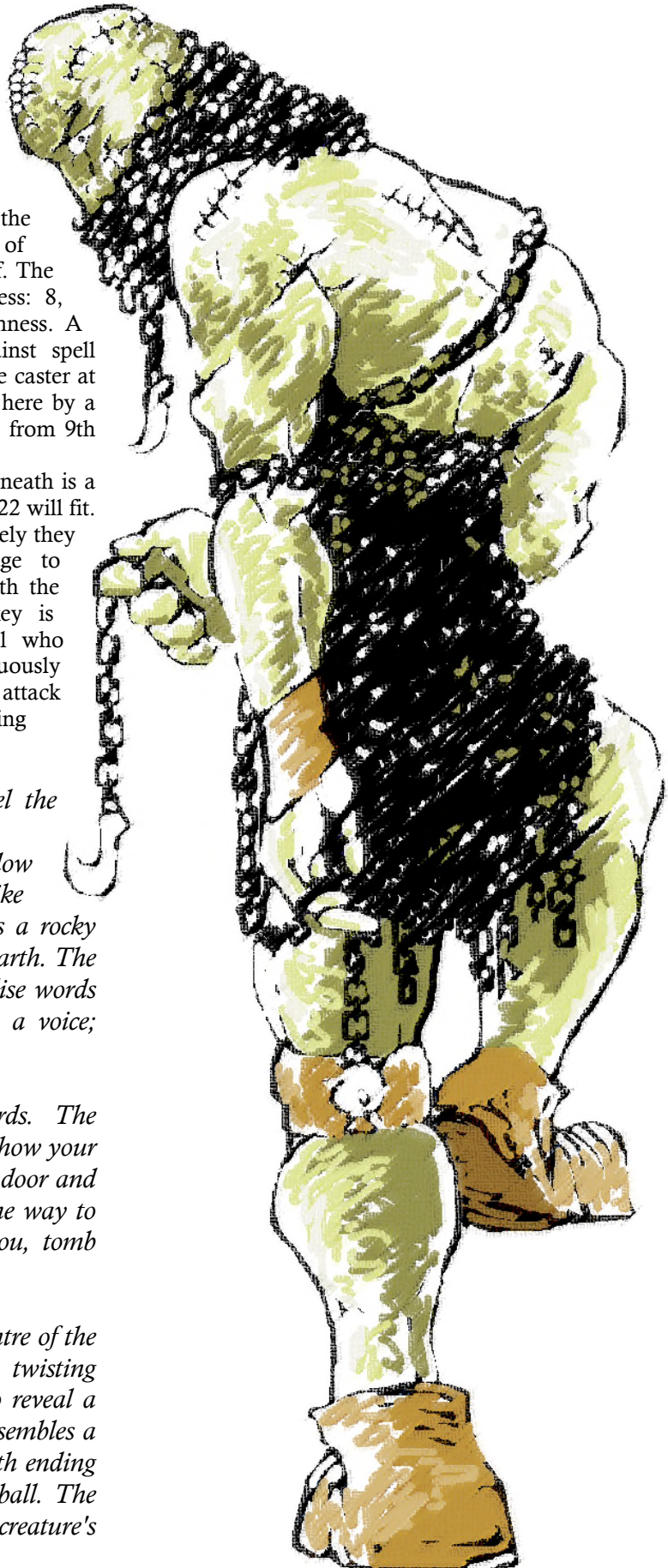
Within the shrine, resting on a marble altar, accessible by a short flight of wooden steps, is a huge leather bound book.

The door in the southeast corner leads to the inner sanctum; the rooms protecting the Orb of Evocation, and the chamber of the Orb itself. The door is made of reinforced wood (Hardness: 8, HPs:54) and magically enchanted for toughness. A magical ward also protects the door against spell casting, rebounding any magic back upon the caster at double strength. The ward has been placed here by a 13th level wizard and will rebuff all magic from 9th level down. The gold door handle is shaped like a globe and directly beneath is a large keyhole which the gold key from room 22 will fit. If anyone inspects the door handle more closely they may have enough cartographic knowledge to recognise it as a carving of Opus itself, with the various continents mapped out. If the key is inserted into the keyhole, the chain devil who should have been haunting the group continuously up to this point, will suddenly appear and attack them. See NPCs/Enemies. Read the following aloud:

As soon as you insert the key, you feel the ground beneath your feet begin to tremble and hear a distant, resonant noise, just below the surface of normal hearing, the sound like a gargantuan stone being dragged across a rocky floor somewhere within the depths of the earth. The sound seems to resolve itself and you realise words are being spoken. The noise is actually a voice; impossibly deep, guttural and demonic.

"The door is closed," speak the words. The language is ancient and terrible, but somehow your ears translate, "I am the guardian of the door and the guardian of the Orb of Evocation. The way to the dark side of the sun is barred to you, tomb robbers."

A dark shadow forms in the air at the centre of the great room, a black mist swirling and twisting around itself before billowing outward to reveal a creature standing within. The creature resembles a large man shrouded in chains, every length ending in a hook or a blade or a spiked metal ball. The chains seem to slither and slide over the creature's



flesh, almost as if they were alive. His bald head is slashed with vicious scars, sewn closed with leathery twine, and what skin you can see on his body appears to be similarly lacerated. He stares at you with deep hatred glistening in eyes of palest red.

Suddenly one of the chains whips up into the air, twirls around the creature's head, and shoots through the air toward you.

The chain devil will use his Dancing Chains special attack on all PCs present in the room. If Canker Dern is present he will scuttle into room 28 to save himself. (See NPC/Enemies for Chain Devil stats).

The book in the shrine is written in common and charts the history of the wizards of the Order of Mohan. Anyone who leafs through the book will learn one of the following bullet points for each hour they spend reading the book.

- The order was formed two thousand years ago at the behest of the then emperor of Mohan who feared his empire might come under attack from one of the other two powerful countries to north and west. He mustered an army of wizards and named them the Order of Mohan.
- When the empire fragmented and the emperor was dethroned, the order of Mohan spent some centuries in the wilderness, without a master and with no true purpose.
- The disenfranchised wizards became a scholarly brotherhood, advocating the development of magic for peaceful purposes instead of for war or defence.
- A new king rose to power in Mohan and commended the peaceful efforts of the wizards. He called them to hold court in the capital city of the kingdom and they became his official advisors.
- The king was overthrown eventually by more tyrannical rulers and the order split into two factions; those loyal to the throne and those who refused to become servants of tyranny. The former faction became the Royal Order of Mohan, but were later destroyed in one of the huge wars that would eventually wipe out most of civilised life in the northern continents. The latter faction went into the wilderness and called themselves simply the Order of Mohan.
- The Order of Mohan continued its studies, sharing knowledge and furthering the development of the spell-crafting art with any wizard who cared to

join. Lists of spells are shown here, and any magic users reading the book will recognise spells in their own arsenal as originating from studies by the Order of Mohan.

- The Thaumaturgos twins joined the order. They were skilled, but not particularly noteworthy in their efforts. The book notes them as being hermits and 'unwilling to share their discoveries or learn from the collective knowledge of the brotherhood.'
- The twins, living in the swamp of Marshdown next to the town of Bleaktonne, create a powerful magical theory which they work to develop. But they lack the skill or power to do so and inadvertently destroy themselves. You should read the following passage to the players:

"The magic of Thaumaturgos, we learned, was based on this curious discovery of theirs, an energy they named gravitas, the force that causes all things to fall to the ground. Gravitas, the twins learned, could actually cause things to fall in any direction if the 'core of the well' as they called it, was moved to a fixed point using magic. Normally the 'core of the well' resided at the heart of the world and for this reason, all things fell downward. The brothers asserted: all of us are forever falling toward the heart of the world, longing to be with the core of the gravitas well. It is the heart's desire of all things; man, dwarf, elf, halfling, orc, goblin, goblet, castle, even the rain itself longs to be one with the gravitas which is why it falls down and not up! The only thing that prevents us joining the gravitas, is the solid mantle of rock beneath our feet.

"In their efforts to fix the core of the well and thus manipulate the power of gravitas, the brothers attempted to use magic beyond their means. They possessed genius in their theory, but lacked skill and basic understanding in their practise. They sought to pinpoint the core of the well to a single position; an orb no larger than a human head. But their magic was erroneous and instead the core became ambiguous, fixing upon the walls, the ceiling and the floor of the Thaumaturgos laboratory. Promptly everything within the room, including our poor belated brethren, attempted to fall toward the new core of the well, in essence, attempted to fall in every direction simultaneously. Thus we found the room empty, every surface smeared uniformly with the unmentionable substance.

"Thus passed the brothers Thaumaturgos. Thus we of the Order of Mohan discovered the basis of gravitas magic and thus we seek now to decipher the work of the brothers and use their theory to craft new spells. We sorrow for the brothers, but had they come sooner to the order instead of hiding their discoveries, I fear they would still be alive and the magic they sought to create would be a reality in their hands."

- The order develops a new method of spell-crafting using gravitas. But the magic proves incredibly dangerous, with most spells resulting in fatality if miscast.
- The order discover a great secret using gravitas. The nature of the secret is not mentioned. The book is deliberately vague but says the order work on a spell to uncover the secret completely. This seems to entail the creation of many small spells, each scribed onto parchment, which then need to be translated into an ancient language and cast in order. The book lists thousands of spells, all with names the players won't recognise. When the spells are used correctly they create an energy force which is subsequently directed into an 'abjured manna sink' called the Orb of Evocation. The orb can then be used at once, resulting in the instant casting of all the minor spells combined.
- After the disappearance of many wizards who have attempted to use the orb, the artefact is deemed too dangerous and the order buries it here, in the Thaumaturgos tomb. The order vow to bury also the original spell scrolls and to forget all knowledge of gravitas. They entomb the Orb of Evocation in the deepest chambers and surround it with devious traps. They then surround the tomb with more traps and magical guardians before sealing the tomb closed and taking its location to their graves.

30 The Shaft of Uncertain Gravity

The tunnel ends abruptly at the threshold of a doorway opening into a vertical shaft. A smooth, circular pit drops to unfathomable depths before you. Above, the roof, some twenty feet above, is furnished with a series of wickedly sharp, downward pointing spikes. On an impossibly thin column of stone which terminates at the same level of the door and which occupies a space at the heart of the pit, is an iron eye-hook, firmly embedded in the top of the column, but with no apparent purpose. You can see another doorway about ten

feet along the wall to your right. There seems to be no obvious means of reaching this door.

All traps within the inner sanctum use the gravitas magic of the Thaumaturgos twins and the shaft is no exception. A core of the well point has been placed on the roof of the pit, effectively turning the point of gravity upside down. As soon as anyone or anything enters the room, their perspective of up and down will suddenly twist one hundred and eighty degrees. If a PC attempts to step out of the passage into the room (to shimmy along the wall for example) they will drop upward and be impaled on the spikes. Similarly, any rope cast out into the pit will behave very oddly, arcing upward then 'levitating' to the roof. The iron hook should provide a means to get across the pit, but players will need to come up with ideas how it can be utilised.

Once PCs quit this chamber and are in the twisting passageway beyond, gravity returns to normal.

31 Torn Asunder

A crossroads in the passage lies ahead, but something seems slightly amiss. The walls here suddenly seem to be armour plated, covered in thick metal studs and forged from steel and iron plates. Where the tunnel converges at the crossroads, each opening into the junction seems to be circular, not square.

This innocuous looking crossroads is a very nasty trap based on the disaster responsible for the demise of the Thaumaturgos brothers themselves. It amused the wizards of the order to include it here as a means to dispose of tomb raiders.

The surfaces of the two bell shaped caves on either side of the passage have been turned into core-of-the-well points, meaning that anyone and anything that tries to pass through the crossroads will suddenly find themselves falling to left and right simultaneously. This would not normally be a problem (the equal force would simply hold the PC in position), but the core of a gravitas well, if imbued with enough energy and thus turned into an incredibly 'dense' well, can vary in strength. In this case, the strength is high enough to tear the unlucky victim right down the middle into two equal portions. Once the two halves of the victim 'fall' into the two bell-shaped rooms they will then attempt to fall in every direction simultaneously, bursting apart into a mist of miniscule particles and smearing the walls, floor and ceiling of the room with a thin membrane of blood, guts, flesh and bone. Gear, armour and clothing will suffer the same fate, mingling equally with the remains of the dead character.

There is a gap of just one foot running directly beneath the roof of the junction where the pull of the two gravity wells has no effect. If PCs can somehow identify this gap, and use it to get past the crossroads, they can continue safely on their way.

32 Room of Tar

You stand on the threshold of a large circular room which seems, at a glance, to be empty. On the far side is another doorway, but both this and the doorway in which you stand are situated some thirty feet above the floor of the room, which is itself a bubbling pit of hot tar. Glancing up you see what you first assume to be a ceiling covered in a glass mirror, reflecting the floor of the chamber and the tar pit. But then you realise, with mounting horror, that there is no mirror. Another tar pit resides impossibly upon the roof, plumes of steam drifting lazily downward, spiralling strangely where the upside down gravity affecting the roof meets the normal gravity below, then mingling with steam rising from below.

At the precise halfway point on the vertical plane of this room is an area where the PCs can float along at zero gravity, pulled equally up and down and therefore falling in neither direction. By 'swimming' in mid-air the PCs should be able to get enough motion going to propel themselves slowly along the central axis and make their way to the far door. However, slipping off this safe central plane by even a foot will cause them to fall either up or down and land in the boiling tar (3d10+10 HP burns damage, plus continuing 1d10+10 HP damage per in-game hour unless the tar can somehow be stripped away. The tar will adhere to flesh and therefore, removing it in the conventional sense, by simply peeling it off, will remove a percentage of skin too and cause a further 1d10+10 HP damage.)

In order to maintain a steady position on the 'safe' central plane, players must first identify the fact that the plane exists at all (Search checks should be allowed for this purpose, or players may simply find it by throwing objects into the room to gauge gravity effects). They must then make a successful DC15 Jump check to leap into the right spot, and then a DC16 Swim check in order to maintain a steady level as they move across the room. A Swim check must be made for every 5 rounds the character is in the air, with movement

reduced to around three feet per round. It will therefore take the average PC about 30 rounds (5 rolls) to traverse the room and make it to the doorway, where they will then fall out of the air and need to make a DC12 Reflex save to grab the threshold of the door and pull themselves into the corridor.

33 The Room of Sideways

The 'bottom' of this room is actually the southern wall. Thus, anyone entering through the north door without checking the direction of gravity first will suddenly plummet some ninety feet and land on the south wall (DC 15 Reflex save to grab the threshold of the door before falling, otherwise 9d6+9 HP damage). At this point characters will pass through the door in the east wall, travelling along the southern wall here also. Effectively, the tunnels as shown on the map (above) should be considered as a side-on view. Where the passage appears, from a bird's eye perspective, to turn sharply north, it actually ends at the bottom of a very deep shaft. The party will need to clamber up this shaft, passing the two openings halfway up, or heading inside them to explore. Here the gravity remains fixed on the southern wall throughout, as it does to the top of the shaft where the passage opens into room 36.

34 The Orb of Evocation

You crawl along a low ceilinged, narrow tunnel which tapers to an ever smaller space until finally you are forced to crawl single file. Finally the tunnel ends at an opening and you straighten, finding yourself in a relatively small chamber lit by a green hued phosphorescent algae which grows in abundance on the walls and ceiling.



An altar of sorts stands in the centre of the room upon a circular raised dais. Fixed upon a small metallic mount atop the altar is a black orb, its surface shot through with purple and pink veins. The air here has a strange texture. Moving through it is akin to moving through a space filled with invisible, closely weaved spider web. Whatever it is that lingers in the air, it doesn't adhere to skin and it seems to vanish in your wake, as though the very act of simply touching it causes it to dissipate into nothing.

The 'strange texture' is static electricity which fills this

room from floor to ceiling. If players are having difficulty grasping how the atmosphere feels, you should use the example of brushing ones hand across the surface of a television screen covered in static. The same feeling prevails here, but fills the entire chamber.

The Orb is protected by a simple poison dart trap, the dart holes situated around the walls of the room. The triggering mechanism will be located on a DC 20 Search check. Poison Dart Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (bloodroot, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 0/1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

The darts will be triggered whenever anyone steps on the stone dais, not when the orb is touched. If anyone touches the orb, see the Orb of Evocation, below.

35 Surprise Pit

To the perspective of the player characters who, remember, are walking on the southern wall of this corridor, the passage will seem to turn sharply left up ahead. In fact, the gravity focus shifts as the tunnel turns the corner, returning to normal. There is no magical effect here, simply the removal of the magical gravitational force placing the gravitational focus on the southern wall of the previous passage. So detect magic spells will not reveal the presence of a shift in gravity.

The pit is sixty feet deep and anyone toppling into it will suffer 6d6+6 points of damage. A successful DC 15 Reflex save sees the falling character grasp the lip of the pit before he falls.

36 Upside Down Room

The gravity shifts in this room to focus on the ceiling. Anyone clambering into the room will suddenly topple five or six feet onto the ceiling and their perspective of up and down will shift yet again.

At this point, players who have not kept track of the real up or down directions risk falling into the final trap of the inner sanctum. Gravity remains firmly fixed on the roof of the passage leading out of this room and to the east.

37 Passage To The Centre of the World

Characters travelling along this passageway will be walking on the roof. They may not realise this and, indeed, the trap here relies on them having lost all sense of orientation by this point.

The tunnel ends shortly at the foot of a long flight of marble steps which twist up and into darkness, the

walls and ceiling of the stairwell are also made from marble, being so expertly crafted that you can hardly see where one slab of marble ends and the next begins.

The steps ascend at a steep angle, curving slowly around in a long, steady spiral. If the players have lost their true sense of up and down, they may presume they are now travelling back toward the surface and, given the likelihood of the Orb being placed at the end of the dungeon, toward the Orb of Evocation itself.

In fact, they have already passed the room containing the Orb and are now travelling down into the depths of the earth, walking on the ceiling of a tunnel whose 'real' floor is a marble slide.

The air will begin to get warmer, the further the party travel, and they may smell a strange, sulphurous aroma coming from somewhere up ahead. In fact, they are travelling to such a depth that they are heading toward deep lava pools bubbling away in a volcanic reservoir many hundreds of feet underground. The smell is brimstone.

If the party press on despite the growing warmth and the smell of sulphur, then they will pass the point of no return. Suddenly the gravitational magic pinning them to the ceiling will cease. They will start to drift upward and in that instant their inner ear will quickly re-orientate itself and they will realise they are actually dropping head-first toward the ground. The tunnel is only seven or eight feet in height, so damage incurred for the fall should be negligible. But now the party will land on the slippery marble slide, previously the ceiling. They will no longer be heading up, but sliding down, and doing so at great speed.

If the players cannot devise a way to save themselves within 10 rounds, the party will shoot out the end of the spiralling tunnel and into a vast subterranean cavern filled with bubbling magma. Their doom, at this point, is assured.



The Orb of Evocation

The orb is a magical device which activates when touched. When this happens, you should read the following aloud (the following affects all PCs present when the orb is touched):

The orb vanishes, replaced by a swirling black vortex, a hole in the very fabric of the air beneath your hand. The vortex swirls, and in so doing seems to draw into its depths the very colour of the room around you. The walls bulge inward, the roof distends down toward your head, the floor rises up, and with it your feet, your legs. The fingers of your hand elongate, though you feel no discomfort. Your fingertips seem to be drifting impossibly into the swirling kaleidoscope of the vortex. Your hand follows, then your arm, stretching like elastic and falling as an infinite twisting thread of colour into the black hole. There is nothing you can do. You are powerless to resist. Soon your body is bending forward, and your head, your eyes, all stretching toward the swirling black hole.

And now you are falling into the hole, swallowed by unimaginable magical forces into the bowels of a darkness more absolute than anything you have ever experienced. The room buckles in on itself and melts into endless vanishing threads of stone grey and earth brown.

You are being sucked along a long circular tunnel with translucent walls, flowing through a new kind of darkness. All around you, beyond the boundary of the walls, you can see stars, twinkling like fireflies in the night, but though you twist around in search of the ground, you see nothing, only the darkness, the stars and your fellow adventurers tumbling along behind you.

And then you see the world. A great disc of brilliant blue far far beneath your feet, somewhere at the beginning of the tunnel. You can see clouds and seas, continents, mountains, plains and forests, all falling rapidly away from you. You are rising out of Opus. Flying away from the world you know and into the depths an inky sky.

The tunnel makes a series of twisting turns and the glaring light of the sun bursts in on you. It lies ahead now, growing larger, chasing away the stars, but not the night. There is no dawn, just a sudden transition between the emblazoned brilliance of the sun and the utter blackness of the sky. You fall headlong into the light and for a brief moment the tunnel has entered the heart of the sun, an unimaginable sphere of raging fires and molten fury. Then you are out the other side, shooting forward at an unimaginable speed, your head reeling, your body spinning.

And now there is Opus once more, a blue, green circle filling the sky, getting bigger by the second. The tunnel weaves its way down and you tumble powerlessly toward the world. Finally you are racing back toward the dark mouth of the vortex and then you are being disgorged back into the cave, your limbs spiralling out of the hole, resuming their natural positions, your body returning to normal, threads of colour unravelling and reforming into the shape of the cave, the altar and the dais.

You crumple to the ground, your legs giving way. You are exhausted, dizzy and shocked. But you seem to be back where you started, with all your faculties and all your limbs intact. The Orb of Evocation stands innocently upon its mount, looking much the same as it did before you touched it.

The Orb of Evocation uses highly concentrated and controlled gravity magics to open a wormhole in time and space. The wormhole bypasses the usual interplanar methods of teleportation and instead joins two points, one to the other. The interconnecting 'tunnel' is merely the fabric of space stretched between the two holes, thus anyone falling into the vortex at one end will inevitably emerge at the other.

Which may give rise to confusion, because it would appear that the party are back where they started.

In fact they are not.

When the wizards of the Order of Mohan first used the Orb, they discovered that they could not connect the two ends of a wormhole to two specific points in space. They could not, for example, use it to move instantaneously from the Greymist Mountains to their

home kingdom of Mohan. As a teleportation device, the orb was useless. When the vortex opened and the wormhole was created, it created a set path to a set destination, and this could not be changed. The nature of the destination, however, was a big surprise.

Because every time the orb was used, it linked the user to another Opus.

Each Opus is slightly different, being part of another universe, which itself is a single facet of the greater Opus multiverse containing infinite universes and possibilities. For a brief moment both multiverse exist inter-dimensionally and on the exact opposite sides of the sun, so that the wormhole stretches between the two worlds where they lie on opposite sides of the same orbital plane, and the tunnel itself passes directly through the heart of the sun, effectively acting like an energy mirror.

As soon as everything within the vicinity of the activated orb has been transferred to the newly created Opus, the previous Opus winks out of existence on the far side of the sun and, for all intents and purposes, the new Opus becomes the only Opus. In fact the previous Opus continues to exist. The connection between multiverses has merely been severed. In its own dimension, the original Opus continues. But now, the PCs no longer exist there.

Reactivating the orb requires a mere touch. The orb can be carried safely without being activated if it is simply wrapped in fabric. But the orb cannot be used to return to the previous world. It will always deliver the user to a new Opus, the previous Opus winking out of existence as soon as the transition through the wormhole is made.

The players and their characters may not realise they now occupy an entirely new world until they leave the caves and head back to Stantionbridge. Here they will find a subtle difference to the world they know, though landscapes, place names and, for the most part, people will remain the same.

Stantionbridge, for example, might now be founded on the site of a tin mine. The residents are not as wealthy as they were when they mined emeralds and instead of fending off attacks by barbarian hordes, they fend off attacks from tribal orcs who hold sway over the Jejune Flatlands.

Nobody in Stantionbridge will recognise the PCs when they emerge from the caves, simply because on this world, nobody has ever met the PCs. Relations, such as parents or siblings, will have no clue who the PCs are. Age old friends will greet the PCs' warm handshake and ready smile with a blank stare. Roads once travelled will seem slightly different and any assets

owned in the previous world, such as houses, or a horse left tethered at the Turning Mere, for example, will belong to somebody else or be missing altogether.

If the GM wishes he can introduce a doppelganger party; a group of adventurers who are very nearly but not quite exactly like the PCs themselves. This group effectively are the PCs, and the GM may even wish to allow players the chance to draw up cloned character sheets for their PCs' counterparts and take control of them in addition to their original PCs. Alternatively, perhaps the doppelganger group made their transition between worlds at exactly the same time as the player group. Friends and family will find the new group somehow familiar, but at the same time different in many ways. They may accuse the PCs of impersonating the vanished group, maybe even of murdering them and stealing their identities. In superstitious cultures they may be accused of soul-stealing or black magic.

The worlds of the Opus multiverse are infinite, but the number of worlds the PCs can visit are not (see below). However, the chances of linking with a world the PCs have already visited via the orb are so wildly improbable that they are virtually impossible. The chances of linking up with the PCs real home world are even less likely and the concept should not be entertained by the GM.

For purposes of maintaining some semblance of consistency, place names and things like the shape of continents, the general cultural makeup of different countries and other demographic details, particularly anything specific to the Opus world map and hex maps you've already explored, should remain the same, as should the religious details of the Opus campaign setting.

As an artefact, the orb is virtually priceless. Selling it will banish an unwitting buyer to oblivion, of course, but the PCs, who themselves have already been banished from their home world, may have no qualms about this. On every Opus world the orb connects to, the orb has been created at some point in history, simply because in spanning the dimensional distance between multiverses, the orb links up with itself. This connection limits the worlds PCs can visit, but still allows for an incredible number of possible worlds, albeit worlds where the creation of the orb has occurred and is possible- in other words, worlds that are similar but not exactly the same as, the original world.



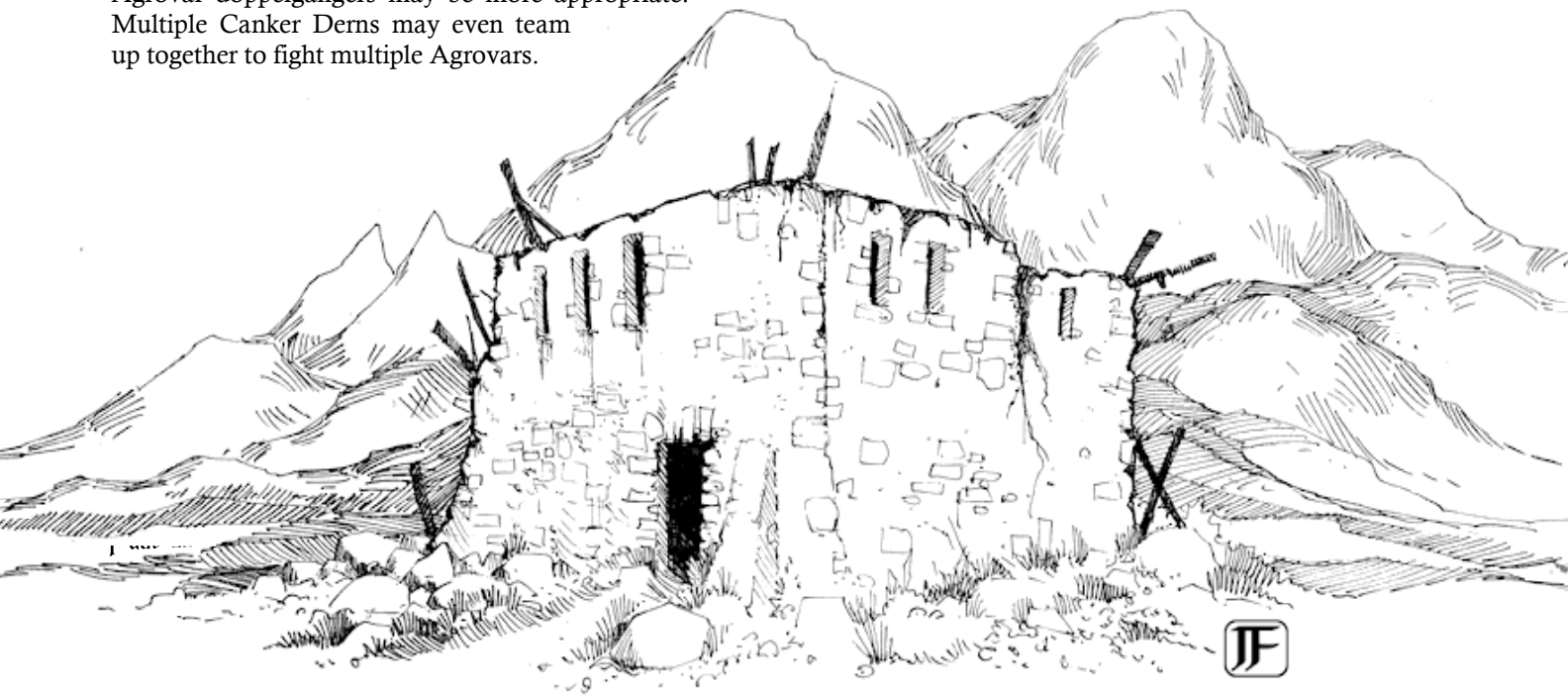
Continuing From Here...

If the PCs have used the orb, the possibilities for fun are endless. Old friends will treat them like strangers, any property they own will belong to other people, horses they may have ridden for years will behave strangely and places they have visited will seem different in lots of subtle ways.

The group may find visiting Ulnar the wizard helpful. Having travelled via the orb many times, Ulnar can sympathise with the difficulties of becoming accustomed to a new world. He alone in all of Opus will believe the PCs if they tell their story. If they recount their tale anywhere else and to anyone else they will be treated like madmen. Remember, because Ulnar is intrinsically linked to the creation of the orb, he must always appear in every multiverse. He may not be called Ulnar in every case, but he will be the same person and will have travelled between worlds using the orb in every instance.

In every multiverse the PCs visit, the orb will have a vague place in history and will be mentioned in folklore or bardsong. So in every multiverse, there will be treasure hunters seeking the artefact for themselves. In your new Opus, Canker Dern might never have purchased Gabreal's notes and will be alive and well still in the city of Carthidge. The PCs may be surprised at a later point in the campaign to come face to face with him. Their stories about the orb have perhaps filtered through the grapevine and reached Canker's ever vigilant ears, and now he has come to take the orb from them. If this occurs, don't forget to include Agrovar the dwarf in the resulting scenario. He is never far behind the wicked Canker Dern.

If, of course, either Canker or Agrovar have travelled through the wormhole with the PCs, Canker Dern and Agrovar doppelgangers may be more appropriate. Multiple Canker Dernos may even team up together to fight multiple Agrovars.



NPCs/Enemies

Animal: Bear

CR 2; Size Medium; HD 3d8+6; hp 19; Init +1; Spd 40ft.; AC 13; Attack/Grapple +2/+6; Attack Claw +6 melee (1d4+4); Full Attack 2 claws +6 melee (1d4+4) and bite +1 melee (1d6+2); SV Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +2; Str 19, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and feats: Climb +4, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +8, Endurance, Run, Low-light vision, scent.

Animal: Wolf

CR 1; Size Medium; HD 2d8+4; hp 13; Init +2; Spd 50ft.; AC 14; Attack/Grapple +1/+2; Attack Bite +3 melee (1d6+1); SV Fort +5, Ref +5, Will +1; Str 13, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Skills and feats: Hide +2, Listen +3, Move Silently +3, Spot +3, Survival +1, Track, Weapon Focus (bite), Low-light vision, scent.



Agrovar the Dwarf

Male dwarf Paladin Lvl5: CR 5; Size M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 5d10+10; hp 35; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Attack +9 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; AL LG; Str 18, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven, Terran.

Skills and feats: Craft (Armoursmithing) +3, Craft (Blacksmithing) +3, Craft (Stonemasonry) +3, Craft (Trapmaking) +3, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +3, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +1.5, Disguise +3, Forgery +2, Hide -1, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +9, Listen +3, Move Silently -1, Ride +0, Sleight of Hand +1, Spot +3; Combat Reflexes, Power Attack.

Possessions: 4,300 gp in gear.

Paladin Spells Per Day: 1.

Agrovar's Dwarfs

Male dwarfs Fighters Lvl 3: CR 3; Size M (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 3d10+3; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 10; Attack +3 melee, or +3 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven.

Skills and feats: Climb +5, Craft (Armoursmithing) +2, Craft (Blacksmithing) +2, Craft (Stonemasonry)

+2, Craft (Trapmaking) +2, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +2, Handle Animal +5, Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Ride +1, Spot +0; Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (crossbow, light).

Possessions: 2,500 gp in gear.

Barbarians of Jejane

CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 9 in. tall); HD 1d12; hp 12; Init +0; Spd 40 ft.; AC 10; Attack +1 melee, or +1 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL CE; Str 11*, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Escape Artist +2, Handle Animal +2, Hide +0, Intimidate +4, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spot +0, Survival +4, Use Magic Device +2; Swim +2, Blind-Fight, Endurance.

**Add 2 points of Strength for Barbarian leaders.*

Canker Dern

Male half-human Wizard Lvl 5: CR 5; Size M (5 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 5d4+15; hp 29; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +3 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; AL CE; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9.

Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Gnome.

Skills and feats: Concentration +9, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +10, Hide +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Nature) +10, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +10, Knowledge (The Planes) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, [Scribe Scroll], Silent Spell.

Possessions: 4,300 gp in gear.

Wizard Spells Known (4/4/3/1): 0th -- Acid Splash, Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance, Touch of Fatigue. 1st -- Colour Spray, Magic Aura, Magic Missile, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Evil, Shield, Sleep. 2nd -- Alter Self*, Knock, Owl's Wisdom, Shatter, Spectral Hand. 3rd -- Fly, Protection from Energy.

**The Alter Self spell is what Canker uses to shapeshift into the form of a bird. This is not strictly the purpose of this spell, but Canker is the progeny of a human and a shape shifter and therefore has a predilection to shape shifting magic.*

Canker's Mercenaries

Male human Fighters Lvl 2: CR 2; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +2 melee, or +2 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NE; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Handle Animal +5, Hide +0, Jump +3, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Ride +5, Spot +0; Blind-Fight, Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative.

Frith Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner Lvl 1: CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Craft (Stonemasonry) +4, Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Profession (Miner) +4, Spot +0; Armour Proficiency (Light), Endurance.

Lepers/The Elgar

CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 1d4-3; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +2 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort -3, Ref +0, Will -1; AL NG; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 4, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Hide +0, Listen +1, Move Silently +0, Spot +5, Alertness.

Affliction: non-contagious leprosy

Oberon Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner (Innkeeper) Lvl2: CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 2d4; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +1 melee, or +1 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Craft (Woodworking) +6, Hide +0, Listen +2, Move Silently +0, Profession (Brewery) +5, Spot +2; Alertness, Skill Focus (Profession (Brewery)).

Denfirth Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner Lvl 1: CR 1; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Profession (Miner) +4, Spot +4; Iron Will.

Stantionbridge Villagers (Men)

CR 1; Size M (6 ft., 6 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NG; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Craft (Pottery) +2, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +4, Hide +0, Listen +2, Move Silently +0, Profession (Hunter) +1, Profession (Miner) +6, Skill Focus (Profession (Miner)).

Stantionbridge Villagers (Women)

CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 1 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +2; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Craft (Alchemy) +4, Craft (Weaving) +2, Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Perform (Wind Instruments) +1, Profession (Miner) +4, Spot +0

The Wizard Ulnar

Male human Wizard Lvl13: CR 13; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 13d4; hp 33; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +6/+1 melee, or +6/+1 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; AL NG; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Languages Spoken: Common, Mohanian Ancient

Skills and feats: Concentration +5, Decipher Script +9, Hide +0, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (History) +18, Knowledge (The Planes) +18, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spellcraft +18, Spot +0; Brew Potion, Enlarge Spell, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, [Scribe Scroll], Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Possessions: 35,000 gp in gear. Citadel of Talus.

Wizard Spells Known (4/5/5/4/4/3): 0th -- Acid Splash, Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance, Touch of Fatigue. 1st -- Animate Rope, Charm Person, Colour Spray, Comprehend Languages, Disguise Self, Magic Missile, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Good, Reduce Person, Shield, Sleep, Ventriloquism. 2nd -- Bear's Endurance, Blindness/Deafness, Blur, Invisibility, Misdirection, Scare, Summon Monster II, Summon Swarm. 3rd -- Deep Slumber, Displacement, Fireball, Greater Magic Weapon, Heroism, Keen Edge, Magic Circle against Chaos, Phantom Steed, Protection from Energy, Secret Page, Wind Wall. 4th -- Charm Monster, Contagion, Dimensional Anchor, Fire Trap, Greater Invisibility, Lesser Geas, Mnemonic Enhancer, Rainbow Pattern, Resilient Sphere, Shadow Conjunction, Shout, Stoneskin, Wall of Fire. 5th -- Animal Growth, Cone of Cold, Fabricate, Persistent Image.

Monster: Asstqa the Gynosphinx

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 8d10+8; hp 45; Init +5; Spd 40 ft. Fly 60ft (Poor); AC 19; Base Attack/Grapple +8/+16; Attack Claw +11 melee (1d6+4); Full attack 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+4); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8; AL Neutral; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 19

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6+2, spell-like abilities

Skills and feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +13, Listen +17, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Sphinxes are enigmatic creatures with great, feathery wings and leonine bodies. All sphinxes are territorial, but the more intelligent ones can differentiate between deliberate intrusion and temporary or inadvertent trespass.

A typical sphinx is about 10 feet long and weighs about 800 pounds. Sphinxes speak Sphinx, Common, and Draconic. The Gynosphinx is a female sphinx.

Combat

In close combat, Gynosphinxes use their powerful claws to flay the flesh from their enemies. Despite their deadly nature, they prefer to avoid combat whenever possible.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +11 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—clairaudience/clairvoyance, detect magic, read magic, see invisibility; 1/day—comprehend languages, locate object, dispel magic, remove curse (DC 18), legend lore. Caster level 14th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Once per week a Gynosphinx can create a symbol of death, a symbol of fear, a symbol of insanity, a symbol of pain, a symbol of persuasion, a symbol of sleep, and a symbol of stunning as the spells (caster level 18th), except that all save DCs are 22 and each symbol remains a maximum of one week once scribed. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Monster: Azrael the Criosphinx

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 10d10+8; hp 60; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. Fly 60ft (Poor); AC 20; Base Attack/Grapple +10/+16; Attack Gore +15 melee (2d6+6) Full Attack Gore and 2 claws +10 melee (1d6+3); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; AL Neutral; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6+3

Skills and feats: Intimidate +8, Listen +11, Spot +1, Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision.

These sphinxes are always male. Neither good nor evil, they lack the intelligence and spell craft of the Gynosphinx.

Combat

Criosphinxes attack with their claws, as do their kin, but they can also butt with their horns. They don't cast spells and employ only the most simple battle tactics.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +15 melee, damage 1d6+3.

Monster: Barghest

CR 4; Size Medium Outsider; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Base Attack/Grapple +6/+9; Attack Bite +9 melee (1d6+3)); Full Attack Bite +9 melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; AL Lawful Evil; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14

Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, feed

Skills and feats: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +11*, Intimidate +13, Jump +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11, Survival +11 (+13 following tracks), Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Track, Change shape, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., scent.

A barghest is a lupine fiend that can take the shape of a wolf or a goblin. In its natural form, it resembles a goblin-wolf hybrid with terrible jaws and sharp claws. Their skin is strange blue colour. A full-grown barghest is about 6 feet long and weighs 180 pounds. A barghest's eyes glow red in the dark.

Barghests speak Goblin, Worg, and Infernal.

Combat

Barghests can claw and bite, no matter what their form, and usually disdain weapons. Though they love killing, they have little stomach for direct combat and attack from ambush whenever possible. Barghests start a combat by using crushing despair and charm monster to keep opponents off balance. They try to stay away from the enemy's main strength.

A barghest's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. Its natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—blink, levitate, misdirection (DC 14), rage (DC 15); 1/day—charm monster (DC 16), crushing despair (DC 16), dimension door. Caster level equals the barghest's HD.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Feed (Su): When a barghest slays a humanoid opponent, it can feed on the corpse, devouring both flesh and life force, as a full-round action. Feeding destroys the victim's body and prevents any form of raising or resurrection that requires part of the corpse. There is a 50% chance that a wish, miracle, or true resurrection spell can restore a devoured victim to life. Check once for each destroyed creature. If the check fails, the creature cannot be brought back to life by mortal magic.

A barghest advances in Hit Dice by consuming corpses in this fashion. For every three suitable corpses a barghest devours, it gains 1 Hit Die, and its Strength, Constitution, and natural armour increase by +1. Its attack bonus and saves improve as normal for an outsider of its Hit Dice, and it gains skill points, feats, and ability score improvements normally.

The barghest only advances by consuming the corpses of creatures whose Hit Dice or levels are equal to or greater than its own current total. A barghest that reaches 9 Hit Dice through feeding immediately becomes a greater barghest upon completion of the act.

Change Shape (Su): A barghest can assume the shape of a goblin or a wolf as a standard action. In goblin form, a barghest cannot use its natural weapons but can wield weapons and wear armour. In wolf form, a barghest loses its claw attacks but retains its bite attack.

Pass Without Trace (Ex): A barghest in wolf form can use pass without trace (as the spell) as a free action.

Skills: *A barghest in wolf form gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

Monster: Chain Devil

CR 6; Medium Outsider; HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20; Base Attack/Grapple +8/+10; Attack Chain +10 melee (2d4+2/19–20) Full Attack 2 chains +10 melee (2d4+2/19–20); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft (10ft with chains); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6; AL Lawful Evil; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12

Special Attacks: Dancing chains, unnerving gaze

Skills and feats: Climb +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +17, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Spot +13, Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings), Alertness, Improved Critical (chain), Improved Initiative, Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, regeneration 2, spell resistance 18.

Kytons are humanlike devils, wrapped in chains instead of clothing. A chain devil is 6 feet tall and weighs about 300 pounds, chains included. Chain devils speak Infernal and Common.

Combat

A chain devil attacks by flailing away with the spiked chains

that serve as its clothing, armour, and weapons.

A chain devil's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Dancing Chains (Su): A chain devil's most awesome attack is its ability to control up to four chains within 20 feet as a standard action, making the chains dance or move as it wishes. In addition, a chain devil can increase these chains' length by up to 15 feet and cause them to sprout razor-edged barbs. These chains attack as effectively as the devil itself. If a chain is in another creature's possession, the creature can attempt a DC 15 Will save to break the chain devil's power over that chain. If the save is successful, the Kyton cannot attempt to control that particular chain again for 24 hours or until the chain leaves the creature's possession. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A chain devil can climb chains it controls at its normal speed without making Climb checks.

Unnerving Gaze (Su): Range 30 ft., Will DC 15 negates. A chain devil can make its face resemble one of an opponent's departed loved ones or bitter enemies, or the opponent themselves. Those who fail their saves take a –2 penalty on attack rolls made against the Chain Devil when/if they fight him, the effect lasting for 1d3 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Regeneration (Ex): Chain devils take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor. A chain devil that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

Skills: Chain devils have a +8 racial bonus on Craft checks involving metalwork.

Monster: Dark Mantle

CR 1; Size Small Magical Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +4; Spd 20 ft./fly 20ft (poor); AC 17; Base Attack/Grapple +1 /+0; Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; AL Neutral; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: Darkness, improved grab, constrict 1d4+4

Skills and feats: Hide +10, Listen +5, Spot +5, Improved Initiative

The darkmantle hangs from a ceiling by a muscular "foot" at the top of its body. It can look like a stalactite, by holding its tentacles stiffly under itself, or like a lump of rock, spreading its tentacles so the membrane between them covers its body. Its shell and skin usually resemble limestone, but a darkmantle can change its colour to match almost any type of stony background. A darkmantle is about 4 feet long from the tips of

its tentacles to the top of its head. It weighs about 30 pounds.

Combat

A darkmantle attacks by dropping onto its prey and wrapping its tentacles around the opponent's head. Once attached, it squeezes and tries to suffocate the foe. A darkmantle that misses its initial attack often flies up and tries to drop on the opponent again.

Darkness (Su): Once per day a darkmantle can cause darkness as the darkness spell (caster level 5th). It most often uses this ability just before attacking.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a darkmantle must hit a Large or smaller creature with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

If it wins the grapple check, it attaches to the opponent's head and can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Blindsight (Ex): A darkmantle can "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allows it to ascertain objects and creatures within 90 feet. A silence spell negates this ability and effectively blinds the darkmantle.

Skills: A darkmantle has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks.

These bonuses are lost if its blindsight is negated. The creature's variable coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.

Monster: Fiendish Giant Scorpion

CR 3; Size Large/Monstrous; HD 5d8+10; hp 32; Init +0; Spd 50 ft.; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +3/+11; Attack Claw +6 melee (1d6+4), 2 claws +6 melee (1d6+4) and sting +1 melee (1d6+2 plus poison) (magic weapons); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +1; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 19, Dex 10, Con 14, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 2.

Special Attacks: Smite Good, Constrict 1d6+4, improved grab, poison

Skills and feats: Listen +2, Spot +14, Darkvision (60ft), Resistance to cold and fire, spell resistance equal to HD+5 (max 25), -10 point damage reduction, Tremorsense 60 ft., Vermin traits.

Combat

Constrict (Ex): A monstrous scorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a monstrous scorpion must hit with a claw attack. A monstrous scorpion can use

either its Strength modifier or Dexterity modifier for grapple checks, whichever is better.

Poison (Ex): A monstrous scorpion has a poisonous sting. The Fort save DC is 13 with 1d3 Con damage on a failed roll.

Monster: Fiendish Hawk

CR 2; Size Tiny; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft./fly 60ft (average); AC 17; Base Attack/Grapple +0/-10; Attack Talons (magic weapon) +5 melee (1d4-2); Space/Reach 2ft/2ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6.

Special Attacks: Smite Good

Skills and feats: Listen +2, Spot +14, Darkvision (60ft), Resistance to cold and fire, spell resistance equal to HD+5 (max 25), -5 point damage reduction.

Monster: Giant Octopus

CR 7; Size Large Aquatic Animal; HD 6d8+11; hp 40; Init +2; Spd 20 ft., (Swim 30ft); AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +5/+13; Attack Tentacle +10 melee (1d4+5); Full Attack 8 tentacles +10 melee (1d4+5) and bite +5 melee (1d8+2); Space/Reach 10ft/10ft (20ft with tentacles); SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +3; AL Neutral; Str 19, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 3.

Special Attacks: Improved grab, constrict

Skills and feats: Escape Artist +12, Hide +12, Listen +4, Spot +6, Swim +13, Alertness, Skill Focus (Hide), Toughness

These creatures are aggressive and territorial hunters, with arms reaching 10 feet or more in length. Their tentacles are studded with barbs and sharp-edged suckers.

Combat

An opponent can attack a giant octopus's tentacles with a sunder attempt as if they were weapons. The giant octopus's tentacles have 10 hit points each. If a giant octopus is currently grappling a target with the tentacle that is being attacked, it usually uses another limb to make its attack of opportunity against the opponent making the sunder attempt. Severing one of a giant octopus's tentacles deals 5 points of damage to the creature. A giant octopus usually withdraws from combat if it loses four tentacles.

Constrict (Ex): A giant octopus deals 2d8+6 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a giant octopus must hit an opponent of any size with a tentacle attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Ink Cloud (Ex): A giant octopus can emit a cloud of jet-black ink 20 feet high by 20 feet wide by 20 feet long once per minute as a free action. The cloud provides total concealment, which

the octopus normally uses to escape a losing fight. All vision within the cloud is obscured.

Jet (Ex): A giant octopus can jet backward once per round as a full-round action, at a speed of 200 feet. It must move in a straight line, but does not provoke attacks of opportunity while jetting.

Skills: A giant octopus can change colours, giving it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks. A giant octopus also can squeeze and contort its body, giving it a +10 racial bonus on Escape Artist checks. A giant octopus has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Monster: Goblins

CR 1; Size Small; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., (Swim 30ft); AC 15; Base Attack/Grapple +1/-3; Attack Morningstar +2 melee (1d6) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; AL Neutral Evil; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Special Attacks: none

Skills and feats: Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2, Alertness, Darkvision (60ft)

A goblin stands 3 to 3-1/2 feet tall and weigh 40 to 45 pounds. Its eyes are usually dull and glazed, varying in colour from red to yellow. A goblin's skin colour ranges from yellow through any shade of orange to a deep red; usually all members of a single tribe are about the same colour. Goblins wear clothing of dark leather, tending toward drab, soiled-looking colours. Goblins speak Goblin; those with Intelligence scores of 12 or higher also speak Common.

Combat

Being bullied by bigger, stronger creatures has taught goblins to exploit what few advantages they have: sheer numbers and malicious ingenuity. The concept of a fair fight is meaningless in their society. They favor ambushes, overwhelming odds, dirty tricks, and any other edge they can devise.

Goblins have a poor grasp of strategy and are cowardly by nature, tending to flee the field if a battle turns against them.

Monster: Grick

CR 3; Medium Aberration; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +1/+3; Attack Tentacle +3 melee (1d4+2); Full Attack 4 tentacles +3 melee (1d4+2); bite -2 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; AL Neutral; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 5

Special Attacks: None

Skills and feats: Climb +10, Hide +3*, Listen +6, Spot +6, Alertness, Track, Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., scent

An adult Grick is about 8 feet long from the tips of its tentacles to the end of its body and weighs some 200 pounds. Its body coloration is uniformly dark, with a pale underbelly.

Combat

Gricks attack when hungry or threatened. They hunt by holing up near high-traffic areas, using their natural coloration to blend into convenient shadows. When prey (virtually anything that moves) ventures near, they lash out with their tentacles. A Grick's rubbery body seems to shed blows of any kind. Its jaws are relatively small and weak compared to its body mass, so rather than consume its kill immediately, a grick normally drags its victim back to its lair to be eaten at its leisure.

A Grick's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Skills: A grick has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened.

Their coloration affords Gricks a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in natural rocky areas.

Monster: Harpy

CR 4; Size Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8; hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft./fly 80ft (average); AC 13; Base Attack/Grapple +7/+7; Attack Club +7 melee (1d6); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Special Attacks: Captivating Song

Skills and feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Perform (Oratory) +5, Spot +3, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Persuasive, Darkvision (60ft).

Harpies like to entrance hapless travellers with their magical songs and lead them to unspeakable torments. Only when a harpy has finished playing with its new "toys" will it release them from suffering by killing and consuming them.

Combat

When a harpy engages in battle, it prefers to use Flyby Attack and strike with a melee weapon.

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim

within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

Monster: Ogre

CR 3; Size Large; HD 4d8+11; hp 29; Init -1; Spd 30 ft. in hide armour; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +3/+12; Attack Greatclub +8 melee (2d8+7) or javelin +1 ranged (1d8+5); Space/Reach 10ft/10ft; SV Fort +6, Ref +0, Will +1; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 21, Dex 8, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7

Special Attacks: none

Skills and feats: Climb +5, Listen +2, Spot +2, Toughness, Weapon Focus (greatclub), Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision.

Adult ogres stand 9 to 10 feet tall and weigh 600 to 650 pounds. Their skin colour ranges from dull yellow to dull brown. Their clothing consists of poorly cured furs and hides, which add to their naturally repellent odour.

Ogres speak Giant, some may also speak Common.

Combat

Ogres favor overwhelming odds, sneak attacks, and ambushes over a fair fight. They are intelligent enough to fire ranged weapons first to soften up their foes before closing, but ogre gangs and bands fight as unorganized individuals.

Monster: Shocker Lizard

CR 1; Size Small; HD 2d10+2; hp 13; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +2/-2; Attack Bite +3 melee (1d4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; AL Neutral; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6

Special Attacks: stunning shock, lethal shock

Skills and feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10, Improved Initiative, Darkvision 60 ft., electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision.

A shocker lizard has a pale grey or blue underside, shading to a darker hue on its back. It has blue-black markings along its back and tail. A shocker lizard is about 1 foot tall at the shoulder and weighs about 25 pounds.

Combat

A shocker lizard relies on its electricity abilities in combat. A lizard tends to bite only after its shock has rendered an opponent unconscious or when the shock seems to have no effect at all. A solitary lizard flees once it delivers its shocks, but if other shocker lizards are nearby, they all home in on their comrade's discharges and attempt to administer their shocks to the foe.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 points of nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Lethal Shock (Su): Whenever two or more shocker lizards are within 20 feet of each other, they can work together to create a lethal shock. This effect has a radius of 20 feet, centred on any one contributing lizard. The shock deals 2d8 points of electricity damage for each lizard contributing to it, to a maximum of 12d8. A Reflex save (DC 10 + number of lizards contributing) reduces the damage by half.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Skills: Shocker lizards have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks due to their coloration. Shocker lizards have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Shocker lizards use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. A shocker lizard has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. A shocker lizard has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

Monster: Spectre

CR 6; Size Medium; HD 7d8+8; hp 38; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. Fly 80ft (Perfect); AC 15; Base Attack/Grapple +3/-; Attack Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; AL Lawful Evil; Str —, Dex 15, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Special Attacks: Energy drain, create spawn

Skills and feats: Hide +13, Intimidate +9, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura.

A spectre is roughly human-sized and is weightless.

Combat

In close combat a spectre attacks with its numbing, life-draining touch. It makes full use of its incorporeal nature, moving through walls, ceilings, and floors as it attacks.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The DC is 15 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes

a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

Monster: Undead Dire Bear

CR 6; Large Undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 19; Base Attack/Grapple +9/+15; Attack claw +15 melee (2d4+8); Full Attack 2 claws +19 melee (2d4+8), and bite +13 melee (2d8+5); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9;

AL Neutral Evil; Str 33, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1

Special Attacks: Slam (1d8)

Skills and feats: Toughness, Undead traits

The omnivorous dire bear usually does not bother creatures that try to avoid it, but this zombified dire bear is extremely aggressive and has undead traits. The zombie dire bear has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. It can move up to its speed and attack in the same round but only if it attempts a charge. The dire bear is 12 feet long and weighs 8,000 pounds.

Combat

A dire bear attacks by tearing at opponents with its claws or using its slam attack.

Monster: Unseen Foe

CR 1; Size unknown/Undead; HD 1d12; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. Fly 30ft (perfect).; AC 11; Attack/Grapple +2/+2; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common, Orc.

Skills and feats: Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spot +0; Undead Traits

The unseen foe is the malevolent poltergeist of a dead half-orc. Unlike a standard ghost, the poltergeist is capable of inflicting damage on non-ethereal characters and can pick up and hurl manifest objects. The poltergeist lacks most of the special abilities of a ghost, such as horrific appearance, or frightful moan.



DARK SIDE OF THE SUN ~ PRINTABLE VERSION

This version of the module should be printed and stapled together to form an easy reference booklet for use during gameplay. The GM should read through the original file first, to familiarise him/herself with the adventure. Where possible we have kept this printable version in black and white to save on printer ink.

CHRONICLE INFORMATION

Thaumaturgos

Thaumaturgy is a word embedded in legend. Magic users of Opus refer to their art as thaumaturgy. Items resonating with magical energies, spell scrolls or items imbued with magic are known as thaumaturgic artefacts. Thaumaturgy is even the name given to the goddess of magic, sorcery and illusion.

Earheart and Graya Thaumaturgos were surprisingly unassuming wizards, given the magnitude to which their name has grown in the centuries since their death. Identical twins and both members of the wizarding Order of Mohan, the pair were young sorcerers, each eager to learn, but unwilling to share their discoveries with other wizards. Their peers recognised them as magic users of considerable skill, and men of many qualities, but unlikely to achieve greatness, particularly in the fields of magic they endeavoured to study. The brothers lacked any compunction to confer with the gathered minds of their own order, and in so doing lost out on a great well of arcane knowledge which might otherwise have provided them with the vital methods and spell-crafting techniques their flawed experiments sorely needed.

Where most of the order occupied impressive stone towers or enigmatic citadels constructed on high peaks in the Greymist Mountains, the Thaumaturgos twins lived in a small wooden hut in the middle of Marshdown swamp, an impish familiar and the occasional passing local their only company. There they developed spells based on their favoured subject, gravity and the energy force they named 'gravitas'. In their efforts the twins were largely successful, and many of the levitation or anti-gravity based spells used by modern-day magic users have a firm basis in the early works of Earheart and Graya, though very few magic users are actually aware of the fact.

One day, a prominent member of the Order of Mohan was approached by a woodsman local to the swamp in which the brothers lived. He seemed agitated and spoke of bright lights and strange sounds in the depths of the swamp, specifically in the region where the wizard brothers' hut was known to be situated. He knew of the Order, and of the twins being members. He numbered among those rare individuals who considered themselves friends to the brothers, and thus had they told him where to go should a violent or unexpected fate befall them.

Sensing trouble, the wizard called other members of the Order to his side and together they stalked into the depths of the swamp, there to discover the laboratory of the twins apparently empty of all furnishings. The walls, ceiling and floor were smeared in a strange red mass which oozed and trickled with the consistency of congealed blood. The brothers were conspicuous by their absence. Indeed, upon testing the substance, the wizards were horrified to discover that this mass constituted the remains of the pair, each mixed with wood, metal, glass and fabric reduced to mere particles, so that the result seemed like a paste spread thickly upon every visible surface.

A search of the house ensued and revealed, among other things, the nature of the twins' most recent experiments and a variety of newly constructed spells. The wizards were tentative in testing each spell, afraid they would suffer the same fate as Earheart and Graya. Eventually, however, and through cautious trial and error, they identified the spell responsible for the wizard brothers' annihilation and endeavoured to test it themselves. The wizards of Mohan wished to understand the nature of the magics the Thaumaturgos twins had been dabbling in and sought to recover as much of the brothers' work as they could, testing it with safer methods and in so doing compiling a steady picture of the spell responsible for their deaths. From this spell came numerous other spells and the crafting of a single magical artefact, the Orb of Evocation. The Orb was activated and the magic of Thaumaturgos tested. A secret was revealed.

So great was this revelation that the name Thaumaturgos would soon become synonymous with magical discovery and

excellence. In crafting their spell, though the casting had killed them, Earheart and Graya had unveiled the foundations of one of the most astounding secrets ever to be uncovered through sorcerous dabbling.

Nobody knows what became of the wizards of Mohan, though it is likely they eventually suffered the same fate as the twins. The true nature of the secret was never fully revealed, or passed on, though a select few were probably privy to limited versions of the truth. Through these few, rumours somehow filtered down to the general populace of Opus, and rumours became a kind of truth, embedded in the collective memory of a world, languishing as uncertain yet fantastic tales in folklore and myth, emerging in the words of bardsong, or appearing in the occasional line of mythical poetry.

Thaumaturgy is the craft of magic and evocation is the tapping of potent and mystical energies. Both terms derived from the time of the twins and the unveiling of a great but long forgotten secret.

Player Introduction

The party are travelling in the shadow of the Greymist Mountains when they happen across a small settlement named Stantionbridge, a village of diminutive thatched cottages huddled together within a wooden palisade upon a circular island, surrounded on one side by a natural moat in the shape of a horseshoe, and sheltered on the other by the jagged wall of the Greymist Mountains. A large raft, which must be called from the inner bank by ringing a large bronze bell situated on the outer bank, ferries visitors across the moat, which itself joins a river running south into the mountains.

The village is a welcoming spot and the local tavern (The Turning Mere) serves decent food, making a nice change from the trail rations to which the party have probably grown accustomed. The barman is a bear of a man named Oberon Fordkeeper who runs the tavern with his two wide-shouldered sons Frith and Penfirth and his wife Meredreith. He welcomes the group into his premises and serves them free ales as a symbol of friendship. In return he asks them for news of the outside world and any locations they may have passed through on their way to Stantionbridge.

The group may be surprised to learn that they are not the only strangers to visit the village this day when Oberon points out a cloaked figure seated on the far side of the bar. Local patrons are giving him a wide berth and he sits alone, sipping carefully from a flagon of ale.

The figure spies the party and suddenly leaps to his feet, hurrying from the tavern by a back door. Oberon explains that the stranger came to Stantionbridge earlier that day, accompanied by a group of ruffian types who, at this time he believes, are resting and watering their horses behind the tavern. Normally, the guards who operate the ferry would never allow such a group of obvious cut-throats passage across the moat, but this worthy and his cohorts somehow managed to convince them to let him in. Oberon wonders if the shifty stranger isn't some kind of wizard and he gained access across the moat by using magic on the guards.

The front door of the inn bursts open at this moment and the stranger enters. A group of thugs accompanies him, each man brandishing a weapon of some sort. They glare at the player characters with unconcealed menace.

Read aloud to the players:

His voice barely louder than a whisper, the stranger sneers, "so, here are Agrovar's pets at last, scurvy dogs upon my heel. Taller than I expected, which, I suppose, is why you have done well to cover such a

distance in so short a time." you are struck by the dark colour of his face and the sharpness of his features. There is something of the hawk about this man, with his hooked chin, beaky nose and beady eyes. His hair too, thick and lustrous, flows away from his head like the downy feathers of a bird and his cape billows around him like nothing less than a pair of long black wings, albeit wings more akin to that of a bat than a bird.

Even as the party profess their innocence and try to explain that the stranger has them mistaken for somebody else, locals will scramble out of the way and the thugs will draw weapons. A fight is unavoidable as the PCs' protests fall on deaf ears.

Oberon Fordkeeper will vault the bar and join the fight on the side of the player characters. He will attack the stranger, who will subsequently deal him a mortal blow, killing him outright. The stranger will then turn and flee, his cohorts closing ranks behind him to prevent the PCs giving chase.

Canker's Mercenaries

Male human Fighters Lvl 2: CR 2; Size M (5 ft., 10 in. tall); HD 2d10; hp 11; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +2 melee, or +2 ranged; SV Fort +3, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NE; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10.

Oberon Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner (Innkeeper) Lvl2: CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 8 in. tall); HD 2d4; hp 7; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +1 melee, or +1 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 10.

Once the battle is won and players have rushed out of the tavern to find the stranger, they will learn that an agitated man dressed in a black cape was seen racing out of the tavern just moments before. He promptly transfigured into a great bird of prey and rose into the air, flying south toward the mountains.

At this point the players will have a motive to give chase, but no lead to go by (unless one of the thugs has been spared for interrogation- see below). Even the best tracker among the player characters could not follow a bird. However, Frith and Penfirth are enraged by the murder of their father and soon deem to set off along the Mohan trail into the mountains to find the evil 'shape-shifter' and bring it to justice. It is likely the players will opt to take up with them on their journey, however if they do not, they will shortly be approached by Meredriith, beside herself with grief for her dead husband and terrified for the fate of her sons. She will beg the PCs to follow Frith and Penfirth into the mountains, to watch over them and make sure they come to no harm. If players are feeling in a particularly mercenary mood, she will offer them a handful of emeralds as payment for their trouble, and promise more if they bring her sons safely back to the village.

If the players decide to stay in the village for a while longer, or explore the surrounding countryside instead of chasing the bird, they may hook up with Agrovar the dwarf - see below.



GM Overview

This adventure introduces the players to a historical aspect of the Opus setting by sending them on a dungeon crawl in search of a lost artefact, the Orb of Evocation, whose potent magical powers will present them with a startling revelation and inject an exciting twist into their game.

The artefact itself was buried many centuries ago by the wizards of Mohan, an alliance of magic users responsible for developing the magical spells of the Thaumaturgos brothers as described in the Chronicle on page 4. The wizards soon discovered that the magic of the Orb harboured an astonishing secret and feared the secret would be used by the power mongers of Mohan for evil purposes. The Orb was subsequently buried in a deep tomb on the outskirts of the Greymist Mountains, along with the remains of the Thaumaturgos brothers themselves.

The caves around the burial chamber were fitted with various devious traps designed to prevent would be thieves finding and taking the Orb. Chambers surrounding these caves were then populated with an assortment of magical creatures who would guard the traps and prevent easy access into the tomb. The entrance to the caves was covered and all trace of its location removed from the records of the Order. The wizards never spoke of it again, though rumours surrounding the Thaumaturgos brothers, the order of Mohan and the mystical Orb of Evocation endured, long after the wizards themselves had taken the secret resting place of the artefact to their graves.

In the time since, many treasure hunters have sought the caves leading to the tomb of the orb. None have succeeded. But recently, a parchment of notes, penned by treasure hunter on the trail of the Orb, came to light in the northern district of Carthidge. Here it passed through the hands of two treasure hunters, Canker Dern, an evil wizard whose life has been spent attempting to locate the Orb, and Agrovar the dwarf, a paladin who knows little of the Orb's history or power but who recognises the sound of an expensive magical item when he hears it.

By coincidence, Canker and Agrovar are age-old enemies, sworn to battle one another whenever they meet. Now the pair have set off in search of the lost tomb and will stop at nothing to locate and claim the Orb of Evocation for themselves. Having learned that Canker is also on the trail of the Orb, Agrovar is now more determined than ever to find the item and keep it from the evil wizard's clutches.

The entrance to the tomb, once buried and forgotten, has since been eroded away by the presence of water flowing down through a natural culvert formed several centuries ago by the movement of a particularly vast glacier in the Greymist Mountains. The entrance is now open, but hidden underwater, specifically in the moat of Stantionbridge village where the waters culminate in a small circular mere and drain into a subterranean cave. This cave marks the entrance hall into the tomb.

To access the tomb, any would be treasure hunter would need to throw caution to the wind and dive into the mere, there to be swallowed by the whirlpool draining water into the entrance hall of the caves. Though this may seem suicidal, it is in fact quite possible to manage without drowning. Once the water has passed out of the mere and through the drainage hole in the bottom of the moat, it pours into a lake, the surface of which is level with the floor of the cavern. Anyone falling into the well will be pushed under by the force of the tumultuous waters cascading down on them from above, but will then be free to swim away from the epicentre of the falls and surface at the edge of the well.

Both Agrovar and Canker Dern know Stantionbridge is an important location, but neither knows the precise location of the tomb entrance. When the pair arrive, their initial (erroneous) guess will be that the emerald mine at the rear of the village is actually part of the tomb. When Canker encounters the player characters he will already be anticipating the arrival of Agrovar and will assume they are linked somehow with the dwarf. His mercenaries will be at the rear of the tavern, preparing to sneak up to the emerald mine for a closer look. He will subsequently call them to arms and attack the PCs. When he flees at the end of the battle he will transfigure into a black hawk and fly into the

mountains, there to nurse his wounds and plan his next move. It is Canker's eventual hope that Agrovar (and those working for the dwarf, among whom the PCs are now presumed to number) will follow him, Canker, into the Mohan Trail, at which point Canker can take flight back to Stantionbridge and take the opportunity to find the caves before Agrovar and make a head start in his exploration. He has lost his mercenary bodyguard, but Canker is quite confident he can survive the tomb alone.

Canker Dern's notes on the Orb of Evocation were purchased from mercenaries touting a variety of old scrolls to patrons at a back-alley bar in the city of Carthidge. When Canker read these particular notes his enthusiasm to purchase them from the mercenaries (who had quite obviously stolen them from some unknown source, and who clearly had no clue as to their significance) made it painfully obvious to the mercenaries that they should charge a high price. They also refused to hand over the scrolls immediately, arranging instead to meet Canker the following day where they could be sure the city militia would not be watching the transaction. In fact, during the interim, the mercenaries copied out the writing on the scrolls, realising that here was something worth selling more than once. Thus, the content of the scrolls was to fall into the hands of Agrovar the dwarf, just a day later.

If the player characters fall in with Agrovar the dwarf, he will happily show them his version of the notes, keen to have as much help in recovering the lost Orb as he can get. He's already found out enough to know that the Orb is a priceless treasure, so he has no qualms about splitting any wealth with whomsoever chooses to help him in his task. Canker Dern, on the other hand, will guard his own copy of the notes with his life and has no intention of sharing them, or the prize of the Orb, with anybody. If the notes, or the Orb, are mentioned to any of the Stantionbridge locals, they will have no information to give. They know nothing of the lost caves, or the Thaumaturgos brothers and, so far as they are concerned, the emerald mines harbour no caverns or chambers beyond those already excavated.



Outcomes

The following is a list of possible plot hooks for snagging the players into the adventure. Any one or a combination of a few should have the desired effect.

One of Canker's thugs is spared and interrogated. He claims to be a mercenary from the northern region of Carthidge, hired by the stranger, a wizard by the name of Canker Dern, to accompany him down from the north to the Greymist Mountains, there to help him explore an ancient cave system and recover a lost artefact. The thug has no knowledge of the particulars of the plan, and doesn't know the location of the caves, but he does know the artefact is highly prized. A second group, led by a dwarven paladin named Agrovar, is also travelling down from the north, having learned of the artefact's location and set off to recover it at precisely the same time as Canker. The thug believes Canker mistook the player characters for Agrovar's men, or at least assumed them to be some kind of advance party hired by the dwarf to stop Canker before he could reach the caves. Other than this, the thug has very little additional information to impart. Once his interrogation is over, he will probably be locked up by the villagers and tried for the murder of Oberon Fordkeeper, then sent north by caravan to face justice in Carthidge. Taking the thug to Carthidge could be an adventure in itself, and the villagers may attempt to charge the PCs with the task (since they were involved in the fight and therefore partly to blame for the barman's death). In this case, we recommend the GM introduce the Opus adventure, *Escape From Carthidge and Chains In The Dark*, which can be played along the way through

the region of Paravelly.

The PCs take up with Frith and Penfirth Fordkeeper, or agree to help Meredriith Fordkeeper by following them, and head off into the mountains. The GM should refer to *The Mohan Trail Scenario*.

The PCs stay in Stantionbridge a while longer. The GM should refer to *The Barbarian Horde Scenario*.

The PCs stay in Stantionbridge for several days. The GM should refer to *The Barbarian Horde Scenario* before pursuing the following encounter: Agrovar's dwarven adventurers,

Agrovar the Dwarf

Male dwarf Paladin Lvl5: CR 5; Size M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 5d10+10; hp 35; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 9 (-1 Dex); Attack +9 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +8, Ref +2, Will +6; AL LG; Str 18, Dex 9, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 14. Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven, Terran. Skills and feats: Craft (Armoursmithing) +3, Craft (Blacksmithing) +3, Craft (Stonemasonry) +3, Craft (Trapmaking) +3, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +3, Diplomacy +8, Disable Device +1.5, Disguise +3, Forgery +2, Hide -1, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +9, Listen +3, Move Silently -1, Ride +0, Sleight of Hand +1, Spot +3; Combat Reflexes, Power Attack. Possessions: 4,300 gp in gear. Paladin Spells Per Day: 1.

Agrovar's Dwarfs

Male dwarfs Fighters Lvl 3: CR 3; Size M (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 3d10+3; hp 24; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 10; Attack +3 melee, or +3 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +1; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 8. Languages Spoken: Common, Dwarven. Skills and feats: Climb +5, Craft (Armoursmithing) +2, Craft (Blacksmithing) +2, Craft (Stonemasonry) +2, Craft (Trapmaking) +2, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +2, Handle Animal +5, Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Ride +1, Spot +0; Combat Reflexes, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Rapid Reload (crossbow, light). Possessions: 2,500 gp in gear.

The Notes

(The next page should be printed and given to players)

The Orb of Evocation- prized artefact, priceless Magical object of abjuration

Twin brothers of Thaumaturgos

'Gravity of the situation?'

Ask Ulnar the wizard - Wizard Order of Mohan

Thaumaturgos- lived in Bleaktonne swamp?

Last resting place of the Orb, hidden, secret caves,

buried to keep from power mongers of Mohan

Stantionbridge important, secret resting place

Somewhere in the Greymist Mountains (is Stantionbridge in the Greymist Mountains??)

Follow the river to the last resting place (what is last resting place???)

What does the Orb do?

The Mohan Trail- are the caves hidden on the Mohan Trail?

Getting to the trail - go to Stantionbridge (!) Ring the bell for the ferry and cross the moat. The door unto the Mohan Trail stands at the rear of the village.

gabriel's notes

Tranquity of the situation?

The Orb of Evocation prized artefact,
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Ask Ulnar the wizard * Wizard Order of Mohan
Twin brothers of Thaumatourgos

Did Thaumatourgos live in Bleaktonne swamp?
Last resting place of the Orb, hidden, secret caves, buried to
Keep from power mongers of Mohan

Stantionbridge important

are in the Greymist Mountains (is Stantionbridge in the Greymist Mountains??)

secret resting place?

Follow the river to the last resting place (what is last resting place???)

What does the orb do?

The Mohan Trail - are the caves hidden on the Mohan Trail?
Getting to the trail - go to Stantionbridge (!) Ring the bell for the
ferry and cross the moat. The door unto the Mohan Trail stands
at the rear of the village.

accompanied by Agrovar himself, arrive in Stantionbridge three days after the barman's murder.

Agrovar will be most distressed to hear of Canker's evil act, and will endeavour to compensate the village by vowing to hunt down the evil wizard and exact revenge on behalf of the barman and his family. When Agrovar learns of the brothers Frith and Penfirth, he will set forth along the Mohan Trail immediately, intent on finding both them and Canker before he continues on his quest for the caves. (See Agrovar's Dwarfs in the NPC section). The PCs may opt to accompany Agrovar's group at this stage. If the barman and the Fordkeeper brothers are not part of the adventure, Agrovar will be most interested to hear of the PCs' encounter with Canker Dern, but will not venture into the mountains in search of him. Instead he and his fellow dwarfs will set about negotiating with the head of the village for a chance to inspect the emerald mine. Since the villagers value their mine above all else, the dwarfs' request may be turned down. Little does he know, the mine is not the site of the lost caves anyway.

The players learn of Ulnar the wizard from Agrovar's notes.

Of all the villagers, Mortise the fisherman is most familiar with Ulnar, being the only one who routinely trades with the wizard (although he only appears to trade, in fact he has other motives for his deliveries to the Talus Citadel - see Stantionbridge details, location 9), and if the PCs ask locals about the wizard, they will likely be deferred to Mortise who may offer to act as guide in return for payment. The GM should refer to The Wizard of Talus Scenario.

The players discover the site of the lost caves and explore, with or without Agrovar the dwarf, though the chances of them finding the cave entrance without him are extremely slim. The GM should refer to The Tomb of Thaumaturgos Scenario.

The players show no interest in pursuing the matter of Canker or the murder of Oberon Fordkeeper, or, the PCs have completed their adventure and returned to Stantionbridge. The GM should refer to General Rumours for a collection of alternative adventure seeds.

CAMPAIGN INFORMATION

The Greymist

Mountain Region

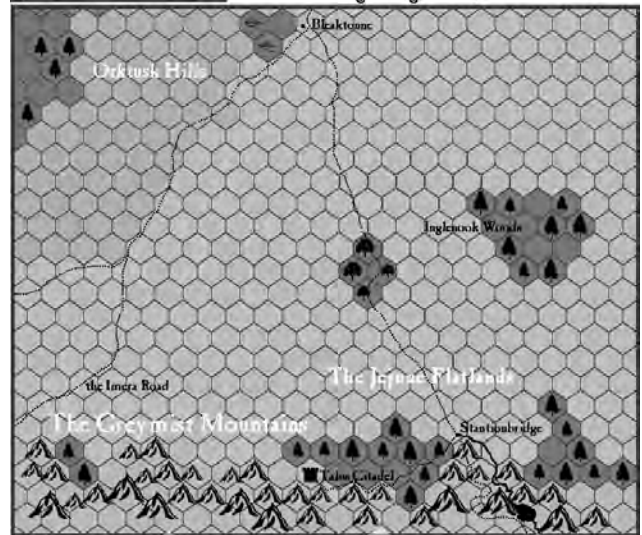
Stantionbridge

Stantionbridge is a friendly, but isolated mining settlement, often the target of wild creatures and lawless barbarians who roam freely in the wide sweeping plains of the Jejune Flatlands to the north. The village is well protected by the mountains at its back and the moat and river. A contingent of two guards man the ferry raft, which is large enough for two wagons, plus horses. The raft is conveyed across the moat using a winch which itself is attached to a sturdy rope spanning the moat from one bank to the other. If the rope were cut while the raft was in motion, the raft would be set adrift and unable to cross. The current flows fairly quickly from south to north, so the raft would drift anti-clockwise around the moat until it either grounded on the outer bank or coasted full circle and stopped on the western side of the village. Here the water pools in a small mere which itself empties into a subterranean reservoir (the entrance to the lost cave of the Orb of Evocation- see above). A whirlpool spins permanently in the centre of the mere, which could cause problems for anyone trapped on the drifting raft but which is not powerful enough to suck the raft underwater.

The raft is too large and too ungainly to steer or manoeuvre using conventional methods. Two small jetties used for offloading and boarding the raft stand on respective sides of the moat. A bronze bell mounted on a wooden post stands on the outermost jetty and visitors or villagers must ring this in order to call over the raft. At night, the raft will only come if a password is yelled out. By day, the guards are usually able to see who stands

Text = Style

Stantionbridge District



upon the jetty well enough to decide whether crossing the river is worth the risk. The area directly in front of the moat and the village is a vast open tract of land, with no places for attackers to hide from the approaching ferry, so anyone who wants to cross must stand exposed and visible. The guards will usually be out of sight on the inner bank, where they spend much of their time in a small hut next to the arrival jetty. This hut, unlike the buildings inside the village, is made of stone, the roof flat and surrounded by crenulations. A ladder inside the building leads to the roof where the guards can go in the event of an attack and where they can fire down on intruders with an assortment of bolts and arrows stored there for just such an eventuality.

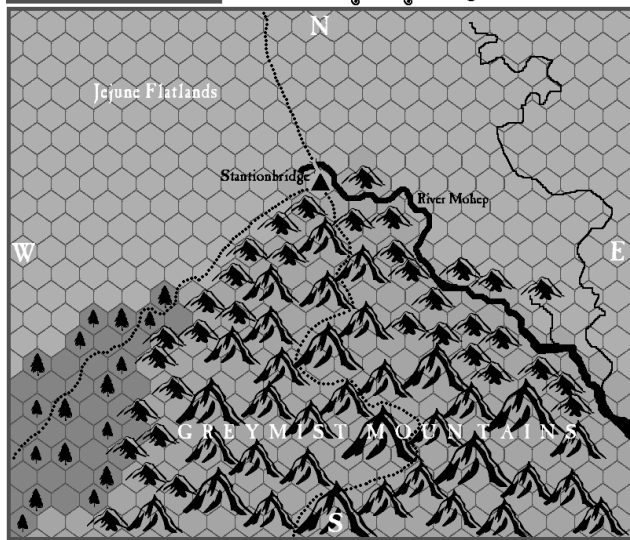
Stantionbridge village stands on the top of a man-made escarpment, the houses and buildings grouped together within a high palisade constructed from sharpened wooden stakes. Two watch towers stand at the front of the palisade and between them stands the main gate, a hefty wooden door which can be thrown shut and locked at a moments notice. Both the palisade and gate display evidence of past attacks, the wood scarred and scorched in places where flaming arrows and hand-held weapons have bitten deep.

The buildings within the village are made from a mixture of clay and mud, most of the roofs thatched with dried grass harvested from the Jejune Flatlands, and a handful sporting clay-tiles. Most of the thatch looks clean and new, the houses underneath well maintained. In fact, almost all of the buildings in Stantionbridge have recently been re-thatched and rebuilt after a massive attack by barbarian hordes where flaming rocks and torches were fired over the fence by wooden trebuchet brought to bear on the outermost bank of the moat. Quite where the barbarians managed to procure the trebuchet is unknown, but of considerable worry to the inhabitants of Stantionbridge who, previously, have had nothing worse to contend with than arrows and slingshot. Various meetings have been held in the village over how to deal with the increasing intensity of the barbarian attacks, and most villagers are in agreement that the thatch should be replaced with baked clay tiles. Efforts to do this are already evident in the newly constructed rooftops adorning a couple of buildings.

The party may also observe the ongoing construction of some kind of conveying mechanism being built on the western side of the village. When finished and operational, this mechanism will convey buckets filled with water up the bank of the escarpment and through a hatch in the wooden fence to the waiting hands of villagers, who will then be able to pass the buckets along a human chain to the source of any fire. Before now, the gathering of water has taken too long and fires have simply raged unchecked until their source of fuel is spent. In most cases, this has meant the destruction of thatched roofs, and some of the building beneath, though the clay and mud of outer

1hex = 1mile

Stantionbridge District



walls is fairly impervious to fire, so the basic structures of most affected buildings have remained undamaged.

Behind Stantionbridge can be found the doorway into the Mohan Trail, a winding path which chews a snaking route into the craggy mountains and rises steadily across the flanks of Greymist. This trail, treacherous and crumbled in many places, eventually descends into the Kingdom of Mohan where it crosses the downs of Shiredawn until arriving at the northern gate of Mardor, capital city of Mohan.

Few travellers come from this direction, for the mountains are perilous, and filled with many enemies. A hefty wooden gate stands where the trail meets the rear of the village, a fortified doorway guarded at all times by at least one villager standing on the adjacent watchtower. This door rarely comes under attack, serving to keep out wandering creatures and wild animals more than anything else. Orcs and goblins sometimes launch sporadic and half-hearted attacks on the door. In these instances villagers will range along the two ledges overlooking the trail where it cuts a deep channel into the mountains and rain stones and arrows down upon the would-be invaders. This method is extraordinarily effective and has even been used to see off ogres and trolls.

The village of Stantionbridge is home to just fifteen human families and is therefore a frail patch of civilisation in the middle of so much wild wasteland. For this reason the fortifications and defences are of paramount importance to the inhabitants who spend much of their time maintaining, fixing and improving on the measures in place. The rest of their time is spent weaving, preparing food and toiling in the emerald mine. There is a single metalsmith in the village, with a crude yet operational forge which provides the community with minor metalwork, including hinges, swords, arrow heads, belt buckles, picks, shovels, and so forth. Most trade within the village is based on food, clothes and services. Currency is rare in Stantionbridge, except where visitors seek to trade their gear, in which case the village treasury - the destination of all emeralds sourced in the mine - may be raided in order to procure much needed items. The village trades routinely with farmers in the distant north and sometimes with the swamp-dwellers of Bleaktonne, the former trading grain for emeralds, the latter trading food for clothes and weapons. Player characters who present the villagers with something particularly interesting or useful, may find themselves trading it for an entire emerald stone worth a small fortune in gold. In this respect, the villagers have very little concept of monetary worth.

Halain Dervish is the leader of Stantionbridge, being the eldest of the original founding family. He lives in the largest building, and the village treasury is situated in a large metal safe in the undercroft beneath this house. The treasury, filled with gems from the emerald mine at the rear of the village, is the reason for the barbarian raids.

The Stantionbridge community is polytheic, worship encompassing Jetava, Lorika, Drom, Thaumia, Almighty Sen, and Gaya with respectful recognition of Gorum (god of the dwarves) and Ethrayall (goddess of elves). Villagers attend the temple situated at the rear of the village at least once a day to offer prayers and oblation to whichever deity is in particular favour. During the winter months the villagers focus on Jetava, praying for mild weather and for the moat to remain unfrozen. The worst barbarian attacks have occurred when the waters have turned to ice and the village's main defence is no longer a barrier against the invading hordes. Most of the village's food supply also comes from the moat, in the form of fish and crustaceans. However, the loss of the moat does not necessarily spell doom for the villagers, who also source grain from the farmlands of Paravelly, far in the north, and meats, vegetables and fruit from the swamp-dwellers of Bleaktonne. When they are really desperate they will hunt wild hart in the alpine woods below The Talus Citadel, though this is rare because few villagers possess decent hunting or tracking skills.

In the summer the villagers focus most of their attention on Almighty Sen, whom they believe has a general divine influence over the other gods. The names of individual gods may be evoked by villagers at appropriate moments. 'By Almighty Sen' is a popular phrase used to convey enthusiasm or surprise. 'By Jetava's Grace' is a term used when hoping for divine favour, and 'by Lorika's will' is a traditional precursor to any hopeful wish, such as "by Lorika's will we shall harvest many emeralds this season" or "by Lorika's will shall the barbarian hordes leave us in peace this week."

The Jejune Flatlands

The sweeping plains of the Flatlands are home to the barbarian hordes of Jejune, lawless creatures devoid of morality who live in nomadic caravans, moving ceaselessly across the plains, attacking anything and anyone unlucky enough to cross their path. There are actually six barbarian tribes, the Soza, Efgar, Uhrtuk, Jegga, Mengol and Mansard. All six are engaged in a constant war with one another, fighting over everything from hunting grounds to physical prowess. All six are also eager to get their hands on the emerald mine at Stantionbridge, which has become something of a trophy irrespective of its monetary worth. In truth, the barbarian tribe who succeeded in taking the mine could spend their newfound wealth on superior weaponry and reinforcements, using both to destroy the other five tribes once and for all. But the Jejune barbarians lack such simple guile and see the mine as nothing more than a prize, to be taken before it can fall into the hands of an enemy clan.

The plains are vast, and anyone crossing them without sticking to the road from Bleaktonne is unlikely to meet the barbarians unless they are very unlucky (4% chance on d100 covering the entire journey). At night scouts roam the plains and may spot camp fires. In this instance an attack before daybreak on the PC camp is extremely likely (1-18 on 1d20). Anyone travelling the Ingleford road (the main road joining Stantionbridge and Bleaktonne), by day or night, risks coming under attack from barbarian raiding parties (1-16 on 1d20, one roll covering the entire journey). This will usually involve 1d20+10 barbarians mounted on horseback. The barbarians sometimes spare the lives of those they rob if their victims hand over goods, gold and any other items of value without fighting back. The barbarians know that most travellers on the road are merchants or traders and killing them would simply cut off all possibility of robbing them again at a later time. If the PCs are quite obviously adventurers or show belligerence in handing over what the barbarians merely consider to be a form of 'fealty' for crossing their territory, the barbarians are less likely to show mercy.

Inglenook Woods

A small area of dense woodland to the north east of Stantionbridge, Inglenook is a cursed region, the site of an ancient magical battle between wizard enemies, it is now home to various magical creatures who thrive upon the dark energies still

prevalent within the woods.

The trees here are huge, with bark as black as night, trunks twisted into strange shapes, branches spreading like monstrous tentacles and thorny leaves of a deep, muddy colour merging overhead to create a thick canopy through which no light can penetrate. The floor of the woods are covered in various types of moss and fungus, many of which are poisonous to touch and fatal to eat.

Almost all the wild animals living in Inglenook are of the dire variety, including badgers, bats, weasels, boars, rats and wolves. An enormous Dire Wolverine pack also live here, though they tend to keep to the heart of the woods where they hold dominion over the lesser animals, and rarely venture beyond the perimeter of Inglenook's tree-line.

Bleaktonne

Some twenty five miles south of the Paravelly Farmlands, and almost one hundred miles north of Stantionbridge, is the town of Bleaktonne, a collection of rough-hewn houses and buildings raised on stilts above the swampy waters of Marshdown. The people of Bleaktonne are a strange breed and largely keep themselves to themselves. They are hostile to outsiders, but used to seeing travellers on the Idlingford road.

Despite their reserved attitude to strangers, the Bleaktonnians understand the need to trade with nearby settlements. Their main export is meat, vegetables and fruit harvested from the swamps. The Ongo is a gooey orange fruit which grows only on the vines of certain swamp trees and is traded routinely with both the people of Stantionbridge and the farmers of Paravelly in return for clothing and equipment (the people of Bleaktonne have little use for gold or emeralds). The swamps are also home to a variety of edible creatures including an unusual species of marsh-chicken, but the Bleaktonnians source most of the meat they trade by hunting wildlife on the plains to the north and east of their village, favouring boar, oxen and wild hart.

Orktusk Hills

the Orktusk hills are a wilderness where only the fearless, the brave or the foolhardy dare to tread. The hills are home to many dangerous creatures and several clans of feral centaur are known to live on the southern edge of the region.

Talus

The citadel of Talus is home to the powerful hermit wizard Ulnar, a healer and scholar known to the people of Stantionbridge as an enigmatic ally upon whom they can call in times of dire emergency. The citadel is actually a wooden mansion constructed on a jutting outcrop of stone overlooking an alpine forest on the lower mountain slopes of Greymist. Sometimes sick or injured villagers will be taken to the wizard's home for healing and recuperation. He is a goodly magic user, welcoming to travellers who approach him in a friendly manner but ruthless with those who show him aggression or seek to cause harm to him or his home. Though most believe Ulnar lives alone, this is not the case. Beneath his mansion is a large network of caverns within which live a colony of lepers. This unfortunate tribe of social outcasts are cared for by Ulnar whose magical studies are almost entirely focused on finding a cure for their disease. The lepers are rarely seen, though they move freely in the forest beneath the citadel, and sometimes visit the mansion itself. Whenever villagers from Stantionbridge or passing travellers attend the citadel, the lepers hide from view in the caves. (See also The Talus Wizard Scenario).

The Greymist Mountains

The largest mountain range on the continent, stretching from Derroton to Lakmarr in South Opus, the mountains act as borderlands between the North Opus Grasslands, the Kingdom of Mohan and the wilderness of Imera. All three were once mighty

empires, but war and ruin has long since seen the vanishing of men, dwarves, elves and halflings from the worlds of the north and the lush countryside of Imera. Now only Mohan remains as a seat of culture, though even the borders of the kingdom seem to shrink with each day, creatures of chaos and evil infringing ever further into the domain of the king.

The mountains are wild and dangerous. On the outer reaches of the mountains stand craggy peaks of sharp grey flint, difficult to traverse and treacherous for the uninitiated. Further in, the mountains grow ever taller, their summits covered in snow and ice where temperatures plummet and raging storms erupt without warning.

Various trails and tracks lead through the mountains, ancient byways fallen into disuse and disrepair since the demise of the three great empires. Some of these roads only pass halfway through the mountains, ending abruptly at the edge of a cliff where once a bridge spanned an impassable chasm, or a wall of stone where an avalanche has buried the way ahead. Others cross the entirety of the mountains, but are well known by local creatures who monitor the trails for unwary travellers or set traps upon the road.

The Alpine Forests

Dense woodland of fir and larch grow on the outermost slopes of Greymist, creating a vegetation buffer between the rising foothills and the plains of Jejune. The forests contain the usual wild animals and wandering monsters, including the occasional goblin or ogre. Wild hart inhabit the woodland in great numbers, providing additional food source for Stantionbridge in times of need, though the villagers lack hunting skills and fear also the Dryad who dwell among the firs.

Though the Alpine Dryad pay little heed to those who hunt for hart or game, they have been known to attack huntsmen carrying axes in the past, mistakenly believing them to be lumberjacks intent on felling trees.



Rumours Abound

The Player Rumours page (page 16 of the main document) should be printed, along with the map, and handed to players when they enter Stantionbridge. Some rumours are specific to this adventure module, others refer to other adventures in the Opus series and some are simply adventure seeds relating to the general region around the village and the mountains.

The area upon which Stantionbridge is founded has long been associated with rumours of an ancient artefact of great power, said to be hidden in secret caves somewhere within the region. The artefact, known as the Orb of Evocation, is believed to be a priceless magical jewel originating from a time of great sorcery. None have ever located the caves. True rumour: CR 3/5

Strange lights and noises have been seen late at night by locals living in the Paravelly Farmland region to the north of Bleaktonne. (Opus adventure module: Chains In The Dark) True rumour: CR 5/6

The swamp town of Bleaktonne has been suffering visits from a strange winged beast. The creature is said to sing a strange song which seems to have a hypnotic effect on the townsfolk, causing them to wander into the swamp and become lost. (The winged beast is a harpy - see NPCs/Enemies. She has been entrancing townsfolk late at night by flying over the rooftops and singing her magical song. The hapless Bleaktonnians have been sleep-walking, trance-like, out of the

Monster: Harpy

CR 4; Size Medium Monstrous Humanoid; HD 7d8; hp 31; Init +2; Spd 20 ft./fly 80ft (average); AC 13; Base Attack/Grapple +7/+7; Attack Club +7 melee (1d6); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +6; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 17.

Special Attacks: Captivating Song

Skills and feats: Bluff +11, Intimidate +7, Listen +7, Perform (Oratory) +5, Spot +3, Dodge, Flyby Attack, Persuasive, Darkvision (60ft).

Harpies like to entrance hapless travellers with their magical songs and lead them to unspeakable torments. Only when a harpy has finished playing with its new "toys" will it release them from suffering by killing and consuming them.

Combat

When a harpy engages in battle, it prefers to use Flyby Attack and strike with a melee weapon.

Captivating Song (Su): The most insidious ability of the harpy is its song. When a harpy sings, all creatures (other than harpies) within a 300-foot spread must succeed on a DC 16 Will save or become captivated. This is a sonic mind-affecting charm effect. A creature that successfully saves cannot be affected again by the same harpy's song for 24 hours. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A captivated victim walks toward the harpy, taking the most direct route available. If the path leads into a dangerous area (through flame, off a cliff, or the like), that creature gets a second saving throw. Captivated creatures can take no actions other than to defend themselves. (Thus, a fighter cannot run away or attack but takes no defensive penalties.) A victim within 5 feet of the harpy stands there and offers no resistance to the monster's attacks. The effect continues for as long as the harpy sings and for 1 round thereafter. A bard's countersong ability allows the captivated creature to attempt a new Will save.

Skills: Harpies have a +4 racial bonus on Bluff and Listen checks.

town and the harpy has been drawing them to their deaths in the treacherous bogs and quicksands of the marsh.) True rumour: CR 4

The Stantionbridge emerald mine has been forced to close due to the sudden appearance of a strange, tentacled creature in the entrance shaft. e creature is a dark mantle. See NPCs/Enemies.) True rumour: CR 1/2

A travelling fighter from the west, recently passing through Stantionbridge, claimed to have fought and killed a blue dragon living in the Babax Desert. (Partly true. A blue dragon named Rubicon lives in the Babax desert, and the fighter did witness the dragon first hand, but he did not kill, or even fight the creature) Partially True Rumour: CR-

Several villagers speak of their friend with grave concern. He set out for the northern city of Carthidge several months ago, looking to buy metal-ore for use in the village smith. But he has not returned, and this is most unlike him. The village has never before traded with Carthidge, but recent success in the mines has prompted them to consider spreading their wings further than Bleaktonne and Paravelly. The villager's greatest worry is that the barbarian hordes of Jejune intercepted him as he made his way north. (The unfortunate

villager is now serving time in Carthidge Fortress- Opus adventure module: Escape From Carthidge. The GM will need to adapt one of the NPC characters in that module to fit the description of the missing villager). True: CR 1/3

Inglenook woods is said to be haunted by the ghost of a long dead wizard. Many strange creatures have been seen there, in particular a pack of enormous wolves, each creature said to be twelve feet in length, with huge shaggy heads and thickset bodies covered in downy grey fur. (See notes above on Inglenook Woods) True rumour: CR 4

The woods that grow on the lower slopes of the Greymist Mountains in the shadow of the Talus Citadel are rumoured to be home to a tribe of undead zombies. Hunters tracking deer within the woods have seen the creatures moving around near caves set into the cliff directly beneath the citadel, home to the mighty wizard Ulnar. Rumours abound that the wizard, once a goody healer known well to the folk of Stantionbridge, has turned to the side of evil and the zombies are under his control. (The 'zombies' are the lepers who have colonised a cave beneath Ulnar's home, see notes on the Talus Citadel above). False rumour: CR-

Monster: Dark Mantle

CR 1; Size Small Magical Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 6; Init +4; Spd 20 ft./fly 20ft (poor); AC 17; Base Attack/Grapple +1 /+0; Attack Slam +5 melee (1d4+4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +3, Ref +2, Will +0; AL Neutral; Str 16, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10. Special Attacks: Darkness, improved grab, constrict 1d4+4. Skills and feats: Hide +10, Listen +5, Spot +5, Improved Initiative

The darkmantle hangs from a ceiling by a muscular "foot" at the top of its body. It can look like a stalactite, by holding its tentacles stiffly under itself, or like a lump of rock, spreading its tentacles so the membrane between them covers its body. Its shell and skin usually resemble limestone, but a darkmantle can change its colour to match almost any type of stony background. A darkmantle is about 4 feet long from the tips of its tentacles to the top of its head. It weighs about 30lbs.

Combat

A darkmantle attacks by dropping onto its prey and wrapping its tentacles around the opponent's head. Once attached, it squeezes and tries to suffocate the foe. A darkmantle that misses its initial attack often flies up and tries to drop on the opponent again.

Darkness (Su): Once per day a darkmantle can cause darkness as the darkness spell (caster level 5th). It most often uses this ability just before attacking.

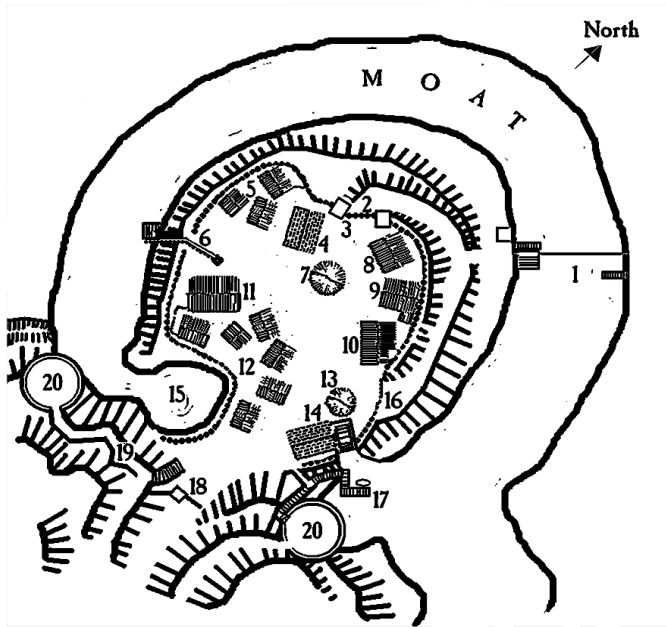
Improved Grab (Ex): To use this ability, a darkmantle must hit a Large or smaller creature with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity.

If it wins the grapple check, it attaches to the opponent's head and can constrict.

Constrict (Ex): A darkmantle deals 1d4+4 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Blindsight (Ex): A darkmantle can "see" by emitting high-frequency sounds, inaudible to most other creatures, that allows it to ascertain objects and creatures within 90 feet. A silence spell negates this ability and effectively blinds the darkmantle.

Skills: A darkmantle has a +4 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. These bonuses are lost if its blindsight is negated. The creature's variable coloration gives it a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks.



Stantionbridge Map and Key Details

1 The Crossing A small wooden jetty positioned on each bank provides a platform from which to board the raft which conveys visitors and villagers across the moat. A bronze bell mounted on a wooden post stands on the outermost bank. If the bell is rung the guards who occupy the stone building on the inner bank will emerge and bring the raft across. The raft is large enough to house two wagons, plus horses and operates by way of a rope (which spans the moat) and a winch. **2 The Main Gate** A large wooden door which can be closed and barricaded at a moments notice, sealing the village within the palisade of sharpened wooden stakes. A steep shingle covered road leads up to the gate and two tall watchtowers on either side of the door offer guards a good view over both the road and the area directly beneath the escarpment. **3 Watchtowers** Manned at all times by at least one guard in each tower. The men of the village take it in turns to stand guard in the towers, using a round-the-clock shift system. **4 The Turning Mere** tavern and inn owned by Oberon Fordkeeper, his two sons Frith and Penfrith and his wife Meredith. The tavern, its name referencing the whirlpool in the moat, is a welcoming spot for visitors and serves good food and home brewed ale. Stables at the rear of the building provide space for horses or wagons. **5 Homes** Homes to some of the Stantionbridge villagers. Small, but well maintained buildings with thatched rooftops and clay/mud brick walls. **6 Water Conveyer** A newly constructed water convector mechanism for bringing buckets laden with water up from the moat at speed. The buckets are then passed along a human chain and used to douse fires. The mechanism is unfinished and still needs work. The villagers may be prepared to pay player characters an emerald or two if they can get the mechanism working. (Appropriate Craft roll required, DC 20). **7 Forge** Home and forge of Stokescroft Hammerblow the metalsmith, his young daughter Apple and his wife Lucia. Stokescroft can manufacture minor metalwork items, like hinges, door handles, belt buckles, stirrups and arrow heads, and if pushed can also craft slightly larger items like swords or shields, though his skills are limited and such items would be of low quality. **8 Manor** Home to Halain Dervish, his daughter Ethy, his two sons Bram and Pein, and his wife Edmie. Halain is the leader of Stantionbridge, being the eldest member of the original founding family. He is a calm, magnanimous individual, eager to serve his community and determined to beat the barbarians who seem intent on destroying everything he holds dear. **9 Fishmongers** Stantionbridge relies on Mortise Edgbaston and his five sons (Mortise the Younger, Gan, Griot, Nirvan and Pandit) for most of its food. These accomplished anglers spend

much of their time fishing the river Motep or trawling the moat for crustaceans and useful algae. They trade much of what they catch with other villagers in return for services, clothing, tools and other items of worth. The algae they find is stored in jars and given to the wizard Ulnar. Many years ago, when Mortise's wife Aglan fell pregnant with their youngest son, Gan, complications during labour cost Aglan her life and nearly the life of her newly born son. Mortise took Gan to Ulnar who cast healing magic and saved the child. Ever since that day, Mortise has attempted to repay Ulnar by providing him with as much algae as he needs. Ulnar uses the stuff in his magical experiments. **10 Mansion** The largest house in the village belongs to Quent Harshbreadth, foreman at the emerald mine. Quent is a blunt, plain speaking man with huge calloused hands and a flattened face covered in scars and bruises. Most of the time his skin is black with dust, as are his clothes, leather hauberk and tin helmet. He is responsible for keeping the mine operational and maintains the rota which decides who works in the mine and when. Quent is unpopular with most of the villagers, most of whom have been yelled at or insulted by him at some point in the past. But he is an essential member of the community and therefore afforded appropriate respect. **11 Temple** Little different to the other buildings in Stantionbridge, this unassuming temple is where the villagers go to pay their respects to their gods. The temple will be occupied by at least one villager and the priest Chela Vedas, a pious individual with an uncanny memory for scripture. **12 Villager Homes** A collection of clay-brick houses with thatched roofs, home to some of the fifteen families living in Stantionbridge. **13 Grain Store** An empty house with a hole in the floor which leads to a cave. It is extremely cold within the cave, and here the village hoards its winter stores of meat, grain, cheese and vegetables. Mortise the fishmonger also uses the store to keep jars filled with strange algae which he sources in the moat. The door to the Grain Store is locked at all times. Only Halain Dervish, the Miller Quern Headrace, and Mortise hold keys. **14 The Millhouse** The water wheel attached to the side of the mill powers a great grinding wheel which crushes wheat to make grain for bread and flour. The wheat is purchased in bulk from the Paravelly farmlands with every fresh harvest. The mill is run by Quern Headrace, his son Terracotta and his wife Mirvus. **15 Mere** Here the moat culminates in a small mere which drains into a subterranean river. A powerful whirlpool spins permanently in the centre of the mere. Anyone unfortunate enough to fall into the moat will be pulled by strong currents into this whirlpool and will eventually be dragged underground where they will fall into a deep subterranean lake. Eventually they will surface in a large cavern- the entrance to the lost caves of the Orb of Evocation. The GM should refer to The Tomb of Thaumaturgos Scenario. **16 Ambush Gate** This barricaded gate is concealed from view, built to look like part of the palisade wall. It provides villagers with a means to escape the compound if the main gate is blocked or captured. It also provides an ambush spot for flanking enemies approaching the village along the main road leading up to the front gate. **17 Jetty** Mortise Edgbaston's six fishing boats and the miller's rowing boat are moored here, tethered to a wooden post at the end of the jetty. The miller only ever uses his boat to reach the millwheel situated in a deep watercourse just to the left of the jetty, and only when he needs to exact repairs or unblock the watercourse. For the most part this jetty is only used by Edgbaston and his family. **18 The Rear Gate and Watchtower** This locked gate, barricaded and fortified with a single watchtower, blocks the way into the Mohan trail, a long winding path which cuts a deep channel into the mountains before climbing across the treacherous spine of Greymist to the Kingdom of Mohan. The door acts to keep predators and enemies out of the village, rather than villagers away from the trail. If PCs pass through the gate. See The Mohan Trail Scenario. **19 Mine** Entrance to the emerald mine. A horizontal shaft leads deep into the low tunnels of the mine. The mine is currently closed due to the appearance of an aggressive Dark Mantle in one of the lower tunnels. If the Dark Mantle has been dealt with, at least two villagers, overseen by the foreman Quent Harshbreadth (see location 10) will be digging away at the latest seam. A rail track runs along the floor of the main shaft, a hefty

iron wagon attached to the track and filled with 1d4 emeralds worth 6d20gp each. If the Dark Mantle is still at large, PCs may be able to earn a few emeralds by getting rid of it for Quent. This might also be a good excuse for players to investigate the mines and rule them out as a possible entrance to the lost caves.

20 Turrets These high turrets provide a vantage point overlooking the two innermost arms of the moat. In the event of barbarian attack, the villagers will use the turrets, firing arrows or bolts and throwing stones down on any attackers who come within range of the far bank. The easternmost turret stands taller than its western counterpart, but is the weakest spot in the village, being constructed on the bedrock of the mountains and undefended by the full width of the moat. In an attempt to make the turret more secure, the villagers have dug a deep trench at the foot of the cliffs and have filled the ditch with sharpened wooden stakes.



The Barbarian Horde Scenario

If PCs remain in Stantionbridge for more than a day, they will be woken late at night by the sounds of shouting voices and running feet. The village has come under attack by a barbarian horde and the villagers are rallying one another to the defences.

If PCs are afforded a view of the ground beyond the moat, they will see many crackling fires and the shadowy figures of the barbarians moving to and fro (1d20+180 barbarians). Every so often an attack may start a fire in the thatched rooftops of Stantionbridge's buildings. If the water conveying mechanism is operational at this point (it will only be working if the PCs have fixed it, see Stantionbridge Details, location 6) a human chain can be formed and the fires doused, otherwise the flames will take hold and the affected buildings will burn. Only the rooftops and contents of the buildings will burn as the clay brick of the walls is largely impervious to fire.

The GM should refer to the following list of attacks until the barbarians are either defeated, successful in gaining entrance into the village (at which point Stantionbridge's defeat is assured and the smart PC will do his/her best to flee), or give up and return to the Jejune Flatlands. Either roll 1d10 for events to occur randomly, or execute each attack in turn, returning to the start of the list after the tenth attack in the sequence.

1) The barbarians have two trebuchet (catapult) which they fire simultaneously. Each trebuchet fires a ballistic object (usually a stone doused in oil and aflame) as per light catapult rules (below). There is a 15% chance a missile will hit one of the buildings within the village, setting the thatch on fire. Even if the water conveying mechanism is working (see Stantionbridge details, location 6) the villagers will be unable to douse the flames sufficiently to put out the fire. The barbarians have brought a supply of 25 missiles. Once their supply runs out, they will stop using the trebuchet.

A light catapult is a large engine capable of throwing rocks or heavy objects with great force. Because the catapult throws its payload in a high arc, it can hit squares out of its line of sight. To fire a heavy catapult, the barbarian operating the machine makes a special check against DC 15 using only his base attack bonus (see NPCs/Enemies for barbarian stats), Intelligence modifier, range increment penalty, and the appropriate modifiers. If the check succeeds, the catapult stone hits the square the catapult was aimed at, dealing the indicated damage to any object or character in the square. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save take half damage. Once a catapult stone hits a square, subsequent shots hit the same square unless the catapult is re-aimed or the wind changes direction or speed.

If a catapult stone misses, roll 1d8 to determine where it lands. This determines the misdirection of the throw, with 1 being back

toward the catapult and 2 through 8 counting clockwise around the target square. Then, count 3 squares away from the target square for every range increment of the attack. Loading and setting the catapult requires one full round, with four barbarians working to pull back the winch and reset the mechanism. If less barbarians are able to perform this operation, the round increases by 1 increment for each missing barbarian.

2) A contingent of 2d20+5 barbarians start to shimmy along the rope spanning the moat, hanging upside down with ankles crossed, pulling themselves forward hand over hand.

If PCs attempt to cut the rope, they will be stopped by villagers who know this will cause the raft to drift free. Instead they will be encouraged to throw stones at the barbarians in an attempt to knock them into the moat (use rules for standard sling). Alternatively, PCs may use their own ballistic weapons.

3) The barbarians launch two boats, each filled with 6 warriors, across the moat to meet the jetty at location 17 (see Stantionbridge details).

The barbarians come under cover of darkness and with no lights. They will be spotted by a lookout on the easternmost turret at location 20 when they are halfway across the moat. Once this attack has been used it cannot be used again.

4) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

1d4 land in thatch and start fires. For each PC in the open roll 1d10, on a roll of 1-2 the PC is struck by an arrow. (1d6 piercing damage, critical x3 +1d4 burns damage).

5) A barbarian has swum the moat under cover of darkness and comes ashore at the water conveying mechanism, clambering up onto the wooden platform there then hurrying up the steps.

He will smash the mechanism with his club before attacking the first villager he meets. If the platform in question is guarded, he will probably swim around to the north and climb ashore at the first opportunity, attacking any defenders guarding the ferry station.

6) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

1d4 Land in thatch and start fires. For each PC in the open roll 1d10, on a roll of 1-2 the PC is struck by an arrow. (1d6 piercing damage, critical x3 +1d4 burns damage).

7) 1d10+10 barbarians gather at the foot of the westernmost turret (location 20, see Stantionbridge details) under cover of wooden shields.

The lookout posted on this turret will fire down arrows on the attackers, but a sniper will shoot the defender, leaving the turret open to attack. Seizing their chance, the barbarians will throw three grappling hooks up onto the battlements, swing across the ditch filled with stakes and start to climb the wall.

8) Barbarians launch four rafts from the outermost bank of the moat, punting the rafts across the moat's narrowest point, west to east (directly opposite location 5, see Stantionbridge map).

This location marks a blind spot in the village defences, with the palisade blocking all view of the boats, and the high bank of the escarpment at this point preventing any ground defence. The rafts will be steered upstream to land on the first available patch of grass. 18 Barbarians will then stream toward the path leading to the front gate and launch an all out attack. Any defenders situated at the ferry station will be ambushed from behind, the barbarians rushing through the narrow channel between the defensive hut next to the jetty and the steep wall of the escarpment. Once this attack has been executed, it cannot be used again. (i.e., roll again).

9) A volley of flaming arrows arc over the palisade and land within the village.

1d4 Land in thatch and start fires. For each PC in the open roll 1d10, on a roll of 1-2 the PC is struck by an arrow (1d6 piercing damage, critical x3 +1d4 burns damage).

10) It would seem the barbarians have gotten their hands on some arcane scrolls.

They possess the following spells and the ability to use each spell only once. If things are going well for them, the barbarians will likely save their spells.

List of barbarian spells

Flare - blinding light bursts across the sky above Stantionbridge. Successful Fortitude save required, or victim dazzled for 1 minute (6 rounds). Sightless characters/characters already dazzled are unaffected.

Ghost Sound - a ghoulish shriek fills the air, causing all villagers to abandon their posts and run for shelter. Only Halain Dervish, Mortise the fishmonger and Quent Harshbreadth will remain stalwart and man their positions. The spell should have no noticeable effect on PCs.

Summon Monster I - summons an extraplanar monster. If the barbarians want to attack defenders standing on jetties, in boats or on the ferry raft, they will summon a Fiendish Octopus, if the gates to the village have been breached, they will summon a Fiendish Giant Scorpion (small) and if the gates are not yet breached and an ally fighting from the air would be useful, the barbarians will summon a Fiendish Hawk which will fly over the palisade wall and attack the first character it sees. See NPCs/Enemies for monster details. This spell can only be used once, so the barbarians will choose the nature of the summoned monster with care.



The Mohan Trail Scenario

The Mohan trail is a rugged mountain path leading across the Greymist range to the kingdom of Mohan and, eventually, the capital city of Mardor. For purposes of this adventure module, the trail is a set scenario, with a definitive boundary at which point the PCs will need to turn back in order to continue the adventure. If the GM is playing a loose, non-linear game, then the PCs should be allowed to pass beyond location 8 on the trail map unheeded. At this point the trail will become a narrow, crumbling ledge following the outer contours of the mountains before climbing sharply into the snowline. Here the trail will vanish beneath thick drifts of snow and PCs will need to cross the mountains and hook back up with the path on the far side of Greymist. This will require tracking or survival skills.

General Mountaineering Information

(Adapted from the d20 SRD)

The three mountain terrain categories are alpine meadows, rugged mountains, and forbidding mountains. As characters ascend into a mountainous area, they're likely to face each terrain category in turn, beginning with alpine meadows, extending through rugged mountains, and reaching forbidding mountains near the summit. The Mohan trail passes through terrain classed as 'alpine meadows' even though the path is surrounded on all sides by mountainous ground. If the player characters ever choose to leave the path, their movement should be appropriately affected as though travelling over 'rugged mountains'.

Stealth and Detection

As a guideline, the maximum distance in mountain terrain at which a Spot check for detecting the nearby presence of others can succeed is 4d10x10 feet. Certain peaks and ridgelines afford much better vantage points, of course, and twisting valleys and canyons have much shorter spotting distances. Because there's little vegetation to obstruct line of sight, the specifics on the map provided are your best guide for the range at which an encounter could begin. As in hills terrain, a ridge or peak provides enough cover to hide from anyone below the high point. It's easier to hear faraway sounds in the mountains. The DC of Listen checks increases by 1 per 20 feet between listener and source, not per 10 feet.

Avalanches (CR 5/7)

The combination of high peaks and heavy snowfalls means that avalanches are a deadly peril in many mountainous areas. While avalanches of snow and ice are common, it's also possible to have an avalanche of rock and soil. Some avalanches may be triggered deliberately by enemies, or mischievous creatures.

An avalanche can be spotted from as far away as 1d10x500 feet downslope by a character who makes a DC 20 Spot check, treating the avalanche as a colossal/large/medium creature depending on the size of the rockfall or a colossal creature only in the case of a snow-avalanche. If all characters fail their Spot checks to determine the encounter distance, the avalanche moves closer to them, and they automatically become aware of it when it closes to half the original distance. It's possible to hear an avalanche coming even if you can't see it. Under optimum conditions (no other loud noises occurring), a character who makes a DC 15 Listen check can hear the avalanche or landslide when it is 1d6x500 feet away. This check might have a DC of 20, 25, or higher in conditions where hearing is difficult (such as in the middle of a thunderstorm).

A landslide or avalanche consists of two distinct areas: the bury zone (in the direct path of the falling debris) and the slide zone (the area the debris spreads out to encompass). Characters in the bury zone always take damage from the avalanche; characters in the slide zone may be able to get out of the way. Characters in the bury zone take 8d6 points of damage, or half that amount if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. They are subsequently buried (see below). Characters in the slide zone take 3d6 points of damage, or no damage if they make a DC 15 Reflex save. Those who fail their saves are buried.

Buried characters take 1d6 points of nonlethal damage per minute. If a buried character falls unconscious, he or she must make a DC 15 Constitution check or take 1d6 points of lethal damage each minute thereafter until freed or dead.

The typical avalanche has a width of 1d6x100 feet, from one edge of the slide zone to the opposite edge. The bury zone in the centre of the avalanche is half as wide as the avalanche's full width.

To determine the precise location of characters in the path of an avalanche, roll 1d6x20; the result is the number of feet from the centre of the path taken by the bury zone to the centre of the party's location. Avalanches of snow and ice advance at a speed of 500 feet per round, and rock avalanches travel at a speed of 250 feet per round.

Mountain Travel

High altitude can be extremely fatiguing—or sometimes deadly—to creatures that aren't used to it. Cold becomes extreme, and the lack of oxygen in the air can wear down even the most hardy of warriors.

Acclimated Characters: Creatures accustomed to high altitude generally fare better than lowlanders. Any creature with an Environment entry that includes mountains is considered native to the area, and acclimated to the high altitude. Characters can also acclimate themselves by living at high altitude for a month. Characters who spend more than two months away from the mountains must reacclimatise themselves when they return. Undead, constructs, and other creatures that do not breathe are immune to altitude effects.

Altitude Zones

In general, mountains present three possible altitude bands: low pass, low peak/high pass, and high peak.

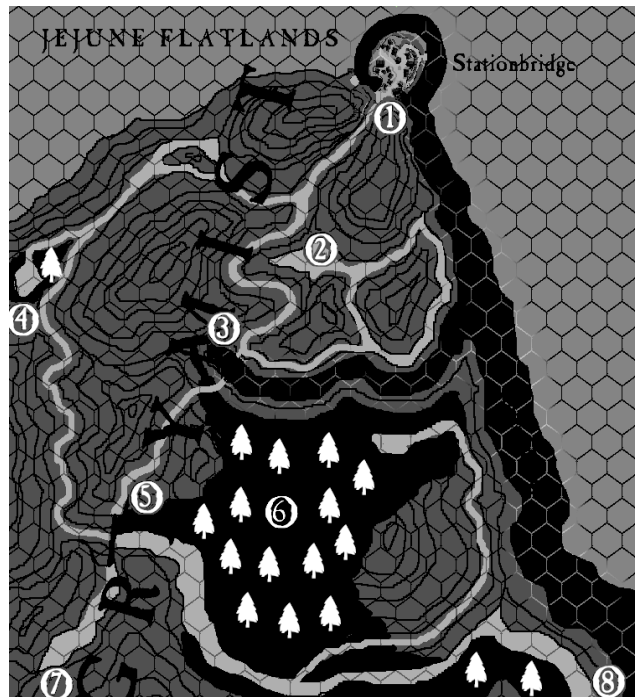
Low Pass (applicable to the mapped section of the Mohan trail) is a zone consisting largely of alpine meadows and forests. Travellers may find the going difficult (which is reflected in the movement modifiers for travelling through mountains), but the altitude itself has no game effect.

Low Peak or High Pass (5,000 to 15,000 feet): Ascending to the highest slopes of low mountains, or most normal travel through high mountains, falls into this category. All nonacclimated creatures labour to breathe in the thin air at this altitude. Characters must succeed on a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or be fatigued. The fatigue ends when the character descends to an altitude with more air. Acclimated characters do not have to attempt the Fortitude save.

High Peak (more than 15,000 feet): The highest mountains exceed 20,000 feet in height. At these elevations, creatures are subject to both high altitude fatigue (as described above) and altitude sickness, whether or not they're acclimated to high altitudes. Altitude sickness represents long-term oxygen deprivation, and it affects mental and physical ability scores. After each 6-hour period a character spends at an altitude of over 15,000 feet, he must succeed on a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1 point of damage to all ability scores. Creatures acclimated to high altitude receive a +4 competence bonus on their saving throws to resist high altitude effects and altitude sickness, but eventually even seasoned mountaineers must abandon these dangerous elevations.

The Mohan Trail Details and Map

1 The Gate into Stantionbridge This barricaded gate prevents wandering creatures gaining access to Stantionbridge. It is locked at all times. A guard will usually be posted on the wooden watchtower overlooking the trail. **2 The Old Mountain Tracker's Hut** This ruined house once belonged to Ebrair the mountain guide. Ebrair died many years ago, and has since risen as a zombie. He wanders around the ruins, feeding on whatever small morsel he can catch. When he hears the PCs approach he will lurch inside the house and hide himself. The interior of the hut is damp and dilapidated. A wooden table covered in half-eaten meats and the rib cages of rats stands next to a rusty stove and a broken chair. A bedraggled curtain of red velvet covers the doorway into Ebrair's old bedroom. If one of the party opens the curtains, they will find Ebrair lurking behind. **3 Canyon Bridge** An arm of the river Mohep runs along the floor of a deep canyon, ending in a spectacular waterfall which cascades into the dark belly of a chasm. A rickety rope bridge spans the gap and would appear to be the only way across. In fact, the bridge is old but quite solid and will bear up to six characters at a time before it starts to creak and groan as the rope strains against the excess weight. The bridge is likely to break (1-15 on d20) if more than eight characters attempt to cross at once. **4 Goblin Gully** The path dips down into a deep, oval-shaped gully with high walls covered in dense foliage and trees. At the base of the gully is a veritable garden of Eden, the floor covered in a soft, spongy moss, will-o-wisps flitting to and fro above the surface of a crystal clear pool. A huge willow tree grows from the bank of the pool, its curtain-like leaves and branches trailing in the water and upon the bank, creating a natural chamber within which anyone who rests will feel strangely tranquil. PCs may bathe in or drink the water and benefit from its magical healing powers (1HP per character who bathes, +1HP if they also drink the water). As the PCs make to leave via the only exit point, they will hear a cackling coming from somewhere above and will spy the faces of six goblins peeking over the edge of the gully. The goblins will proceed to hurl down insults, followed by sharp stones (treat as a ranged attack as per slingshot, 1d2 bludgeoning damage per successful strike). As the PCs reach the top of the gully, the goblins will turn tail and scarp. They may appear again from time to time, but always out of reach and always somewhere above the travelling



PCs from where they can hurl down more stones. They may also take great delight in setting traps for the party, dislodging large boulders from precarious perches above the trail, or setting off rockfalls and miniature avalanche just as the party are passing beneath. **5 Encounter At the Bridge** The same event should occur here, whether the PCs are converging with the bridge itself, or travelling the path passing beneath the bridge some forty feet below. The brothers Frith and Penfrith (see Player Introduction) have been ambushed halfway across the bridge by Canker Dern in bird form. He is repeatedly bombarding them from the air, lashing out with sharp talons and pecking at them with his beak. If the PCs attempt to bring Canker down with an arrow or bolt, he will fly to the far side of the bridge and transfigure into human form. Here he will draw a sharp dagger and begin sawing through the rope holding the bridge in place. Frith and Penfrith will be unable to reach either side before the rope snaps, and unless the PCs can do something, they will both fall to their deaths. If he finishes the brothers, he will transfigure again and fly away, this time heading back toward Stantionbridge. As he flies overhead he will laugh down at the PCs (and Agrovar, if the dwarf is present)

"fare thee well fools. I return to Stantionbridge to take the prize. Pleasant journey!"

Frith Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner Lvl 1: CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 11 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +0, Ref +0, Will +0; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 11, Wis 10, Cha 10.
Skills: Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spot +0.

Penfrith Fordkeeper

Male human Commoner Lvl 1: CR 1; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 1d4; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +0 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; AL NG; Str 11, Dex 10, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11.
Skills: Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spot +4; Iron Will.

For more comprehensive statistics on NPCs and monsters, see NPCs/Enemies in main file.

Monster: Fiendish Hawk

CR 2; Size Tiny; HD 1d8; hp 4; Init +3; Spd 10 ft./fly 60ft (average); AC 17; Base Attack/Grapple +0/-10; Attack Talons (magic weapon) +5 melee (1d4-2); Space/Reach 2ft/2ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +2; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 2, Wis 14, Cha 6. Special Attacks: Smite Good. Skills and feats: Listen +2, Spot +14, Darkvision (60ft), Resistance to cold and fire, spell resistance equal to HD+5 (max 25), -5 point damage reduction.

6 Woodland The side of this mountain is covered in dense woodland, home to a clan of goblins and various nocturnal animals, including bears and wolves. During the day the creatures of the woods remain out of sight, but if the party camp anywhere near here at night they risk a 90% chance (d100) of encountering a wandering animal or a goblin raiding party. If the group enter the woods there's a 90% chance (1-18 on d20) the goblins who live here will hear them and track them down (allow 1d6 goblins for each character level). The goblins know their own hunting ground well and will ambush the PCs, surrounding them on all sides, cutting off any chance of retreat.

Monster: Goblins

CR 1; Size Small; HD 1d8+1; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft., (Swim 30ft); AC 15; Base Attack/Grapple +1/-3; Attack Morningstar +2 melee (1d6) or javelin +3 ranged (1d4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +3, Ref +1, Will -1; AL Neutral Evil; Str 11, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 6. Special Attacks: none. Skills and feats: Hide +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +5, Ride +4, Spot +2, Alertness, Darkvision (60ft)

A goblin stands 3 to 3-1/2 feet tall and weigh 40 to 45 pounds. Its eyes are usually dull and glazed, varying in colour from red to yellow. A goblin's skin colour ranges from yellow through any shade of orange to a deep red; usually all members of a single tribe are about the same colour. Goblins wear clothing of dark leather, tending toward drab, soiled-looking colours. Goblins speak Goblin; those with Intelligence scores of 12 or higher also speak Common.

Combat

Being bullied by bigger, stronger creatures has taught goblins to exploit what few advantages they have: sheer numbers and malicious ingenuity. The concept of a fair fight is meaningless in their society. They favor ambushes, overwhelming odds, dirty tricks, and any other edge they can devise.

Goblins have a poor grasp of strategy and are cowardly by nature, tending to flee the field if a battle turns against them.

7 Rockfall The path ends at a solid wall of fallen rocks and boulders. If PCs climb over this obstacle they will discover the rocks have been deliberately placed here to form the wall of an ogre's nest (see NPCs/Enemies). There's a good chance (1-13 on d20) the ogre will be waiting for them on the other side of the wall (having already heard them approach) if they explore this location during the day. At night the nest will be empty, the ogre's meagre possessions, a few gnawed bones and some straw bedding, betraying his recent presence. The nest smells awful, and anyone entering to fight the ogre within must make a Fortitude save or suffer the effects of nausea (automatic fatigue) until they leave. The trail ends here, more rocks having fallen across the path on the other side of the ogre's nest and

destroyed any possibility of proceeding safely beyond this point. If PCs opt to continue from here the terrain becomes classed as 'rugged mountains' and climb checks will be required. The ground will slope upwards at ever steeper degrees until eventually the party will need to climb vertically. At this point the terrain becomes 'forbidding mountains'. Higher up they will meet the snow line, and all that entails. **8 The Rest of the Trail** Here the trail straightens into a single path which rises sharply into the mountains proper. Here the terrain becomes classed as 'forbidding mountain' and movement is affected appropriately. The trail bypasses all vertical ascents by climbing in a zigzag fashion. Such pathways are incredibly dangerous, crumbling at the edges and sometimes no wider than half a foot. Eventually the path will enter the snowline and disappear under drifts of powdery snow. Characters who lack survival or tracking skills will need to make their best guess as to the continuing direction and location of the path and hope they hook up with the trail again when it emerges from the snowline on the far side of the Greymists.



The Wizard of Talus Scenario

The 'hermit wizard' Ulnar lives in a large wooden mansion constructed on an outcrop of rock overhanging an alpine forest some thirty miles west of Stantionbridge. He is a benevolent character, friendly and peace-loving, though local superstition and rumour have dealt him an unfair hand and most who live in the region around Stantionbridge, and indeed the villagers themselves, believe the wizard was once goodly, but can no longer be trusted.

The probable reason for this would be sightings of the lepers, collectively known as the Elgar people, who live in caverns beneath the citadel home of the wizard. Hunters in the woods around the caves have spied the Elgar and mistaken them for undead zombies and ghouls, spawning rumours that the woodland is haunted. Upon hearing such hearsay most have invariably reached the conclusion that the wizard must be involved.

In fact, the lepers are just as benign as Ulnar himself. They have chosen to live deep in the woods and caves of Greymist, cut off from the outside world where the ravages of their disease cannot be witnessed and there is no danger of contaminating the fit and healthy. This altruistic self-exile has greatly touched Ulnar, who has taken the lepers to his heart. He spends most of his time these days conjuring potions and crafting spells in an attempt to find a cure for their disease. So far he has been unsuccessful, but he refuses to give up trying, certain there must be some combination of magic capable of relieving the lepers of their miserable plight.

A wagon trail - two tracks gouged in the earth with a tussock of grass between - leads from Stantionbridge, through the alpine woods and into the lower slopes of Greymist before arriving at the foot of a long staircase. These steps climb to a plateau upon which the Citadel of Talus stands. This enormous wooden house is five stories high and topped with an assortment of baroque spires, gothic-style turrets and crooked rooftops, all surrounding a single roof of grey shingles, a sweeping affair which curls up in four extravagant loops at each corner and which rises to a steep pinnacle at its dead centre, mirroring the craggy mountains serving as a picturesque backdrop to the house. The walls are formed from wood but plastered in a surface of white clay, the facets broken up by long wooden beams painted a deep black and decorated with runes edged in gold. Here and there are rows of small windows surrounded by black wooden shutters, glass grey with age, cobwebs glittering in the corners. Several tall chimneys protrude from the apex of the main roof and smoke trails lazily into the sky from the tallest of these. Visitors approaching from the road may fancy they can see shapes and

faces moving in the smoke.

To reach the citadel, visitors must climb the steps to the plateau. Here they will find themselves in a magnificent garden, surrounded by neatly trimmed lawns, babbling streams, abundant mountain ferns, topiary hedges and flowering trees. A grey gravel path cuts a perfectly straight line through the gardens and ends at a grand staircase. This leads to the front door of the house, an enormous portcullis made of wood and reinforced with iron bars.

Ulnar will know of the PCs' approach long before they arrive in his garden, and as they head for the portcullis it will start to rise slowly, revealing the wizard who stands in deep shadow on the other side.

An Interview With Ulnar

Ulnar is a gracious host and welcoming of visitors. If he is threatened, or he deems the behaviour of his guests to be in any way insulting, he will dismiss them with a flick of the wrist and a casual spell. They will find themselves teleported outside the citadel and back in the garden, the portcullis now firmly closed (spell equiv. Teleportation Circle 9th level Wizard).

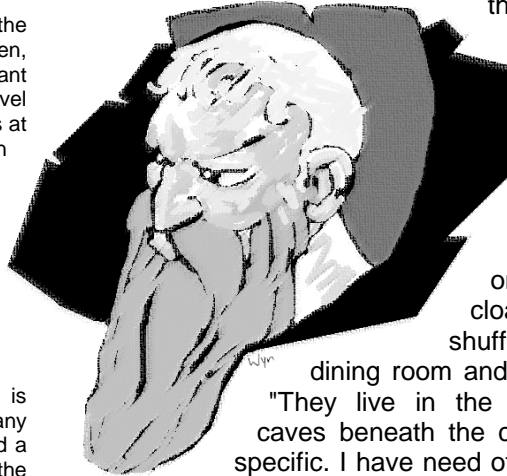
The wizard will invite the party into his reception hall, a vast and luxurious room containing a long dining table and chairs more befitting the throne room of a king than the dining chamber of a wizard. Windows five times as tall as a man and furnished with dusty velvet drapes, overlook the majestic vista of the Greymist Mountains. Ulnar will lead the group through double doors and out onto a semicircular balcony of grey stone overlooking a deep canyon thick with fir trees and vegetation. A table stands on the balcony surrounded by chairs carved from ivory. Here Ulnar will bid the group sit, rest and refresh themselves. With a clap of his hand, Ulnar will summon a small meal of delicate tasting pastries and goblets filled with wine. As the PCs eat and drink the wizard will enquire as to the purpose of their visit.

As the group talk, every so often they will spot movement in the dining room behind them; hunched figures dressed in dull brown robes shuffling to and fro, cleaning ornaments and statues, or simply watching the PCs, their faces hidden in shadow. These, of course, are members of the leper colony, some of whom are employed by Ulnar as casual cleaning staff, but many of which have just wandered into the citadel, as they are oft wont to do, and are showing a curious interest in the wizard's guests. The more mischievous GM may afford a PC the occasional glimpse of a ruined face, parchment coloured skin or bloodshot eyes beneath the cowl of the figures' robes.

Whatever questions the PCs may have, Ulnar has important information with regard to the Orb of Evocation. Use the list of likely answers below as a guide to Ulnar's knowledge and impart as much as you believe the players need in order to figure out some of this adventure's enduring mysteries. Each phrase or word is accompanied by a paragraph which you should read aloud to players. If the players ask a question or raise an issue for which there seems to be no response, you should make up an answer as you see fit.

Stantionbridge

"I know the village well. I have been there many times, though not in the last fifty years. I find the current collection of locals somewhat superstitious and possibly a little too gods-fearing for their own good. I do, however, have a soft spot for Mortise the fishmonger. He came here some years ago after the birth of his youngest son. You may know the story. His wife perished during labour, poor thing, and the boy was himself upon the brink of death. It was a simple matter to recover him from the brink and now, I believe, he is as fit and healthy as his four brothers. Mortise comes by from time to time, bringing algae samples from the moat around the village. Some of



those algae have unusual medical properties."

The Lepers

"They are the Elgar" Ulnar says, in a matter - of - fact tone. He beckons one of the shadowy, cloaked figures who shuffles out of the huge

dining room and onto the balcony.

"They live in the alpine woods, in caves beneath the citadel to be more specific. I have need of staff, however, in such a large house. My dear, please remove your cowl," the wizard says. The figure complies,

revealing a face ravaged as though by the talons and fangs of rabid wolves. The eyes, though obviously feminine, are bloodshot and jaundiced, red rimmed and sorrowful. The mouth droops horribly, lips distended beyond the outline of the face. The nose is squashed, as though smeared, across the flesh of the creature's right cheek, and one ear seems to be missing. "She is Aleel," Ulnar explains, extending fingers covered in extravagant rings and taking the creature's malformed hand in his own, "a leper. All the Elgar are lepers. Don't worry," he hastens to add upon seeing the looks on your faces, "it is no longer contagious. My magical experiments have thus cured the disease so far, but only so far. Try as I might I can do nothing to relieve the disfigurement or sores, nor the occasional death." The wizard looks sad as he dismisses the girl. She pulls her hood over her face and shuffles back into the building.

Gabreal "I seem to remember speaking with a man of that name once. A cleric, seeking treasure in the mountains." **Gabreal's Notes** (*Ulnar will ask to look at the notes*) "Intriguing. I believe these belonged to a cleric I once met travelling in the mountains." He returns the note with an enigmatic smile. "How did you come by these notes?"

Ask Ulnar The Wizard (from the notes) "Here I am," Ulnar grins, a mischievous twinkle in his eye, "what question would you ask? I am at your disposal until such time as I become indisposed. When that may be, I cannot say." **Priceless Magical Object of Abjuration**

(from the notes) "There is only one priceless magical object of abjuration in Opus. It is the Orb of Evocation." Ulnar folds his fingers in his lap and smiles serenely. **Abjuration (generally)** "This is an object imbued with the magical elements of a spell, a magical item, if you will," Ulnar holds up his hand, displaying many glistening rings, "magical rings. Each serves a different purpose and contains a different spell. Truth be known, I rarely use them these days- but they are abjured objects. Magical by nature, but possessing of an ability to create the effects of a specific spell."

Thaumaturgos/Thaumaturgy "Well now," Ulnar chuckles, "that is quite a question. Thaumaturgy, of course, is the study of magic. Indeed, you all know that Thaumata is the goddess of magic, she of sorcerous magnificence, may her robes forever shimmer and her manna bring good fortune to us all. But Thaumata was not always known thusly. Once she was Sorcera, goddess of spell-craft. Before this she was known as Sorestus, goddess of the art, as magic once was known. Thaumaturgy, also, was not always known to be so. Sorcery was long the common term for the practising of magic. Much changed when the brothers Thaumaturgos crafted the orb and gave unto Opus the great secret of Evocation." Ulnar sits back and takes a sip from a silver goblet of wine. **The Thaumaturgos Twins** "It is an ancient story, I am sure you know at least some of it, perhaps only in part? It has a particular resonance for me because, you see, I was there."... "The Thaumaturgos twins were wizards of intermediate skill. To give them higher credit would be tempting, but erroneous. In truth, they were never more than mere artisans, dabbling with their craft in no great way. That is to say, their intentions, their goals, were great, but their abilities were not. They were members of the order of Mohan, a brotherhood of wizards dedicated to the king of the kingdom of Mohan, dedicated to the study of magical effects, dedicated to pushing forth the boundaries of magical limitation. But the twins, for all their charisma and intent, disliked the company of other wizards and kept to themselves in their swamp home of Marshdown, to such an extent that we of the order oft forgot they were members at all." Ulnar laughs at this, "it was to be their undoing, for their magic went horrendously wrong- you see. They were spread like butter upon toast. We buried them in their tomb not within a sarcophagus but within a glass jar," he laughs once again, "a sad truth, though it makes me laugh after all these years. In our efforts to decipher the scroll spells of the twins, we of the order learned the secret. **The Secret** "It was a long time ago - six hundred years. My old brain has aged somewhat since then and I fear to tell you I have all but forgotten the nature of the secret. Something to do with a great force, a mirror and the sun. Beyond that," he shrugs and smiles, "it is the curse of being ancient, memory like a sieve and flesh like dry hessian." **Orb of Evocation** "A mystical orb, black as pitch- about the size of your fist. We crafted it, we of the order of Mohan, in order to contain the magic of the twins, for there was much to be contained! It was powerful stuff, you see - too powerful for one wizard to cast safely. That's why they died: the twins. They lacked the power. Don't ask me what the Orb does. My memory is not what once it was, and such things no longer interest me anyway, though I remember the force of it; the power of it; the tremendous, terrifying energy! Forces, energies, power; all the folly of youth and worlds I have long

since lost. As I grow older, people matter to me more than furthering wizardry. I have the Elgar to worry about. They are my world now." **The Order of Mohan** "It is long since I heard that phrase used," Ulnar clears his throat, stands and raises one hand, as though addressing the mountains themselves, "for the king and the kingdom, we members of the order of Mohan do solemnly swear oath that our combined powers shall never be used for ill, nor the downfall of Mohan. Long live the king!" The wizard chuckles as he resumes his seat, "ah it feels good to slip back into an old outfit sometimes, don't you agree?" **The Lost Caves** "That which is lost, is only lost until it is found. Look here," Ulnar slips a ring from his finger and tosses it casually over the balustrade of the balcony. "A prized ring of mine. It falls hundreds of feet to the woodland below. There it will lie among the bracken and the twigs. It is lost now to me, but not to the bracken and twigs." He snaps his fingers and the ring reappears in place on his right thumb, "I'm rather fond of this ring, if you'll excuse the extravagance." **Keep From Powermongers of Mohan** "Did I recite the oath of the order?" Ulnar asks, (if not, he will do so, see The Order of Mohan). "We kept our oath, we wizards of the brethren. It is a shame that the kingdom did not keep its oath. We remained of the order and of Mohan to the end, but we lost our love for the kingdom when imperial war and blood became of paramount importance. It is why we buried the Orb of Evocation. To keep them from using it." **The Mohan Trail** "A road leading from Stantionbridge to Mohan. Have you been to Mohan? Lovely place. Beautiful in the summer." **Caves Hidden in the Mohan Trail?** "I would imagine there are many caves hidden in the Mohan trail," Ulnar nods. "The ground rises and falls like waves upon the tide of time, and hollows shall form. Lucky for the bear that they do, for where otherwise would the poor fellow live?" **Barbarians** "Yes," Ulnar looks sad, "they personify the dirge of men. And here, in our midst, the beautiful minds of the Elgar hide in darkness. They lack the bright face and fierce temperament of the plains-men, but their hearts are no less human. I would trade a thousand barbarians for a single Elgar." **Marshdown/Bleaktonne** "A quiet little village of swamp folk, some way north if I recall." **Inglenook Woods** "A small woodland, some distance west of Bleaktonne if I'm not much mistaken."

Ulnar's Responses to Rumours

The area upon which Stantionbridge is founded has long been associated with rumours of an ancient artefact of great power

"Yes, I would imagine so. The Orb of Evocation. We crafted it to contain the magic of the twins. They would have done well to do the same. They might

have lived longer. Instead they kept their work to themselves and ended their days as so much goo on the walls. Well, we can but hope we will have a happier ending ourselves, eh?" He chuckles.

Strange lights and noises have been seen late at night by locals living in the Paravelly Farmland region.

"That does sound odd. I have not been in the vicinity of Paravelly in many long moons. Strange things seem to be eclipsing the usual. Bizarre noises and lights cast doubt upon the solidity of the norm. Though I have always believed, one should value the vista before ones own eyes before trusting in the second hand yarn of a local gossip."

The Stantionbridge emerald mine has been forced to close due to the sudden appearance of a strange, tentacled creature in the entrance shaft.

"How very unfortunate. Have you investigated this yourselves?"

The swamp town of Bleaktonne has been suffering visits from a strange winged beast.

"A creature of dark malevolence harangues the north," Ulnar closes his eyes, chants under his breath for a moment then gasps, "yes, yes. I see her clearly. Black against the sunset. She spreads her wings wide across the Marshdown, her song is terrible as the banshee's wail, but she does not portend death, she hungers it." The wizard opens his eyes and sighs deeply. "The poor folk of Bleaktonne appear in need of help. But I cannot leave the Elgar."

A travelling fighter from the west, recently passing through Stantionbridge, claimed to have fought and killed a blue dragon living in the Babax Desert.

"The dragon's name is Rubicon. She is a magnificent beast, quite beautiful, startlingly violent." Ulnar dismisses the rumour with a wave of his hand, "any man could brag that he has destroyed a dragon. Only the immortal, only the divine or the fiendish could actually undertake the deed. Such creatures do not generally 'pass through' anywhere, not unless the place they pass is left in a steaming crater, a blackened pit of charred remain and smoking bones. Did Stantionbridge resemble such a vision after this fabled dragon-slayer passed along his way?"

Several villagers speak of their friend with grave concern. He set out for the northern city of Carthidge several months ago, looking to buy metal-ore for use in the village smith. But he has not returned, and this is most unlike him.

"I have heard tidings of the evil in Carthidge, this is not the first such story to meet mine ears. Avoid the city, unless go there you must beyond all choice. Many who enter the curtain wall of old Carthidge do not return in this day and age. They languish instead within the jail of the fortress. This, I fear, is where your missing man shall be found."

Inglenook woods is said to be haunted by the ghost of a long dead wizard. Many strange creatures have been seen there, in particular a pack of enormous wolves, each creature said to be twelve feet in length, with huge shaggy heads and thickset bodies covered in downy grey fur.

"You describe the wolverine. But I know nothing of wizards, long dead or long lived, in connection with the woods. It is an ugly place, as woodlands go, but spectacular enough by the light of a decent sunrise and some morning mist. Some have oft said the same of me!" Ulnar laughs.

The woods that grow on the lower slopes of the Greymist Mountains in the shadow of the Talus Citadel are rumoured to be home to a tribe of undead zombies.

"Zombies? No. I am sure I would have noticed," Ulnar smiles to himself.

The Wizard Ulnar

Male human Wizard Lvl13: CR 13; Size M (6 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 13d4; hp 33; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +6/+1 melee, or +6/+1 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +4, Will +8; AL NG; Str 10, Dex 10, Con 11, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Languages Spoken: Common, Mohanian Ancient

Skills and feats: Concentration +5, Decipher Script +9, Hide +0, Knowledge (Dungeoneering) +12, Knowledge (History) +18, Knowledge (The Planes) +18, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spellcraft +18, Spot +0; Brew Potion, Enlarge Spell, Leadership, Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, [Scribe Scroll], Silent Spell, Still Spell, Weapon Focus (quarterstaff).

Possessions: 35,000 gp in gear. Citadel of Talus.

Wizard Spells Known (4/5/5/4/4/3): 0th -- Acid Splash, Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance, Touch of Fatigue. 1st -- Animate Rope, Charm Person, Colour Spray, Comprehend Languages, Disguise Self, Magic Missile, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Good, Reduce Person, Shield, Sleep, Ventriloquism. 2nd -- Bear's Endurance, Blindness/Deafness, Blur, Invisibility, Misdirection, Scare, Summon Monster II, Summon Swarm. 3rd -- Deep Slumber, Displacement, Fireball, Greater Magic Weapon, Heroism, Keen Edge, Magic Circle against Chaos, Phantom Steed, Protection from Energy, Secret Page, Wind Wall. 4th -- Charm Monster, Contagion, Dimensional Anchor, Fire Trap, Greater Invisibility, Lesser Geas, Mnemonic Enhancer, Rainbow Pattern, Resilient Sphere, Shadow Conjunction, Shout, Stoneskin, Wall of Fire. 5th -- Animal Growth, Cone of Cold, Fabricate, Persistent Image.

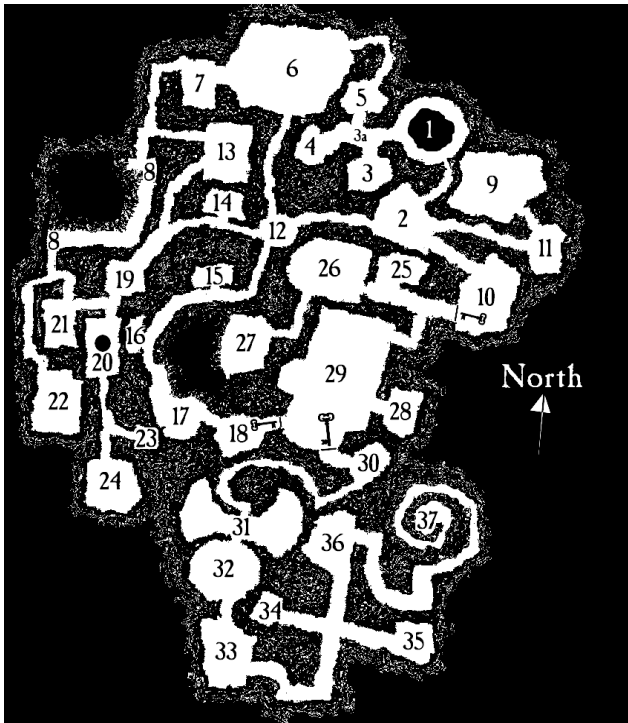
Lepers/The Elgar

CR 1; Size M (5 ft., 5 in. tall); HD 1d4-3; hp 4; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 10; Attack +2 melee, or +0 ranged; SV Fort -3, Ref +0, Will -1; AL NG; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 4, Int 8, Wis 8, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common.

Skills and feats: Hide +0, Listen +1, Move Silently +0, Spot +5, Alertness.

Affliction: non-contagious leprosy



The Thaumaturgos Tomb Scenario

The caves leading to the tomb of Thaumaturgos were covered many hundreds of years ago, but have since been eroded by the flow of water running down from the river Mohep and are open once again. The river culminates in the moat surrounding the village of Stationbridge, curving around the escarpment upon which the village stands in the shape of a horseshoe then ending at a small swirling mere. Here the water drains into a rift in the bottom of the moat, the true entrance to the tombs (See also Stationbridge Details and Map).

Anyone who wishes to enter the tomb will need to plunge into the mere and allow themselves to be dragged under by the permanent whirlpool spinning in the centre of the pool. A column of water cascades through the rift and into an open cavern beneath the mere, dropping some sixty feet into a small subterranean lake. Characters who drop through the rift will be driven underwater by the force of water falling upon them from above and carried 1d20 feet under the surface plus an additional 2 feet for every 50lbs in weight they carry, including the weight of their own body. If the weight of gear and/or armour is unknown, the GM should impose 1ft for every item ten medium sized objects carried (limited only to the type of gear characters are likely to carry in backpacks, satchels and pouches). Metal weapons such as swords, and armour including worn armour (chain, scale, banded etc.), helms and/or shields must be discarded by the PC otherwise they will continue to sink. Removing an item of worn armour will take one full round. Removing specific items from a backpack without discarding the whole backpack will also take one full round. Removing a full suit of armour will take 3 rounds. Discarding helms, shields and weapons counts as a free action. For every round spent discarding items, the PC will sink a further 2 feet. This way the player and GM should be able to calculate the depth the character plunges before he/she can begin to swim back up to the surface of the underground lake.

Characters can swim upward at a rate of 1 foot per round for every 5 points of Strength rounded down to the nearest 5 (5,10,15,20 etc.). They can hold their breath for 60 seconds/6 rounds plus an additional 10 seconds/1 round per Con modifier (or negative ten seconds/round if the Con modifier is a negative level). If the character cannot reach the surface in time they will breathe in water and start to drown. For every foot left to swim

upward, the character loses 1d6 HPs of non-lethal damage. If HPs reach zero the character falls unconscious and eventually drowns. If the character manages to break the surface, all HPs are restored.

Once the character has broken the surface of the underground lake, they can move freely using a normal Swim check at DC 10. For purposes of recovering discarded gear, or rescuing sinking characters, the lake should be considered bottomless. The bowl within which the lake resides is actually a vertical shaft many hundreds of feet deep. Discarded gear will continue to sink until it hits the bottom at which point it will be sucked by strong currents into various fissures, finally being fried when the water expels into a magma filled reservoir at many thousands of feet depth. This should only be relevant if PCs have the ability to breathe underwater. Even in this instance, they will only be able to chase discarded gear or sinking characters so far before water pressure forces them to turn back.

The Caves, Detailed Map and Key

Each cavern includes a room description which the GM should read aloud to players.

1 Subterranean Lake

A large cavern with vaulted ceiling rising to an apex some sixty feet above and filled with the thunderous roar of water. Here a thick column of water falls through a natural hole in the roof, cascading down to a large underground lake in the centre of the cave. The lake is approximately ninety feet wide, turbulent in the centre where the water pours in, but calm beyond this point. Though many tonnes of water must be pouring in through the roof every second, the surface level of the lake remains constantly flush with the ground of the cavern, suggesting the water is draining at a precisely equal rate somewhere below. The bank of the lake is covered in stalagmites large and small, some so tall that where they taper to a point they meet the downward pointing tip of a stalactite attached to the roof. These conical columns of stone, and the walls surrounding them, are covered in a strange red algae which seems to pulsate and glow, giving off an eerie crimson glow and enough light by which to see. Here and there, dotted around the room like macabre statues and bathed in the same red light, you can see a variety of skeletons, some dressed in armour, others merely naked bone covered in ragged clothing, flesh stripped away by the passage of time. All are seated on the floor, or propped in awkward kneeling positions, as though they had slumped to their knees and died where they fell.

Peering toward the walls of the cavern you can see two very definite caves, one ten to twelve feet wide and twenty feet high, the other much narrower but just as tall.

Characters able to see in the dark will have perfect vision in this cave. All other characters will have their line of sight reduced by 10 feet but should still be able to see well enough to move around without lighting lanterns.

The lake harbours no perils, though it is filled with fish and crustaceans that have fallen in from the moat above. The skeletons are nothing more sinister than the putrefied corpses of previous tomb-raiders, or victims of the whirlpool in the moat, trapped in the caves and starved to death.

2 Room of Electric Burning

All the passageways leading to this room slope down at a steep angle before opening out some fifty feet above the floor of a huge pit. The various doorways are at a uniform height, but there are no ways to reach one doorway from another.

A vast cavern opens before you, the roof so high it resides in total darkness somewhere above. The floor, a chamber-wide pit some fifty feet below the level of the opening where the passage terminates, is also shrouded in shadow. Dotted about the

shadows you can see ten or twelve tiny red dots, like rubies glistening in the dark. They could be rubies, but for the fact they seem to be moving around. Every now and then a pair wink out then return.

The walls here are covered in the same red algae, but less so than before, making the darkness deeper somehow. You can hear the steady drip dripping of water, a rhythmic, staccato sound that echoes around the great space before you.

Suddenly the hairs on the back of your neck prickle and you feel a tingling sensation crawling across your skin. The room seems to tremble and a grumbling sound emanates from somewhere high above. Light bursts in on the cavern, illuminating the rugged walls and arched roof of a huge chamber. For the briefest moment you see strange, squat, dog-like shapes crawling across the floor of

the pit, maybe five or six of them, spines unnaturally long, forelimbs more human than dog, heads hidden under a shaggy mane of blue fur from beneath which peer two red eyes filled with a burning malevolence - the 'rubies' you saw before. A blast of electric-blue lightning as thick as a man's arm forks down from the middle of the roof and grounds on a point in the dead centre of the cave floor. With a shocking bang the lightning is spent and the light is gone.

A jagged after burn of blazing blue dances on your retina as you scour the floor of the cave for a better look at the creatures lurking down there. But you can see nothing. Only shadow and the deliberate movement of those red, blinking eyes. You fancy you hear some of the creatures murmuring and cackling under their breath, but the sound is short-lived.

There seem to be three other doorways in the walls of the cavern around you, three caves, all at the same height as the one you currently occupy and all with no discernable method of reaching them.

This is the room of electric burning. The creatures squirming across the floor are Barghest, lupine fiends that can take the shape of a wolf or a goblin but which resemble a mixture of the two in their natural form. If the Barghest spot the PCs, they will change into goblins and try to scale the walls to reach their prey. The Barghest feed on blood and souls, growing stronger the more they devour. As the PCs explore this area they will hear the creatures muttering to themselves in Infernal. They can also speak Goblin and Worg.

The lightning blast is a magical eruption of energy which comes from a tiny crystal 'manna sink' situated in the dead centre of the roof. Every minute (6 rounds) the charging crystal releases its pent up energies in the form of the lightning which grounds with a second crystal set in the middle of the pit floor. The lightning will also barb outward and ground with any metallic object occupying the cavern, excluding anything situated on the threshold of the four doorways or in the passageways beyond. Thus, any character traversing the room and wearing metal armour or carrying metal items (remember to include belt and backpack buckles, coins and metal jewellery) will be struck by a fork of lightning when next the crystal expends its energy.

Monster: Barghest

CR 4; Size Medium Outsider; HD 6d8+6; hp 33; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18; Base Attack/Grapple +6/+9; Attack Bite +9 melee (1d6+3); Full Attack Bite +9 melee (1d6+3) and 2 claws +4 melee (1d4+1); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +6, Ref +7, Will +7; AL Lawful Evil; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 14. Special Attacks: Spell-like abilities, feed. Skills and feats: Bluff +11, Diplomacy +6, Disguise +2 (+4 acting), Hide +11*, Intimidate +13, Jump +12, Listen +11, Move Silently +10, Search +11, Sense Motive +11, Spot +11, Survival +11 (+13 following tracks), Combat Reflexes, Improved Initiative, Track, Change shape, damage reduction 5/magic, darkvision 60 ft., scent.

A barghest is a lupine fiend that can take the shape of a wolf or a goblin. In its natural form, it resembles a goblin-wolf hybrid with terrible jaws and sharp claws. Their skin is strange blue colour. A full-grown barghest is about 6 feet long and weighs 180 pounds. A barghest's eyes glow red in the dark.

Barghests speak Goblin, Worg, and Infernal.

Combat

Barghests can claw and bite, no matter what their form, and usually disdain weapons. Though they love killing, they have little stomach for direct combat and attack from ambush whenever possible. Barghests start a combat by using crushing despair and charm monster to keep opponents off balance. They try to stay away from the enemy's main strength. A barghest's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction. Its natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will—blink, levitate, misdirection (DC 14), rage (DC 15); 1/day—charm monster (DC 16), crushing despair (DC 16), dimension door. Caster level equals the barghest's HD.

The save DCs are Charisma-based.

Feed (Su): When a barghest slays a humanoid opponent, it can feed on the flesh and life force, for a full-round action. Feeding destroys the victim's body and prevents any form of resurrection that requires part of the corpse. There is a 50% chance that a wish, miracle, or true resurrection spell can restore a devoured victim to life. Check once for each destroyed creature. If the check fails, the creature cannot be brought back to life by mortal magic. A barghest advances in Hit Dice by consuming corpses in this fashion. For every three suitable corpses a barghest devours, it gains 1 Hit Die, and its Strength, Constitution, and natural armour increase by +1. Its attack bonus and saves improve as normal for an outsider of its Hit Dice, and it gains skill points, feats, and ability score improvements normally. The barghest only advances by consuming the corpses of creatures whose Hit Dice or levels are equal to or greater than its own current total. A barghest that reaches 9 Hit Dice through feeding immediately becomes a greater barghest upon completion of the act.

Change Shape (Su): A barghest can assume the shape of a goblin or a wolf as a standard action. In goblin form, a barghest cannot use its natural weapons but can wield weapons and wear armour. In wolf form, a barghest loses its claw attacks but retains its bite attack.

Pass Without Trace (Ex): A barghest in wolf form can use pass without trace (as the spell) as a free action.

Skills: *A barghest in wolf form gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

Each strike acts in much the same way as a 3rd level Wizard/sorcerer Lightning Bolt spell, but without the Reflex save, since the lightning is grounding on the metal the PC wears/carries and is not aimed at them per say. Each minor bolt will cause 3d6 points of electricity damage. If a character steps over the crystal in the floor of the pit, or reaches down to pick it up when the bolt is firing, they take full damage from the main lightning blast (10d6 points of electricity damage).

The lightning bolt sets fire to combustibles and damages objects in its path. It can melt metals with a low melting point, such as lead, gold, copper, silver, or bronze. If the minimum damage that could be caused to an interposing barrier would shatter or break through it, the bolt will continue through the barrier, as if the barrier were not there; otherwise, the bolt will not fire at all, the connection between the two manna sinks being broken.

3 The Bronze Key

Situated on a hook on the far wall of this large square cave is a huge bronze key the size of your hand. As far as you can tell, the room is empty.

If the key is taken, a moment will pass, followed by an ominous rumbling. Heavy iron portcullis (Hardness:10, 45HPs) fall over the entrance to this room and the thresholds of rooms 1, 4 and 5 as well, effectively cutting off rooms 3 and 4, restricting access to rooms 1 and 5 and creating a virtual cage between the four rooms (3a).

The walls in rooms 3 and 4 will suddenly appear to move. 1d10+4 ghouls, divided as equally as possible between the rooms, will seem to appear from nowhere, emerging somehow from the grey stone of the walls and advancing on those trapped within each respective room. If nobody is in room 4, the ghouls will shuffle across the chamber, reach through the bars of the portcullis and groan loudly. (See NPCs/Enemies for ghoul stats).

Simultaneously a small hole will slide open in the roof of the central chamber (3a) and a thin trickle of water will start to pour into the room. Every now and then a shocker lizard will drop through the hole (up to a maximum 2d6+6 lizards) and land in the growing pool of water on the floor of the cave with a small crackle of electricity and a complaining squeal.

The lizards are about half a foot in height and a deep blue in colour, with large amber-coloured eyes. They stand on four legs, two long back limbs and two skinny forelimbs, but when they move they lift themselves up to full height and dash forward in a mad whirl of legs and webbed feet, emitting a series of loud clicks as they run.

Shocker lizards know of no transition between running and standing still. At any given time, they will either be doing one or the other.

As soon as a lizard hits the ground it will sprint off in a frenzied fashion, electricity arcing off it in every direction. For each PC occupying chamber 3a and each new lizard arrival, roll 1d20. On a roll of 1-3 a shocker lizard will accidentally bump into the PC in their enthusiasm to rush across the room (Reflex save DC 12 applicable for PCs, but not ghouls). The PC will take 2d8 points of non-lethal electricity damage from the subsequent electric shock. If the PC attempts to retaliate, the shocker lizard can fire its shock effect up to five feet in any direction and will use this as a defence mechanism, causing a further d8 points of non-lethal electricity damage, but this time with a half Reflex DC12 save. Shocker lizards prefer to avoid combat and will run away from, rather than turn and fight, an aggressor.

Once the above has been determined, the GM should roll 1d4 for each lizard. On a roll of 1 the lizard runs into room 1, races around the lake and dives into the water. It will miss anyone standing in that cave. On a roll of 2 the lizard runs into room 3, on a roll of 3 it runs into room 4 and on a roll of 4 it runs into room 5.

If a lizard runs into an occupied room (except room 1), roll 1d20 for each character/monster present. On a roll of 1 a Shocker will dash into them, causing appropriate damage (Reflex

save DC 12 applicable for PCs, but not ghouls). Ghouls hit by a shocker lizard will instantly burst into flame and start to burn for 1d6+6 HPs per round. They will continue to attack or move normally even as they burn, but as soon as all HP are depleted they will drop to the ground. PCs fighting a burning ghoul will take an additional 1d4 burns damage on a successful hit.

The GM should make a note of the number of shocker lizards and the direction each one takes. Lizards that dash into room 5 will find the doorway on the far side and keep going, continuing into cavern 6 where they will find the nearest shadowy corner and hide (Hide +11). Lizards that run into rooms 4 or 5 will continue running around like mad things and the GM should continue to roll 1d20 per lizard for each character/monster in the room. On a roll of 15-20 the lizard dashes back through the portcullis into room 3a (anyone there must check for the risk of bumping into the lizard again) and then finds the cave leading to room 1 and jumps into the lake. If characters press themselves flat against walls the d20 risk of a hit can be decreased by one.

Once the ghouls and shocker lizards have been despatched, the portcullis will rise into the ceiling and the party will be free to move on, taking the bronze key with them.

4 Empty cave

The ghouls lurking unseen in the walls of this cave will remain hidden unless the key is taken from the wall in room 3.

5 Empty cave

6 Lair of the Lizard

A vast square cavern with three exits. The same strange red algae covers walls and ceiling, affording you enough light to see by. Plumes of hot steam vent from fissures in the floor of the cavern, jets of grey mist that shoot several feet into the air before evaporating. Several hundred shocker lizards occupy the cave, favouring areas around the fissures. Their curious clicking language fills the air, which is charged with electricity and muggy with heat from the steam vents. A cloying dampness settles on your clothing and skin as soon as you enter the cave; a close humidity which seems to press in from all sides, suffocating and claustrophobic.

There are many hundreds of shocker lizards in this cave, small blue reptiles with big yellow eyes, each glowing with an electric blue light and crackling with pent up energies. The creatures, each no taller than your knees, seem to be clumped together near the fissures and you can see clear channels running between them where you may tread safely. Provided the reptiles stay where they are, you should be able to weave your way through them to one of the other exits.

A lizard close to you glances around with a quick snap of its neck, yellow eyes turning toward you. It picks up one back leg and slaps the ground repeatedly with a webbed foot, clucks its tongue and emits a strange warbling sound. A few other lizards here and there seem to tense, the muscles in their legs bunching, their eyes rolling. One or two also slap the ground with their feet. But then the lizard looks away and a calm returns to the creatures. You sense one wrong move could set off a mass panic,

leading to chain reaction of mad, dashing lizards.

PCs must tread very carefully through this room. The lizards are skittish creatures, prone to panic. If one feels threatened it will leap onto its hind legs and race away. This one will set off every other lizard in the cave, leading to a mass eruption of dashing creatures, each capable of dealing any PCs caught in their midst 2d8 non-lethal points of electricity damage. If this happens while the party are traversing the room, they will take a minimum 10d8 points non lethal damage plus a further 4d8 damage if they fail a Reflex save DC 15.

Players should use Move Silently as an opposed check against the Shocker Lizards' collective Listen skill +4. One roll should be made for every ten feet traversed. The cavern is approximately 100 feet wide, meaning a PC travelling between east and west doorways must make 10 rolls, while a PC travelling

Monster: Shocker Lizard

CR 1; Size Small; HD 2d10+2; hp 13; Init +6; Spd 40 ft.; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +2/-2; Attack Bite +3 melee (1d4); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +1; AL Neutral; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 6
Special Attacks: stunning shock, lethal shock
Skills and feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Jump +7, Listen +4, Spot +4, Swim +10, Improved Initiative, Darkvision 60 ft., electricity sense, immunity to electricity, low-light vision.

A shocker lizard has a pale grey or blue underside, shading to a darker hue on its back. It has blue-black markings along its back and tail. A shocker lizard is about 1 foot tall at the shoulder and weighs about 25 pounds.

Combat

A shocker lizard relies on its electricity abilities in combat. A lizard tends to bite only after its shock has rendered an opponent unconscious or when the shock seems to have no effect at all. A solitary lizard flees once it delivers its shocks, but if other shocker lizards are nearby, they all home in on their comrade's discharges and attempt to administer their shocks to the foe.

Stunning Shock (Su): Once per round, a shocker lizard can deliver an electrical shock to a single opponent within 5 feet. This attack deals 2d8 points of nonlethal damage to living opponents (Reflex DC 12 half). The save DC is Constitution-based.

Lethal Shock (Su): Whenever two or more shocker lizards are within 20 feet of each other, they can work together to create a lethal shock. This effect has a radius of 20 feet, centred on any one contributing lizard. The shock deals 2d8 points of electricity damage for each lizard contributing to it, to a maximum of 12d8. A Reflex save (DC 10 + number of lizards contributing) reduces the damage by half.

Electricity Sense (Ex): Shocker lizards automatically detect any electrical discharges within 100 feet.

Skills: Shocker lizards have a +4 racial bonus on Hide checks due to their coloration. Shocker lizards have a +2 racial bonus on Listen and Spot checks. Shocker lizards use their Dexterity modifier instead of their Strength modifier for Climb and Jump checks. A shocker lizard has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. A shocker lizard has a +8 racial bonus on any Swim check to perform some special action or avoid a hazard. It can always choose to take 10 on a Swim check, even if distracted or endangered. It can use the run action while swimming, provided it swims in a straight line.

from east to south or west to south, must make 5 rolls. On a failed roll one lizard will sense the passing PC and bolt in the opposite direction. All lizards it leaps over will react in the same way, until eventually the entire cavern is in an uproar. For each round the PCs stay in the cavern after the initial lizard bolts, the GM should impose an increment of +1 to all HP damage, representing the ever increasing numbers of moving lizards.

7 Room of Bones

This largish cavern is square in shape, thick pillars of a strange, irregular shape, rising from the floor to support the arched ceiling overhead. As your light passes over the interior of the room, you realise the reason for the irregular shape of the pillars. Each is made from human skulls, thousands crammed one atop the other to form a solid mass so dense that it's strength seems capable of supporting the roof.

The roof too, you see now, is formed from human skulls which leer down with sightless sockets and permanent rictus grins. The walls are made from more skulls, while the floor consists of a matrix of bones, each criss- crossing the one below to create a macabre weave effect.

The eye sockets of a skull in the dead centre of the nearest pillar suddenly blaze with a strange green light. The jaw moves with a jerky motion and a deathly voice issues forth. "What do they want?"

Another skull, this time embedded in a nearby wall, seems to come to life, its own eyes glowing red, jaw rattling as it speaks, "they seek the prize of kings, hidden by the treacherous wizard scum!"

"They dare not tread through the room of bones," a new voice rasps, and now you see a third skull speaking. Others seem to be coming to life, more eyes blazing in the shadows.

"Test us, tomb raiders," the original skull sneers, "step lightly upon our ribs and feel us crunch beneath your feet. We will embrace you. We will bite you! Come, test us."

Each skull is under the influence of a fourth level wizard Animate Undead spell. The skulls have been commanded to spit wrathful insults at anyone appearing at either of the doorways. They will taunt the PCs in an attempt to goad them into entering the room. Anyone setting foot on the floor will begin to sink into the bones which have the same cumulative effect as a pit of quicksand. The victim should be considered 'helpless' at this point, with an effective Dex of zero. They will be sucked down at a rate of 1 foot depth for every combat round. Thus a 6ft character will last 6 rounds before vanishing beneath the bone floor. If huge amounts of strength are applied in an attempt to tear the victim free, the victim's legs or feet will simply be ripped from their sockets. A 6th level wizard Anti-Magic Field spell protects the room. The field suppresses any spell or magical effect used within, brought into, or cast into the area, but does not dispel it. The field has been carefully constructed within the walls of the room, thus the animated skulls remain unaffected, albeit protected from magical attacks by the effective barrier of the field.

Time spent within the chamber will count against all

suppressed spell's durations. Summoned creatures of any type and incorporeal undead wink out if they enter the room. Time spent winked out counts normally against the duration of the conjuration that is maintaining the creature. A normal creature can enter the room, as can normal missiles. Furthermore, while a magic sword does not function magically within the area, it is still a sword (and a masterwork sword at that). The spell has no effect on constructs that are imbued with magic during their creation process and are thereafter self-supporting (unless they have been summoned, in which case they are treated like any other summoned creatures). Elementals, corporeal undead, and outsiders are likewise unaffected unless summoned. These creatures' spell-like or supernatural abilities, however, may be temporarily nullified by the field. Dispel magic does not remove the field.

The skulls will cackle madly if anyone becomes ensnared in the bone-quicksand. When all attempts to get the victim out have failed, the skulls will offer to release him if one of the PCs makes an offering to the room of bones. Offerings must be in the form of a bone sacrifice and the skulls will take nothing less than a whole hand or foot which must be severed and thrown into the room. The skulls will not accept a hand or foot of the sinking victim, only that of someone who stands safely on the threshold of the room.

If a sacrifice is made (see below for damage results) the sinking PC will be released and all life will seem to fade from the skulls. The sacrificed body part will sink into the bones and vanish from view. A PC who attempts to cut off his/her own body part must make a DC18 Will save or lose their nerve.

Severed Sword-hand - 4 negative points to base attack bonus, -1d6 permanent points to Dex, 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins.

Severed Non Sword-hand - 1 negative points to base attack bonus, -4 negative points for all two handed weapon attacks, -1d6 permanent points to Dex, 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins.

Severed Foot - 1d10 permanent points to Dex, movement rate decreased by a factor of three. No running feats/abilities such as bull rush apply. Penalties for Jump, etc. 3d10 immediate HPs loss and DC 15 Fort save or fall unconscious from shock. Loss of 1 HP per day thereafter, unless the wound can be cauterized or healed magically. DC 12 Fort save at the end of every in-game day for 1d20+20 minus CON days, or the wound becomes infected with additional 1d6HP loss and 1d4 CON points per day. The victim will recover after a number of days equal to 1d20+40 minus CON, at which point HP loss will cease and healing begins. The victim will need to walk on a crutch.

It is possible to cross the room by climbing on the walls and shimmying around to the opposite doorway, however, the skulls will do their best to hamper any attempt by biting at the fingers and feet of the PCs as they climb, causing 1d6 HP damage overall. Anyone wearing metal gauntlets and/or metal solarets (armoured shoes) can make the climb unscathed.

Monster: Spectre

CR 6; Size Medium; HD 7d8+8; hp 38; Init +6; Spd 40 ft. Fly 80ft (Perfect); AC 15; Base Attack/Grapple +3/-; Attack Incorporeal touch +6 melee (1d8 plus energy drain); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +7; AL Lawful Evil; Str —, Dex 15, Con —, Int 14, Wis 14, Cha 10. Special Attacks: Energy drain, create spawn
Skills and feats: Hide +13, Intimidate +9, Listen +14, Search +12, Spot +14, Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative, Darkvision 60 ft., incorporeal traits, +2 turn resistance, sunlight powerlessness, undead traits, unnatural aura.

Combat

In close combat a spectre attacks with its numbing, life-draining touch. It makes full use of its incorporeal nature, moving through walls, ceilings, and floors as it attacks.

Energy Drain (Su): Living creatures hit by a spectre's incorporeal touch attack gain two negative levels. The DC is 15 for the Fortitude save to remove a negative level. The save DC is Charisma-based. For each such negative level bestowed, the spectre gains 5 temporary hit points.

Create Spawn (Su): Any humanoid slain by a spectre becomes a spectre in 1d4 rounds. Spawn are under the command of the spectre that created them and remain enslaved until its death. They do not possess any of the abilities they had in life.

Unnatural Aura (Su): Animals, whether wild or domesticated, can sense the unnatural presence of a spectre at a distance of 30 feet. They do not willingly approach nearer than that and panic if forced to do so; they remain panicked as long as they are within that range.

Sunlight Powerlessness (Ex): Spectres are powerless in natural sunlight (not merely a daylight spell) and flee from it. A spectre caught in sunlight cannot attack and can take only a single move or attack action in a round.

8 The Chasm

The tunnel opens into a huge cavern. You find yourself standing at one end of a narrow, crumbling ledge which runs around one corner of a deep chasm-like pit whose sheer walls drop into unfathomable depths and deepest shadow below. At the other end of the ledge is an exit.

A light shimmers in the air, a few feet away directly above the ledge. The light seems to twist and drift like mist. Whorling shapes within the mist resolve themselves into an incorporeal figure, a young human male dressed in rags, his flesh semi-transparent so that you can see the inner workings of organs and blood vessels moving within his body. The spectre's eyes are a uniform milky white, and its mouth is twisted into a permanent grimace. A deathly chill seems to fill the air around you, fingers of icy cold travel the length of your spine.

Suddenly, the air above the chasm shimmers and fills with hundreds more ghostly characters, varying in shape, size race and class. Some are barbarians, others adventurers like you. You can see clerics,

bards, wizards and knights, but also orcs and goblins, a few gnomes and even an ogre. The ghosts hang in the air, all eyes turned on you.

The ghostly spectre whispers as it floats slowly toward you, "in the dark where shadows grow, into the pit the robbers go."

The spectre will attempt to attack using its numbing, life draining touch. It is bound to the confines of this chamber and the pit (the bottom of which, some thirty feet deep, is filled with previous victims whose lifeless bodies may be worth investigating for items of equipment and treasure, but only if the spectre is despatched first), and cannot follow victims beyond the two doorways. When the room is unoccupied, the spectre will simply vanish. It can go anywhere within the room, including into the pit.

The spectre is incorporeal, so barriers, obstacles or shields will not hinder its progress.

Any victim slain by the spectre will become a ghost, joining the many previous victims now bound eternally to haunt the pit. These ghosts are non-aggressive and incapable of attack, being little more than wisps of memory and soul.

If the spectre is killed a collective sigh of relief will rise from the gathered ghosts who will slowly dissipate into the air, their souls laid to rest at last. At the GM's discretion, one or two more goodly souls may remain behind to help the PCs in their efforts to retrieve the Orb, vanishing to the after life when the task is complete.

9 The Sinking Room

A wide cavern with a high, arched ceiling, smooth, slippery walls and a floor which seems to comprise entirely of a vast iron grill. The air here is so hot that even as you stand upon the threshold of the doorway you begin to sweat and your eyes begin to sting. The reason for the heat is obvious, when you glance down through the bars of the grill and see a swirling red lake of boiling magma, churning and bubbling in a huge lava-lake some thirty feet below. On the far side of the cavern, hooked to the wall and shimmering in the rising heat haze, hangs a large silver key, easily the size of your hand.

Reaching the key without magic will entail stepping out onto the grill. The metal is extremely hot and will cause 1d4 burns damage to anyone with bare feet. But this is not the most perilous aspect of the grill.

The whole floor is supported at various points around the walls beneath by stone wheels. Any weight placed on the floor will cause the grill to sink at a rate of 5 feet per round (every 10 seconds). Simultaneously a heavy iron portcullis (Hardness:10 HPs 45) will drop across the doorway, blocking access into and out of the room. The grill will stop just one foot above the lava and remain there until the weight is removed. Anyone standing on the grill at this point will start to roast (1d10+5 HP damage per round). Remember that the blocked door and the silver key are now approximately thirty feet above and cannot be easily reached. The walls are slippery with a slimy fungus, affording no foot or handholds for climbing.

Simply removing weight from the grill floor will cause it to rise again. Taking the key from the wall will also cause the grill to rise. When the grill reaches its original position, the portcullis will crank back up and the trap will reset.

10 The Stone Forest

Many pillars support the strange stone ceiling of this huge cavern which resembles nothing short of a forest clearing. The pillars have been carved to resemble tree trunks and the uneven floor is covered in sinewy, twisting roots of stone. The roof is the most impressive aspect of the room, consisting of thousands, possibly millions, of intricately carved leaves and branches, each meticulously sculpted from the very bedrock of the roof itself. Closer inspection of nearby pillars reveals the bark-like surface is even detailed with tiny insects and drooling sap.

In the centre of the cave stands a grey stone altar covered in carved vines, and upon which stands a single red candle. Even as you watch, a flame gutters on the wick of the candle, and a fresh light illuminates the room. Where the light falls, colour seems to bathe the stone and lend sudden realism to the carvings. The tree trunk pillars become brown and organic, grass seems to grow amid the stone roots and browns, greens and other earthy colours rattle through the canopy. Wherever you look the forest seems to come to life.

Finally you find yourself looking upon what must surely be some kind of illusion. A forest clearing, complete with shafts of sunlight filled with drifting motes, filtering down from a sky above the treetops. The pleasant sound of birdsong and the rustle of leaves shifting collectively in a light breeze reaches your ears, even though you know neither could possibly be heard in this deep underground cave. The altar is the only thing that seems the same as before, though now the vines growing over its surface look real enough.

On the far side of the cave, now framed by tangled roots and vines, you can see a large wooden door furnished with a huge door handle shaped like a cross between a lion's head and a woman's face. Beneath the handle is a bronze-plated keyhole big enough for a key the size of your hand.

The door is locked, but can be opened using the bronze key from room 3. If the players enter the room, you should read the following

You hear a roar, followed by the heavy padding of feet on the floor of the cave. Suddenly, a huge creature appears from behind one of the pillar-like-trees, apparently emerging from thin air. Similar in size to a horse, the creature has a tawny lion-like body with powerful limbs and muscular flanks. Great falcon wings are folded above its back while its feline face, framed by a sleek mane of brown hair, is strangely feminine.

"Who enters the wild wood?" the creature asks, her

sultry voice deep and powerful so that it seems to reverberate in your skull and echo from every surface of the cave. "Know that all envoys of the king of Mohan die by my claws. Are you envoys of the king?"

Monster: Asslyla the Gynosphinx

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 8d10+8; hp 45; Init +5; Spd 40 ft. Fly 60ft (Poor); AC 19; Base Attack/Grapple +8/+16; Attack Claw +11 melee (1d6+4); Full attack 2 claws +11 melee (1d6+4); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8; AL Neutral; Str 19, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 19, Cha 19

Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6+2, spell-like abilities
Skills and feats: Bluff +15, Concentration +12, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Intimidate +13, Listen +17, Sense Motive +15, Spot +17, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Sphinxes are enigmatic creatures with great, feathery wings and leonine bodies. All sphinxes are territorial, but the more intelligent ones can differentiate between deliberate intrusion and temporary or inadvertent trespass.

A typical sphinx is about 10 feet long and weighs about 800 pounds. Sphinxes speak Sphinx, Common, and Draconic. The Gynosphinx is a female sphinx.

Combat

In close combat, Gynosphinxes use their powerful claws to flay the flesh from their enemies. Despite their deadly nature, they prefer to avoid combat whenever possible.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +11 melee, damage 1d6+2.

Spell-Like Abilities: 3/day—clairaudience/clairvoyance, detect magic, read magic, see invisibility; 1/day—comprehend languages, locate object, dispel magic, remove curse (DC 18), legend lore. Caster level 14th. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Once per week a Gynosphinx can create a symbol of death, a symbol of fear, a symbol of insanity, a symbol of pain, a symbol of persuasion, a symbol of sleep, and a symbol of stunning as the spells (caster level 18th), except that all save DCs are 22 and each symbol remains a maximum of one week once scribed. The save DCs are Charisma-based.

The creature is Asslyla a Gynosphinx and mate to Azuerl the Criosphinx who occupies room 18. Both creatures belong to a remote demiplane paradise where they have been granted a life of peace and solitude together by the wizards of the Order of Mohan in return for guardianship of the tomb. They pass into the material plane when the magical flame of the candle standing on the altar flickers to life and calls them (creating a coterminous point between the two planes). The creatures are sworn to guard the Orb of Evocation and the tomb of the Thaumaturgous brothers and will execute this oath above all other considerations with one exception: if either creature fears the other is in danger, they will retreat and allow passage into the tomb.

Asslyla will only attack those who purport to be sent by the king, but if she suspects the characters of lying, or trying to pull the wool over her eyes, she will react accordingly. She is a powerful creature and players should avoid a fight with her if at all possible.

Gynosphinx are often willing to bargain for treasure or service and constantly seek out new intellectual challenges. In

this way the players may be able to engage in conversation with Asslyla, earn her trust or even find out about other rooms in the caves. Under no circumstances, however, will Asslyla yield the doorway into the tombs. Her sole purpose here is to prevent anyone, even those with a key, from stepping through the door. She will do everything in her power to perform this duty and no amount of bargaining or smart talk will change this. If she fails in this task, her time in the paradise demiplane will end and she will be banished permanently to the material plane.

There is a simple way to get past Asslyla, and it is a method she is aware of and one she will take great pains to prevent. This is a failsafe, imposed on the magic of the room by the wizards who built it. If the candle on the altar is snuffed out, the forest and Asslyla will vanish. The candle will reignite within ten seconds, so PCs will need to be swift if they wish to use this time to open the door. Though Asslyla is strong, even she cannot break down the door which can only be opened using the key and which automatically locks when closed.

Asslyla will guard against the use of this failsafe by roaming sentinel-fashion around the altar, making certain to keep herself between the candle and the PCs. If she engages in combat, however, she will likely be forced to move away from the altar, leaving the candle exposed.

Asslyla is unique among the creatures who inhabit the dungeon in that she knows what the Orb of Evocation does. If asked about the orb she will reply cryptically:

"It evokes passage to the dark side of the sun. Taking the road means that you may never return to the world you know, so take care."

She will not elaborate and may become suspicious of the PCs' motives if they press for more information.

The locked door can be opened using the bronze key from room 3 (Hardness: 6, HPs: 20). The door is strengthened with a magical enchantment which rebuffs all spells cast against it directly back onto the caster at double strength.

11 Empty Cave.

This cave stands empty, save for a few stalactites.

12 Crossroads.

A circular cave with a conical roof which tapers to a very fine point. Four exits lead in four different directions.

13 The Room of Compulsion

You are in a large cavern, roughly square in shape, the walls covered in stone carvings and friezes which seem to depict some kind of story. You can see another exit to the right/left of the one you entered by.

The GM should request a DC15 Will save from all players whose characters are present in the room. Any who fail will be affected by a compulsion spell designed to turn them on their fellow adventurers. Afflicted characters will attack all other characters, afflicted or otherwise, and will continue to do so until the enchantment is broken with magic, or they are forcibly removed from the room.

If PCs get the chance they will see that the frieze tells the story of two male wizards who seem to be identical twins. Each section of the frieze shows a different scene:

1. The twins are shown receiving scrolls from a group of other wizards.
2. The twins are seen concocting potions in the middle of what looks like a swamp
3. The twins look shocked by an explosion between them. One twin is holding something in one hand, which at first may look like a snail-shell, but which upon closer inspection will seem more like a swirling vortex in the air.

4. A group of wizards are seen mourning over two identical sarcophagi.
5. A group of wizards stand in a circle. Another of the swirling vortex snail-shell type objects hangs in the air above them, this one larger than the one in the previous carving.
6. A wizard holds a small orb in one hand and another of the swirling vortex in the other. Other wizards are standing nearby, reaching toward him. He seems to be surrounded by a circle.
7. A sun with two crescent moons on either side and a wizard below. The orb stands on a pedestal in front of him.

14 Cavern of Vengeful Creatures

You step into an empty cavern, roughly rectangular in shape, with no other visible exits. Ranged around the room, some half hidden behind stone columns, others in full view, are various statues depicting an eclectic assortment of wild beasts. These range from natural animals, including a wolf, blood dripping from its fangs, a dog with lolling tongue and a docile expression on its face, a pig rooting around in mud and a goat chewing on what looks like a piece of fabric, to more monstrous creatures, including a hideously realistic giant spider, its huge forelimbs wrapping some unidentified prey in silken web, a gigantic rat with beady eyes and an evil expression on its face, a snake-like Grick, its tentacles splayed, beaky jaws wide open as it seems to emerge from an aperture (actually just a shallow alcove) at the back of the cave, and a giant owl perched upon a stone carving of a branch, its wings spread wide, talons clutching what looks like a small vole.

Each statue is carved from stone, and impressively realistic. The eyes are formed from gemstones which reflect the light of your lantern in an eerie way, giving you the distinct impression that the statues are in fact alive, and watching you.

The statues are not alive, nor are they watching the PCs. However, if any of the gemstones are removed from any of the statues, the PCs will contract a variety of magical effects specific to each different statue. The effects of each statue stack, so a PC with the traits of the wolf can also have the traits of a spider and a dog, for example. Effects will prevail until a magical cure can be found (any spell designed to break a compulsive magical effect). Some effects can be resisted on a successful DC18 Will save. See below for specific details.

Wolf - when the PC next becomes hungry, he will begin to suffer a bloodlust that he will find hard to ignore (DC18 Will save). On a failed roll, they will attack the nearest character, be that friend or foe, and attempt to bite them. This characteristic will prevail until a magical cure is found. The most likely solution will be to provide plenty of cured raw meat upon which the affected character can gnaw during mealtimes.

Dog - The PC will become pathetically loyal to another random member of the party for 1d4 hours each day (DC18 Will save covers the full duration per day). The GM should either choose a PC at random, or roll a dice equivalent to the number of players then allocate a digit to each player sitting around the table in a clockwise fashion. During his period of dotting loyalty, the player character will follow his 'master' without question and act in a very dog-like fashion, panting and scratching behind his ears one minute, leaping up at his master or chasing an imaginary tail the next. The PC will retain all human characteristics as well, but they

will exist alongside his new canine traits. Once the d4 period of hours is up the PC will return to normal and will probably be extraordinarily embarrassed by their own behaviour. During the period of loyalty, the affected PC must do anything their master asks of them, even if their player disagrees with the command.

Pig - Whenever the PC sees mud, or anything remotely resembling mud (quicksand, damp soil etc) he will be filled with a mad desire to roll around in it, snorting like a pig and rooting about with his nose. The PC resists on a DC18 Will save. Furthermore, the PC will suffer a strange craving for raw vegetables at mealtimes, particularly turnips and swedes. The sloppier and more disgusting the meal, the more the PC will enjoy eating it. The player should be encouraged to inject this new trait into their PC regardless of Will saves.

Goat - The PC will suffer a continual, gnawing hunger in the pit of his belly and a strange compulsion to eat anything and everything for 1d4 hours every day. He will chew fabric, grass, his own leather armour, in fact anything he can get his hands on. And he will need to do this all the time, with respite coming only at the end of the rolled period. Usual DC18 Will save to resist.

Giant Spider - The PC will no longer gain satisfaction in eating anything other than live prey. He will become depressed suffering a temporary reduction of 1d4 points in Wis, the reduction lifted only if he manages to eat a live meal (any animal will do- birds, rats, rabbits etc.) The 1d4 reduction and a general depression in the character's mood will prevail until this happens. If the character misses a live meal the following day, the reduction and depression will recur. Will save does not apply to the Spider trait.

Giant Rat - The PC becomes a carrier of The Shakes. Anyone who touches him will contract the illness. The Shakes causes twitches, tremors and fits, has an incubation period of 1 day (thus the illness will emerge one day after the PC is touched) and causes 1d8 Dex damage for the duration of the illness. Affected PCs should make a Fortitude saving throw each day in order to avoid incurring damage for that day. If the victim rolls two consecutive saves in a row they have recovered from the illness. Dex points can be healed magically, or at the rate of 1pt per day provided the PC gets adequate rest and food.

Note: the recovery of lost points occurs even during the period of illness, so 1pt of Dex can be recovered each day regardless of the Fortitude save. The carrier of the Shakes benefits from their new affliction by being immune to the effects of The Shakes. No Will save for this trait.

Grick - The character will begin to find they are only comfortable when resting in the smallest nook or sheltering in the tiniest hole their body can fit into. They will instantly gain the Dark vision ability, but will also suffer an irrational terror of being under the open sky. They will prefer being indoors, but given the choice would sooner be underground than anywhere else and will endeavour to achieve this wherever possible. Thus, given the choice between a journey over open plains or a dungeon crawl, the PC will choose the dungeon crawl every time. They will always be on the lookout for caves to duck into and stones to hide under. When travelling under an open sky they will need to make a DC18 Will save or suffer a panic attack which will cause them to scream in terror and curl up into a tight ball. The victim should be considered paralysed for 1d4 hours thereafter, after which point they should make another Will save to recover from their panic attack and function normally.

Giant Owl - The character will gain the uncanny ability to turn his head 360 degrees in any direction, but at the same time he will no longer gain sustenance from regular foodstuffs and must hunt live prey which he must devour while still alive and raw. Any non-living food the PC swallows will cause him to regurgitate and suffer 1d4 hours of nausea (automatically fatigued). There is no Will save for this trait.

15 Unseen Foe

A narrow cave with a low ceiling and no other visible exits. The cave appears to be empty.

But is not. This room contains an invisible, magical creature similar to an Unseen Servant (as per 1st level Wizard spell) but with the ability to attack anyone who enters its domain. The servant cannot leave the room and pursue its victim into the passage beyond, but it may pick up rocks from the ground and throw them at the victim.

Monster: Unseen Foe

CR 1; Size unknown/Undead; HD 1d12; hp 5; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. Fly 30ft (perfect).; AC 11; Attack/Grapple +2/+2; SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +0; AL Chaotic Evil; Str 13, Dex 11, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 8.

Languages Spoken: Common, Orc.

Skills and feats: Hide +0, Listen +0, Move Silently +0, Spot +0; Undead Traits

The unseen foe is the malevolent poltergeist of a dead half-orc. Unlike a standard ghost, the poltergeist is capable of inflicting damage on non-ethereal characters and can pick up and hurl manifest objects. The poltergeist lacks most of the special abilities of a ghost, such as horrific appearance, or frightful moan.

16 Lair of the Grick

You spy an opening in the wall of the passage ahead, but then you hear the sound of something slithering around beyond the opening and stop in your tracks...

Monster: Grick

CR 3; Medium Aberration; HD 2d8; hp 9; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16; Base Attack/Grapple +1/+3; Attack Tentacle +3 melee (1d4+2); Full Attack 4 tentacles +3 melee (1d4+2); bite -2 melee (1d3+1); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft; SV Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +5; AL Neutral; Str 14, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 3, Wis 14, Cha 5. Special Attacks: None

Skills and feats: Climb +10, Hide +3*, Listen +6, Spot +6, Alertness, Track, Damage reduction 10/magic, darkvision 60 ft., scent

An adult Grick is about 8ft long from the tips of its tentacles to the end of its body and weighs some 200lbs. Its body colour is uniformly dark, with a pale underbelly.

Combat

Gricks attack when hungry or threatened. They hunt by holing up near high-traffic areas, using their natural coloration to blend into convenient shadows. When prey (virtually anything that moves) ventures near, they lash out with their tentacles. A Grick's rubbery body seems to shed blows of any kind. Its jaws are relatively small and weak compared to its body mass, so rather than consume its kill immediately, a grick normally drags its victim back to its lair to be eaten at its leisure. A Grick's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Skills: A grick has a +8 racial bonus on Climb checks and can always choose to take 10 on a Climb check, even if rushed or threatened. Their coloration affords Gricks a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks when in natural rocky areas.

...A creature suddenly slides into view, blocking the way ahead. It resembles a long fat snake about 8ft in length judging by what you can see of its body protruding from the cave. But where a snake's head should be are instead a mass of squirming tentacles, a small beaky mouth nestled at their centre. The mouth opens and the creature emits a menacing hiss. It slides toward you, tentacles writhing.

This Grick has made a nest in cave 16 and laid some eggs which it will assume the PCs are after. If the PCs retreat, the Grick will also fall back, returning to its cave and remaining there until the next time it hears approaching footsteps.

If the Grick kills any of the party, it will attempt to drag them back into its lair to feed on at a later time.

Room 16 itself comprises the lair of the creature. The floor is covered in a variety of materials including torn fabrics and dry straw. A small circular gathering of straw contains five Grick eggs, which may be valuable to collectors of such things. As the eggs are reptilian, they are inedible. Anyone consuming the gooey stuff inside will suffer nausea and -1d4 Con points. If the lair is searched, PCs are likely to find 1d10 GPs, 2d20 SPs, 3d20CPs and several pouches containing things like tobacco, tinder twigs etc. These items are the uneaten remains of the Grick's previous victims.

17 The South Cave

You enter a vast cavern, the ceiling so high it is shrouded in darkness, the walls so distant their contours are barely described by the reach of your lantern light. The far side of the cave consists of a huge pit, on the other side of which you can see a ledge and another exit. On this side of the pit you can see another doorway opposite leading to a dark passage. The pit is approximately 100ft in diameter and too deep for you to see the bottom.

If this is the party's first visit to room 17, they will come under attack when they are halfway across the cave from Canker Dern who occupies the far ledge (room 27) and who has armed himself with a repeating heavy crossbow (1d10 piercing damage, 19/20x2 Critical, range 120ft). See NPCs/Enemies and the Stationbridge introduction for details on Canker Dern.

The evil wizard has gained entry to the tomb chambers by turning into a hawk and flying across this pit, thus avoiding the guardian sphinxes. He knows Agrovar the dwarf will soon find out how to get to the tomb and guesses he will favour the less intelligent of the sphinxes in gaining access to the locked chambers, so he's set himself up here to watch the far ledge and lie in wait for his enemy, planning to launch an ambush when the dwarf (or anyone he assumes to be working with the dwarf or competing for the Orb of Evocation) comes along.

Canker has a store of 50 bolts which he will exhaust before he resorts to spell casting. If his quarry move out of range he will give up and head back into the tomb to try and break through the main door. He will fail because he doesn't possess the golden key and this door is impossible to break.

18 The Room of the Wild Mountains

You approach a large cavern furnished with several thick pillars which support a high arched roof. In the centre of the chamber is a grey stone altar upon which stands a single candle. On the far side of the room you can see a solid looking door made of wood. The door handle is fashioned to resemble the face of a lion and beneath this is a huge keyhole

which could comfortably accommodate a key the size of your hand.

If the players enter the cave:

A flame suddenly gutters on the wick of the candle which casts a dim light about the room. Wherever the light falls it seems to illuminate a strange, incorporeal scene showing mountains in the distance, blue sky and clouds. Then you realise, the scene is not the incorporeal element here, the cave is. Now the light seems to be casting a strange transparency upon the stone of the cave walls, roof and pillars, making it seem as though the room were situated on a high, rocky plateau surrounded outside by a vista of tall mountains capped with snow and a deep azure sky overhead. Soon the walls have faded altogether and the scene is complete. You can hear the sound of birdsong and feel a cool breeze on your skin. The sun is warm on your face and the smell of mountain dew fills the air.

The altar and candle remain, but seem oddly out of place. The door also remains, now situated in the side of a rocky outcropping and framed by lichen and ivy.

"Who enters my paradise?" A deep voice growls from a point directly in front of you. As you watch, a form seems to materialise out of thin air. A large creature the size of a horse, with huge falcon wings upon its back and the body of a muscular lion. Its face, framed by a shaggy mane of brown fur, is strangely human, with sloping eyes, a small mouth filled with fangs and a flat nose like that of a snake or lizard. "Be you envoys from the king of Mohan? I am sworn to slay such visitors. Such is my duty. Speak or begone."

The creature is Azuerl, a Criosphinx and mate to Asslaya the Gynosphinx who occupies room 10. Both creatures belong to a remote demiplane paradise where they have been granted a life of peace and solitude together by the wizards of the Order of Mohan in return for guardianship of the tomb. They pass into the material plane when the magical flame of the candle standing on the altar flickers to life and calls them (creating a couterminos point between the two planes). The creatures are sworn to guard the Orb of Evocation and the tomb of the Thaumaturgos brothers and will execute this oath above all other considerations with one exception: if either creature fears the other is in danger, they will retreat and allow passage into the tomb. If they fail in their task to keep the inner sanctum of the tomb safe, they will lose the right to occupy the paradise demiplane, thus Azuerl is highly motivated to keep invaders from the locked door in this room.

Azuerl is less intelligent than Asslaya and shares none of her enthusiasm for intellectual pursuits. Instead he prefers to spend most of his time wandering in the wild lands of the demiplane, exploring the mountains, the forests and the plains. Occasionally he seeks Asslaya, a task which may take him many months of wandering. The demiplane is timeless, so both Azuerl and Asslaya are immortal for so long as they occupy the plane. When they appear in the material plane they become bound to the passage of time like any other creature, but they cannot appear by their own choice, only by the arrival of others into

either of their two rooms.

Azuerl will have less to say than Asslaya and will have less patience for characters who presume to question him about this or that. He is charged with defending the tomb from robbers sent by the king of Mohan, but if he suspects the PCs have come to raid the tomb and take the Orb of Evocation for some other reason, he will attack them anyway.

Being a typical Criosphinx, Azuerl is fond of treasure and gold which he hoards in caves dotted around his demiplane. He may be persuaded to part with information, or spare the PCs lives, if they offer to give him all their treasure. Under no circumstances will the party be able to persuade Azuerl to let them open the locked door. He would sooner die in battle before letting them do this.

Unlike Asslaya, Azuerl does not know what the Orb of Evocation does, and nor does he care to know.

The locked door can be opened using the silver key from room 9 (Hardness: 6, HPs: 20). The door is strengthened with a magical enchantment which rebuffs all spells cast against it directly back onto the caster at double strength.

Like Asslaya, Azuerl can be banished for ten seconds from the material plane simply by snuffing out the candle on the altar. At this point the cave will rush back into existence and the mountain scene will vanish, taking Azuerl with it. The candle will reignite after ten seconds, at which point an enraged Azuerl will return to deal with the characters.

Monster: Azrael the Criosphinx

CR 7; Large Magical Beast; HD 10d10+8; hp 60; Init +0; Spd 30 ft. Fly 60ft (Poor); AC 20; Base Attack/Grapple +10/+16; Attack Gore +15 melee (2d6+6) Full Attack Gore and 2 claws +10 melee (1d6+3); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +10, Ref +7, Will +3; AL Neutral; Str 23, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 11, Cha 11
Special Attacks: Pounce, rake 1d6+3
Skills and feats: Intimidate +8, Listen +11, Spot +1, Alertness, Cleave, Flyby Attack, Power Attack, Darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision.

These sphinxes are always male. Neither good nor evil, they lack the intelligence and spell craft of the Gynosphinx.

Combat

Criosphinxes attack with their claws, as do their kin, but they can also butt with their horns. They don't cast spells and employ only the most simple battle tactics.

Rake (Ex): Attack bonus +15 melee, damage 1d6+3.

19 Chambers of the Wight, room 1

You step into a wide cavern, roughly square in shape, with a low slung roof. The corpse of a long-dead human male is secured to the far wall by manacles which hold it at the wrists and ankles. The stench of the putrefying corpse fills the air, forcing you to cover your mouth and nostrils with a free hand. As you step forward, your foot lands on what you at first assumed to be the blackened soil floor of the cave, but which you now realise, with sudden horror, is a carpet of bluebottle flies. The flies rise from the floor as one collective mass and fill the cave with a deafening buzz. They get in your eyes, your mouth, your ears, and no amount of swatting will clear them away.

Above the roar of the flies you hear a low clanking sound and peer as best you can in the direction of the sound to see the dead corpse has been released from its manacles and is now standing on the far side of the room, swaying slightly in the hectic cloud of flies, its eyes glowering at you with a dark malevolence. From its desiccated flesh, pocked all over with holes and tears in the skin, crawl yet more flies.

The creature lurches forward, hands rising as if to throttle the very air and, swatting with annoyance at the flies, moves slowly toward you.

The wight will lurch toward the PCs with the intention of attacking them, and this, combined with the repulsive cloud of flies, may prompt the party to retreat into the passageway. If so, the following should be read aloud to the players:

You turn to retreat from the hellish vision of the corpse as it staggers toward you, but stumble when your foot snags on something on the floor. Looking down you see a fleshless hand has broken through the loose earth of the passage floor and is clutching at the air, making a grab for your ankle.

More arms are bursting through the ground up ahead, each in a different state of decay. And further along the passageway still you can see a corpse has pulled itself halfway out of the ground, its skeletal torso, arms and head already free.

The ghastly creature lifts its chin and glares at you with milky white eyes, even as another hand gropes to the surface a few feet behind it.

These are the Wight's progeny, previous victims who have become spawn of the wight and whose buried forms are now clutching toward the surface in order to defend their master. Given the opportunity, the wight will join any dead PCs or NPCs to the ranks of these unfortunate undead slaves.

The PCs will need to choose whether they try to fight their way through the spawn to the relative safety beyond, or whether they turn at this point to fight the wight himself. (See NPCs/Enemies for stats). The GM should alter the number of spawn to suit experience, with a guideline of 1d4 spawn for each character level.

If the group opt to fight the wight in the room of flies, they will lose one half of their base attack bonus because of the sheer number of flies buzzing around the place, reducing visibility and forcing combatants to squint to keep the insects out of their eyes. A successful Concentration check, DC 15, will negate this penalty. The Wight is unaffected by the flies.

20 Chambers of the Wight, room 2

A huge empty room with a stone pit at its heart. The pit, surrounded by a low retaining wall no higher than half a foot, is relatively shallow, being no deeper than four feet.

Beneath the ground lurk the spawn of the wight who resides in room 19. The spawn will remain hidden until the party encounter the wight and his room full of flies, then, if the PCs retreat to this cave, they will burst up through the floor and attack. See room 19.

The spawn will not emerge from the pit, but will instead try to drag or push their victims into it. The retaining wall is a deliberate design, intended to trip unwary feet and send victims sprawling into the hole. The floor of the pit is actually a thirty foot depth of water covered in a membrane of sludge-like muck. More progeny lurk under the surface and will drag down anyone who falls in, drowning them and joining them to their undead ranks.

21 Chambers of the Wight, room 3

A wide cavern with a low roof of uneven stone and a floor covered in packed earth.

More spawn of the Wight who resides in room 19 lurk under the ground in this room. They will remain hidden, even as the party travel overhead, until their master is roused in the room of flies. See room 19.

22 The Chain Devil

Here is a large cavern with walls covered in grey slate tiles decorated with all manner of runes and hieroglyph. The floor, too, is tiled, and so is the ceiling. From the latter hang a number of iron chains and shackles, dangling from iron eye hooks, each ending in a shard of jagged metal, a hook or a spiked ball. One, furthest from the doorway where you stand, ends in a huge gold key the size of your hand. The chains swing gently and in an ominously random fashion, the air filled with the sound of rattling links and jangling metal. There is no draft in this underworld place, thus the chains should be motionless.

On the far side of the room, set into the wall some three feet above the floor, is a circular alcove surrounded by keystones and roughly the same height as an average sized man. Within the alcove a strange green film covers the wall and seems to shimmer with an odd inner-light. This bizarre green substance seems to be translucent like water, but moving like some kind of inert gas, suspended impossibly in place by who knows what magical energies.

A low thrumming sound can just be heard and felt beneath the constant clanking of chains. Every now and then you feel certain this thrumming takes on a different pitch and becomes the sound of an impossibly deep voice speaking to you in an archaic language.

The mist is an extraplanar portal, but can only be used by the chain devil who possesses this room. A solid stone wall lies beyond its surface. The wizards of the order of Mohan never intended to summon such a dastardly creature to protect the Orb of Evocation, but in their haste to create guardians, they inadvertently gained the chain devil's attention and rather than make of the creature an eternal enemy, they chose instead to bind it to the dungeon where it would, at the very least, have access to numerous wandering victims.

The chain devil, Kyton, is an evil being who will emerge from the portal when the PCs leave this room. He thrives on the fear of those he stalks, and will take great delight in frightening the party long before he materialises fully before them and launches an attack. The wizards have granted the chain devil a

number of additional special skills including incorporeality-at-will (the chain devil cannot fight while incorporeal, but can be harmed if attacked), outright invisibility and the ability to cast minor illusion spells.

To begin with the chain devil will simply watch the progress of the group as they travel through the caves, using his invisibility skill to move unseen. But when there is a lull in activity, or they stop to rest, he will execute one of the following scare tactics (use in order, or roll 1d6 for a random action. Kyton will only use each tactic once).

Roll=1: The PCs hear a sudden clanking sound in the passageway outside the room they currently occupy. When one or all of the group go to investigate, you should read the following passage:

Some way down the passage stands a dark, shadowy figure with its back to you. It appears human in shape and size, but chains wrap it like a shroud, every length ending in a hook or a blade, or a heavy spiked ball. The chains seem to slither and slide over the creature's grey flesh as though they were alive.

The creature turns slowly to face you, chain encased face lowered, eyes closed, bald head a mass of vicious scars sewn closed with thick leathery twine. The eyes click open and meet your own gaze instantly. The eyes are a pale red, piercing and infinitely cold. To your amazement the chains seem to melt away and you find yourself staring into your own features. It is your face, but the wry smile playing about the lips harbour an alien wickedness far beyond your own capabilities.

All characters present and within 30ft of the creature, will need to make a Charisma based DC15 save against the chain devil's 'unnerving gaze' attack. A failed roll will result in the character being unnerved. They will take a -2 penalty on all attack rolls if ever they meet the chain devil in battle and will suffer a -2 penalty on any Charisma based rolls for a duration of at least 1d6+2 days.

Roll=2: A character (chosen at random) hears the rattle of chains behind and glances around in time to see the back of a dark and shadowy figure wrapped in chains vanishing into the wall.

Roll=3: Characters hear the rattling of chains and sense a sudden drop in temperature. They feel an indistinct presence of evil within the vicinity, but cannot place the precise location.

Roll=4: The GM should read the following passage:

[To random player], you have been gazing at a shadow in the corner of the room when you suddenly realise you are looking at the outline of a man hunched over and partially hidden in the dark. Just as you realise this, the figure rises, but simultaneously vanishes. Before he disappears completely you spot a pair of pale red eyes staring at you from the darkness of the figure's face. Everybody present suddenly senses a deep, thrumming tremor, not entirely heard and not entirely felt, but somewhere in between. It is identical to the sound you heard in the room of chains. But this time a suggestion of words within the sound is

unmistakeable. Words, definitely, but nothing you can understand.

The words are spoken in infernal, and are merely offensive threats and insults uttered by the chain devil in an attempt to frighten his prey. If he has heard the PCs refer to one another by name, he may pepper his diatribe with their names in an effort to further unnerve them.

Roll=5: The PCs are walking along a passage/room when they spot a chain link on the floor. When they pick it up, it seems to turn into something made of living flesh. It pulsates and throbs, before putrefying in their hands, the outer skin desiccating and dissolving, revealing gory tissues within. Blood will stream over the PC's hand as the thing liquefies and turns into a bloody mess. This is an illusion. A few moments later the gore will be gone. Any blood on the PC's hands will vanish.

Roll=6: The PCs spot what looks like a small white doll made from chain-linked metal, dangling by its neck from the roof of the passage/room by a length of steel wire. You should read the following passage aloud

The doll is made from chain-linked metal. Its face is a horrible thing of indescribable ugliness with pits for eyes and nostrils and a jagged gash for a mouth. Its tiny hands are furnished with long hinge-jointed fingers ending in sharp needles, and its body is oily and covered in etched runes. As you study the strange doll, you are certain you hear the distant sound of clanking chains and jangling metal; the suggestion of a deep thrumming, a subtle tremor in the ground and a sensation of malignancy that makes you want to get as far away from these caves as you possibly can. Mercifully the feeling is short lived, and the mysterious tremor soon subsides.

The doll is an illusion visible only to the party. It will vanish eventually, so if a PC stows the doll in his gear or carries it with him, it will mysteriously disappear at some point and the PC will never know where it went.

When the PCs reach the tomb of Thaumaturgos brothers and if they try to use the gold key from this room, the chain devil will manifest and attack once and for all.

23 Caged Beast

This narrow passageway ends at a doorway barred by an iron gate, vertical rungs set with some apparent permanency into the floor and ceiling of the doorway. The area beyond is in total darkness. A headless skeleton sits bolt upright in front of the gate and a ribcage lies on the floor just in front of you. A musty, bestial smell permeates the air here and you can hear what sounds like the deep breathing of a sleeping animal coming from beyond the gate.

If anyone comes within a foot of the bars they will be spotted by the undead dire bear curled up in the pitch-dark lair beyond. The bear will leap to its enormous feet and rush at the bars, buckling them outward with the sheer weight of its massive bulk. A great forelimb covered in patches of fur and dead hairless flesh in equal measure, will thrust through the bars and the bear will try to seize the character in sharpened talons. The character must make a DC 15 Reflex save in order to leap backward and away from the claws. If they fail, the bear will grasp them and slam them up against the gate where it will try to bite them. It will fail,

Monster: Undead Dire Bear

CR 6; Large Undead; HD 6d12+3; hp 42; Init +1; Spd 30 ft. (can't run); AC 19; Base Attack/Grapple +9/+15; Attack claw +15 melee (2d4+8); Full Attack 2 claws +19 melee (2d4+8), and bite +13 melee (2d8+5); Space/Reach 10ft/5ft; SV Fort +12, Ref +9, Will +9; AL Neutral Evil; Str 33, Dex 10, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 1
 Special Attacks: Slam (1d8)
 Skills and feats: Toughness, Undead traits

The omnivorous dire bear usually does not bother creatures that try to avoid it, but this zombified dire bear is extremely aggressive and has undead traits. The zombie dire bear has poor reflexes and can perform only a single move action or attack action each round. It can move up to its speed and attack in the same round but only if it attempts a charge. The dire bear is 12 feet long and weighs 8,000 pounds.

Combat

A dire bear attacks by tearing at opponents with its claws or using its slam attack.

since it cannot possibly get its huge muzzle through the bars, but the PC will suffer 1d6 HP bludgeoning damage (from being crushed against the bars) and 1d4+5 slashing damage (from the claws) nonetheless. The PC will need to succeed against a standard grapple attack in order to pull themselves free of the bear's grip, or suffer further damage from its claws.

If the character manages to wrest themselves free, the dire bear will become enraged, slamming repeatedly into the bars, buckling them outward and roaring so loudly that dust and debris will rain down from the roof of the tunnel. The creature has been locked in its tiny cell for many hundreds of years and only occasionally enjoys the odd encounter with a wandering victim, so when a moment like this breaks the monotony, the creature tends to make the most of it. The bars are magical and will resolve themselves back to their original state once the bear calms down and returns to its nest. They are buried in the floor and ceiling to a respective depth of nearly twenty feet, so there is little chance of the bear tearing them out of their stanchions, and even less chance of it bending them sufficiently wide enough to get through the gap. Even if it does somehow manage to squeeze through, it will never fit down the narrow tunnel.

If the bear is killed, the gate somehow bypassed and the creature's lair searched, the investigators will find a small hoard of torn clothes, dented armour, helms filled with fleshless skulls and the odd useful spoil, such as iron gauntlets (useful once the skeletal hands within are removed) and 2d6 random weapons, including swords, crossbows, daggers, and saps. 2d6 pouches, each containing 1d20GPs will also be found if the PC uses their Search skill.

24 The Face of Belagorse

At first this huge square cavern seems to be empty and affords little of any immediate interest. The grey stone roof is arched and furnished with stalactites, the floor uneven and rocky. On the far side of the room a flight of stone steps rises in a gentle curve to a stone ledge some twenty feet above. You can see no other exits up there, or indeed any visible reason to want to climb the staircase.

A single wedge shaped rock rises in the centre of the room, looking oddly familiar, but for some time, though you stare at it and attempt to identify the

nature of its familiarity, you don't make the connection. Then it hits you- the rock looks like a huge nose. The two mounds in front of it resemble nothing less than the undulations of a brow, and you're willing to hazard a guess that the vague dip in the floor on the far side of the room is very much like the line of a mouth.

Indeed, when looked at from the ledge above, the indents, bumps and rocks on the ground resolve themselves into a huge face some ten feet wide and fifteen feet long. If the party climb to the ledge and look down, the eyes of the face will crumble open to reveal stone eyes beneath. The eyes will regard the group and the rocky mouth will somehow shift into the shape of a smile, the ground around it cracking, but sealing over straight away, as though the earth were somehow breaking then quickly repairing itself in order to create the smile.

When the face speaks it does so very slowly and in a deep, booming voice, the stone around the mouth breaking and sealing so quickly that it looks almost like an inert rockslide.

"Well, well, well," the face booms, the hard granite eyes somehow managing to twinkle with life, "small people of the Elterland. It has been many long years since small people visited the parlour of Belagorse. Many many long years. I have spent many of them asleep, so I have, I believe, lost count with regard to the precise number. But I know that it has been many many. As much as that, I am sure I know. What are your names little folk?"

Belagorse is a friendly elemental construct from the Earthly plane. He is perfectly happy being little more than a face in the ground, enjoying the darkness of the cave and the feel of stone around him. He never grows bored, primarily because he has about as much perception of the passage of time as the average boulder.

Belagorse has been here ever since these caverns were formed many millions of years ago, eroded away by a mixture of lava and water. He remembers well the formation of the caves, though he has long forgotten why he chose to leave the Earthly plane for the floor of this cavern.

He will also remember the wizards of the order of Mohan. They are the 'small people' he often refers to when he speaks of previous occasions when he enjoyed visitors. The wizards were most intrigued by Belagorse and saw no harm in telling him what they were doing in the caves and why they had decided to do it. Thus, Belagorse has a unique angle on the background story. He knows the whole thing, though even he doesn't know exactly what the Orb of Evocation does, nor why or how the Thaumaturgous twins died.

Belagorse will tell the PCs that the tomb containing the remains of the twins is guarded by two sphinx, but that the sphinx are lovers and can be played one against the other if the characters are smart. The PCs will need three keys, one silver, one bronze and the most important golden key. Belagorse doesn't know where the keys are, but he knows they are crucial in gaining access to the inner sanctum of the tomb.

Eventually the elemental will tire of telling stories and speaking to 'small people' and will request an opportunity to enjoy a "short nap". The party may not realise the slim grasp Belagorse has on the nature of time, however. They will witness him close his eyes with a satisfied, "hummm" and see him fall asleep, but they will never see him open his eyes again and any attempts to wake him up will meet with abject failure. Belagorse will not rouse from his nap for another two hundred years. At which time he will be most perplexed to find the group have gone without saying goodbye, and will cluck his stone tongue in disappointment.

25 Room of Scrolls

The walls of this huge square cavern are lined with row upon row of scroll cases, each case containing hundreds upon hundreds of rolled up parchments. Letters etched into metallic plates fixed to individual shelves suggest the scrolls are categorised in alphabetical order, A through to Z. Furthermore, a plaque at the top of each case provides a subject.

None of the words scribed onto these plaques mean anything to you. Not only are they written in some unknown tongue, they seem to be words no language would readily use in an everyday context. Most are at least thirty letters long, with multiple instances of Qs and Zs.

An ancient and dust covered ladder mounted on small metal wheels is attached to the cases. This looks like it can be moved to and fro to gain access to the higher shelves. But the wood looks suspiciously grey and rotten and the wheels are so thick with rust you doubt they would turn if the ladder were pushed.

The scrolls in this room contain the collected studies of the wizards of the Order of Mohan, placed here to be preserved and protected from the ravages of time. The order possessed its own bizarre language, which it used to encrypt its spells and prevent their use by other wizards. Only a spell designed to translate magical languages will decipher this coded script and even then the spells are so complex that understanding the translation would be very difficult.

Unfortunately most of the scrolls have suffered the effects of erosion and time, despite being stored here. If touched, 19 out of every 20 scrolls will crumble to dust. The ones that survive will require a painstaking reconstruction of the parchment material before they can be read. If they are simply unrolled, the stale parchment will crack and break into pieces.

Combined, the scrolls within this chamber provide the magical combination of spells now stored as a single entity within the Orb of Evocation. Anyone who possesses the orb possesses the ability to evoke a magical effect in a single, simple spell that would otherwise require the arduous recital of every scroll in this room, in precisely the right order and with precisely the right hand movements, incantations and rituals.

26 Cavernous Chamber

A vast empty chamber with a high vaulted roof covered in an array of spectacular stalactites. The floor of the room is perfectly flat and smooth, littered with bones and debris and signs here and there that previous visitors have set up and stamped out camp fires. There are two exits through two open apertures in the cavern walls.

27 The North Cave

At first this looks like another huge cavern with a high arched roof and a smooth expanse of stone floor. But then you notice a suspiciously uniform edge to the floor about eighty feet on the far side of the cave. Approaching this you discover that you are actually on a vast ledge overlooking a deep chasm,

the bottom of which is too far away and too dark to discern. Some twenty feet below the level of the ledge upon which you stand, on the far side of the chasm and some hundred feet or so distant, is another wide ledge. Here you can make out two doorways in walls on either side.

This is the other half of the great pit. Players may have already visited the southern side (location 17) in which case the ledge they currently occupy will be the one from which Canker Dern shot at them with his crossbow. If this is the case they may find signs of Canker's presence in the form of fumbled crossbow bolts, or discarded food. If they haven't had that encounter, Canker will have given up waiting for them by now and will be in room 28 (see below).

28 Canker's Retreat

You enter a low ceilinged antechamber, the floor paved with flagstones, walls covered with grey slate tiles and the stone ceiling furnished with thick wooden beams. A large altar stands in the middle of the room, the sides covered in runes and glyphs, the surface draped with a thick red cloth edged with gold tassels. Resting on the altar is a grubby jar stoppered with a cork. The jar seems to be filled with some kind of red viscous fluid.

"All that remains of the great Thaumaturgos brothers," says a snide voice from a shadowy corner of the room. The owner of the voice steps forward and you find yourself face to face with Canker Dern, the shape-shifter from Stantionbridge. "But this is not the treasure I came for, and nor is it the prize you

Canker Dern

Male half-human Wizard Lvl 5: CR 5; Size M (5 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 5d4+15; hp 29; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+2 Dex); Attack +3 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +5; AL CE; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9. Languages Spoken: Common, Draconic, Gnome. Skills and feats: Concentration +9, Craft (Weaponsmithing) +10, Hide +2, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Nature) +10, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +10, Knowledge (The Planes) +6, Listen +1, Move Silently +2, Spot +1; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, Lightning Reflexes, Maximize Spell, [Scribe Scroll], Silent Spell.

Possessions: 4,300 gp in gear.

Wizard Spells Known (4/4/3/1): 0th -- Acid Splash, Arcane Mark, Dancing Lights, Daze, Detect Magic, Detect Poison, Disrupt Undead, Flare, Ghost Sound, Light, Mage Hand, Mending, Message, Open/Close, Prestidigitation, Ray of Frost, Read Magic, Resistance, Touch of Fatigue. 1st -- Colour Spray, Magic Aura, Magic Missile, Protection from Chaos, Protection from Evil, Shield, Sleep. 2nd -- Alter Self*, Knock, Owl's Wisdom, Shatter, Spectral Hand. 3rd -- Fly, Protection from Energy.

*The Alter Self spell is what Canker uses to shapeshift into the form of a bird. This is not strictly the purpose of this spell, but Canker is the progeny of a human and a shape shifter and therefore has a predilection to shape shifting magic.

seek. you and I want the same thing. So let us put our differences aside and work together. If you can breach the door into the inner sanctum, I know how to survive the traps protecting the Orb of Evocation. What do you say?"

If Agrovar the dwarf is with the group, he will attack Canker at this point (see NPCs/Enemies). PCs will need to decide whether their loyalty to the dwarf is more important to them than finding the Orb, or learning more from Canker about the story behind the orb. If the latter two are more important they may need to rescue the wizard from the dwarf.

Remember that even Canker doesn't know the nature of the orb itself, or the secret it supposedly harbours. Nor does he have any knowledge of the traps beyond the gold door. He merely wants to see if the PCs can open the door, at which point he will turn on them if he can. If he cannot (if the PCs have been smart and bound his hands or taken similar precautions), he will continue to bluff them into believing he has some knowledge that will help them eventually and will continue to give them information about the Thaumaturgos brothers.

The jar on the altar, of course, contains the remains of the Thaumaturgos twins. All that was left of them after their magical experiments went hideously wrong.

29 The Tomb

The door opens onto a vast, cathedral-sized chamber with a vaulted ceiling some seventy feet above your heads. Unlike the caves you've seen so far, this room has clearly been worked by craftsman. The walls are tiled with an ochre-coloured slate and decorated with colourful pennants and tapestries. Arched tympanum, decorative recesses containing candle-sticks as tall as a man and dripping with long fingers of tallow, line the walls, with two at the southern end of the room, harbouring doors. The intricate stonework, corbels and trefoil vaults within the ceiling above are truly staggering in design, with archways dividing into smaller archways, interlacing with larger ones and intersecting with the overall curve of the roof to create an eye-twisting effect.

You can see various exits around the room, with two open archways in the east wall, two doors furnished with keyholes in the south wall and a wide shouldered arch in the west wall opening onto some kind of shrine.

Within the shrine, resting on a marble altar, accessible by a short flight of wooden steps, is a huge leather bound book.

The door in the southeast corner leads to the inner sanctum; the rooms protecting the Orb of Evocation, and the chamber of the Orb itself. The door is made of reinforced wood (Hardness: 8, HPs:54) and magically enchanted for toughness. A magical ward also protects the door against spell casting, rebounding any magic back upon the caster at double strength. The ward has been placed here by a 13th level wizard and will rebuff all magic from 9th level down. The gold door handle is shaped like a globe and directly beneath is a large keyhole which the gold key from room 22 will fit. If anyone inspects the door handle more closely they may have enough cartographic knowledge to recognise it as a carving of Opus itself, with the various continents mapped out. If the key is inserted into the keyhole, the chain devil who should have been haunting the group continuously up to this point, will

suddenly appear and attack them. See NPCs/Enemies. Read the following aloud:

As soon as you insert the key, you feel the ground beneath your feet begin to tremble and hear a distant, resonant noise, just below the surface of normal hearing, the sound like a gargantuan stone being dragged across a rocky floor somewhere within the depths of the earth. The sound seems to

Monster: Chain Devil

CR 6; Medium Outsider; HD 8d8+16; hp 52; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 20; Base Attack/Grapple +8/+10; Attack Chain +10 melee (2d4+2/19–20) Full Attack 2 chains +10 melee (2d4+2/19–20); Space/Reach 5ft/5ft (10ft with chains); SV Fort +8, Ref +8, Will +6; AL Lawful Evil; Str 15, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 12

Special Attacks: Dancing chains, unnerving gaze

Skills and feats: Climb +13, Craft (blacksmithing) +17, Escape Artist +13, Intimidate +12, Listen +13, Spot +13, Use Rope +2 (+4 with bindings), Alertness, Improved Critical (chain), Improved Initiative, Damage reduction 5/silver or good, darkvision 60 ft., immunity to cold, regeneration 2, spell resistance 18.

Kytons are humanlike devils, wrapped in chains instead of clothing. A chain devil is 6 feet tall and weighs about 300 pounds, chains included. Chain devils speak Infernal and Common.

Combat

A chain devil attacks by flailing away with the spiked chains that serve as its clothing, armour, and weapons.

A chain devil's natural weapons, as well as any weapons it wields, are treated as evil-aligned and lawful-aligned for the purpose of overcoming damage reduction.

Dancing Chains (Su): A chain devil's most awesome attack is its ability to control up to four chains within 20 feet as a standard action, making the chains dance or move as it wishes. In addition, a chain devil can increase these chains' length by up to 15 feet and cause them to sprout razor-edged barbs. These chains attack as effectively as the devil itself. If a chain is in another creature's possession, the creature can attempt a DC 15 Will save to break the chain devil's power over that chain. If the save is successful, the Kyton cannot attempt to control that particular chain again for 24 hours or until the chain leaves the creature's possession. The save DC is Charisma-based.

A chain devil can climb chains it controls at its normal speed without making Climb checks.

Unnerving Gaze (Su): Range 30 ft., Will DC 15 negates. A chain devil can make its face resemble one of an opponent's departed loved ones or bitter enemies, or the opponent themselves. Those who fail their saves take a –2 penalty on attack rolls made against the Chain Devil when/if they fight him, the effect lasting for 1d3 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Regeneration (Ex): Chain devils take normal damage from silvered weapons, good-aligned weapons, and spells or effects with the good descriptor. A chain devil that loses a piece of its body regrows it in 2d6x10 minutes. Holding the severed member against the stump enables it to reattach instantly.

Skills: Chain devils have a +8 racial bonus on Craft checks involving metalwork.

resolve itself and you realise words are being spoken. The noise is actually a voice; impossibly deep, guttural and demonic.

"The door is closed," speak the words. The language is ancient and terrible, but somehow your ears translate, "I am the guardian of the door and the guardian of the Orb of Evocation. The way to the dark side of the sun is barred to you, tomb robbers."

A dark shadow forms in the air at the centre of the great room, a black mist swirling and twisting around itself before billowing outward to reveal a creature standing within. The creature resembles a large man shrouded in chains, every length ending in a hook or a blade or a spiked metal ball. The chains seem to slither and slide over the creature's flesh, almost as if they were alive. His bald head is slashed with vicious scars, sewn closed with leathery twine, and what skin you can see on his body appears to be similarly lacerated. He stares at you with deep hatred glistening in eyes of palest red.

Suddenly one of the chains whips up into the air, twirls around the creature's head, and shoots through the air toward you.

The chain devil will use his Dancing Chains special attack on all PCs present in the room. If Canker Dern is present he will scuttle into room 28 to save himself.

The book in the shrine is written in common and charts the history of the wizards of the Order of Mohan. Anyone who leafs through the book will learn one of the following bullet points for each hour they spend reading the book.

- The order was formed two thousand years ago at the behest of the then emperor of Mohan who feared his empire might come under attack from one of the other two powerful countries to north and west. He mustered an army of wizards and named them the Order of Mohan.
- When the empire fragmented and the emperor was dethroned, the order of Mohan spent some centuries in the wilderness, without a master and with no true purpose.
- The disenfranchised wizards became a scholarly brotherhood, advocating the development of magic for peaceful purposes instead of for war or defence.
- A new king rose to power in Mohan and commended the peaceful efforts of the wizards. He called them to hold court in the capital city of the kingdom and they became his official advisors.
- The king was overthrown eventually by more tyrannical rulers and the order split into two factions; those loyal to the throne and those who refused to become servants of tyranny. The former faction became the Royal Order of Mohan, but were later destroyed in one of the huge wars that would eventually wipe out most of civilised life in the northern continents. The latter faction went into the wilderness and called themselves simply the Order of Mohan.
- The Order of Mohan continued its studies, sharing knowledge and furthering the development of the spell-crafting art with any wizard who cared to join. Lists of spells are shown here, and any magic users reading the book will

recognise spells in their own arsenal as originating from studies by the Order of Mohan.

- The Thaumaturgos twins joined the order. They were skilled, but not particularly noteworthy in their efforts. The book notes them as being hermits and 'unwilling to share their discoveries or learn from the collective knowledge of the brotherhood.'
- The twins, living in the swamp of Marshdown next to the town of Bleaktonne, create a powerful magical theory which they work to develop. But they lack the skill or power to do so and inadvertently destroy themselves. You should read the following passage to the players:

"The magic of Thaumaturgos, we learned, was based on this curious discovery of theirs, an energy they named gravitas, the force that causes all things to fall to the ground. Gravitas, the twins learned, could actually cause things to fall in any direction if the 'core of the well' as they called it, was moved to a fixed point using magic. Normally the 'core of the well' resided at the heart of the world and for this reason, all things fell downward. The brothers asserted: all of us are forever falling toward the heart of the world, longing to be with the core of the gravitas well. It is the heart's desire of all things; man, dwarf, elf, halfling, orc, goblin, goblet, castle, even the rain itself longs to be one with the gravitas which is why it falls down and not up! The only thing that prevents us joining the gravitas, is the solid mantle of rock beneath our feet.

"In their efforts to fix the core of the well and thus manipulate the power of gravitas, the brothers attempted to use magic beyond their means. They possessed genius in their theory, but lacked skill and basic understanding in their practise. They sought to pinpoint the core of the well to a single position; an orb no larger than a human head. But their magic was erroneous and instead the core became ambiguous, fixing upon the walls, the ceiling and the floor of the Thaumaturgos laboratory. Promptly everything within the room, including our poor belated brethren, attempted to fall toward the new core of the well, in essence, attempted to fall in every direction simultaneously. Thus we found the room empty, every surface smeared uniformly with the unmentionable substance.

"Thus passed the brothers Thaumaturgos. Thus we of the Order of Mohan discovered the basis of gravitas magic and thus we seek now to decipher the work of the brothers and use their theory to craft new spells. We sorrow for the brothers, but had they come sooner to the order instead of hiding their discoveries, I fear they would still be alive and the magic they sought to create would be a reality in their hands."

- The order develops a new method of spell-crafting using gravitas. But the magic proves incredibly dangerous, with most spells resulting in fatality if miscast.

- The order discover a great secret using gravitas. The nature of the secret is not mentioned. The book is deliberately vague but says the order work on a spell to uncover the secret completely. This seems to entail the creation of many small spells, each scribed onto parchment, which then need to be translated into an ancient language and cast in order. The book lists thousands of spells, all with names the players won't recognise. When the spells are used correctly they create an energy force which is subsequently directed into an 'abjured manna sink' called the Orb of Evocation. The orb can then be used at once, resulting in the instant casting of all the minor spells combined.
- After the disappearance of many wizards who have attempted to use the orb, the artefact is deemed too dangerous and the order buries it here, in the Thaumaturgos tomb. The order vow to bury also the original spell scrolls and to forget all knowledge of gravitas. They entomb the Orb of Evocation in the deepest chambers and surround it with devious traps. They then surround the tomb with more traps and magical guardians before sealing the tomb closed and taking its location to their graves.

30 The Shaft of Uncertain Gravity

The tunnel ends abruptly at the threshold of a doorway opening into a vertical shaft. A smooth, circular pit drops to unfathomable depths before you. Above, the roof, some twenty feet above, is furnished with a series of wickedly sharp, downward pointing spikes. On an impossibly thin column of stone which terminates at the same level of the door and which occupies a space at the heart of the pit, is an iron eye-hook, firmly embedded in the top of the column, but with no apparent purpose. You can see another doorway about ten feet along the wall to your right. There seems to be no obvious means of reaching this door.

All traps within the inner sanctum use the gravitas magic of the Thaumaturgos twins and the shaft is no exception. A core of the well point has been placed on the roof of the pit, effectively turning the point of gravity upside down. As soon as anyone or anything enters the room, their perspective of up and down will suddenly twist one hundred and eighty degrees. If a PC attempts to step out of the passage into the room (to shimmy along the wall for example) they will drop upward and be impaled on the spikes. Similarly, any rope cast out into the pit will behave very oddly, arcing upward then 'levitating' to the roof. The iron hook should provide a means to get across the pit, but players will need to come up with ideas how it can be utilised.

Once PCs quit this chamber and are in the twisting passageway beyond, gravity returns to normal.

31 Torn Asunder

A crossroads in the passage lies ahead, but something seems slightly amiss. The walls here suddenly seem to be armour plated, covered in thick metal studs and forged from steel and iron plates. Where the tunnel converges at the crossroads, each opening into the junction seems to be circular, not square.

This innocuous looking crossroads is a very nasty trap based on the disaster responsible for the demise of the Thaumaturgos brothers themselves. It amused the wizards of the order to include it here as a means to dispose of tomb raiders.

The surfaces of the two bell shaped caves on either side of the passage have been turned into core-of-the-well points, meaning that anyone and anything that tries to pass through the crossroads will suddenly find themselves falling to left and right simultaneously. This would not normally be a problem (the equal force would simply hold the PC in position), but the core of a gravitas well, if imbued with enough energy and thus turned into an incredibly 'dense' well, can vary in strength. In this case, the strength is high enough to tear the unlucky victim right down the middle into two equal portions. Once the two halves of the victim 'fall' into the two bell-shaped rooms they will then attempt to fall in every direction simultaneously, bursting apart into a mist of

minuscule particles and smearing the walls, floor and ceiling of the room with a thin membrane of blood, guts, flesh and bone. Gear, armour and clothing will suffer the same fate, mingling equally with the remains of the dead character.

There is a gap of just one foot running directly beneath the roof of the junction where the pull of the two gravity wells has no effect. If PCs can somehow identify this gap, and use it to get past the crossroads, they can continue safely on their way.

32 Room of Tar

You stand on the threshold of a large circular room which seems, at a glance, to be empty. On the far side is another doorway, but both this and the doorway in which you stand are situated some thirty feet above the floor of the room, which is itself a bubbling pit of hot tar. Glancing up you see what you first assume to be a ceiling covered in a glass mirror, reflecting the floor of the chamber and the tar pit. But then you realise, with mounting horror, that there is no mirror. Another tar pit resides impossibly upon the roof, plumes of steam drifting lazily downward, spiralling strangely where the upside down gravity affecting the roof meets the normal gravity below, then mingling with steam rising from below.

At the precise halfway point on the vertical plane of this room is an area where the PCs can float along at zero gravity, pulled equally up and down and therefore falling in neither direction. By 'swimming' in mid-air the PCs should be able to get enough motion going to propel themselves slowly along the central axis and make their way to the far door. However, slipping off this safe central plane by even a foot will cause them to fall either up or down and land in the boiling tar (3d10+10 HP burns damage, plus continuing 1d10+10 HP damage per in-game hour unless the tar can somehow be stripped away. The tar will adhere to flesh and therefore, removing it in the conventional sense, by simply peeling it off, will remove a percentage of skin too and cause a further 1d10+10 HP damage.)

In order to maintain a steady position on the 'safe' central plane, players must first identify the fact that the plane exists at all (Search checks should be allowed for this purpose, or players may simply find it by throwing objects into the room to gauge gravity effects). They must then make a successful DC15 Jump check to leap into the right spot, and then a DC16 Swim check in order to maintain a steady level as they move across the room. A Swim check must be made for every 5 rounds the character is in the air, with movement reduced to around three feet per round. It will therefore take the average PC about 30 rounds (5 rolls) to traverse the room and make it to the doorway, where they will then fall out of the air and need to make a DC12 Reflex save to grab the threshold of the door and pull themselves into the corridor.

33 The Room of Sideways

The 'bottom' of this room is actually the southern wall. Thus, anyone entering through the north door without checking the direction of gravity first will suddenly plummet some ninety feet and land on the south wall (DC 15 Reflex save to grab the threshold of the door before falling, otherwise 9d6+9 HP damage). At this point characters will pass through the door in the east wall, travelling along the southern wall here also. Effectively, the tunnels as shown on the map (above) should be considered as a side-on view. Where the passage appears, from a bird's eye perspective, to turn sharply north, it actually ends at the bottom of a very deep shaft. The party will need to clamber up this shaft, passing the two openings halfway up, or heading inside them to explore. Here the gravity remains fixed on the southern wall throughout, as it does to the top of the shaft where the passage opens into room 36.

34 The Orb of Evocation

You crawl along a low ceilinged, narrow tunnel which tapers to an ever smaller space until finally you are forced to crawl single file. Finally the tunnel ends at an opening and you straighten, finding

yourself in a relatively small chamber lit by a green hued phosphorescent algae which grows in abundance on the walls and ceiling.

An altar of sorts stands in the centre of the room upon a circular raised dais. Fixed upon a small metallic mount atop the altar is a black orb, its surface shot through with purple and pink veins. The air here has a strange texture. Moving through it is akin to moving through a space filled with invisible, closely weaved spider web. Whatever it is that lingers in the air, it doesn't adhere to skin and it seems to vanish in your wake, as though the very act of simply touching it causes it to dissipate into nothing.

The 'strange texture' is static electricity which fills this room from floor to ceiling. If players are having difficulty grasping how the atmosphere feels, you should use the example of brushing ones hand across the surface of a television screen covered in static. The same feeling prevails here, but fills the entire chamber.

The Orb is protected by a simple poison dart trap, the dart holes situated around the walls of the room. The triggering mechanism will be located on a DC 20 Search check. Poison Dart Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Atk +8 ranged (1d4 plus poison, dart); poison (bloodroot, DC 12 Fortitude save resists, 0/1d4 Con plus 1d3 Wis); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 18.

The darts will be triggered whenever anyone steps on the stone dais, not when the orb is touched. If anyone touches the orb, see the Orb of Evocation, below.

35 Surprise Pit

To the perspective of the player characters who, remember, are walking on the southern wall of this corridor, the passage will seem to turn sharply left up ahead. In fact, the gravity focus shifts as the tunnel turns the corner, returning to normal. There is no magical effect here, simply the removal of the magical gravitational force placing the gravitational focus on the southern wall of the previous passage. So detect magic spells will not reveal the presence of a shift in gravity.

The pit is sixty feet deep and anyone toppling into it will suffer 6d6+6 points of damage. A successful DC 15 Reflex save sees the falling character grasp the lip of the pit before he falls.

36 Upside Down Room

The gravity shifts in this room to focus on the ceiling. Anyone clambering into the room will suddenly topple five or six feet onto the ceiling and their perspective of up and down will shift yet again.

At this point, players who have not kept track of the real up or down directions risk falling into the final trap of the inner sanctum. Gravity remains firmly fixed on the roof of the passage leading out of this room and to the east.

37 Passage To The Centre of the World

Characters travelling along this passageway will be walking on the roof. They may not realise this and, indeed, the trap here relies on them having lost all sense of orientation by this point.

The tunnel ends shortly at the foot of a long flight of marble steps which twist up and into darkness, the walls and ceiling of the stairwell are also made from marble, being so expertly crafted that you can hardly see where one slab of marble ends and the next begins.

The steps ascend at a steep angle, curving slowly around in a long, steady spiral. If the players have lost their true sense of up and down, they may presume they are now travelling back toward the surface and, given the likelihood of the Orb being placed at the end of the dungeon, toward the Orb of Evocation itself.

In fact, they have already passed the room containing the Orb and are now travelling down into the depths of the earth, walking on the ceiling of a tunnel whose 'real' floor is a marble slide.

The air will begin to get warmer, the further the party travel, and they may smell a strange, sulphurous aroma coming from somewhere up ahead. In fact, they are travelling to such a depth that they are heading toward deep lava pools bubbling away in a volcanic reservoir many hundreds of feet underground. The smell is brimstone.

If the party press on despite the growing warmth and the smell of sulphur, then they will pass the point of no return. Suddenly the gravitational magic pinning them to the ceiling will cease. They will start to drift upward and in that instant their inner ear will quickly re-orientate itself and they will realise they are actually dropping head-first toward the ground. The tunnel is only seven or eight feet in height, so damage incurred for the fall should be negligible. But now the party will land on the slippery marble slide, previously the ceiling. They will no longer be heading up, but sliding down, and doing so at great speed.

If the players cannot devise a way to save themselves within 10 rounds, the party will shoot out the end of the spiralling tunnel and into a vast subterranean cavern filled with bubbling magma. Their doom, at this point, is assured.



The Orb of Evocation

The orb is a magical device which activates when touched. When this happens, you should read the following aloud (the following affects all PCs present when the orb is touched):

The orb vanishes, replaced by a swirling black vortex, a hole in the very fabric of the air beneath your hand. The vortex swirls, and in so doing seems to draw into its depths the very colour of the room around you. The walls bulge inward, the roof distends down toward your head, the floor rises up, and with it your feet, your legs. The fingers of your hand elongate, though you feel no discomfort. Your fingertips seem to be drifting impossibly into the swirling kaleidoscope of the vortex. Your hand follows, then your arm, stretching like elastic and falling as an infinite twisting thread of colour into the black hole. There is nothing you can do. You are powerless to resist. Soon your body is bending forward, and your head, your eyes, all stretching toward the swirling black hole.

And now you are falling into the hole, swallowed by unimaginable magical forces into the bowels of a darkness more absolute than anything you have ever experienced. The room buckles in on itself and melts into endless vanishing threads of stone grey and earth brown.

You are being sucked along a long circular tunnel with translucent walls, flowing through a new kind of darkness. All around you, beyond the boundary of the walls, you can see stars, twinkling like fireflies in the night, but though you twist around in search of the ground, you see nothing, only the darkness, the stars and your fellow adventurers tumbling along behind you.

And then you see the world. A great disc of brilliant blue far far beneath your feet, somewhere at the beginning of the tunnel. You can see clouds and seas, continents, mountains, plains and forests, all falling rapidly away from you. You are rising out of Opus. Flying away from the world you know and into the depths an inky sky.

The tunnel makes a series of twisting turns and the glaring light of the sun bursts in on you. It lies ahead now, growing larger, chasing away the stars, but not the night. There is no dawn, just a sudden transition between the emblazoned brilliance of the sun and the utter blackness of the sky. You fall headlong into the light and for a brief moment the tunnel has entered the heart of the sun, an unimaginable sphere of raging fires and molten fury. Then you are out the other side, shooting forward at an unimaginable speed, your head reeling, your body spinning.

And now there is Opus once more, a blue, green circle filling the sky, getting bigger by the second. The tunnel weaves its way down and you tumble powerlessly toward the world. Finally you are racing back toward the dark mouth of the vortex and then you are being disgorged back into the cave, your limbs spiralling out of the hole, resuming their natural positions, your body returning to normal, threads of colour unravelling and reforming into the shape of the cave, the altar and the dais.

You crumple to the ground, your legs giving way. You are exhausted, dizzy and shocked. But you seem to be back where you started, with all your faculties and all your limbs intact. The Orb of Evocation stands innocently upon its mount, looking much the same as it did before you touched it.

The Orb of Evocation uses highly concentrated and controlled gravity magics to open a wormhole in time and space. The wormhole bypasses the usual interplanar methods of teleportation and instead joins two points, one to the other. The interconnecting 'tunnel' is merely the fabric of space stretched between the two holes, thus anyone falling into the vortex at one end will inevitably emerge at the other.

Which may give rise to confusion, because it would appear that the party are back where they started.

In fact they are not.

When the wizards of the Order of Mohan first used the Orb, they discovered that they could not connect the two ends of a wormhole to two specific points in space. They could not, for example, use it to move instantaneously from the Greymist Mountains to their home kingdom of Mohan. As a teleportation device, the orb was useless. When the vortex opened and the wormhole was created, it created a set path to a set destination, and this could not be changed. The nature of the destination, however, was a big surprise.

Because every time the orb was used, it linked the user to another Opus.

Each Opus is slightly different, being part of another universe, which itself is a single facet of the greater Opus multiverse containing infinite universes and possibilities. For a brief moment both multiverse exist inter-dimensionally and on the exact opposite sides of the sun, so that the wormhole stretches

between the two worlds where they lie on opposite sides of the same orbital plane, and the tunnel itself passes directly through the heart of the sun, effectively acting like an energy mirror.

As soon as everything within the vicinity of the activated orb has been transferred to the newly created Opus, the previous Opus winks out of existence on the far side of the sun and, for all intents and purposes, the new Opus becomes the only Opus. In fact the previous Opus continues to exist. The connection between multiverses has merely been severed. In its own dimension, the original Opus continues. But now, the PCs no longer exist there.

Reactivating the orb requires a mere touch. The orb can be carried safely without being activated if it is simply wrapped in fabric. But the orb cannot be used to return to the previous world. It will always deliver the user to a new Opus, the previous Opus winking out of existence as soon as the transition through the wormhole is made.

The players and their characters may not realise they now occupy an entirely new world until they leave the caves and head back to Stantionbridge. Here they will find a subtle difference to the world they know, though landscapes, place names and, for the most part, people will remain the same.

Stantionbridge, for example, might now be founded on the site of a tin mine. The residents are not as wealthy as they were when they mined emeralds and instead of fending off attacks by barbarian hordes, they fend off attacks from tribal orcs who hold sway over the Jejune Flatlands.

Nobody in Stantionbridge will recognise the PCs when they emerge from the caves, simply because on this world, nobody has ever met the PCs. Relations, such as parents or siblings, will have no clue who the PCs are. Age old friends will greet the PCs' warm handshake and ready smile with a blank stare. Roads once travelled will seem slightly different and any assets owned in the previous world, such as houses, or a horse left tethered at the Turning Mere, for example, will belong to somebody else or be missing altogether.

If the GM wishes he can introduce a doppelganger party; a group of adventurers who are very nearly but not quite exactly like the PCs themselves. This group effectively are the PCs, and the GM may even wish to allow players the chance to draw up cloned character sheets for their PCs' counterparts and take control of them in addition to their original PCs. Alternatively, perhaps the doppelganger group made their transition between worlds at exactly the same time as the player group. Friends and family will find the new group somehow familiar, but at the same time different in many ways. They may accuse the PCs of impersonating the vanished group, maybe even of murdering them and stealing their identities. In superstitious cultures they may be accused of soul-stealing or black magic.

The worlds of the Opus multiverse are infinite, but the number of worlds the PCs can visit are not (see below). However, the chances of linking with a world the PCs have already visited via the orb are so wildly improbable that they are virtually impossible. The chances of linking up with the PCs real home world are even less likely and the concept should not be entertained by the GM.

For purposes of maintaining some semblance of consistency, place names and things like the shape of continents, the general cultural makeup of different countries and other demographic details, particularly anything specific to the Opus world map and hex maps you've already explored, should remain the same, as should the religious details of the Opus campaign setting.

As an artefact, the orb is virtually priceless. Selling it will banish an unwitting buyer to oblivion, of course, but the PCs, who themselves have already been banished from their home world, may have no qualms about this. On every Opus world the orb connects to, the orb has been created at some point in history, simply because in spanning the dimensional distance between multiverses, the orb links up with itself. This connection limits the worlds PCs can visit, but still allows for an incredible number of possible worlds, albeit worlds where the creation of the orb has occurred and is possible- in other words, worlds that are similar but not exactly the same as, the original world.

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OPUS OPERANDI

Dark Side of the Sun - GM's Printable Version

Created by David Sharrock and Wyn F Dawkins, with additional material by Suzanna Hope and Steve Dean. Artwork by Wyn F Dawkins.

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OPUS

The White Sea



The Sea of Opus



OPUS

The White Sea



The Realm of Opus

The material plane is divided, but not by the hands of men, for these are the wild continents of Opus, where chaos oppresses the spread of civilisation and the world belongs to the wild monsters, the gods and the elemental energies of magic.

Long ago the gods forged a great shining sphere and called it Opus, a Great Work. They breathed life to the people of their creation and called them servants of the world. There were perverse gods, and gods of law. At first the two used the world as one. But the gods of law and beauty feared to see their great work destroyed by the callous hands of the evil gods, and a war was waged. The evil gods were cast into the dark planes where they plotted their revenge upon the pantheon gods and their precious sphere.

The Pantheon Gods of Opas

Jetava

Intermediate Deity - Rank 14

Goddess of the wind, the air, the sky and the cloud.

Lorka

Intermediate Deity - Rank 11

God of luck, fate and destiny

Drom

Greater Deity - Rank 16

God of strength, power, sword and steel

Thauma

Greater Deity - Rank 18

Goddess of magic, sorcery and illusion

Almighty Sen

Greater Deity - Rank 20

God of Men

Gorum

Greater Deity - Rank 19

God of Dwarves

Ethrayall

Greater Deity - Rank 20

Goddess of Elves

Gayya

Intermediate Deity - Rank 14

Goddess of the earth, soil and stone

Cultares

Civilisation is rare within the wild continents, divided north and south by the human kingdom of Mohan. Here live the greater proportion of humans, led by their great king Ephrata, whose mighty swordsmen and sorcerers maintain as best they can the borders of Mohan's territory.

North Opus is home to pockets of human, elf and dwarf civilisation. Here too are gnome towns and halflings in abundance. But the civilised districts are surrounded by great wastelands of plains, forest, hills and mountain where monstrous races roam freely.

South Opus is entirely wild and the few cultures here belong to that of the dark elf, or are controlled by the evil will of black-hearted wizards.

Chroma and the Northern Wastes are a frost land of snow and ice, too inhospitable to harbour any semblance of civilisation. The White World of the south is also uninhabitable, a vast tract of ice, unexplored and unknown to the world of men.

Sidhe is an exotic land, temperate, but remote. The people of Sidhe are dark skinned and strong, corrupt to the will of evil gods and always ready to wage war upon the human lands of the north.

Most races worship either all the gods of good or all the gods of evil. Certain races, like the dwarf or elf, sometimes specialise in worshipping only one god.

Evil Deities of Opas

Slathe

Intermediate Deity - Rank 12

God of serpents and reptiles.

Ougre

Intermediate Deity - Rank 13

Wolf god of Monstrosities

Stygia

Intermediate Deity - Rank 15

Goddess of Darkness

Unholy Nefar

Greater Deity - Rank 20

God of Evil

Opus uses the d20™ OGL system. For Bestiary, Planes, Divinity, Magic, Races, Classes and so forth, see the System Resource Document online: <http://www.wizards.com>

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Escape From Carthidge - PDF version

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OPUS operandi

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OPUS OPERANDI

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