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GOLDHAWK 99

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must begin with a single step.

— Lao Tzu



Editorial



Bad Guys Finish First

One of the things I find most compelling about a James Bond film (even more than the spectacular stunts and delightfully convoluted plot) is the villain. It's hard to have a good Bond film without a strong villain like the likes of Auric Goldfinger or Elektra King.

When I review a proposal or manuscript, one of the things I look for is a memorable villain. It's one of the three most important elements of any good adventure. (The second element is a cool location. The third is a clever story or adventure hook.)

This issue contains a strange bunch of nasties. (If you are not a DM, be warned that the next few paragraphs contain SPOILERS!)

First, Peter Zollers' "Keep for Sale" pits the heroes against a clan of seawolf pirates led by the nefarious Captain Vaughn, whose haphazard domination of the lesser seawolves allows clever PCs to turn the pirates against one another. Peter also presents us with a minor villain—Kobu the kenku—with the potential to complicate the PCs' lives over an entire campaign!

In Kevin Carter's "Bad Seeds," the PCs come face-to-face with a murderous band of nightshades known collectively as the Enclave of the Twisted Root. Each nightshade has a distinct appearance and personality, making it easier for the DM to paint a vivid picture in the players' minds.

In "Cloudkill," Jeff Fairbourn introduces us to Jinjuk, a brilliant and cunning derro savant whose voice is described as a "harsh, cutting whisper" and who uses *invisibility* spells to spy on his own servitors!

Finally, Matt Adkins' "The Akriloth" presents a pair of undersea villains who make *The Little Mermaid's* Ursula the Sea Witch seem like the Girl Next Door. The only thing more dangerous than a mermaid vampire is a mermaid vampire created by an *ixitxachtl* devitan! Lurelei and Xulkur, depicted on this issue's cover, are guaranteed to terrify even the most seasoned undersea explorers!

Future issues promise some equally memorable antagonists, including an illusionist whose demishadow monsters take on a life of their own, a seafaring gnome inventor with a really big grudge against "the tall folk," a mad bomber with a flair for riddles, a schizophrenic ulitharid recluse, a heptad of vampires, a demented asylum director determined to resurrect a dead race, and an evil baron who makes the Sheriff of Nottingham look like a kitten. Last but not least, we have

an adventure featuring Lolth's daughter, Laveth, and her bold scheme to wrest control of the infamous Demonweb. Just when you thought it was safe to return to the Abyss ...

Villains can make or break a module, and an adventure with a good villain stands a much better chance of acceptance than a module in which the villains are scantily described and dull. If we receive a dozen proposals featuring "an evil wizard" and one featuring "a wizard maimed by a beholder who dedicates his life to destroying his nemesis by luring powerful heroes to the beholder's lair," we'll choose the latter!

Villains come in all shapes and sizes, from the lowliest kobold to the mightiest dragon, from diabolical driders to sentient plants. Before sending us a proposal, make sure you've given some serious thought to your villain (or villains), and try to give us something we've never seen before.

If you have trouble creating truly memorable villains and henchmen, try to dig up a copy of *The Complete Book of Villains* [TSR 2144] by Kirk Botula. This book contains hundreds of splendid ideas for adding wicked new dimensions to your bad guys. Even if you don't have this book, the "tricks" to creating memorable villains are fairly straightforward.

- Make them smart.
- Make them despicable.
- Make them fun.

Chris Perkins

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Letters



Any thoughts on the adventures in this issue? Write to "Letters," DUNGEON® Adventures, 1801 Lind Avenue S.W., Renton, WA 98055. You can also email us at dungeon@wizards.com. Please send subscription questions and change of address notices to DUNGEON Adventures, Subscriptions, P.O. Box 469106, Escondido, CA 92046-9106. Toll free: 1-800-395-7760. Email: dungeon@pcspublink.com.

Guilty Pleasure

Let me offer some feedback on Issue #77. I like the cover art. As soon as I received the issue, I had to open it up to see what the cover depicted. The illustrations inside were good, too. The maps were adequate, and the bonus art was interesting, though I'd rather see another module than bonus art. Stephen Daniele is an excellent artist and cartographer.

Creating modules for entry-level PCs is very challenging. "Visiting Tylwyth" is a good one. I know how difficult it is to show new players a good time without killing their characters. Next time I'm across the game table from a group of first-timers, one will need to see his long-lost uncle Tylwyth.

The Side Treks in Issue #77 were good enough to keep handy. Like I said, low-level fun is hard to come by. Plus, it would be a simple matter to adjust hit dice and damage statistics for a mid-level party to find the giant beetles and the baby slaad challenging.

"Wind Chill" was interesting because it offered a new monster that was really original. Creepy new monsters like the windigo put the spice back in the game for experienced players.

I tip my hat to Andy Miller for his killer dungeon, "Ex Keraptis Cum Amore." I can only hope that someday I will DM or play with a party that could survive this hell-hole. The treacherousness of this dungeon made it a guilty pleasure just to read. Character levels 8-12? Better be a lot closer to 12 than to 8. After I run this adventure, my party will hate and respect me, but who cares? They'll all be dead.

A. J. Sample
Des Moines, IA

"Ex Keraptis Cum Amore" seems to be the most popular adventure in Issue #77, although all of the modules received high marks from readers. A number of you have commented on the usefulness of entry-level adventures like "Visiting Tylwyth," and so we present a batch of new low-level adventures in this issue. Let us know how your heroes fare!

Top 10 List

I just received my copy of Issue #78. You've expanded the magazine by about 20 pages or so and decreased the font size. At a guess, there's roughly 50% more adventure text than before—a nice surprise indeed.

In Issue #76, you asked us to write in saying which adventures were our all-time favorites. Here's my Top 10, which I've listed in order of appearance. You might notice that the list is spread out over all the issues. This is not intentional; it just happened that way. These adventures have one or more of the following: really cool maps, an intriguing story, memorable NPCs, tightly written and interesting encounters, and no "puff." They also have that certain "something." There were many others that I might have included ("The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb" in Issue #37, "Sleepless" in Issue #28, "Kingdom of the Ghouls" in Issue #70), but these ten are the ones that stand out in my mind (at least, as of December 1999):

Issue #8: "In Defense of the Law," by Carl Sargent;

Issue #13: "The Ruins of Nol-Daer," by H.L. McClesky;

Issue #14: "Master of Puppets," by Carl Sargent;

Issue #25: "A Rose for Talakara," by Wolfgang Baur and Steve Kurtz;

Issue #30: "Thiondar's Legacy," by Steve Kurtz;

Issue #35: "The Ghost of Mistmoor," by Leonard Wilson;

Issue #42: "The Lady of the Mists," by Peter Åberg;

Issue #59: "Seeking Bloodsilver," by Christopher Perkins;

Issue #66: "Operation Manta Ray," by Paul Culotta;

Issue #75: "The Forgotten Man," by Steve Devaney.

As to the types of adventures I'd like to see more often, my favorite types are quality dungeon (or castle) crawls that meet the criteria above, of medium length and for levels 7+. I also like the intriguing adventures in the style of "The Ghost of Mistmoor" and "The Lady of the Mists." I'd like to see another Bond-style adventure like "Operation Manta Ray," maybe even a villain with a fluffy white cat! I'd also like to see more adventures of a non-European style, such as "First People" (Issue #74), particularly one based on the Indian culture and mythology. I'd also like to see a political adventure, although these are perhaps the hardest to write.

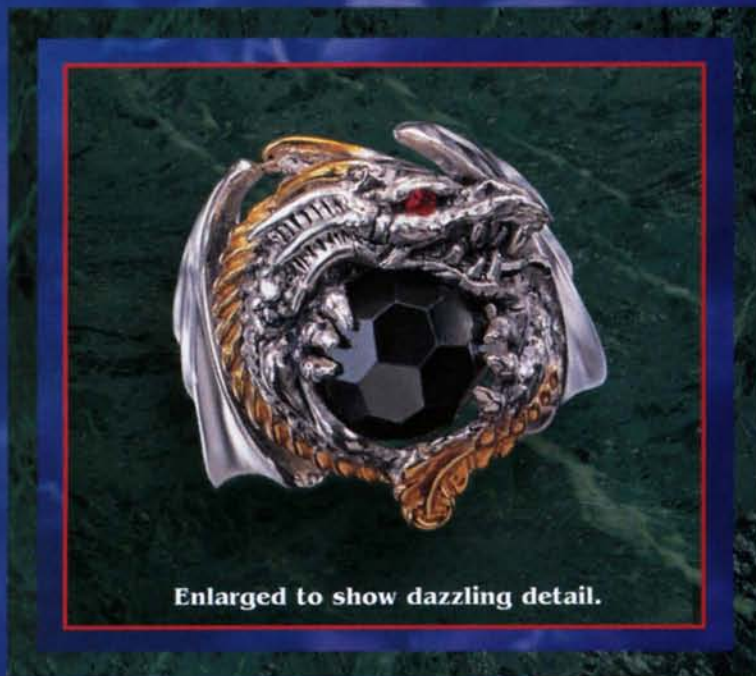
While on the whole I prefer dungeon crawls, an (almost) entirely roleplaying-based adventure would be great to see.

You've done a great job providing a variety of adventures, and even though someone complained about "quirky" adventures in a recent "Letters" page, I welcome them (quirky adventures, that is, not complaints). The magazine would not be the same without them. I enjoyed reading the adventure about the singing troll ("Song of the Fens" in Issue #40)!

I don't want to see plot-heavy RAVENLOFT® adventures—too much puff. Besides, how many versions of Dracula, Frankenstein, and Dr. Moreau do we need? As far as I'm concerned, the original Ravenloft adventure (I6) is still the best of all the AD&D® "horror" modules, and "Bane of the Shadowborn" (Issue #31) is the best RAVENLOFT module DUNGEON Adventures has published.

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Please do not publish another RAVENLOFT adventure that features a reading by the Vistani; it's soooo overused!

One of your comments in the Issue #78 editorial troubles me (as John Cage in *Ally McBeal* might say): "All generic adventures appearing in the magazine will be playable using only the core rulebooks (PH, DMG, and MM), which means you won't need to familiarize yourself with a plethora of D&D® products to enjoy and play our adventures!" Does this mean that you intend to have adventures using material only from these three books? I would hope not, because it would mean that all of the pre-3rd Edition products are irrelevant. It's not that often that modules in *DUNGEON Adventures* refer to spells and magical items from outside the current PH and DMG, although monsters from outside the MM are commonly used. I think it reasonable that adventures might refer to the *Wizard's Spell Compendium*, *Priest's Spell Compendium*, and *ENCYCLOPEDIA MAGICA™* tomes, as well as the FORGOTTEN REALMS® "god-books" (*Faiths & Avatars*, *Powers & Pantheons*, and *Demihuman Deities*) and *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM®* appendices. Perhaps you were referring to the various campaign setting boxed sets and other supplements?

Julian Neale
via email

To make all the adventures in Issue #78 fit properly, we reduced the size of the typeface slightly. We plan to continue using the

smaller typeface (instead of the old 9-point typeface) until we receive complaints!

When the core rulebooks for 3rd Edition are released, we plan to publish adventures that do not require new DMs to invest hundreds of dollars in backlist products. If an adventure includes a spell from another source (for example, the *Wizard's Spell Compendium*), we might provide a detailed description of the spell in a short sidebar (modified for the 3rd Edition rules, of course).

For the record, here's my "Top 10 List" of *DUNGEON Adventures* modules, up to and including Issue #78:

Issue #4: "Trouble at Grog's," by Grant & David Boucher;

Issue #18: "Tallow's Deep," by Bill Slavicek & Steve Gilbert.

Issue #25: "A Rose for Talakara," by Wolfgang Baur & Steve Kurtz;

Issue #29: "Ex Libris," by Randy Maxwell;

Issue #32: "Pearlman's Curiosity," by Willie Walsh;

Issue #35: "The Ghost of Mistmoor," by Leonard Wilson;

Issue #37: "The Mud Sorcerer's Tomb," by Mike Shel;

Issue #42: "The Lady of the Mists," by Peter Åberg;

Issue #45: "An Artist's Errand," by Steve Kurtz;

Issue #59: "The Mother's Curse," by John Guzzetta;

I also have a special place in my heart for "The Jangling Mordo Circus" (Issue #7), "The Crypt of Istaris" (Issue #9), "Rudwill's Stew" (Issue #45), "The Murder of Maury

Miller" (Issue #57), "Wildspawn" (Issue #71), and "The Forgotten Man" (Issue #75).

Keep those Top 10 Lists coming, and let us know what you would like to see in future issues!

The Umpteenth Time

I read DeAnna Ferguson's letter in Issue #77. I agreed with her wholeheartedly, but I'd like to add something else.

I used to feel quite bitter when I read the short author biographies in *DUNGEON Adventures*, seeing someone with their umpteenth article printed when I hadn't even had one. Of course, I'd sent a total of two proposals to the magazine before giving up. It took me another four years to send any more.

When I did, I received one of the most pleasant surprises of my life: a rejection letter from Chris Perkins. But this wasn't just any "thanks, but no thanks" form letter. Chris actually pointed out the reasons why he didn't think the proposal was right for the magazine. He ended the letter with, "I hope this doesn't discourage you from sending in more proposals." I did so less than a month later.

The next one was rejected as well, but this time I received a long letter with an actual list of six reasons why the editors were passing on the proposal, reasons that made perfect sense to me. Chris also ended the letter with another encouraging remark and an idea of the type of stuff the magazine was looking for.

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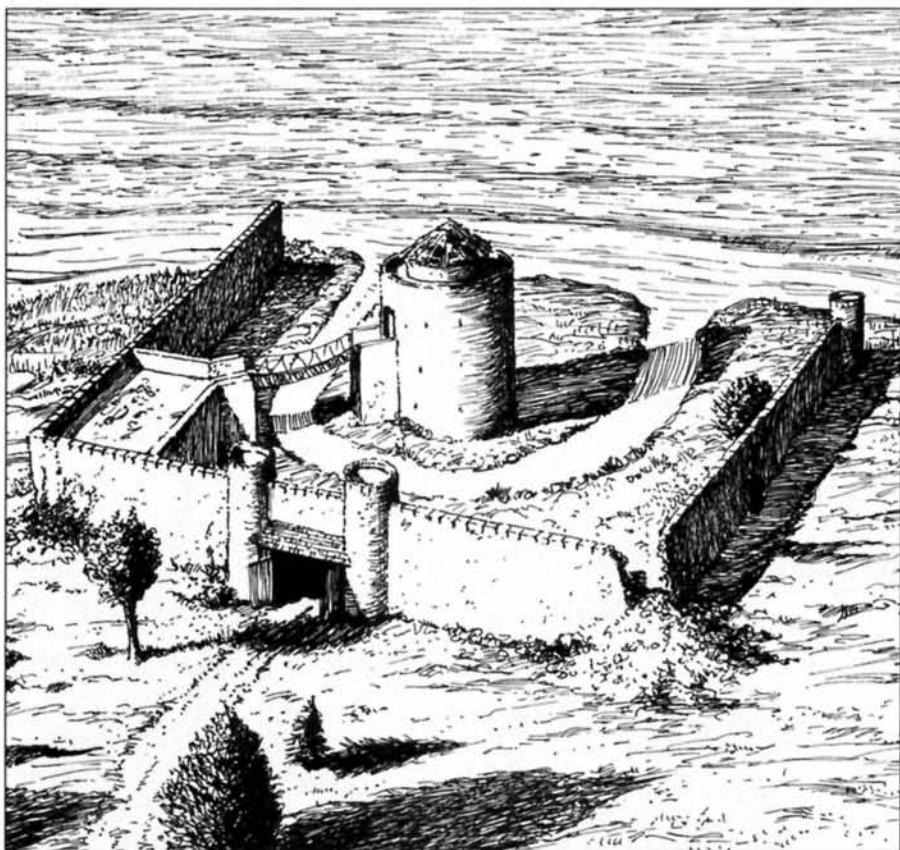
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This quiet, seaside castle can be yours—for the right price.

KEEP FOR SALE

BY PETER ZOLLERS

Buying a home can be hazardous

Artwork by David Kooharian
Cartography by Diesel

Peter writes: "I have enjoyed the AD&D® game for as long as I can remember. Thanks to my wife for her encouragement and to my players for always doing it all wrong."

"Keep for Sale" is an AD&D adventure for 4-8 player characters of levels 1-3 (about 10 total levels). The adventure takes place in a small coastal keep just outside the border of a rapidly expanding barony. The names of the places and people in the adventure can be modified for any campaign.

Beginning the Adventure

The city of Schadel was established decades ago as a small, fortified town on the shores of a newly discovered continent. As the new continent was colonized, the town grew into a busy city. Schadel is now surrounded by a high stone wall, complete with towers and a gatehouse, built in a rough semicircle around the docks that are its life-blood. A steady stream of ships moves in and out of the harbor, bringing the goods that the city cannot produce on its own. On a low plateau overlooking the harbor sits the baron's keep. Schadel boasts a busy market square where nearly anything can be bought or sold at prices comparable to those in the *Player's Handbook*. In general, the city's residents are happy during these prosperous times.

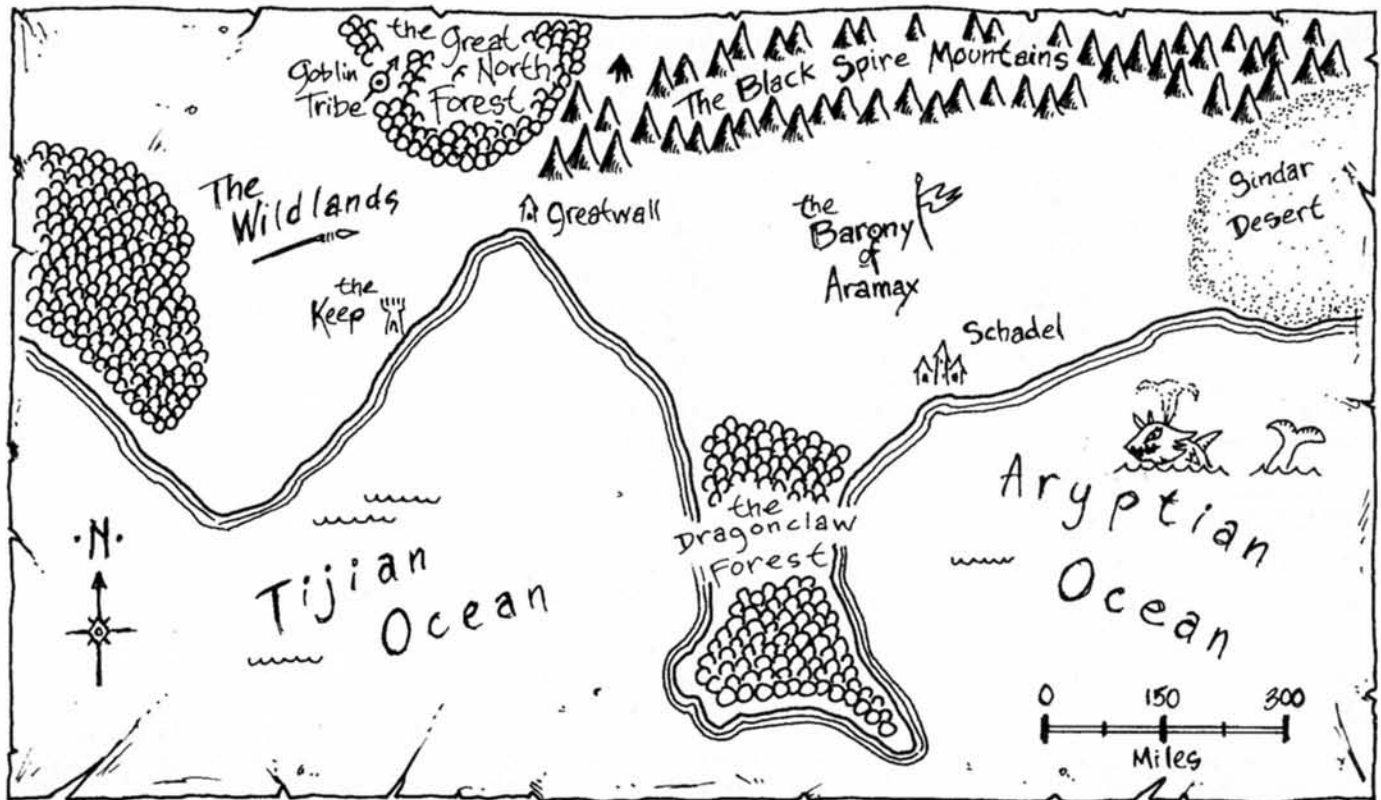
The PCs have either just arrived in Schadel or are taking some time off between adventures. The first encounter can occur just about anywhere where there are a few other people such as an inn, a tavern, a shop, an open-air market, or one of the main streets. Wherever the PCs are, their attention is drawn to a commotion in the crowd:

A commotion rises somewhere behind you. Amid the chaos, you see a big man in splintmail shove a dwarf in a hooded cloak. The dwarf stumbles backward and falls in a heap on the ground. The man laughs loudly as the dwarf struggles to his feet.

The dwarf brushes himself off and, noticing you, shuffles over and asks in a hoarse voice, "May I have a moment of your time?"

If the PCs take issue with the big man's treatment of the dwarf, he is unrepentant. He thinks the dwarf is a con artist, and he says as much to the assembled crowd:

"I'm supposed to believe that a ragged dwarf like him actually owns a keep?! Even if he does, at the price he's asking for it, it's nothing but a pile of rocks. Both you and this con man are wasting my time. Now how's about minding your own business for a change."



The brutish fighter, Razmus, laughs at the PCs' threats or suggestions that he should apologize to the dwarf. If the PCs persist, he snorts in disgust and walks away. If prevented from leaving or assaulted, Razmus grabs the mace from his belt and attacks. The city watch arrives on the scene 1-6 rounds after the fight breaks out and arrests everyone involved. Assuming no one is killed, Razmus and the PCs are thrown into jail for the night, fined 10 gp each, and then released. If the PCs kill Razmus, their adventuring days are most likely over for a while.

Razmus, human male F3: AC 4; MV 12; hp 29; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type +1 (Strength bonus); Str 16, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 8; ML 16; ALCN; XP 65; splintmail armor, footman's mace, dagger.

The Proposal

Assuming the PCs avoid major trouble with Razmus, they may speak with the dwarf. If the PCs are abusive or say that they are not interested, the dwarf moves on and the adventure is over. If the PCs are willing to listen, the dwarf clears his throat and presents his proposal:

"I am looking for a group interested in purchasing the deed to a keep in the lands just beyond the palisade at Greatwall."

If the PCs are interested, he continues:

"I am a dwarf of simple means. As such, I no longer need a keep nor its trappings to bring me joy. Therefore, I am offering to sell the deed to my keep for the modest sum of 1,000 gp [or higher if the PCs are wealthy]. There is some risk involved, mind you. I have not journeyed to the keep in some time, due to poor health, and I don't really know its current condition, but you can surely see that the land alone is worth the asking price."

If asked his name, the dwarf, whose real name is Boris, tells the PCs that he goes by the name of Ferris. If the PCs ask how he acquired the deed, he tells them that his father willed it to him. If the PCs question the authenticity of the deed, the dwarf assures them that it bears the seal of the king. If the PCs want to check out the keep before they buy the deed, the dwarf grudgingly agrees. He is willing to provide them with a map to the keep in exchange for a down payment on the deed. He wants 100 gp down but settles for as little as 50 gp. He does not have the map or the deed on his person, so he instructs the PCs to meet him in one hour at a tavern called The Pit.

Asking around about the dwarf or his proposal garners little additional information from the assembled crowd. Each of the local

proprietors has a 10% chance of recognizing the dwarf from his description. Those that do tell the PCs that they have seen the dwarf in their establishment on several occasions talking to other people, but that they have no idea what business the dwarf had with them.

The Meeting

The Pit is a tavern located in a rough part of town just south of the city's keep. The tavern is a rowdy place frequented by many of the city's dwarves, and it boasts a large, ornate wooden bar over which is suspended a black dragon's skull. The bar is tended by a gray-bearded dwarf with a patch over one eye, named Rathgar. Rathgar paces behind the bar, cleaning glasses and casting a wary eye over the customers seated at the twenty or so tables in the place. Rathgar's daughter Hilde and his son Karl circulate among the tables, taking orders and filling empty mugs from pitchers of ale.

If the PCs arrive at The Pit early, the dwarf whom they know as Ferris is not present. The PCs can sit and wait for him, though tall PCs find the dwarf-sized tables and stools very uncomfortable. PCs who choose to wait are soon told by either Hilde or Karl that only paying customers are welcome in The Pit. The Pit offers all the beverages listed in the *Player's Handbook*, but groups not accompanied by a

Encounters East of Greatwall

It is recommended that the DM use each encounter once only. Roll 1d4:

1. Caravan: 3-6 (1d4+2) wagons with 1-2 merchants and 1-3 guards per wagon. As the PCs approach the caravan, one merchant and half of the guards ride out to challenge them. If the PCs are not overtly hostile, the merchant invites them to join the caravan. If the caravan is headed toward Greatwall (50% chance), the wagons are laden with foodstuffs, clothing, and iron ingots with a total value of 25-100 gp (1d4 × 25). If headed for Schadel, the wagons are empty. If the PCs accompany the caravan all the way to its destination, they are each paid 1 gp per day.

Merchants, 0-level human males: AC 10; MV 12; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 9; INT average (8-10); AL LN; XP 15; MM/196; dagger, 5-20 gp worth of jewelry and coinage.

Guards, human males F1: AC 4; MV 9 (24 on horseback); hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; ML 12; INT average (8-10); AL LN; XP 35; chainmail armor, shield, longsword, dagger, 1-10 sp.

2. Patrol: Ten soldiers and a sergeant mounted on medium war horses. The patrol stops all travelers and questions them about their destination and reasons for traveling. If the PCs give them any trouble, the patrol places them under arrest and takes them to the nearest city.

Soldiers, human males F1: AC 4; MV 9 (18 on horseback); hp 7 each; THAC0 20; #AT

1; Dmg by weapon type; INT average (8-10); AL LN; ML 14; XP 65; chainmail armor, shield, longsword, light crossbow, six light quarrels, dagger, 1-6 gp.

Sergeant, human male F2: AC 2; MV 9 (18 on horseback); hp 15; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; INT average (10); AL LN; ML 14; XP 65; platemail armor, longsword, dagger, 2-12 gp.

3. Bandits: This group of half-elven bandits is led by a 3rd-level priest named Paulus. Paulus always felt like a second-class citizen whether he lived among humans or elves, so he collected together a community of his own kind. The group engages in banditry as a means of support and as a way of punishing the so-called "pure races."

The bandits form a line across the road with Paulus behind them. If the PCs try to avoid the roadblock, the bandits pursue until the PCs are out of sight. Paulus demands that the PCs hand over their horses, food, and any coinage they might have. If the PCs refuse Paulus's demands or claim to have no money on them, Paulus orders his bandits to attack. The bandits fight until they are outnumbered by the PCs or Paulus falls.

Bandits, 0-level half-elf males (9) and 0-level half-elf females (3): AC 7; MV 12; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 9; INT average (8-10); AL N; XP 15; MM/196; leather armor, small shield, short sword, dagger.

Paulus, half-elf male P3: AC 5; MV 12; hp 20; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 11, Dex 12, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 8;

ML 14; AL CN; XP 65; MM/196; chainmail, warhammer.

Spells (4/3): 1st—*command*, *cure light wounds* (×2), *protection from good*; 2nd—*aid*, *chant*, *spiritual hammer*.

4. Goblin Raiders: Six goblins mounted in pairs on three worgs. These goblins have descended from the Black Spire Mountains to cause trouble among the humans. One goblin of each pair is equipped with a spear that can be used as a lance from the back of the wolves. The other goblin is equipped with a club and a sling. The raiders attack until it becomes obvious that they will not win.

Goblins (6): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 9; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; MM/163; spear or club, sling, 1-10 sling stones.

Worgs (3): AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 120; MM/362.

Encounters West of Greatwall

It is recommended that the DM use each encounter once only. Roll 1d6:

1. Ogres: These two ogres, Sleek and Jebo, are trying to make a name for themselves by killing something really tough. They have no idea what creatures are tough and what ones are not, so if they encounter the PCs, they ask them if they are tough. If the PCs claim to be tough, the ogres attack; otherwise they leave the PCs alone and move on.

dwarf are charged twice the standard price.

PCs asking for information about a dwarf named Ferris are greeted by harsh stares and unfriendly remarks. The only potential source of information on "Ferris" is Rathgar's daughter, Hilde. Boris has been pestering her for months with offers of marriage, and she is weary of it. She has complained to her father about Boris's unwanted advances, but Rathgar has so far refused to do anything. If the PCs ask Hilde about a dwarf named Ferris, she thinks a moment before telling them that she knows of no dwarf by that name. If the PCs furnish a description of the dwarf that includes a reference to his raspy voice, she immediately recognizes the dwarf as Boris.

"You would be speaking of my father's good friend, Boris. Don't worry, he'll be along with your map any minute now. Now stop asking questions where you shouldn't and tend to your drinks."

Hilde ignores any further questions about Boris or his business. If the PCs persist in their questioning of Hilde or become belligerent, the dwarves at the surrounding tables come to her aid. There are 15-18 (1d4 + 14) dwarves in the tavern, and they respond in kind to any trouble the PCs cause. If the PCs are foolish enough to attack any of the dwarves, all the dwarves in the tavern, including Rathgar, join the fight.

Hilde, 0-level dwarf female: AC 10; MV 6; hp 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as dwarf; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 16, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 12; ML 12; AL NG; dagger.

Rathgar, dwarf male F4: AC 8; MV 6; hp 32; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type +3 (Strength + specialization bonuses); SD as dwarf; Str 17, Dex 13, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 7, Cha 13; ML 16; AL LN; XP 175; leather armor, *battle-ax* +1 (specialized).

Patrons, dwarf males F1 (15-18): AC 10; MV 6; hp 8 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as dwarf; ML 14; INT very (11); AL LN; XP 35; leather armor, dagger.

Boris enters The Pit shortly before the appointed meeting time and sits at a table near the bar, whether the PCs are already there or not. Boris waits for the PCs to come over to his table before inspecting their payment and handing over the map. He shows them the deed if they ask to see it, but he does not allow them to handle it until the deal is complete. If the PCs ask Boris about other maps he might have sold, he does not deny it but points out that there is only one deed and it is available to the first group that wants it. He responds to other questions by simply asking the PCs if they want the map or not. If the PCs give him any trouble, he calls over several dwarves from the bar to back him up. These dwarves wear leather armor and are armed with daggers. The dwarves attack only to defend themselves or Boris. If Boris is attacked, he defends himself with a dagger he has hidden under his cloak. The rest of the dwarves in the tavern do not involve themselves in Boris's affair.

Slek and Jebo (ogres): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 21, 16; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 or 1d6+6 (spear); SZ L; ML 12; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 270; MM/272; spear.

2. Lucia: The PCs see a lone rider off in the distance riding slowly north. If the PCs approach, they see that the rider is a woman in heavily damaged splintmail atop a horse with several arrow wounds. The woman wears no helmet and rides with a bastard sword across her lap. She sits wearily in the saddle and seems to take no notice of the PCs unless they call out to her. If the PCs ride up to her, she asks them if they know the location of any goblins. If the PCs have encountered goblins and point her in the right direction, she rides off. If the PCs have not seen any goblins, she continues riding north.

The rider is a paladin named Lucia who is the sole survivor from a group of adventurers who were attacked by goblins three days ago. After burying her friends, Lucia set off on a personal crusade to kill as many goblins she could before being killed herself. Lucia is grievously wounded and weak, having neither eaten nor slept since the battle.

Only a good-aligned priest who makes a successful Charisma check can dissuade Lucia from her suicidal quest. Even then she listens only to the suggestion that she return to Greatwall to heal and gather allies before continuing. If the PCs tell Lucia of the keep and suggest that there might be goblins there, she is willing to accompany them. If shown Boris's map, she tells the PCs that her group had the same map, but that she left it

behind at the battle site. Lucia fights at -2 to hit and her movement rate is halved until she has had a day's rest with decent food. Lucia immediately attacks any goblins encountered regardless of her health.

Lucia, human female Pal1: AC 2; MV 9; hp 9 (currently 2); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 9, Int 7, Wis 13, Cha 17; AL LG; ML 16; splintmail (damaged, AC 5), bastard sword.

Trevor (medium war horse): AC 7; MV 18; HD 2+2; hp 13 (currently 5); THAC0 19; #AT 2; Dmg 1d6/1d6; SZ L; ML 7; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 65; MM/194.

3. Goblin Patrol: Six goblins mounted in pairs on three worgs. These goblins from the Great North Forest are patrolling the Wildlands, watching for troops from Greatwall. One goblin of each pair is equipped with a spear that can be used as a lance from the back of the wolves. The other goblin is equipped with a club and a sling. The raiders attack only unmounted groups. The goblins attack until the first goblin is killed, at which point they break off the attack and regroup in the wilderness several miles distant.

Goblins (6): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 9; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; MM/163; spear or club, sling, 1-10 sling stones.

Worgs (3): AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2d4; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 120; MM/362.

4. Goblin Raiders: These goblins are on their way back to the Great North Forest after

a night raid on Greatwall. The goblins are taking the long way back to their tribe to conceal the true direction of their destination. They carry clubs and shortbows, but they have no arrows left.

Thronk (goblin leader): AC 5; MV 6; HD 1; hp 5; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 9; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 35; MM/163; wooden shield, short sword.

Goblins (9): Same statistics as Thronk with the following changes: AC 6; HD 1-1; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; XP 15; club, shortbow.

5. Ankheg: AC 2, underside 4; MV 12, burrow 6; HD 3; hp 14; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 3d6 (mandibles) + 1d4 (acid); SZ L; ML 9; INT non (0); AL N; XP 175; MM/7.

6. Battle Site: The PCs come upon the site of a recent battle. The rotting corpses of over two dozen goblins and six horses lie scattered about the battlefield. At the center of the battlefield are six fresh graves, each with a weapon for a headstone. The headstones are: a battle-ax, staff, flail, longsword, shortbow and warhammer. If the PCs search the battlefield, they find a total of 19 sp and 25 cp among the goblins and 6 gp, 3 ep, 24 sp, and two vials of holy water in the saddlebags of the horses. The two vials of holy water are wrapped in an exact copy of the PCs' map to the keep. Any PC who violates the graves, including taking one of the headstone weapons, falls victim to a curse that causes the next curative spell cast on them to fizzle. If Lucia is with the PCs, she threatens to attack anyone who so much as touches one of the graves.

Boris, dwarf male T4: AC 6; MV 6; hp 24; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab (x2 damage); SD as dwarf; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 9, Cha 7; ML 11; AL N; XP 270; *cloak of protection* +2, dagger.

Rogue skills: PP 55%, OL 40%, FRT 40%, MS 40%, HS 35%, DN 25%, CW 50%, RL 0%.

Boris's friends, dwarf males F1 (4): AC 8; MV 6; hp 10, 9, 8, 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD as dwarf; ML 14; INT very (11); AL LN; XP 35; leather armor, dagger.

For the Dungeon Master

Boris has told the PCs the truth for the most part. The deed is real, although the current king might not honor it, and the keep does exist. However, Boris makes a living selling maps to his keep. He sells several every month and supports a fairly comfortable lifestyle. He sets a high price for the deed and solicits only poor, inexperienced adventurers so that he can be assured of keeping the deed. If the PCs actually have the gold to buy the

deed, Boris never shows up for the meeting at The Pit. The dwarves in The Pit react as described above in "The Meeting" except that Hilde is very surprised when Boris does not arrive. Hilde has no idea where he can be found but promises to let the PCs know if she sees him. Two weeks pass before the need for money forces Boris to resume his business, and he arranges to meet another group of adventurers at The Pit. If the PCs are still in town at this point, Hilde sends them word of Boris's return. If the PCs confront Boris at The Pit, he tries to flee while his bodyguards cover his escape. If his life is seriously threatened, Boris hands over the deed as agreed.

The keep was built several decades ago by an adventurer on a land grant from a former king. As the keep's builder lay dying, he willed the keep and the land to his henchman, Boris's grandfather, who tried to manage the keep but could not. Boris has never seen the keep and has no desire to, since none of those to whom he has sold the map have ever returned for the deed.

Travel to the Keep

The keep is located on the coast southwest of the town of Greatwall. The journey from Schadel to Greatwall takes a week on horseback, and the journey southwest from there to the keep takes another three days. East of Greatwall, there is a 1-in-12 chance of an encounter during the day and a 1-in-6 chance during the night. West of Greatwall, there is a 1-in-8 chance of an encounter during the day and a 1-in-4 chance during the night. The DM should roll the appropriate die and consult whichever table applies given the PCs' position relative to Greatwall (see above).

Greatwall

The Black Spire Mountains mark the northwestern border of the civilized lands surrounding Schadel. At this border, the baron's forces have constructed a great wooden palisade to span the opening between the tip of the Black Spire Mountains and the sea. At the center of the wall is a massive set of wooden

doors. The palisade is guarded by an entire company of the baron's troops who have set up camp behind the northern portion of the wall. Behind the southern portion of the wall is the town of Greatwall. The town was founded by a group of entrepreneurs who established their businesses here to help the soldiers stationed at the wall spend their pay. The businesses in the town include an inn, a smithy, a trading post, a tavern, and a brothel. Prices in the town are generally 25% higher than those found in the *Player's Handbook*. Individuals desiring passage through the gates of the palisade are charged an "opening fee" of 5 gp (or the equivalent in goods) if they are on foot and 15 gp if they have a mount.

The Keep

The keep was a work in progress when the original owner died, so it has only the basics necessary to make it defensible. The wall includes a small gatehouse and several towers, only one of which still stands. The main gate is open, and there are no outward signs that the keep is inhabited.

Before you stands a keep that looks sturdy despite having seen better days. The keep consists of a tall central tower protected by a curtain wall on three sides and the sea to the south. A small gatehouse, its stout wooden doors partially open, occupies the center portion of the north wall. A multi-story building, perhaps a barracks, forms the corner of the wall east of the gatehouse. Small towers once protected the three other corners of the outer wall, but only one of them still stands. Piles of dark stone mark the locations of the two fallen towers.

The central tower is 40 feet tall and 30 feet in diameter. The southwestern tower and those of the gatehouse are 25 feet tall and 20 feet in diameter. The outer wall and the barracks building are 20 feet high.

Except for the two collapsed towers and the hole in the barracks wall, the stonework is still quite sound. The wood throughout the keep is another matter. All the exterior wooden doors are in bad shape (AC 8; hp 20) and can be battered down with little effort (+4 bonus to Open Doors rolls).

A goblin war party is currently exploring the keep with a mercenary ogre and their kenku advisor. They have cleared out the old barracks and set up camp there. They are currently trying to get into the central tower. The goblins do not regularly patrol the exterior areas of the keep, but they move about at night, so there is a 1-in-6 chance of encountering 2-5 goblins in any currently unoccupied area. The goblins are equipped with spears and wear leather armor. They retreat from a

superior force, falling back to the barracks if possible. If captured and questioned by a PC who speaks goblin, these goblins can provide information similar to those encountered at the main gate (area 1).

Goblins (2-5): AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 6, 5, 4, 4, 1; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6; SZ S; ML 10; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; MM/163; leather armor, spear.

If the PCs think that the keep is inhabited, they might decide to announce their presence before entering. If the PCs approach the main gate (area 1) when the goblins are on guard or approach the hole in the barracks' dining hall (area 8) and state, in goblin, their desire to parley, they are told to remain where they are until the boss arrives. If the ogre is on guard when the PCs announce themselves, he is alerted but takes no action other than to ready his club and wait for the PCs to enter.

If the PCs follow the goblin guards' instructions, one runs to tell the goblin leader, Snarg, in area 17. Snarg sends his kenku advisor, Kobu, to speak with the PCs. Kobu exits the barracks by the door and flies to the barracks roof. Once Kobu is on the roof he pulls up the hood of his cloak to hide his face and moves to the wall closest to where the PCs are waiting. Kobu asks the PCs who they work for and why they want to enter the keep. If the PCs state that they are adventurers here to explore the keep, Kobu tells them that they are welcome to explore the central tower, but that is all, and they must leave the keep as soon as they have finished exploring the tower. If the PCs agree to Kobu's conditions, he tells them to meet him at the gate. Kobu then flies down from the roof, *shapechanges* into an elderly human male, and moves to the main gate to meet the PCs.

Once he reaches the gate, Kobu sends a goblin to wake the ogre and steps out to greet the PCs. The goblin returns to the gate with the ogre 3 rounds later. If the PCs attack Kobu, the goblins leap to his defense. Kobu (see area 17 for statistics) fights alongside the goblins at the gate until the ogre arrives, then he retreats to the barracks to summon the rest of the goblins. When Kobu returns with the remainder of the goblin war party, his combat strategy is the same as in the description of area 17.

If the PCs are not aggressive, the kenku greets them cordially, introducing himself as Kobu the Enchanter. Kobu is thrilled that the PCs are willing to clear out the tower for him but makes it very clear that the keep belongs to him and the goblins. Kobu refuses to allow the PCs to enter the barracks under any circumstances, pointing out the rubble pile south of the barracks that can be climbed for access to the roof and the bridge to the tower. Kobu refuses to discuss his relationship with the goblins or the reason they have come to the keep, telling the PCs that it is simply none of

their business. Kobu asks to accompany the PCs into the tower but does not insist, as he knows he can just sneak in after them. If allowed to accompany the PCs into the tower, Kobu plays the part of a wizard—avoiding melee combat and pretending to cast spells. Whether or not he accompanies the PCs into the tower, Kobu presses them to begin without further delay.

Gatehouse and Outer Wall

1. Gatehouse. One of the two wooden gatehouse doors is partially open. A sickly green moss covers the rotting wooden surface of both doors. Despite their appearance, the doors can still absorb a fair amount of punishment before giving way if barred with a stout plank (AC 8; hp 100). There are tracks in the mud between the gates, but the ground is too soft for an accurate determination of what made them.

During the day, an ogre named Gort sits behind the closed door in the shade of the gatehouse. Gort is not attentive, and the PCs have a good chance of surprising him (1-4 on a d10) unless they are making a lot of noise near the gatehouse. If Gort is attacked, he uses his club to strike a makeshift gong hanging from a spike driven into the back of the door. The sound of the gong can be heard by the goblins in area 8. Unfortunately for Gort, the goblins have no plans to sortie out and help him in the bright sunlight. The goblins simply prepare their ambush as detailed in the area descriptions for the barracks building. Being abandoned by his goblin allies makes Gort very susceptible to bribery, and he can be convinced to give up the fight and leave the keep if offered as little as 10 gp.

Gort is small for an ogre, which led to a rough life among his tribe. After a savage beating at the hands of his brothers, Gort left the tribe, taking his father's favorite bearskin cloak with him, and joined up with the goblin tribe as an enforcer. The opportunity to do some unchallenged bullying of his own has made Gort overconfident and lazy. He has agreed to guard the gate only because it provides a cool place to sleep during the day. Gort still wears his father's old bearskin and uses a club in battle. He wears a silver nose ring worth 30 gp.

Gort (ogre): AC 5; MV 9; HD 4+1; hp 19; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1d10 or 2d4+6 (club); SZ L; ML 12; INT average (8); AL CE; XP 270; MM/272; furs, club.

During the night, the gate is guarded by four goblins wearing leather armor and armed with spears. The weakest, a goblin named Juk, keeps watch from on top of the east tower, while the other three remain hidden behind the closed door. Not a strong fighter, Juk has had to learn to defend himself

from a distance in order to survive. He has become so good at the sling that he gains a +2 bonus to hit with the weapon. If Juk spots any intruders, he descends the tower stairs and warns the goblins at the gate before proceeding to area 8 to alert the barracks.

Juk: AC 6; MV 6; HD 1-1; hp 2; THAC0 20 (18 with sling); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ S; ML 12; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 35; MM/163; leather armor, sling, 11 sling bullets, dagger.

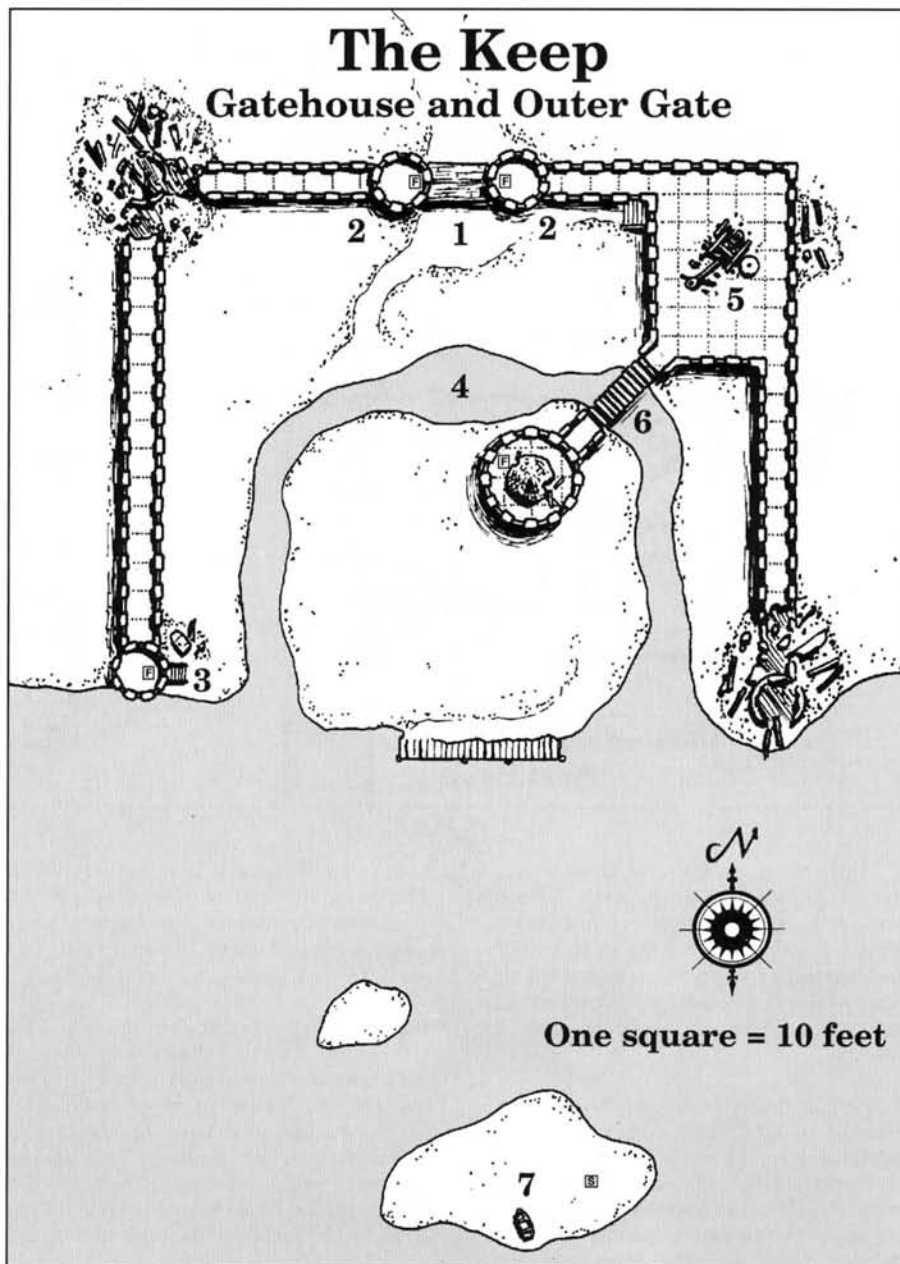
Goblins (3): hp 7, 6, 3; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear.

If any of these goblins are captured, they promise to leave the keep and not come back if the PCs let them go. They can give the PCs a general description of the inside of the barracks as well as the location of the guard post (area 8) and the leaders' quarters (area 18). If asked about their leader, they describe only Snarg (see area 17).

2. Gatehouse Towers. The doors to the two gatehouse towers are unlocked. The door to the east tower opens easily, but the door to the west tower must be forced open. Both towers originally had second floors, but they collapsed a long time ago, leaving a clutter of splintered wood on the first floor. If the PCs force open the door to the west tower, they find that the wooden stairway has also collapsed. If the PCs open the door to the east tower, they find that the stairway to the top of the tower still clings to the wall. A path has been cleared from the door to the stairway, and the stairs show signs of recent use.

The wooden stairs in the east tower cannot support more than the weight of a goblin or halfling. If a heavier individual tries to climb the stairs, the stairs collapse when that person is 1-10 feet off the ground. Anyone on the stairs when they collapse suffers 1-6 points of damage. The damage sustained is reduced by 1 point for every 2 feet of falling distance less than 10 feet (i.e., a person falling 6 feet suffers 1d6-2 points of damage). At night a single goblin climbs the stairs to the roof to act as a lookout. (See area 1 for statistics.) If the PCs reach the top of the east tower, they find the skeleton of an archer with his bow and quiver. The bow is worthless, but there are two arrows +1 in the quiver.

3. Southwest Tower. The door to this tower has been torn from its hinges and thrown to the side atop a pile of splintered wood. Anyone who checks can tell that the wood was piled here recently. The floor and stairs of this tower have also collapsed, but the debris has been cleared from the first floor and piled outside. A collection of filthy furs and rags are piled up against the far wall of the tower. The unpleasant stench of rotting, sweat-soaked furs fills the tower.



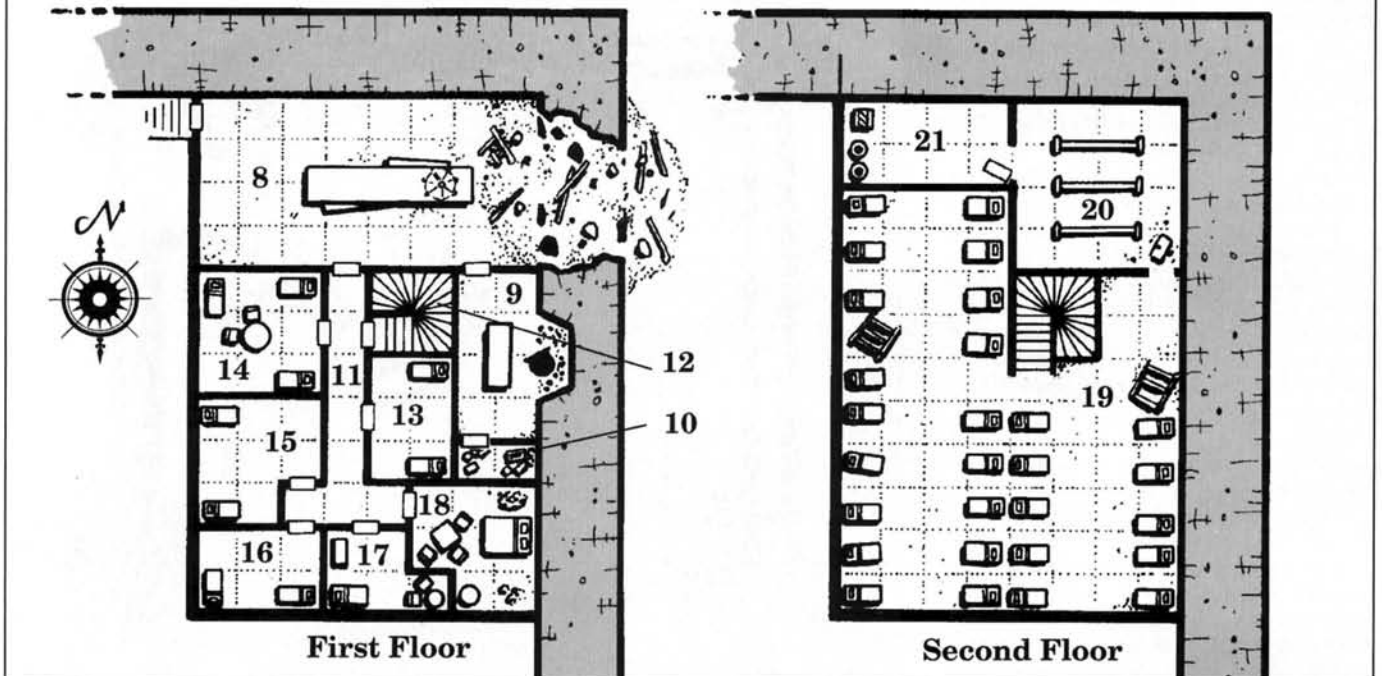
The ogre that guards the gate during the day sleeps here at night. If encountered here, he is asleep on the pile of furs. Sounds from a battle at the gatehouse have a 10% chance of waking the sleeping ogre, but there is a 50% chance he goes right back to sleep.

Under the pile of furs are two leather sacks. The first one contains a big block of moldy cheese; the other sack holds four gems plus 123 sp, 55 ep, 19 gp, and 5 pp. Three of the gems are pieces of quartz worth 10 gp, and the other is a citrine worth 50 gp.

4. Moat. The depth of the moat varies from 5 to 15 feet, and its sandy bottom is clearly visible unless a recent storm has churned up the sea. PCs trying to walk on the moat's sandy bottom sink if wearing armor heavier than studded leather. PCs sinking in the sand at the bottom of the moat cannot free themselves and must be pulled out by comrades on the bank. Pulling someone out of the sand requires a combined Strength of at least one point per 10 pounds of weight. Each PC pulling must make a successful Strength check to add his or her Strength to the total.

The Keep - Barracks

One square = 10 feet



At the bottom of the moat, directly under the bridge, is a skeleton in rusty chainmail obscured by a thin layer of sand. Anyone who spends 1 turn searching the sand near the skeleton finds a stoppered flask and a garnet worth 100 gp. The flask contains a muddy brown liquid, the result of a potion ruined by seawater.

5. Barracks Roof. The roof of the barracks is accessed by climbing the stairs of the east gatehouse tower, through a trapdoor in the roof, or by climbing the rubble pile at the end of the wall. The risks associated with climbing the stairs of the east gatehouse tower are detailed in the description of area 3. Any non-thief character trying to climb the rubble pile must make a successful Dexterity check at +4 to avoid falling. Falling down the rubble pile causes 1-4 points of damage.

On the roof of the barracks are the remains of a light catapult. The throwing arm of the catapult has fallen in such a way that it hides the trapdoor down to the barracks. The trapdoor is treated as a concealed door for purposes of detection, and a combined Strength of 30 is required to move the throwing arm before the trapdoor can be opened. The goblins in the room below the trapdoor are alerted by the sound of the catapult arm being moved. The night sentry in the east gatehouse

tower (area 3) usually does not pay much attention to this area, so there is only a 25% chance it notices quiet intruders. The trapdoor cannot be cleared quietly without the aid of a *silence 15' radius* spell.

6. Bridge. The bridge between the roof of the barracks and the tower does not appear to be in the greatest shape. Several boards are missing, and the remaining wood is weather-beaten. If a character with the Engineering proficiency examines the bridge and makes a successful proficiency check, the PC can tell that the bridge is safe to cross. A roll of 19 or 20 on the proficiency check leads the engineer to think that the bridge is unsafe to cross.

7. Islands. There are two small islands in the sea just south of the keep. On the shore of the larger of the two islands lies a large rowboat. It cannot be seen from the dock but is visible to anyone who studies the island from the top of the central tower. The boat is not in the best shape, but it floats.

There is a concealed trapdoor on the larger of the two islands. A PC who makes a successful Tracking proficiency check with a -1 modifier can detect faint tracks in the area around the door. There is also buried treasure on the island, but it is difficult to find without magical aid such as a potion of *treasure finding*.

The treasure is contained in an old wooden chest and consists of 50 semi-precious gems worth a total of 500 gp.

The Barracks

The interior doors are in slightly better condition than the exterior doors (AC 7; hp 25; +2 bonus to Open Doors rolls). All areas in the barracks building are equipped with regularly spaced wrought iron wall sconces, except for the dining hall, which has chandeliers. Many of the wall sconces still contain torches. The goblins move about the barracks regularly, so there is a 1-in-4 chance of encountering 1-4 goblins in any currently unoccupied area of the barracks. The goblins are equipped with spears and wear leather armor. The goblins retreat from a superior force, falling back to the nearest group of reinforcements, most likely area 17 or 19. If captured, they can provide information similar to the goblins in area 8 except they know the upper level of the barracks as well.

Goblins (1-4): hp 7, 5, 3, 2; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear.

Goblins captured in the barracks can provide PCs who speak goblin with an accurate description of the barracks. Captured goblins agree to lead the PCs anywhere they want to go if the PCs promise not to kill them, though

they have a 25% chance of getting lost and leading the PCs in the direction opposite from where they want to go. If asked about the number of goblins in the barracks, they can say only that there are many, since they cannot count. The goblins know little of their leaders' plans other than Snarg (the goblin leader) and Kobu (the goblins' military advisor) want to gain entry to the central tower.

8. Dining Hall. A long dining table occupies most of this chamber, but it is in poor condition. The long benches for the table have been overturned and shoved under the table. One of the two wooden chandeliers that provided light for this room has fallen onto the table. There was a large fireplace on the east wall of the room, but it and part of the wall that supported it collapsed outward years ago.

Two goblins with spears are on guard in this room. They focus their attention mainly on the hole in the wall, since they assume that the guards at the gate will keep intruders out. If the goblins are outnumbered or wounded, they retreat: one to area 17 and one to area 19.

Goblins (2): hp 6, 4; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear.

If the PCs spend an hour searching through the rubble of the fireplace, they discover a silver candlestick worth 25 gp.

9. Kitchen. A large fireplace takes up the entire east wall, and an iron cauldron lies on its side in the ashes of the firepit. A single wooden table stands in the center of the kitchen. Assorted cookware and kitchen debris are scattered all over the table and the floor around it. There is a thick layer of dust covering everything.

Two sets of goblin-sized boots have left a trail that leads from the northern doorway to the pantry, area 10.

10. Pantry. This room has been searched and is now just a clutter of broken boxes, empty barrels, and rotting sacks.

11. Hall. If any goblins have escaped to raise the alarm, this hall is unlit. Otherwise a flickering torch in a wall sconce illuminates the south end of the hallway. Underneath the torch is a wooden bucket filled with water.

If the alarm has not been raised, there is a single goblin guard outside the door to area 17. He retreats into the room if he spots intruders.

Goblin: hp 5; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, short sword.

If the alarm has been raised, the goblins have doused the torch and, if possible, set up an ambush at the south end of the hall. The goblin leader, his kenku advisor (see area 17 for the statistics of the leader and his advisor), and the door guard hide around the corner to

the east while the goblins from area 16 hide to the west. These tactics grant them +1 to their chance to surprise intruders, but they require 3 rounds to prepare.

12. Stairs. If any goblins have retreated through the doorway to the stairs, the door is barricaded with a large wooden beam and must be forced open or battered down. Otherwise the large beam is just leaning against the staircase so that it can be tipped over easily to block the door. The spiral staircase is made of wrought iron. PCs searching under the steps find a forgotten pouch containing 23 gp.

13–15. Sleeping Quarters. These rooms served as quarters for the garrison's sergeants. The largest room has three beds, and the smaller ones have two beds. Each bed has an accompanying footlocker. All these rooms have been ransacked.

All the footlockers are open except for one of the three in area 14. The lock has been broken off, but the lid is closed. A small poisonous snake slipped into the chest via a small hole in one corner. None of the goblins were willing to risk his life to kill the snake, since all the other footlockers had contained nothing of value.

Poisonous snake: AC 6; MV 15; HD 2+1; hp 9; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison bite (onset time 2d6 rounds; save vs. poison at +2 or suffer 2d4 points of damage); SZ S; ML 8; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 175; MM/320.

In a leather sack under the snake is a collection of ten small gemstones worth 10 gp each.

16. Sleeping Quarters. This room is furnished exactly as areas 13–15. There are three goblins in this room trying to break the lock off one of the two footlockers. Two of the goblins are armed with spears, the third with a short sword. The goblin with the sword is attempting to use it to break the lock off of the footlocker. They are automatically surprised unless the alarm has been sounded. Neither of the footlockers contains anything of value.

Goblins (3): hp 5, 4, 3; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear or short sword.

17. Lieutenant's Quarters. This room served as the quarters for the garrison lieutenant. There is one bed, a cabinet, a table, and two chairs. The doors of the cabinet are open, and there is a small scorched area on the floor in front of it. A single torch illuminates the room. The goblin leader and his kenku advisor are in this room along with a human prisoner who has been tied to the bed. The goblin leader, Snarg, is standing beside the bed shouting at the prisoner in a poor attempt at the Common

tongue that makes him sound more like an enraged monkey. The kenku, Kobu, sits in a chair pulled up to the end of the bed and is busy cleaning his claws with his dagger. He knows the Common tongue better than Snarg but enjoys the goblin leader's ravings too much to help.

Snarg: AC 5; MV 6; HD 1; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1d6+1; SZ S; ML 10; INT average (10); AL LE; XP 35; MM/163; chainmail, mace with an garnet pommel stone worth 50 gp, silver ring with an onyx stone worth 20 gp, key to the strongbox in area 18.

Kobu (kenku): AC 5; MV 6, fly 18 (D); HD 3; hp 16; THAC0 17; #AT 3 or 1; Dmg 1d4/1d4/1d6 or by weapon type; MR 30%; SZ M; ML 13; INT average (10); AL N; XP 420; MM/211; ring mail, staff, dagger, silver cloak pin in the shape of an eagle worth 50 gp, gold ring (on claw) worth 15 gp, pouch containing 16 gp and 27 sp.

Thief skills: PP 45%, OL 30%, FRT 15%, MS 60%, HS 35%, DN 25%, CW 60%, RL 0%.

Spell: 1st—*charm person*.

Kobu spent his early years serving as a bodyguard for an aarakocra shaman from whom he learned to speak the Common tongue. When he grew tired of the relatively peaceful ways of the aarakocra, he moved into the wild lands and took up with a tribe of goblins. Kobu soon learned that he could easily manipulate the gullible goblin chieftain. Kobu convinced the chieftain that if the palisade at Greatwall were left unmolested, their tribal territory would be lost. He decided that this keep, discovered during an aerial survey, would be a perfect staging area for his campaign against the humans at Greatwall because it lies in a direction opposite the lair of the goblins and is much more defensible should the humans counterattack. He persuaded the goblin chieftain to give him a war party with which to clear out the keep of its current inhabitants, if any. The war party arrived at the keep two weeks ago and cleared out the barracks, but they have not been able to bypass the iron door to the central tower because the ogre refuses to cross the rickety-looking bridge.

If alerted to trouble by the guard in the hall, Snarg and Kobu try to prepare an ambush. If there is insufficient enough time to set up the ambush, they douse the torch and hide to either side of the door. Kobu gladly takes prisoners, especially mages or strong fighters, and uses his *charm person* spell to that end. If seriously threatened (reduced to 5 or fewer hit points), Kobu surrenders. If Kobu surrenders or is killed, Snarg tries to trade the prisoner's life for his own.

The human prisoner has short blonde hair and a close trimmed beard. His black robes have been torn open to expose his chest. His chest bears several shallow knife cuts. If he is

rescued, he introduces himself as Izbahn and tells the PCs that he is the last of an adventuring group that came looking for the keep about a week ago. He was captured after the group lost a battle with the ogre at the main gate. He was unable to understand the goblin's horrible Common, so he had no idea what the goblin wanted from him.

Izbahn, human male W(Inv)2: AC 10; MV 12; hp 9; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type (currently unarmed); Str 12, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 15, Wis 12, Cha 13; ML 14; AL LN.

No spells memorized at present.

Izbahn gladly joins the PCs if asked, but he insists on an equal share of all treasure found. He asks to be allowed to rest and study his spellbook (see area 18) before continuing, as he currently has no spells prepared. If his rescuers become unreasonable, Izbahn storms out in a huff to look for his things and returns to Greatwall. If the PCs refuse to allow Izbahn to have his possessions from area 18, he bides his time and plots revenge. If attacked, Izbahn tries to grab the kenku's dagger so he can defend himself.

The cabinet contains several moldy sets of military clothing.

18. Captain's Quarters. This room served as the quarters for the garrison captain and contains what was once furniture of excellent quality. Time has taken its toll, though; the bed, cabinet, washstand, table, and chairs that furnished the room have deteriorated to the point that they are worthless. The bed shows signs of recent use, the rotten linens having been replaced with a pile of woven blankets. Beside the bed is a pile of filthy furs. The cabinet has been tipped over, and a hole has been hacked in the back of it. Its former contents lie strewn about the floor around it. There is a jumble of wooden plates, bowls, and cutlery on the table as well as an unlit lantern, two flasks of lamp oil, a belt pouch, and a leather-bound book. The belt pouch on the table belongs to Izbahn and contains 16 pp, 12 gp, and 5 sp. The book is Izbahn's spellbook and contains the spells *magic missile*, *read magic*, *shield*, and *wall of fog*.

In the southeast corner of the room is a pile of equipment: all that remains of Izbahn's companions. In the pile are two suits of chainmail, one suit of leather armor, one medium shield, a light crossbow, five quarrels, a broken longbow, two arrows, two longswords, a broadsword, four daggers, and a handax.

The *fire trap* spell that was cast on the cabinet doors long ago is still active because the doors were never opened. If the cabinet is stood back up or turned over and the doors opened, the *fire trap* detonates, causing 8-11 (1d4+7) points of fire damage to anyone within 5 feet. Victims of the *fire trap* spell are allowed a saving throw vs. spell for half dam-

age. The cabinet has a false bottom that conceals a felt-lined leather bag containing the remains of several broken vials and a potion of *treasure finding*. The false bottom cannot be detected unless the back of the cabinet is completely removed or the cabinet doors are opened from the front.

Under the bed is a locked iron strongbox that contains the goblins' accumulated loot. It contains 28 cp, 54 sp, 10 ep, 3 gp, and a coral statuette of a mermaid worth 75 gp. Snarg, the goblin leader, has the key to the chest.

19. Main Barracks. This large, open room contains thirty triple bunk beds and served as the barracks for the main garrison force. The beds are in poor shape, and the upper tiers on many of them have collapsed. Two bunks have also been tipped over.

Each bunk has three footlockers associated with it, and although they were once stored neatly under the beds, most have now been broken into and looted.

Five goblins are in the process of casually searching this room for useful items. The goblins are spread throughout the room unless the alarm has been raised, in which case the goblins assemble and head downstairs. It takes 3 rounds for them to assemble as a group once the alarm is sounded. If attacked in this room, the goblins try to separate the PCs and attack them one at a time. One goblin acts as bait to draw the PCs into an ambush set up by the other four. PCs attempting to chase the "bait" goblin must make a successful Dexterity check each round or trip over a bunk or chest and fall, automatically losing initiative on the following round.

Goblins (5): hp 7, 5, 3, 2, 1; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear.

20. Armory. The door to this room was battered down long before the goblins arrived. The room beyond served as the main armory. All the usable equipment has already been taken from this room. The few weapons and suits of scalemail that remain are broken or heavily damaged.

21. Armory. The door to this room has been propped open with a heavy crossbow. The walls of the room are set with two tiers of wooden pegs from which hang missile weapons of various types. There are 12 heavy crossbows, nine longbows, and six shortbows. The weapons are all in poor condition and have a 50% chance of breaking each time they are fired. At the western end of the room are two barrels and a box. One of the barrels holds 11 javelins, and the other holds 42 flight arrows. The box holds 60 crossbow quarrels, two of which are *bolts* +1.

Two goblins are trying to cock a heavy crossbow without much success. Their spears

lean up against the nearby wall. The larger of the two goblins, Loop, received some training as a fighter while serving on a pirate ship and was bragging to the smaller goblin Tick that he could wield any weapon made. If the alarm is raised, they join the goblins from area 19 and head downstairs. If Loop is killed first, Tick surrenders and pleads for his life.

Loop, goblin male F2: AC 7; MV 6; F2; hp 13; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 6, Wis 8, Cha 12; ML 12; AL LE; XP 65; leather armor, spear.

Tick (goblin): hp 3; see "The Keep" for complete statistics; leather armor, spear.

The Central Tower

The main tower of the keep stands 40 feet tall and appears to be in excellent condition considering its age and lack of maintenance. There are arrow slits around the tower at the level of what would be the top floor. There is also an arrow slit to either side of the door and a 6"-wide slot over the door. The steel door is rusty but still sturdy (AC 2; hp 80). The door's lock is far too rusty for a thief to have any chance of successfully picking it. The remains of a wooden spire can be seen on the tower roof, which is enclosed by battlements.

The tower has four levels. Each level has a 10'-high flagstone ceiling supported by stout wooden beams. No random encounters occur in the tower; however, the sounds of combat or the noisy exploration of an unoccupied room has a 50% chance of attracting the occupants of the floors above and below.

The tower and the dungeons below are currently serving as the lair for a pack of lesser seawolves that discovered the concealed door to the dungeon level while sunning themselves on the large island south of the keep. Two days ago, the pack ended up on the losing end of a fight with a merchant ship that turned out to be much more heavily guarded than it seemed. They limped back to their lair and are hiding out until they recover their strength. The pack consists of a dominant male, three subordinate males, and three females.

If PCs ask Koku for help fighting the seawolves, he agrees to accompany them with six of the goblins from the barracks.

22. Dining Hall. This level served as the dining hall and armory for the tower defenders.

The western half of the room was the dining area. It consists of a long wooden table surrounded by chairs and a large fireplace. There are twelve chairs around the dining table, several of which have been overturned. There is a clutter of dishes and serving trays on the table, a few of which have fallen onto the floor. An unlit, wrought-iron chandelier hangs over the center of the table. The fireplace is built into the west wall of the room. A

soot-blackened painting hangs over the fireplace, and to either side of it there is a large stack of wood.

The eastern half of the room was the armory. It consists of two wooden racks that run parallel from the east wall toward the center of the room. Scattered about the racks are four heavy crossbows, three longswords, a mace, a battle-ax, and six medium shields. All the equipment is in poor condition but still functions properly.

Bartos, one of the subordinate males of the seawolf pack, sits on the table in hybrid form gnawing ferociously on a human leg bone. If the PCs start to batter down the door, he hides under the table so that he can attack with surprise once they enter the room. Bartos has been on sentry duty since losing a challenge for leadership of the pack one day earlier. If the response to his initial attack is particularly strong, Bartos breaks off combat immediately and flees down the stairs. If reduced to 3 hit points or fewer and unable to flee, Bartos surrenders. If he is captured or surrenders, Bartos quickly tells the PCs that there are fourteen other seawolves in the tower and suggests that he could lead the pack away peacefully if the current leader were killed. In either case, Bartos leads the PCs straight to area 29, where he hopes they can kill the current leader of the pack, Captain Vaughn.

Bartos (lesser seawolf): AC 7; MV 12, swim 30; HD 2+2; hp 13 (currently 10); THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-2/1-2/1-4; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (10); AL NE; XP 120; MM/232.

The image depicted in the painting over the fireplace is heavily obscured by many layers of soot, but PCs who inspect the painting can make out the shape of a tree with a white shield on the trunk. There appears to be writing on the painting where the leaves of the tree would be. The painting depicts the family tree of the keep's builder, Lord Hubert Khest, but the painting must be cleaned by an expert before any of the names can be read. After the painting is cleaned, the PCs can read the names of the last five generations of Lord Khest's family, including his parents, an unmarried uncle, and his sister. The painting must be taken to Schadel for cleaning, a delicate operation that costs 30-60 gp (10d4+20). The cleaned painting might be worth up to 5 gp to a sage interested in local history.

23. Barracks. The top floor of the tower was used as a barracks for the tower defenders. There are eight wooden bunkbeds arranged like spokes on a wheel. The beds are positioned 5 feet from the outer wall to allow adequate access to the arrow slits. In the center of the room, inside the ring of bunks, are a round table and six chairs.

The arrow slits are currently closed off with wooden shutters. The shutters are



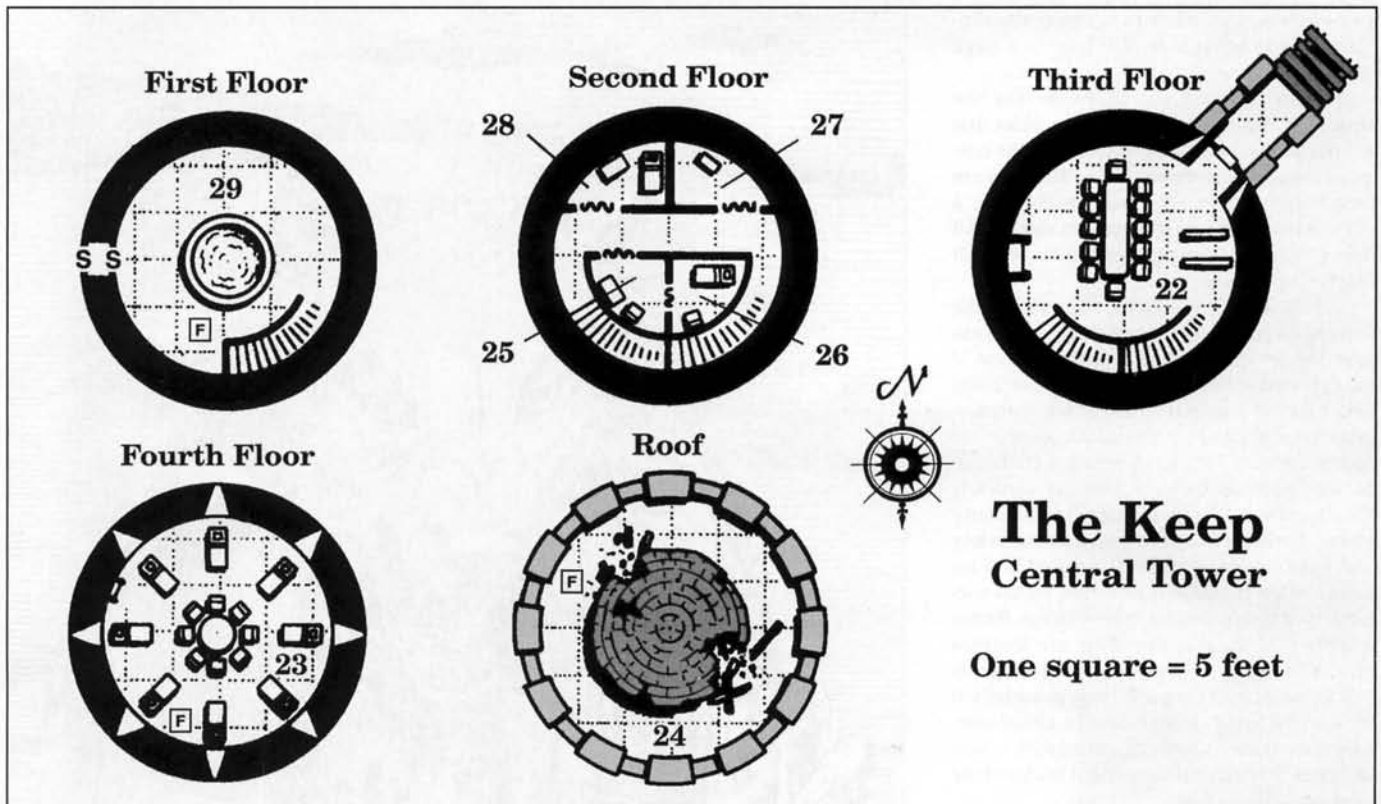
One of the keep's more sinister tenants rears its ugly head.

hinged such that they can be unlatched and swung out of the way when the arrow slits are needed. On the floor near each arrow slit is an open box used to hold munitions for the crossbowmen who once manned the slits. Each box still holds 0-5 (d6-1) usable bolts. Beneath the arrow slit that looks out over the bridge is a 1'-diameter hole covered by a metal grate. Four wooden kegs have been stacked to one side of the hole. Any liquid poured down this hole

pours out the slot over the main door. The four kegs contain flammable oil.

A wooden ladder leads up to a padlocked trapdoor in the ceiling. The lock can be picked by a thief who makes a successful Open Locks roll. A *knock* spell also opens the trapdoor.

24. Tower Roof. A wooden spire once covered most of the roof area of the tower, but a good portion of the wood is now missing, and the



remaining structure looks as though it might soon collapse.

A giant owl has built its nest in the remains of the wooden tower spire. It attacks any PCs who attempt to gain entry to the spire by flying to the top of the tower or climbing up through the trapdoor. PCs trying to get onto the tower roof are perceived as a direct threat to the owl's egg and are attacked at +2 to hit. The owl can attack intruders coming through the trapdoor only with its beak. It attacks flying PCs only until it has lost half its hit points, but it fights to the death to defend its nest.

Giant owl: AC 6; MV 3, fly 18 (E); HD 4; hp 25; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 2-8/2-8/2-5; SZ M; ML 12; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 270; MM/27.

There is a single egg in the nest. The egg can be sold for as much as 100 gp in any city of moderate size. The egg can be hatched and the hatchling trained by a druid, ranger, or any PC with the Animal Training proficiency. The trained giant owl hatchling can be sold for up to 200 gp.

Among the twigs that make up the nest are some humanoid bones, six pieces of quartz worth 10 gp each, 3 sp, 5 gp, 1 pp, and a bone scroll tube decorated with carvings depicting skulls and wavy-bladed daggers, the holy symbol of the god of death. Inside the scroll tube is a scroll with three priest spells cast at

9th level: *light*, *cause light wounds*, and *silence* 15' radius.

25-28. Second Floor. The second floor of the tower has been divided up into four smaller rooms. The rooms do not have doors, just openings closed off by the tattered remains of heavy wool blankets.

PCs who make a lot of noise arouse the seawolves resting in area 28; see that area for the seawolves' tactics.

25. Sitting Room. This room contains an overturned bookshelf, the remains of a stuffed armchair, and a small wooden table.

Anyone who lifts up the bookcase is immediately attacked by a pair of large spiders that have built their nest underneath it. Also under the bookcase are several dusty books, most of which are works of fiction by various authors. There are also two works of nonfiction. The first one, entitled *The Basics of Castle Design*, is a compilation of the thoughts of several dwarven and human castle architects on the subject of castle design. A PC with the Engineering proficiency who studies this book gains a +1 bonus to all proficiency checks dealing with castles. The second, entitled *A Study of the Goblin Tongue*, is a beginning level text that can be used by any PC with an available nonweapon proficiency slot to learn

to speak Goblin. The works of fiction, of which there are eight, can be sold for 5-10 sp each in any city. The book on castle design is worth 15 gp to an interested engineer, and the text on the Goblin tongue is worth as much as 5 gp if sold in an area where goblins are common (such as in the town of Greatwall).

Large spiders (2): AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 6, 3; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison bite (Type A; save at +2); SZ S; ML 7; INT non (0); AL N; XP 175; MM/326.

26. Master Bedroom. This room contains a bed, a large cabinet, a wash stand, and a chair. All the furniture is simple but well crafted. A hooded lantern hangs on a wall-hook next to the bed. There is a skeleton in the bed covered from the shoulders down by a purple tapestry.

The skeleton in the bed is that of Lord Khest. The tapestry depicts his coat of arms: a white eagle clutching a sword and an olive branch. Under the tapestry the skeleton clutches a sword and a book to its chest. The sword has a gilded hilt set with a pearl, and the pommel is crafted in the likeness of an eagle's head. The sword appears to be of excellent quality and has a very keen blade. The skeleton's sword is not magical but it is dwarven made, and its fine craftsmanship makes it worth 250 gp. The book is a prayer book to a goddess of peace and healing. If the

PCs search under the mattress on the bed, they find a small leather-bound book and a set of construction plans for the complete keep as it was to be built. All the keep's features, including the secret doors, are clearly shown on the prints.

The book is the diary of the keep's original owner. The first entry recounts the thoughts of Lord Hubert Khest, on the day he arrived at the site on which he planned to build his castle. The last entry, written in dwarven by a different hand, describes the day of Lord Khest's death. This last paragraph of the final entry translates into the Common tongue as:

It was with a heavy heart that I accepted your generous gift of the deed to this castle, for I am skilled in the building of them and not in their management. It remains my hope that a distant heir of yours comes forth to take the burden of your last wishes from me. I feel that the best I can do is to promise you that the deed will remain with my family until it can be transferred to a rightful heir.

Gunther Stonefist was Boris's grandfather, and the deed to the castle is still in his family, though it is doubtful he would have approved of Boris's current use of it. It requires several days to read the entire diary, as there are nearly five hundred entries. The diary chronicles the keep's construction from the laying of the first stone for the central tower to the race against time to complete the outer wall before Lord Khest's death. The diary describes frequent attacks by goblins that Lord Khest believed had originated from The Great North Forest, and several entries chronicle a week-long attack by two pirate ships. In his final days, Lord Khest never mentions trying to find an heir, writing only of his decision to will the keep to his companion and friend, Gunther Stonefist.

Among the entries relating to the pirate attack is the account of the last day of the battle, when the pirates discovered and attacked through the dungeons under the keep. In the description of this final battle is a memorial to an adventuring companion of Lord Khest's, a bard named Reginald. Reginald fell while he and Lord Khest were fighting a delaying action in the lowest level of the tower, allowing time for reinforcements to be summoned from the barracks. Lord Khest writes that Reginald was rendered immobile by a spell cast by a mage allied with the pirates and died after being pushed into the marble fountain by the pirates. By the time Lord Khest fought his way to the fountain, Reginald had drowned in its waters. Several entries later, there is another reference to Reginald. Lord Khest writes that he hired a priest to cast a spell that would bring Reginald back from the dead, but the spell failed. At this point, Lord Khest ponders having the fountain removed but writes that none of his workmen is willing to return to the room because several of them



A brazen warrior takes his best swing at an intimidating inhabitant.

have heard voices while working there. In the end, Lord Khest decided to leave the fountain as a memorial to Reginald.

The doors of the large cabinet are warded with a *fire trap* spell. If they are opened, the trap detonates causing 8–12 (1d4+7) points of damage to anyone within 5 feet of the front of the cabinet; a successful saving throw vs. spell reduces the damage by half. The cabinet contains several sets of what were once expensive

clothes, two pairs of fine leather boots, and a shiny suit of *scalemail* +1 trimmed in gold.

27. Shrine. This room has been set up as a simple shrine to a goddess of peace and healing. It has only a plain wooden altar draped in white cloth, on which sits an ivory statue of the goddess and a small ivory bowl filled with a clear liquid. Lying on the floor in front of the altar is a skeleton wearing chainmail armor.

The statue is worth 300 gp, and the bowl is worth 90 gp. The liquid in the bowl is equivalent to one vial of holy water. Anyone who loots or desecrates the shrine is afflicted with a minor curse that takes the form of -1 penalty to attack rolls and saving throws. The curse lasts until a *remove curse* spell is cast or until the deeds that caused it are undone.

The armor on the skeleton is heavily damaged, having been torn open in several places. Hanging around the skeleton's neck, hidden under the armor, is a holy symbol of the god of death. The holy symbol is carved from a piece of bone and depicts a wavy-bladed dagger thrust into the top of a screaming skull. If the PCs have recovered the bone scroll tube from the nest of the giant owl, they recognize the skull and dagger device from among the symbols carved into the tube. The skeleton is that of an adventuring priest who was seriously wounded in a battle with the giant owl on the roof of the tower (area 24) and then died after being bitten by one of the spiders in area 25. He dropped the scroll tube during his battle with the owl and was unable to recover it before he and his companions were forced to retreat.

28. Guest Bedroom. This unremarkable bedroom contains a plain bed and a small cabinet. The cabinet is empty. A mated pair of seawolves, Arno and Odette, are recovering from wounds on the bed. If alerted by noise in one of the other rooms or from the floor above, they assume hybrid form and carefully investigate the source. Arno and Odette were both seriously injured during the attack on the merchant ship and retreat immediately to area 29 if they encounter intruders in the tower. If they are surprised and unable to escape, Arno tries to negotiate safe passage out of the tower for himself and Odette by offering to tell the PCs the location of the secret door in area 30. If they are attacked and are unable to flee, Arno and Odette fight to the death. If Odette is killed, Arno flies into a berserk fury, attacking with a bonus of +2 to hit and damage, and continuing to fight until he is reduced below -6 hit points.

Arno and Odette (lesser seawolves): AC 6 or 7; MV 12, swim 30; HD 2+2; hp 11, 9 (currently 6 and 3); THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 2-8 or 1-2/1-2/1-4; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (9); AL NE; XP 120; MM/232.

29. Ground Floor. A strong animal odor assaults the senses of the PCs as they descend the stairs into the first floor of the tower. The floor is littered with broken bones. In the center of the room is a 10'-diameter basin constructed of white marble decorated with carvings that depict a celebration in progress. The basin contains a shallow pool of lavender water. The bottom of the basin is covered with

a layer of filth and garbage. Just southwest of the pool is an unlocked steel trapdoor.

This floor is being used as a lair by the seawolf pack that inhabits the tower. There are four seawolves sleeping near the trapdoor in seawolf form: the dominant male, Captain Vaughn, a subordinate male, Sten, and two females, Clarice and Katia. If the PCs do not attack, Captain Vaughn is more than happy to parley with them. If the seawolves are attacked, they need not check morale as long as Captain Vaughn is alive. If Captain Vaughn is killed, any remaining seawolves must immediately make a Morale check. It is at this point that Bartos, assuming he is still alive, tries to take control of the pack; however, the other seawolves ignore him. Seawolves that fail their Morale check attempt to flee through the dungeon level to the sea. If trapped, the seawolves fight to the death.

Sten, Clarice, and Katia (lesser seawolves): AC 6 or 7; MV 12, swim 30; HD 2+2; hp 10, 10, 6 (currently 8, 7, and 6); THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 2-8 or 1-2/1-2/1-4; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (8-10); AL NE; XP 120; MM/232.

Captain Vaughn (lesser seawolf): AC 6 or 7; MV 12, swim 30; HD 2+2; hp 18 (currently 16); THAC0 19; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg 2-8 or 1-2/1-2/1-4; SZ M; ML 13; INT average (10); AL NE; XP 125; MM/232; silver medallion on a silver chain worth 25 gp.

Captain Vaughn was a celebrated privateer in the service of the Baron of Aramax until he contracted lycanthropy while trying to eradicate the pack of seawolves he now leads. He delights in the destruction of all beings that are not also suffering from the curse that stole his career, but he knows that his pack is particularly vulnerable at the moment. On the other hand, Vaughn's reputation within the pack has suffered as a result of the failed attack on the merchant ship and the challenge of his leadership by Bartos, and he cannot afford for it to slip any further. Captain Vaughn therefore suggests a combat between a champion from each group, after which the loser's group must leave the tower and not return. If the PCs agree to the combat, Captain Vaughn selects Bartos as his champion. If Bartos is dead or seriously wounded, Sten fights as the seawolf champion. If the PCs' champion is defeated easily and the odds against him are less than two to one, Captain Vaughn orders the pack to attack the remaining PCs.

The only way for the PCs to gain the tower from the seawolves without a fight is to eliminate their need for it by healing their wounds. If the PCs suggest this, Captain Vaughn accepts and the pack leaves after they are healed, but they return the next night unless the PCs are obviously the stronger group.

If the PCs suggest an alliance with the seawolves against the goblins, Captain Vaughn

refuses, saying that he has no need of anything they have. If the PCs add that the goblins are planning an attack on the tower soon, Captain Vaughn agrees to help defend the tower but will not sortie out against the barracks unless the pack is completely healed.

If Kobu is following the PCs and hears talk of an alliance, he tries to get as many details as possible before returning to the barracks. Knowing the goblins' chances against the alliance will not be good, Kobu has them pull back to a camp one day's march from the keep while he uses his thief skills to spy on the PCs and the seawolves. Kobu waits until the alliance falls apart or the seawolves leave before having the goblins return to the keep.

Among the bones on the floor is a bone scroll tube containing a wizard's scroll with three spells cast at 13th level: *charm person*, *web*, and *fly*. The scroll tube has been waterproofed with bee's wax and bears the initials AF in gold leaf under the wax. The initials AF are those of Armand Farkas, the first mate of a cog named the *Two Winds* that was lost at sea two years ago.

The lavender water in the basin has been imbued with the spirit of a bard named Reginald who was murdered in the pool many years ago. Reginald still has all the powers of the 10th-level bard (spells, songs, legend lore, and so forth) that he had while still alive. The seawolves grew tired of the pool constantly talking, so they polluted it with the remains of their captives until it no longer spoke. The water is fouled to the point that all Reginald can do is whisper, making it impossible to hear him unless the listener is right next to the pool. If the PCs come close enough, Reginald asks them to clean the pool. If the characters comply by either physically mucking out the pool or by casting a *purify food and drink* spell, Reginald regains the use of his spells and abilities. In addition to the normal bard abilities, Reginald may cast the following spells once a day: *change self*, *detect magic*, *grease*; *ESP*, *improved phantasmal force*, *deafness*; *tongues*, *dispel magic*; *emotion*. He uses his abilities to help the PCs as long as they remain at the keep.

Once the pool is cleaned out, Reginald immediately begins to question his saviors, asking the PCs who they are, where they come from, and what is happening in the outside world. Reginald is well aware of his current state of being, but he has lost all track of time and has no idea how much time has passed since his death. Reginald spent a lot of time at the keep before his death and can describe it to the PCs in perfect detail if they ask, although he will not know of the fallen towers. He can also recount most of the events in Lord Khest's diary up to the time of his death. He does not know for certain that Lord Khest is dead, but he is not surprised at the news. If asked about the seawolves, Reginald tells the

PCs that the creatures had been in the tower several times, but he had no idea that the creatures were seawolves because he could only hear them. They would brag about killing sailors and sinking their ships, then they would eat any prisoners and toss the remains in his fountain. If asked about a possible heir for Lord Khest, Reginald tells the PCs that he knew of no direct heirs at the time of his death. Lord Khest did, however, speak often of his sister, Lady Catherine, who had wed an elf and moved to the Dragonclaw Forest. For any other question, Reginald can make use of his legend lore ability, which gives him a 50% chance of knowing something about any significant, local historical event.

There is a secret door in the west wall. The secret door leads out onto the island on which the tower stands.

Dungeon Level

The dungeon is always damp because of the high local water table. In many areas, water actually puddles on the floor. A stone spiral staircase leads down from the trapdoor in area 29 to the dungeon level, 20 feet below the base of the tower. The last 10 feet of stairway are slippery, and any PCs who try to descend without using one free hand to steady themselves must make a successful Dexterity check or fall from the stairs, suffering 1–6 points of damage.

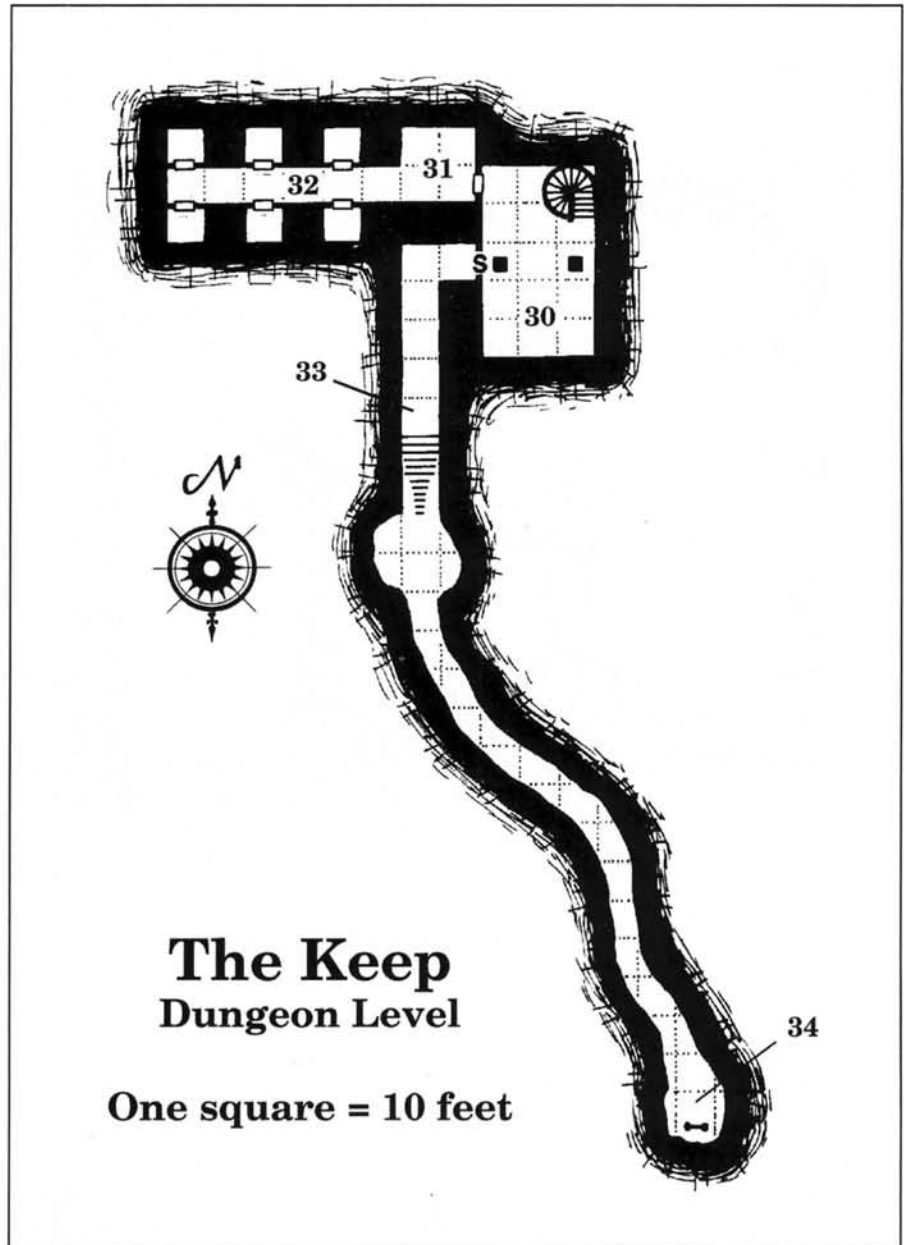
30. Storage. This room is very damp, and there are several large puddles of water on the floor. It is obvious that no one has made use of this room in a long time. Two ornate columns spaced 20 feet apart support the ceiling.

There is a secret door in the center of the west wall of the room. Anyone searching for secret doors on the south wall notices that the shape of an arched doorway has been set into the wall in silver. The archway set with silver was once a gate to the home of a mage who was a friend of the keep's builder. Once the keep's owner died, the mage dispelled the gate. If the PCs are willing to spend the six man-hours necessary to dig the silver out of the wall, they end up with the equivalent of 1,000 sp.

31. Guardroom. This room was a guardroom for the prison cells, but it now stands empty. Growing on the ceiling just inside the entrance to this room is a blob of green slime that drops onto the first PC to pass beneath the doorway.

Green slime: AC 9; MV 0; HD 2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA special; SZ M; ML 11; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/278.

32. Cellblock. There are a total of six doors in this hallway. Each of the doors has a small,



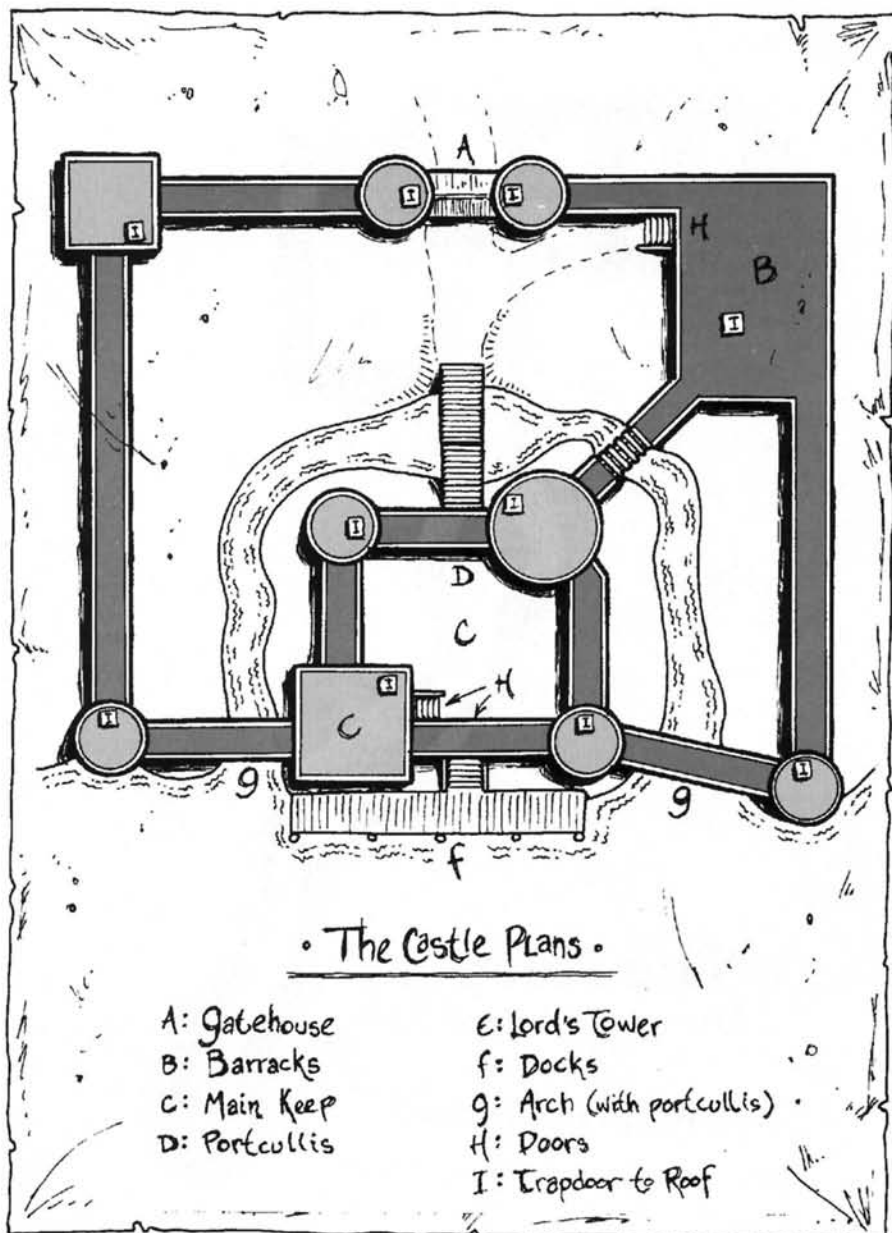
barred window. None of the doors is locked, but the middle door to the north is spiked shut from the outside. Behind each door is a small cell with a set of rusty manacles attached to the wall opposite the door. The cell behind the spiked door contains two unconscious human males in tattered clothing. The rest of the cells are empty.

The two men in the cell are sailors from the ship *Knave of Trades* that was the victim of the seawolf pack's last successful attack. The seawolves have locked the sailors in the cell until they can determine whether the sailors are now members of the pack or the pack's next

meal. Although both men have sustained serious bite wounds, neither sailor has contracted lycanthropy.

Mick and Brady (human sailors): AC 10; MV 12; HD 1–6 hp; hp 6, 2 (currently 1 each); THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 9; INT average (8–10); AL N; XP 15; MM/196.

If the PCs agree to see the sailors safely back to Schadel, they tell the PCs of the 10 gp reward offered by the merchant's guild for each seawolf pelt. If this is not enough for the PCs, they offer to accept the PCs as partners when they return to their sunken ship to recover its cargo of fine wine.



33. Secret Passage. This secret passage is as damp and slimy as the rest of the dungeon. It leads to a concealed trapdoor on the larger of the two islands. Just south of the turn in the passage are the remains of a human corpse clad in rotted leather armor and a pair of leather boots. A rusty dagger lies on the floor of the passage at its feet.

Four large spiders claim the corpse, and they attack if it is disturbed.

Large spiders (4): AC 8; MV 6, web 15; HD 1+1; hp 8, 5, 4, 4; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA poison bite (Type A; save at +2); SZ S; ML 7; INT non (0); AL N; XP 175; MM/326.

The boots on the corpse are nonmagical. In

a small purse under the corpse's armor are 21 sp, 16 gp, and a small ruby worth 100 gp.

34. Secret Ladder. At the southern end of this rough passage is a rusty iron ladder built into the rock wall. PCs who climb the ladder and open the trapdoor in the ceiling find themselves on the larger of the two islands south of the keep.

Concluding the Adventure

Now that the PCs have seen the keep, they must decide whether they want to go back for the deed or not. The keep needs a fair amount

of work before it is once again defensible, but the central tower can be brought up to standards with as little as a new main door and a good cleaning. If the PCs have destroyed the main door to the central tower and need to defend it, they can always collapse the bridge and use the secret door on the first level to access the tower and the boat from the island to cross the moat. Access to the large island via the dungeon level allows supplies to be brought in by ship, avoiding the longer and riskier overland route. Overall, the keep is a good deal if the PCs are willing to commit to it long term.

If the PCs have made a deal with the goblin war party and they leave after exploring the central tower as agreed, they are allowed to leave unmolested. If Kobu believes, however, that the PCs are planning to violate the deal and return to the keep later, the goblins attack the PCs as they try to leave the keep. The goblins wait to attack until the PCs are in the courtyard, well away from any defensive positions. Snarg leads two-thirds of the goblins and the ogre against the PCs from the door on the barracks, while the rest of the goblins, led by Kobu, exit the hole in the dining area (area 8) and re-enter the keep through the main gate.

Reginald is desperate for civilized companionship, and he tries his best to get the PCs to stay at the keep. As long as the PCs remain, Reginald is more than happy to aid them with his spells and abilities. Reginald's legend lore ability could come in handy for researching magical items and imparting information on future adventures. The DM must remember that Reginald has a personality and does not take kindly to being mistreated or taken for granted. If the PCs decide not to stay at the keep, Reginald pleads with them to take him with them. There are many ways to accomplish the task of moving Reginald, including draining the water into a *bag of holding* or a *portable hole* or using an *item* spell to reduce the fountain to a portable size. If the *item* spell is used, it must be cast by a mage of 8th level or higher. The DM should allow the PCs some leeway if they devise a nonmagical solution that seems reasonable, as long as it does not require that the water be split up.

The DM should include random encounters on the trip back to Greatwall to impress upon the PCs the wild nature of the lands surrounding the keep. Once the PCs return to Schadel, they must locate Boris. The PCs have a cumulative 5% chance per day of encountering Boris in the city and a cumulative 15% chance per day of encountering him in The Pit. When the PCs encounter Boris, the DM should roll an Intelligence check for him to see whether he recognizes them. If the PCs have made no attempt to disguise themselves, Boris gains a +4 bonus to his Intelligence check. If Boris recognizes the PCs, he immediately

attempts to flee through the crowded city streets (use Boris's Hide in Shadows percentage) or relies on his bodyguards in The Pit to cover his escape. Boris surrenders the deed only to save his life. If Boris manages to escape the PCs, he goes into hiding as described in "The Meeting" section.

Unfortunately for the PCs, having the deed does not guarantee their rights to the keep. The deed bears the seal of a king long dead, and there is a fair chance that the Baron of Aramax does not recognize it. If the DM wants the PCs to have the keep and feels that the PCs are too wealthy, the baron can always charge a certification fee to assure recognition of the deed. The fee for certification of the deed should not exceed 1,000 gp.

Further Adventures

If the goblins are defeated but Kobu escapes, he returns to the goblin tribe and convinces the *charmed* goblin chieftain to send a second war party to retake the keep. This second goblin war party arrives at the keep about three weeks after the PCs liberate it. The war party consists of forty goblins and is led by Kobu and a goblin shaman. If, on the other hand, the PCs have formed an alliance that leaves the goblins in control of the keep, Kobu and Snarg send for reinforcements so that they can begin repairing the keep. The reinforcements consist of another twenty goblins, four worgs, and ten human slaves.

If the PCs decide not to stay at the keep and they agree to move Reginald, they will most likely require the services of a high-level mage, either to purchase an *item* spell scroll or to borrow a *bag of holding* or similar item. There is also the problem of what to do with Reginald once the PCs come up with a way to move him. If the PCs ask Reginald, he asks to be placed in a public spot where he can hear and speak to many different people. If the PCs borrow a magical item to move Reginald, the item's owner might be interested in a permanent swap of Reginald for the item. If the PCs try to sell Reginald for more than a token price, he makes it very difficult for them by refusing to speak to the potential buyer. Even if Reginald does not speak, the water still detects as magic, but most buyers will be unwilling to pay more than a couple hundred gold pieces for water that supposedly talks, without proof. If the PCs manage to move the entire fountain and offer it to the city of Schadel, the city is willing to pay 500 gp for it. Whatever the PCs choose to do, they should remember that Reginald is a bard and that bards, whether alive or as spirits, can make or break reputations.

If the PCs rescue Izbahn and treat him decently, he rewards them by offering to let a PC mage copy one spell from his spellbook

once they are safely back in Schadel. Izbahn formed his ill-fated adventuring band at the behest of his master, a 7th-level invoker named Moncet, who had bought one of Boris's maps. Moncet recently relocated to Schadel but quickly ended up on the baron's bad side after an experimental spell blew out all the stained-glass windows in the city's largest temple. Moncet paid for the damage but was labeled "dangerous" by the baron. Moncet leapt at the chance to own the keep, but like most potential buyers, he wanted to check it out first. If the PCs have been good companions, Izbahn is more than happy to introduce the PCs to his master, who could perhaps aid them with the task of moving Reginald. If the PCs don't want the keep, Moncet could hire them to retrieve the deed from Boris and return to the keep as his guards until he can hire mercenaries to take over. If the PCs intend to purchase the deed to the keep, Moncet has no intention of contesting their claim, as the PCs did, after all, rescue his apprentice. If the PCs treated Izbahn badly and he makes it back to Schadel, he tells his master that the PCs ambushed him and his companions and stole the map. An enraged Moncet drops what he is doing and sets off to punish the brigands who stole his map and assaulted his apprentice.

If the PCs did not defeat the seawolves, they continue to return every several weeks to the islands south of the keep until the PCs drive them off by force. The seawolves may be willing to help the PCs defend against attacks from the sea in exchange for magical healing, but their practice of feasting on survivors and captives should encourage good PCs to eliminate the pack. Any PCs who contract lycanthropy as a result of wounds suffered fighting the seawolves seek to join this pack.

If the PCs rescue the two sailors from the keep's dungeon and agree to help recover the cargo from the *Knave of Trades*, they will need to hire a ship and crew and dive to the wreck. The sailors can act as contacts for hiring the ship and crew, but they lack the money to share in the costs of financing the mission. If the PCs balk at absorbing the cost of the salvage operation, the sailors remind them that without the location of the wreck they have nothing, so their knowledge is worth at least a full share each. If the PCs threaten to quit the partnership, the sailors offer to subtract the cost of the mission from the profits before the shares are paid out. Once the details are settled and a ship is hired, the PCs and their partners can sail to the wreck, which lies in nearly 125 feet of water off the coast of the tip of land southwest of the keep. The hold of the *Knave of Trades* contains one hundred casks of fine wine valued at 50 gp each, but the hulk lies within the territory of a small community of ixitxachtli. A group of eight ixitxachtli visits

the site every other day looking for prey drawn to the wreck in search of treasure. The ixitxachtli retreat once five of their number have been killed. The survivors return with the rest of the community, fifteen ixitxachtli and a priest, the next day. Any wine recovered by the PCs and their partners is subject to a 15% tax upon arrival in the port of Schadel.

Finally, PCs who don't want the keep might want to search for Lord Khest's heir. Lord Khest's only living relative is his sister Lady Catherine, who lives with her elven husband in the elven community of Arbrenyalaan in the Dragonclaw Forest. To find Lady Catherine, the PCs must either consult Reginald or locate a friend of the family in Schadel who knows her current location (10% cumulative chance per week of searching). Getting to Arbrenyalaan is impossible without a guide, but, fortunately, there are many elves in Schadel who are willing to serve as guides for the PCs once they learn the goal of their quest. Lady Catherine is now very old, but she and her husband have a son and three daughters. Of these children, only the youngest daughter, Tia, has any interest in the castle, but she can neither afford to buy the deed nor offer any reward. Ω

Coming in Issue #80

Cover by Mark Zug

"Fortune Favors the Dead,"
by Lance Hawvermale.
An AD&D® adventure,
levels 5-7.

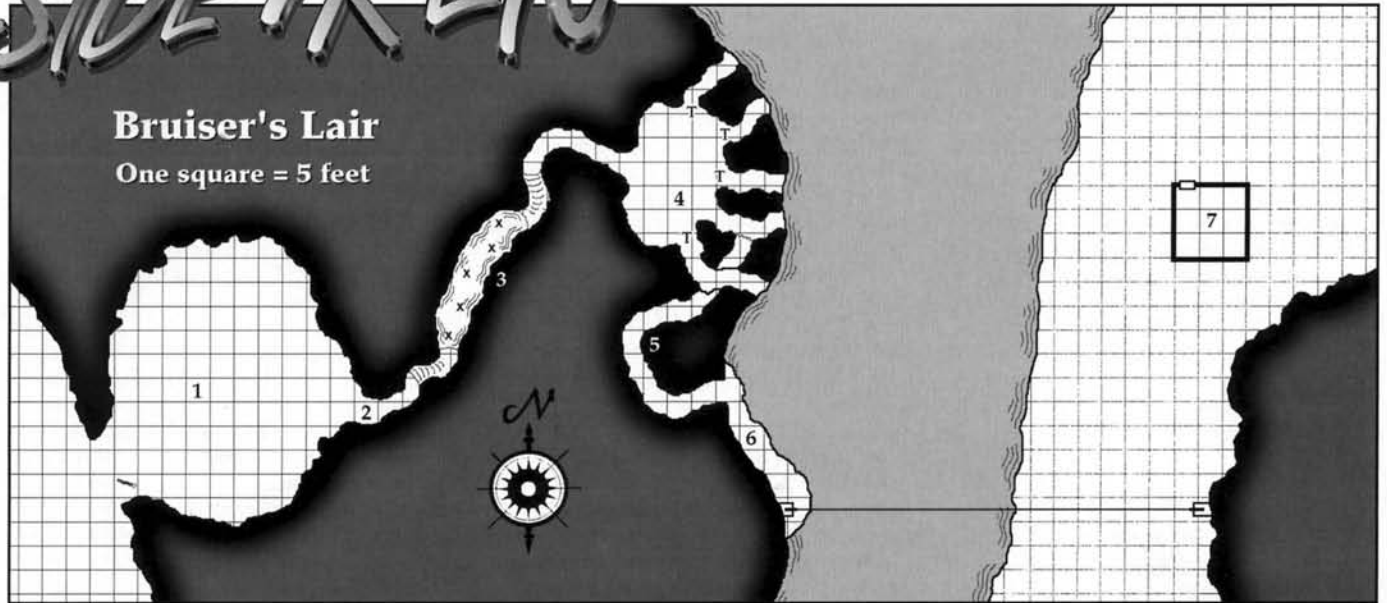
"Challenge of Champions III,"
by Johnathan M. Richards.
An AD&D adventure,
any levels.

"A Head for Business,"
by JD Wiker.
A DARK•MATTER™ Adventure.

"The Frothing Miscreant,"
by Robert Van Buskirk.
An AD&D adventure,
levels 2-4.

AND MORE!

SIDE TREKS



BY KENT ERTMAN

Cartography by Chris Perkins

"The Best Laid Plans" is an AD&D® Side Trek adventure for 4-6 1st-level PCs (about 5 total levels). At least one thief PC is essential.

The adventure begins with the PCs traveling to Red Fern, the capital of the duchy. They are one day away, not too far from a small town named Gypsum Hollow.

For the Player Characters

The adventure assumes that the PCs are traveling by foot to Red Fern. Read or paraphrase the following to begin the adventure:

About an hour from town you hear a rumbling from around the bend as six horses with riders come into view. The riders whip their wide-eyed mounts, driving them onward. As they charge past, you can't help but notice the lead rider, a brutish man with a handlebar moustache and a black eyepatch. An elaborate dragon tattoo covers the left side of his face, and he sports several bloody wounds. The humans and their mounts race past you without a second look, then turn abruptly off the road and charge up the side of the hill.

Neither the men nor the horses stop for any reason. They ignore attacks and offers of healing, bolting away with all due haste. The PCs do not recognize the men.

When the PCs reach town, read or paraphrase the following:

Gypsum Hollow is a small town with perhaps two dozen buildings. A man is nailing a notice to the front of the town marshal's door. It reads in bold print:

Wanted Alive!

Bruce "Bruiser" Holloway

Reward for capture: 1,000 gold pieces

Beneath the writing is an unflattering picture of Bruiser Holloway, a brutish man with an enormous handlebar moustache and a black eye-patch. An elaborate tattoo of a green dragon coils about the left side of his face.

For the Dungeon Master

Bruiser Holloway just pulled off the theft of a lifetime. He stole the official moulds for minting the duchy's staple coinage: the silver piece. However, the robbery was badly bungled, half of his men were killed, and his planned escape by *teleport* was thwarted by a wizard. He and his few remaining gang members fled to their hideout in the hills behind Gypsum Hollow.

The man posting the picture is a messenger from Red Fern. The marshal is drunk with his buddies in a nearby stable and is nowhere to be found. The messenger politely answers all of the PCs' questions before excusing himself; he has many more notices to post. If the PCs mention seeing Bruiser, his eyes widen and he guesses that Bruiser's hideout must be nearby. He thanks them for the information and returns to Red Fern with the news. Before leaving, however, he reminds the PCs that if they can capture Bruiser themselves before he returns with reinforcements, the reward is theirs for the taking.

Bruiser's Hideout

The PCs can easily relocate Bruiser's trail. It leads to a wide cave mouth in the side of the hill. There are no guards at the entrance.

1. Bat Cave. The first thing the PCs notice at the cave entrance is a single torch and tinderbox lying on the ground, apparently forgotten. Just inside the mouth of the cave, six horses munch contentedly on a dusty pile of oats. Next to the horses is a small brass key that opens Bruiser's chest. PCs find it only if they search the area thoroughly.

The cavern is over 50 feet high and empty except for the three hundred bats sleeping fitfully as they cling to the ceiling. They are completely harmless and do not move unless startled by bright lights or loud noises. If spooked, they flee the cave en masse. This is the gang's early warning system; if Bruiser's men see or hear the bats swarm, they become aware of the party's approach.

The torch is actually a hollow paper rod filled with magnesium chips. If lit, it burns normally for 10 seconds and then belches a huge shower of blinding white sparks. The effect is harmless, but it spooks the bats.

2. Blade Trap. Ten feet down this tunnel is a slim trip wire. Detecting the wire requires a successful Find Traps roll with a +10% bonus. Once detected, the wire can be avoided easily.

Breaking the wire releases a pole-arm hinged to the cavern ceiling behind the wire. The pole-arm's blade swings 4 feet above the floor, striking the first Medium-sized PC in the marching order. The pole-arm trap has THAC0 12 and inflicts 1d8 points of damage.

THE BEST LAID PLANS

3. Water Trap. The tunnel descends a steep set of natural stairs to a section flooded by natural seepage to a depth of 2 feet. Lying on the floor and effectively invisible under the brackish water are five steel bear traps (marked with X's on the map). The middle one was sprung by Bruiser himself—another manifestation of his bad luck—and was not reset. Anyone walking past a trap has a 3-in-10 chance of stepping into it and suffering 1d6 points of damage.

Characters moving cautiously through the flooded tunnel can detect the bear traps without stepping in them; the base chance of detecting a bear trap is 10%, although thieves can add their Find Traps percentage to their roll. Once detected, the bear trap can be easily set off or avoided.

4. Chutes. PCs entering this cave see five tunnels leading outside. The floor of the cave is covered with an inch of coarse sand.

Four of the exit tunnels (marked T on the map) have false floors made of flimsy timbers covered with sand; these timbers collapse under more than 150 lbs. of weight. The real floors beneath are sloped, 45° chutes with polished surfaces and slick, oiled sides. PCs caught on a collapsing floor go flying out the chute unless they make a successful Dexterity check on 5d6 (thieves roll on 4d6), thus securing themselves. Fastened near the “mouth” of each chute is a large metal gong. Any PC who falls down a chute strikes the gong with a resounding crash (alerting Bruiser's men) and plunges into the river 30 feet below.

The river is swift and deep. The current sweeps PCs down river about 200 feet before they are washed ashore. Non-proficient and encumbered swimmers risk drowning (as explained in the PH).

One of Bruiser's followers took the time to hide the footprints leading down the only safe tunnel (area 5 below). Nevertheless, a successful Tracking proficiency check reveals which tunnel is the safe one.

5. The Real Way Out. This stable side passage is hidden behind a curtain disguised to resemble the surrounding stonework and is undetectable from area 4. The tunnel worms its way through the granite and out to the cliff face overlooking the river. A narrow shelf of rock protrudes from the tunnel's mouth, forming a ledge. (See area 6 for details.)

If Bruiser's bandits are aware of the PCs (see area 7), they attack with their bows once the PCs appear on the ledge.

6. The Zip Line. This ledge clings to the cliff 40 feet above the river. Bolted securely into the rock 5 feet above the ledge is a large metal pulley and cable assembly. The taut cable stretches across the river at a downward angle of about 25 degrees to a second pulley 15 feet above the ground. Fastened to the cable every 10 feet or so is a metal handle.

To cross the river, one need only grab a handle and let gravity take over. If the PCs don't let go the moment they are across the water, they slam into the opposite rock wall and suffer 2d4 points of damage unless they make a successful Tumbling proficiency check or a Dexterity check on 5d6. PCs can ride one after another if they desire, rather than going one at a time.

The cable makes a loud whirring noise when in motion, automatically alerting Bruiser's men. (See area 7.) Anyone suffering damage while crossing the zip line must make a Strength check on 3d6 or fall into the river (as described in area 4).

The pulley at the east end of the zip line is equipped with a crank mechanism that moves the zip line in the other direction. A PC operating the crank can move up to ten times his or her maximum weight allowance to the west side of the river using the crank and zip line.

7. Bruiser's Hideout. The bandits' hideout is a small wooden building with a single door and no windows. Inside are a table, twelve chairs, iron rations stacked on the shelves (enough to feed Bruiser's band for 30 days), and twelve pallets with blankets. Bruiser is lying on a pallet, having just bandaged his wounds. His five surviving men are waiting for their long-overdue reinforcements to arrive with horses so they can make their getaway. These reinforcements won't arrive for another 5 hours.

If the PCs spooked the bats in area 1 or rang one of the gongs at area 4, the bandits line up along the east side of the river below the zip line with their bows. If presented with a suitable target, they fire until they run out of arrows; note that only two of them are proficient with the bow.

If the PCs manage not to alert Bruiser's men until they cross the zip line, the men rush out of the hideout to attack, arriving just as the first PC lands on the east side of the river. In this case, they have no chance to fire their bows and immediately draw their swords.

Bandits, human males F1 (3): AC 8; MV 12; hp 8, 5, 3; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 13; AL NE; XP 35; leather armor, longbow (-2 penalty for non-

proficiency), 6 flight arrows, short sword, dagger, 2d8 sp in pouch.

Archers, human males F2 (2): as above except: hp 12, 9; THAC0 19; XP 65; leather armor, longbow (proficient), 6 flight arrows, short sword, dagger, 2d12 sp in pouch.

Bruiser Holloway, human male F5: AC 5; MV 12; hp 2 (normally 49); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon +1 (Strength bonus); Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 14; SZ M; ML 15; AL LE; XP 270; chainmail, longsword, dagger, 25 gp in pouch.

Bruiser is too weak to join the fight. However, he has a dagger hidden at his side, and if any PC gets close enough, he lashes out with the last of his strength. He is easily subdued afterward.

Stashed under Bruiser's bed is a stout iron chest. It is locked, and Bruiser lost the key. (See area 1.) The lock is trapped such that anyone who fails to detect the trap while picking the lock is shot with a dart for 1 point of damage. The dart is coated with Type B poison. Even with the key, the trap is sprung unless the key is turned counter-clockwise. Inside are the moulds for the duchy's silver coin, a matched pair of gilded throwing knives (worth 100 gp each), and a delicate crystal decanter containing diluted *oil of fiery burning* (which causes 2d6 points of damage). The decanter is labeled. If the chest is hurled about or treated roughly, the crystal decanter breaks open and the chest explodes, inflicting 2d6 points of damage to everyone within 10 feet (successful saving throw vs. breath weapon for half damage). The contents are charred, but not damaged.

One of the moulds was broken in transit; it has a large chip missing from one side. This renders the moulds effectively worthless.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs capture and subdue Bruiser, they have to transport him back across the river to town. When they reach Gypsum Hollow, the PCs learn that the duke's messenger has just returned with two dozen city guards. The guard leader, Captain Coby, has the 1,000 gp reward with him and gladly presents it to the PCs if they surrender Bruiser into his custody.

If the PCs keep the silver coin moulds, it is only a matter of time before the guards interrogate Bruiser and figure out who has them. Coby then mounts a relentless search for the PCs. Posters bearing their likenesses appear throughout the duchy, promising a 1,000 gp reward for their capture. Ω



Goven the ranger is entangled by the nightshade's magic.

BAD SEEDS

BY KEVIN CARTER

Evil has its roots in the Tusk Forest

Artwork by Stephen Schwartz
Cartography by Diesel

Kevin says he got the idea for tage mustard, the culinary delight featured in this module, after daring to drink a mixture of hot sauce, cayenne pepper, and Tang powder.

"Bad Seeds" is an AD&D® adventure for 4–8 characters of levels 1–3 (about 10 total levels). A diverse group of character classes is recommended. The party should contain at least one ranger, druid, or character with nature-based nonweapon proficiencies.

The adventure, which takes place during the rainy months of early spring, is set in and around an isolated roadside inn. Because the inn has only recently been constructed as a rest stop for wayfarers, it might not appear on the PCs' maps, allowing the DM to set this adventure along any stretch of isolated forest road within his or her own campaign world.

Adventure Background

Not long after the Hawk's Shadow Inn was constructed one year ago, word of the inn's powerfully spicy sauce spread. Known simply as tage mustard, this sauce is potent enough to knock out a draft horse. Gan Tenook, the inn's halfling chef, has frequently boasted as much. Despite the side effects, many attest to the mustard's great taste and its uncanny ability to clear one's sinuses. Taking great pride in his volatile creation, Gan holds contests to see which contestants can remain conscious after stomaching a spoonful of the potent sauce. Gan Tenook jealously guards the recipe for tage mustard, hiding it from everyone except the inn's co-owner, a complacent mage named Joseph Gizelli.

Gan and Joseph became fast friends during their brief but tumultuous adventuring career together. An odd couple from the beginning, Joseph's mild, calm demeanor contrasts sharply with Gan's forward boisterousness. Gan never lets Joseph's opinions go unspoken, while Joseph keeps Gan's wildness in check.

The Hawk's Shadow Inn has gained a favorable reputation among the local trappers and traders, partly because it is the only rest stop along the Wayward Reach Road, a twisting caravan route that winds through Tusk Forest. The inn also has fairly tight security. Wary of the forest's more fearsome denizens, Joseph and Gan enclosed their establishment with a high wooden palisade and hired six guards. These security measures have done much to attract caravan leaders intent on traversing the risky woods by the shortest route possible. Having spent all of their remaining adventuring loot fortifying the inn, Joseph and Gan are just now beginning to reap the benefits of their investment, as the traffic through the Tusk Forest slowly increases.

For the Dungeon Master

Joseph and Gan have gone to great lengths to hide the recipe for tage mustard from would-be competitors. Underneath the Hawk's Shadow Inn is a large chamber, carved from the damp earth, that houses both Gan's kitchen and the small garden that cultivates the various herbs and spices that go into a batch of the volatile condiment. Thanks to Joseph's modified *continual light* spell, sufficient false sunlight illuminates the hidden garden to allow for photosynthesis. Keeping both the garden and the kitchen underground allows Gan to create his "special sauce" away from prying eyes.

Tage mustard's potency comes, in part, from the fistfuls of cayenne pepper that are thrown into the mixture. However, there is a special ingredient that gives the sauce its extra punch: 1 teaspoon of crushed obliviax (memory moss). Gan cultivates the moss in the basement of the Hawk's Shadow Inn, harvesting the seedlings before they develop their memory-stealing power. Recently, however, demands for the ever-popular tage mustard have overwhelmed the production capabilities of the small underground garden. Gan reasoned that if he allowed the black moss to grow to full maturity, he could harvest more than enough to meet the rising demands for his infamous sauce. Using this logic, Gan secretly transplanted several patches of obliviax from his basement to a secluded locale nearby in the Tusk Forest, leaving the remaining mundane herbs hidden within the underground garden. Although the wild obliviax soon developed its memory stealing abilities, Gan harvests a crop from a safe distance with the help of Joseph's *magic missile* and *unseen servant* spells.

The inn's rising popularity has been noticed by more than just the local caravans, trappers, and travelers. Early this spring, a group of five nightshades (described in the *MONSTROUS COMPENDIUM® Annual, Volume One*) known as the Enclave of the Twisted Root awoke from their winter hibernation to discover the increased traffic within their forest. The Enclave, led by a shrewd yet aggressive nightshade named Stix, investigated the cause of this intrusion. They soon discovered the newly constructed inn a mere 10 miles from their lair. Disturbed that the presence of the Hawk's Shadow Inn might bring further human settlement into the forest, the Enclave decided to eliminate the problem. In a few short days, Stix organized and planned a full frontal assault on the Hawk's Shadow Inn, hoping to completely raze the inn. The nightshade war party, consisting of the Enclave members and two *charmed worgs*, traveled throughout the night. Only 5 miles from the inn, the coming dawn forced the Enclave to

seek refuge in a small root-choked cave. The nightshades, as nocturnal spirits, decided to wait for the darkness of night to settle over the forest before finishing their journey.

The group was reviewing their battle plans when they suddenly felt that something was amiss. The thin root tendrils that dangled from the ceiling of their cave seemed to be stretching toward them, as if straining to hear their conversation. The nightshades, suddenly apprehensive, quieted down and waited for nightfall to investigate just who or what was spying on them.

The eavesdropper was, in fact, a dryad of the Tusk Forest named Essma. Listening into the cave through the roots of her oak tree, she learned of the nightshades' plans to attack the Hawk's Shadow Inn. Essma, fearing that she had been discovered, immediately sought the aid of her lover, a local ranger named Goven Wess. Essma, unable to venture far from her oak tree (see *MM/93*), wrote a message of warning to the inn, sealed the scroll with tree sap, and asked Goven to deliver the message. Goven was unwilling to abandon Essma to the nightshades, but Essma's stubborn insistence that he go left him with little choice. Essma and Goven said their good-byes as the amber sun disappeared below the thick tree line.

The setting sun brought the Enclave out of their underground shelter. A short and fierce battle ensued between the dryad and the poisonous plant spirits. Ultimately, Essma succumbed to Stix's paralytic poison. Stix decided that the dryad would make a fine sacrifice for his deity, Splin' Derathra. (See "The Enclave of the Twisted Root" sidebar.) The Enclave lashed Essma to a pine staff by her hands and ankles, carrying the dryad with them in the same manner a hunter would carry a slain deer. While continuing toward the inn, the nightshade war party noticed Goven's fresh tracks.

Stix, hoping to catch Goven before the ranger reached the inn, mounted one of the *charmed worgs* and rapidly pursued his prey. Goven was only a few hundred yards from the safety of the Hawk's Shadow Inn before the worg's keen sense of smell located him. Goven was quickly pinned by an *entangle* spell cast by the mounted nightshade. Stix's poisoned spear soon ended the hapless ranger's life.

Just before Goven sucked his last ragged breath, a nearby patch of obliviax (one of the same patches transplanted by Gan) stole the doomed ranger's memory of the past 24 hours. Intrigued by such a creature, Stix began conversing with the memory moss using his *speak with plants* ability while he waited for the rest of the Enclave to catch up. Because the sentient moss was originally grown inside Gan's basement, the obliviax had firsthand

knowledge of the inn's interior. After learning of the inn's secret garden from the black moss, Stix began formulating a new plan. Using Gan's underground herb plants as a portal, Stix would infiltrate the inn's basement by creating a *plant door*. Once inside, he could poison the inn's food supply with the pollen of a yellow musk creeper. Stix obtained this pollen from a creeper growing in the Enclave's lair (see area D5).

If all went according to plan, the inn's patrons and staff would ingest the pollen and suffer its entrancing effects. Once entranced, the victims would mindlessly wander out into the forest toward the creeper, leaving the inn unguarded. More importantly, the inn's staff and patrons would not have to be killed, allowing the Enclave to claim them as slaves.

Just before dinner was prepared at the inn, Stix put his plan to work. Sneaking in and out through a *plant door*, Stix successfully poisoned a rack of lamb with the creeper's vile pollen. Pleased with their good work, the Enclave of the Twisted Root laid low and waited for their plan to take effect.

Meanwhile, back at the inn, Joseph and Gan harvested a patch of obliviax—the same patch that stole Goven's memories—and threw the moss into a fresh batch of tage mustard. Later that night, the poisoned lamb was served for dinner. Because the guests ingested rather than inhaled the yellow musk pollen, the pollen worked differently in two ways. First, the inn's patrons and staff automatically forfeited their saving throws by eating the infected food. Second, the pollen's effect was delayed, as it takes several hours for the pollen to be fully digested and absorbed into the bloodstream. While the pollen is slowly running its course, the PCs arrive at the doorstep of the Hawk's Shadow Inn.

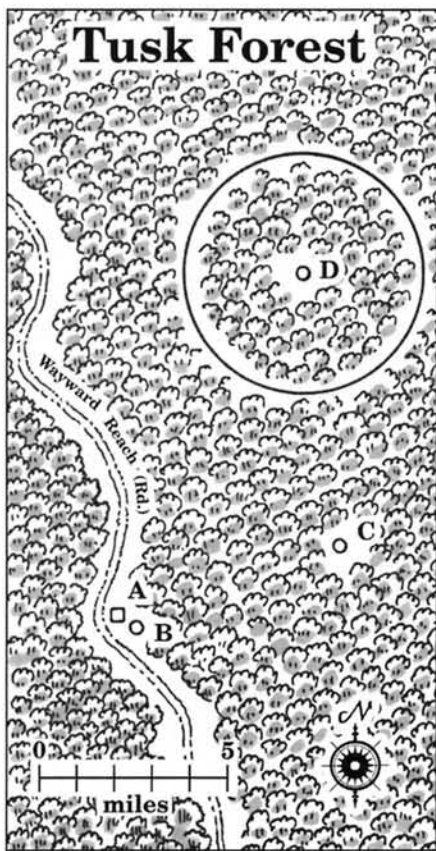
Events (Time Matrix)

Time is an important factor in this adventure, as the PCs must hurry if they are to foil the nightshade's plans. For the most part, the time-dependent events of this adventure are thoroughly detailed in the description of the location where they occur. However, a brief timeline is presented here to clarify the plot and help the adventure run smoothly. This timeline is not set in stone, as the PCs' actions might hasten, delay, or prevent any number of events. The DM should note that the PCs do not enter the story until 9:00 P.M. on Day 1.

Day 1

6:00 P.M. The nightshades capture Essma.

7:00 P.M. Goven's memories are stolen just before he is murdered. Stix sneaks into the Hawk's Shadow Inn's basement and poisons a rack of lamb with yellow musk pollen.



7:30 P.M. Dinner is served, infecting the inn's staff and patrons with the pollen.

8:00 P.M. Gan and Joseph go outside to harvest a patch of obliviax (the same patch that stole Govern's memories).

9:00 P.M. The PCs arrive at the Hawk's Shadow Inn. After meeting with Gan, they are invited to partake in the tague mustard-eating contest.

10:00 P.M. The contest begins.

Day 2

2:00 A.M. The yellow musk creeper pollen takes effect. The inn's staff and patrons arise from their slumber and wander out into the forest. Before the nightshades can gather all of the entranced victims, a forest gnome named Tyco Leafwell (see area C for details) witnesses the entranced patrons wandering through the woods.

5:00 A.M. The nightshades return to their lair (area D) with the entranced patrons and staff. Their hands full with their new slaves, the Enclave sends a group of kobolds to destroy the inn.

7:00 A.M. The PCs awaken to discover that they are the only ones left inside the inn.

8:00 A.M. The kobold war party arrives at the inn and attempts to raze the building.

6:00 P.M. If Essma has not yet been reunited with her oak tree, she dies.

Day 3

5:00 P.M. The nightshades trade their slaves to a local hill giant, in exchange for a *cloak of elvenkind*.

Beginning the Adventure

The Tusk Forest, aptly named due to the large number of wild boars present, is a secluded and wild expanse of redwood trees. The forest floor, blanketed with many species of bright green ferns and mosses, is lit by daggers of sunlight (or moonlight) piercing downward through the leafy canopy. Many of the lichen-encrusted tree trunks have girths greater than 7 feet across. The size of the trees and strange lighting give the ancient forest a mystical atmosphere.

The PCs are traveling through the Tusk Forest for whatever reason the DM desires. Perhaps they are journeying specifically to the inn to partake in the mustard-eating contest. It is assumed that they are traveling by road and intend to stay the night in the Hawk's Shadow Inn. For any reason determined by the DM, the PCs do not reach the inn until after dark. The party has missed dinner and inadvertently avoided eating the poisoned lamb.

Area A: The Hawk's Shadow Inn

When the PCs approach the inn's palisade, they are hailed by two of the inn's guards who are stationed on top of the towers. The guards open the gates and stable any of the party's pack animals. Once the PCs enter the tavern, read or paraphrase the following:

The inn's heavy wooden door swings open, causing a gust of hearth-warmed air to rush past you. The sounds of clanking pewter flagons and the dull murmur of conversation drift through the smoky atmosphere. The tavern—filled roughly to capacity—holds crude furnishings, obviously selected for their durability rather than their craftsmanship. Bolted to the high rafters that span the arched ceiling is a collection of ornamental weapons: longswords, warhammers, and even a few spears.

A rugged halfling with a scrunched face and a braided beard of auburn curls hobbles through a maze of tables, patrons, stools, and benches before sliding a tray of gravy-soaked meat in front of two solemn looking wayfarers. After finishing his delivery, the halfling wipes his greasy hands on his spot-stained apron while navigating his way toward you. He bears a wide, eager grin as he offers his hand in greeting.

In a deep voice, he introduces himself. "The name's Gan Tenook, and this is my inn. I regret to tell ye that dinner was hours ago and I just served up the last bit of leftovers. Tell ye what, I've got some bread and gravy that might fill ye." After glancing at your weapons he continues, "I've seen your type before. The bold adventuring kind! I was one myself before these old bones up and quit on me." He points to his knee, its twisted joint betraying the aftermath of some horrible wound.

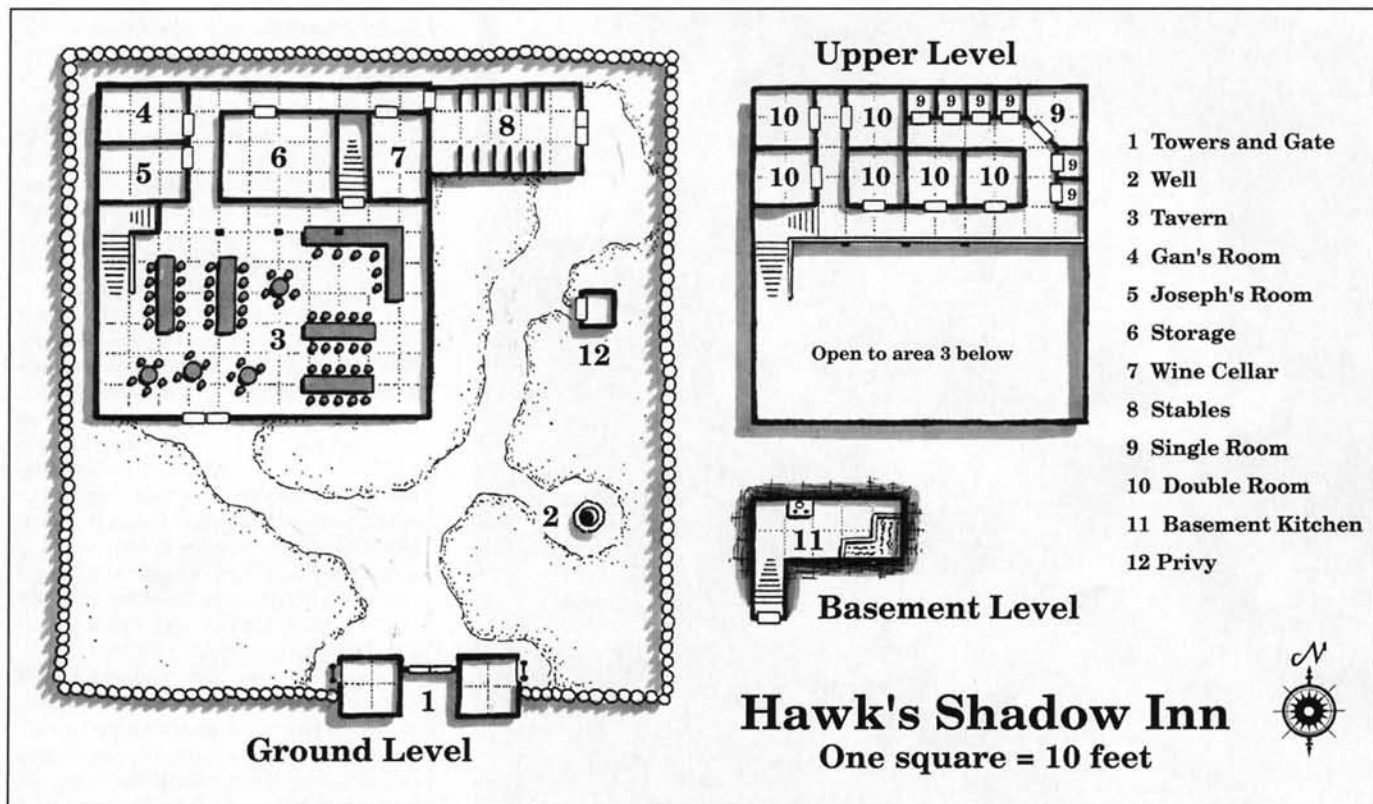
After introducing himself, Gan engages in general conversation with the PCs. He is eager to learn of any of their past adventures, as this gives him a chance to retell many of his own (greatly exaggerated) exploits. Gan speaks fondly of the countless times that he had to "save Joseph's arse" on the field of battle. This causes Joseph to look up from the bar and smile sheepishly. Should any PC ask about Gan's knee, the halfling claims, "It was knocked backward by the bone axe o' Julickth, the lizard king," and of course launches into the accompanying story. Whether any of Gan's rambling holds any truth is up to the DM. After a few minutes of conversation, Gan decides that one of the PCs would make an ideal contestant in the evening's mustard-eating tournament. The halfling already has four 0-level contestants lined up, and he needs one more to "round out the gambling odds." After showing the PCs to a table, Gan makes the following offer:

"How would ye like to make some coins without having to wrench them from the hand of a dead orc? Tonight my inn is having a contest to see who has the toughest stomach. All ye need to do is swallow a bit of the house mustard and stay standing longer than the rest of these gents to win the entire pot, which last I checked was up to 26 gold pieces. My tague mustard has some grit ye can take back to the dungeons. Lads, this stuff will put hair on the chest of an elf maiden!"

Should the PCs seem confused by Gan's offer, Joseph explains in greater detail the tague mustard and the gambling associated with it. Although Gan needs only one more contestant, he is overjoyed if several PCs wish to join the competition.

Any PC who wishes to partake in the mustard-eating can do so free of charge. However, PCs hoping to win the money must contribute 1 gp to the pot. The coins currently in the pot were provided by the other contestants and various onlookers.

If given a flat-out refusal by all of the PCs, Gan does not give up easily, embarking on a



ten-minute spree of nagging and teasing. If the PCs remain obstinate, the bitter Gan Tenook sulks back to the kitchen. By not eating the mustard, the PCs inadvertently miss out on some valuable information. (See the "Restless Night" section below.) However, the adventure proceeds nonetheless.

The Tage-Eating Contest

At 10:00 P.M., roughly one hour after the PCs arrive at the Hawk's Shadow Inn, the contest gets underway. The participating PC and four NPC contestants are hoisted on top of an oaken table while the audience gathers, forming a semicircle around the crude stage. Gan disappears into the kitchen, only to return a few moments later with several wooden spoons laden with tage mustard; the condiment seems to glow, as if lit from the inside by some unseen fire.

As Gan hands the spoons to the contestants, he whispers with a wink, "Don't worry. If your system can't take the heat, you'll be out before you feel the burn." Meanwhile, the other patrons shout words of encouragement to the contestants as they place their bets. (PCs who are not participating in the contest are free to gamble at this time.)

Once the PC swallows the powerful sauce, read or paraphrase the following:

The tage mustard slides easily down your throat and tastes surprisingly sweet. You suddenly become aware that small drops of sweat have beaded on your forehead. You glance at the enrapt crowd standing in silence as they await your final reaction.

Blinking repeatedly in an attempt to clear your vision, you find the room beginning to blur. Blood rushes to your face just as the spices kick in. It feels as if swarms of angry stinging insects have been released in your mouth. Your center of gravity begins to wander about your feet, leaving you in a desperate struggle to keep up.

At this point, the PC should make a saving throw vs. poison. The DM should also roll saving throws for the four 0-level contestants. Anyone failing the saving throw pitches forward, careening through several chairs and onlookers on their way down. All unconscious bodies are propped up next to the raised fire pit and remain there until Joseph gets around to throwing a bucket of water on them. Should the saving throw succeed, the PC regains both balance and vision slowly over the course of the next few minutes. Either result is met with tumultuous celebration from the small crowd.

After the contest, Gan offers the PCs a round of drinks to commemorate the event.

The excited halfling divvies up the gold as required. The PCs are free to spend the rest of the night as they wish. If the PCs so desire, they can converse with Joseph, Gan, the other patrons, or any off-duty guards. After the contest, many of the inn's residents tire, and yawns begin to spread contagiously about the room (as the yellow musk pollen begins to take effect). The tavern's activity begins to die down at about 11:00 P.M., and Joseph announces last call at midnight.

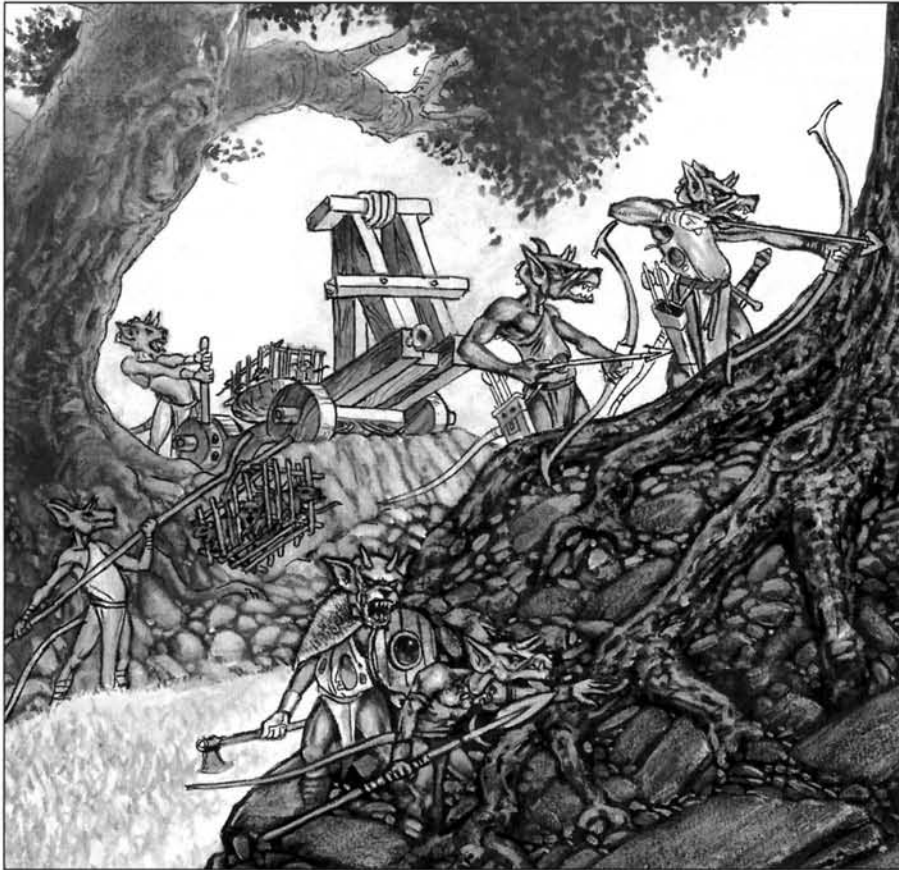
Joseph Gizelli, male human W3: AC 10; MV 12; hp 8; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 9; SZ M (5' 8"); ML 10; AL CG.

Spells (2/1): 1st—*magic missile, unseen servant*; 2nd—*detect evil*.

Gan Tenook, male halfling F3: AC 10; MV 6; hp 21; THAC0 18; Dmg by weapon type, Str 15, Dex 11, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 6, Cha 13; SZ M (4' 7"); ML 12; AL NG.

Guards, 0-level human males (6): AC 5 (chainmail); MV 12; HD 1; hp 5 (x2), 6 (x3), 7; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8 (bill-guisarme) or 1-8 (longsword); SZ M; ML 10; INT average (9); AL NG; chainmail armor, bill-guisarme, longsword, 2d6 gp in pouch.

Typical patron (0-level trapper, trader, merchant, or woodsman): AC 10; MV 12; HD 1; hp 4; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SZ M; ML 7; INT average (9); AL any.



Kobolds prepare for an all-out attack on the Hawk's Shadow Inn.

The DM is free to detail the inn's patrons as suits his or her campaign world.

Restless Night

The tague mustard's unique ingredients have not finished plaguing the PC. By swallowing the mustard, the PC ingested a bit of the obliviax and therefore has gained the stolen memories of the forest ranger, Goven. (See the "For the Dungeon Master" section for details.) Because only a portion of the black moss was consumed, the memories are only accessible by the subconscious mind, emerging while the PC is dreaming.

Once the PCs retire for the night, read or paraphrase the following to the PC(s) who participated in the tague contest:

You are standing in the midst of a thick redwood forest. The sun's last rays cast a soft red-hued light on the leaves of a great oak tree. From the leafy branches of this tree hang many wind chimes that tinkle and rattle in the breeze.

The body you occupy is not your own, yet somehow this seems perfectly logical.

On some dim, detached level you realize that this must be a dream.

Stepping from behind the tree is a beautiful green-skinned woman, and you feel a twinge of sadness and fear for her. Having never seen this woman before, you are uncertain as to the cause of your sorrow. A delicate crown of interwoven laurels rests atop the woman's chestnut brown hair. Her delicate fingers draw a rolled up parchment, stamped with a seal of amber-colored tree sap, from the folds of her loose-fitting robe. She places the document in your hands and gives you a bittersweet kiss on the cheek. A sense of urgency permeates your thoughts. As you run off into the forest, you glance back one last time at the exotic woman, sensing that this will be the last time you see her.

Time passes in an instant. The sun has set, leaving the forest dark and eerily quiet. Draped in moonlight, the towering redwoods adopt a much more menacing aura. On top of a large rise a few hundred yards ahead, you can discern the southern flank of the Hawk's Shadow Inn. Moving toward

the inn, you begin to see black shapes flit in and out of the trees' shadows, as the ferns blanketing the forest floor seem to tangle themselves around your feet. Suddenly you trip on a large oak root. As you fall hard to the ground, gnarled branches and roots begin to reach out, feeling for your prone body. Terror seizes you as you are pinned by the living foliage. You lie there, held tightly to the damp forest floor, listening only to the sound of your own heart.

The silence is short lived, broken as a silhouetted humanoid emerges from the darkness of the forest. The figure appears dwarven, wearing a kilt of matted vines. Greenish sprigs are interwoven within his thick, twisted hair. In the darkness, his eyes glow with an unearthly yellow luminescence that twinkles like firefly light. His muscular body bears an immense black tattoo of clinging ivy on his chest, torso, and arms. The figure levels an oaken spear and lets a wry smile cross his thick, chapped lips before driving the cruel, fire-hardened point through your heart.

Suddenly you find yourself sitting upright in bed, drenched with sweat. Although you are safely within the Hawk's Shadow Inn, back in your own body, you cannot shake the numbing fear. Outside, heavy rain bombards the dark forest, and lightning ignites the night sky.

The storm, which blew in during the night, adds to the eeriness of the PC's dream. This nightmare reoccurs every time the PC falls asleep for the next few days. Indeed, the DM might want to reread the above text every time the PC slumbers, as the dream contains several clues that can help the PCs uncover the evil plaguing the Hawk's Shadow Inn.

By the time the PC's dream is over, the yellow musk creeper pollen has completely run its course. At about 2:00 A.M., the inn's NPC residents rise from their beds in a zombie-like state, quietly leaving the inn and wandering into the stormy Tusk Forest. Because the rain and thunder are particularly loud, the PCs are not awakened by the sound of the entranced victims leaving the inn. Once beyond the inn's palisade, the nightshades round up the entranced victims and bring them to the Enclave's lair (area D).

With the help of Stix's messenger spell, the nightshades have negotiated a deal with a local hill giant, offering to trade their captives for a *cloak of elvenkind*. The giant is currently traveling to the nightshade's lair to pick up his slaves and is due to arrive at 5:00 P.M. on Day 3 of the adventure. Thus, the PCs have 2 days to free the inn's patrons and staff before they are taken away by the giant. Indeed, the PCs have even less time to work with if they are to save Essma, as the dryad's separation from

her oak tree causes her to die roughly 12 hours after the PC wakes from the dream.

The PCs awake to a deathly silent inn, slowly realizing that they are the only people left inside. Tracking the missing people is impossible, as the night's heavy rain has completely washed away all traces of their passing. However, several clues can be found in the deserted inn:

- ☛ The missing residents did not bother to gather their equipment before leaving (suggesting that their exodus was unplanned).

- ☛ The doors of the inn are all left hanging open (the entranced victims did not bother to close them), and there are no signs of struggle.

- ☛ The pillows of the missing residents bear damp yellow drool stains. (As the pollen began to take effect, the victims grew slack-jawed in their sleep.)

- ☛ In the underground kitchen, a fine yellow dust can be found on the floor around a rack that recently held lamb meat. (When Stix hastily sprinkled on the yellow musk pollen, he was a little sloppy.) A PC can make an Herbalism proficiency check to identify the dust as pollen. Another Herbalism check, this time with a -10 penalty, correctly identifies the pollen as belonging to a yellow musk creeper.

The Kobold Attack

Once the PCs have had a chance to investigate, or if it appears that they are about to leave the empty inn and continue on their way, they begin to hear a steady drumming through the rain. This drumbeat accompanies a kobold war party sent by the Tur'Kalatch clan. Having their hands full with their new-found slaves, the Enclave of the Twisted Root has sent these kobolds to finish razing the abandoned inn. The Tur'Kalatch clan worships the nightshades as gods. Fearing divine retribution, the kobolds readily complied with the wood woses' command to destroy the inn. Assured by the Enclave that the inn would offer no resistance to their raid, the cocky kobolds forgo the element of surprise and loudly bleat out ancestral war songs as they approach. Their shrill kobold voices can be heard 5 rounds before the war party arrives at the inn. Thus, the PCs have 5 rounds to prepare for the attack, allowing them to close the inn's heavy gate and take defensive positions.

The kobolds, wanting to please their gods, have come prepared. They are pulling two special siege weapons that they have aptly named "ratapults." Too small to launch boulders, the ratapults employ a stranger kind of ammunition—vermin from the kobolds' lair. Having a range of 60 yards and a rate of fire of 1/3, the ratapults barrage the inn with cages of rats or pouches of squirming bookworms. While the catapults are reloading, the other kobolds attempt to foil any PC counterattack

by keeping a steady hail of arrows on the inn, forcing their adversaries to take cover. One ratapult launches the kobold's supply of three rat cages. Although each cage holds 20 rats, only 3–12 survive the landing. The cages, which break open upon impact, release the irate rats on the hapless PCs.

Rats (3–12/round for 3 rounds): AC 7; MV 15; HD ¼; hp 1 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA disease; SZ T; ML 3; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 7; MM/300.

While the PCs are dealing with the rats, the other ratapult peppers the inn's fortified outer wall with bookworms. The bookworms, which rain down like squishy grapeshot, can burrow through the wooden wall at a rate of 3 inches per round. It takes the worms 3 rounds of burrowing to weaken the outer wall enough to allow the kobolds to smash their way inside.

Bookworms (4–24/round for 3 rounds): AC 2; MV 12, burrow 3; HD ¼; hp 1 each; THAC0 nil; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SZ T; ML 3; INT non (0); AL N; XP 15; MM/364.

Once they have depleted all of their ratapult ammunition, the kobolds light torches, and charge headlong into the inn's courtyard. Once inside, they attempt to set the complex on fire. Thrown torches have a range of 10 yards, and a called shot (vs. AC 10) is required to hit the inn. The wooden walls receive a saving throw vs. fire to avoid being set ablaze at the beginning of the next round. The saving throw is made with a +4 bonus, as the roof is damp from the recent rains. Should the kobolds fight their way inside the tavern, the saving throw is made without this bonus.

Each kobold carries a short sword, shortbow with ten flight arrows, a torch, and a holy symbol. The holy symbol, depicting a skull wrapped with thin roots and vines, is actually the symbol of Splin' Derathra, the deity worshipped by the Enclave of Twisted Root.

Kobolds (22): AC 7; MV 6; HD ½; hp 3 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1–6 (short sword or shortbow); SZ S (3' tall); ML 8; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 7; MM/214.

Once the kobolds are reduced to one-third of their original numbers, the survivors drop to their knees and begin pleading for their lives. Should any PC speak Kobold or Goblin, the kobolds can be interrogated. Displaying typical kobold courage, the sniveling little monsters tell everything they know. The following information is interwoven with gratuitous begging but can be gleaned provided the PCs show proper patience with their captives.

- ☛ The kobolds were sent here to destroy the inn by their gods (the nightshades), creatures they refer to as "poison ghosts." They are described as broad beings covered with vines and fierce markings.

- ☛ Although the kobolds' description of the "poison ghosts" is slightly exaggerated

out of respect for their gods, the PCs notice similarities between the kobolds' deities and the creature in the PC's dream.

- ☛ The "poison ghosts" live deep in the forest northeast of the inn. Being terrified of the nightshades, the kobolds refuse to escort PCs to the Enclave's lair.

- ☛ The forest itself protects the home of the "poison ghosts." The kobolds do not elaborate on this cryptic statement.

If the PCs do not have the skills or spells necessary to talk to the kobolds, the only remaining clues come from the dream of the night before. By delving into his subconscious, any PC who ate the tige mustard can intuitively locate both Gan's hidden obliviax patch (the site of Goven's death) and Essma's grove. While traveling to either location, the PC must make a Wisdom check to see if he or she can recollect the exact route. Even if this check fails, the PC can still divine the general direction of the garden and grove.

The PCs might decide to pack up and leave, abandoning the missing people to whatever fate has befallen them. If this happens, the DM might have the nightshades learn of the PCs' presence by conversing with the various plants in the forest. Fearing that the PCs are going for reinforcements, the Enclave ambushes the PCs during their first night of travel.

Area B: Obliviax Garden

The secluded obliviax garden, which houses one obliviax patch, is sheltered under the exposed root complex of a fallen redwood tree. All of the original patches have been harvested by Gan.

Resting 20 feet north of the small garden are the grisly remains of Goven. Having been mostly consumed by the nightshades and their worgs, all that is left of the poor ranger are gnawed bones and bloodstains scattered across the forest floor. Intermixed with the gruesome remains is Goven's equipment: a battle-ax, an olive green cloak, a composite longbow, ten *arrows* +1, and the scroll given to him by Essma. The scroll, sealed with amber tree sap, reads:

Be alert. I overheard a group of evil spirits planning to attack your inn. Do not doubt their powers. They have rudimentary control of the forest itself. My companion, Goven Wess, will give you further instructions for defending yourselves against these malevolent spirits.

Any PC approaching within 60 feet of the garden is subject to telepathic attack by the remaining obliviax patch. The black moss prefers to steal the memories of a spellcasting PC rather than the memories of others, as this

gives it the opportunity to steal spells. For the sake of the adventure, the obliviax should avoid using its memory-stealing powers on the PC who ate the tige mustard, as the memories of the dream are helpful in completing the adventure. The PC who ate the mustard notices that the obliviax smells faintly similar to Gan's mustard.

Obliviax: AC 10; MV 0; HD ½; hp 2; THACO 20; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA can cast stolen spells; SZ T (6" square); ML 9; INT average (8); AL NE; XP 35; MM/293.

Area C: Essma's Grove

Once the PCs move within earshot of Essma's tree, they hear the barking and snarling of wolves. When they enter the grove, read or paraphrase the following:

Standing in a grove, protruding from the dense fern cover, is a giant oak tree dwarfed among the redwoods. The soft tinkling of the tree's wind chimes is barely audible between the sharp rapt of barks and snarls produced by two massive wolves. The wolves' dappled-gray fur is raised around their collars as they methodically circle the base of the tree. Their bloodshot eyes are fixed upon a small humanoid clutching the oak tree just a few feet out of range of their snapping jaws. This 2'-tall, gray-skinned humanoid is hanging upside down by his legs, waving a walking stick at the immense wolves.

The wolves are actually two worgs that broke off from the nightshade war party. Picking up the scent of a gnome, the worgs tracked the smell to Essma's grove, only to have their prey scamper up a tree before they could attack. The worgs are currently waiting for the gnome to tire and fall from the tree. However, now that the PCs have arrived, the worgs have found a more accessible meal.

Worgs (2): AC 6; MV 18; HD 3+3; hp 18, 20; THACO 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SZ M (5' tall); ML 11; INT low (5); AL NE; XP 120; MM/362.

The worgs' eccentric prey is actually a forest gnome named Tyco Leafwell. Tyco has journeyed to Essma's grove to consult with the dryad about a strange event that he had recently witnessed. The gnome claims to have seen humans, dressed only in sleeping attire, waltz mindlessly past his hut. (The humans Tyco speaks of were actually the entranced residents of the Hawk's Shadow Inn. Several of them walked past Tyco's hut before being rounded up by the nightshades.) Tyco arrived at the grove and discovered that Essma was strangely absent. Before the gnome had a chance to search for the dryad, he was treed by the two worgs. If the PCs kill one worg, Tyco helps them fight the surviving one.

Tyco Leafwell (forest gnome): AC 10; MV 6; HD 2; hp 12; THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 (walking stick); SD -4 to hit when attacked by M or L creatures, *pass without trace* and hide in woodlands; SZ S (2' tall); ML 14; INT average (10); AL NG; MM/159.

Although the forest gnome is grateful for his rescue, he assures the PCs that he could have eventually eluded the worgs using his own guile. Tyco, a carefree nomadic forest dweller, is less shy than is typical for his kin and talks freely with the PCs about the string of bizarre occurrences that have plagued the inn and the forest. Should the PCs treat Tyco with kindness, the gnome offers to join the party, helping them anyway he can. He proves an excellent companion, as he is very familiar with the Tusk Forest.

Concerned by Essma's disappearance, Tyco asks the PCs if they know what became of her. Should the PCs tell the spry gnome of the dream, he is dumbfounded but believes that the PC has had some kind of premonition. Tyco has the following tidbits of information to offer the PCs:

- Essma cannot leave the vicinity of her tree and dies if she is separated from it for more than a day.
- A procession of slack-jawed humans meandered through the forest late at night (Day 2 of the adventure at 2:00 A.M.). Tyco does not know who these people were but assumes (correctly) that they are the missing people for whom the PCs are looking.
- The slack-jawed humans, oblivious to Tyco's friendly greeting, walked past the gnome and toward an area of the forest to the northeast where only vile plants grow. Most people who wander into this region of the woods do not return.
- Every full moon, strange echoing noises can be heard emanating from the area of poisoned forest. (The full moon holds special importance to the nightshades. According to legend, Splin' Derathra, their dark deity, gains her power from moonlight. The noises Tyco heard were actually the Enclave's hymns.)

Area D: The Enclave's Lair

The nightshades' evil presence has affected the surrounding forest, as the woods within a 3-mile radius are choked with briar patches, creepers, and thorny trees. The dense foliage blocks most of the sun's rays, leaving this zone in perpetual twilight. Due to the congested flora, PC movement is halved while within this vicinity. If the PCs have conversed with either the kobolds or Tyco Leafwell, they know that the Enclave's lair is somewhere within this briar-ridden section of forest. A series of game trails, blazed within the plant-choked area by the nightshades, can lead the PCs directly to the Enclave's lair.

From a distance, the Enclave's lair appears as nothing more than a treeless hillock. This grassy rise is actually the hollowed shell of a deceased giant turtle. Great horny protrusions stemming from the thick shell offered the living turtle protection long ago. Now the towering spikes stand as some kind of ancient and foreboding monument. Indeed, the nightshades use the top of the turtle shell to host many of their dark rituals, and the spines have many runes and glyphs etched into their moss-encrusted surfaces.

While the PCs move about the lair, the DM should keep track of their noise level, as sufficiently loud noises alert the nightshades. Once alerted to the PCs' presence, the nightshades spring into action. They spend 1 round quietly coating their weapons with special poison (described in "The Enclave of the Twisted Root" sidebar). On the next round, Iviss creates a *plant door* connecting the mushroom grove in area D6 to the forest above. While the *plant door* is being created, Stix casts a *protection from good* spell on himself, and Zilther quaffs one dose from his potion of *speed*. Crossing through the *plant door*, the nightshades then reenter their own lair through the main entrance, imposing a -2 penalty to the PCs' surprise rolls as they ambush the party from the rear. By attacking from behind, the nightshades hope to block off all avenues of escape for the PCs.

D1. Skull Entrance. The entrance to the Enclave's lair—the neck hole of the shell—is blocked by an immense turtle skull. Anyone speaking the name "Splin' Derathra" within 10 feet of the entrance causes the turtle's mouth to magically swing open wide enough to allow a Medium-sized or smaller creature to enter. The only other way to enter to the lair (short of teleportation magic) is through one of the two eye sockets, each 3 feet in diameter.

Each eye socket is trapped with a jury-rigged guillotine hidden just inside the skull. Wispy root tendrils hang down over the eye-holes, forming thin cobweb-like eyelids. Two of these tendrils (one on each eye) are actually lengths of twine that serve as the guillotines' triggers. Any PC entering an eye socket without first disarming the trap must make a saving throw vs. paralyzation (modified by the PC's Reaction Adjustment modifier) to avoid the falling blade. If the trap is successfully sprung, a guillotine delivers 2-8 points of damage. The trap can be safely bypassed with a successful Remove Traps roll or by any PC who triggers the trap from a distance with a stick or weapon.

D2. Entry Chamber/Turtle Shell. This dark, damp cave is unusually warm due to large amount of decomposing vegetable and animal matter. Small lizards scurry among the

The Enclave of the Twisted Root

The Enclave of the Twisted Root was originally formed when a group of evil clerics gathered in the Tusk Forest to offer sacrifices to a dark forest god known as Splin' Derathra. After years of faithful worship, the enclave was "rewarded" by their deity and granted immortality as nightshades. Nightshades, also known as wood woses, are the malevolent spirits of poisonous plants. Now, decades after their metamorphosis, the Enclave haunts the backwoods of the Tusk Forest, preying on wayfarers foolish enough to venture too far from the Wayward Reach Road. Far from idle in their isolated forest environment, the Enclave has established a rudimentary network with the other evil creatures in the forest, including a tribe of kobolds (that worship the nightshades as gods).

The nightshades are formidable opponents, as they use their extensive knowledge of the forest to gain any tactical advantage. If the nightshades have the time to prepare for battle, their blades are coated with a unique brand of poisonous sap. Unless a saving throw vs. poison is successful, this substance permanently reduces the victim's Dexterity by 1 point per hit. Once a victim's Dexterity is reduced to 0, he or she is slain and, on the night of the next full moon, rises as a nightshade. Lost Dexterity points can be regained only through a *heal* spell.

All nightshades have the ability to *speak with plants* and *pass without trace* at will. Once per day they can cast *entangle* and *plant door*. In addition to these spells, each Enclave member possesses a special power that reflects their individual spirit plant. These abilities, detailed below, are unique to the Enclave members, as the powers are specially granted by the goddess Splin' Derathra herself.

All of the Enclave members share the following statistics:

Nightshades: AC 7; MV 9; HD 1+4; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA see below; SD immune to wooden weapons; SW suffer double damage from fire; SZ M; ML 14; INT average (9); AL NE; XP 270 (420 for Stix); MCA1.

The individual members of the Enclave of the Twisted Root, as well as their statistics, are as follows:

Stix (hp 12; Spells [5/4/1]: 1st—*cause fear, cause light wounds, curse, invisibility to animals, protection from good*; 2nd—*charm person or mammal, messenger, silence 15' radius, warp wood*; 3rd—*plant growth*).

Stix, a hemlock spirit, is the most aggressive member of the group. Granted priestly magic, Stix has the spell power of a 5th-level druid—powers he uses to maintain his dominance over the other nightshades. Violent as a spring thunderstorm and pitiless as dead wood, Stix is difficult to negotiate with. The only spark of love kindled in Stix's heart is his intense enjoyment for claiming lives in the name of his deity.

Stix prefers poisoning or trapping his victims to a straightforward fight. If left with no choice, however, he fights without honor or decency and commits any atrocity to gain the upper hand during a battle. Stix carries the following equipment with him at all times: *spear +1*, a leather pouch containing various rare herbs, a raspberry sprig with six *badberries*, two vials of poison (Type E), and four puffballs (see *The Complete Druid's Handbook*).

Zilther (hp 11, Str 16). This reserved nightshade is the spiritual manifestation of the black lotus flower. Zilther's ebony complexion is highlighted with a vivid purple around his high cheeks and massive shoulders. Once per day this nightshade can cast *darkness 15' radius*. Zilther carries the following equipment: a rusty (yet effective) longsword, potion of *speed* (2 doses), a wolves' tooth necklace (2 gp), and a thick leather belt embroidered with woodland designs (50 gp).

Iviss (hp 8). Iviss, a sly and brooding character, is the spiritual manifestation of poison ivy. Any living thing coming in contact with Iviss's pale skin must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer the effects of the rash version of an *irritation* spell. Iviss can always be found

with the following equipment: two bronze short swords, a longbow with 20 flight arrows, three cockatrice feathers (braided into his dark oily hair), and a jade earring (100 gp).

Groot (hp 10; AC 6). Groot, a milkweed spirit, is elusive and secretive. His pale green skin is streaked with bright yellow stripes, making him resemble a tropical spider more than a poisonous plant spirit. If Groot is wounded by a slashing or piercing weapon, his wound secretes a frothy white liquid that is mildly acidic. This acid has a base 50% chance of dripping upon whoever delivered the wound. Any PC exposed to the acid suffers 1 point of damage per round until at least 1 round is spent wiping or washing the acid away. Weapons and armor might also be damaged by Groot's "blood." This nightshade carries the following equipment: a leather sling with 10 bullets, a nicked scimitar, and a buckler.

Azzalia (hp 9). Azzalia, the only female of the group, is the spirit of vampire moss (not a true poisonous plant, but a dangerous one nonetheless). Azzalia's thick, matted green hair is actually a clump of vampire moss growing from her head like normal hair. She has complete control over the moss and can establish a feeding link at will with any host in range who first fails a Constitution check. Once a link has been established, the moss drains 1 hit point of life energy per round from its victim, stopping only when slain or separated by more than 10 yards from its host. Because the moss is actually part of Azzalia's body, she can use drained life energy to regenerate lost hit points. Azzalia cannot, however, exceed her maximum hit points.

Azzalia carries six red-feathered darts, a dagger, and a gold pin shaped like an oak tree (15 gp).

Vampire moss: AC 9; MV 0; HD ½; hp 4; THAC0 special; #AT can attempt to establish one link per round (Dmg 1 hp per round); SZ T (2' long); ML 10; INT average (9); AL N; XP 7; MCA1.



To rescue a dryad, heroes must first confront the Enclave of the Twisted Root.

scattered colossal bones. These bones, originally belonging to the turtle, give the humid cavern a charnel atmosphere. The domed roof (actually the underside of the turtle shell) is covered with a coarse yellow fuzz. Believed by the nightshades to be a gift from Splin' Derathra herself, this fuzz is actually a patch of yellow mold that guards this chamber.

Attacking or prodding the mold has a 50% chance of releasing a cloud of spores. A spore cloud, engulfing everything within a 10' radius of the disturbed area, kills any PC it touches unless a saving throw vs. poison is successful. Fortunately, the mold grows only on the ceiling, so the PCs can walk freely about the room without triggering a deadly spore cloud.

Yellow mold: AC 9; MV 0; HD nil; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg nil; SD affected only by fire; MR 20%; SZ H (400 square feet); INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/255.

Aside from the gigantic turtle bones, the muddy floor is scattered with the following items: two kobold skeletons, a set of stag antlers, six rusty arrows, 200 feet of frayed hemp rope, a splintered wagon wheel, two

mud-smear (but salvageable) longswords, a clerical scroll (*cure light wounds* x2), a mildewed leather backpack, 22 cp, 13 sp, 5 ep, 23 gp, 4 pp, and a *ring of protection* +1 (silver inlaid with a jade pictograph of a raven). It takes at least 1 turn of searching through ankle-deep muck to uncover all of these items.

D3. Bridge and Chasm. The 30'-deep chasm bisecting this tunnel is spanned by a well-maintained rope bridge. PCs falling (or climbing) down into the steep-walled rift discover a flooded lower tunnel (area D6).

Three yellow musk zombies (formerly orcs) guard the far side of this chasm; their bodies lie buried under a layer of mud and subterranean moss. Once the PCs are on the bridge, the zombies tear free from their hiding spots and lumber forward to protect their mother plant (in area D5). The PCs should roll for surprise normally.

The zombies try to attack the PCs while they are crossing the bridge. If this occurs, the battle is played out with both sides in single file ranks. Should the PCs need to rearrange their fighting line, two PCs must spend an

entire round switching positions on the bridge. The zombies attack without fear and do not relinquish the bridge until slain. If the nightshades are not yet aware of the PCs' intrusion, the battle with the zombies is 95% likely to alert them.

Any PC or zombie struck while standing on the bridge must make a successful saving throw vs. paralysis or fall into the water below. PCs apply their Reaction Adjustment modifiers for Dexterity to their saving throws. PCs who fall into the watery passage below are attacked by a swarm of leeches (see area D6). The zombies are ignored by the leeches and float down to area D4, where they remain.

Yellow musk zombies (3): AC 6 (rusty chainmail); MV 6; HD 2; hp 6, 7, 8; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to mind affecting spells; SZ M (6' tall); ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 120; MM/291.

D4. Makeshift Prison. The circumference of this arched room is covered with a thick mat of ropelike roots that extend downward from the redwood trees above. If game time has progressed beyond 5:00 P.M. of Day 3, this room is empty, as the nightshades have already traded their prisoners to a hill giant in exchange for a *cloak of elvenkind*. Otherwise, the missing people can be found here, bound in place by the thick roots.

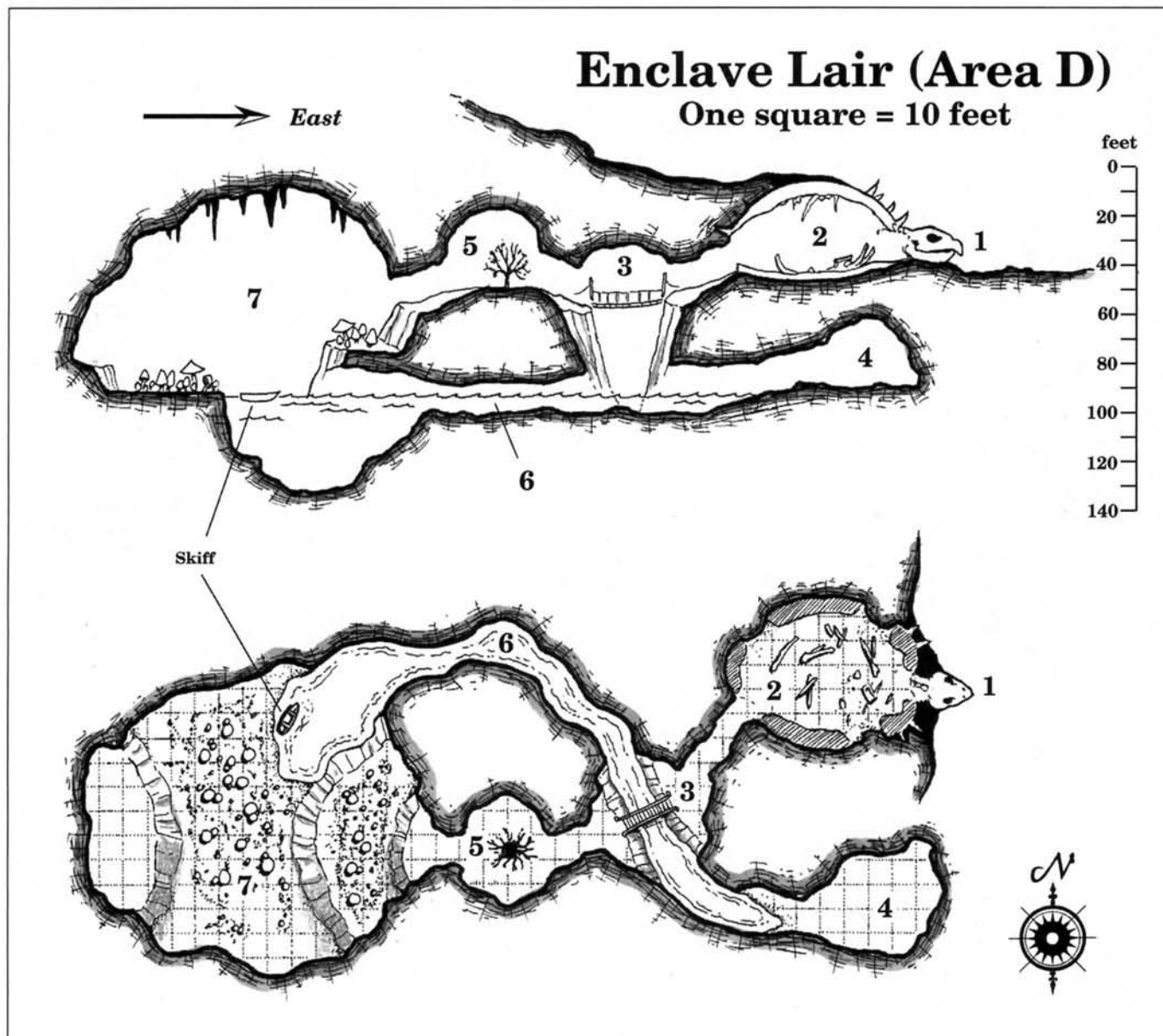
Victims of Stix's *entangle* and *plant growth* spells, the prisoners have little hope of freeing themselves from the tight, woody mesh. When the PCs enter this room, the captives begin calling out for aid. Their cries have a 65% chance of alerting the nightshades. A PC using a cutting tool (such as an ax or saw) requires at least 3 rounds to free one prisoner. Freed prisoners, including Gan and Joseph, are weak from their ordeal and cannot effectively help the PCs fight the Enclave.

D5. Creeper Room. The passage widens to form a roughly domed chamber. Dominating the center of this earthen room is a huge, light green climbing plant bearing vivid yellow flowers streaked with purple. This plant is actually a yellow musk creeper that the nightshades have nurtured from a seedling. Surrounding the creeper in irregular patches is a rough ring of woody briar, approximately 4 feet high. A PC must spend at least 2 rounds clearing the thorny obstacle or suffer 1-2 points of damage when moving through it.

The yellow musk creeper attacks by rotating one of its six bright yellow flowers toward a PC and ejecting a cloud of pollen. Each flower has a firing arc of 60 degrees; therefore, unless the PCs surround the plant, only one flower can attack at a time. Anyone caught in such a cloud must make a successful saving throw vs. spell or become entranced, walking toward the plant the following round. Once

Enclave Lair (Area D)

One square = 10 feet



an entranced PC reaches the creeper, one of the plants' three green bulbs extends its roots into its victim's head and begins draining intelligence. (See *MM* for details.)

Depleting the creeper of its hit points renders the plant defenseless. However, unless the roots are also destroyed, the plant regrows new vines and flowers within a month. If the PCs have not yet disposed of the yellow musk zombies in area D3, the creeper telepathically brings them to its aid.

Yellow musk creeper: AC 7; MV 0; HD 2+8; hp 20; THAC0 17; #AT 6; Dmg nil; SA pollen; SD immune to mind-affecting spells; SZ L (20' square) ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; *MM*/291.

D6. Flooded Tunnel. This passage has been flooded by the recent spring rains and extends from area D4 to area D7, submerging part of the lair's lower level. Any PC entering the muddy water attracts the attention of hundreds of leeches that lurk below the thin layer of algae that blankets the water's surface. When a warm-blooded creature is detected, the leeches congregate in a 10'-diameter mass. Anyone caught in the swarm suffers 1-10 points of damage per round from blood drain. Area-effect attacks inflicting at least 10 points of damage disperse the leech swarm.

Aside from swimming, the only way to safely traverse the flooded cavern is by using the skiff docked in area D7.

Leech swarm (200 leeches): AC 10; MV swim 3; HD special; THAC0 nil; #AT 1; Dmg special; SA drain blood; XP 15; INT non (0); AL N; *MM*/219.

D7. Grand Cavern. When the PCs enter, read or paraphrase the following:

Groves of man-sized mushrooms and toadstools dominate the rocky tiers of this echoing, multi-terraced cavern. Vivid splashes of purple highlight some of the larger fungi, while the shorter stalks range from a golden brown to deep crimson. A series of footpaths wander throughout the fungi

groves, leading to various stone altars that lie scattered throughout the room. A small skiff made of tightly interwoven reeds bobs slowly in a large algae-encrusted pond along the northern wall.

The nightshades have converted this root-cave into a chapel dedicated to their dark goddess, Splin' Derathra. Although the fungi blanketing this room are extremely poisonous if eaten, they are otherwise harmless. The nightshades spend most of their time in this room engaged in prayer or plotting evil deeds. If the nightshades have not yet been alerted to the PCs intrusion, the Enclave is here resting among the fungi groves.

The small skiff, which can hold up to 500 pounds, can be used to access the flooded tunnel of area D6.

Lashed atop one of many earthen altars is the dryad Essma. The nightshades have left their captive tied here as an offering to their goddess. Essma, growing ever sicker, has been separated from her oak tree since the same night the PCs arrived at the Hawk's Shadow Inn. Because Essma can only survive, at most, one day apart from her tree, she succumbs to illness at 6:00 P.M. on Day 2 of the adventure.

If the PCs reach her before this time, she can be rescued. Although too weak to move herself, Essma can be carried to an outside tree where she can then use her *dimension door* ability to safely return to her oak tree. If more than 10 hours have elapsed since the kobold attack, the PCs are too late; they find only Essma's corpse, garbed in her earth colored robe and crown of interwoven laurels.

Essma (dryad): AC 9; MV 0 (until reunited with her tree); HD 2; hp 3 (12 at full); #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA *charm*; SD *dimension door* and

speak with plants; MR 50%; SZ M; ML 12; INT high (13); AL N; MM/93.

Three large chests are pushed up against the south wall. Their contents are as follows:

Chest #1 (locked): Five thick cloaks, two bowls crafted from fire beetle husks (5 gp each), a leather pouch containing many rare herbs (worth 50 gp to a herbalist), and an onyx dagger with a hilt wrapped in fine silk (65 gp). The chest's lock is a simple mechanism (+15% bonus to Open Locks rolls).

Chest #2 (unlocked): This small chest is filled to the brim with many teeth of various species. (The teeth are trophies taken from the nightshades' victims.)

Chest #3 (locked): *Potion of levitation*, three vials of paralytic poison (Type O), a map of the Tusk Forest marked with points of interest, a pouch containing yellow musk creeper pollen, six tiger eye gems (10 gp each), 122 cp, 102 sp, 517 gp, and two small platinum bars (200 gp each). The chest's lock is of good quality, imposing a -15% penalty to thieves' Open Locks rolls.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs receive story awards for accomplishing key objectives. These awards should be divided evenly among the party members:

+1,000 XPs if the PCs rescued Gan, Joseph, and the other captives from the the Enclave of the Twisted Root.

+300 XPs if the PC successfully stopped the inn from being destroyed by the kobolds.

+300 XPs if the PCs manage to save Essma by returning her to her oak tree.

+150 XPs if the PCs give Essma and/or Goven a proper burial.

If rescued, Gan and Joseph are extremely grateful and let the PCs know that they are always welcome at the Hawk's Shadow Inn (assuming it is still standing). If pressed for an explanation of the dream/memory, Gan pri-

vately explains to the PCs the memory stealing capabilities of tage mustard's secret ingredient—obliviax. Although the duo does not have much to offer the PCs in terms of a monetary reward, they are willing to train any PCs who gained a level during the adventure. Furthermore, if asked politely, Joseph lends his spellbook to any mage in the party, allowing the PC to copy any two spells.

If the PCs rescue Gan, Joseph, or Essma, they have gained a valuable source of information. Gan and Joseph, being ex-adventurers, have more than a few tips and leads for the PCs concerning local dungeons, tombs, and ruins. Essma is intimately familiar with the surrounding area; although she is shy, the dryad can provide the PCs with the answer to just about any question they have concerning the Tusk Forest and its denizens. She might also know a way to *resurrect* Goven the ranger, but this might entail a long and perilous quest on the part of the PCs.

There exists a veritable cornucopia of opportunities for further adventures. Any surviving Enclave members, or perhaps other followers of Splin' Derathra, might seek revenge for the PCs' meddling. Should the PCs wipe out the nightshades, there are several important questions for the DM to consider: How do the kobolds react to the slayers of their gods? Will they retaliate against the blasphemous PCs, or do they adopt the PCs as new deities? Conversely, the nightshades might succeed in pawning off their captives to the hill giant mentioned earlier. In this case, the PCs must embark on a special rescue mission into the lair of the hill giant ("Them Apples" in Issue #48). Finally, the enclave has many connections with the other evil denizens of the Tusk Forest. Perhaps the PCs find a map leading them to the lair of one of the nightshades' many contacts—a devious quickling named Angwarvax ("The Bigger They Are..." in Issue #56). Ω



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by Aaron Williams



Issue #77 Contest Winner!

We are very pleased to announce the winner of our TSR Silver Anniversary Contest in Issue #77.

Lance Hammond of Stanford, CA wins a free copy of the *Silver Anniversary Collector's Edition* boxed set, including a 32-page *History of TSR* book signed by the entire TSR staff.

Thanks to everyone who sent in a postcard! Here are the correct answers to the contest questions:

1. What was the title of the adventure featured on the cover of *DUNGEON Adventures* #1?

"Into the Fire," by Grant and David Boucher.

2. What author wrote "Huddle Farm," "The Cauldron of Plenty," and "Fraggart's Contraption"?

Willie Walsh.

3. Who is the only artist to paint two consecutive magazine covers?

Tony DiTerlizzi. He painted the covers for Issues #71 and #72.

My next submission was accepted, as were the next two Side Treks. However, for anyone who says, "Look! They've found a writer they like, so they're going to keep printing his stuff," I should point out that in the past two years, I have had nine proposals for full-length adventures and eight finished Side Treks rejected. Only one other full-length submission has been accepted.

The editors are choosy about what they accept. They should be. I'm happy that I made the cut, but I did so only because I kept pestering them with ideas and proposals.

Andy Miller
Hicksville, OH

Unusual Beginnings

I've been a subscriber on and off since early on. Luckily, I've managed to fill in almost all of the missing issues (except for Issue #20). I just received Issue #78 and would like to make some comments.

I really liked the idea of the tapestry map in "The Winter Tapestry." It was an unusual way to start an adventure (and the kind of ideas you look for, no doubt).

Hopefully that will help to stimulate the creative juices of contributors.

I like the art in your magazine. The artwork is the tool that makes the adventures successful in group play. When I can show my players what an NPC looks like or show them the item that they are inspecting, the players are better able to visualize the story. The art should be for the players, not the DM. Conversely, the front cover should be used to catch the buyers' interest, as you have been doing.

Scott Wallace
Pendleton, OR

We DO like to see adventures that begin in unusual ways. However, we don't mind publishing the occasional adventure that begins at an inn. "Bad Seeds" in this issue is a prime example. Sometimes an old idea works!

I wouldn't mind seeing a few submissions that feature clever gimmicks and "goodies" like the tapestry in Issue #78. We don't see enough of these and never tire of them!

Favorite Adventures

Some of the *DUNGEON Adventures* module my group has enjoyed most include "The Vineyard Vales," by Randy Maxwell (Issue #23), "In the Dread of Night," by Ann Dupuis (Issue #24), "The Assassin Within," by Paul Culotta (Issue #47), "Nobod's Room," by Jeff Crook (Issue #51), "The Ghost of Silverhill," by Samuel Heath (Issue #58), "Iasc," by Willie Walsh (Issue #60), and "Lenny O'Brien's Pot o' Gold," by J. Lee Cunningham (Issue #49).

My all-time favorite adventure has to be "The Curse and the Quest," by Craig Barrett and Christopher Kederich (Issue #27). Talk about putting the PCs under pressure to figure stuff out in a hurry! I DMed "The Curse and the Quest" in another campaign, and I can't wait to DM it again for my current players. But first, they have to get through "Savage Beast" (by Ron Poirier, Issue #55) and "Honor Lost, Honor Regained" (by Paul Hamilton Beattie, Jr., Issue #49)!

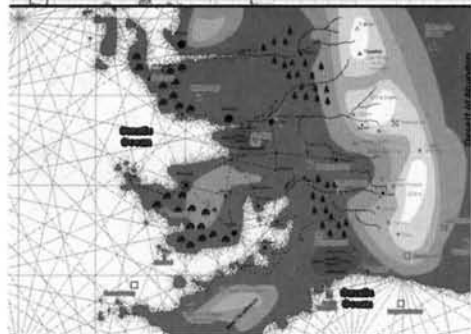
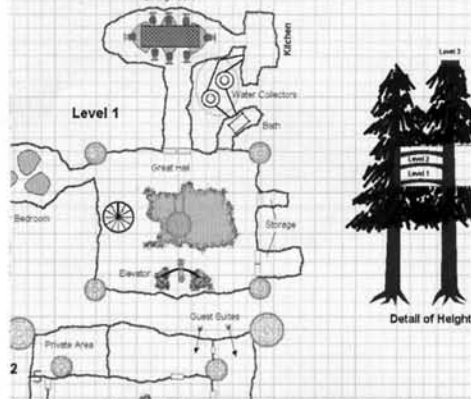
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The asperii take their riders on a trip through the clouds.

CLOUDKILL

BY JEFF FAIRBOURN

It's time to clean up
the environment!

Artwork by David Day
Cartography by Diesel

Jeff writes: "When I started playing the AD&D® game as a youngster, my parents were concerned. I'm grateful that instead of discouraging me, they let me explore this strange interest for myself. Thanks also to Mark, John, Rich, CarrieAnn, Catherine, Camille, Devin, and Justin."

"Cloudkill" is an AD&D adventure for 3-6 good-aligned PCs of levels 4-8 (about 30 total levels). It takes place in a generic range of tall, forbidding mountains called the Whitecap Peaks. Although it involves a creature normally found in the FORGOTTEN REALMS® setting (the asperii), the adventure can be placed in any mountainous region of the DM's campaign world. The party should have several magical items (including magical weapons) and at least one spellcaster.

For the Dungeon Master

Every 20 years, tribes of derro embark on a mass act of aggression against the other creatures of the Underdark. This event, called the Uniting War, has a threefold purpose: It weeds out the weaker members of derro society, provides union and racial identity among all derro tribes, and fills the derro's neighbors with fear and respect. With far-reaching goals such as these, the derro leaders do not expect the war to be won; it merely must be fought.

Such an important event requires special weapons for the derro below the region of the Whitecap Peaks, a group of tribes collectively called the Massog. Every participant must carry one of the sacred, ornamental blades called *secari*. The creation and dedication of these blades requires special forging and secret rituals far away from the prying eyes of the Massog's wary neighbors. For this purpose, the Massog have acquired a special item to aid them. This item, a linked pair of 12'-diameter hoops of 2"-thick iron, functions much like a *well of many worlds*, save that it won't cross planar barriers and can be commanded (by derro savants only) to shrink to the size of a normal ring.

With one of the linked magical hoops, one of the derro savants left his realm in search of a site for the creation of the *secari*, as the time for the upcoming Uniting War was swiftly approaching. This savant, named Jinjuk, eventually found a series of natural caves and chimneys high in the Whitecap Peaks. Enlarging and activating the hoop, Jinjuk summoned others of his tribe and began building an iron-smelting factory—the first stage in *secari* creation.

The factory needed to be well ventilated, and the mountaintop site provided good ventilation as well as the depth the derro required to hide from the hateful light of the sun.

Within a few months the factory was ready, and the Massog began shipping supplies of food, slaves, combustibles, and iron ore to Jinjuk's people, whose work produced carts of molten metal to be returned to foundries and smithies in the Massog realms, where the secari would be completed and dedicated.

The factory produced a great deal of pollution, which was carried by windstreams up through the chimney and out of the peak. Unknown to the derro, the peak used by the Massog's factory was close to the territory watched over by a sylph and a herd of flying horses called asperii. These creatures were alarmed by the growing russet-colored haze and investigated. The sylph, Gelica, observed the pollution from her nearby cloud-top home and determined that it was poisonous. She spent the next few days calling on other faerie associates living in the foothills of the Whitecap Peaks, asking them for potions or other magic that could combat the poison. Returning to her home, Gelica saw a lone asperii enter the cloud. Being on friendly terms with the wind steeds, she flew in after the creature to warn him of the pollution's poisonous effects. Although she could not find the asperii, she used her magic to enter the factory through the chimney. While she investigated, the derro discovered and imprisoned her.

The lone asperii, named Starbow, volunteered to investigate the cloud because he was one of the strongest and swiftest of his kind. Unfortunately, he became so weakened and disoriented by the pollution that he lost control of his levitation and wind-riding abilities, crashing on a mountainside some distance from the peak housing the factory. Growing anxious, Starbow's herd began searching for him. They fear that he has died or that they, too, will have to enter the russet-colored cloud to find him.

Adventure Background

Begin the adventure by reading or paraphrasing the following to the players:

Your trip through the Whitecap Peaks has been treacherous and several days too long. The thin road has climbed cliff after cliff of the deadly mountain pass. Twice you have stumbled at the edge of a precipice and nearly fallen. Once you were nearly swept off and buried by an avalanche. Now a large, silver-maned horse sprawls awkwardly over the rocks ahead, completely blocking the trail. One of the animal's forelegs is broken and twisted beneath it. Its white hide is spotted with red blood that flows from an open wound on its shoulder. It appears to have fallen from somewhere farther up the mountainside. Its magnifi-

cent head rears up, and its glazed eyes struggle to focus as it utters a bleat of pain. Images of spinning mountaintops fill your mind, followed by a thick, reddish-brown cloud and a piercing plea for help.

This is Starbow the asperii, a flying horse. He is dying and delirious from the pain. Unless the PCs aid him (with the Healing proficiency or magic), he dies in 5 rounds. Although asperii are telepathic and can communicate with any intelligent creature, Starbow's pain fragments his telepathic speech. During his last moments of life (or until the PCs heal him), he continues to mentally blurt images at them. Each PC can discern one or two of the following:

- A great cloud of blood-red smoke billowing up into the sky;
- A group of horses running over white ground before leaping into the air and flying;
- One flying horse pulling ahead of the others;
- A raw pain in the back of the throat and nose, and a dizzying blackness that seems to scatter and overwhelm everything else.

Since it is likely the PCs have never encountered an asperii, they face a small dilemma. They would immediately recognize a pegasus as a good creature that would pay in kind for any assistance rendered. Without knowing Starbow's nature, the PCs might question the value of trying to help a "mere horse." Any good-aligned PC who sacrifices personal goods for the benefit of the wounded creature should receive a 500 XP award. Six rounds after the PCs encounter the wounded asperii, the other asperii arrive to aid him. By that time, Starbow is either dead or resting after receiving the PCs' aid.

With a fierce neighing from above, eight more horses gallop downward through the air. Their silver manes reflect the sunlight like a sparkling stream as they hover above the path, pawing at the empty air as if it were solid ground. One of them, a sleek, muscular mare, leaps down onto the ledge close enough to the wounded horse to nudge him with her muzzle. Then she glares at you with smoldering eyes.

This is Sleet, Starbow's mate. If she finds Starbow dead with evidence that the PCs were responsible, all the asperii immediately flee. The PCs must explain this situation convincingly to keep the asperii from leaving. This requires a successful Charisma check modified by the DM depending upon how compelling the PCs' explanation. If the check fails, the asperii depart. If the PCs' argument is convincing or if Sleet finds Starbow alive and sleeping, she discerns that the PCs helped

him and addresses them telepathically in a quiet, feminine voice. (The DM should modify the text below to reflect Starbow's death, if necessary.)

"Your actions are kind. Starbow is my mate. He is strong and swift and brave. He should not go to the death-cloud. The death-cloud is evil. It takes away the sun, the sky, life. We cannot drive it away. Can you drive it away?"

If necessary, Sleet elaborates as best she can in her halting, telepathic Common, describing the recent events as she understands them. When finished, she repeats her question, emphasizing it with an image of the PCs flying through the air, chasing a massive, menacing cloud toward the setting sun.

If the PCs accept, all the asperii except Sleet immediately take to the air, expecting the PCs to follow them in flight. Assuming the PCs can't fly, or if they refuse, Sleet telepathically shows the PCs an image of them riding on the asperii, again chasing the cloud away, after which the image concludes with the asperii dropping the PCs off on the other side of the Whitecap Peaks. If the PCs still refuse to go, the asperii allow them to move past them on the trail to complete the dreary, treacherous trip through the formidable mountains on their own power. The adventure is over, and the PCs never see the asperii again.

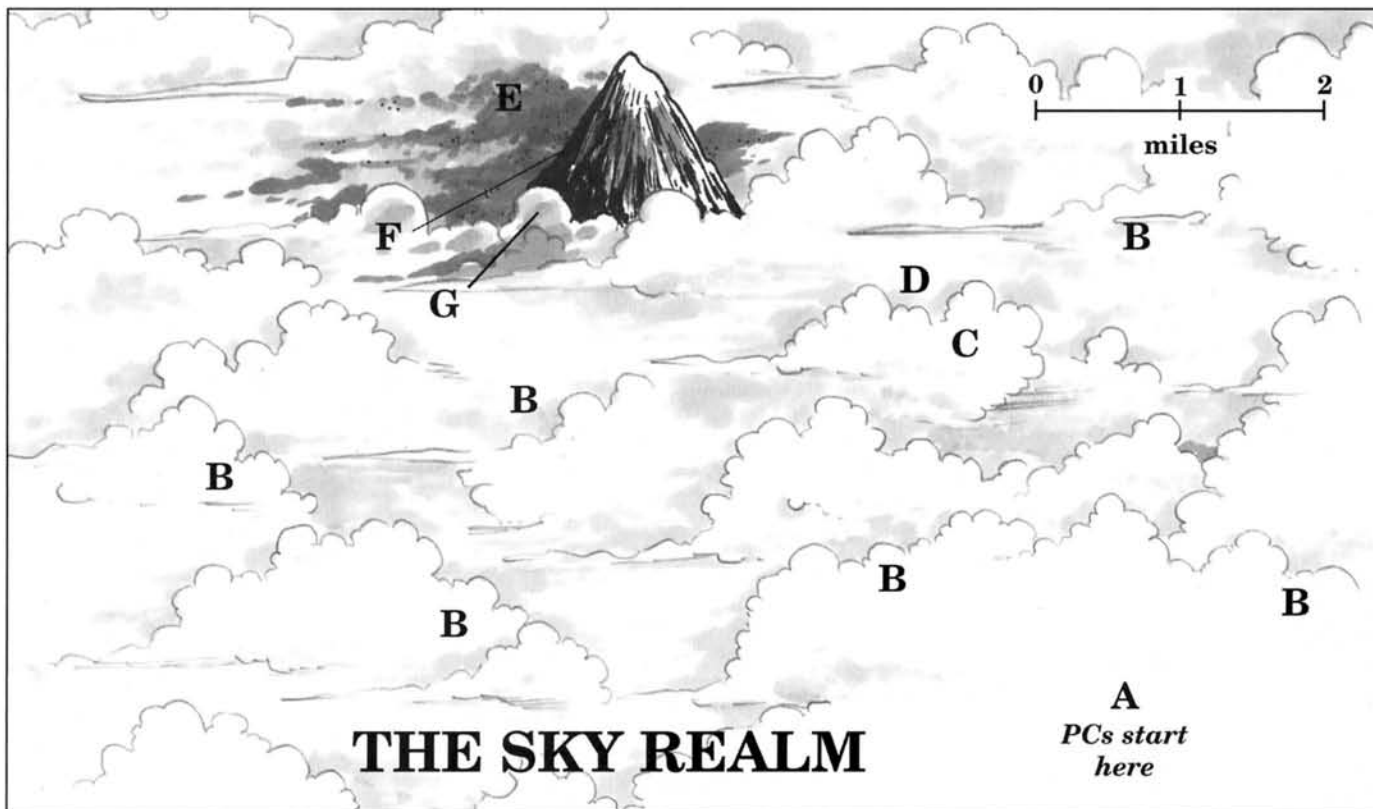
If the PCs agree to help Sleet, the asperii allow them to mount. Each steed telepathically shares his name with his rider, requesting a similar greeting from the PC. Sleet and any riderless asperii remain with Starbow, telepathically wishing the PCs and their herd-mates speed and good luck as they travel through the Sky Realm.

Asperii (8): AC 4; MV 21, fly 42 (C); HD 4; hp see below; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-8/1-8/1-4; SD immune to cold and wind-based attacks, *true seeing* at will, *feather fall* (4/day); SW suffer double damage from fire-based attacks; SZ L; ML 14; INT high (13); AL NG; XP 420; MCA4/8.

The asperii include **Starbow** (hp 30 at full), **Maelstrom** (hp 27), **Spiritwalker** (hp 22), **Sleet** (hp 29), **Tears-of-the-Sun** (hp 24), **Rainshine** (hp 23), **Whistling-at-the-Moon** (hp 20), and **Mirromane** (hp 19).

The Sky Realm

Assuming the PCs accompany the asperii, either flying beside them or riding them bareback, the asperii quickly fly to the edge of the region detailed in this adventure (called "the Sky Realm" by the asperii). This is area A on the Sky Realm map. If all the PCs have their own flying ability, only Maelstrom and Tears-of-the-Sun accompany the PCs.



The DM should review the information included in the "Airborne Adventuring" sidebar before continuing.

A. Above the Clouds.

A fantastic and terrifying new world spreads out below you. Golden clouds form great mountains and massive valleys that stretch out on every side. Beneath the clouds, the gray slopes of the Whitecap Peaks seem dark, bleak, and small. Ahead, through the maze of shifting blue and gold, a single mountain peak towers high up into the clouds' world. Around it the air seems discolored. A reddish-brown haze has spread subtle tendrils into the cloudscape, tinting everything around it murky red. In the seemingly vast space between you and the strange cloud, you can make out several winged shapes darting or drifting through patches of cloudstuff.

The asperii suggest the PCs go first in search of Gelica's home (area C) in the hope of gaining the sylph's assistance. (They don't know she is a prisoner of the derro.) If questioned, they explain that Gelica, "a child of the winds" as they call her, has great magical powers that could aid the PCs in driving the cloud away. They know the sylph's home

floats somewhere near the center of the Sky Realm, but the PCs are free to plot whatever search pattern they wish.

B. Blood Hawk Hunting Grounds. When the PCs travel within 2 miles of any of these areas, they are spotted by a number of blood hawks whose nests lie on the peaks beneath the clouds. Although their favorite prey are humanoids, these birds often attack other winged creatures of Small or Medium size. The DM should roll for surprise and the number of blood hawks encountered (2d4) before beginning the encounter, modifying the boxed text if the entire party is surprised. The blood hawks make no noise before they engage.

A shadow across your face draws your attention upward, directly into the sunlight. Squinting, you can barely make out the winged form of a large bird of prey. It is not alone. Several of the creatures are flying in your direction. One of them suddenly tucks its wings against its sides and dives straight for you, talons outstretched!

These creatures are fierce aerial opponents. Their maneuverability class of B allows them to attack every round, as they are able to hover in place. They instinctively focus their attacks on one or two opponents, choosing

humanoid creatures over flying mounts. Any asperii accompanying the PCs aid in the combat against the birds. Hawk flesh is actually part of the asperii's preferred diet.

Blood hawks (2-8/location): AC 7; MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD 1+1; hp 9, 8, 7 (x2), 5 (x3), 4; THAC0 19; AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-6; SZ M (5' wingspan); ML 11; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 120; MM/27.

C. Gelica's Home. Each turn the PCs spend within 1 mile of this area grants them a 1-in-10 chance of spotting the sylph's cloudtop residence. When that happens, the DM should read or paraphrase the following:

Ahead and below is a strange sight: a small hut surrounded by a garden of rainbow-colored flowers and shrubs, growing right up from the cloud. As you draw nearer, you can see windows in the sides of the structure and a single door facing the west.

Gelica's home was built here by a noble djinni named Amir, whom the sylph rescued from his servitude to an evil human conjurer named Crowthen. Once freed, the djinni lured the conjurer high into the air and slew him in an aerial battle. Crowthen's chief mode of transportation was a *carpet of flying* of largest size (6' x 9') that the djinni used to create

Airborne Adventuring

Many of the encounters in this adventure take place at heights normally inaccessible to adventurers, and the PCs will require some means of flying to reach them. This can be anything from *fly* or *levitate* spells to *winged boots* or a flying mount, or any similar spell or item. Two means of flying are provided in this adventure: the *asperii* and the *sylph's carpet of flying*. The DM should be familiar with the maneuverability class, functions, and/or abilities of each device or mount used, as well as the effects of the Airborne Riding nonweapon proficiency.

The DMG details two sets of rules for aerial combat, the Tournament Rules and the Optional Rules. This adventure was written with the simpler, more abstract Tournament Rules in mind. The description of each creature the PCs encounter in flight includes its maneuverability class and details of how this affects combat.

As suggested in the DMG, combat using the Tournament Rules can be made more satisfying by the descriptions the DM and players provide for their actions. Because combat in the air might require more imagination than normal, to make the adventure a truly

memorable one requires extra effort. Rather than simply relaying the information of who can attack whom round by round, as indicated by their maneuverability class, the DM and players should detail their actions as fully as possible. For example, instead of beginning a combat with "You're attacked by the manticores," the DM could set the stage for a vivid scene of chaotic aerial combat with, "The massive, winged creatures swoop around, closing on [the least maneuverable PC]. One passes above and one beneath, their talons raking and their tail-spikes slashing." Another tool the DM should use is the three-dimensional battlefield. As often as possible, creatures that naturally fly will attack inexperienced groundlings from above or beneath, gaining charge and/or surprise bonuses where appropriate.

Players and DMs using the Optional Rules need to keep careful track of their altitudes relative to the clouds, mountain peaks, and other areas detailed in the Sky Realm. This requires more preparation on the part of the DM. The map and descriptions of the Sky Realm are sketchy when it comes to relative altitudes. Similarly, a more three-dimensional map needs to include contours on the slopes of the mountain peaks.

Any flightless being who falls from the heights at which most of the adventure takes place dies. Finding the remains of a fallen creature in the Whitecap Peaks would be very difficult unless their "landing" was observed firsthand. Since 1 round represents a minute of actual time, rescuing another flightless being from a fall is only possible within 2 rounds after the fall begins. For instance, if Murnock the mage's *fly* spell wore off on Round 6 of an aerial battle, his companions would have until the end of Round 8 to rescue him, for at the beginning of Round 9, Murnock would smash against the Whitecap Peaks below and certainly perish.

Spells and abilities such as *feather fall* allow a creature to survive a fall, but the creature is absent for the remainder of that particular encounter. Finding a PC who has landed safely on the slopes below requires 2d6 turns unless the fallen character has some means to signal his or her companions. Similarly, the DM is free to throw any formidable "wandering" encounters at a fallen PC until his or her companions arrive. Possible wandering monsters include blood hawks (see area B for statistics), manticores (see area D for statistics), hippogriffs, perytons, griffons, and rock-hurling mountain giants.

Gelica's aerial abode. The *carpet* is the floor of the structure, stretching from wall to wall and underneath the front face of the hut to form a small doormat.

The walls and ceiling of the shelter are made of cloudstuff that has been condensed by djinni-magic until it has the consistency of water. It offers slight resistance to hands or prodding objects, but it affords 100% protection from wind and rain to those inside the shelter. The hut has a peaked roof, 10 feet tall at its center, with the condensed vapor enchanted to look like beams and thatch. The windows are built of cloudstuff that has been rendered transparent. The doorway is created out of a normal, stationary cloud that is painted to look like a closed door, but through which sound and people can pass easily.

The garden extends 30 feet outward from the hut in all directions and is also made of the "heavy" cloudstuff. The garden does not support a nonflying (or non-levitating) creature walking on its surface but buoys them instead. Medium or smaller-sized creatures can "swim" through the garden-cloud without falling through or getting wet. The surface of the cloud is fluffy and rolling in the garden, with mounds of the "heavy" vapor having been enchanted to resemble rose-bushes, daffodils, a round patch of lawn, and a small walnut tree. Outside the house and garden, the cloudstuff is normal, and any creatures "swimming" to the edge plummet to their

doom unless they are capable of flight. The "heavy" nature of the cloudstuff extends 15 feet below the enchanted area, and anyone "swimming" lower than that also falls.

When the PCs arrive, their *asperii* companions or mounts hover near the shelter, suggesting that the PCs go in and speak with Gelica. No sound issues from within. If the PCs call a greeting, a chirping voice invites them inside. When they enter, the DM should paraphrase the following:

Once inside, you see a small room scarcely wider and longer than you are tall. The walls are made of colored cloudstuff, but the floor is a thick carpet woven in elaborate designs of purple and green. It gives slightly beneath your feet but supports you. A small satchel is slumped in the corner, while in the center of the room, floating several feet above the carpeted floor, is a harp of glittering white wood. Perched on the harp, a speckled owl observes you through large, glossy yellow eyes. "Well, don't just stand there, being rude," the owl chirps. "Come in and give me an idea of what you're about."

The talking owl is Nikwik, a friend and go-between for Gelica and her best friend, a nymph named Mayla of the Lily Pools who lives some distance away. Nikwik has come at Mayla's bidding, leading a group of his bird

allies laden with supplies the sylph requested to combat the poisoning effects of the pollution. He dismissed his bird friends and has since been waiting anxiously for word from Gelica. He is aware of the PCs' approach and has used his *detect evil* ability on them. Assuming they are good-aligned, he waits until they reveal their quest before speaking the following:

"This home belongs to Gelica, a most beautiful and kind creature," the owl hoots and clicks. "She has been gone for some time, which has me worried. She sent an urgent message to my mistress, the nymph Mayla of the Lily Pools, requesting aid in combating a poisonous cloud. I suppose she meant the tainted thing spreading across the northwest horizon. She has gone there and not returned. Perhaps you 'groundlings' can help her." He jumps down to the satchel, pulling at its ties with his beak, and then wiggles his way into the opening. He emerges quickly, nudging a number of small glass vials before him. "Take these on your journey," he chirps. "The nymph, my mistress, promised the blue ones would offer protection from liquid or vaporous poisons, while the others would provide assorted boons. You must find the evil source of the cloud, destroy it, and rescue the sylph if she is alive."

The three blue potions are *sweet vapor*. (They function just like *sweet water*, but if opened they affect a similar amount of airborne or waterborne toxins and pollutants.) The other vials contain an *elixir of health* (green) and potions of *extra-healing* (red), *vitality* (clear), and *invulnerability* (amber).

Nikwik insists that the asperii do not accompany the PCs into the "death cloud" (area E). If the PCs require another means of flying, Nikwik offers Gelica's *carpet* for their use. It has maneuverability class D (allowing one attack pass every 3 rounds), seats up to four Medium-sized individuals, and offers a ride smooth enough to allow priests and wizards to cast spells while in flight. Nikwik knows the command word, "hetham" (which he shares only with the most trustworthy of the PCs). He makes certain that they understand the *carpet* is to be returned when the PCs are finished with it. If necessary (for instance, if there are too many PCs to fit on the *carpet*), Nikwik informs them of the powers of Gelica's white harp (detailed below).

Nikwik (talking owl): AC 3; MV 1, fly 36 (C); HD 2+2; hp 11; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/1-2; SA surprise opponents with a -6 modifier, swoop (+2 to attack and double damage for claw attacks only—no beak allowed); SD +4 magical defense adjustment, immune to 4th-level and lower *charm* spells; SZ S; ML 15; INT genius (17); AL LG; XP 975; MM/27.

The floating white harp is another of Gelica's treasures, given to her by a half-elven bard years ago. It bears a *permanent levitation* enchantment that keeps it at whatever elevation it was last played. In addition, if played, it can bestow the *fly* ability (as the 3rd-level wizard spell) on up to six persons once per week. The *fly* ability lasts for 36 hours divided by the number of creatures enchanted. The Musical Instrument proficiency is not required to use the harp; it plays itself if willed to do so. Gelica keeps this instrument to help any "groundling" guests. The harp is large but incredibly light. It makes saving throws against attacks as thick wood with a +1 modifier. Nikwik does not allow PCs to take the harp, telling them that it is cursed and brings misfortune to anyone carrying it. (The owl considers this a necessary "half-truth" to protect the interests of his sylph friend.)

If he senses that one or more PCs are evil, Nikwik politely questions them and then suggests that they hurry on their quest. He still insists that the asperii do not travel any closer to the death cloud, but he does not offer the *flying carpet* or arsenal of potions. He allows one PC to use the harp's powers on the group before politely inviting them to leave.

Besides the harp, *carpet*, and cloudtop home, the sylph's treasure is actually kept on the Plane of Elemental Air, protected with the

personal wealth of her noble djinni ally. The *carpet* can be removed from the home by commanding it to move downward, through the cloud below Gelica's house. It can be returned to the shelter by flying up through the cloud to the home's open floor (which is barely visible from below). The asperii wait at Gelica's home for one week before giving up on the PCs and finding some other way to deal with the situation.

D. The Manticores. As indicated above, Gelica's home is visible from beneath the cloud, appearing as a dark patch of murky color. Many creatures of the Sky Realm are aware of its location, including a pair of small, light-bodied manticores whose ancestors were long-ago driven to mountaintop heights by their normal, bulkier cousins.

As a result of their demanding environment, the manticores are exceptionally cunning for their kind. They hunt the paths through the mountains, preying on lone travelers, but are always on the watch for groundlings who have taken to the air, which seem to be fairly common around Gelica's home. The manticores believe that such creatures are easy prey, and they have prepared a battle plan to secure a fast, satisfying meal.

The female and male take turns approaching from various angles and flinging volleys of tail spikes at the PCs, while the other approaches from the opposite direction and attacks one groundling in a raking pass (receiving a +2 attack bonus for charging). Although their maneuverability class (D) allows them to make an attack pass every 3 rounds, they break off and dive into the cloud cover for 1d6+4 rounds between passes so that their opponents cannot anticipate their attacks. If the PCs are avoiding all clouds, the manticores simply close in on them from both directions at once (above and below) and attack every 3 rounds.

When the attack begins, the DM should roll a surprise check for each PC, then read or paraphrase the following boxed text:

You are suddenly aware of a strange rippling in the cloud below, as if some strong wind were tearing through it. An immense pair of leathery wings and a red mane disappear into the white mass. Suddenly, a serpentine tail lashes up, flinging dagger-length spikes right at you, and the air is split by the roar of another great beast bearing down from above!

Once a meal is forced to drop, the manticores follow the opponent downward and finish off whatever survives the fall before returning to their lair (see below). If PCs wish to pursue the creatures into the clouds to launch their own attacks, they can do so, but

they suffer a -2 penalty to all attack rolls due to the limited visibility. The manticores, on the other hand, are accustomed to fighting with limited vision in the clouds and have no such modifier, relying on their other senses to gauge opponents' movements around them.

If unable to down any PC before they run out of tail spikes, they return in a roundabout way to their lair in a cave on the upper, inaccessible slopes of one of the Whitecap Peaks. The lair is a tight squeeze for the two large creatures, but it has two exits, which provide them with a more secure means of escape should pursuers arrive. In the center of the 110'-long twisting cave, below a 225-pound rock, is a small niche containing the manticores' treasure: 3,041 sp, 490 pp, a matching pair of golden earrings worth 40 gp each (or 100 gp as a set), a collection of human fingerbones, a *helm of read magic and comprehend languages*, and two steel vials containing potions of *diminution* and *healing*.

Manticores (2): AC 5; MV 12, fly 24 (D); HD 5+3; hp 39, 32; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-8; SA tail spikes; SZ L (12' tall); ML 11; INT low (7); AL LE; XP 650; MM/246 (modified).

E. The Death-Cloud. This rust-colored haze is relatively stationary. The cold winds circling around area F surround and trap the pollution from the derro factory in this slowly expanding pocket. From more than a mile away, the haze appears thick, dark, and impassable. To anyone moving closer, the outer edge of the pollution becomes hard to spot and is more easily pinpointed by smell and its effects on the naked eye.

The pollution is mildly irritating to humanoid eyes, causing them to water. This imposes a -1 penalty to all attack rolls for as long as the PCs remain inside the cloud. To creatures of the air, such as Gelica and the asperii, the effects of the pollution are even worse. Such beings receive a -4 penalty to attack rolls because of the pollutant's sting. Visibility within the pollution is reduced to 200 feet for all creatures, beyond which details are sketchy at best. The PCs, traveling with unprotected eyes, can avoid crashing headlong into the mountainside.

In addition, all creatures spending more than 1 hour in the cloud must make a saving throw vs. poison. Success means no additional penalties for the next 24 hours. Failure means the creature has been weakened by the pollution and has trouble breathing and functioning. All saving throws and attack and damage rolls suffer a -2 penalty (which replaces the -1 modifier above). As long as the PCs remain inside the cloud, their throats feel gummy, and they experience a dull headache. To a sylph or an asperii, prolonged exposure causes wheezing and powerful dizziness.

Every 24 hours, each creature in the pollution that successfully saved previously must roll a new saving throw or suffer the detailed effects. Those who fail their saving throws and do not leave the cloud for at least 24 hours continue to suffer as above until they do.

The haze issues from the mountainside at area F, where a natural vent mars the peak's stone surface. The PCs have the same chance of discovering the vent as they do for finding a concealed door. Each PC can make one attempt each hour spent searching the mountainside. Considering the amount of space the PCs are covering, it could take them several hours to find the vent. These hours would be costly to any asperii or to Gelica and her avian allies. If any asperii has accompanied the PCs for any reason, it leaves the area for the adventure's duration, ignoring any PC arguments.

F. The Chimney. When the PCs find this area, the DM should read or paraphrase the following text:

Through the stinging haze you see a dark stream of the rust-colored smoke pouring upward into the air. A single, wide hole is barely visible in the rough, gray stone. The opening is rough and uneven, more like a natural vent or cave than an artificial tunnel or chimney. However, there can be no mistaking the iron grate of thick, interlaced bars placed over the vent, dimly visible through the putrid smoke billowing upward into the sky. The bars of the grate are several inches thick, and the barrier appears riveted to the stone of the chimney's opening.

A short way above the opening is a ledge that looks wide enough for several beings to stand on.

The chimney averages 12 feet in diameter. The iron bars are warm to the touch, due to the constant heated air and smoke. This entire area is much warmer than what the PCs have experienced in the Sky Realm thus far. The heat has melted most of the nearby ice and snow that remain here year-round. Any PC who tries to look down into the chimney receives an eyeful of concentrated, stinging pollution and heated air. Before they are forced to withdraw, they catch a glimpse of a great, orange-white flame far below (the blast furnace at area G4).

Anyone attempting to remove the grate and go down the chimney needs to make a successful Bend Bars/Lift Gates roll with a -10% penalty. In addition, the grate is not truly a portal (it is not meant to be opened), so a *knock* spell will not force it open. The largest space between the iron bars is a mere 8 inches wide—too small for even a halfling or slim elf to slip through.

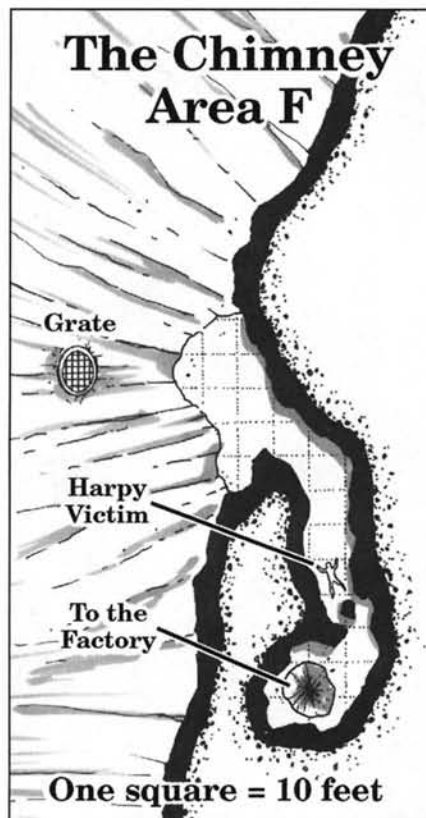
Should the grate be removed without magical *silence*, the derro in the factory below will be alerted to intruders in the area. (The DM should apply the factory's reaction for a general alarm, described below.) Anyone climbing down the 80'-deep chimney suffers 1 point of heat damage per round once they have descended 40 feet. At 60 feet down, they suffer 2d6 points of damage each round, as they are exposed to open flame issuing from the top of the blast furnace only 20 feet below them. Anyone of normal size surviving this descent arrives in the blast furnace where the only exits are back up through the chimney (see above for damage), or through one of the furnace's utility entrances detailed in area G4.

Gelica passed through here when seeking to rescue Starbow, the asperii. Finding the grate-covered chimney emitting pollution, she used her *reduce* spell and *ring of fire resistance* and flew down the vent. Entering the furnace, she was overwhelmed by the pollution and barely escaped into the factory proper where she was discovered and imprisoned.

The derro placed this grate before they built their factory below and have not come out since. Jinjuk, the derro savant, periodically observes the area with a *clairvoyance* spell. It was through this scrying that he discovered a group of creatures living nearby that would serve as natural guardians. These creatures—an aging, deranged harpy and a flock of bats—seemed unlikely to pose a threat to the derro plan, and so Jinjuk chose to leave them.

From the cave overlooking the ledge above the grate, Hecabre the harpy observes the PCs' investigation of the vent. She is 74 years old, which is thought to be quite aged for her kind. Her mind and vision are both fading, and she became lost during a recent migration of her small flock a few months ago. She holed up in this cave because she found it full of bats, which she could eat, at about the time the factory began its operations. She has stayed here since, growing accustomed to the movements of the bats and the sickening effects of the pollution. Killed by the harpy and the pollution, the bats' numbers have dwindled from over 200 to a mere 55. Now, only the strongest of the flock are still present during the day. At night, they leave the lair and fly down into the lowlands around the mountains to hunt, returning before morning.

During the day, the stirring of the bats alerts Hecabre to anyone or anything approaching the cave or the ledge above the chimney, whereupon she uses her heightened sense of smell to discern the nature of the intruders. Discovering a potential food source in the PCs, she begins singing 5 rounds after they land on the ledge. The harpy's song is not what it used to be, and the enchanting melody is often broken by coughing and screeching. Those who hear it receive a +2 bonus to their



saving throw vs. spell to avoid the *charm*. In addition to speaking Common, the harpy can give basic commands to the bats in her lair.

As soon as anyone approaches the cave (*charmed* or not), she causes her "pets" to swarm around them. In the confusion caused by the bats (detailed in the "Bat" entry in the MM), Hecabre attempts to kill all who enter the cave before emerging to kill anyone on the ledge, trying to garner as many future meals as possible.

Bats, common (55): AC 8 (4 under ideal flying conditions); MV 1, fly 24 (B); HD ¼; hp 2 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg 1; SA swarm; ML 3; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 15; MM/15.

Hecabre (aging harpy): AC 7; MV 6, fly 15 (E); HD 7; hp 26; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA *charm*, and see above; SZ M (6' tall); ML 13; INT average (8); AL CE; XP 975; MM/184 (modified).

Hecabre's great age is easily apparent in her fading mind, vision, and voice. She has lost many of her wing-feathers, which limits her to only 3 turns of flight each day with a maneuverability class of E (one attack every 6 rounds). Her hair is the color of lead, matted with filth from the home she shares with bats. Her human features are wrinkled and scabbed, and her milk-colored eyes impose a -2 penalty on her attack rolls. (This penalty is already figured into her THAC0.) Concealed



The ancient harpy, Hecabre, has more than a few bats in her belfry.

beneath a central mound of guano in the cave is her treasure, taken from a dwarf she slew on a nearby mountain pass. It includes a rotting leather pouch containing 143 pp and a necklace of intertwined silver and gold chains worth 70 gp.

At the rear of the cave is the corpse of a human male cleaned almost to the bone. It lies a few feet from an entrance to a concealed shaft leading down into the derro factory. The man was Groyle, a human kept as a slave by the derro.

Finding an opportunity to escape just eight days ago, Groyle climbed up the rough vertical passage to the rear of Hecabre's lair, whereupon the harpy *charmed* and slew him. He had no treasure, but his stone knife lies discarded next to his corpse, and a pair of sturdy iron shackles connected by a chain bind the skeleton's ankle bones. The PCs can use the concealed entrance, which is another natural chimney leading down, to enter the factory. (The chimney is fully described in area G1 below).

If a *speak with dead* spell is used to communicate with him, Groyle reveals in desperate, sketchy detail the secret passage he thought would lead to his "freedom from the flame, smoke, and glowing-eyed little devils that curse and strike." Groyle never had a chance to know the harpy for what she was, being *charmed* and slain almost the instant he emerged in her cave.

G. The Factory. Only the chimney grate and shackled skeleton in area F hint at what lies at the bottom of the shaft—a sprawling complex organized and run by a group of derro savants, guards, and workers, their slaves, and bugbear overseers. Consult the "Factory Inhabitants" sidebar for details.

Observation, subtlety, and planning are required to shut down the derro operation—a simple charge and attack will probably fail. The "How the Factory Works" sidebar details the factory's operation, from beginning to end, so that observant PCs can decide on the most vulnerable spot to attack and cripple it.

The factory is built into a large, vaulted main chamber and three smaller side caves. All caverns have been extended and modified by the derro. Generally, the caverns have walls of solid limestone, cut rough with many sharp edges and supported by iron beams and brick walls. The cavern floors have been worked fairly level—stalagmites removed and holes filled with gravel, sand, water, and *transmute mud to rock* spells.

The awesome powers harnessed in the furnace create special environmental conditions in the factory, with which the DM must be familiar before running the adventure. A newcomer to the factory finds the air oppressively warm. The heat ruins infravision for demihuman and derro alike, and together with the pollution it discourages the growth of the moss and fungi the Underdark dwellers use to light their way in the subterranean realm. Thus, lighting is provided by *continual light* spells placed on fist-sized rocks scattered across the floor of the whole cavern network, spaced about 40 feet apart. The *continual light* spells produce a deep red illumination, which the derro have found makes their slaves less comfortable and more easily intimidated. The environment provides a +20% bonus to a thief's Pick Pockets, Move Silently, and Hide in Shadows abilities. Sudden, bright lights (such as *fireball* or *lightning bolt* spells) automatically alert all creatures in the factory, and the whole complex reacts as if a general alarm were sounded (see below).

The caverns are full of sound, including the constant, low roar of the blast furnace, the grinding and moving of charge (the solid material used in iron smelting), the hissing and bubbling of molten metal and slag, and the barking and whip-cracking of derro and

How the Factory Works

All supplies necessary for the factory's operation arrive through the hoop-gate (area G2) at the beginning of each shift. The student in charge of the shift activates the hoop-gate, and derro workers and slaves on the other side begin pushing stuff through, to be received by the slaves and worker on the factory side. The last thing brought through are the four carts used to carry the molten metal from the blast furnace. While two of the slaves at area G2 arrange goods in that chamber to be delivered to various areas of the complex, the other two begin loading three crucial components into the carts. These components are limestone chips, iron ore, and a dark, greasy sand called "minsh." Together they are called "charge," which is the material dumped through the window in the top of the blast furnace. The worker and slaves stationed on the floor just west of the blast furnace take the three components and mix them in correct proportions, then dump them into one of the two cauldrons on the chain. They then winch the full cauldron up to the charge loading door, where the worker on the nearby ledge uses his hooked pole to maneuver the cauldron into position at the window. The slaves then haul the cauldron up higher, catching it on the stone finger on the win-

dow's ledge, dumping the contents into the furnace. (See the "Blast Furnace Diagram.")

Other supplies, all combustible items, are delivered by the slaves to the workstation on the furnace's eastern side, to be thrown through the barred window to the imprisoned fire elemental. The creature consumes the material, producing tremendous heat that rises up through channels bored through the brick into the main furnace chamber. The blast of superheated air continues to rise as the charge is dumped from above, and when the two meet, smelting occurs.

The minsh, a red, gritty paste, acts as a reducing agent when it burns, drawing oxygen from the iron ore and creating carbon monoxide gas that rises up through the natural chimney into the Sky Realm far above. Other components of the burning minsh go with the gas, causing the reddish tint and further toxic effects of the pollution, while the ore melts and falls into a pool built into the base of the furnace, just above the fire elemental's holding cell.

Into this pool, called the crucible, all of the molten metal collects, along with other impurities and solid chunks that were not strained out in the smelting. These impurities are fused together with the limestone chips that float on the surface of the molten iron, becoming what is called "slag." When a shift

uses up all of its charge, or when the crucible is full, the slag runoff panel is opened, allowing the slag and the topmost layer of molten iron to drain off of the pool, across the aqueduct, and to the slag dump in area G6. The panel is then closed.

The stone plug in the metal tap is then removed, releasing the remainder of the molten iron to drain from the crucible into the trough that is dug into the low brick wall running away from the blast furnace. Small channels in the western side of this trough are blocked by brick plugs. When the four carts are moved into position next to the trough and the slag is drained, the brick plugs are removed, allowing the iron to fill the carts. The student in charge then reactivates the hoop-gate while the four slaves from area G2 haul the carts back along the track, one by one, and push them through the hoop-gate to the Massog tribal caves.

In their home realm, the derro take the cooling iron to a foundry where it is formed into small, dagger-length billets, which are then delivered to skilled derro bladesmiths and other savants who forge and dedicate the secari. The empty carts are laden with further supplies and the components of charge, which the derro have been hoarding since the last Uniting War, almost 20 years ago.

bugbear slave-drivers. Normal vocal communication in this environment is possible only within a distance of 10 feet or less. Shouting can be heard and understood within any single chamber or side cave (by everyone in the particular area) but does not carry to the other areas beyond. This background noise is even more blinding to the derro (who rely on their keen hearing rather than their poor infravision) than the poor illumination and heat. Only very loud noises that are unusual are sure to alert the derro to trouble. (The DM's judgment is required here.) Regaining spells in the factory through memorization and study is possible only in the savants' stone igloo (area G3), which is kept magically quiet.

In most areas, the cavern ceiling is 100 + 3d20 feet above the floor (higher for those in the slave pits and lower for those in the derro quarters or guard stations, all of which are detailed below). This makes flying or levitation possible throughout the complex. Besides the lack of lighting in the areas above the floor, only two obstructions to airborne travel exist in these caverns: pollution and stalactites. A cloud of heavy, polluting smoke (with effects like those detailed in area E) fills and obscures the top 20 feet of every chamber. The derro and their Underdark-dwelling helpers are not significantly affected by their exposure to the pollution. All of the surface natives in the

complex are functioning at a weakened state due to the pollution (-2 on attack and damage rolls, as well as saving throws), and they continue to do so until allowed to breathe clean air for a week.

The complex houses 31 derro, including Jinjuk, his two students, 16 guards, and 12 workers—more than enough to deal with careless PC intruders. In addition, there are eight bugbears that serve as overseers of the slaves. Except for Jinjuk, the rest of the occupants work in one of two shifts, called "first shift" and "second shift" respectively. Each shift consists of one derro student (marked "S" on the factory map) who acts as supervisor, six derro workers (marked "W"), eight derro guards (marked "G"), four bugbears (marked "B"), and nine slaves (marked "H").

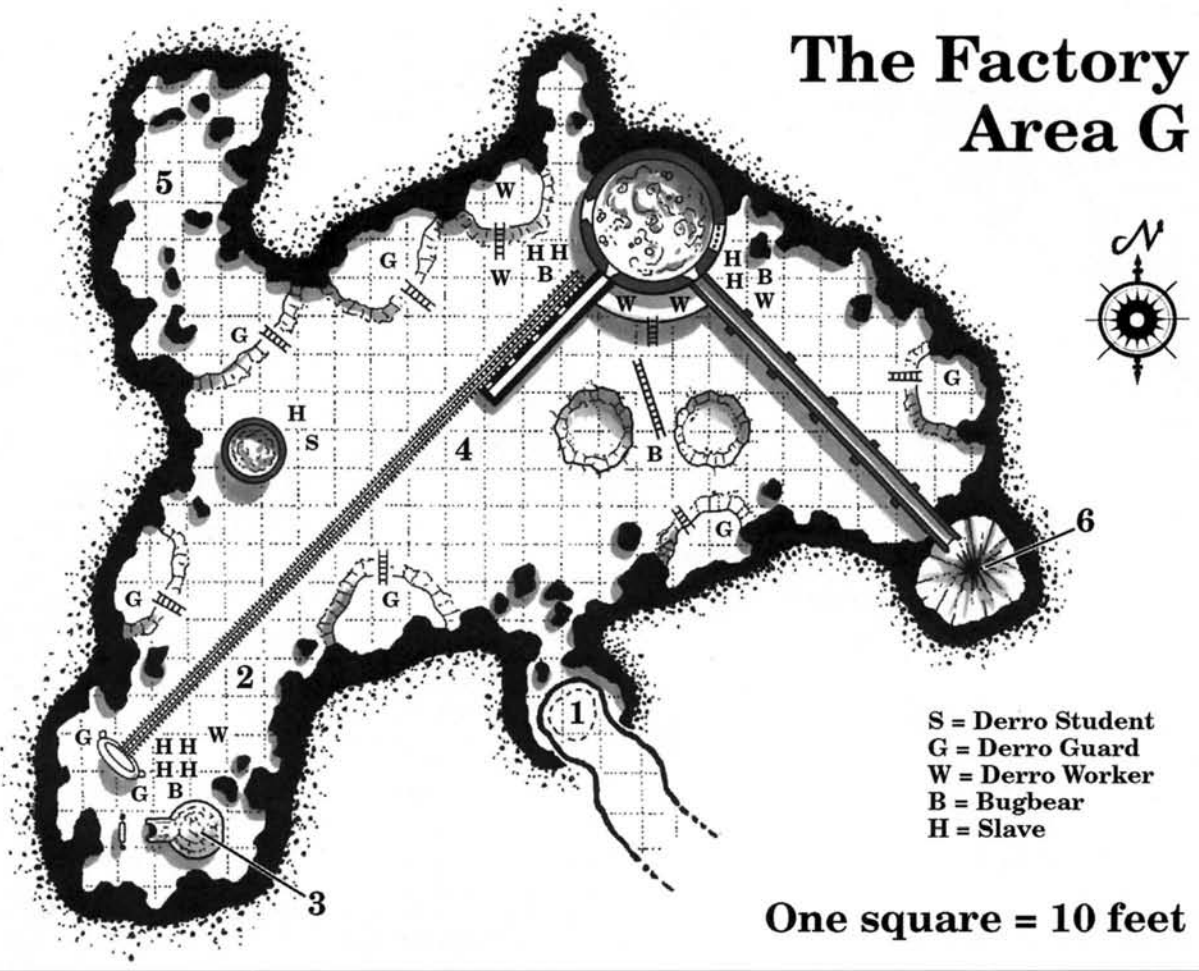
Each shift completes one full use of the complex, from the unloading of new supplies to the delivery of molten iron ore through the hoop gate to the Massog tribal caves, after which the other shift repeats the process. This schedule is arranged by Jinjuk and his two students, who have the ultimate say on whether or not a shift's work is complete. A shift's term of labor is by no means regular, given the many variables in the operation, and lasts anywhere from 9-14 hours (1d6+8). Although this method is inefficient and wasteful, it fits the bizarre, cunning tastes of the

derro, who prefer to keep their slaves from becoming comfortable enough to plot against their cruel masters. The DM should assume the PCs first arrive during the first shift, before keeping time as indicated.

There are 18 slaves total, many of whom are under the influence of *charm person*. (The dwarves, gnome, and dwarf have resisted the students' spells.) The slaves perform the bulk of the work done in the factory, while their labors are directed by derro workers and overseen by the bugbears. The slaves wear only clothing and equipment necessary for their assigned tasks (a single, apron-like loin-cloth and a pair of leather shoes, unless the text indicates otherwise) when they are at work. They leave extra clothing and gear at prescribed locations. All slaves are outfitted in leg-irons connected by 18 inches of chain, limiting their movement rate as indicated in the "Factory Inhabitants" sidebar.

While the number of foes in the adventure might appear daunting, the line of defense presented by the derro and bugbears is full of holes the PCs can exploit if they plan carefully. Only half of the factory's inhabitants function at any one time; the others are out of the way, resting, and unprepared. The derro guards are not stationed to defend the complex against an attack from the outside—they are placed to intimidate and watch over the actions of the

The Factory Area G



slaves. *Charmed* slaves do not attack the PCs, nor will they help. If freed from the students' *charm* spells, the slaves would likely tip the scales in the PCs' favor. Additionally, it is likely the PCs have a means of flying with which they can get the drop on the subterranean guards who are not familiar with such abilities or tactics.

Jinjuk or his students sound a general alarm by ringing the great brass gong in area G2. The sounding of this alarm means that the complex is under heavy attack (most likely a slave revolt) and everyone is needed for defense. The number of derro guards, workers, and bugbears at all locations doubles within 1 turn, as the members of the off-shift don their armor and weapons and rush to aid in defense. All slaves are herded into their appropriate pit, and work in the factory ceases. Jinjuk personally leads the factory's defenders against invaders as detailed in the NPC sidebar. If necessary, he personally searches the entire complex, beginning with the cave of the hoop-gate (area G2) and end-

ing at the slag dump (area G6). The derro search every nook, alcove, and niche, with a 75% chance of finding the hidden shaft (area G1) when they search that location. (See "Concluding the Adventure" for details.)

G1. Hidden Shaft. The descent from the cave at area F is sloped and uneven, requiring rope and careful climbing to make it safely to the bottom 200 feet below. At any one point the shaft is 4d6 feet wide, pierced by crevices and small ledges that are covered with pebbles, guano, and bat bones. Besides thieves (who can climb walls with normal chances), anyone descending the shaft must make a successful Climbing check every 50 feet. (See Tables 65 and 66 in the *PH*.) Anyone falling drops only 10 feet before hitting another ledge and stopping, suffering 1d6 points of damage in the process. It is possible to *levitate* or *fly* up or down the shaft safely. As the PCs make their descent, they feel irregular drafts of warm air blowing up past them, and as they near the bottom, the air becomes considerably warmer.

At its bottom, this natural chimney abruptly twists and joins the factory complex through a small tunnel entrance hidden behind a leaning slab of fallen rock. From the factory side, the doorway appears as a small alcove hardly worthy of notice (and dismissed by the derro), while it provides just enough room for a large being in full platemail to squeeze through. The alcove and concealed door are recessed enough to hide two or three PCs here indefinitely, as long as they keep quiet and do nothing to give themselves away. From this vantage point, the PCs can observe the operation of the factory for enough time to make their plans.

G2. The Hoop-Gate. This small side cave serves as the "proper" entryway for the factory. The hoop-gate is placed here, standing upright in the center of the chamber, with a pair of mining cart tracks running directly into it. The magical hoop, an open ring of iron, 2 inches thick and 12 feet in diameter, is fixed in place by a triangular series of supporting

braces on either side. Anyone touching it with bare skin feels a tingling sensation but receives no damage. A charcoal cloud constantly fills the center of the hoop unless it is activated, when a golden mist shimmers across the interior (like a huge flame seen in a mirror). When activated, the hoop-gate *teleports* anything passing through the golden mist from the hoop-gate's twin in the Massog tribal caves to this location, or vice versa.

During each shift, various containers are scattered about the chamber, both empty and full. These include barrels, flasks, wooden crates, leather sacks, and large, dried fungi formed into watertight bottles. At any time, the goods in these containers include foodstuffs (mostly fungi and the cured meat of fish and various Underdark creatures), water and wine, and the three elements that make up the "charge" for the blast furnace in area G4: iron ore, chips of limestone, and "minsh" (an oily, rust-colored grit).

Only the touch of a savant or student who speaks the word "abrytek" can open the hoop-gate. The hoop-gate does not respond to a *knock* spell, so it is unlikely that the PCs can travel through this portal to the deep Underdark beyond. PCs passing through the hoop-gate when it is activated find themselves in a dark passageway that widens into a great chamber full of small, stone hovels, many derro, and their servants (gargoyles and bugbears). Any PCs entering this area are doomed, unless the DM would like to expand this adventure and detail the Massog tribal caves beyond the portal. Derro societies and enclaves appear in "The Ship of Night" (Issue #20) and "Train of Events" (Issue #44).

Two derro guards occupy this chamber, standing to either side of the hoop-gate. A derro worker, a bugbear, and four *charmed* slaves are here for most of the shift. They perform the labors detailed in the "How the Factory Works" sidebar.

A wide path is always maintained through the supplies in this chamber to the small, 10'-tall igloo built of stone blocks in the southeastern section (area G3, below). Just outside the igloo's entrance is a 5'-tall stand made of the leg bones of a giant lizard. Hanging from the stand is a 3'-diameter brass gong used to sound an alarm throughout the factory. Only Jinjuk and the two derro students are allowed to ring the gong, since doing so ceases the all-important progress of the factory.

G3. Igloo of the Savant. This 10'-tall, hemispherical igloo of stone blocks is the home of Jinjuk and his two students. The building's single entrance is a short crawlspace only 3 feet tall. Even the derro need to crouch to enter the dwelling.

The igloo is made of 1'-thick, mortared stone bricks. The interior is lit by a *continual*

light spell of purple hue that gives the area a sickening appearance. Through careful construction and some magic, the igloo's interior is also free of the noise that fills the rest of the factory, which allows the savant and students to study their spells in peace before each shift. The small home contains three small beds made of stone slabs covered in cushions of dried, puffy fungi. Extra foodstuffs are stacked around the outside edge of the single chamber, including two casks of drowic "black ale," a potent, bitter drink that Jinjuk prefers. Any non-drow or unaccustomed palate tasting it must make a saving throw vs. poison or suffer weakness as per the *ray of enfeeblement* spell.

In the center of the igloo huddles Gelica the sylph. Her head is snugly enclosed in a full mask of iron, the faceplate of which has no eyeholes and is closed and locked below her chin. She is unable to remove it, and Jinjuk carries the only key to the small lock, together with the key to all of the slaves' leg-irons. Beneath the helm she is gagged to prevent her from casting any spells, although she has long forgotten those she had memorized. Her ability to become *invisible* is useless here, since the derro rely on their excellent hearing more than sight. A chain linked to a ring on the top of the helm trails down to another ring bolted to the floor, tethering the sylph in place. When Jinjuk interrogates her, he asks her yes-or-no questions in Common, gaining what information he can from the shaking or nodding of her head. He correctly believes she either entered through the chimney and blast furnace or *teleported* into the factory, either of which would require considerable magical ability, so he is taking no chances with the sylph. Although the savant has stripped her of all magical goods, including her *ring of fire resistance* and her *wand of magic missiles*, he is not aware that she has the ability to summon an air elemental (see below).

Gelica (sylph): AC 9; MV 12, fly 36 (A); HD 3; hp 18 (4 currently); THAC0 17; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SA spellcasting abilities (as 7th-level wizard); SD *invisibility* at will; MR 50%; SZ S (4' tall); ML 14; INT exceptional (16); AL NG; XP 1,400; MM/101.

Gelica is very slender and clothed in a thin, sky blue robe that now hangs in tatters. Her hair (concealed within the locked helm) is white at the crown, turning a fiery bronze at the tip. Her skin is crystal-white, and her eyes are shiny blue. Her gossamer wings are torn in several places, and she appears bruised from her fall and from Jinjuk's tortures. If the PCs heal her for 5 or more hit points, she regains her ability to *fly* (she can now *levitate* without any thrust), although she must still be freed from the helm and tether.

Once freed, she thanks her rescuers and insists that they shut down the abominable

factory. Unless her rescuers appear selfish and evil, she will not abandon them, rendering what aid she can in her weakened state. This aid might include flying one or more PCs up to strategic positions around the factory or scouting around the complex. She cannot summon an air elemental inside the complex, due to the lack of open air and wind necessary for the process. If exposed to the pollution, she automatically suffers all of its negative effects.

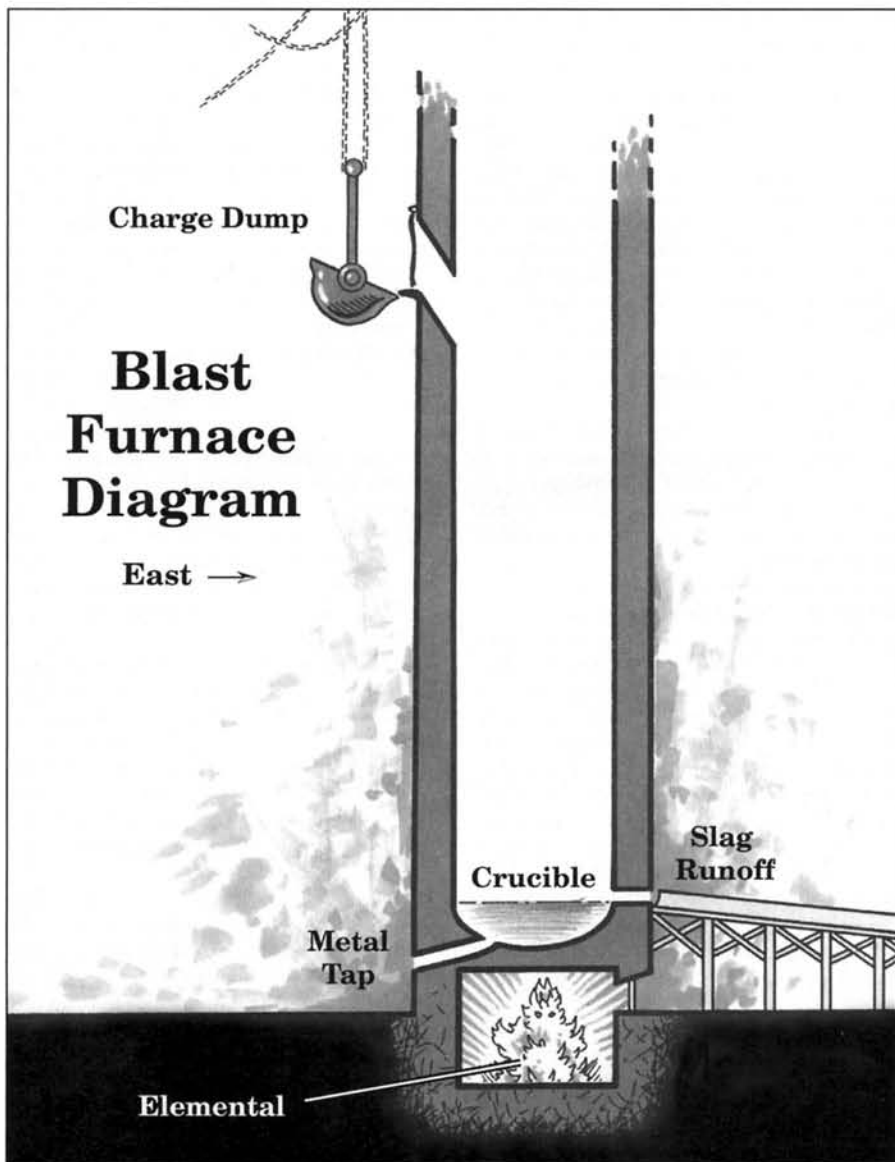
Unless a general alarm has been sounded, one of the beds in this chamber is always occupied by the student in charge of the off-shift. Students are by necessity light sleepers, and there is only a 20% chance of finding the student asleep even if the PCs are extremely quiet in their approach. If awake, the student is studying spells from his personal set of slate tablets (small, chalkboard-like spellbooks kept beneath the beds' fungus cushions). Jinjuk and the students keep all of their personal wealth with them (detailed in the "Factory Inhabitants" sidebar). If an alarm is sounded, Gelica is the sole occupant of this room.

G4. Main Smelting Cavern. This cavern is the heart of the derro operation, containing the blast furnace, slave pits, and workspace for many of the operating tasks of the derro and slaves. The chamber is therefore filled with activity no matter when the PCs arrive. Reviewing the "How the Factory Works" sidebar will help the DM run this encounter more effectively.

The cavern is dominated by the huge, cylindrical blast furnace, which rises up to the height of the ceiling and is built of heavy, fire-resistant brick. Besides the opening into the natural chimney (detailed in area F above), the blast furnace has four portals to its interior, each of which is manned by a derro worker. The first is the charge dump, which is 100 feet up the side of the cylinder's northwest facing. The charge dump is a 5'-wide window that slopes downward into the furnace, blocked by a curtain of dried fire-lizard skin that keeps most of the furnace's heat from escaping into the main chamber. The window's upper edge bears a large stone finger that catches hold of the top rim of the cauldrons and tips them.

The second opening is the metal tap, which is a 6"-wide hole in the cylinder's base. Through this southwestern aperture the molten iron drains into a 9"-deep trough cut into an extended, short wall of brick reaching 40 feet across the cavern floor. The metal tap is usually blocked by a stone plug removed only when enough molten iron has accumulated in the heart of the furnace.

The third opening is the slag runoff, which is a sliding, fire-resistant panel of brass placed 20 feet above the floor on the cylinder's southeast facing. When the brass panel is opened, slag runs from the top of the pool of molten



iron onto a sloping aqueduct supported by 20'-tall arches. The aqueduct runs southeast over the floor to an opening in the chamber wall leading to the slag dump (area G6).

The fourth opening is a wide, barred window on the base of the furnace's eastern facing. It looks directly into the bottom portion of the furnace—the holding cell of a fire elemental. The bars are designed to provide support for the massive furnace built above rather than to keep anything in or out of the holding cell. The fire elemental was summoned by Jinjuk as part of the factory's construction and is held in place by magical wards built right into the furnace by the savant. It cannot attack or be attacked by anyone through the barred window, although it is possible for Medium-sized or smaller creatures to slip through the

bars and enter the elemental's 15'-diameter holding cell (where they would be vulnerable to the creature's attack).

Fire elemental: AC 2; MV 12; HD 8; hp 42; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 3–24; SA set objects aflame; SD +2 or better weapon to hit; SZ L (8' tall); ML 15; INT low (5); AL N; XP 2,000; MM/100.

Platforms placed near or adjacent to the apertures in the furnace allow the designated worker to direct the use of each opening in the furnace, assisted by the number of slaves indicated on the factory map. These platforms are reached by iron ladders bolted to the brick or stone that supports them. Each worker carries an 8'-long hooked pole of steel to use in working at his station. The pole can be used as a *voulge* (Dmg 2d4) against anyone climbing

up to the worker's ledge. Each derro worker is dressed in an apron-like suit of studded leather armor and heavy gloves that have been treated with fluids from fire-resistant slimes and molds. These provide the worker with protection equal to a *ring of fire resistance*, although they wear out quickly and must be replaced every 2d6 days. While the gloves fit the hands of any Medium-sized creature, the armor is fitted for Small-sized humanoids. In addition, each derro worker wears a strange metal helmet with a veil of dark cloth covering his eyes. This allows him to look directly into the flames inside the furnace, while the slaves must avert their eyes while they work.

Two slaves work at the barred window, using enchanted gloves (like those described above) to toss fuel down to the fire elemental. This fuel consists of any combustible material that has been left unused in the hoop-gate chamber for any length of time, including spoiled food, broken containers, wood, and bones. The slaves stationed here usually include one or two who are not *charmed* and are overseen by a bugbear.

On the west side of the furnace, near the charge loading dump, a massive cable and pulley system has been built to lift materials up the side of the cylinder. A thick, steel chain over 250 feet in length forms a massive loop. It runs up to the cavern ceiling where, hidden from view by the cloud of pollution, it passes over a massive pulley. The pulley is fixed in place by large bolts in the ceiling like those used on the grate in area F and cannot be removed without powerful magical aid. Directly beneath the pulley, the loop of chain passes through a winch fixed by bolts to the cavern floor. Attached by heavy iron handles to opposite ends of the looped chain are two cauldrons. The looped chain, winch, and pulley are used to pull one cauldron down and the other up to the charge loading dump. On the floor next to the winch is a working space occupied by a derro worker, two slaves (usually *charmed*), and a bugbear.

Running from the base of the furnace to the hoop-gate chamber (area G2) is a set of mining cart tracks, spaced 2 feet apart. Four carts are designed to run along these, carrying molten iron from the trough to the chamber of the hoop-gate. The carts have six wheels each and are made of a 1'-tall boxlike iron base that supports a bowl-shaped basin made of fire-resistant brick and mortar. Extending 6 inches out from each cart's base are four iron handles, two on each side. The handles are used to push and guide the cart along the tracks, which is done by the four slaves described in area G2, under the watchful eye of the student in charge and a bugbear.

In the center of this cavern's floor are two pits that serve as quarters for the slaves. These pits are each 20 feet deep, with a bottom of



The derro weapons factory operates at peak efficiency day and night, thanks largely to the work of slaves.

cold, soft dirt. Anyone falling into them suffers 2d6 points of damage and has a 10% chance of landing on one of the slaves present (if any), causing 1d6 points damage to the unfortunate. The western pit houses the first shift, while the eastern pit houses the second shift. Each is occupied by all members of the appropriate shift when the other shift is laboring. Climbing out is made difficult (–20% to Climbing checks) by smooth stone and the loose rocks sifting down from above.

The bottom of either pit is reached by a single ladder kept on the ground level except when slaves are moving in or out. Only one ladder means that only one group of slaves can climb up to ground level at any one time—the “off” shift is forced down into the appropriate pit before the “on” shift is brought up to work. The ladder is lowered by the bugbear guard and then removed as soon as everyone has either climbed up or down.

The bugbear’s chief responsibility is to stop rebellious slaves from climbing out of the pit during a general alarm.

Against the western wall of the great cavern is a huge wooden vat, 15 feet tall and 20 feet wide, reinforced by iron bands and filled with water. In the factory, water is necessary both for safety and for nourishment. Together with Jinjuk’s *ice storm* spell, this vat of water is the only safety measure the derro have taken in the creation and operation of the complex. The student in charge of the operating shift maintains his position here, ready to give directions regarding the use and distribution of water wherever it is needed. A metal spigot is built into the side of the vat near the eastern base. It can fill up two one-gallon buckets in 1 round but is generally used only by the single slave stationed here, who is the only slave with a title of any kind. Called the “water-bearer,” this slave is responsible for transport-

ing food and water to everyone within the complex, first to the derro, then the bugbears, and then the slaves. The derro prefer to assign an easily intimidated slave to be the water-bearer, and the student in charge watches the slave carefully throughout the shift. Wine-skins, gourds, and food rations are placed around the base of the vat to be delivered by the waterbearer during each shift.

Spaced around the main cavern, 40 feet up the walls, are six ledges. A derro guard is stationed on each ledge, ready to use his repeating crossbow and poisoned bolts to quell any slave uprisings. The factory’s lighting and noise allow the guards to observe and fire at anyone on the cavern floor within 60 feet of the base of their individual ledges, but they suffer a –4 penalty to their surprise checks against attacks from above. They have additional cover (a –2 bonus to their AC) against anyone attacking them from the floor. The

Factory Inhabitants

Jinjuk (derro savant): AC 5; MV 9; HD 7; hp 30; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; SD invisible when initially encountered, other protections described below; MR 30%; SZ S (4' tall); ML 13; INT genius (17); AL CE; XP 5,000; MM/96.

The key to the factory does not place Jinjuk in any single location, because he has neither a fixed workstation nor a regular schedule. Instead, he makes it known among the derro, bugbears, and slaves that he might be standing invisibly in their midst at any time, observing their performance. All fear the diminutive genius and the deadly powers he wields, and this threat alone keeps most of the factory's inhabitants in line and following the instructions of the student in charge of their shift. The DM can determine Jinjuk's location by rolling 1d8: 1-2, the hoop-gate (area G2); 3-4, the savants' igloo (area G3); 5-8, the main smelting cavern (area G4).

Jinjuk wears a *ring of sustenance* that enables him to function on little, irregular sleep, and he begins the adventure *invisible*. His voice is a harsh, cutting whisper issuing from the darkness. Jinjuk wears Gelica's *ring of fire resistance* and carries Gelica's *wand of magic missiles* (18 charges). Jinjuk's memorized spells are *affect normal fires*, *ESP*, *ice storm*, *invisibility*, *levitate*, *ventriloquism* (x2) and *wall of force*.

Once he is aware of intruders, Jinjuk attempts to rally derro and bugbears into a combined assault force, using the bugbears as shock troops while the derro guards harass the opponents with fire from their repeating crossbows. Jinjuk remains out of combat as long as possible, using his *levitate* and *invisibility* spells to stay clear of danger while using *ESP* and *ventriloquism* spells to anticipate, confuse, and foil opponents' battle tactics. He is extremely cunning, able to speak the languages of Common, Elvish, Gnomish, Dwarven, Undercommon, Orcish, and Drowic. He is an accomplished sage in the areas of engineering, geology, and physics, and he can instinctively *comprehend languages* and *read magic*, which enabled him to decipher the command word ("eferren") inscribed on the side of Gelica's *wand of magic missiles*. He dresses in studded *leather armor* +1 and wields a *secari* and a *dagger* +3, both coated in the derro poison that causes an additional 2d6 points of damage if a saving throw vs. poison is unsuccessful.

All derro guards in the factory have the following statistics.

Derro guards (16): AC 5; MV 9; HD 3; hp 14 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon; SA +2 to hit with missile weapons, poisoned

crossbow bolts, trip opponent with hooked club; SD high Dexterity lowers AC; MR 30%; SZ S (4' tall); ML 12; INT high (13); AL CE; XP 975; MM/96-97.

Guards wear studded leather armor and have an average Dexterity of 17 (AC 4). Their Dexterity gives them a +2 bonus on attacks with their repeating light crossbow (2 shots fired per round, for 1d3 points of damage each). They each carry four special bolts, two coated with a poison that causes an additional 2d6 points of damage (successful saving throw negates damage), and two coated with a poison that causes effects similar to a *ray of enfeeblement* (successful saving throw negates effect). In addition to their crossbow, each guard wields a hooked club called an *aklys* that is attached to a thick, leather thong they can use to throw and trip opponents (a 1-in-8 chance). All derro carry a *secari* (a shiny, wavy-bladed dagger that inflicts 1d4 points of damage) for close combat.

Derro workers have the same statistics as the guards, save that they are not as well armed or armored.

Derro workers (12): AC 8 (unarmored); SA see below; SD see below; XP 650; see above for complete statistics.

Workers carry only *secari* for weapons, although they can use equipment from their individual workstations for their own defense. These tools are detailed in each encounter area. If they are attacked, workers follow the orders of the nearest guard. No derro (guards or workers) carry any treasure other than their personal equipment.

The bugbear assistants are all members of a bugbear tribe subdued and indoctrinated by the derro years ago, and all have the following statistics.

Bugbears (8): AC 5; MV 9; HD 3+1; hp 16 each; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA -3 surprise modifier, +2 to damage because of Strength; SZ L (7' tall); ML 12; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 120; MM/32.

Each bugbear carries a footman's mace (Dmg 1d6+1), a short sword (Dmg 1d6), and a whip (Dmg 1d2). All bugbears wear shirts of thick ringmail and leggings of studded leather. In a battle, they follow the orders of the nearest derro guard or worker. Each bugbear carries 3d6 sp and 2d4 gp.

First Shift

Isho (derro student): AC 3; MV 9; HD 5; hp 24; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; MR 30%; SZ S (4' tall); ML 12; INT exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 3,000; MM/96.

Isho's studded leather armor is stained in red and black patches, giving him natural camouflage in the factory environment and an added -1 bonus to his AC in the bizarre

lighting. He keeps a potion of *speed* for use in tight situations. He has memorized the spells *charm person*, *ghoul touch*, and *wall of fog*, mainly to help manage the workers on his shift, although he has access to all of the spells common to the savant and both students. He also wields a hook-fauchard that causes 1d4 points of damage and which he can use to pull a Medium-sized creature off-balance (25% chance on a successful hit). Isho is a sage in engineering.

Demaxia, drow female P5 (Lolth): AL CE; MV 12 (4 while chained); hp 28; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA magical abilities, spells; Str 11, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 13; MR 60%; SZ M (5' tall); ML 14; XP 1,400; MM/112-113.

Unlike other drow taken prisoner by the derro, Demaxia has learned to suppress her cruel, indomitable side and adopt a more timid manner. This ruse has been so successful that she has remained as much in her captors' confidence as any slave, and they have assigned her as the waterbearer for her shift. This position has enabled her to observe and keep tabs on the entire factory—knowledge she plans to use to destroy the derro operation when the opportunity presents itself. She wishes to offset the Uniting War's damage on her own people living nearby. As a priestess of Lolth, she is treacherous to the core but disciplined enough not to give herself away until the time is right. Even then, she tricks others into performing her "dirty work." She knows the other slaves of her shift well enough to know who is *charmed* and who is not, and who can be counted on during a rebellion. In addition, she has taught all of the non-*charmed* slaves a version of drow sign language, enabling them to communicate unobserved by the guards and overseers.

Although only slightly taller than the derro, she is wiry and tough. She has eleven daggers, two repeating crossbows (with four bolts for each), a short sword, a small shield, and one week's worth of food and water stashed away in various hiding places throughout the complex. Like all drow priests of her level, she is able to cast *dancing lights*, *faerie fire*, *darkness*, *levitate*, *know alignment*, *detect magic*, *detect lie*, *clairvoyance*, *suggestion*, and *dispel magic* once/day. Without a shrine or holy symbol, and watched as she is by the guards, she has been unable to pray for clerical spells. Once the factory is shut down, she attempts to steal whatever goods she can from the ruins and escape into the Underdark to prepare her people for the derro Uniting War.

Humans (2 males, both *charmed*): AC 10; MV 12 (4 while chained); 0-level; hp 4 each;

THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 7; AL N; XP 15; MM/196.

These men, named Firgain and Tyle, measure and load the smelting components (called "charge") into the blast furnace. They have been *charmed* for two days, and their status will be reviewed by one of the students in the next couple of days to determine if additional *charm person* spells should be cast on them. Unless their *charm* is somehow removed, they do not aid anyone fighting their masters, although they will not significantly hinder them either.

Orcs (6 males, all *charmed*): AC 10; MV 12 (4 while chained); HD 1; hp 5 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 11; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 15; MM/281.

The orcs' morale makes them the most devoted of the *charmed* slaves. Four of these creatures work at the hoop-gate loading, unloading, and delivering the mining carts full of molten iron. The other two work at the fueling window of the blast furnace. If their *charm* is removed, they can be convinced to revolt against their derro masters.

Second Shift

Kuruki (derro student): AC 6; MV 9; HD 5; hp 27; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA spells; MR 30%; SZ S (4' tall); ML 12; INT genius (17); AL CE; XP 3,000; MM/96.

Kuruki is a sage in geology, and he is able to speak all of the languages Jinjuk speaks. He dresses in a dark blue apron-like robe and a fitted *cloak of protection* +2. He wields the same weapons as those carried by the derro guards and has memorized *affect normal fires*, *charm person*, and *repulsion*. Unlike most derro, Kuruki has long black hair pulled back into a ponytail and long black

fingermails. He laughs almost continually, giving others the impression that he is insane. His laughter is calculated to instill fear in the slaves and workers.

Grueber Hockenhil, **gnome male F3/T3**: AL CG; AC 7; MV 6 (2 while chained); hp 19; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SA backstab inflicts double damage; SD thieving abilities, +4 bonus to saving throws vs. magic; Str 10, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 8; SZ S (3½' tall); ML 14; XP 650.

Thief abilities: PP 40%, OL 30%, FRT 30%, MS 45%, HS 40%, DN 25%, CW 70%, RL 10%.

Before he was captured by the derro, Grueber held a widespread reputation as a successful adventurer in the Underdark. He once survived alone in a maze of caves for fourteen months with little or nothing to eat and emerged from the experience happy and ready to go delving almost immediately. He puts his heart and soul into every task, even if it means slave labor, for he has learned that doing so creates opportunities. Like the drow Demaxia, he is not distrusted by the guards any more than any other slave, even though he resists their *charm* spells and has skills far beyond what they expect. He is careful not to give himself away, but hopes to lend his full support into any revolt that Demaxia can organize among the slaves. He certainly aids the actions of the PCs as quickly as possible, using a short sword he has buried beneath the dirt bed of his quarters in the slave pits to backstab guards and cause confusion.

Grueber is fluent in the language of the derro, and he is able to transfer information he overhears to the other non-*charmed* slaves using Demaxia's sign language.

If rescued, Grueber might want to remain with the PCs as a henchman or companion

(DM's judgment). At the very least, he spreads praise about the PCs wherever he goes, perhaps showing up at some later time to aid them when they need it. He has brown eyes, short red hair that is fading to light gray, and a furry, muscular body. He currently measures and lifts charge up to the charge loading door.

Dwarves (2 males): AC 10; MV 6 (2 while chained); HD 1+1; hp 7 each; THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD +3 bonus to saving throws vs. magic (13 Constitution); SZ M (4½' tall); ML 8; INT very (11); AL LG; XP 270; MM/94.

These mountain dwarf brothers recently underwent the *charm person* process. The pair's resistance to magic made the casting difficult, and so the dwarves were beaten many times. They are in bad shape, and their morale has suffered because of the treatment, but if they passed a Morale check, they could be incited to revolt. Their names are Bereno and Mulken Twinbeard, and they are young for dwarves (48 years old). They work at the blast furnace, fueling the fire elemental through the barred window.

Humans (4 males, 2 females, all *charmed*): AC 10; MV 12 (4 while chained); 0-level; hp 4 each; THAC0 20; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; roll 2d4+6 for ability scores; SZ M; ML 7; AL N; XP 15; MM/196.

These humans, named Carl, Jory, Tomar, Uriah, Binni, and Tabitha, are the factory's most recent batch of slaves. They are all *charmed* and watched closely by the guards, since one of the members of their batch disappeared not long ago (Groyle, whose corpse is found in the harpy's cave at area F). Carl works with Grueber loading charge into the blast furnace, while Jory, Tomar, Uriah, and Binni work at the hoop-gate. Tabitha is currently the waterbearer for the second shift.

guards reach the ledges by leather rope ladders that they pull and roll up upon assuming their stations, dropping them down only if so ordered by the savant or a student, or when the shift changes.

G5. Derro Quarters. The central guardpost on the western wall is actually the entrance to the quarters of the off-shift derro and their bugbear henchmen. Unless there is a general alarm or a search led by Jinjuk, this room is occupied by all bugbears and derro not involved in the working shift. Thirty small beds like those in the Savants' Igloo (area G3) line the walls of this room, used by the derro. The bugbears rest on furs piled close to the cave's entrance. They are armed like their working counterparts, although they, like the derro, do not dress in their armor while they

rest. Should this cavern be attacked, the bugbears form a defensive line at the front of the cave while the derro workers fire at opponents with the derro guards' repeating crossbows. The guards quickly don their armor (taking 3 rounds) and continue to harass anyone fighting the bugbears.

If a general alarm is sounded, this room is empty within 6 rounds, as all the occupants go to their appropriate locations.

G6. Slag Dump. This is nothing more than an 80'-deep natural pit that the derro have turned into a waste dump. Slag courses from the furnace through the aqueduct described above to a 3'-diameter tunnel in the cavern wall. Passing a short distance through the stone, the tunnel opens into the top of the pit, dropping the slag 80 feet down to the bottom where it

cools and hardens. Originally, this cavern held the entrance from the Underdark to this complex. The entrance at the bottom has long been buried and sealed beneath the slag. Other garbage not used to fuel the furnace is also thrown here. Anyone falling the distance suffers 8d6 points of falling damage plus 2d6 points of heat damage from the cooling slag.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs' objective should be to shut down the factory, not kill all the derro. Even if all the guards and workers are killed and Jinjuk escapes, he returns with more guards and workers through the hoop-gate and resumes the operation within an hour. If the factory is permanently crippled, however, the derro are forced to abandon the site, and the Uniting War is delayed 2d6+6 months.

There are three ways to shut down the factory. The first is by slaying Jinjuk, the derro savant and mastermind of the operation. Though the Massog tribes have other savants, the factory design and location was Jinjuk's idea, and the operation falls apart within 2d12 hours if he is eliminated. The factory stops spewing pollution, and the "death cloud" disperses in a few days. Finding and slaying the savant is a difficult option requiring several days of observation and infiltration. The drow slave, Demaxia, suggests this course of action if the PCs communicate with her.

The second way to shut down the factory is to free or destroy the fire elemental. To free the elemental, the PCs must inflict 100 points of damage to the wall of the blast furnace, using weapons or spells. Magic that changes the nature of the furnace's walls (such as *transmute rock to mud*, *passwall*, and such) disrupts the wards placed there by Jinjuk and also frees the elemental. Once freed, the elemental goes berserk, attacking derro and non-derro alike until it is destroyed. Jinjuk summoned the creature using a *conjure elemental* scroll he acquired years ago. He has no way to replace the elemental if it is lost, which immediately forces the factory to quit functioning.

The third way to shut down the factory is to destroy the hoop-gate. The Massog have only one pair of these, and their tribal caves are too distant to keep the factory functioning without its magic. With the transportation device broken, no more supplies can enter the factory—the operation halts as soon as the next shift starts. Destroying the hoop is possible with magical weapons and damaging spells—it is treated as AC 5 and ceases func-

tioning once it sustains 80 points of damage. Tipping over the hoop-gate requires an Open Doors check and causes 2d6 points of damage to the device. It cannot be operated while tipped over, but if returned upright it functions normally. Casting a *dispel magic* on the hoop-gate renders it inert for 2d4 rounds but does not destroy it. Only a *Mordenkainen's disjunction* or *wish* spell can permanently dispel the hoop-gate.

For permanently shutting down the factory, the PCs should each receive a story award of 3,000 XP. The party should also receive as a reward the XP value of each slave they free. If they rescue Gelica, they should each receive an additional 500 XP.

Forever grateful for the PCs' help, Gelica and the asperii assist them whenever they are passing through the Whitecap Peaks. The asperii offer to carry the PCs to their next destination and serve them as mounts on future adventures (if the DM wishes). Gelica gives her magical white harp to the PCs so that they can visit her home in the future. The sylph's rescue will soon be known among the faerie kind in the surrounding region, including the sylvan wood occupied by the nymph, Mayla of the Lily Pools. The DM is free to develop the nymph's personality and keep her in the wings for when the PCs travel through a nearby forest.

If the PCs' initial foray into the factory is not successful and they are forced to retreat, the derro prepare for further intrusions from outside. Jinjuk brings in an additional group of 12 derro guards and 6 bugbears from the Massog realm and with them scours the cavern complex looking for the PCs' mode of

entry. They discover the hidden shaft at area G1 within two days; and after exploring it all the way up to the harpy's cave, they prepare a deadly ambush at the shaft's base in case the PCs return. The ambush involves Jinjuk's *wall of force* and *ice storm* spells, as well as the new troops summoned by Jinjuk.

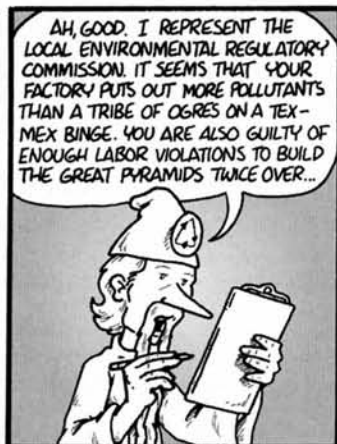
If the PCs are defeated by the derro, Jinjuk halts the work in the factory long enough to have all the guards, workers, and slaves watch as the PCs are flogged by the bugbear overseers. All PC equipment is confiscated and kept in Jinjuk's igloo, and the PCs join the ranks of the slaves. They are given only ragged loin-cloths and whatever other equipment is necessary to function at a post in the factory (DM's judgment). Jinjuk splits up the PCs among the two shifts and has his students cast a *charm person* spell on each of them. This could become an excellent roleplaying opportunity as the PCs are forced to work together with the other slaves, learning to communicate in Demaxia's sign language while they plan another attempt to shut down the factory.

Ω



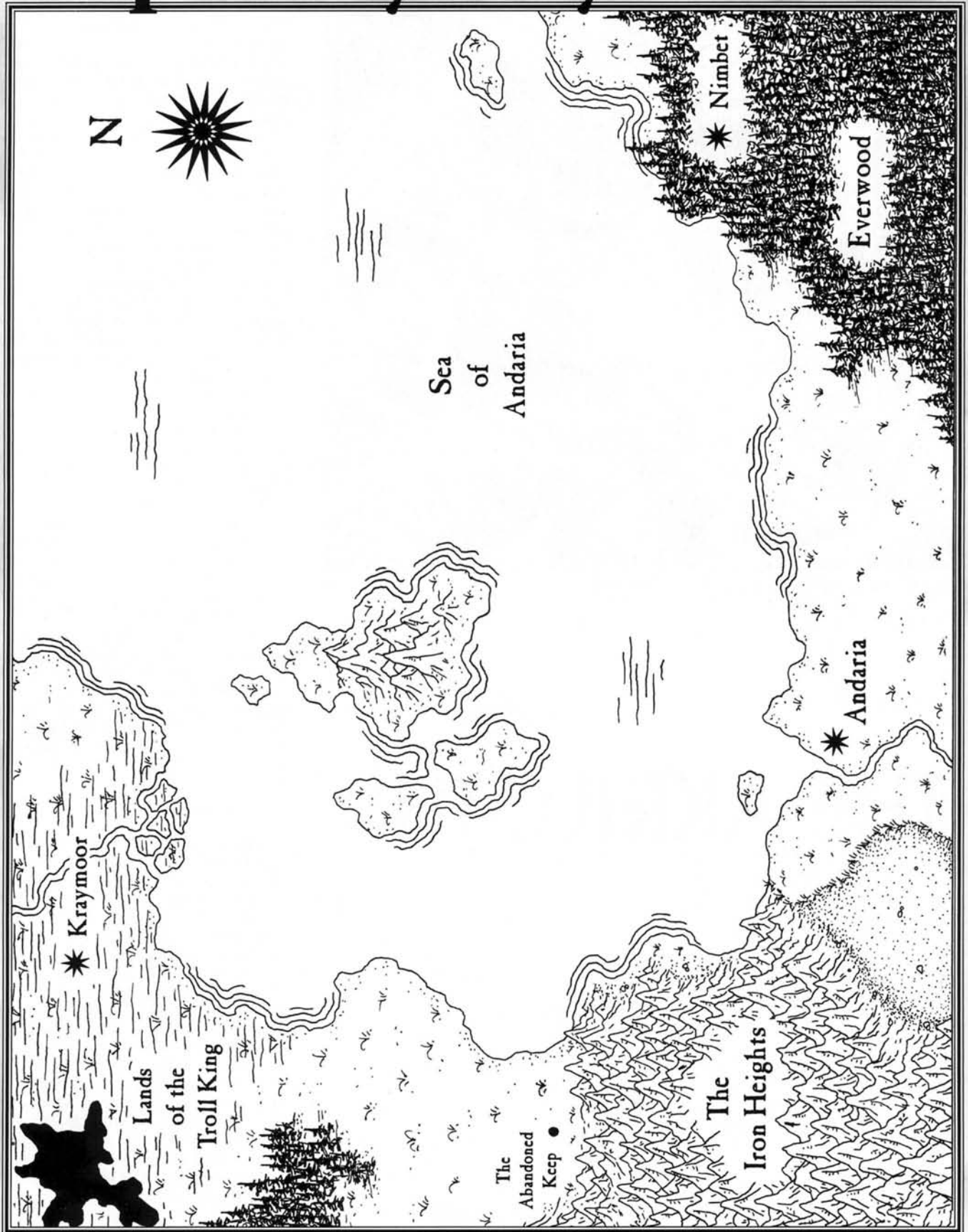
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by Aaron Williams



Map of Mystery

Map by Craig Zipse





A locathah warrior falls prey to an ixitxachtl predator.

THE AKRILOTH

BY MATTHEW G. ADKINS

Song of the sea

Artwork by Terry Dykstra
Temple of Eadro Maps by Craig Zipse
Serôs Map by Dennis Kauth & Rob Lazzaretti

This is Matthew's third appearance in *DUNGEON*® Adventures. Matt would like to thank the Brigade and his wife, Angela, for their continued support, as well as the editors for their boundless patience and mentorship.

"The Akriloth" is an AD&D® adventure designed for 5–6 characters of levels 10–12 (about 60 total levels). The adventuring party should include several strong warriors and at least one powerful wizard and priest (preferably one with the power to turn undead). Surface characters also require some means of surviving underwater. The adventure takes place in Serôs, the underwater realm of the Inner Sea in the *FORGOTTEN REALMS*® campaign setting. Serôs is fully detailed in the *Sea of Fallen Stars* campaign expansion [11393]. However, this adventure can be adapted to suit any undersea campaign.

Rules governing underwater movement and combat are detailed in the *Of Ships and the Sea* accessory (*OSS*), as well as the *Sea of Fallen Stars* expansion (*SoFS*), although DMs can use the simpler rules presented in the *DUNGEON MASTER*® *Guide*. The adventure works equally well with surface PCs or aquatic PCs (merfolk, tritons, aquatic elves, and such), refer to the *Sea of Fallen Stars* campaign expansion. New character races are also detailed in James Wyatt's "Heroes of the Sea" article in *DRAGON*® Magazine #250.

The calendar of Serôs is measured in Timesongs (TS), much as the Faerûnian calendar is represented by Dalereckoning (DR). This adventure takes place in the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR, 1441 TS) after the Twelfth Serôs War, which is dramatically chronicled in the "Threat from the Sea" novel trilogy by Mel Odom.

Adventure Background

During the Year of the Gauntlet (1369 DR, 1439 TS), the empires of the Inner Sea were wracked by the forces of Iakhovas the Ravager. Iakhovas and his dark minions breached the Shardsbane Wall, laying waste to the undersea colonies beyond. To complete the devastation of Serôs, Iakhovas's army of sea zombies, lacedons, and koalinth marched on Voalidru, the merfolk capital, aided by treacherous merfolk interested only in self-preservation.

The inhabitants of Voalidru learned of the approaching danger and abandoned their city, removing as many of its treasures as possible. The Merking of Eadraal, Vhaemas the Elder, was severely wounded in battle with Iakhovas at Voalidru, but he gave his people time to retreat from their capital and enabled his son, Prince Mirol, to ally with the other undersea races to save Serôs.

The war against Iakhovas ended in 1440 TS with the expulsion of the Ravager from Serôs. Prince Mirol and his merfolk made a concerted attempt to retake Voalidru from Iakhovas's lingering undead minions and other monstrous denizens, but the attempt failed. More than one hundred merfolk lives were lost.

By the Year of the Unstrung Harp (1371 DR, 1441 TS), most of Voalidru's buildings have been plundered by koalinth and ixitxachitl. However, these marauders are almost always driven off by the hundreds of undead denizens lurking within the city. Voalidru is no longer regarded as the glass-towered wonder of Serôs; it is now a desolated place of dread and woe.

For the Dungeon Master

Prince Mirol has not given up on Voalidru and plans to recapture the merfolk city in time. However, his people are still recovering from the war, and his father, King Vhaemas, has been unconscious since his terrible battle with Iakhovas. After the last attempt to reclaim the city failed, Mirol has lost support in his bid to retake the city by force. Rumors have spread that the city has been claimed by a kraken, a priesthood of vampiric ixitxachitl, or worse.

Two weeks ago, Mirol received a sign from Eadro, god of the merfolk. The Prince Regent was approached by a small blue fish with scintillating scales that spoke to him in a deep, resonant voice. The blue fish told Mirol to seek Narvolas in Myth Nantar, for he had the secret to recapturing the lost city of Voalidru. This puzzled Mirol. Narvolas was a High Merpriest of Eadro, as well as Mirol's teacher and mentor. When Iakhovas and his armies attacked Voalidru, Narvolas refused to abandon the city and the Temple of Eadro therein. Mirol assumed that Narvolas and his fellow priests had been lost defending the city. Upon hearing that Narvolas had survived the attack, Mirol scoured Myth Nantar for the High Merpriest, eventually finding his mentor tending to injured merfolk at the Stadium of Tavynos, where many refugees of Voalidru had found a new home.

Narvolas told Mirol of his harrowing experience at Voalidru. The merpriest was one of several merfolk who chose to remain and protect the Temple of Eadro from Iakhovas's forces. The temple was assaulted by wave after wave of undead, but the temple would not fall. The priests used an ancient relic called the Akriloth, a large black horn found in the depths of Serôs that had been preserved by the temple for centuries, to drive away the undead hordes. However, Iakhovas attacked the temple, sundering its foundations and plunging it deeper into the earth. Sahuagin, sharks, and giant eels were sent to attack the

priests and silence the Akriloth's song. The undead then returned, and the priests of Eadro were forced to seek refuge among the unshattered sections of the temple. The horn was lost in the temple's sunken depths. Amid the shattered remains of the once great edifice, Narvolas and the other surviving priests hid from the deluge of foes, striking out whenever possible.

Slowly, after months of playing cat and mouse with the occupying undead army, all of Narvolas's fellow priests fell in battle or became separated from him, leaving Narvolas alone and trapped. However, Narvolas managed to escape with the aid of a mermaid named Lurelei, who had found sanctuary in a secret chamber of the temple. Together, the pair fled the temple and headed northwest to Myth Nantar, but Lurelei was captured by a roaming pack of ixitxachitl during the escape attempt. Weakened by his ordeal in the temple, Narvolas could do nothing but flee, knowing that if the ixitxachitl caught him he would be killed. Thus, he left Lurelei to the mercy of the dark rays.

Narvolas is deeply troubled and feels he should have done more to save Lurelei from the ixitxachitl. However, the merpriest believes he can save the city of Voalidru, and perhaps Lurelei as well. Lately, he has often thought of the Akriloth, still hidden within the Temple of Eadro. Although he was unable to retrieve the horn before fleeing Voalidru, Narvolas believes it can be found. Anyone blowing the horn can use its song to harness great power, including the power to banish the undead from Voalidru. Once the undead are driven out, the city can be reclaimed. Narvolas is confident that the artifact remains within the walls of the temple, for he knows that Iakhovas would have had little use for the powerful relic. The message borne to Prince Mirol from Eadro has only increased his surety.

Unknown to Narvolas, the Akriloth is now safely in the tentacles of a kraken that lurks in the depths of the Temple of Eadro. The kraken, Qol'in'taroq, heard the song of the horn during the attack upon Voalidru and waited until Iakhovas's departure before moving into Voalidru and claiming the horn for itself. A loyal servant of Those Who Sleep Below, the kraken is drawn to the Akriloth by an even greater force. Those Who Sleep Below have commanded Qol'in'taroq to guard the Akriloth and keep the horn out of merfolk hands, for these dark gods of the depths have no wish to see the merfolk reclaim Voalidru or its many treasures. The actions of the kraken unwittingly allowed Narvolas and his fellow refugees to survive within the temple, as Qol'in'taroq and his allies struggled against Iakhovas's forces for supremacy of the structure. Narvolas never saw the kraken and is

unaware of its presence, but he remembers several strange incidents where monsters inside the temple fought among themselves.

The ixitxachitl constitute another potential threat. Survivors of the attack on the Xedran Reefs, these dark rays know that the exiled merfolk of Thuridru, led by Vhaemas II (Prince Mirol's bastard brother) are at least partly responsible for the devastation of their homeland. Vhaemas II and his merfolk followers allied with Iakhovas, turning against their own kind and using Iakhovas to strike at their enemies. The ixitxachitl vitanarate now seeks to claim Voalidru as recompense, but the kraken and the lingering undead pose a constant threat to the dark rays' sovereignty. To solidify their claim, the vitanar has dispatched a devitan named Xulkur to fetch the horn. Once the vampiric ray has the Akriloth in his possession, the ixitxachitl can force one of their merfolk slaves to use it to drive away the undead, paving the road for their military takeover of the city.

Xulkur's hunters recently captured the mermaid Lurelei, and Xulkur has put her knowledge of the Temple of Eadro to good use. The vampiric ixitxachitl has turned Lurelei into a velya, a mermaid vampire under his command. She has helped Xulkur map the temple for a possible future assault, as well as recovered several minor magical items from the ruins that can be used against those who stand in Xulkur's way. The velya, like Narvolas, is not aware of Qol'in'taroq's presence in the temple, though she does know that some greater power has taken control of the undead that linger there. Lurelei, Xulkur, and company have entered the second level of the temple (via a secret cavern entrance Xulkur discovered) and are currently scouring the first and second levels of the structure for the horn. Thus far, Xulkur and his minions have not been discovered by the kraken.

Following Narvolas's advice, Prince Mirol has begun searching Myth Nantar for adventurers willing to accompany Narvolas back to Voalidru to find the Akriloth. If this can be done, Prince Mirol believes he'll have a much easier time convincing his merfolk followers to retake the city. In addition to retrieving the horn, Narvolas also wants to find Lurelei and rescue her from her captors, if she is still alive.

Starting the Adventure

This adventure starts in the fabled city of Myth Nantar, wherein Mirol seeks adventurers for his quest. The PCs may or may not be familiar with the metropolis, depending upon their origins and previous adventures in the area. Visitors to Serôs from the surface world are fairly common during this period, as the attention of various merchants and adventuring groups has been directed to the area by the

Currency of Serôs

Throughout this adventure, frequent references are made to such items as green and yellow pearls, without stating the value of such gems. In the undersea realm of Serôs, these pearls function as the common currency, used between different communities and races in commerce. These pearls have a set value when used in Serôs but might fetch many times their worth if sold to merchants on land. The chart below breaks up the different denominations of pearls and their value, as well as their approximate worth when sold to dry-landers. Each pearl is assumed to be one-sixth inches in diameter and of good quality, with deviations from this norm affecting value appropriately. This chart is reproduced from the *SoFS* expansion for the DM's convenience.

Pearl Color	Serôsian Name	Value in Serôs	Value in Faerûn (Average)
Blue	Nuyar	1 pp	2d20 pp (18 pp)
Green	Tayar	1 gp	2d4 gp (4 gp)
Yellow	Hayar	1 sp	1d4 gp (2 gp)
White	Seyar	1 cp	1d4 sp (2 sp)

events surrounding the Twelfth Serôs War. As a result, Myth Nantar has quickly developed into a center of learning and commerce between the aquatic and dry races. It is not uncommon to witness such sights as an aquatic elf and a dwarf haggling over the price of squid in this modern clime. Not everyone welcomes the presence of the dry-landers in Serôs, but within Myth Nantar such close-minded opinions are the exception, not the rule.

If the PCs are surface characters taking their first dip into the undersea realm of Serôs, the DM should guide them here. It is within Myth Nantar that surface dwellers can readily learn to fight and cast spells underwater, learn to speak the common undersea tongue (Serusan), and benefit from the benign magic associated with the mythal. The city holds no end of merfolk and sea elves who will impart their knowledge to the characters for a price. The specifics of such training are left up to the DM, who can make the process as expensive and time consuming as he or she sees fit. The timeline for the start of this module is also flexible, allowing the DM as much time as needed to acclimate surface PCs to the rigors of undersea life, a process that is sure to take at least two or three months. After the characters have adapted to life underwater and perhaps even experienced a few other undersea adventures, the chance encounter with Prince Mirol occurs, and the adventure begins.

If the PCs actually hail from the sea, the start of the module will be dramatically different for them. In this case, the DM might wish to allow the PCs time to explore the city if they are new to the area, but the meeting with Prince Mirol can occur at any time. The city of Myth Nantar is not described herein but can be referenced in detail in the *Sea of Fallen Stars* expansion accessory.

Meeting the Prince

As the PCs are going about their business in Myth Nantar, they are spotted by Prince Mirol and his retinue. The Prince Regent has been searching the city for an appropriate party of adventurers for a few days by this time, and he is desperate to find someone worthy and willing to accompany Narvolas on his dangerous journey. Every other group he has spoken with has turned him down once the name "Voalidru" was spoken, despite his offer of generous payment. The infamous City of the Damned is well known to adventurers in these waters, many of whom have lost a great many friends and comrades to the allure of treasure hidden within the ruins.

Bracing himself for another bout of rejection, Mirol approaches the PCs with Narvolas in tow, introduces himself and the merprie in Serusan, and politely asks to speak to them in private. If the PCs decline to listen, Mirol shakes his head sadly at their lack of manners and swims on. If the PCs accept, the Prince's bodyguards circle about the group, keeping them screened from prying eyes and ears. In this case, read or paraphrase the following to the PCs:

With the Prince's guardians hovering so close behind you, your entire group is pressed near to Mirol, who ignores the tight quarters and gets down to business immediately. Giving each of you a grave look, the Prince Regent recites a well rehearsed speech. "My friend here, Narvolas, needs an experienced party to travel with him to the ruined city of Voalidru. Therein, he must find and retrieve a relic lost to the merfolk when our capital fell, and bring that artifact safely back here to Myth Nantar. The quest will not be easy, but I am willing to pay well for the risk."

The Prince reaches into a pouch at his side and produces a large box fashioned of green coral. With a slight flourish, he opens the lid of the box to reveal an astonishing sight. Nestled on a bed of soft kelp are ten of the largest pearls you have ever seen! You recognize the olive gems as olmars, the rarest form of pearl, obtained only from the dangerous great spitter clam. Each gigantic pearl is 7 inches long and 3 inches wide. A small fortune lies before you, gently reflecting the soft glow of the city's coral reefs.

"So," the Prince says, "what say you to my proposal? Will you accompany brave Narvolas on his journey?"

At this point, the Prince allows the PCs to pose any questions they might have for him, which he patiently answers as completely as possible. If asked why the Prince's own merfolk will not complete the mission, Mirol grimaces and reluctantly admits that his people have tried but failed. Many merfolk have died, and he cannot justify the risk of sending more of his subjects to death.

Mirol identifies "the relic" as a horn called the Akriloth and its resting place as the Temple of Eadro, but he refuses to go into detail as to the relic's powers or why Narvolas wishes to recover it. Any merfolk PC instantly recognizes the name from legends but knows little of the item's abilities beyond fables. Non-merfolk PCs can make an Ancient History proficiency check at a -2 penalty to recall a few scant details concerning the horn (color and size perhaps, but not powers). The olmars (which have a value of 500 tayars in Serôs and over 1,000 gp each in Faerûn) are to be handed over to the PCs once the horn is safely in Mirol's possession, but the Prince does give the party two of the pearls as a token of his goodwill if they press the issue. The Prince offers nothing more in payment if the party tries to haggle with him.

If the PCs refuse the Prince's offer, Mirol nods at their decision, expecting no less, and swims off with his guards to seek another acceptable party. If the PCs accept, the Prince Regent and Narvolas are visibly overjoyed. Narvolas wishes to leave the city immediately but understands if the PCs need time to do some final shopping or catch up on their rest.

Prince Regent Mirol, merman P4 (Eadro): AC 4; MV 1, swim 18 (B); hp 28; THAC0 18 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Wis 16; SA *shocking grasp* at will for 1-4 points of damage; ML 16; AL NG; XP 650; holy symbol, silverweave heartsleeve, *harpoon* +2, *dagger* +1, three coral knives, Crown of Eadraal (newly fashioned from blaze coral), two green pearls, eight yellow pearls, ten white pearls (in eelskin money belt), coral box with ten olmars (described above).

Spells (5/2): 1st—*command*, *cure light wounds* (×2), *detect evil*, *light*; 2nd—*hold person*, *messenger*.

Prince Mirol is nearly 8' long. He has short brown hair and green eyes with ice blue pupils. His skin and scales are both a deep brown color, to the point that the junction of his upper and lower torso is hard to distinguish. The prince has kept himself in good shape despite his years of study with the priesthood of Eadro and is 250 lbs. of trim muscle. Mirol bears several tattoos across his human torso; a tattoo across his abdomen depicts a large coral crown.

Mirol dreams of one day reclaiming the merfolk capital city of Voalidru for his people. With so much time gone by since the city's fall, along with the last disastrous attempt to take it back, most merfolk count the city as lost. Mirol still commands respect from his people, who view him as a good and fair leader, but he needs to recapture Voalidru to boost his political power. Many merfolk are uneasy with the Nantarn Alliance that Mirol supports, especially because of the presence of morkoth on the council, and Mirol needs to strengthen his people's belief in him to keep the merfolk in the coalition.

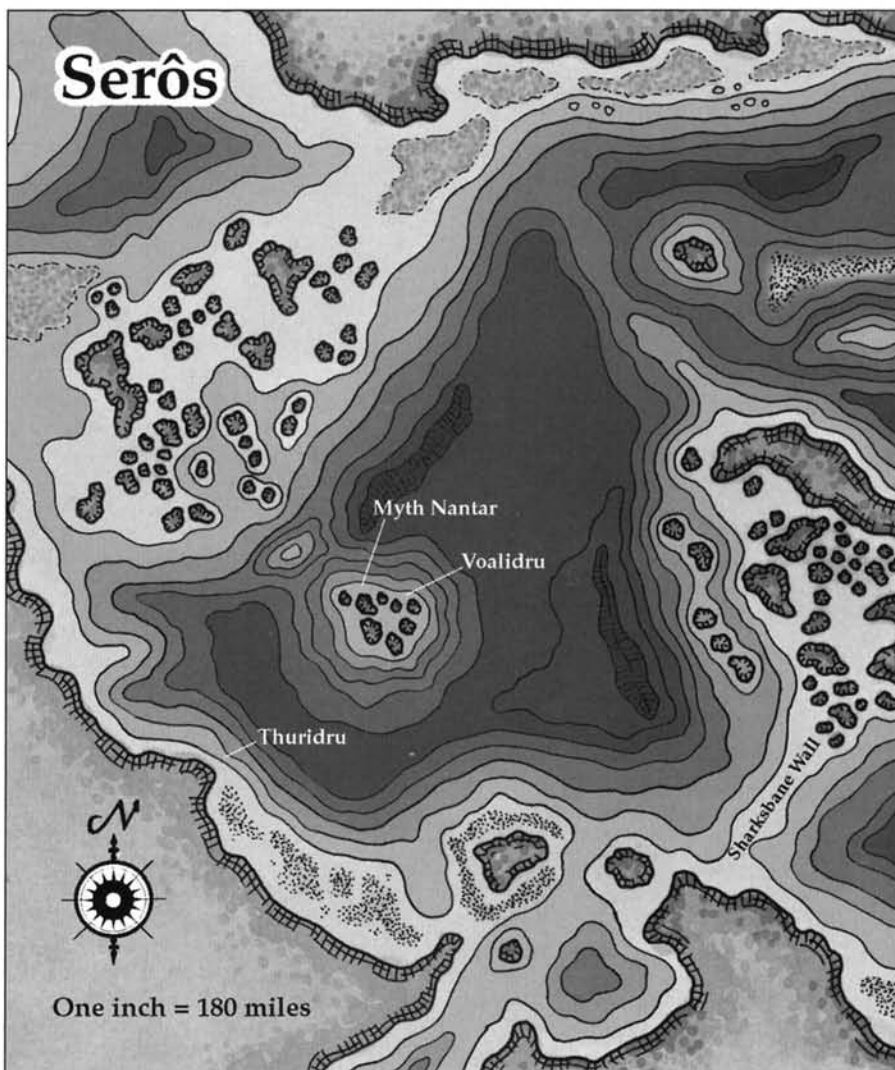
Narvolas, merman P7 (Eadro): AC 3; MV 1, swim 18 (B); hp 25; THAC0 16 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Dex 15, Wis 18; SA summon 12-HD water elemental for 6 turns (1/day); SD *augury* (1/day); ML 18; AL NG; XP 3,000; holy symbol, silverweave coif, *trident* +1, two coral daggers, two *pastes of healing* (same as potion), two thick gold bracelets (35 gp each), three platinum rings (20 gp each), two blue pearls, five green pearls, 12 yellow pearls, 18 white pearls (in eelskin money belt).

Spells (5/5/3/2): 1st—*bles*, *cure light wounds* (×3), *invisibility to undead*; 2nd—*chant*, *messenger*, *silence 15' radius*, *slow poison*, *withdraw*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *prayer*, *remove paralysis*; 4th—*cure serious wounds* (×2).

Narvolas is fully described in the next section.

Royal guards (8): AC 3; MV 1, swim 18 (B); F6; hp 55, 54, 52, 50 (×2), 47, 45, 40; THAC0 15 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 20; INT very (12); AL NG; XP 650; MM/249; silverweave heartsleeve, small tortoise shield, two coral daggers, coral trident (specialized); #AT 3/2; +1 bonus to attack rolls, +2 bonus to damage).

Each member of this elite band of guards is tattooed with a large depiction of the Crown of Eadraal encircled by a ring of coral daggers, which readily identifies them as members of the king's guard. The guards are sworn to protect their charge unto death, shielding the Prince from harm no matter the cost.



Narvolas As an NPC

Narvolas is 7' 7" long, with long silver hair that he keeps carefully tucked under his coif so that it won't interfere during battle. He has dark brown skin, bright silver scales, and eyes that are blue with pale silver pupils. Although far from fat, Narvolas is a bit soft by merfolk standards, weighing a rather massive 280 lbs. Like others of his race, he bears several tattoos, most notably the large spiral symbol of Eadro upon his left shoulder and an intricate double headed trident upon his left breast (his adulthood mark).

Narvolas has been a loyal follower of Eadro almost all of his 73 years. He quickly rose through the ranks of the clergy and was eventually assigned as the tutor of the Crown Prince, a position of great honor and prestige. When the forces of the Ravager came to Voalidru, he joined forces with the priests in the Temple of Eadro and fought bravely in the

temple's defense. He was ashamed that he could not prevent Lurelei's capture by the dark rays and did not contact Prince Mirol after entering Myth Nantar weeks ago to keep his dishonor secret. When the Prince Regent sought him out under his deity's directive, Narvolas realized his god wished him to face his failure and now has a fierce desire to set things aright. Narvolas knows precious little about the intricacies of the Temple of Eadro in Voalidru. Although he stayed behind to defend the structure, Narvolas never actually lived there nor was privy to any of its cryptic secrets. Once in the temple, Narvolas is of little aid to the PCs in their quest for the horn.

Narvolas should be carefully played by the DM to properly illustrate his depth of personality. The proud merpriest is not a spear-carrier for the more powerful PCs, and he refuses to act as such. Narvolas is actually a confident merman, with an easy laugh and a

very amiable, though sometimes terse, personality. He is fond of old tales and ballads, to the point that he almost became a bard in his youth. Narvolas is no stranger to combat, able to wield trident or spell in the name of his god quite ably if so needed. He makes friends easily and keeps friendships for life once forged, acting as a staunch ally in times of need. In short, the merpriest is a vivid character whose intensity should be as fully explored by the DM as possible. Properly played, the old merman could liven up any party, as well as spin a few yarns that could be used for later adventure hooks.

Voalidru

The way to Voalidru can be as perilous or smooth as the DM desires. The city lies approximately 42 miles southeast of Myth Nantar, a distance large enough to allow the PCs to experience any number of small side adventures and encounters. Narvolas knows the way to the ruined city, so the PCs need have no fear of becoming lost in unfamiliar waters. There is only one planned encounter for the PCs as they make their way toward the abandoned metropolis: a run-in with the merfolk of Clan Kamaar, fully described below.

Clan Kamaar

Shortly after the PCs speak with Prince Regent Mirol and agree to undertake the mission to reclaim the horn, word of the meeting reaches the ears of Sharna, leader of the rebel merfolk clan Kamaar. Through her vast network of sympathizers, spies, and bribed officials, Sharna keeps close tabs on the affairs of her estranged kin. When she learns of the PCs' mission, the merqueen of Thuridru contacts one of her many covert groups operating about Myth Nantar and has them arrange a "meeting" with the PCs. When the encounter begins, read or paraphrase the following:

A strong current guides you southeast toward Voalidru. Occasionally you glance about, observing a school of passing fish or a lone manta ray gliding gracefully through the water. On one such glimpse, you catch a hint of movement as something heads in your direction. A few seconds later, you discern a small group of merfolk accompanied by a lone sea elf. Narvolas waves to his fellows and raises his hands in a customary gesture of welcome, but the strangers do not respond in kind. Instead, they ready tridents and draw daggers as if preparing for combat.

Without preamble, the Kamaar attack the PCs, attempting to slay them. The group is led by one of Sharna's siblings, a young merman

named Ogmard. The merfolk engage the PCs head on, preferring to fight two-on-one if at all possible. Ogmard's mage, the sea elf Jamira, stays away from the ensuing melee, casting spells to aid her allies. If Ogmard is slain in battle, the other assailants must make a Morale check or bolt, their resolve broken by the death of their leader. Ogmard himself fights until he reaches one-quarter of his hit points, at which point he attempts to flee to the safety of Thuridru to report his failure to Sharna.

Ogmard, merman F9: AC 4; MV 1, swim 18 (B); hp 87; THAC0 12 (base); #AT 3/2; Dmg by weapon type; Str 18/79 (+2/+4), Con 17; ML 15; AL LE; XP 1,400; *ring of communication* (see "New Magical Items" sidebar), *ring of disguise* (same as *hat of disguise*), silverweave arm guards, Kinslayer: *trident* +1, +4 versus merfolk (specialized; #AT 2; +1 bonus to attack rolls, +2 bonus to damage), *dagger* +2, two coral daggers, seven silver earrings in right ear (1 gp each), five silver earrings in left ear (1 gp each), electrum ear cuff (5 gp), gold necklace with merfolk ears attached (10 gp for the necklace), five blue pearls, 13 green pearls, 32 yellow pearls (in eelskin money belt).

Ogmard, when not disguised with his magical *ring*, appears very similar to his four other siblings: He has bright red hair, aquamarine eyes, and a scattering of gold scales across his tail. His skin is a pallid white, like the underbelly of a manta ray, while his fish half has deep green scales. Ogmard is 8' long and 275 lbs. of knotted muscle. Like all other merfolk of Serôs, Ogmard bears several unique tattoos across his bulky body; upon his left shoulder blade is a tattoo depicting the Crown of Eadraal speared on a trident.

Ogmard has operated in and around Myth Nantar since the end of the Twelfth Serôs War, gathering information on behalf of his sister. One of Sharna's best operatives, Ogmard uses his *ring of disguise* to keep his true identity hidden from the other merfolk residing in Myth Nantar, while staying directly in contact with Sharna with his *ring of communication*, whose command word, "kelyak," is inscribed on the inside of the band. The youngest child of Vhaemas the Bastard, Ogmard was closest to his father and took his death very hard. Since that black day, he has kept a grisly collection of ears from all the merfolk of the Homurr clan he has slain in tribute to the memory of his father. His trident, Kinslayer, is his most prized possession, as it aids him in slaying members of clan Homurr. Kinslayer acts as a *trident* +1 in the hands of a nonmerfolk but gains its full abilities when wielded by a merman or mermaid. In addition to the weapon's bonuses, Kinslayer allows a merfolk wielder to cast the spells *pressure resistance* (detailed in *OSS*) and *light* at 8th-level of ability. Each spell can be cast thrice per day.

Jamira, aquatic elf female W8: AC 9; MV 9, swim 15 (C); hp 25; THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or spell; Int 16; SA +1 to hit with spears and tridents, surprise; SD 90% magic resistance to *sleep* and *charm* spells; ML 13; AL NE; XP 975; coral dagger.

Spells (4/3/3/2): 1st—*armor*, *magic missile* (x2), *sleep*; 2nd—*blur*, *mirror image*, *ray of enfeeblement*; 3rd—*haste*, *lightning bolt* (x2); 4th—*fear*, *monster summoning II*.

Kamaar warriors, mermen F3 (8): AC 7; MV 1, swim 18 (B); hp 29 (x2), 28 (x3), 26, 25 (x2); THAC0 18; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ L; ML 12; INT very (12); AL NE; XP 175; MM/249; trident, two coral daggers.

The City Proper

The city of Voalidru is not fully described in this module, although accounts of it can be gleaned from the *SoFS* accessory. This adventure only deals with the Temple of Eadro, which lies in the heart of the metropolis. Narvolas knows the path to the temple and leads the PCs straight to the entrance. The merpriest does not wish to explore the other buildings of the city but gives in if the PCs are adamant in their desire to roam the ruins. In this case, the PCs are likely to encounter wandering undead, the numbers and likes of which are determined by the DM. The DM is also encouraged to create a random room generation chart for the buildings of Voalidru for such an event, or use a variation of the one provided for the temple.

The Temple of Eadro

The Temple of Eadro is a massive building that was built slowly over a period of centuries. What began as a simple shrine expanded to become a major temple housing dozens of priests and their acolytes, as well as having numerous rooms dedicated for the worship of Eadro.

When Iakhovas assaulted Voalidru, the priests of the Temple of Eadro attempted to save the city by using their most powerful artifact, the Akriloth. Seeing his undead minions retreat from the relic's song, Iakhovas set upon the temple with a vengeance, loosing scores of living minions upon the merfolk inside while he personally struck the temple's foundations. As the Ravager's terrible jaws ripped through the base of the temple, the stone of the structure weakened, plunging the building deeper into the soft silt of the ocean floor, forming a giant crater in the process. Whereas before the temple proudly stood 40 feet above the smooth floor of the ocean, it now rests 30 feet below that point, at the bottom of a smooth-rimmed pit that runs for hundreds of feet in all directions. In the process of being sunk, several walls of the



Ravaged by war, the mer-city of Voalidru stands in ruins on the sea floor.

ancient building buckled, allowing even more of Iakhovas's forces to pour in. The temple's defenders didn't last long against such an onslaught.

After the temple's militia fell, Iakhovas didn't have long to enjoy his victory. Eager to conquer all of Serôs, he pushed his forces northwest, toward the city of Myth Nantar. The Ravager was not so brash, however, as to leave Voalidru unguarded. As his army pulled out of the city, Iakhovas left a large host of undead to safeguard his prize, to which he intended to return later. The Temple of Eadro was placed under particularly heavy guard, as Iakhovas had no desire to see the Akriloth brought to bear against his undead minions once more. The Ravager had no use for the great horn and no time to destroy it, so he simply left it where it lay.

After Iakhovas left the city, Qol'in'taroq, with the aid his morkoth ally, Vlantir, slipped into the temple and began his campaign for dominion of Voalidru. With Vlantir casting *reduce* spells on his body to make it small enough to fit through the narrow corridors of the temple, the kraken slowly took over the

entire building, turning its undead inhabitants to his command and destroying those that could not be swayed to join his side. Along the way, a group of sahuagin were lured to the kraken by the power of Sekolah, the sahuagin deity. With the aid of its sahuagin allies and enslaved minions, Qol'in'taroq took the horn from its resting place on the first level to a more secure vault on the fourth, where it had gathered together most of the valuables plundered from the temple. The kraken then settled down to its task of guarding the horn.

Structure

The Temple of Eadro, unlike many of the other buildings located within Voalidru, was constructed from sedimentary stone mined from beneath the ocean's floor. This stone was then inlaid with many small runes and glyphs that granted the structure great strength and stability. The presence of these runes causes all the walls and ceilings within the temple to glow slightly when viewed with a *detect magic* spell, radiating a slight aura of Alteration

magic. These symbols are invisible to the naked eye, although they show up quite clearly under magical scrutiny. The glyphs are indecipherable unless translated with a *read magic* spell, which identifies them as a strange variant of the priest spell *stone shape*, repeated thousands of times.

There are no stairs in the temple, which uses long, smooth tubes to connect the individual levels of the building. Doors in the temple are nothing like their surface counterparts, which work very poorly when submerged. Instead, openings between rooms and hallways are perfectly round portals that are covered with a thin, vibrant, orange membrane. Whenever an animate creature—be it a shark, undead monster, or PC—touches one of these membranes, it quickly and smoothly recedes to the sides of the portal, allowing the creature to pass. Two rounds after opening, the membrane reveals itself completely. Inanimate objects—such as rocks, floating algae, or a weapon—coming into contact with the membrane do not trigger this reaction. For purposes of defense, the membranes are AC -4 with 10 hp each, sustaining half damage from

slashing weapons and none from bludgeoning weapons. The membranes regenerate at a rate of 1 hp per hour, and they slowly grow back even if completely destroyed. Double doors indicated on the map are merely large portals; larger portals have 25 hp each.

The entire city of Voalidru lies beneath the waves at a depth of roughly 220 feet, but the sunken temple lies deeper still, with the first level at the 250' mark. Each of the under levels is progressively 20 feet deeper, with the fourth level lying at a depth of 310 feet below the surface. Unless otherwise noted, all ceilings in the temple are 10' high. Illumination in the great temple is scarce since its abandonment by the priests, and visual perception is poor, especially with all the sediment from the collapse of the foundation floating about inside. Except where indicated, visibility within the temple is classified as Gloom: Moonlit Night. Rules for vision and lighting underwater are presented in the *SoFS* campaign expansion.

Lurelei and Xulkur

By the time the PCs reach the temple and begin their hunt for the Akriloth, Xulkur and his party of *ixitxachtli* and koalinth slaves have already been probing the ruins for days. The *ixitxachtli* has been careful to avoid the temple's inhabitants as much as possible, thus slowing his own search efforts down considerably and giving the PCs a chance to find the artifact first. During the day, the vampiric *ixitxachtli* and its minions hide in area 9, recuperating and allowing the velya to rest in her crypt. At night, the monsters split into two groups, with Xulkur leading one and Lurelei commanding the other. Xulkur's group combs the second level, while Lurelei's group scours the first, both parties systematically and thoroughly checking each room for the horn.

During the hours of darkness, the PCs run the risk of encountering these search parties. On the first level, the PCs have a non-cumulative 5% chance per turn of bumping into the velya and her minions. On the second level, the PCs have a non-cumulative 10% chance per turn of running into Xulkur and his party. If the temple has been placed on alert, the chances for these encounters are lowered to 1% and 5% respectively, as the search parties move about more hesitantly. If one group or the other is encountered, run the appropriate scenario listed below.

Lurelei's Group

When the PCs encounter Lurelei and her search party, roll for surprise normally. The following description should be altered depending upon the location and situation in which the PCs meet the velya:

You're just about to exit another room when the portal leading out suddenly opens. On the other side, you make out the shapes of four humanoids, three of which harbor strangely luminous orange eyes. The figures quickly enter the room, approaching close enough to be recognized. The five closest figures have tattered flesh and clawed, webbed hands. Their orange eyes seem to burn with hatred as they survey you. To the rear of the group swims a lithe mermaid with long blonde hair. Upon closer inspection, you notice that the mermaid's mane is tangled, and her skin and scales have turned a sickly white color.

"Lurelei!" Narvolas cries out in a pained voice, obviously recognizing this undead creature. "NO!"

The velya has her marine wights engage the PCs in melee while she holds back and uses her *song* ability every round until one or more of the PCs are *charmed*. Once she has *charmed* one of the PCs, Lurelei orders the character to attack Narvolas, whom she hates above all others for letting her die. If Narvolas himself becomes *charmed*, the velya has him swim to her side, where he placidly waits while Lurelei attacks him every round with her draining touch. After successfully using her *song* power, the velya uses her *hardwater amulet*, slinging bolts at random targets (but focusing on Narvolas if he is alive and uncharmed). Lurelei and her marine wights fight until destroyed, with the velya turning into a current of water and swimming to her crypt (area 9) if reduced to 0 or fewer hit points. The characters should not receive any experience for the velya until her body is permanently destroyed. If the temple's inhabitants are not already on alert by the time this encounter is run, they are afterward, as the sound of the velya's unearthly *song* can be heard up to a mile away.

Lurelei (mermaid velya): AC 1; MV swim 12 (B); HD 7; hp 46; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1d8; SA energy drain (one level by touch); *charming song*, *shapechange*, *summon sharks*; SD regenerates 2 hp/round; +1 weapons needed to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; SZ M; ML 18; INT average (10); AL CE; XP 6,000; MYSTARA® MC/116; *ring of protection* +2, *hardwater amulet* (EM/34).

Lurelei looks much like a normal mermaid upon first glance, but subtle changes are readily apparent upon closer inspection. Her long blonde hair is tangled, her silver scales lack their usual gleam, and her brown eyes are filled with a wild, feral look. By means of the dark rite performed on her, Lurelei is completely loyal to Xulkur, whom she views as both master and trusted companion. Her

transformation into a velya has shattered her mind, but the former mermaid is sane enough to instantly recognize Narvolas, who abandoned her in her time of need. The velya despises all living things, as most undead do, but harbors a special hatred for Narvolas and longs to kill him in a very painful fashion.

After seeing Lurelei in her horrible undead form, Narvolas abandons all hope of rescuing the mermaid, instead grimly concentrating on destroying her and setting her tormented soul free. The merpriest feels deep regret for allowing Lurelei to be captured and turned into a vampire by the *ixitxachtli*, and he remains quiet for some time after the encounter.

Marine wights (5): AC 5; MV 12, swim 9 (C); HD 4+3; hp 31, 29 (x2), 24, 21; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain (one level by touch); SD +1 weapon to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, cold-based spells, and poison; SZ M; ML 14; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 1,400; MM/360 (wight, modified); Seawalker: *dagger* +3 (in boot of 31-hp wight), 1d4 green pearls each, 1d8 yellow pearls each, 1d10 white pearls each (in eelskin money belt).

These marine wights were once an adventuring group of sea elves who ran afoul of the velya while treasure hunting in Voalidru. The wights now follow the velya's every command without regard to their personal safety. Each still carries some small piece of treasure, all but forgotten in their transformation to undead status. Seawalker, the *dagger* +3, belongs to the wight that once led this small band of adventurers. The aquatic elf found the *dagger* some time ago upon the corpse of a drowned sea captain who was caught below decks when his ship sank. The *dagger* allows the wielder to cast *water walk* up to three times per day as the 5th-level priest spell.

Xulkur's Group

When the characters encounter Xulkur and his hunters, roll surprise rolls for both groups as the two parties accidentally bump into one another. After the rolls are made, read or paraphrase the following to the characters. Note that this description may need revision depending upon the location and circumstances surrounding the characters' meeting with the vampiric ray.

Ahead you spot a small band of koalinths led by a large koalinth clutching a harpoon. Behind the koalinths swim six black rays with long, barbed tails. At the back of the group is a particularly large ray with red, glowing eyes. It is barely able to fit in the 10'-wide corridors of the temple.

The enemy spots you immediately, and the entire pack suddenly charges forward in your direction.

In combat, the *ixitxachtli* follow a rather simple attack plan. Dras and the five *ixitxachtli* slave handlers charge the PCs head on, while the remaining eight *koalinth* fire their underwater crossbows. During the battle, Xulkur remains behind the other attackers, casting his spells. Xulkur enters melee only if he has exhausted all of his ranged spells. In close combat, Xulkur is a deadly foe, able to bite opponents with his draining fangs while simultaneously grasping with his barbed tail. If the tail hits, Xulkur's target is shocked by the *ring of shocking grasp* he wears, suffering 1d8+6 points of damage. If reduced to 15 hit points or less, Xulkur flees at double speed (MV 24), heading for area 9 to gather the remainder of his forces to protect him. The *koalinth* and other *ixitxachtli* fight to the death, regardless of whether Xulkur flees.

Xulkur (*ixitxachtli* devitan): AC 3; MV swim 12 (C); HD 4+4; hp 36; THAC0 17; #AT 1 + special; Dmg 3–12 or by spell; SA cast spells as 9th-level priest, energy drain (one level by bite), barbed tail; SD regenerate 3 hp/round; SZ L; ML 14; INT exceptional (15); AL CE; XP 2,000; MM/209; *ring of protection* +3 (worn on fang), *ring of shocking grasp* (worn on tail).

Spells (4/4/3/2/1): 1st—*invisibility to undead* (×4); 2nd—*hold person* (×3), *withdraw*; 3rd—*animate dead*, *continual darkness*, *dispel magic*; 4th—*poison*, *protection from good* 10' radius; 5th—*slay living*.

Xulkur is a powerful devitan, a vampiric leader of an *ixitxachtli* city. He has been charged by the vitanar to find the Akriloth and bring it back to Xedran Reefs so that the *ixitxachtli* may launch a full scale invasion of the city at a later date. Since failure to finish a mission means death, Xulkur has no intention of letting anything stop him.

Dras, koalinth male F4: AC 5; MV 3, swim 12 (D); hp 34; THAC0 17 (base); #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 13; INT very (11); AL LE; XP 175; MM/191 (hobgoblin); *girde of frost giant strength* (+4 to attack rolls, +9 to damage), *harpoon* +1, two *pastes of healing* (same as potion), heavy underwater crossbow (1d8+1/1d10+1), 30 heavy bone quarrels.

Dras has been Xulkur's personal slave all his life, and although he doesn't particularly like the vampiric ray, he won't betray him either. Xulkur is quite generous to his slave, at least by *ixitxachtli* standards, and Dras knows he "has it made" with his current master.

Koalinth (8): hp 9 (×4), 8 (×3), 7; see area 9 for complete statistics.

Ixitxachtli (5): hp 9 (×3), 8 (×2); see area 9 for complete statistics.

These *ixitxachtli* act as Xulkur's task masters, keeping their force of *koalinth* slaves in line and focused on the enemy. They view Xulkur in high regard and obey any commands that issue from his fanged maw.

Level 1 (Areas 1–6)

1. Main Entrance. This room was once the elegant reception room for the Temple of Eadro. All traffic into the edifice would pass through this room, which was decorated to impress visitors and guests. The east and west walls are painted (with a special, colored paste akin to paint that only the merfolk know the secret of making) in vibrant murals of merfolk worshipping their patron god, Eadro. The east wall depicts a dozen high merpriests in prayer while a giant, smiling merman looks on. The west wall portrays hundreds of mermen and mermaids within a large, cathedral-like room, all pressed to the floor in supplication. Before them stands the object of their worship, a great, blob-like being with eight pseudopods that radiate about its central mass.

This room is occupied by minions of the kraken that have been placed here to safeguard against intruders. A single sea zombie named Samuel has been given command of this chamber by the kraken. The drowned one is actually an ally of the kraken, not a turned slave. When intruders enter the room, the zombie commands its underlings forward while he casts spells from the rear. If 75% of his charges fall in combat or he is reduced to half of his total hit points, Samuel flees to area 14 to alert Vlantir to unwanted guests.

Samuel (sea zombie): AC 7; MV 6, swim 12 (E); HD 5; hp 32; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1–10 or by spell; SA stench, disease, cast spells as 4th-level priest; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells; cannot be turned; SZ M; ML 20; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 420; MM/373 (zombie); rusty spear.

Spells (3/2): 1st—*cause fear*, *cause light wounds* (×2); 2nd—*chant*, *hold person*.

Sahuagin zombies (10): AC 8; MV 6, swim 9 (E); HD 2; hp 16 (×4), 15 (×3), 14 (×3); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1–8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/373 (zombie, modified).

Giant skeletal turtles (4): AC 6; MV swim 6 (E); HD 6; hp 46, 40, 38 (×2); THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2–5; SD edged or piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and *fear* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ L; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; MM/315 (skeleton, modified).

2. Forum. This chamber once acted as a large meeting area where members of the temple and their visitors could confer or conduct business. The area was furnished with plush kelp couches and such at one time, but all the trappings have since been stripped away. The ceiling is decorated with a great painting depicting the chamber in its former glory, filled with merfolk, sea elves, and locathah, all engaged in conversation. In the center of the

chamber are the remains of at least a dozen of the temple's merfolk defenders. Their corpses are little more than skeletons, with all of their equipment and belongings removed.

The chamber is occupied by a pair of crystal oozes that moved into the temple some time ago. The creatures don't bother the temple's undead occupants, whose flesh they seem to find unsavory, and are therefore left alone by the kraken and its minions. The monsters attack the PCs immediately. The creatures are 75% undetectable, gaining automatic surprise with their first attack unless the PCs successfully notice them.

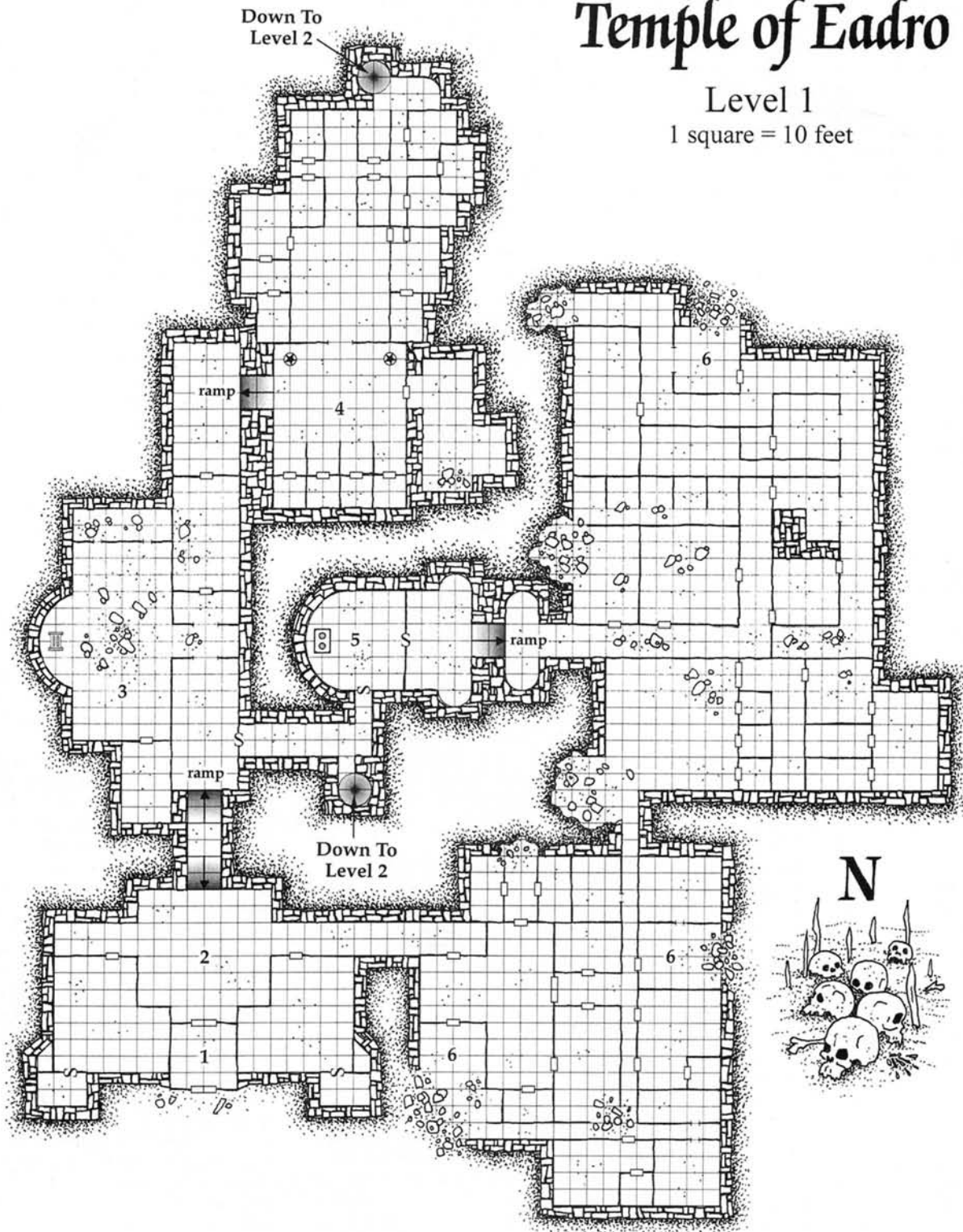
Crystal oozes (2): AC 8; MV 1, swim 3 (E); HD 4; hp 29, 24; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 4–16; SA poison, corrode wood and cloth; SD immune to acid, cold, heat, and fire attacks; all weapons inflict only 1 point of damage plus magical bonuses per hit; SZ M; ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 420; MM/278.

3. Hall of the Horn. This enormous chamber was once the resting place of the Akriloth. Great piles of merfolk bones rest throughout the chamber, attesting to the fact that this room was heavily defended during the invasion by Lakhovas's forces. The remains hold little of interest. The walls and ceiling are adorned with murals showing vivid pictures of the horn as used by the priests of Eadro. To the far west, there is a raised dais set into the curvature of the western wall. This dais, which smoothly ascends 5 feet from the floor of the chamber, bears a short, black, 4'-diameter stone pedestal. The stand was designed to hold the Akriloth and could easily fetch 700 gp, although its weight of 350 lbs. discourages theft. The alcove about the dais is inhabited by a species of luminous algae that gives the entire room a visibility rating of Gloom: Clear.

A pair of stone archways set into the northern wall lead to a 60' × 20' vestibule that was once used to store various holy symbols and vestments used in sacred rituals. The space now holds a group of undead. These undead were once all merfolk priests of the temple, which Narvolas recognizes even in their new horrid form. Three of the creatures are heucuvae, priests who cursed Eadro during their time of trial and torture and were punished for their transgression. The heucuvae exit from the northern chamber, *polymorphed* to resemble their former selves, and slowly approach the PCs. Observant PCs might have some indication that something is amiss based on the fact that the priests don't greet the PCs as they approach. The heucuvae maintain the illusion until someone is within striking range, at which point they revert to their true forms and attack. The heucuvae concentrate their attacks on priests, all three ganging up on such individuals. After combat is joined, the merfolk zombies enter the fray.

Temple of Eadro

Level 1
1 square = 10 feet



PCs who search the northern vestibule find that all the articles housed there have been destroyed or fouled by the heucuvae, although one item of note does remain intact. Hidden amid the debris is a functional *amulet versus undead* bearing the mark of Eadro. The heucuvae were unable to touch the *amulet* due to its divine aura and buried it beneath a pile of trash to remove the hated symbol of Eadro from their sight. Anyone sifting through the rubble has a cumulative 5% chance per person per turn spent searching of finding the *amulet*. Note that the pendant must be donned for seven consecutive days before the wearer gains the ability to turn undead.

Merfolk heucuvae (3): AC 3; MV 9, swim 14 (E); HD 2; hp 16, 15 (x2); THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6; SA disease; SD silver or +1 weapon to hit, turned as wights, *polymorph self* 3/day; SZ M; INT semi (4); AL CE; XP 270; MM/188.

Merfolk zombies (13): AC 8; MV 6, swim 14 (E); HD 2; hp 15 (x6), 14 (x3), 12 (x4); THACO 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/373 (zombie, modified).

4. Worship Chamber. This room was one of several chambers scattered throughout the temple dedicated to worship services in Eadro's name. Since the temple's fall, however, the room has been abandoned and its altar destroyed. Small pieces of the coral structure still rest in the center of the room. A few broken stone pews, their cushions of kelp torn away, lie about the room in haphazard fashion.

In each of the northern corners of the room stands a 3'-tall statue carved from sedimentary stone to resemble Eadro in his blob-like state. Each statue radiates a permanent *faerie fire* aura but is otherwise of little value. Visibility within 20 feet of these statues is raised to the status of Shallows: Stormy, while vision outside the radius is upped to Gloom: Overcast. Anyone touching the statues with bare flesh must make a successful saving throw vs. rods or be surrounded by a *faerie fire* aura for 3 turns. PCs thus affected effectively bring their own light source with them as they explore the temple but suffer the penalties indicative of the spell.

A portal to the east leads to what was once the abode of the temple's ruling priest, but the chamber is now empty and of little interest. To the south are four more portals that lead to small dressing rooms. Priests performing various sacraments changed in these rooms and took small breaks between services in them as well. The dressing rooms hold small coral benches lined with rotting kelp, but little else of interest. A pack of wights have moved into this area and use the dressing rooms as their abode. The wights hide behind the portals that lead into the dressing rooms until they

hear someone enter the main chamber. One round later, they burst from their concealment, seeking to surprise the PCs with their sudden appearance.

Marine wights (8): AC 5; MV 12, swim 9 (C); HD 4+3; hp 35, 33 (x2), 31, 27 (x4); THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4; SA energy drain (one level by touch); SD +1 weapon needed to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML 14; INT average (8); AL LE; XP 1,400; MM/360 (modified).

5. High Altar. This room served as the temple's main altar, where the temple's ruling merpriest ventured every twelve hours to sing songs of worship and praise to Eadro. A great stone altar stands against the western wall of the room. The 5'-high altar bears a stylized carving of Eadro upon its flat surface, showing the god in his amorphous state with eight pseudopods radiating about a central mass. If each of the pseudopods are touched in order, starting at the tentacle pointing north and working clockwise, a hidden panel beneath the symbol opens to reveal a secret compartment. A successful Find Traps roll also locates this niche. Inside the small crevice are three sharkskin scrolls containing the following clerical spells cast at 15th-level of ability: *holy word*, *succor*, *resurrection*.

Casting the *resurrection* spell on Lurelei restores the mermaid to life regardless of whether she is dead or undead; for details, see "Concluding the Adventure."

The north and south walls of the room are inscribed with giant symbols of Eadro that are carved deep into the sediment stone. Pressing on the middle portion of the spiral on the southern wall opens the secret door to the south, which can be detected normally.

This room is guarded by a dormant water elemental, indistinguishable from the surrounding water while at rest. The elemental, which was placed here by Eadro to protect the ruling priest, passively floats in the room until someone who does not bear the *ruler's amulet* (see area 10) enters the room. At that point, the creature quietly gathers its mass and attacks the perpetrators, automatically gaining surprise the first round of combat. The elemental will not attack any party in the company of one wearing the *ruler's amulet*, provided that person displays the symbol openly. The elemental fights until its foes die or it is slain, but it does not pursue prey beyond the boundaries of the chamber.

Water elemental: AC 2; MV 6, swim 18 (A); HD 16; hp 102; THACO 7; #AT 1; Dmg 5-30; SD +2 or better weapon needed to hit; SZ H; ML 17; INT low (6); AL N; XP 10,000; MM/100.

6. Secondary Entrance. These chambers present the PCs with an alternative route of

entrance into the temple. When the Temple of Eadro was plunged into its present crater by Iakhovas, several sections of the outer wall crumbled despite their protective wards and glyphs. In the lower levels, these breaches were quickly filled in by an onrush of sand and bedrock, effectively plugging the gap with rubble. On the first level, however, a few of these breaks were not so affected, creating new doorways into the temple. The kraken has long desired to have these breaches repaired but fears such construction would alert curious adventuring parties to the presence of a higher intelligence at work within the temple. Therefore, the kraken has settled for having each opening guarded and carefully monitored.

Each cleft is guarded by a menagerie of undead and sahuagin under the command of a sahuagin lieutenant. The sea devils are all members of the clan living in area 23. When the PCs enter the room, the lieutenant commands his undead charges forward while the sea devils throw their javelins, entering combat themselves once the javelins are hurled. During the ensuing melee, the lieutenant stays well away from combat, preparing to retreat to area 14, whereupon he alerts Vlantir to the PCs' presence.

K'sethis, sahuagin male F4 (lieutenant): AC 5; MV 12, swim 24 (C); hp 39; THACO 17 (base); #AT 1 or 3; Dmg by weapon type +1 (16 Strength) or 1-2/1-2/1-4; SA rake (1-4/1-4 with foot claws, if raking possible); SD detect invisible creatures within 30' radius; SZ M; ML 12; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 420; MM/306; sahuagin *trident* +1 (1d8+2/3d4+1), two bone daggers, 1d6 green pearls, 1d12 yellow pearls (in triton skin money belt).

Sahuagin (6): AC 5; MV 12, swim 24 (C); HD 2+2; hp 18 (x2), 17 (x3), 16; THACO 19 (base); #AT 1 or 3; Dmg by weapon type or 1-2/1-2/1-4; SA rake (1-4/1-4 with foot claws, if raking possible); SD detect invisible creatures within 30' radius; SZ M; ML 12; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 270; MM/306; two *javelins of piercing* each, sahuagin *trident* (1d8+1/3d4), two bone daggers, 1d6 green pearls each, 1d12 yellow pearls each (in triton skin money belt).

Zombie sharks (8): AC 6; MV swim 9 (E); HD 6; hp 48, 45, 42 (x2), 36 (x2), 32, 27; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 2-8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and *fear* spells; impervious to cold, poison, paralysis, and death magic; SZ L; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; MM/373 (variant).

Giant zombie eels (2): AC 6, MV swim 9 (E); HD 6; hp 45, 40; THACO 15; #AT 1; Dmg 3-18; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ L; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; MM/373 (zombie, modified).

Level 2 (Areas 7–15)

7. Prison Cells. The portals that lead to each of these rooms are noticeably different from the rest encountered in the temple, with membrane coverings of a somber midnight blue color. These membranes do not respond to touch, requiring instead a command word to open. The command must be uttered in Serusan to take effect and is known by the kraken and his minions, but not by Narvolas. Before the fall of the temple, these three rooms were infrequently used by the priests as prison cells. Once in a while, a sahuagin or malenti would be captured and brought here to be magically interrogated by the temple's clerics. Signs of former occupation are prevalent, with coral manacles lining the walls of each room, some still containing the skeletal remains of long departed prisoners.

Since the coming of the kraken, these chambers have been used as holding pens for a pride of sea lions. The floor of each room is littered with the bones of fish and golden scales shed from the lions. The lions were captured weeks ago by Qol'in'taroq's sahuagin, who are attempting to train them to act as perimeter guards. Thus far their efforts have met with mixed success. Each chamber houses a single full-grown female sea lion and her offspring, some of which are almost old enough to be considered adults. All of the mature males of the pack were slain by the sea devils, who could not force the willful lions to cooperate. When the PCs enter each room, the lions do not attack unless their young are endangered or the PCs take the offensive first. If the PCs attempt to free the lions from their incarceration, they should receive the experience point value of the entire pride (2,895 XP total) as a bonus for their kind deed. If they instead kill the group, only half experience should be awarded.

Female sea lion: AC 5/3; MV swim 18 (C); HD 6; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SA mauling; SZ L; ML 12; INT semi (3); AL N; XP 420; MM/310.

Adolescent sea lions (2): AC 5/3; MV swim 14 (C); HD 4; hp 30, 27; THAC0 17; #AT 3; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-12; SZ L; ML 11; INT semi (3); AL N; XP 175; MM/310 (modified).

Sea lion cubs (3): AC 7/4; MV swim 10 (C); HD 2; hp 16, 14, 11; THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SZ M; ML 10; INT semi (3); AL N; XP 65; MM/310 (modified).

8. Storage Room. This room was formerly used to store various foodstuffs and supplies for the temple's inhabitants. The chamber has not been used in quite some time, however, and all of its contents have gone to rot. The scattered remains of several felled undead skeletons and a pair of slain merfolk (minus their gear) litter the floor of the chamber. The

secret door is opened by simply pushing on the wall, which swings about effortlessly.

9. Secret Passage. This rough natural chamber connects to a convoluted tunnel that winds its way beneath the ocean floor for roughly 2½ miles before emerging in a bed of kelp a mile east of Voalidru. The cavern and tunnels have always been present beneath the temple but were never meant to be connected to the structure. When the temple was plunged into the depths of the ocean floor, a secret door built to provide easy access to the storerooms came to rest adjacent to one of the caverns. Thus, a hitherto unknown secret entrance into the temple came to exist. Xulkur and his band accidentally discovered the tunnel leading to this secret door while surveying the perimeter of Voalidru and have since used it for their own means.

The floor of the chamber is littered with the remains of days' worth of meals taken by the ixitxachitl and the koalinth. Crude kelp sleeping pallets used by the marine hobgoblins are scattered about the room. The most prevalent feature of the cavern, however, is found in the northern section, down a wide niche that juts northwest. At the end of this cul-de-sac, sand has been gathered to form a raised area roughly 1 foot high, 4 feet wide, and 7 feet long. The perimeter of this mound is ringed with fifteen bone stakes topped with merfolk skulls, all missing their lower jaws. This area serves as the velya's crypt, where the undead mermaid rests during the daylight hours and comes to regenerate when slain. Anyone taking the time to dig beneath the sand finds several items of interest. Hidden within the mound is a large eelskin pouch containing two coral daggers sheathed in eelskin, three small gold beads (1 gp each), two thick silver bracelets (5 gp each), a gold-rimmed hand mirror (25 gp), a tortoise shell comb inlaid with silver (15 gp), and a holy symbol of Eadro—all remnants of Lurelei's former life. Finding this sack requires 5 rounds of searching in the sandy mound.

The occupants of the room and their activity level depends upon several factors. If the PCs enter during the daylight hours, all of Xulkur's charges are here and asleep in anticipation for the night's upcoming activities. The monsters awaken during the first round of combat. If the PCs enter during the night, Xulkur and Lurelei, along with their search parties, are absent, while the rest of the cavern's inhabitants are awake. If the PCs have already met Lurelei and defeated her, she is in her crypt to the north in a deep sleep from which she will not awaken for a full day after the time of her defeat. If Xulkur's group has been defeated and Xulkur himself managed to escape, the remaining occupants of the room are awake at all hours. There are other possi-

ble scenarios depending on the PCs' interaction with the two monster search parties, and the DM should use common sense when arbitrating these cases.

Ixitxachitl (7): AC 6; MV swim 12 (C); HD 1+1; hp 9, 8 (×3), 7, 6 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1 + special; Dmg 3-12; SA barbed tail; SZ M; ML 13; INT high (14); AL CE; XP 35; MM/209.

Koalinth (20): AC 5; MV 3, swim 12 (D); HD 1+1; hp 9 (×5), 8 (×8), 7 (×5), 6 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SZ M; ML 12; INT average (9); AL LE; XP 35; MM/191 (hobgoblin); bone spear, heavy underwater crossbow (1d8+1/1d10+1), 20 heavy bone quarrels.

10. Central Worship Chamber. This great chamber was once the central chapel for those paying homage to the god Eadro. Visitors would come to the temple from all over Voalidru to attend an open ceremony held here once a week. The ceilings here rise to a height of 20 feet and are painted in various murals that depict merfolk in prayer. Ten stone pillars reach from the floor to the roof, each intricately carved to depict Eadro in his merman form. The base of each pillar bears a *continual light* spell, providing the entire room with a visibility rating of Shallows: Clear. Rows of ornate, kelp-cushioned pews, a few broken but most still intact, line the central part of the chamber. A massive stone altar rests against the northern wall.

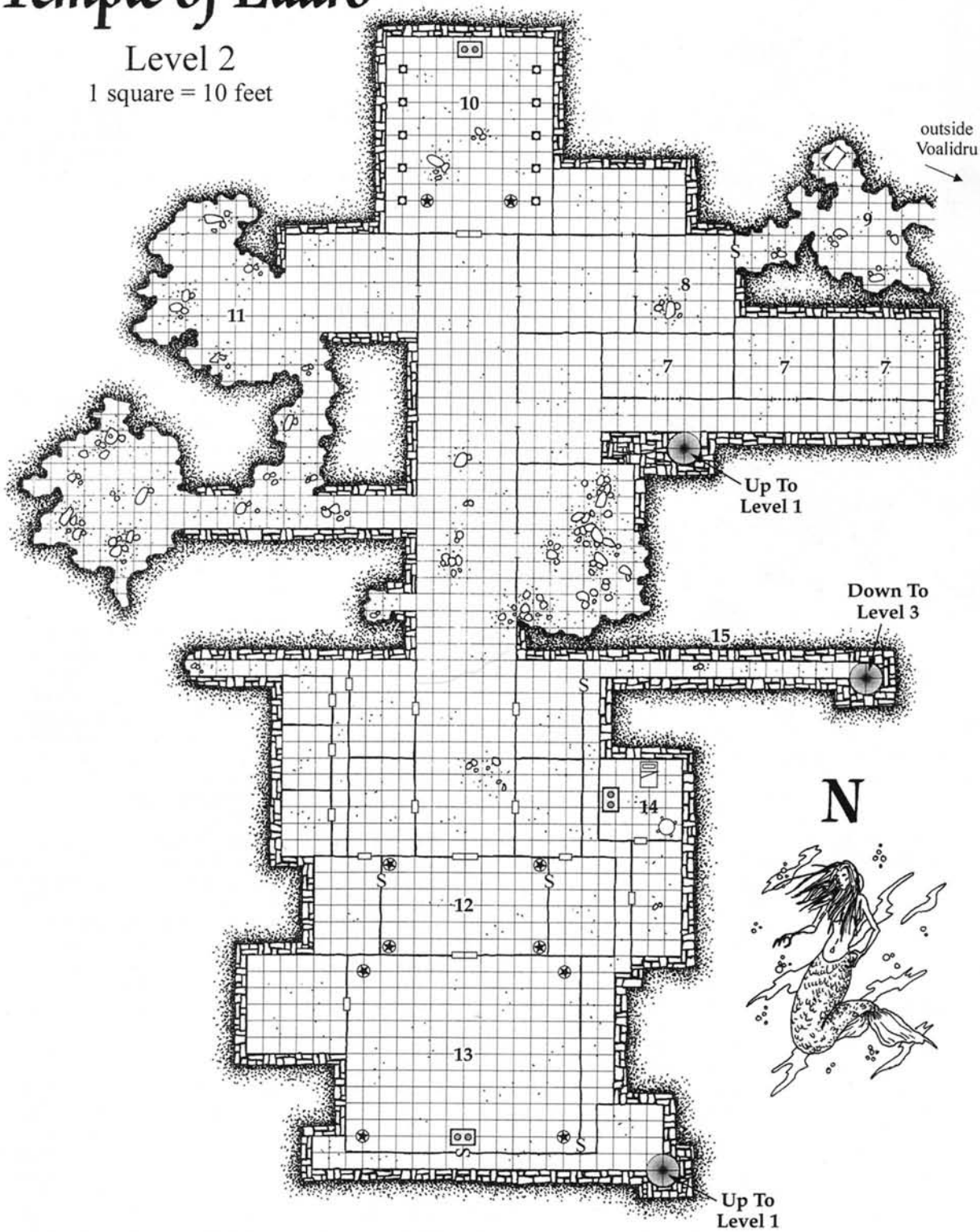
To the east and west of the portal entrance stand two massive humanoid stone statues, both roughly cut and rather plain. Each bears the spiral mark of Eadro, carved into its stone chest. These statues are actually stone golems that were created to serve the ruling high priest of the temple.

When the temple fell to Iakhovas's forces, this room served as the fallback point for the defenders. Here the priests made their last stand, led by the ruling high merpriest of the temple, Jarecah. With the aid of the stone golems, the merfolk held out in this room for hours against an overwhelming onslaught of invaders. Eventually, however, the press became to great, and the priests were dragged down one by one. After all the merpriests were slain, Iakhovas's minions withdrew, leaving the stone golems guarding a chamber containing dozens of dead, decaying merfolk. After the battle, this room was left unmolested and unexplored, as the stone golems proved too hard to defeat to warrant pillaging the chamber.

PCs entering the room see the bodies of the fallen merfolk on the litter-strewn floor, many still holding weapons. As soon as the PCs enter, the stone golems (still acting under command from Jarecah) attack them, directing their attention toward any non-merfolk members of the party. The golems fight until destroyed or their targets leave the room.

Temple of Eadro

Level 2
1 square = 10 feet





A ghostly sentinel guards an altar in the sunken Temple of Eadro.

Searching all the dead bodies in the room (a process requiring 5 turns) uncovers 28 coral tridents, 35 coral daggers, 22 tortoise shell bucklers, 20 silverweave heartsleeves, 24 holy symbols of Eadro, and a combined treasury of 38 green pearls, 40 yellow pearls, and 64 white pearls. Near to the altar lies the body of Jarecah, whom Narvolas recognizes. The corpse still clutches a *trident* +1, +3 *versus undead* in its desiccated left hand and the *ruler's amulet* in its right. The *ruler's amulet* functions as a holy symbol of Eadro and acts as a *ring of protection* +3 when worn by a specialty priest of Eadro. The *amulet* is completely nonmagical if worn by anyone other than a specialty priest. Narvolas is saddened by the discovery of Jarecah's body but not surprised by his death.

Stone golems (2): AC 5; MV 6; HD 14; hp 60 each; THAC0 7; #AT 1; Dmg 3–24; SA cast *slow* on one opponent once every other round; SD +2 weapons to hit; immune to all spells except *transmute rock to mud*, *transmute mud to rock*, and *stone to flesh*; SZ L; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 8,000; MM/166.

Note that the golems cannot swim but are able to hurl objects with a Strength of 22.

11. Nest of Eyes. This roughly hewn natural cavern once laid below the temple but became attached to the building once it sank beneath the ocean floor and its outer walls crumbled. The ceiling rises to a height of 15 feet, while a thin layer of sand and gravel line the floor. A dimly fluorescent variety of algae grows upon the walls of the chamber, granting the room a visibility rating of Gloom: Stormy. Aside from the algae, the room's only item of interest is a glossy red egg, fully 6 feet in diameter, which hangs from the ceiling of the chamber. Closer inspection of the egg reveals that its surface is both warm and soft to the touch, rather like the texture of supple leather. The egg is attached to the ceiling by a dark, viscous substance (similar to the surface of the egg) that is neigh impossible to break. Removing the egg from its brace requires a combined Strength of 50, which then only succeeds in tearing the top layer of the shell off and releasing its inhabitants (see below).

The giant egg is actually the spawning cocoon of two eyes of the deep. These creatures, aquatic cousins of the beholder, reproduce only once a century in a process that takes five years to realize. When the time to replicate comes, the parent rises from the

depths and seeks out a secluded spot to begin the cycle. After adhering itself to a solid surface with a special mucous membrane that the eye's body produces only during the reproduction cycle, the eye slowly encases itself within a thinner layer of the same membrane. From that point on, the creature slowly divides into two separate beings, each an exact copy of the original with half the Hit Dice of the parent. When the duplication is complete and both embryos have grown to 10 Hit Dice, the egg breaks open and the twins swim their separate ways. This particular eye spun its shell years ago, before the temple fell into its hidden cave, and it is close to hatching.

Unless attacked by the PCs, the egg and its occupants remain impassive and unresponsive. If assaulted, the cocoon has an AC 5 and 15 hit points. After sustaining this much damage, the egg splits asunder, releasing the two eyes within. The eyes, which are not yet fully grown, require 1 round to orientated themselves to their new environment before viscusly attacking the characters. The kraken's servants discovered the egg months ago but have left it alone rather than risk incurring the ire of its inhabitants.

Eyes of the deep (2): AC 5; MV swim 6 (A); HD 8; hp 50 each; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 2–8/2–8/1–6; SA *light*, *hold person*, *hold monster*, *create illusion*; SZ S; ML 15; INT very (12); AL LE; XP 3,000; MM/21 (beholder, eye of the deep—modified).

12. Shadowhome. This room once served as an antechamber for the large chapel to the south. Standing in the corners of the room are four statues similar to those found in area 4. However, these statues do not seem to radiate a *faerie fire* aura, leaving this room completely dark. The walls and ceiling are painted in dozens of small, breathtaking murals that flow seamlessly into one another. Any merfolk PC (or any PC who makes a successful Religion proficiency check at a –2 penalty) realizes that these murals depict the legend of how the merfolk race was brought into being by Eadro.

In the center of the chamber is the body of a slain merpriest, obviously long dead. Careful examination of the cadaver reveals that the merman died of a severe wound to the throat. The coral dagger that sliced his throat is clutched in the merman's right hand. Searching the corpse turns up two more coral daggers, a coral trident, a silverweave heartsleeve, a tortoise shell buckler, 11 green pearls, a holy symbol of Eadro, and a tiny, elaborate box carved from the horn of a narwhale (45 gp value). The box bears several strange symbols that radiate Conjunction magic if viewed with a *detect magic* spell, and it has an ivory clasp.

The box originally contained a rare, dreadful monster known as a slow shadow that was

confined to the ivory trap. Unfortunately, a junior merpriest (the corpse on the floor) found the item, which was carefully placed out of harm's way at one time, while on the run from Iakhovas's forces. Hoping that the container held something of great power he could use against the torrent of undead, the merman opened the box and released the shadow. In recompense for its freedom, the shadow quickly began to draw the merpriest's life essence away, slowing turning him into a shadow as well. Realizing what was happening to him and unable to harm the creature that clung to his chest, the merpriest turned his dagger upon himself.

Since the time of its release, the slow shadow has been hiding in the antechamber and attacking any living being that passes through. Through its stealth and cunning, the shadow has managed to slay five merfolk and four of Iakhovas's sahuagin, all of whom rose from the dead as slow shadows under the original's command. The absence of a light aura from the statues in the corners of the room can be attributed to these shadows, four of which cover the figurines with their bodies, thereby negating the dim illumination. When the PCs enter the room, the shadows maneuver to get behind the PCs and strike with surprise, attaching themselves to as many targets as possible. The slow shadows covering the light sources don't attack until the others have already entered combat, at which point they leave the statues and enter melee. The slow shadows do not pursue PCs beyond the confines of this room.

Slow shadows (10): AC 8; MV 12, swim 12 (D); HD 4; hp 32, 31 (x2), 30 (x3), 29, 28 (x2), 25; THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 1-4 + special; SA 90% undetectable in darkness, *slow*; SD +2 weapon needed to hit, immune to *charm* and *hold* spells, as well as cold- and lightning-based attacks; cannot be turned; SZ M; ML 15; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 975; MCA4/69.

13. Traumatic Death. This room was yet another of the temple's many worship chambers, designed to house a congregation of dozens of merfolk. The ceiling is painted in one huge mural depicting Eadro in his blob-like form, pseudopods radiating about his body. Four statues identical to those found in area 4 adorn the corners of this room, each depicting Eadro in his merman form.

Twelve pews form a double line down the central portion of this chamber, while a large and ornate red coral altar rests to the south. Five dead merfolk and two dozen or so fallen undead and sahuagin litter the floor about the pews, bearing silent testimony to the battle that took place here long ago. The bodies have been stripped of all their equipment and belongings. Behind the altar is a narrow niche that is completely covered by the altar's leg.

This niche may be detected as though it were a concealed door. Inside the hole is a *manual of (stone) golems* written in Serusan, penned in underwater ink upon sharkskin pages. Exposing the book to air for more than 3 rounds causes it to dry out and quickly break into useless pieces.

When the PCs first enter the room, they spot a faintly glowing merpriest floating over the altar. The merman shouts in Serusan, "All glory to Eadro!" as he stabs out with a wickedly barbed trident at some unseen target. The phantom then goes through an elaborate dance of stabbing and dodging, raising a shield occasionally to catch blows that aren't there. The smell of blood suddenly and inexplicably fills the water as the phantom continues engaging in mock combat. After 12 rounds of fighting, the phantom suddenly loses its shield, apparently torn from its arm by some foe. The merman cries aloud in surprise and pain as an invisible blow snaps its right arm, causing the trident to fall to the floor with an audible clatter. The phantom then begins to whimper, cradling its broken arm, as a final unseen strike knocks its head backward, shattering the merpriest's neck with a loud crack of bone. The phantom then falls lifelessly to the floor. Three rounds later, the display repeats itself, with the phantom suddenly disappearing from the floor and appearing above the dais, once more fully armed and ready for combat.

The first round the PCs sees the phantom, each must make a successful saving throw vs. death magic at a -2 penalty or flee as though affected by a *fear* spell. Anyone witnessing the "death" of the phantom must make a System Shock roll with a +10% bonus or fall dead from a heart attack. Both rolls apply only the first time the event is viewed.

Phantom: AC nil; MV 9, swim 9 (D); HD nil; hp nil; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SA *fear*, system shock; MR immune to all spells except *remove curse* cast at 12th-level or above; SZ L; ML nil; INT nil; AL N; XP nil; MM/287.

14. Vlantir's Chambers. This room is home to the kraken's morkoth ally, Vlantir. Before the coming of Iakhovas, this room was the bedchamber of a high-ranking priest of Eadro and still retains much of its original furnishings. A coral bed, complete with a mattress of woven kelp, is pressed against the northern wall, while a full-length mirror (a rarity in Serôs) encased in a white coral frame adorns the wall to the east. A stone altar stands against the west wall, but this has been converted to a nightstand of sorts by the room's present occupant. A round stone table, complete with two coral chairs, occupies the southeast corner of the room. A small, indistinguishable lump rests in the middle of the table, covered by a thick blanket of woven kelp. The covered item

is a nonmagical crystal ball worth at least 500 gp and ideal for enchantment.

PCs searching through the junk piled on the forgotten altar find several miscellaneous items that Vlantir has gathered from the ruins. Scattered about the top of the altar are a *dagger +1*, +3 vs. sharks in a sharkskin sheath, five 5"-diameter platinum disks gathered together on a mithral wire (300 gp), a beautiful gold figurine of a shark with tiny rubies for eyes (850 gp), and an eelskin sack containing eight green pearls, 14 yellow pearls, and 15 white pearls. Beneath the altar is a locked stone chest containing Vlantir's grimoire. The lock on the chest is of excellent quality (-20% penalty to Open Locks rolls), and the steel key is in Vlantir's possession. The morkoth's grimoire (spellbook) is difficult to understand, since it is actually a group of spindles with raised bumps that contain the proper spell incantations in tactile form. To read the spells, *comprehend languages* must be cast in association with the standard *read magic*. In addition to the spells the morkoth has memorized, the spindles contain the spells *chill touch*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *identify*, *message*, *read magic*, *reduce*, *shield*, *knock*, *know alignment*, *shatter*, *hold person*, *hold undead*, and *suggestion*.

The occupant of this room might not be at home, depending on the events that have occurred so far. If the temple is on alert, Vlantir waits patiently for the PCs in area 15. In this case, Vlantir will have already sent a messenger to the deeper levels of the temple to alert the kraken and the sahuagin of unexpected visitors. In addition to his undead charges, Samuel or one of the sahuagin will be present. If a warning has still not been effected by the time the PCs reach this room, they find Vlantir here studying his spellbooks (50% chance), sleeping (25% chance), or eating a meal (25% chance). In any of these latter cases, the PCs automatically surprise the morkoth as they burst into his private room.

Regardless of the circumstances, when the PCs encounter Vlantir, he is accompanied by a pair of saltwater vodyanoi. The vodyanoi chose to ally with Qol'in'taroq during his takeover of the shattered temple. Since that time, the vodyanoi have served Vlantir, acting as the morkoth's bodyguards. Vlantir tries to stay away from the PCs while casting his spells. Vlantir uses his aquatic umber hulks as shields, positioning them between himself and his opponents. If a battle turns against him (that is, both vodyanoi are defeated or Vlantir himself is reduced to half hit points), the morkoth uses his *teleport* scroll to flee to area 24, informs the kraken of his defeat, and alerts the sahuagin. Vlantir avoids melee, fighting only if cornered and unable to flee.

Vlantir (morkoth): AC 3; MV swim 18 (D), jet 36; HD 7; hp 45; THAC0 13; #AT 1; Dmg 1-10 or by spell; SA hypnosis, cast spells as

5th-level mage; SD spell reflection; SZ M; ML 17; INT exceptional (16); AL CE; XP 3,000; MM/258; wand of paralyzation (14 charges), sharkskin scroll of protection from electricity, sharkskin teleport scroll (cast at 10th level), key to chest.

Spells (4/2/1): 1st—*magic missile* (×4); 2nd—*blur*, *ray of enfeeblement*; 3rd—*haste*.

Vlantir is Qol'in'taroq's long standing servant, and the pair were allies for decades before the kraken was commanded by Those Who Sleep Below to seize the Akriloth. When Qol'in'taroq left for Voalidru, Vlantir accompanied it to the temple, acting as the kraken's link to the world outside and supervising the arrival of the sahuagin. A worshiper of Those Who Sleep Below himself, Vlantir will not betray the kraken under any circumstances.

Saltwater vodyanoi (2): AC 2; MV 3, swim 6 (E), burrow 6; HD 10; hp 72, 70; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 4-16/4-16/1-12; SA summon 1-20 electric eels once/day (60% chance of success); SZ L; ML 15; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 3,000; MM/352 (vodyanoi, modified).

15. Blocked Passage. This long hall leads to the only entrance to the third level of the temple. Unfortunately for the PCs, the passage-way is guarded by undead monsters that have been placed under Vlantir's command by the kraken. When the PCs round the corner, the undead quickly descend upon them. Due to the cramped nature of this hall, combatants can fight no more than two abreast, causing the monsters to form a long line as they push forward to get at the PCs. Swimming above or around the monsters is nigh impossible, as they lunge at characters who try to skim past; the only route is straight through. The undead are positioned in random fashion in the hall.

If Vlantir is present in this hallway when the PCs arrive (see area 14 for details), he and his vodyanoi guardians are positioned to the very rear of the monsters, where he can safely cast spells from behind a wall of undead. If Vlantir is still in his room when the PCs reach the passage, he and his guards arrive 3 rounds after the beginning of combat, attempting to gain surprise by attacking the party from behind.

Merrow skeletons (8): AC 6; MV 12, swim 3 (E); HD 6; hp 47, 46 (×2), 43, 42 (×3), 35; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type; SD edged or piercing weapons inflict half damage; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and *fear* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ L; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; MM/315 (skeleton, monster); large spear (2d8/2d8).

Sahuagin zombies (6): hp 12 (×4), 11 (×2); see area 1 for complete statistics.

Merfolk zombies (10): hp 12 (×3), 11 (×4) 10 (×2), 9; see area 3 for complete statistics.

Marine wights (3): hp 31, 30, 23; see area 4 for complete statistics.

Level 3 (Areas 16–21)

16. Burial Crypts. These two rooms have long served as the temple's burial crypts, where the most devout and pious members of the priesthood of Eadro are interred upon their passing.

Each room is split into six 20' × 20' crypts, three crypts per wall. Each crypt contains 1d6+4 stone sarcophagi, most of which contain the preserved corporeal remains of a dead merpriest. (Roll 1d4 to determine the number of empty sarcophagi per crypt.) The sarcophagi have been molded with *stone shape* spells. Set into the stonework are various semiprecious shells and pearls (worth 100 gp per sarcophagus). None of the sarcophagi holds anything of value, as those who follow the path of Eadro bequeath all their worldly possessions to friends and family. However, several of the sarcophagi have been smashed open, their contents devoured.

Unfortunately for the dead entombed within these vaults, the area has become a "snack bar" for the group of lacedons that inhabit area 17. Due to the elaborate ritual the merpriests use to prepare their dead for burial, the bodies are extremely well preserved—a fact that quickly caught the attention of the lacedons. Rather than search out meals in other areas, the ghouls prefer to break open the sarcophagi and consume the bodies within.

At the time the PCs enter this level, they hear the sounds of a group of lacedons breaking open a sarcophagus in one of the southern crypts. PCs who investigate find four of the monsters gathered around a sarcophagus in a loose circle, taking turns pounding the lid with their knobby fists. The undead are so preoccupied that the PCs automatically surprise them.

Narvolas knows that the burial chambers and sarcophagi are devoid of valuables and is aghast at any suggestion of breaking into one of the sealed sarcophagi.

Lacedons (4): AC 6; MV swim 9 (D); HD 2; hp 10 (×2), 9 (×2); THAC0 19; #AT 3; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6; SA paralyzation; SD immune to *sleep* and *charm* spells; SZ M; ML 12; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 175; MM/131.

17. Mausoleum. This room once served as the preparation chamber for those who were to be entombed in the crypts (area 16). When a dead priest was to be interred within the temple, a large ceremony would take place here, with friends and family of the merpriest in attendance. The ritual would last three days, over which time the corpse was carefully preserved with special pastes and salves made by the clergy. When the preservation process was complete, the group would then stand witness to the sealing of the crypt, followed shortly thereafter by the reading of the priest's "will" and the distribution of all his worldly goods.

A large stone bier stands in the middle of the room. Anyone carefully searching the bier can locate a secret hatch set into the side of the platform (detected as a secret door). The hatch pulls open easily once discovered, revealing a *dagger of wounding* (similar to the *sword of wounding*) within. The weapon was used by priests in the preparation process to drain all the blood out of a corpse and remove the internal organs so they too could be embalmed. About the bier rest eight coral pews, four to each side, their kelp cushions long since gone. A stone altar stands in the middle of the dais to the south. To the north, a portal leads to a small chamber that was once used to store the various tools and items used in the preparation of a dead body. All of its contents have been smashed and ruined by the occupying lacedons, who attack intruders on sight.

Lacedons (12): hp 12 (×5), 11, 10 (×6); see area 16 for complete statistics.

18. Guard Chamber. This small room contains nothing more than a smooth shaft that leads down to lowest level of the temple. The room is guarded at all hours by a pair of sahuagin. As soon as the PCs enter the chamber, one of the sahuagin sentries dives into the shaft, heading for area 23 to rouse its comrades. The remaining sahuagin tries to buy time for its compatriot to secure reinforcements. If the PCs gain surprise (which is rolled normally for both parties), they have a chance to stop the sentinel from getting away. If the temple is on alert by the time the PCs reach this point, they find the room deserted and their path to the fourth level unobstructed.

Sahuagin (2): hp 15 each; see area 6 for complete statistics.

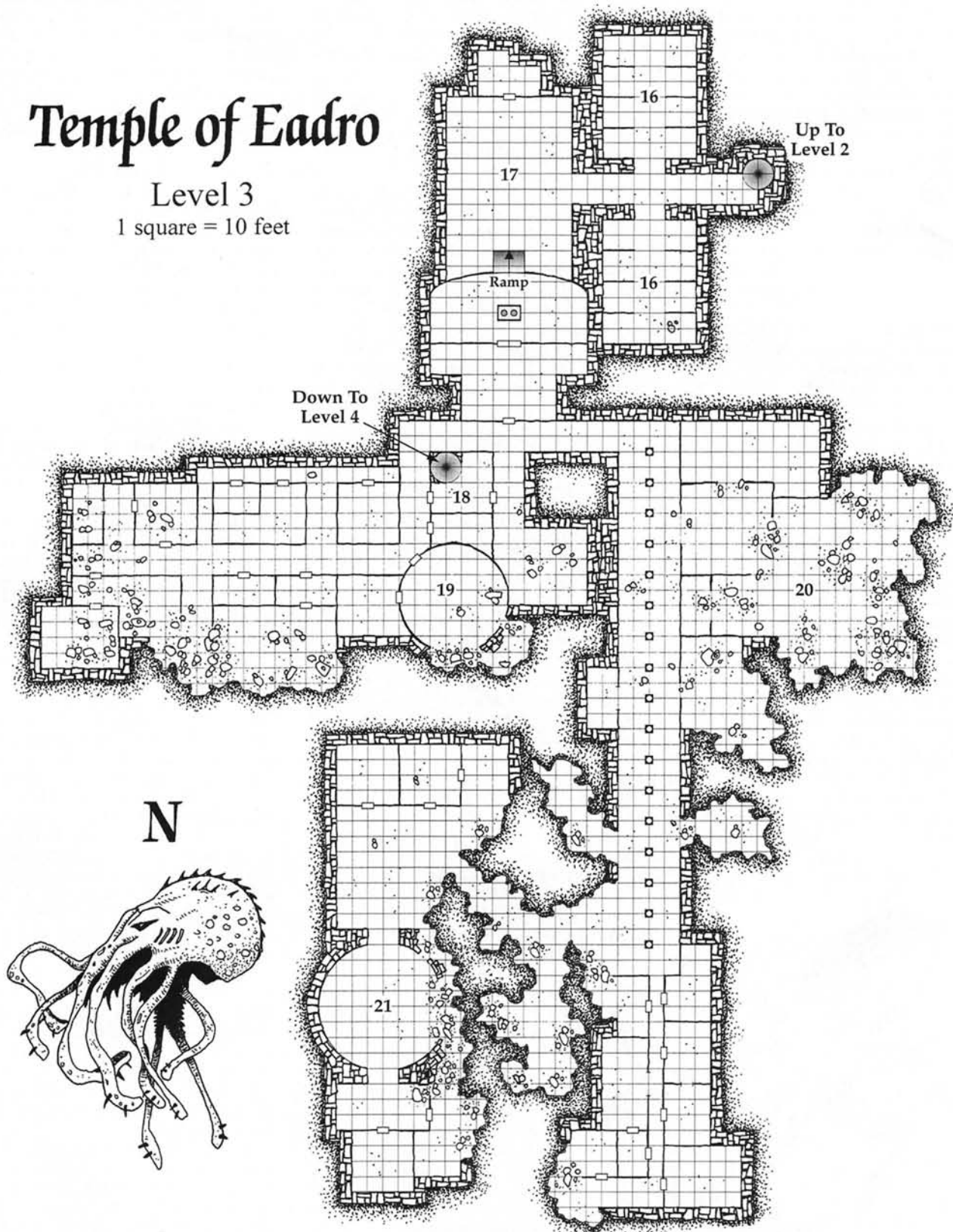
19. Ghostly Remains. This room was once a laboratory where high-ranking priests of the clergy could work on new spells and items. The walls are lined with stone shelves that once held a staggering array of salves, inks, and spell components. Since the temple's downfall, however, these items have either been destroyed or removed, leaving only a pile of shattered jars and boxes upon the tiled, rubble-strewn floor. A large stone altar dedicated to Eadro once occupied the southern wall, but the chantry has since been covered by a cave-in. Mixed in with the debris upon floor are the dead bodies of seven sahuagin and one mermaid.

Searching the bodies reveals a few items of use. The sahuagin each carry a sahuagin trident and two stone daggers, as well as 1d4 green pearls, 1d6 yellow pearls, and 1d8 white pearls. The mermaid's body has a silverweave heartsleeve, a *buckler +1*, a *trident +1*, a holy symbol of Eadro, and a pouch containing 30 blue pearls. Anyone carefully examining the

Temple of Eadro

Level 3

1 square = 10 feet



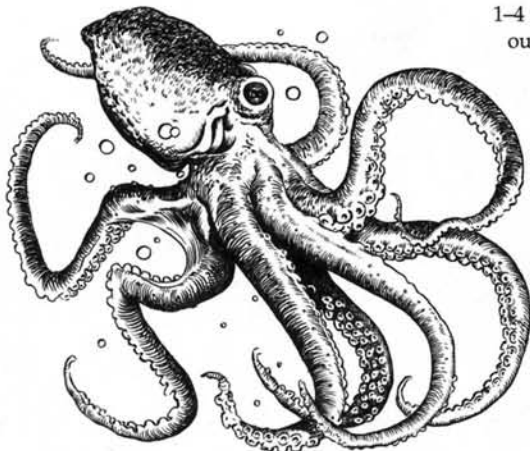
bodies notices that the merpriestess perished of multiple puncture wounds, most likely bleeding to death. The sahuagin, however, all appear to have died of great age, their bodies hunched over and scales wrinkled. Their strange death should give the PCs a clue as to the presence of the room's inhabitant.

This room is, in fact, haunted by the ghost of the mermaid, whose name was Kelparch. When the PCs first enter the room, Kelparch is out of sight, fully ethereal and hiding amid the rubble of the cave-in. Three rounds after the PCs enter, the ghost decides that they are non-hostile and reveals itself to them. Although it intends no harm, PCs must still make a successful saving throw vs. death magic or age 10 years.

Once it has the PCs' attention, the ghost floats over to its corpse and stands there, looking forlornly at its desiccated body. Kelparch cannot speak with the PCs but uses body motions to try and communicate with them, expressing its desire to be buried. The ghost attempts to lead PCs to area 16, gesturing with its hands for them pick up the cadaver and follow. Immediately upon being placed in one of the empty sarcophagi in area 16, the ghost fades away with a smile, its quest completed.

If the PCs attack Kelparch after sighting her, the ghost retaliates with its formidable powers. Anyone trying to loot the mermaid's body is likewise attacked. If the characters have already deduced that the spirit wishes to be buried and are en route to do so, the ghost allows them to take its worldly possessions without a fuss. The PCs should be given full experience for the ghost if they release its tortured soul by interring its dead body or half experience if they destroy the ghost.

Kelparch (mermaid ghost): AC 0; MV 9; HD 10; hp 52; THAC0 11; #AT 1; Dmg special (age 10–40 years by touch); SA *magic jar, fear*; SD invulnerable while immaterial, struck only by silver or magical weapons while semi-material; SZ L; ML special; INT high (14); AL LN; XP 7,000; MM/130.



20. Green Ruins. This area was once an undersea garden tended by the priests of Eadro. Many of the plants were used as herbs and ingredients in healing salves. Both the chamber and the natural cavern beyond are covered by extensive growths of seaweed, kelp, and phosphorescent algae. The vegetation has turned the area into a jungle that sways in the gentle current of the temple's waters.

Broken tools and shattered benches can be seen amid the plant life. In the southeast corner of the room, next to the crumbling remains of a wall, an arm stripped of all flesh juts out from the vegetation covering the floor. The skeletal arm clutches a steel *dagger +1*, which has been driven point-first into the shattered wall. Anyone taking the time to remove the growth from around the arm with a knife or other short bladed weapon (a process that requires at least 5 rounds) discovers the remains of a locathah adventurer. The locathah fell victim to the chamber's current inhabitants. Her corpse still holds several items of value, including a *medallion of species enemy* (EM/714; detects sahuagin), a *gem of brightness* (16 charges; the command words "marka," "aarashan," and "delgorth" are carved into the base of the gem), and an eelskin pouch containing seven blue pearls, nine green pearls, 13 yellow pearls, and 24 white pearls.

This chamber is home to three giant octopi who take full advantage of their camouflage ability in the thick cover. The beasts lurk in the vicinity of the locathah's dagger, which they have discovered attracts fish and the occasional adventurer. PCs have a 10% chance of spotting the hidden creatures. Unseen octopi attack anyone who comes within striking range, imposing a -4 penalty to their opponent's surprise roll. Although the monsters are not directly allied with the kraken, they have learned not to trifle with his minions, as their last transgression cost the lives of two of their group.

Giant octopi (3): AC 7; MV 3, swim 12 (D); HD 8; hp 61, 53, 52; THAC0 13; #AT 7; Dmg 1-4 (x6)/2-12; SA constriction; SD ink, camouflage; SZ L; ML 13; INT animal (1); AL NE; XP 2,000; MM/271.

21. Hall of Elders. This circular room has a domed ceiling that rises up nearly 20 feet at its highest point, with the symbol of Eadro carved into the peak. The west wall is painted in a mural depicting twelve merfolk—eight mermen and four mermaids—in dramatic poses. The east wall, which collapsed upon the temple's sinking, once held three similar paintings, the evidence of which can be readily viewed upon various bits of stone amid the rubble. At the point

where the domed ceiling and the west wall meet, a 3'-wide shelf juts out. Upon this shelf stand twelve life-sized merfolk statues, each positioned above a single portrait which it is carved to resemble. Once again, the east wall previously held such statues as well, pieces of which litter the floor of the chamber.

Before the fall of the temple, this room was where the former ruling priests of the temple were forever represented in both paint and stone. Including Jarecah, who was not yet honored by having his likeness entered into the Hall, there have been sixteen ruling merpriests of the temple. No longer a hallowed place, this room has since become the lair of a group of kapoacynth. The band was naturally drawn to the temple's ruin and established a base in this room, allying with the kraken as they did so. The marine gargoyles make frequent forays outside Voalidru to capture merfolk and sea elves, who are dragged back to this chamber and slowly tortured to death. The remains of these captives lie about on the floor in haphazard fashion, adding to the detritus. A small pile of valuables gleaned from the cadavers lies in the very center of the room, acting as bait to lure in more prey for the gargoyles. The hoard consists of 55 gp (each stamped with the mark of Baldur's Gate), 15 blue pearls, a sliver of polished obsidian (10 gp), and a 6"-tall silver statuette carved into the shape of a human maiden carrying a basket full of roses with tiny rubies for their petals (1,800 gp total).

When the PCs first reach this room, they have the misfortune of catching all of the gargoyles at home. As the PCs approach, the kapoacynth secret themselves behind the statues upon the west wall, blending perfectly with the surrounding stonework. Any PC who looks carefully at the sculptures before entering the chamber is entitled to an Intelligence check to notice that something is amiss, such as part of a wing that appears to be attached to a merman's back or a clawed foot sticking out from a mermaid's tail. When the party actually enters the room, the kapoacynth burst from concealment, swimming down upon the PCs with such speed as to incur a -2 penalty to the characters' surprise rolls. The kapoacynth are led by a pair of aquatic gargoyles, which are simply meaner, uglier versions of their gargoyle cousins.

Kapoacynth gargoyles (10): AC 5; MV 9, swim 15 (C); HD 4+4; hp 33 (x2), 32, 30, 27 (x3), 26, 24 (x2); THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-3/1-3/1-6/1-4; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 11; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 420; MM/125 (gargoyle).

Kapoacynth margoyles (2): AC 2; MV 9, swim 12 (C); HD 6; hp 45, 42; THAC0 15; #AT 4; Dmg 1-6/1-6/2-8/2-8; SD +1 or better weapon to hit; SZ M; ML 13; INT low (7); AL CE; XP 975; MM/125 (margoyles—modified).

Level 4 (Areas 22–25)

22. Ambush. This shattered room holds little more than the tube leading up to the third level of the temple. If the temple's occupants are not on alert by the time the PCs reach this room, the PCs find this chamber empty and their path unhindered. (Ignore the rest of this room's descriptive passage.)

If the temple has been placed on alert, the sahuagin prepare an ambush here. Hidden behind the shattered eastern wall, holding position near the 20'-high ceiling, are the occupants of area 23 plus the sentries from area 18. In the first round, each sahuagin launches a javelin at the PCs. The PCs should roll for surprise as they are suddenly and unexpectedly bombarded with javelins. If the PCs act quickly after the initial assault and charge the devils, the front row draws tridents and attempts to hold them at bay while the back row unloads another volley.

While the sahuagin warriors attack the party, Terack (the sahuagin chieftain) and his lieutenants remain safely at their rear, with Terack using his harpoon's *enervation* power on those PCs who appear the weakest. After using this power three times, Terack and the lieutenants charge into combat, attacking the PCs' front line recklessly. Terack fights until reduced to 20 hit points, at which point he retreats to area 24 to join up with the kraken. If their chieftain is slain, the remaining sahuagin must make a Morale check or flee.

23. Sahuagin Hold. This hallway, including the room to the far east, once was used to prominently display art and statuary. Busts upon pedestals, and sometimes even full sized statues, of distinguished merpriests would be placed in the niches to the north and south, while the room to the east held other art displays. The days of art and beauty have long since passed for this area, which has become the official residence of the kraken's most devout and fanatical followers, the sahuagin. These sea devils are led by a powerful warrior named Terack, who was ordered to the temple by Sekolah himself (or so Terack believes) with instructions to help the kraken defend the Akriloth.

Each niche is home to a trio of sahuagin warriors, who have small pallets of fresh kelp laid therein. The old occupants of the alcoves, the statues, lie in broken heaps upon the hallway floor. The room to the east is occupied by Terack and his lieutenants, who have their own pallets there, as well as a small altar to Sekolah erected in the northeastern corner.

If the temple is on alert, all the sahuagin from this location are present at the trap set for the PCs described in area 22. If the sea devils do not have time to greet the PCs in area 22, Terack quickly musters his troops, who wait

for the PCs to enter the junction of this hall before attacking in a pattern similar to the one in area 22, but with half the force on each side of the intersection. Finally, if the PCs managed to silence the sentinels in area 18, chances are good that most of the sahuagin are asleep. In this scenario, each sahuagin has a 75% chance of being asleep when the PCs enter the hallway. The slumbering sea devils stir at the sound of any combat within this area and join the fight 2 rounds after waking.

Terack, sahuagin male F8 (chieftain): AC 3; MV 12, swim 24 (C); hp 71; THAC0 13 (base); #AT 2 or 3; Dmg by weapon type or 1–2/1–2/1–4; Str 17 (+1/+1); SA rake (1–4/1–4 with rear claws, if raking possible); SD detect invisible creatures within 30' radius; SZ M; ML 15; INT high (13); AL LE; XP 1,400; MM/306; Soulhest: *harpoon* +2 of life stealing (specialized); #AT 2; +1 bonus to attack rolls, +2 bonus to damage, *amulet of protection* +2, *paste of invulnerability* (same as potion), two bone daggers, eight green pearls and 12 white pearls (in triton skin money belt).

Terack is a massive specimen of his race, fully 6'5" long and weighing almost 300 lbs. The sahuagin is well muscled with arms that rival the size of his legs in girth. His scales are a deep blue coloration, near to navy, with light green speckles scattered throughout. Terack's anterior fins ("ears") are light orange, providing sharp contrast to the otherwise somber tone of his body, while his other fins are dark green.

Terack's vile *harpoon*, Soulhest, is sentient (AL LE; INT 12; Ego 4) and communicates with its wielder through vibrations. Soulhest allows its wielder to cast the 4th-level wizard spell *enervation* three times per day at 12th-level of ability. Terack always uses this power of the *harpoon* before engaging in melee.

Sahuagin lieutenants (3): hp 40, 36, 30; see area 6 for statistics.

Sahuagin (16): hp 18 (x6), 17 (x4), 16 (x3), 15 (x3); see area 6 for statistics.

24. Grand Hall. This room was once an enormous feast hall, where all the members of the clergy and any guests of the temple would come to dine. The gigantic main room was used only for special occasions, such as celebrations following a religious holiday. Smaller rooms attached to the primary chamber were used by the priests for their daily meals. Since the coming of the kraken, however, this room has served as the beast's lair, for no other area in the temple can accommodate his great size. The tables and couches that once occupied this room have since been removed or reduced to rubble to allow ample space for Qol'in'taroq and his accumulated treasure.

Regardless of the situation when the PCs enter this room, they find the kraken awake and ready for a fight. The monster has very

specific instructions from Those Who Sleep Below to protect the Akriloth at all costs. When the PCs first enter the chamber, read or paraphrase the following:

Beyond the portal lies a darkened chamber. Although you cannot discern the dimensions of the room, you are aware of its tremendous size. The 20'-high ceiling is flat and unadorned.

Beyond you, lurking in the gloom, is an undefined, writhing shape. The sound of heavy respiration resonates throughout the chamber, reminding you of a great pump sucking in water and pushing it back out again. A deep voice, powerful enough to rumble the very walls of the room, suddenly spills out from the form.

"Ahhh, I see I have visitors! Come to retrieve the Akriloth, have you? I'm afraid not, little ones. Those Who Sleep Below have commanded that it remain with me. The merfolk shall never reclaim their city, for it is now home to the damned and the decayed. I do believe you will be joining the ranks of the latter very shortly ..."

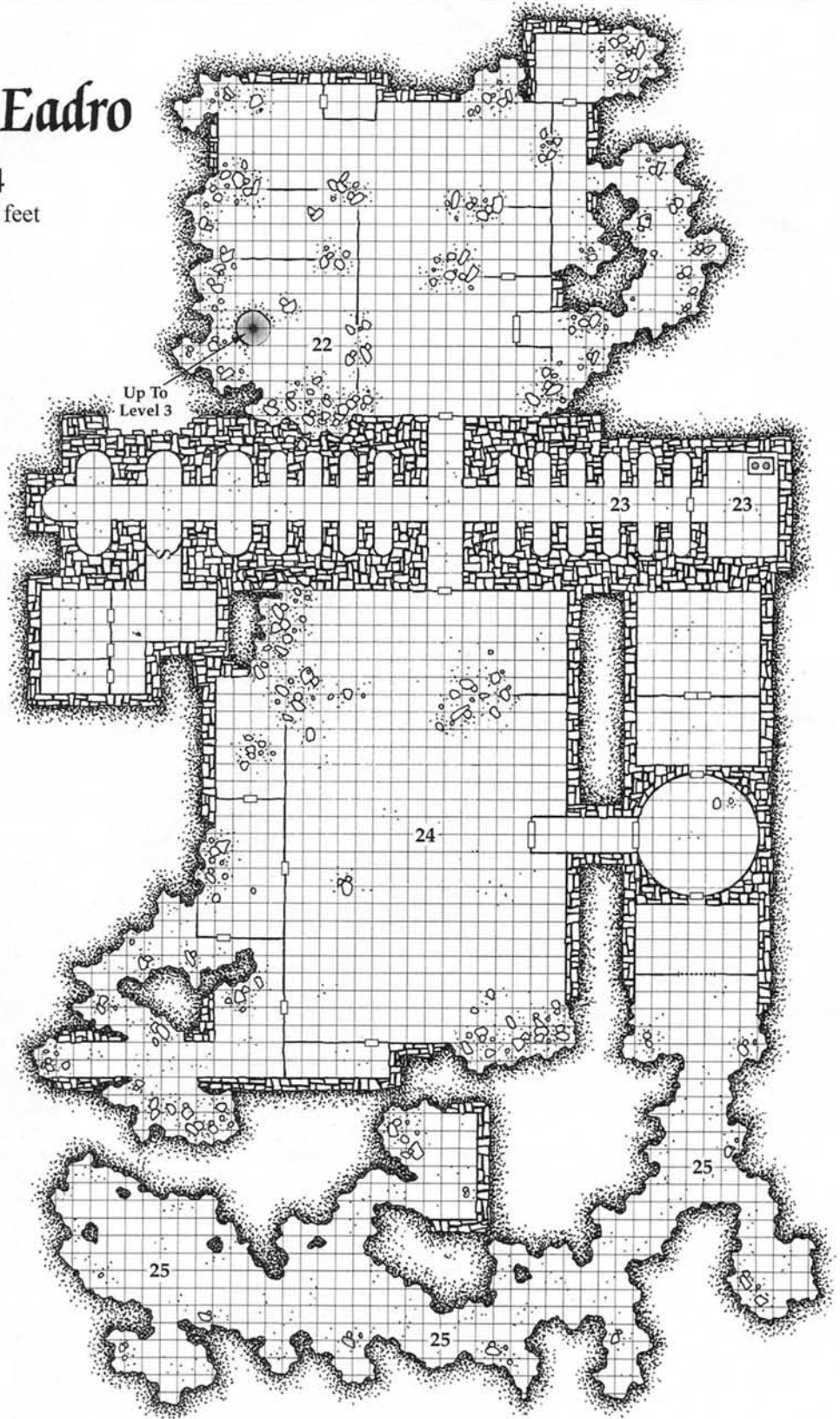
A hulking form moves quickly toward you, enormous tentacles curving through the water.

The unknown form is, of course, the kraken Qol'in'taroq, seen here in all his deadly glory. The beast immediately attacks the PCs. The monster attempts to grasp all the members of the party in its tentacles as quickly as possible, dragging captive prey to its maw for a bite attack. If reduced to half his hit points, Qol'in'taroq casts *withdraw* upon himself long enough to use his healing spells and get back into the fight. Once reduced to one-quarter of his total hit points, Qol'in'taroq releases his poisonous ink, which fills the entire chamber. The kraken, who is immune to his own toxin, uses this attack only once. The kraken employs his other spells and special abilities to his maximum advantage in combat, as dictated by the DM. Under no circumstances will the kraken leave the room or flee the battle, instead fighting to the death in defense of the Akriloth.

Far behind the kraken, piled high upon the southern wall, is a mound of valuables taken from the temple. The trove is not visible at first, as the kraken's body blocks the pile from view. After Qol'in'taroq's defeat, however, the hoard becomes readily apparent and accessible. The treasure contains 586 blue pearls, 2,589 green pearls, 3,412 yellow pearls, 3,578 white pearls, and 984 gp of miscellaneous coinage from various surface countries. Among the loose currency are a number of valuable gems, including a pair of flawless opals (2,000 gp each), a pink pearl of unusual size (650 gp), a topaz (500 gp), an aquamarine

Temple of Eadro

Level 4
1 square = 10 feet



(500 gp), a plain hunk of amethyst (100 gp), an average pearl (100 gp), a star rose quartz (50 gp), a pair of onyx stones (50 gp each), and a hunk of hematite (10 gp). Four pieces of artwork have also found their way into the collection of valuables. These include a 1'-tall statuette of Eadro in his merman form, carved from blaze coral, with two small emeralds for eyes and a crown of tiny sapphires (4,000 gp), a decorative mithral circlet engraved with scenes of dolphins at play and set with an emerald-green sphene gemstone (3,500 gp), and a pair of large opal cowrie shells, each painted with a breathtaking montage of merfolk engaged in combat against a force of sahuagin (1,000 gp each).

Four weapons jut out of the heap, including a *spear +3*, a *trident of fish command +1* with 11 charges, a *rod of beguiling* with 45 charges, and *Wavecutter*, a *two-handed sword +3* that grants its wielder the effects of a *free action* spell for as long as it is held and bestowing its user a base swimming movement rate of 12 with a maneuverability class of B. The *sword* can also cast the 3rd-level wizard spell *water breathing* three times per day (at 15th-level of ability) upon the wielder only. A *pearl of power*, a *folded boat* (canoe form), a pair of *anklets of dancing* (similar to *boots of dancing*), and a *periapt of wound closure* also adorn the untidy treasury, along with a sharkskin scroll of *protection from magic* and a *manual of stealthy pilfering*. Both manuscripts are designed for underwater use only and quickly decay if exposed to air for longer than 3 rounds.

Near the top of the pile is an eelskin bag that holds a number of magical pastes, all acting the same as their potion counterparts: *healing* (×4), *water elemental control*, *growth*, *invulnerability*, *polymorph self*, *super-heroism*, *treasure finding*, and *madness*.

Atop the great mound of treasure rests the Akriloth itself, the object of the PCs' quest. The horn is fully detailed in the "New Magical Items" sidebar.

Qol'in'taroq (kraken): AC 5 (tentacles)/0 (body); MV swim 3 (C), jet 21; HD 20; hp 147; THAC0 5; #AT 9; Dmg 3-18 (×2)/2-12 (×6)/7-28 or by spell; SA constriction, cast spells as 9th-level cleric, *faerie fire* (1/day), *control winds* (1/day), *weather summoning* (1/day), *animal summoning III* (fish only; 3/day), *control temperature* (120' radius) continuously; SD poisonous ink cloud; SZ G; ML 18; INT godlike (21); AL CE; XP 17,000; MM/331 (squid, giant).

Spells (4/4/3/2/1): *cure light wounds* (×2), *fear*, *protection from good*; 2nd—*hold person* (×2), *silence 15' radius*, *withdraw*; 3rd—*cause blindness* (×2), *dispel magic*; 4th—*cure serious wounds* (×2); 5th—*cure critical wounds*.

The gigantic kraken is a midnight blue color on its ventral surface that slowly fades to a dark green on the dorsal surface. The beast measures 100 feet long, with a pair of enor-

mous barbed tentacles that measure almost half of its length. The other six tentacles that surround the monster's maw are roughly 30 feet long, providing the kraken with a long attack range. The kraken is a fierce, intelligent, and merciless opponent and should be played as such.

25. Temple Pantry. This room is actually one very large cave, the greatest and deepest of all those that formerly laid beneath the temple. The cave has a rough, irregular ceiling that maintains an average height of 14 feet throughout. The walls, floor, and ceiling of the cavern are covered with coral and kelp, amid which flutter various fish of all sizes and colors. The portal that connects to this cavern from the temple is similar to those found in area 7, requiring a command word to open. As such, the fish inside are restrained to this one area, where they feed upon the kelp and each other and go about their lives in captivity.

Upon first glance, this area seems wild and untamed. However, the chamber has been carefully tended by the sahuagin, who transplanted the first growths of coral and kelp when they moved into the temple. After a few months of allowing the flora to grow unmolested, Qol'in'taroq used his innate ability to *summon fish*, which were then herded by the sahuagin into the grotto. In this manner, the temple's residents set up their own giant pantry, where they store all manner of fish for later consumption. When their stock becomes low, the kraken uses his power again to resupply the chamber.

Although most of the fish in the cavern are of no threat to the PCs, hidden within their numbers is a pair of death minnows inadvertently summoned by Qol'in'taroq. The minnows, former guardians of powerful magical treasures, had been skulking about the temple's ruins for months, their charges long since looted and removed. Hearing the kraken's call, the minnows came to investigate and were trapped within the cave. Thus far, for some unknown reason, they have not bothered Qol'in'taroq's sahuagin, who come to the chamber twice a day to fetch food, and their presence is still unknown. When the PCs enter the room, they have a 5% cumulative chance per round of attracting the attention of the minnows. Once alerted to the PCs' presence, each minnow selects a single random character, which it tries to swallow. The death minnows strike out suddenly from concealment within large schools of other fish, imposing a -6 penalty to their target's surprise roll. All other members of the party must make a surprise roll at a -4 penalty or fail to notice the sudden engulfment of one of their number. If the entire group fails their surprise rolls, the PCs won't have any idea what became of any errant companions, who seem to have simply

disappeared. To say the least, this could be very bad for any swallowed PC.

Deep sea fish (170): AC 10; MV swim 9 (B); HD 1 hp; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SZ T; ML 8; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 1.

Tuna fish (43): AC 8; MV swim 9 (C); HD 1; hp 6 each; THAC0 nil; #AT nil; Dmg nil; SZ L; ML 6; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 15.

Death minnows (2): INT animal (1); AL N; AC 0/10; MV swim 9 (A)/12 (C); HD 6; hp 40 each; THAC0 15; #AT 1; Dmg 1-6 per round once swallowed; SA swallow whole, *enlarge*; SD shrink self; SZ T or L; ML 13; XP 2,000; MCA4/34 (fish, deep ocean).

Concluding the Adventure

After the PCs defeat the kraken and reclaim the horn, they still have to tote the heavy relic back to Myth Nantar to complete their agreement with the Prince Regent. This return trip gives the DM ample opportunity to throw a few more hazards at the PCs, especially if their run through the temple wasn't challenging enough for the DM's liking. Possibilities include Clan Kamaar making another concerted attempt to stop the PCs from fulfilling their mission, or Those Who Sleep Below throwing a few more undersea followers in their path. If the PCs haven't encountered Lurelei and her search group yet, they should do so before leaving the outskirts of Voalidru.

If the PCs recover the clerical scroll from area 5 and cast the *resurrection* spell on Lurelei, they can restore the vampiric mermaid (or her slain body) to her former, living self. If she is restored to life, Lurelei is grateful beyond words and offers to help the PCs any way she can. She knows the layout of the first three levels of the temple and has a 50% chance of knowing the location of any secret door on those levels. However, Narvolas has no wish to see Lurelei harmed again and insists on escorting the mermaid safely back to Myth Nantar, entrusting the PCs to continue the search for the Akriloth. Unless he is *charmed*, Narvolas cannot be swayed in this matter.

If the PCs find the clerical scroll but do not have a cleric to cast the *resurrection* spell, Narvolas offers to cast the spell on Lurelei.

Once the artifact is safely back in merfolk hands, the delighted Prince Regent gladly pays the PCs their olmars. They can keep any treasure they took from the temple except, of course, the Akriloth. Mirol is deeply saddened if Narvolas was lost during the course of the adventure but understands that the risk was high and does not hold his death against the PCs. For the successful return of the Akriloth to merfolk hands, the PCs should be awarded a story bonus of 10,000 XP, or half if Narvolas was killed during the quest. In addition to the

continued on page 84

New Magical Items

The Akriloth

The Akriloth (which translates into "Horn of the Dread Sea" in the merfolk tongue) is a large, black conch horn weighing almost 20 lbs. The relic is 4 feet long with a diameter of approximately 2 feet, slimming down to a mere half-inch at the mouthpiece. The color of the conch is deeper than any natural shade, appearing not so much as black but as a total absence of light. Smooth spines and ridges line the length of the artifact, providing easy handholds when the item is in use.

The horn radiates an overwhelming aura of Conjuratiion/Summoning magic if viewed under a *detect magic* spell.

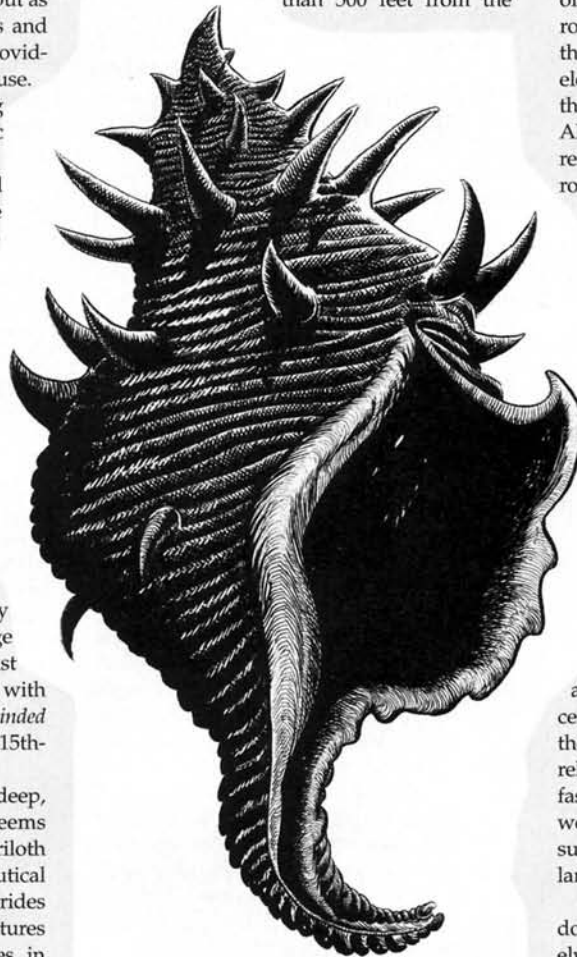
The horn's powers are usable by all classes and races, provided they have the ability to "blow" (not exactly a correct term when applied underwater) into the horn's mouthpiece. The user need not have any skill in musical instruments to sound the horn. However, unless the user is a bard or has the Musical Instrument (horns) proficiency, a Constitution check must be made every round the horn is blown beyond the tenth, with failure indicating the user is forced to stop playing. The horn, while usable by everyone, damages evil beings who try to call forth its powers. Any evil-aligned creature attempting to play the Akriloth suffers 5d4 points of damage after the first note is sounded and must make a saving throw vs. death magic, with failure resulting in the user being *feebleminded* as per the 5th-level wizard spell (cast at 15th-level of ability).

When played, the horn produces a deep, resonant thrumming noise that seems slightly melancholy. The song of the Akriloth can be heard underwater for 50 nautical miles in all directions and actually overrides the constant Hum of the Deep. All creatures of animal intelligence, as well as whales, in the area of affect become transfixed upon hearing the strain, swimming slowly about as they quietly listen to the artifact's tune. Note that these creatures are not defenseless during this time and fight if forced to do so, though with great reluctance.

The powers of the Akriloth are called forth only after the instrument is played for a number of consecutive rounds. Any cessation or interruption ends the horn's effects. These abilities stay in effect, once activated, until either the horn ceases to be played or a specified number of rounds has passed after the

music's cessation. The effects of the horn are cumulative and are fully described below. Also note that the horn must be fully submerged to call forth any of its powers.

5 Rounds: All undead with 2 Hit Dice or fewer within 500 feet of the horn are instantly destroyed, as if they had been turned by a high-level cleric. All other undead are considered turned (including those that cannot be turned normally), no matter their level or type. Turned undead creatures remove themselves to a point no less than 500 feet from the



horn. The turning effect lasts for 1d8 rounds after the Akriloth ceases to sound.

10 Rounds: All undead within 2 nautical miles of the Akriloth must make a saving throw vs. spell each round or suffer 2d4 points of damage. A successful saving throw indicates 1d4 points of damage. This effect ends when the horn ceases to be sounded.

15 Rounds: All merfolk and locathah within 2 nautical miles of the horn receive a +1 bonus to all attack rolls, saving throws, and Morale checks, as they feel the power of

Eadro awaken the courage in their hearts. This effect lasts for 2d8 rounds after the horn is quieted.

20 Rounds: All evil undersea creatures within 2 nautical miles of the horn suffer a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, saving throws, and Morale checks as they tremble in fear from the power of Eadro brought to bear. This effect lasts for 2d8 rounds after the horn is silenced.

25 Rounds: This final effect takes place only if the horn is used by a specialty priest of Eadro. At the end of the twenty-fifth round, three 16-HD water elementals appear through a *gate* to serve the horn's player. The elementals take orders via telepathy so that the horn's wielder need not cease playing the Akriloth to command them. The elementals remain until destroyed in combat or until 2d8 rounds have expired after the horn ceases to be played, at which point they return to the Elemental Plane of Water.

XP Value: 8,000

GP Value: 25,000

Ring of Communication

The *ring of communication* at first appears to be nothing more than a slight loop of coral, common enough jewelry among the dwellers of the deep. When viewed under a *detect magic* spell, however, the *ring* shines with a dull aura of Alteration magic. Originally created by the aquatic elves during the time of Aryselymalyr, these magical *rings* were worn by field generals and the like. Using the bands, army officers could communicate with one another as though standing in the very same room, relaying messages and commands at much faster paces than normally possible. The *rings* were invaluable to the sea elves, who used such devices to coordinate the rule of their large undersea empire.

These *rings* are completely useless until donned and a command word (usually in sea elvish) spoken. Afterward, the *ring* glows with a faint orange light that pulsates for 10 rounds before fading away. During that time, the *ring* wearer may send missives to a single, named creature as though both are affected by the 1st-level wizard spell *message*, though neither party has to whisper as in the spell. The recipient of the message must be on the same plane of existence as the *ring* and within a 100-mile radius. This ability can be used once/day, and only when the *ring* and its wearer are both completely submerged.

XP Value: 200

GP Value: 500

Random Room Generator

Although not detailed in its entirety, the Temple of Eadro is a massive structure, with enough chambers and passages to daunt even the most intrepid adventurers. The DM is encouraged to fill the temple with as many random encounters and events as he or she likes, providing the PCs with an extra margin of challenge and setting the mood for the adventure. To aid the DM, below are four handy reference charts for random room generation. The term "room" is used in the generic sense, as the charts could easily be used for hallways and tubes. These tables are strictly for ease of use, and the DM should feel free to alter results.

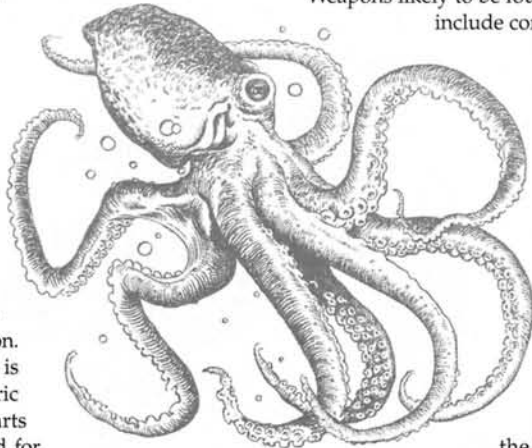


Table 1: Room Contents

Roll 1d100

- 01–15. Roll once on Table 2.
 16–30. Roll once on Table 2, once on Table 3.
 31–40. Roll twice on Table 2.
 41–50. Roll twice on Table 2, once on Table 3.
 51–60. Roll once on Table 2, twice on Table 3.
 61–70. Roll once on Table 3.
 71–80. Roll twice on Table 3.
 81–90. Roll twice on Table 2, once on Table 3, once on Table 4.
 91–95. Roll once on Table 3, once on Table 4.
 96–00. Roll twice on Table 3, once on Table 4.

Table 2: Furnishings

If furnishings are present in a randomly generated room, roll a 1d10 and refer to the chart below for the exact item. Note that the term "furnishings" refers to random, generally useless articles that are present to set a tone of abandonment and decay during the PCs' exploration of the ruined temple.

1. Coral. This room contains a vast amount of naturally occurring coral that grows on almost every surface in the room. The coral is harmless and ranges in color from bone white to mauve to vibrant red.

2. Bones. A pile of humanoid bones rests in one corner of this room. Although the bones might have once belonged to an undead creature, they are now inanimate.

3. Weapons. Scattered about the floor of this room are a 1d4 weapons in fair condition.

Weapons likely to be found in the temple include coral daggers, bone daggers, stone daggers, stone spears, coral spears, and coral tridents.

4. Silt. The floor of this room is covered in silt that has accumulated

gradually since the fall of Voalidru.

Although the muck is common throughout the temple, it is especially deep in this chamber, reaching 1d3 feet in depth. The sediment holds bits of bone and pieces of broken coral and masonry, but nothing of value.

5. Algae. The walls of this room are covered with luminescent algae, softly glowing in an array of colors. The presence of the mold effectively raises vision in this chamber by two conditions.

6. Strong Current. One of the walls of this chamber is marred by a slight crack that runs roughly 5 inches up the wall, is no more than 2 inches across, and is of an undetermined depth. From the crack flows an extremely strong current of water, possibly from the exterior of the temple. Any creature attempting to approach within 10 feet must make a successful Swimming proficiency check or be pushed away.

7. Ceiling Collapse. Thanks in part to the destruction wrought by Iakhovas, the roof of this area is particularly unsound. As the PCs explore the area, a few large chunks of the ceiling dislodge and fall down upon 1d3 random characters—an accident that could be blamed on PCs who "bump into a wall" or "speak too loudly." Targeted PCs must make a successful saving throw vs. paralyzation at a +2 bonus or suffer 1d6 points of damage from falling debris.

8. Debris. This room is littered with an above average amount of refuse. Buried in the silt, barely showing through, are a number of ineffectual articles, including bits of silver-weave armor, chips of coral, broken bones from some indeterminable source, and other detritus.

9. Destroyed Furnishings. Before Iakhovas's rampage, the temple was home to many priests and underpriests of Eadro. Although most of the personal effects of these clerics have been ruined, a few rooms still contain the remnants of furniture. The furniture can be as widely varied in design and condition as the DM desires. All of the furniture was fashioned from stone, coral, and shells. Furniture includes kelp-padded chairs and reclining sofas, ornate coral tables, stone chests set with colored shells, and clam-shaped "beds" filled with pallets of rotting seaweed.

10. Wild Flora. A few rooms, such as this one, harbor isolated patches of kelp, seaweed, and anemones. The creeping foliage grows through cracks in the walls and floors.

Table 3: Treasures

If treasure is present in a randomly generated room, roll 1d10 and refer to the chart below. Due largely to the influence of the kraken and its minions, the rubble of the temple has not been looted as heavily as the other buildings in Voalidru. The kraken has amassed a great many valuables, but a few scattered trinkets do lie here and there, passed over in the detritus. When a treasure is discovered, the DM should present it in a manner befitting such a find; i.e., the PCs uncover a few pearls secreted inside the skull



of a long-dead merman instead of lying about in the open. Discovering treasure on this list requires 10 mandatory rounds + 1d8 additional rounds of searching. The mandatory 10-round search decreases by 1 round for each person beyond the first who joins in the hunt. In the case of coins and pearls, each searcher finds one coin or pearl for each round spent rummaging through the debris.

1. Scattered Pearls. This room holds 1d2 blue pearls, 1d8 green pearls, 2d10 yellow pearls, and 2d12 white pearls. The PCs can uncover one pearl each round they search for treasure.

2. Valuable Jewelry. This area contains a single piece of valuable jewelry. Roll a 1d100 to see what valuable is found:

01–25: A platinum comb with small azurite stones set in the handle (120 gp).

26–40: A silver finger sheath with an onyx claw set upon the tip (60 gp).

41–50: An unadorned mithral ring with a tiny diamond set in the center (250 gp).

51–70: A gold armet carved into the likeness of a moray eel (50 gp).

71–80: A thick silver torque with a single blue jasper stone inset (80 gp).

81–85: A pair of silver earrings with aquamarine stones dangling from them (500 gp).

86–00: A handsome silver bracelet set with five banded agate stones (55 gp).

3. Shells. This room contains 1d2 valuable shell types. One shell type can be turned up for every 5 consecutive rounds spent searching. Roll a 1d100 to determine what shells are present:

01–40: A single pearl cowrie (20 gp).

41–50: Ten shambos plates (4 gp each) strung together on a thick kelp line.

51–60: Three red abalone shells (10 gp each) strung together on a kelp line.

61–95: A large conch shell (10 gp).

96–00: A flame helmet shell (50 gp).

4. Scroll. This room contains one magical scroll written upon sharkskin. On a 1d100 roll of 01–45 the scroll is clerical, containing the spell *cure serious wounds*. On a roll of 46–00, the scroll is wizardly and contains the spell *Samprey's sensible sea sphere* (detailed in the OSS accessory; replace with *airy water* if this reference is unavailable). Only one of each scroll can be found; if both scrolls have been recovered, re-roll on this table.

5. Magical Item. Located in this room is a single magical item. Roll a 1d100 to determine what item is found:

01–30: A ring of jumping.

31–40: A silvery mirror cube *ioun stone* that grants a +1 bonus to saving throws vs. petrification gaze attacks (EM/618).

41–60: A snake belt (EM/170).

61–85: A pair of bracers of defenselessness.

86–98: A set of eyes of minute seeing.

99–00: A necklace of prayer beads.

Only one of each item can be found. If there are no more magical items to be recovered, reroll on this table.

6. Minor Jewelry.

Located in this room are 1d3 pieces of small jewelry, mostly trinkets that command little value individually. Roll a 1d100 to determine what items are found:

01–15: A thick eelskin belt set with a silver buckle and rivets (20 gp).

16–40: Three small gold beads still woven into a lock of decaying merfolk hair (5 gp for all three).

41–55: A small gold ring carved into the image of dolphins swimming (10 gp).

56–65: A tortoise shell shield lined with a thin gold rim (15 gp).

66–80: Three thin platinum bracelets (10 gp each).

81–85: A pair of unadorned silver necklaces (3 gp each).

86–90: A long, thin gold chain meant to be worn about the waist (8 gp).

91–95: Four small mithral hoop earrings (3 gp each, 12 gp total).

96–00: A single eelskin gauntlet with gold fingertips sewn in (25 gp).

7. Coins. This room contains something of an oddity in the undersea world of Serôs: coins. Found in this room are 1d10 Waterdeep harbor moons, 2d20 Waterdeep toals, 1d6 Sembian trade bars (worth 5 gp each), 1d6 pp, 1d8 ep, and 2d10 gp. One individual coin is turned up for each round of searching. PCs can make this discovery only once; if this result is rolled again, re-roll on this table.

8. Gemstones. This room contains a valuable gemstone. Roll a 1d100 to determine what gemstone is discovered:

01–10: A lapis lazuli polished to a mirror shine (20 gp).

11–15: A poorly cut blue euclase (450 gp).

16–30: A plain chunk of jade (100 gp).

31–34: An uncut ruby (500 gp value, 5,000 gp if cut properly).

35–42: A single red tear (1,000 gp).

43–60: A cut piece of iol (100 gp).

61–00: A hunk of tiger eye agate (10 gp).

9. Ornamental Weapon. The PCs find a single ornamental weapon. Such a weapon

was never meant to be taken into battle and automatically breaks upon a natural attack roll of 20 or when it inflicts maximum damage. Roll a 1d100 to determine the weapon:

01–20: A coral dagger set with a gold hilt and silver pommel (10 gp).

21–40: Three mithral quarrel heads minus their shafts (3 gp each).

41–60: A fine steel trident set with three silver tines (30 gp per tine, 100 gp for the entire weapon).

61–65: A bone harpoon thinly plated with platinum (600 gp).

66–75: A coral spear with an electrum leaf-shaped blade (25 gp for the blade).

76–90: A stone knife with a razor sharp edge and thinly plated with gold (15 gp).

91–00: A javelin made completely of silver with platinum tips (350 gp).

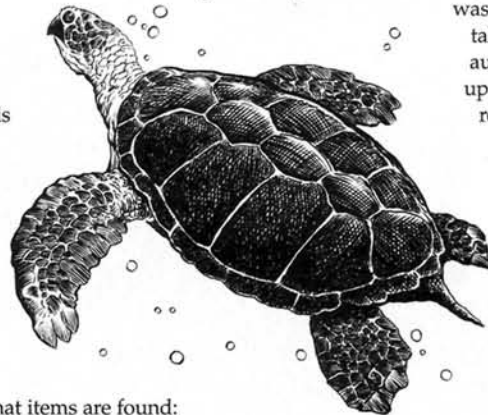
10. Pearls Again! This room holds 1d12 blue pearls and 2d10 white pearls. One pearl can be discovered each round spent searching.

Table 4: Denizens

In the areas of the temple detailed within this module, monstrous inhabitants are fully described. These creatures, however, are not the only beings occupying the crumbling remains of the once great Temple of Eadro. Other areas of the temple could be home to a number of unsavory beasts. If a monstrous denizen is encountered, roll 1d10 to determine the type of creature:

1. Dreaded Undead. The PCs have a run-in with a group of dreads that have temporarily taken up residence in this area.

Dreads (12): AC 6; MV 6, fly 15 (B), swim 9 (E), jump 3; HD 3+3; hp 22 (x3), 21 (x5), 19,



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18 (x2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg by weapon type or 1-4; SD regenerate 2 hp/day; turned as shadows; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, *shatter*, and *disintegrate* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ S; ML 20; INT non (0); AL N; XP 975; MCA1; bone javelin.

2. Zombies. This room holds a number of ordinary human zombies that were used as cannon fodder in Iakhovas's great undead army. The corpses were once sailors whose ships were sunk and pillaged by sahuagin under the Ravager's command.

Zombies (12): AC 8; MV 6, swim 6 (E); HD 2; hp 9 (x5), 8 (x3), 7 (x4); THAC0 19; #AT 1; Dmg 1-8; SD immune to *sleep*, *charm*, and *hold* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 65; MM/373.

3. Eel on the Prowl. This room is occupied by an aggressive giant moray eel. The filthy creature has subsisted on the rotting flesh of zombies for some time now and is happy to see fresh meat enter its home. The creature is in no way affiliated with the kraken, whose minions simply stay out of its way rather than try to destroy the feral beast.

Giant moray eel: AC 4; MV swim 6 (D); HD 5+4; hp 40; THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 2; Dmg 2-8 or 3-6/1-4; SA jaw lock, disease, tail lash; SD immune to disease and *fear* spells, +4 bonus vs. *enfeeblement*; SZ H; ML 12 or 20; INT animal (1); AL NE; XP 650; MCA3/37.

4. A Hidden Menace. This particular room holds an unseen but lethal occupant. Buried just below the surface of the floor of the chamber is a saltwater vodyanoi. One of several such beasts inhabiting the temple's ruins, the monster waits patiently until the PCs enter the room before suddenly exhuming itself in an explosive spray of stone. PCs suffer a -2 penalty to their surprise rolls.

Saltwater vodyanoi: AC 2; MV 3, swim 6 (E), burrow 6; HD 10; hp 54; THAC0 11; #AT 3; Dmg 4-16/4-16/1-12; SA summon 1-20 electric eels once/day (60% chance of success); SZ L; ML 15; INT average (9); AL CE; XP 3,000; MM/352 (vodyanoi—modified).



5. The Trouble with Trolls. A pack of scraggs greet the PCs as they enter this room. The trolls are new to Voalidru, enjoying the flesh of the human zombies that are so prolific in the city.

The scraggs are pleased to see fresh meat and attack the PCs on sight.

Saltwater trolls (4): AC 2; MV 3, swim 12 (D); HD 6+12; hp 50, 45, 44, 41; THAC0 13; #AT 3; Dmg 1-4/1-4/9-16; SA sever limbs; SD regenerate 3 hp/round when in saltwater; SZ L; ML 16; INT low (5); AL CE; XP 1,400; MM/349 (troll).

6. Persuasive Plant-life. This room houses a dangerous, intelligent patch of seaweed known

as a kelpie. The flora attempts to *charm* the first male PC who enters the room, thus gaining a loyal guard against the other dangerous inhabitants of the temple. The kelpie flees if attacked while bereft of an enchanted guardian. The kelpie can be encountered only once.

Kelpie: AC 3; MV 9, swim 12 (C); HD 5; hp 31; #AT 0; Dmg 0; SA *charm* once/day (-2 penalty to opponent's saving throw); SZ M; ML 13; INT low (7); AL NE; XP 420; MM/293 (plant, intelligent).

7. Shadows of the Night. A pack of wandering shadows, one of several that prowl the ruins of Voalidru, are skulking about this area as the PCs enter. The shadows are 90% undetectable in this environment and automatically gain surprise with their first attack unless the PCs spot them.

Shadows (8): AC 7; MV 12, swim 12 (D); HD 3+3; hp 21, 20, 19 (x3), 16, 15 (x2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SA Strength drain; SD 90% undetectable in darkness; +1 weapons needed to hit; immune to *sleep*, *charm*, *hold*, and *fear* spells, as well as cold-based attacks; SZ M; ML special; INT low (6); AL CE; XP 420; MM/312.

8. Creepy Crawlers. The PCs encounter a pack of undersea carrion crawlers. These legless monsters resemble eels but have bony plates on their heads, multifaceted eyes, and eight whipping tentacles that sprout from their small mouths. The aquatic crawlers mindlessly set upon the PCs, hoping to paralyze and consume them.

Aquatic carrion crawlers (5): AC 3/7; MV 3, swim 12 (B); HD 4+1; hp 30, 27, 22 (x2), 18; THAC0 17; #AT 1 or 8; Dmg 1-3 or special; SA paralysis; SZ L; ML special; INT non (0); AL N; XP 650; MM/35 (modified).

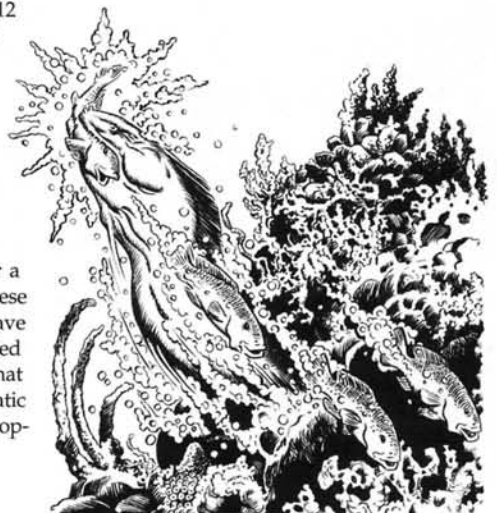
9. The Unclean. The PCs encounter a party of merrow (underwater ogres). The group is part of a larger tribe that occupies several regions in Voalidru. The ogres attack PCs on sight, determined to strip them of all their shiny valuables.

Merrow (4): AC 4; MV 6, swim 12 (D); HD 4+4; hp 36, 33, 30 (x2); THAC0 15; #AT 1 or 3; Dmg by weapon type +6 or 1-6/1-6/2-8; SA swimming charge (+1 to hit); SD -5 penalty to opponents' surprise rolls; SZ L; ML 12; INT average (8); AL CE; XP 420; MM/272 (ogre); large spear (2d8/2d8), 1d4 pp, 1d6 gp, and 1d12 sp each (in seal skin money belt).

10. Giant Anemone. Rooted to the floor, wall, or ceiling of this area is a gigantic anemone. The creature's tendrils sway gently in the current, waiting to snare passing fish. Although its sheer size makes the anemone look fearsome, it does not attack larger prey. If the PCs attack the anemone, it releases a nigh-undetectable scent (its "distress signal") that attracts seven sharks to its location. The sharks arrive in 2-8 rounds and attack the nearest PC. All seven sharks can attack a single human-sized target.

Giant anemone: AC 8; MV 1; HD 8; hp 49; THAC0 13; #AT 0; Dmg nil; SZ L; ML 7; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 650; New monster.

Sharks (7): AC 6; MV swim 24; HD 4; hp 30, 29, 26 (x2), 25, 24 (x2); THAC0 17; #AT 1; Dmg 2-5; SZ M; ML 10; INT animal (1); AL N; XP 120; MM/117 (fish). Ω



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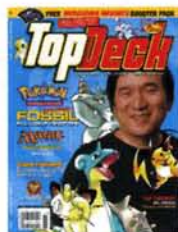
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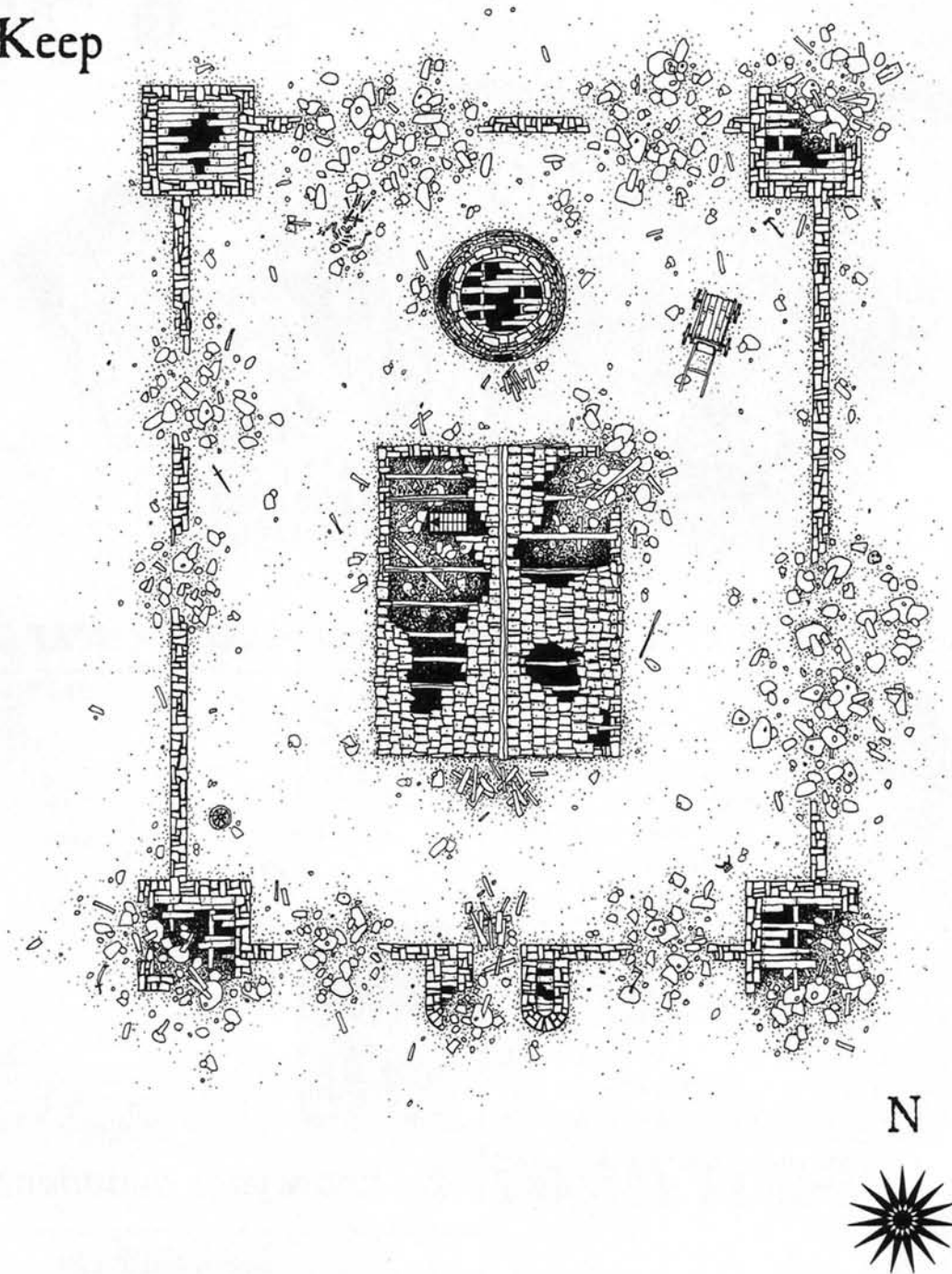
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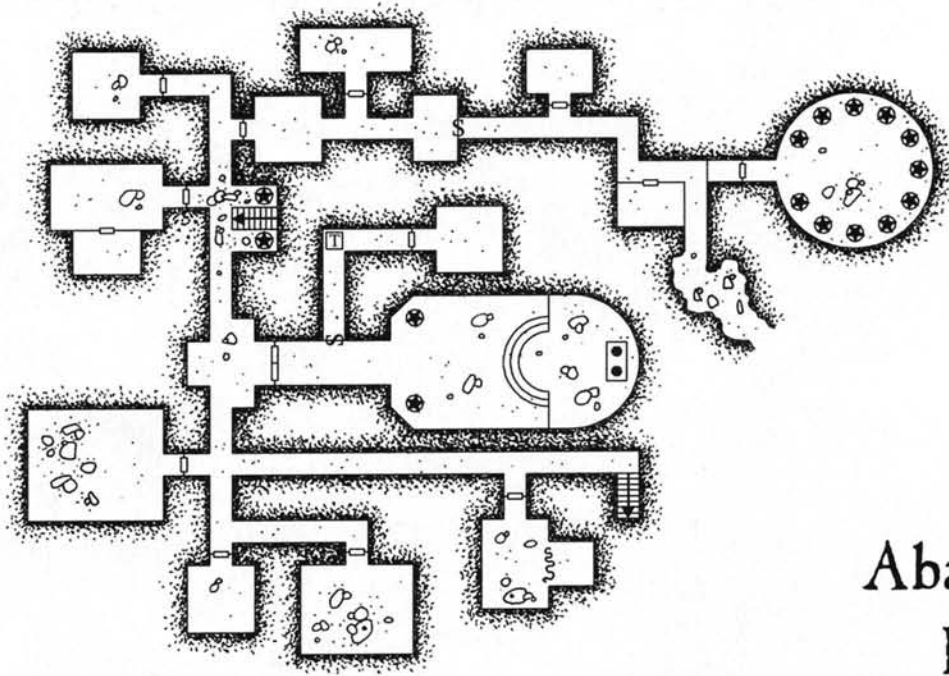
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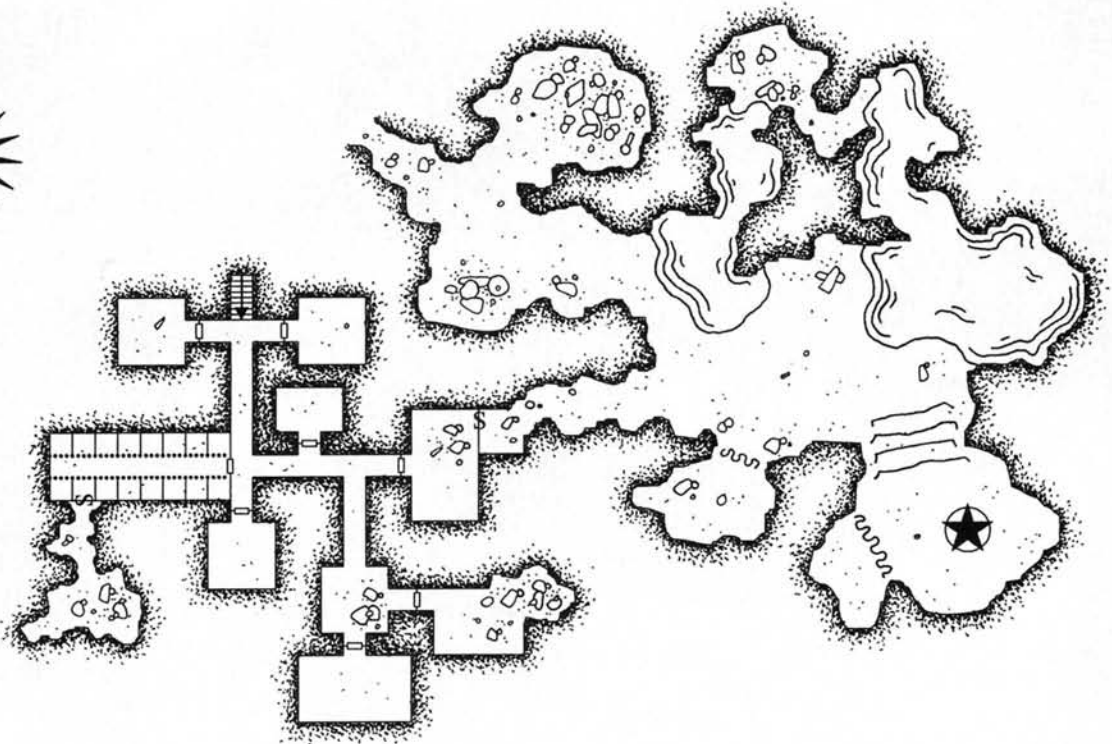
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The Abandoned Keep

Dungeon Level 1



Dungeon Level 2

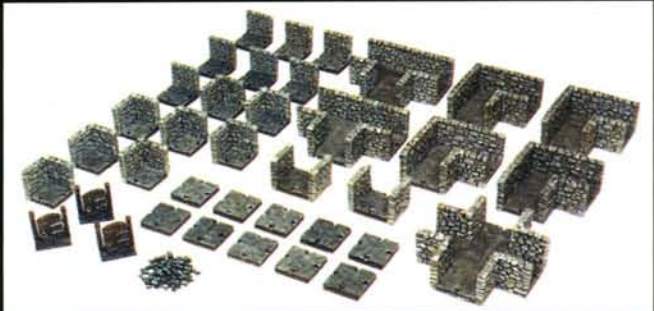
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