

PREPARED 2

A DOZEN ONE-SHOT ADVENTURES FOR 5TH EDITION



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PREPARED 2!

A Dozen 5th Edition One-Shot Adventures

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“FOR CORMAC, MY HEART – MY COMPASS.”

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DIB'S WAGON OF DOOM

FOUR 1ST- TO 2ND-LEVEL PCS

"We had to walk quite quickly to escape it. I'm nearly out of breath. Well, last I saw, it was sort of chugging along down Topaz Way. It tried to climb the hill up to the silks market, but I think whoever is inside got tired? Goblins, no doubt. No, I wouldn't say it was careening through the city on a path of destruction; definitely not—still quite a nuisance."

SUMMARY

The nefarious master wrestler Dib, the goblin, is "terrorizing" the streets of the town (or city). Since his defeat in his roadside fortress, the would-be chieftain has plotted his revenge. Gathering to him a new batch of dim minions, Dib has transformed a stolen merchant wagon into a machine of war. The wagon is powered by several goblins inside who, while devoted to Dib, lack the strength to pedal the thing quickly or consistently. Dib's plan to wreak a path of havoc through the streets has resulted in something a bit more disappointing. In this light-hearted and quirky adventure for four first- or second-level PCs, the party must confront the war wagon, gain entry to it, and defeat its defenders—the lives of several potted plants and a few market stalls depend on it!

FACING THE WAGON

A wagon that otherwise might haul crates of food to market has been capped with a crude wooden turret. The carpentry evident here is suspect. The turret is comprised of old boards and rusted shields. Wherever gaps exist between the wagon and the turret, more wood was hastily nailed on. Multiple slits in the walls of the wagon and its cap allow the passengers to see out into the street. Small dead animals have been nailed to the wheels. The sad corpses turn slowly as the wagon lurches forward.

The body of the wagon is a little over 12 ft. long and nearly 7 ft. wide. The turret sits on the back half and extends the height of the vehicle to 10 ft. There is a reinforced door on the left side. It can be forced open with a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check. There is an emergency door on the turret that can be similarly forced open. The wagon will lurch around attacking

the party until it is stopped. Your party may devise any number of ways to stop the wagon from moving and gain access to the troublemakers inside. Reducing the wagon to 0 hp, setting it aflame, or destroying one wall are all viable strategies. Refer to "Breached!" if the party gains access to the interior of the wagon. The war wagon is designed to offer a CR 2 challenge. It has the following statistics and actions:

WAR WAGON

AC 13

Speed 0

HP 65

Damage Vulnerabilities fire

CR 2 (450 XP)

TRAITS

We're Pretty Tired Boss. The goblins tasked with pedalling and moving the wagon are already exhausted. At the beginning of each of the wagon's turns, roll d6. On a 5 or 6, the wagon can move 40 ft. that turn. Once moving, the wagon ignores difficult terrain thanks to momentum.

Rolling Death. The wagon can move through other creatures of Medium or smaller. Creatures caught in the path of the wagon's movement must make a DC 12 Dexterity save or be run over, taking 8 (2d6+1) bludgeoning damage or half as much on a successful save.

Wood Strong, More Wood Stronger! In addition to its hp and AC, the wagon has a damage threshold of 5.

Hiding. The goblins are in total cover.

ACTIONS

Excited. The goblins inside are thrilled. The wagon makes one blade storm attack and one fire the cannons attack.

Blade Storm! *Melee weapon attack:* +3 hit, reach 10 ft., up to 2 targets. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+2) slashing damage. With great enthusiasm and probably sound effects, the goblins swing two short swords at the end of extra-long poles attached to the wagon like oars on a boat.

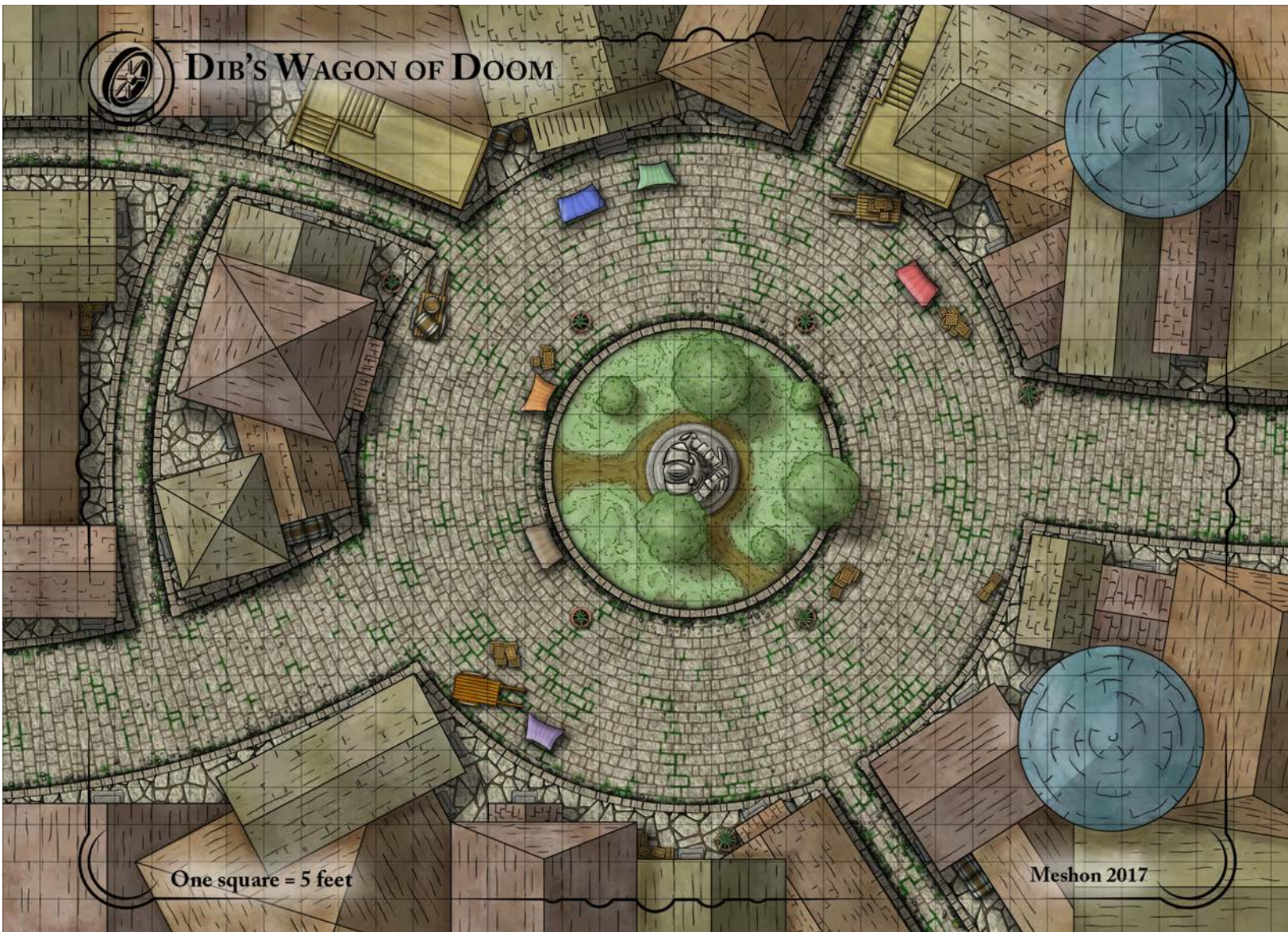
IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a street located in a town (or city). It mentions a street passing around a small monument. It assumes the town has residents that can be threatened by creatures at the goblin power level. The wagon attack is unexpected and requires the party to act immediately. A citizen, rushing past the party in an attempt to escape the wagon, informs them of the trouble.

The scenario is a perfect starting point for a campaign against nearby goblin forces. Dib is a disgruntled leader of a ragtag group of wrestling enthusiasts and miscreants. His antics, while silly and fun, could easily prompt a more serious and dangerous storyline.

IN MIDGARD

The city of Savoyne has seen strange attacks by a new band of dust goblins. The goblins arrive with various hastily constructed siege weapons, making a nuisance of themselves. The goblins who travel through and stay in the city are not pleased with their brethren's attacks as it greatly increases the tension between the city's human residents and themselves. Dib and his war wagon are but one example of this strange onslaught. The druids of the Oaken Ring would see an end to these assaults.



Fire the Cannons! Ranged weapon attack: +4 hit, range , 1 target.

Hit: 9 (2d8) piercing damage. The goblins yell and make a big show of their "cannon," which is a heavy crossbow mounted inside the turret.

BREACHED!

If the wagon is reduced to zero hp, if the door is forced open, or if other conditions expose the goblins or force them to flee, the wagon is considered slain and takes no further actions. The interior of the wagon is very cramped and not suitable for toe to toe fighting. In general, the goblins then clamber out of the wagon and attack the party on the streets. They are cunning fighters and make use of cover, flanking, and combat tactics.

There are between four (CR 1) and six (CR 2) **goblins** inside the wagon, including Dib. They are loyal to their boss but are not above fleeing if the fight goes badly. They came to town in the wagon in hopes of finding loot and murdering citizens with their amazing machine. They are equally happy killing heroes and taking their things. The goblins carry their normal equipment.

WRESTLING MOVES

Dib and his crew were once ejected from their clan's stronghold for indiscriminate wrestling. They have since continued the sport and enjoy wrestling more than most things (looting and murdering are still top of the list). Two goblins who are next to the same opponent can coordinate and use their action to attempt a clothesline maneuver.

With surprising coordination, two goblins clasp forearms and with gleeful enthusiasm attempt to clothesline you. While their motions are practiced, their balance is suspect.

Clothesline (requires two goblin actions). Melee weapon attack: +5 hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 3 (1d4+1) bludgeoning damage and the creature is knocked prone and stunned until the end of their next turn. If this attack is successful, each goblin initiating the clothesline must make a DC 13 Dexterity check or also fall prone.

ON THE STREET

The wagon is puttering around a small monument and greenspace. People have fled the area, though a few hesitant guards watch on from a safe distance.

Monument: Pick an appropriate statue for the town. It provides partial cover.

Guards: Will not join the combat until the threat is clearly gone, at which point they arrive and deliver a few blows or try and look helpful.

WAGON INTERIOR

The interior is cramped and hot. Scraps of food litter the floor, and a haze of goblin sweat fills your nose. A ladder at the back of the wagon leads to the crossbow turret. A simple pedal drive is assembled toward the front with a mostly ineffective stick for steering. A few crates sit on the floor. Something has been written on one side of the crates.

There is nothing obvious of value inside the wagon. Some of the goblins made crude seat cushions from fur and moss.

The crates at the back are marked in the goblin tongue with the word *loot*. The crates are entirely empty. The "cannon" is a heavy crossbow in excellent repair and a stack of thirty bolts sits next to it. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check made while searching the wagon reveals a loose floorboard and hidden compartment which contains a fat sack of silver coins (203 sp) and a few bottles of cheap spirits (7 gp value).

REWARDS

The residents are relieved Dib's wagon has been stopped. Aside from the treasure found inside the wagon, the PCs are rewarded with free food and drink for several nights. A reasonable bounty (25–50 gp) might be paid by the local guard or leader.

WHAT'S NEXT

The primary concern of the town is determining if this is an isolated act of chaos by one goblin or an opening salvo in a larger offensive. Perhaps a goblin boss egged Dib on in an attempt to assess the town's defenses. What other strange assaults lurch down the old merchant road toward the peaceful community?

A STARRY BREACH

FOUR 2ND- TO 3RD-LEVEL PCS

"Out past the spires, in the tyrannical rays of the midnight sun, there are cracks in the surface of the ice. Those cold and lonely breaches—what stirs in their depths? What constellations twinkle on their rimy walls? The nomads knew. Their stories passed from mouth to ear. Imagine what is lost in the transcription. These dead pages full of ink—so much earnest work, and to what end? As though this scribbling could capture all the facets of a voice telling a story. I aim to visit one myself. The breaches in the ice. To have before me that which I have loved as I would a child. Bah, save your judgment—what stirs your heart to wander this far from comfort . . ."

SUMMARY

The party arrives at an abandoned outpost in a frozen landscape. The outpost appears to have suffered some strange attack. A half-mad scholar from a distant city hides in the outpost; he is drawn to the region by his visions of a breach in the ice nearby—a breach he believes leads to the realms beyond the stars. Heading east, the party finds that the breach is no simple chasm in the ice, and its scaled guardian does not appreciate its work being interrupted. In this frozen and otherworldly adventure for second- and third-level PCs, the party must overcome rimy insects, a void dragon wyrmling, and the pull of the breach itself.

QUIL, SCHOLAR (MADMAN)

You can cover your eyes, but the light finds your skin and troubles your sleep. Tomorrow I search east. In my dreams, I saw the spires there and between them a breach.

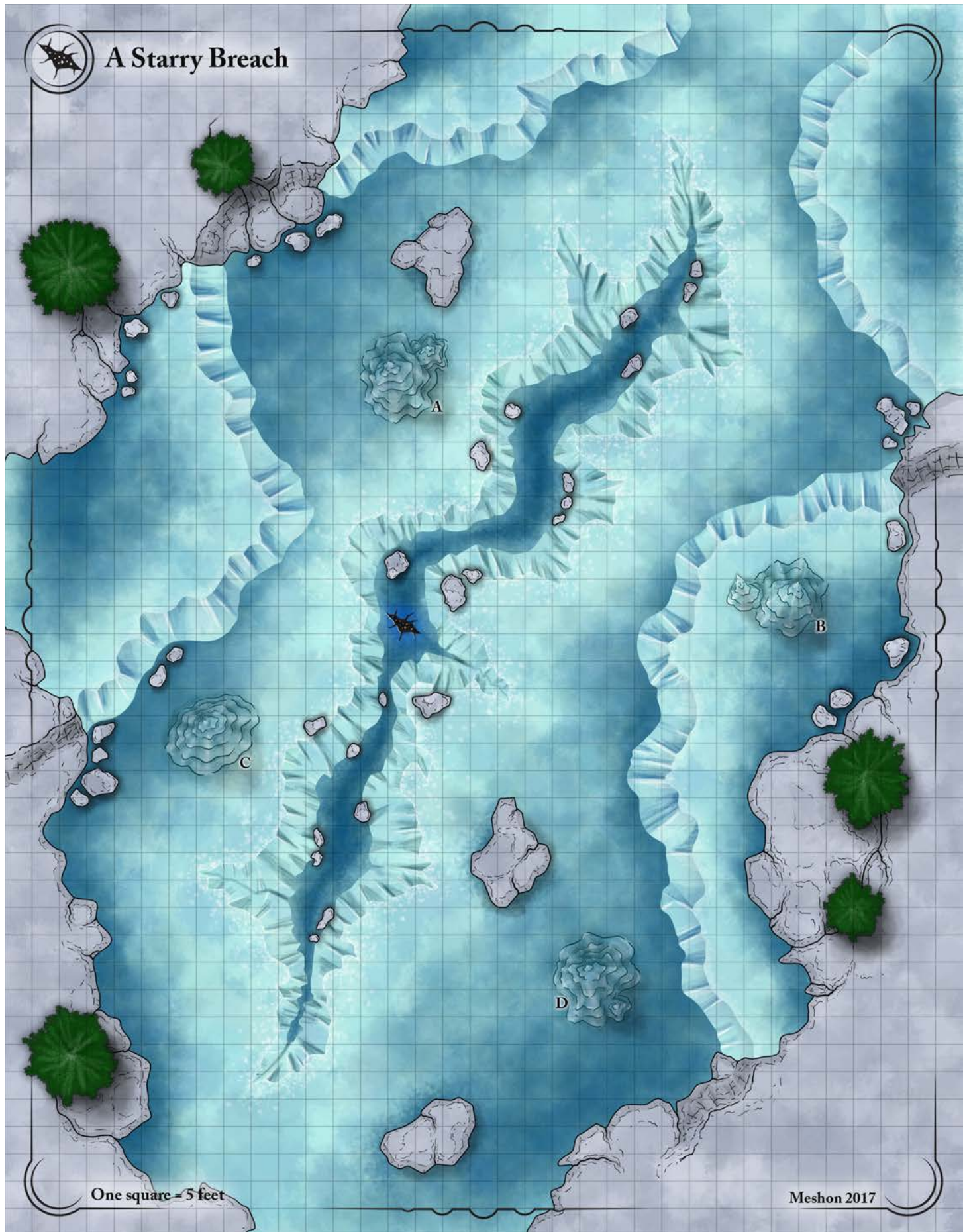
What He Wants Most: To witness a fabled breach in the ice and learn the truth about them.

Physical Traits: Quil is a thin human male. He is only 30 years old, but his relentless pursuit of the breaches, poor diet, and relative isolation have taken a toll on his body. He is pale, frail, and limps slightly from an injury travelling to the north. His bloodshot eyes dart from place to place and sometimes linger—glassy with thought. A wet cough has settled in permanently, and his fingernails and hair show signs of malnutrition.

Personality/Roleplaying: Quil is an obsessive. He first learned of the breaches in his work as a scholar while studying cosmology in a library back home. Recent visions have inspired him to travel north, where he hopes to find one. He is single-minded in his determination to discover and witness one these breaches. He believes they are key to understanding the outer realms. He is prone to ranting about the constellations but is not insane—yet. Conversations with Quil are centered on his studies of the stars. He is uninterested in small talk and only occasionally responds to queries about his past. He prefers to talk about his research. Quil sees the party as a means to an end and offers them everything he can to secure their assistance. He offers no credible threat to adventurers and can be killed with little effort.

What He Knows:

- Spires matching those in his visions rise half a day to the east of the ruined outpost.
- The breaches in the ice are connected to the outer realms somehow.
- Long dead nomads had stories of the breaches, talking about starry magic.
- The outpost was abandoned a few years ago after some kind of attack or catastrophe; he arrived less than a week ago.



THE QUIET OUTPOST

The outpost's edifices and low walls are made from a combination of wood and ice. The simple gate at the southern edge is intact and open slightly. Around and throughout the ruins are holes in the frozen ground. There are no bodies, though even from a distance supply crates and loaded sleds can be seen between the abandoned buildings. A thick layer of snow blankets the outpost.

Walls and Gate: There is little to be learned about the outpost's fate from its defenses. (The grubs burrowed under the walls in the night.) Masons and carpenters in the party recognize the great skill that went into building the reinforced ice walls; the technique is easy to pick up and may be useful to the party in their future adventures on the ice.

Holes: The holes are actually the entry and exit points for rime worm grub tunnels. PCs who originate from the region likely know what they are. DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the holes are made from a burrowing action, though there are no obvious claw marks—instead the snow and ice has undulating ridges, suggesting melting.

Buildings: The buildings are intact. They are rough, frontier-like structures with little in the way of comfort. Most are small cabins for one or two occupants. A storehouse contains 30 days' worth of rations, a dozen full wineskins, and nine complete explorer's packs. A search of the outpost reveals the former occupants left without taking their valuables. A total of 230 sp and 75 gp is collected from pouches, sacks, and footlockers.

Quil: Quil is living in one of the buildings but will hide (Stealth 14) under some furs when the party enter the outpost. He shows himself once he sees the party are explorers. With the party's appearance, Quil sees an opportunity to be escorted to the breach. He offers them his scroll cases (three first-level

wizard spell scrolls) and money (a pouch with 34 gp) if they agree to investigate the breach with him. He needs a night of rest and preparation before striking out.

Return of Rime Worm Grubs: Just as the party settles down to their watches and to camp for the night (or shortly after they arrive at the outpost), the rime worm grubs responsible for killing and dissolving the previous inhabitants of the outpost return. The grubs arrive all at once, rising from the frozen ground and attacking. There are two (CR 2) to three (CR 4) grubs in the encounter. Add swarms of insects (tiny necrotizing worms) to increase the challenge.

THE BREACH

Icy spires rise like obelisks around the long chasm in the ice. Small points of light dance across the surface of the spires, alternating between frenetic movement and stillness. Steam rises from the chasm as some unseen heat melts the ice below. Rainbow-colored light spills out of the breach onto the snow at its rim. The light is hypnotizing and accompanied by a low hum.

The Ice Spires: These 15–20-ft. fingers of solid ice (A, B, C, D) are currently acting as conduits for the dragon's void magic. They store and deliver energy as required by the dragon as it further grows the breach. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) checks reveals subtle claw marks on the surface of the spires; the marks trace otherworldly sigils. PCs who start or end their turn within 10 ft. of a spire must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or use their reaction to move their speed toward the breach (or fall prone if no reaction available). A successful save negates further saves against this effect.

The Breach: The breach represents a void dragon wyrmling's attempts at opening a portal to the space beyond the stars. The wyrmling gains +1 AC and regenerates 7 hp at the start of its turn as long as it is within 10 ft. of the breach. Once each round, the dragon can call on the power of the breach to give it advantage against a saving throw.

The breach is 15 ft. deep. In the decades it has been here, the dragon has managed to open a 1-ft.-by-1-ft. rift at the bottom of the breach. The breach calls to mortals who get close, inviting them to leap in. PCs who start or end their turn within 5 ft. of the breach's edge must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or fall (15 ft.) into the breach. A PC who starts their turn in the breach must succeed a DC 15 Wisdom save, or they lose the ability to move or take any actions except to dig into the icy floor.

The Void Dragon: Attacks anything approaching the breach. At the end of its turn, as a lair action, the dragon may cause any spire to speak a dark utterance in the language of the stars. All PCs within 100 ft. of the spire must make a concentration check as though they had received damage.

Quil: Unless physically subdued, the scholar is drawn into the breach in the first round, where he begins to dig. Void energy from the breach kills him at the beginning of the second round, and he is transformed into a dread **specter** and ally of the dragon. Quil is lost and attacks the party.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a frozen landscape and an abandoned outpost. It assumes the party is travelling through the region, happening upon the outpost by chance. At the heart of the adventure is a rift between worlds, guarded by a dangerous and enigmatic dragon.

The **rime worm grubs** and **void dragon wyrmling** (both from the *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with **swarms of insects** (add burrow 10 ft. to their speed) and a **white dragon wyrmling**.

The scenario presents an opportunity to introduce other planes of existence and could be tied into stories involving extraplanar threats.

IN MIDGARD

North of Bjeornheim, at the foot of the Reaching Mountains, lies the breach in the ice. The outpost belongs to the humans of Bjeornheim, and with no word from that distant place for several weeks, they grow concerned. The party is sent to investigate the outpost, armed with the information that a scholar named Quil was the last soul to travel in that direction.



REWARDS

The wyrmling has been working here for decades. Over time, several groups of explorers and would-be heroes have fallen victim to the breach and its guardian. Amidst the frozen corpses are 300 sp, 111 gp, 2 uncommon potions, and a *void-touched* buckler (see "Appendix").

WHAT'S NEXT

This breach is not the only one. The old stories told of several such breaches. Perhaps there are larger and more dangerous gateways out there in the frozen wastes. What threat do these enigmatic portals pose to the region? Surely other, more malevolent beings have learned of the breaches.

OOZE TOMB OF THE OATHBREAKER

FOUR 3RD- TO 4TH-LEVEL PCS

"We have drunk from the lake for a generation—its waters have quenched the thirst of chieftains! Poison, it is all poison now . . ."

SUMMARY

A small band of centaurs have seen their water source fouled by unknown magic. When word of their plight reaches the party, they embark on a day's travel to the centaur camp. Along the way, they encounter injured wildlife and panicked bugbears. Terrifying storms beset the region, raining down acid and oozes. Agreeing to investigate the small corrupted lake, the adventurers discover a long buried evil has awakened—bringing with it oozing undead. In this strange and gruesome adventure for third- and fourth-level PCs, the party must navigate the wilds, face the ooze storms, and confront a reanimated warrior who betrayed her god.

CENTAURS' PLIGHT

The party discovers the centaurs' plight while visiting a town in the region. A travelling merchant brings the news as she and her caravan have recently passed through the affected area. The merchant can meet the party in an inn where they are both staying or as the heroes purchase supplies in the local markets. She reveals the following information:

- A clan of centaurs living nearby are plagued by strange storms.
- The centaurs report their water source, a small lake, has been fouled.
- The storms bring black rain that smell of death.
- To make matters worse, bugbear warbands have been attacking the centaurs lately; they can spare no scouts to investigate the befoulment of their lake.
- She traded with them before arriving here, and they seemed desperate.

The merchant also provides instructions to find the centaur camp.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE LAKE?

The entryway to the tomb of a long forgotten evil has surfaced in the center of the lake. The tomb contains the buried remains of a hero who broke a sworn oath to her god. She and her accomplices were buried alive by the god's followers many years ago. Though her bones and flesh turned to dust long ago, her black heart persisted—growing in power and malevolence through the years. Eventually the heart coalesced a new oozing body to inhabit, and in the process conjured strange storms and corrupted the small lake.

The tomb is now open, and dead things crawl from it. The magical storms herald her re-emergence. You must choose a god in the pantheon of your campaign and complete the story of the betrayal in a manner true to your world. A few questions to help complete the narrative quickly:

- Who is the god that was betrayed?
- What was the nature of the broken oath?
- Who was the betraying hero?
- What does the re-animated oathbreaker want now?

TRAVELLING TO THE CENTAUR CAMP

The camp is 20 miles from the town. The road toward the camp is good and travelled often. The party may use the road to travel 15 miles, at which point they will have to walk across the open plain. The party should encounter a rancid rainstorm on the way to the centaurs. Additionally, crossing the wilds is inherently risky, and challenging the heroes with a medium/hard difficulty encounter or two is appropriate.

Tigers in the Grass: Two (CR 4) or three (CR 5) **saber-tooth tigers** attempt to ambush the party as they ascend a small hill. The tigers strike at one target initially, attempting to bring it

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a small town (or city) and a small lake. It assumes the party encounters a travelling merchant. A journey through grasslands or plains with storms on the horizon is mentioned.

The **gray thirsters** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with **ghasts**.

The scenario requires you to decide a key story element. You must choose a god from your campaign's pantheon and add a few details about a broken oath. The meeting with the oathbreaker can be a straight combat or an opportunity to further the story—perhaps the oathbreaker was unjustly killed or perhaps she now seeks redemption.

IN MIDGARD

This adventure is set on the Rothenian Plain. The party's own business takes them wandering into the territory of the khan. In one of the wheeled cities, the PCs discover the centaurs' plight. The tomb belongs to a priest of Svarog, who fell to greed and murder. The priest along with several acolytes were buried alive in the tomb.

down before dealing with the rest of the heroes. The tiger's bodies show strange burn marks and scars. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals the burns are fresh and acidic in nature. Each pair of teeth from the tigers fetches 50 gp.

Panicked Bugbears: Three (CR 4) to five (CR 5) **bugbears** are fleeing from the site of a recent ooze storm. Their trajectory intercepts the heroes as they navigate a shallow ravine. The bugbears attack recklessly, and heroes with a high Wisdom modifier, or those trained in Insight, recognize the creatures are spooked. One of them is badly burned on its legs and struggles to keep pace with its brethren. The brutes carry a variety of pillaged coins and jewelry worth 200 gp in total.

OOZE STORMS

The dark sky crackles menacingly. Though no wind stirs the grass of the plains, the clouds move rapidly toward you. A few drops of blackened water fall onto your shoulders, and a strong scent of decay rises from the viscous precipitation. And then they begin to fall—masses of coal-colored ooze.

You may choose when the party encounters the ooze storms. They might be added to a combat to increase its challenge. They appear suddenly and with little warning. Shelter is hard to find on the plains, but reward the party for ingenious plans to mitigate and defeat the ooze storms. There are two distinct types of ooze storms in the region.

Rancid Rains: The sky crackles with lightning and clouds gather. A viscous black rain falls on the region. Creatures caught in the rain are pelted with stinking droplets. The rain visibly affects the surrounding flora, causing it to wither, blacken, and die. Exposure to the rain triggers a DC 12 Constitution save, taking 6 (1d10) acid damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. The saving throw is repeated each minute the creature remains in the rain. A typical rancid rain lasts 5 minutes.

Oozers: The oozer storm clouds are much darker than the rancid rain. A few oily drops fall but are quickly replaced by more menacing goopy tendrils that reach from the clouds to the ground. The oozer storm initially drops three **gray oozes** near the party and then one (CR 4) or two (CR 5) **ochre jellies** at the beginning of the second round.

CENTAUR CAMP

The centaur camp consists of six massive tents built around a central fire pit. Everywhere are large sacks strung together with leather strips. The exterior walls of the hide tents feature freshly painted symbols in white paint. Several of the massive creatures greet you at the camp's periphery. Their spears appear fashioned from whole slender trees.

The leader of this small centaur band is named Yarnak. He joins his guards in greeting the party as they arrive at the camp. Yarnak is caught in a difficult position: he must keep his band together in the event the bugbears attack, so he cannot investigate the situation at the lake. The centaur camp is running out of water, however. They are loathe to abandon the camp as it has history and meaning to them. He offers the party a tidy chest of gold (500 gp) and a pair of *centaur wrist-wraps* (see "Appendix")



OOZE TOMB OF THE OATHBREAKER

One square = 50 feet

One square = 5 feet

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as a reward for dealing with the befoulment of the lake. He provides the following information:

- The lake is 2 miles from the centaur camp.
- The last visit made to the lake revealed the water had turned brackish and foul smelling.
- A strange stone structure had risen from the ground on a small island near the middle of the lake.
- The ooze storms are frequent near the lake.

DEAD LAKE

The small lake stretches out before you. Its water is the color of smoke and covered in sickly yellow foam. An old raft has been pulled ashore nearby, its condition suspect. In the center of the lake is a speck with a single tree. From a distance, you can see a half-sunken structure of some kind; the dirt beside the grimy stone walls looks recently churned.

The centaurs' watering hole is fouled by the evil risen in the middle of the lake. Animals avoid this area. Plant life along the banks of the lake has blackened and died. Milling around the

edge of the lake eventually results in an attack by the undead drawn to the evil site.

Foul Waters: A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check allows the party to notice streams of viscous looking material pouring from the tomb on the island into the lake. Divine casters and heroes trained in Religion recognize the befoulment is necromantic in origin.

The raft can be used to transport the party onto the island. The raft is visibly degraded. Unless repaired, the raft disassembles and dumps the party into the water just off the island. A DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the party to repair the raft for use to and from the island.

The water here is poison. Creatures who drink the water must succeed a DC 20 Constitution save or take 21 (6d6) poison damage and be poisoned for an hour; a successful save results in half damage. Creatures partially submerged or exposed to the water in a substantial way must succeed a DC 12 Constitution save or be poisoned for an hour.



OATHBREAKER'S TOMB

A shadowed entrance into a small tomb has broken the surface of the ground. Thick black ooze flows from the tomb, across the island, and into the lake. As you approach, a bony hand covered in oily black slime grasps the side of the entrance. "Who comes to welcome me?"

The tomb is small (10 ft. by 10 ft.) and half submerged in mud and dark lake water. The walls inside the tomb are marred with scratch marks made decades ago.

The Oathbreaker: She does not attack immediately. She instead attempts to engage the PCs in conversation—her aim is to determine if they might help her achieve her goal. Depending on what she wants (revenge, salvation?), the party may agree to help or may refuse and kill her. In combat she (mummy) is joined by one (CR 4) or two (CR 5) gray oozes, which slough off her repulsive form with a sickening wet sound. Slaying the oathbreaker ends the fouling magic and ooze storms. The water in the lake returns to normal within a month. Alternatively, the oathbreaker may end her necromancy if the party aids her to achieve her goal.

REWARDS

As agreed, and provided the oathbreaker's magic has ended, the centaurs provide the party with the gold and centaur wrist-wraps (see "Appendix"). The tomb contains no valuables; she and her accomplices were stripped of their wealth before being buried.

WHAT'S NEXT

Depending on the nature of the betrayal and the story you craft, there are many directions to go. Does the party embark on a quest to redeem the oathbreaker? Perhaps the tomb serves as the entrance to a larger structure built under the lake—a grim repository for those who displeased their god.

Unquenchable: *We will slake our thirst on your blood . . . !* The betrayer was not buried alone. Her servants and accomplices were buried alive with her. They died horribly of thirst, laying in the stony darkness, able to hear the lapping water of the lake just out of reach. Two (CR 4) to four (CR 7) **gray thirsters** rise from the water and attack the party as they consider how to cross the water.

ASSAULT OF THE STEEL HORDE

FOUR 4TH- TO 5TH-LEVEL PCS

"Surrender won't stop an arrow already loosed."

SUMMARY

The earth churns in a city graveyard, revealing not the undead but an ancient war machine. A great iron transport bores its way up from depths below, disrupting funeral rites and sending the citizens into a panic. With an opportunity to investigate and reap the rewards of bravery, the party closes on the graveyard. There they discover that the pilots of the strange vehicle are soulless automatons who have spent an eternity burrowing toward the battlefield of a long-forgotten war. In this action-packed and gritty adventure for fourth- and fifth-level PCs, the party must battle automatons, breach the iron transport, and put down its mad and malfunctioning commander.

WHAT'S HAPPENING AT THE GRAVEYARD

A war machine has dug its way up into the graveyard of the town. Its passengers are soldiers in a war that ended a very long time ago. While most of the burrowing machines reached their destination and met their fate, this one strayed off course. Its pilot and commander of the soldiers, was possessed by an evil spirit when the digger passed too close to the spirit's lair. The possessed commander has steered the transport in an erratic course over many years, finally surfacing in the graveyard. The soldiers are acting according to their protocols—they are at war and, after some delay, have arrived at the battle. The commander lurks in the bowels of the war machine, plotting its next move. Unchecked, the soldiers and their leader begin attacking the citizens around the graveyard. Killing as many people and causing as much destruction as possible. Built for war and nothing else, the automatons play out their roles as soldiers in a war, regardless of their circumstances.

YANSHA, CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD

The party is either sought out by the captain or can encounter her in the streets. She tells a harrowing tale involving heavily armored soldiers attacking citizen and guard alike near the graveyard. She describes a great war machine bursting from the ground in the graveyard.

I've never seen such cold and calculated violence. They don't make mistakes; I didn't see one swing of their hammers that didn't find a home . . . it was a slaughter.

THE WAR MACHINE

This massive iron and steel machine is divided into two discrete sections. The forward 30 ft. are dedicated to a rotating drill whose teeth are noticeably worn. The back portion consists of a 50-ft. tube with three large attached treads spread equidistant around the tube. Two outlines suggesting doors are set into the body of the machine. The very back of the vehicle is a smoldering engine—what magic fuels this impressive wonder of metal?

The machine consists of a 30-ft.-long, mechanical drill made of magically durable steel mounted to the front of a 50-ft.-long crew and passenger section. A great magical engine comprises the back 10 ft., which sheds bright light for 25 ft. around the machine and dim light for another 50 ft.

The machine has a base AC of 18 and 175 hp. Its hardened metal exterior grants it a damage threshold of 15. It resists all nonmagical damage and is immune to force damage. It has no actions and cannot move.

The Doors: There are two doors in the midsection which can only be opened from the interior. The doors have no visible hinges or handles. Forcing a door open requires a DC 20 Strength check. The doors open forcefully, and creatures caught underneath them must make a DC 13 Dexterity save, taking 12 bludgeoning damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

The Drill: Powered up and running, the drill allows the machine to pass through natural elements including dirt, clay, sand, rock, and ice. The drill leaves a 15-ft.-diameter passage behind it, which normally caves in within a few moments. Creatures who come into contact with the drill while it is operating (shoved, falling, and so on) must make a DC 13 Dexterity save, taking 40 slashing damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a town (or city) to be threatened by the emergence of the war machine. A guard captain prompts the PCs to action. The appearance of the war machine is a surprise and offers a way for the party to earn some renown with the locals. This is a combat-heavy scenario with mindless soldiers pitted against the party. The automatons inside the transport have likely already caused a great deal of violence in the area.

The **fellforged** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with a standard **wraith**.

The Engine: The engine is magical in nature. It radiates enchantment magic. A DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the magic is fading and that the machine's ability to continue travelling is compromised.

PERFECT SOLDIERS

The burrowing war machine transports eighteen soldiers (**animated armor**) and one commander (**fellforged**). Twelve soldiers are out performing maneuvers in the area around the graveyard while six remain behind to protect the vehicle and the commander. The soldiers appear as black-iron-clad humanoids that march in unison and use every advantage the battlefield offers. The soldiers come in four varieties.

Shield Bearer: In addition to its regular actions and traits, the shield bearer's AC is increased by 2, owing to the massive grimy metal shield it carries. These shield-bearing soldiers resist nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

Hammerer: In addition to its regular actions and traits, the hammerer's slam attack is replaced with . . .

Warhammer. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d8 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

Its multiattack action is modified to . . .

Multiattack. The animated armor makes three warhammer attacks.

Gunner: In addition to its regular actions and traits, the cannoner soldiers lose their multiattack action. It gains . . .

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) piercing damage.

Its multiattack action is modified to . . .

Multiattack. The animated armor makes two hand crossbow attacks.

Scout: In addition to its regular actions and traits, the scout gains +7 to Stealth and its base move speed is 40 ft. It also receives the following trait . . .

Cloaked (3/day). The scout gains advantage to its next Stealth check.

APPROACHING THE GRAVEYARD

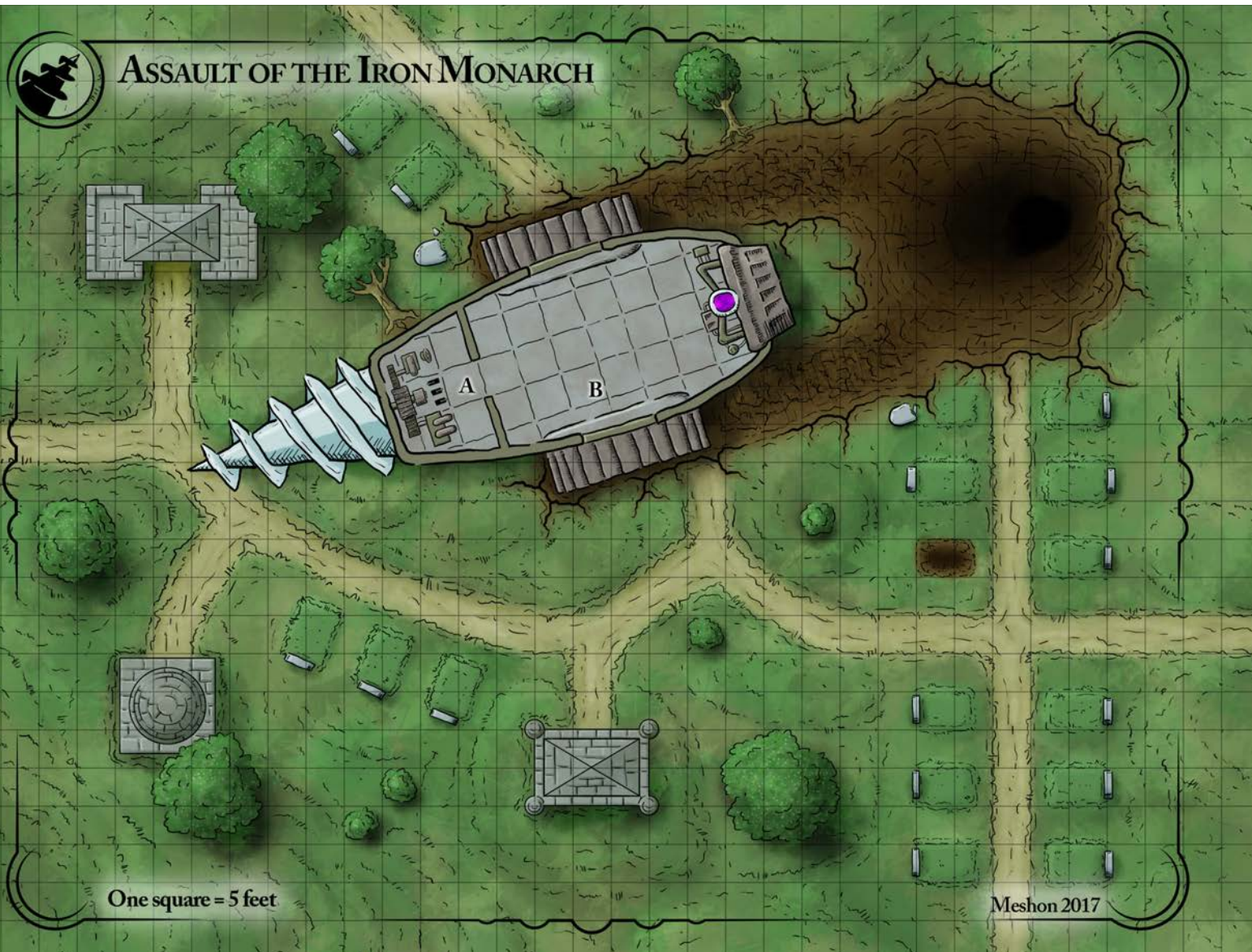
The party encounters the soldiers before they reach the graveyard. There are two units of six soldiers out wreaking havoc in the streets. A unit consists of two shield bearers, two hammerers, one scout, and one gunner. You may assemble

IN MIDGARD

Long ago, the city of Valera created a dozen burrowing war machines to bolster its already formidable army. The diggers were crewed with clockwork soldiers and sent on various training missions. Several of the diggers were lost, though, and it was concluded that the machines were crushed by the earth they dug through. The diggers were not destroyed and have managed to dig themselves all the way to the free city of Siwal! There they play out their training with deadly consequences.



ASSAULT OF THE IRON MONARCH



the units however you wish, but be mindful of the increased challenge created by adding foes to the encounter. Additionally, the modifications to the animated armor stat block increases the challenge offered by these foes; a single unit should provide a medium to hard encounter (CR 7) for the party. Here are two possible encounter scenarios involving the soldiers:

Fortified Position: A unit of soldiers has taken over a two-story building. The gunner fires at anything on the street from the second floor and is in three-quarters cover. The building's two entrances are barred (AC 15, 30 hp) and guarded by a shield bearer and one or two hammerers.

Breaking In: A unit of soldiers is on the street, attempting to force their way into a home where a dozen innocents have taken refuge. Uncontested, the soldiers break into the home within 2 rounds. A fight on the streets awaits the party as they intervene with the soldiers using the environment to their advantage as much as possible.

ASSAULTING THE WAR MACHINE

The machine sits in the center of the graveyard. Two soldiers with heavy shields patrol the vehicle's entrance. A few crypts offer hiding places on the way to the machine, but the area immediately around it is clear.

The graveyard has been trapped. Large explosive traps are sunk into the ground and are triggered by creatures moving overtop of them. Spotting the traps requires a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Dismantling a device requires an action and a DC 14 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. There are at least ten such devices forming a perimeter around the war machine. Creatures within a 10-ft. radius of a device when it is explodes must succeed a DC 14 Dexterity save or take 14 (4d6) fire damage; a successful save results in half damage.

A unit (see "Perfect Soldiers" above) of soldiers protect the vehicle and the commander inside it (B). They will rush to engage enemies—avoiding their own traps. A scout class soldier patrols the perimeter of the graveyard in stealth. It waits for the right moment to strike, preferring to attack once the party has confidently engaged the rest of its unit.

Battling past the soldiers, the PCs may enter the vehicle.

This dark and cramped metal hall smells of oil and earth. A grating sound rises. There, at the threshold between the forward cockpit and the main chamber, a hulking metal monster. Its head is bathed in ensorcelling crimson light.

The commander (**fellforged**) starts combat at the doorway (A). It seals the doors to the war machine in the first round before hissing and charging any party members inside. It is happy to fight in close quarters. The door can be opened by PC who reaches the cockpit (interacting with the object). (See "The War Machine" above for rules on forcing the door open.) The wraith inside the fellforged armor has no intentions beyond murdering its enemies; it cannot be reasoned with or convinced to surrender.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check made while examining the cockpit reveals the decades-long course the war machine took.

REWARDS

The soldiers carry no valuables, and the war machine contains only the essentials for keeping the crew running. Two *red corundum elemental gems* serve as part of the power source for the machine. They may be removed from their housing in the cockpit and used as normal.

WHAT'S NEXT

The story may continue in a number of ways. What was the outcome of the war these soldiers were supposed to be a part of? Local powers may wish the source of the war machine investigated, starting a longer adventure that reveals the origin of the automatons—and how many more such machines strayed off course?

THE VOID WALKER

FOUR 5TH- TO 6TH-LEVEL PCS

"I watched it lope across the horizon of the wastes at dusk; that is the shape of the end."

SUMMARY

A great threat lopes toward a small city at the edge of a wasteland. One of the leviathans of the wasteland, a gigantic malevolent creature known locally as a "walker," appears to be on a course directly through the city. The PCs are called to heroism by the city's council, who have learned that the walker is being directed by a foul darakhul who has gained control of the creature and directs it from atop its shoulders! Scouts have discovered a portal used by the ghoul to teleport atop the walker. With a hastily scrawled map, the party must navigate the wild hills to locate the magical doorway. In this epic and deadly adventure, the party must navigate wild hills, locate a teleportation portal, and slay the darakhul and his minions on teetering platforms built atop the shoulders of the walker.

A CITY IN PERIL

The council of a city built at the edge of a vast wasteland has put out an urgent call for adventurers. The councillors have learned that a darakhul has devised a way to command one of the leviathans that dwell deep in the wastes. The darakhul is directing the walker on a course that intersects the city in several days. A great dust cloud obscures the walker and blots out the sun around it—evidence of dark magic. The walker's arrival all but ensures the city's destruction. The councillors have offered 5,000 gp as a reward to any brave enough to stop the ghoul and his walker. They have obtained a map to the portal the ghoul is using to travel from the walker to the ground. The portal is located in a wild, hilly region nearby. They provide the map to the party should they answer the call.

THE WALKER

The walker is a prop for the action of this adventure. It is simplest to make it a non-combatant that is impervious to attacks and spells. Ignore this instruction if you have the time to invent a fantastic way to incorporate the walker into a fight. While the walker is the ultimate threat, the villains in this adventure are the darakhul pilot and his minions. Without the darakhul commanding the walker, it recedes into its wasteland and stops its destruction.

Though it is a non-combatant, the walker's presence should still be felt during the combat. Here are several tools for you to use during the fight to remind the party that they are riding a leviathan nightmare.

THE WALKER'S CLAW

The platform leans suddenly. The walker raises one of its loathsome limbs, brandishing its black talons, the claw sweeps downward.

At least once, and no more often than is reasonable, the walker attempts to slash and swat the bothersome enemies from its shoulder. The walker's accuracy is poor, and the massive claw threatens all creatures standing on the platforms.

Sweeping Claw. On initiative 1, the walker sweeps its claw across the platforms. All creatures standing on the platforms must succeed a DC 14 Dexterity save or be struck by the claw for 11 slashing damage (2d10). Additionally, on a failed save, the creature is dragged along with the claw toward the neck for 15 ft. Creatures whose trajectory would lead them off the platform must succeed a DC 10 Strength check or be knocked off the platform and fall to the ground below.



THE VOID WALKER



One square = 5 feet

Meshon 2017

SHUDDER

The floor begins to shudder and violently shake. The walker's scream is deafening.

Use this effect in the event the PCs unleash a very effective area attack or just to add color to the combat. It affects all creatures on the platform.

Shake and Wail. On initiative 1 or in reaction to the fight occurring on its shoulder, the walker violently shakes and wails. All creatures on the platform must succeed a DC 12 Dexterity save or fall prone. Creatures who fall prone next to the edge of a platform must make a DC 10 Strength check or fall off the platform to the ground below. The wail forces a concentration check (DC 10) on all casters.

THE WILD HILLS

The hills rise and fall, punctuated by gnarled trees and patches of briar. A light drizzle has set in, and thin mist gathers in the low places. A strange cry sounds from far away.

The wild hills where the darakhul sorcerer opened his portal are dangerous and unexplored. There is evidence that halflings lived here once a long time ago, and the party may discover the odd, caved-in burrow. The map provided to the party is adequate for finding the portal within a day. The hills are filled with strange and dangerous things. You may choose any number of the following encounters as the party navigate the hills.

Lowen's Regulars: Lowen (**veteran**) and three (CR6) to four (CR7) henchmen (**spies**) have established a permanent camp in the Wild Hills. From this camp, they engage in all manner of villainy: banditry, extortion, kidnapping. The women and men appear as hunters initially. A DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check suggests they are flatly lying when asked their business in the

area. They are not eager to die at the hands of a well-equipped adventuring party, but left alive, they will attempt to ambush the party later in the day. A locked chest (DC 10) in the camp contains their spoils: 400 gp, 200 gp in uncut gems, and two potions of healing.

Great Hall of the Burrfoot: A wyvern has nested in the ruined remains of a halfling feasting hall dug into the side of a hill. Approaching the hall's entrance, the party smells carrion, and a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check discovers fresh, dragon-like tracks. The wyvern also uses a collapsed portion of the roof to enter and exit its lair. The wyvern happily attempts to eat the party as they wander by or through its nest. Inside the hall are a few intact pieces of furniture and a +1 *sling* with 10 bullets.

THE PORTAL

The map has taken you to the far end of Shallow Valley in the hills. Near the center of the valley, nestled between two trees, is a crackling yellow field of magic. Several humanoid shapes wander around the portal. An empty wagon sits nearby.

This is the portal allowing access to the shoulder of the walker. A DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the portal is not permanent and will likely last only a few more days. There are three (CR 6) or four (CR 7) **ogres** guarding the portal. The last ogre alive attempts to put its head through the portal to warn the passengers on the walker than intruders are coming. If the ogre manages to do this, the forces beyond the portal will not be surprised when the party arrives.

Travelling through the portal has no effect, though it is unpleasant. It is reasonable for the party to cast spells in preparation for a fight – using the portal does not dispel effects. The party can arrive on the platform ready for combat.

THE TEETERING PLATFORMS

Three tiers of hastily built wooden platforms are installed on the shoulder of a leviathan walker. Several figures hold on to the sparse railing as the leviathan's steps make the ground teeter precariously. A pale humanoid in dark robes holds a blackened staff over its head—as it directs the staff, so goes the walker.

Provided the ogre did not warn the travellers on the platforms, the PCs surprise their enemies. They arrive at the portal (C). The platforms consist of three tiers and span an 80-ft.-by-50-ft. area. The portal is at the lowest tier while the darakhul “pilot” stands at the highest elevation. The platforms are 70, 75, and 80 ft. above the ground.

Battle on the Shoulders: The **darakhul ghoul** (located at A) and two (CR 8) or three (CR 9) **goat-men** (located at B) engage the party on the teetering platforms. The ghoul uses his claw attack on prone opponents as much as possible. He and the goat-men work together and retreat up the tiers to form chokepoints.

The dust cloud hanging over the walker prevents sunlight from reaching the platforms. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check made on the dust cloud reveals it could be dispelled (DC 14 to dispel). If the dust cloud is dispelled, the darakhul may be forced to fight in direct sunlight. (Review “The Walker” at the beginning of the adventure to add the walker’s actions into the combat.) The goat-men carry jade carvings of their foul god worth 50 gp each. The darakhul wears a silver and gold pendant worth 200 gp. He bears a *cloak of the empire* (see “Appendix”) on his back, which can be taken and worn by brave PCs.

The Staff: Only the ghoul may use the staff. If he dies or the staff is lost over the edge, the walker stops its advance and retreats into the wastes where it originated.

REWARDS

The city council rewards the party as promised. Alternatively, the party might accept an estate to form a home base for further adventures in the region.

WHAT'S NEXT

The next step is determining what the ghoul intended. The city may be a target for the ghoul empire, who plot various ways to overthrow or destroy the council. Additionally, what foul magic did the darakhul employ to manufacture the staff and dust cloud? Something with strong magic must lie behind this lone ghoul’s efforts . . .

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a city to be threatened by the walker, with a small range of wild hills near by. It requires a city council calling the party to action. It mentions a nearby wasteland. It assumes that not everyone in the party can fly and instead has them searching for a portal to gain access to the platforms and pilot of the walker. The scenario sets the scene for an invasion that might span several sessions. The specific agenda of the darakhul is not determined; general destruction is likely only one aspect of its plan.

The **darakhul ghoul** and **goat-men** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with a standard **wight** and **minotaur**.

IN MIDGARD

The necrophagi of the Ghoul Empire have perfected a form of command magic through foul necromantic rituals. They are eager to test their new power and conduct experiments across Midgard, taking control of larger and more powerful creatures with each passing day. One of the ghouls has had success in dominating a tortured walker from the wastes and pushes his new steed onward to test the limits of his commanding staff. The town of Barenna is under threat, and the PCs must stop the walker before it arrives.

HELL COMES A' GLITTERING

FOUR 5TH- TO 6TH-LEVEL PCS

"For a cold-blooded killer."

SUMMARY

Bodies are turning up in a city (or large town). The organs of the victims appear to have been turned to solid crystal; in a gruesome twist, the hearts of the victims have been carefully removed. The mayor and the guard captain have hit an impasse in their investigation. Agreeing to assist in finding the murderer, the party find themselves under attack by infernal assassins as they follow the clues to a gemcutter's workshop. In this rich and devilish adventure for fifth- and sixth-level PCs, the party must find and face a murderer and a charming devil.

WHY ARE PEOPLE DYING?

A gnome gemcutter has made a bargain with a gilded devil. The devil has granted the young woman unsurpassed skill in her craft, and in exchange, she has agreed to provide him crystallized mortal hearts. She and the devil are hiding in the gemcutting workshop of her former master, who was her first victim. The bargain made between the two is as follows:

- The devil increases Jelfi's skill at gemcutting to surpass both rivals and mentors.
- Jelfi must sacrifice (murder) one resident of the city each week.
- She must perform an unholy ritual that crystallizes parts of her victim's body.
- Jelfi must remove the crystallized heart of her victims and cut it into a beautiful stone.
- The stone is given to the gilded devil, who now lairs in the basement of the workshop consuming the gems and jewelry.

A MYSTERY PRESENTED

The PCs hear of the murders while staying in or travelling through the city. Inquiries made to inn keepers, guards, and general citizenry lead the party to a conversation with mayor Enkam, who can be found in her official office most days.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a city or large town capable of supporting competing gemcutting shops. It mentions a high alchemist and a gemcutting craft guild. It will likely take 2 days for the party to find their way to the murderer. It is assumed the party is staying in the city for a short while.

The **crystalline devil** (see *Tome of Beasts*) and gilded devil can be replaced by an earth elemental and an oni.

Audience with the Mayor: The mayor (**noble**) is a tall woman dressed in rich clothing. Mayor Enkam is straightforward and maintains eye contact during conversation. She has only the best interests of the citizens in her heart. She is never without her two personal guards (**veterans**). The mayor's investigators have come up empty handed, and she is open to the PC's assistance. She offers 1,000 gp if the party can solve the murders. She provides the following information:

- The six victims come from a wide range of backgrounds.
- They have been stabbed to death.
- Their internal organs, eyes, and bones are transformed into pure crystal.
- The hearts of victims are missing.
- The high alchemist has not been helpful in the investigation so far but may have useful information.
- The bodies of the victims are available for examination.
- The guard captain has reached a dead end and is not sure what to do next; he is available for consulting.

GATHERING CLUES

The following provides guidance for handling the PCs' investigation into the murders. It is likely that the party will solve the mystery and confront Jelfi at Kendrin's Fine Works on the second day, after speaking with the high alchemist and Argus. They may decide to investigate the gemcutting shops on the first day if they are clever. Improvise based on the party's actions, using the following topics and scenarios as required.

You Know Too Much!: At some point in their investigation, likely in the evening of day one or when they are close to investigating Kendrin's shop, the party is attacked by three (CR 8) to four (CR 9) assassins (**bearded devils**). The assassins strike wherever the party attempts to rest. They may also lure them into an alley or uninhabited building by emulating cries of distress. The assassins are sent by Jelfi's patron; they know nothing of the murders or bargain and are simply following instructions.

IN MIDGARD

The Merchant District of Zobeck contains both of the gemcutting shops featured in this adventure. Jelfi's dead employer was an associate of House Graymark, and the party will have a run-in with a representative from the rich family during their investigation. Mayor Karillian Gluck is anxious to see the murders stopped as stories of a serial killer with grim magical predilections does nothing to help trade. Some of the citizens may well believe the Winter Court is to blame for the murders and fan the flames of tension between the fey and the mortal citizens of Zobeck.



HELL COMES A' GLITTERING

One square = 5 feet

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DAY ONE

Speaking with the Guard Captain: Mekno is a sturdy human male with shocking orange hair and beard. He is openly frustrated by his inability to solve the murders. He is convinced the murders are ritualistic. Strange chalk markings were found near the murder sites. He suggests the party visit one of the sites to see for themselves.

Examining the Bodies: A DC 5 Wisdom (Medicine) check confirms the victim died from stab wounds. A DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that the heart was removed carefully, but the stab wounds are very rough and amateurish. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check concludes that the stab wounds were inflicted by someone small in stature and that someone with nimble hands must have removed the heart.

Examining the Murder Sites: The party finds a chalk symbol scrawled onto a nearby wall. A DC 10 Wisdom (Religion) or Intelligence (Arcana) reveals it is an infernal symbol. Casting *comprehend languages* does not decode the symbol but does reveal its connection to the infernal alphabet. PCs with a

suitable background or who read infernal automatically identify it and its meaning: cage the soul.

DAY TWO

Speaking with the High Alchemist: The high alchemist is unavailable for a meeting on the first day of the party's investigation. He agrees to meet with them in the morning on the second day. Tembor the Green is no friend of the mayor's. He lives and works in his laboratory and is attended by several servants and apprentices. He is an old human with an arrogant streak. The mayor slighted him by importing curative draughts once instead of ordering from him. He agrees to speak with the party but will not give his assessment of the murders freely. A DC 16 Charisma (Persuasion) changes his mind; alternatively, the party might explain the slight to the mayor who agrees to apologize to Tembor to further the investigation. Once properly convinced, he informs the party that kyanite is known for its purity—energy stored in kyanite would be pristinely preserved. Kyanite is not overly common. He also suggests speaking with Argus at the Gemcutters Guild Hall.

Visiting the Gemcutters Guild Hall: Argus is the second-highest-ranking member of the guild. He is a slender elf with strikingly good looks. He knows nothing specific about the murders. He agrees kyanite is prized for its purity, but he also reveals the crystal is difficult to cut and would chip or shatter in all but the most skilled hands. He suggests visiting the city's jewelry and gemcutting workshops: the Emerald Dove and Kendrin's Fine Works.

Visiting the Emerald Dove: Anni is a pleasant half-elf who owns and runs a jewelry-making shop in a nice part of the city. She is troubled to hear about the murders. She admits she has never worked with kyanite. Her relationship with Kendrin has soured since he accepted the unpopular Jelfi as an assistant. Jelfi worked for Anni for a few months but had more talk than skill. She can't be sure, but she thinks the gnome even stole an old lapidary guide before her last day at work.

Visiting Kendrin's Fine Works: The door is locked, and there is no response to knocking. The door can be forced open without a skill roll. Proceed to *Hell Comes a' Glittering* once the PCs enter Kendrin's shop.

HELL COMES A' GLITTERING

The storefront of this workshop is dark. A few ornate displays sit empty near the back of the chamber. A single door leads to the back of the building.

The store has been emptied of valuables; the devil in the basement has eaten most of them. The place smells of decaying flesh. Old bloodstains mark the floor near the front. The blood belongs to Kendrin, Jelfi's first victim. His body was not recovered, and the apprentice hid it in the basement. A stairway in the backroom leads to the basement lair of the gilded devil. The heavy steel door into the lower workshop is open.

The Murderer Revealed: Jelfi (spy) is hiding (Stealth 17) behind the displays. When the PCs have entered the store and it's clear she will be discovered, she confronts them:

"No, no, no! I was promised unsurpassed skills! I'll not be taken!"

The PCs have a moment or two to interact with Jelfi before she attacks them. She's happy to sell out the gilded devil lairing in the basement if she's allowed to go free. DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion/Intimidation) checks might diffuse the conflict, otherwise—faced with imprisonment or worse, Jelfi attacks. She has been given a guardian by the gilded devil: Jelfi carries a large emerald that is in fact a **crystalline devil** in its gemstone form. The two attack the party. Jelfi does have Anni's stolen lapidary guide which can be returned for a 200 gp value gem as reward.

The Devil in the Basement: Dwelling amongst the sacks of raw stones in the gemcutter's workshop is a **gilded devil**. He has eaten the most valuable items; the six kyanite hearts of Jelfi's victims sit prominently on a small table. The devil, having heard the fight upstairs, has taken a relaxed position on the main worktable. He welcomes the party to his abode and apologizes for the smell. He explains the bargain he made with Jelfi and expresses disappointment in her. He flatly offers the PCs the remaining 5,000 gp worth of finished precious stones to walk away and

leave him to escape. He promises to leave, and a DC 5 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals he is telling the truth. Otherwise, he gladly attacks the party. The devil may use an action to consume one of the six kyanite hearts. Doing so restores 25 hp and gives the devil advantage on his next attack.

REWARDS

Jelfi has Anni's lapidary guide stashed on the main floor of Kendrin's shop. The book is worth around 500 gp. Anni will pay half as much for its return. The party must decide what to do with the 5,000 gp worth of unfinished gems in Kendrin's basement workshop. The mayor is pleased to pay the party the promised fee.

WHAT'S NEXT

The uncut gems that the gilded devil did not eat are in the hands of the PCs. Selling them in the city would incriminate them, and smuggling that many gems might prove difficult. There may be infernal allies of the slain devil living in the city who take offense at the party's actions.



BRYAN SYME

NEITHER BY SAIL, NOR BY OAR

FOUR 5TH- TO 6TH-LEVEL PCS

"It sailed up through the fog, a black ship that left no wake. It's come for the statue; it's come for us all."

SUMMARY

The party arrange for passage on a fast ship called the *Silver Slipper*. The good Captain Sara agrees to take them aboard for a reasonable fee. The voyage, however, is marred by strange events, and the crew begin whispering about a dark statue taken aboard as cargo. The statue is to be delivered to a port beyond the PCs' destination. When a fog rolls in one night, the ship is attacked by evil agents of a dark god come to claim the statue. In this nautical nightmare, the PCs must travel aboard the ship, interact with the crew, and save themselves from a boarding party of eldritch evil.

STRANGE CARGO

A crude humanoid figure squats atop a roughly carved pedestal. The figure and its base are made from one piece of dark gray stone. The face is brutish and scowling; its ears rise to a point, and its teeth are jagged and broken.

Evil agents of a dark god have arranged for a cursed statue to be transported aboard the *Silver Slipper*. The statue is not intended to make it to its destination but rather be picked up by an intercepting ship filled with cultists. The statue is of great value to the cultists. It radiates both evil and magic, and weighs about a 150 lb. The PCs are assumed to be immune to the statue's more nefarious effects—the product of being seasoned adventurers. The crew, however, are not spared from its influence.

CAPTAIN SARA

Welcome aboard. Mind your step. The wind blows hard in our favor today, friends!

What She Wants Most: To retire in her home town, rich and renowned.

Physical Traits: Captain Sara is a middle-aged woman with long grey and black hair tied back from her face. She carries herself about the ship on a sturdy frame and dresses in practical and well-made clothes. She dons an impressive captain's hat with fancy embroidery when the sun is hot.

Personality/Roleplaying: Captain Sara would have made a good adventurer. She is brave, cunning, and a natural leader. A look from her silences most complaints from her crew. She is loud, boisterous, and friendly. Her success at sea is owed to her professionalism, and she does not suffer fools aboard her ship, the *Silver Slipper*.

Chatting with the Captain: The players may engage the captain in conversation during the voyage. She is friendly and willing to trade stories. Asked directly about the statue, she reveals the following:

- She's been paid to take it to a port beyond where the party is destined.
- She was paid twice what she demanded.
- She agrees the statue is ugly but is convinced it's harmless.

THE VOYAGE

The voyage may be whatever length you choose. Ideally, the party engages in some downtime activity as they travel aboard the *Silver Slipper*. The following events can be used to pass the time and reinforce the dark influence of the statue upon the crew.

DRINKING WITH THE CREW

The crew of the *Silver Slipper* often pass the time by playing various drinking games. The games are simple as rum does not favor complication. The PCs might join the crew one night for such revelry.

Pearl in the Deep: This simple game requires two players.

One is a salty crew member, the other a brave PC. Each player places 3 gp on the table. A soup bowl of rum is poured and set between the two players. Players alternate trying to flip their coins into the soup bowl. The player with the most coins in the bowl must drink but also keeps the gold. Ties are decided by a cursing contest with one of the other sailors as judge. Flipping a coin into the bowl is a DC 12 Dexterity check. The cursing contest is a contested Charisma check. Drinking a soup bowl of rum triggers a DC 10 Constitution save to avoid becoming incapacitated for an hour. The sailors receive +3 to all rolls when playing the game.

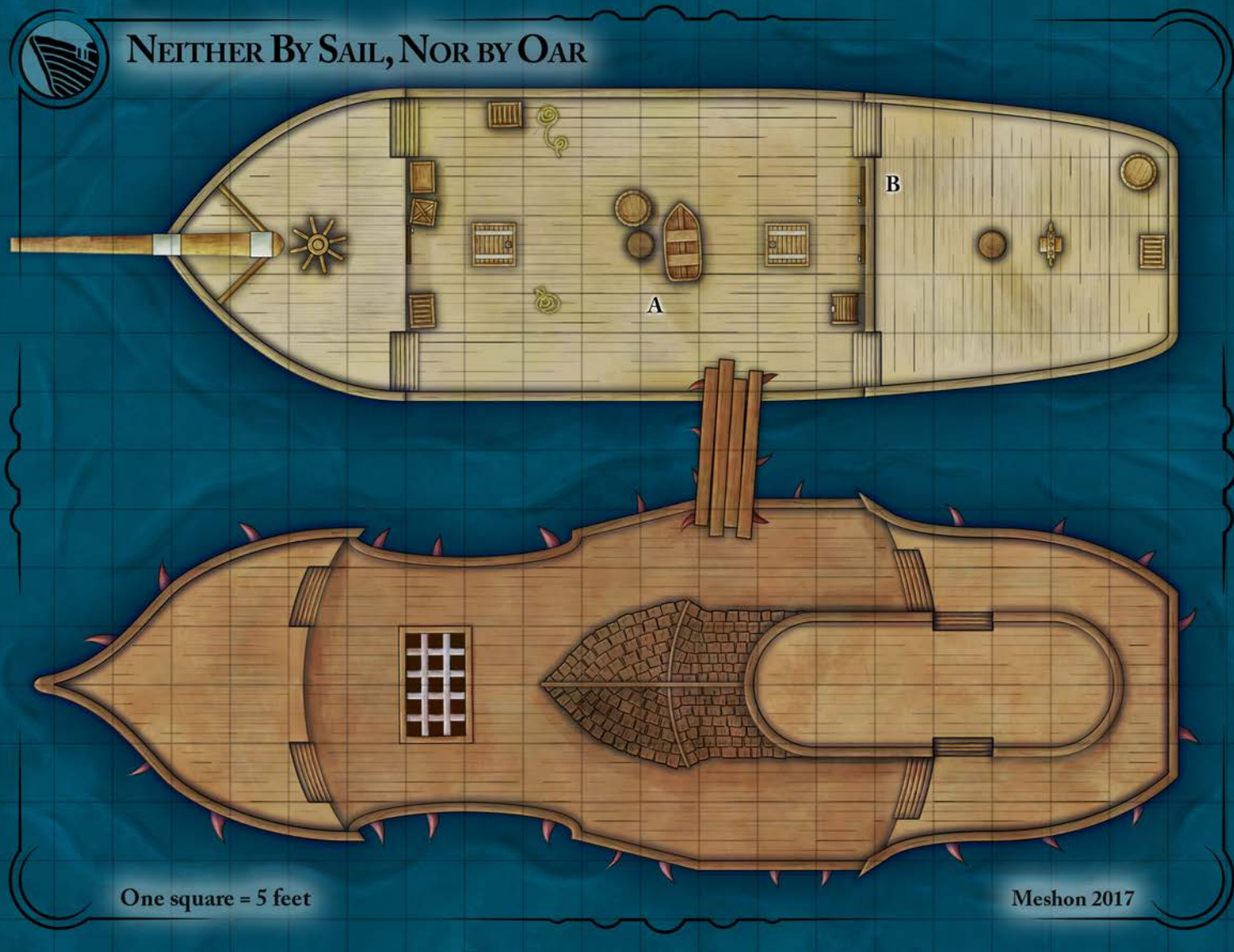
IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires that the party travel by boat. It is intended to add some excitement to what would normally be uneventful downtime. A statue carved in the image of some dark god is mentioned, and the enemies have distinctly cult-like qualities.

The **text** and **noctiny** (see *Tome of Beasts* for each) can be replaced with a **mage** and **berserkers**.

IN MIDGARD

Along the northern coast of the Southlands, perhaps near Nuria Natal, the PCs sail from port to port. The good captain of the *Silver Slipper* has been paid a fortune by worshippers of an evil aspect of the god Anu-Akma. These cultists look to build a temple dedicated to their dark patron who manifests as a large humanoid made from coal-like, stony shards. The statue serves as a centerpiece to their ritual chamber, but transporting it by land was too risky. Now, the PCs are caught in the worshipper's plot as the ship they hire meets its fate.



FOREBODING SIGNS

The following strange events occur while the party is aboard the *Silver Slipper*.

Algae Bloom: The deck of the ship is covered in thick ropy algae one morning. The PCs arrive from below to find the crew attempting to scrub it clean. Nobody knows how it grew so quickly. The algae radiates weak magic. A DC 10 Wisdom (Nature) check confirms it is natural, but its rate of growth suggests something is not quite right.

The Sullen Captain: Captain Sara retreats into her cabin. She does not come out except to bark orders at the increasingly ornery crew. The dark magic of the statue in the hold has begun to affect her mood and mind. She is stubbornly resistant to conversing with anyone. She appears increasingly unwell as the voyage continues; her skin pales, and she looks withdrawn.

Jigging at Midnight: One of the sailors awakens the whole ship with furious jigging in the middle of the night. He too is being driven slowly mad by the statue, and its effect is to force him into a maniacal dance. He takes no joy in the dancing, and his

face is a mask of uncertainty and fear as he drives himself into exhaustion. The crew have no luck convincing him to cease his dancing, and he eventually collapses.

The Staring Sailor: One of the sailors goes missing. The crew enlist the aid of the party to find him; they fear he has fallen overboard. After a brief search, he is found in the cargo hold, sitting before the statue. He stares at it—transfixed. A DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check releases him from its hold. Otherwise he stands up and returns to his bunk after an hour. He has no memory of the event.

Swarm of Seabirds: Six swarms of seabirds (**swarm of ravens**) attack the deck of the ship early one evening. Though the encounter is trivial for the PCs, it rattles the crew, and many begin murmuring about turning back to port.

MIDNIGHT FOG

Near midnight on the eve when the black ship is to arrive and assault the *Silver Slipper*, a patchy fog rolls in around Captain Sara's ship. The fog masks the arrival of the dark forces come

to collect the statue. For the duration of the coming encounter and as long as the ship remains in the fog, the deck is considered lightly obscured.

NEITHER BY SAIL, NOR BY OAR

Bursting up onto the deck, you see a great black ship has sidled next to the Silver Slipper. Neither sail nor oar can be seen propelling this dark craft. Spiked, wooden planks have descended, and loping humanoid shapes have made their way across. The deck is filled with panicking crew, and the captain's door remains shut. "We've come for it," one of the figures hisses. The ship is being boarded.

The dark agents have come to collect the statue. The party's rest is interrupted by cries from above deck. They arrive on deck (B) to find a boarding party intent on slaughtering the crew. The boarding party consists of a captain (**fext**) a second mate (**noctiny**) and two (CR 9) to four (CR 10) crew (**cultists**). Combat begins with the noctiny and the cultists forming a loose defensive formation around their fext captain, having already made it onto the deck (A). The black ship sinks into the water and disappears as soon as the fext is slain. The noctiny wears a gilded pearl necklace worth 750 gp. The fext captain bears the *shark-tooth crown* (see "Appendix"), which can be taken and used by the PCs.

Wild Eyes and Dark Thoughts: The crew of the *Silver Slipper* are temporarily mad. The appearance of the black ship and the statue's evil aura have turned them feral. Each round on

initiative 20, there is a 50% chance that a crew member (bandit) attacks a member of the party randomly. The crew member does not stay active as a combatant. There are a total of six crew members running amok. A DC 17 Charisma (Intimidation) check sends them below deck, ending their random attacks.

EVIL GOES OVERBOARD

Successfully defending the *Silver Slipper* ends the maddening effect on the crew. Captain Sara wants to toss the statue overboard and let it sink quietly in to the dark waves. She will not transport it any farther. Convincing her otherwise requires magic or a DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

REWARDS

For saving her ship, the captain offers the PCs free passage to their original destination and a free ride to another port if they so desire. Captain Sara believes herself to be indebted to the PCs and should prove a useful ally for sailing to various destinations when your campaign requires it.

WHAT'S NEXT

The PCs may have made an enemy. The agents of the dark god are slain, and its prized artifact likely cast to the bottom of the sea. What other black ships sail in the god's name? What evil comes seeking revenge once the party makes it back onto land?

DARK NIGHT AT THE ODEUM

FOUR 7TH- TO 8TH-LEVEL PCS

"Ladies and gentlemen, welcome to our humblest show. The Night's Promise Theatre Troupe has rehearsed a wondrous panoply of song, poem, and soliloquy. Lights dim; let the show begin!"

SUMMARY

A powerful evil plots to corrupt the fey audience attending a theatrical performance. Her priests pose as convincing performers who set the stage for their master's arrival in the final act. While staying in the fey community and perhaps as partial reward for some previous accomplishment, the party is invited to the performance. In this dramatic and deadly adventure for seventh- and eighth-level PCs, the party witnesses a strange performance and the corruption of the fey audience before defeating a herald of darkness and her priests.

AN INVITATION

A folded leaf reveals golden writing when opened: "You are most cordially invited to attend our celebration and performance in the Odeum tonight. —The Night's Promise Theatre Troupe"

The party receives invitations to the performance by the leaders of the fey city. The villainous theatre troupe have no idea that the heroes are attending and are under the impression their corruption of the audience will be unchallenged.

THE THEATRE

A semicircle of stone bench-seating built to gaze upon an gilded and ornate proscenium stage. Above you is a canopy of leaves and branches with tiny glowing lights flitting here and there. Fey citizens filter in and take their seats with you. Onstage, a number of performers make ready. A tall curtain conceals something toward the rear center of the stage.

Allow the PCs to take their seats: they may sit together or separately. Eventually the lights in the canopy dim, and the performance starts with a happy tune.

THE PERFORMANCE

The performance is divided into three acts. There is no clear story to the performance. The acts are gestural and allow for as little or as much additional material as you'd like to include.

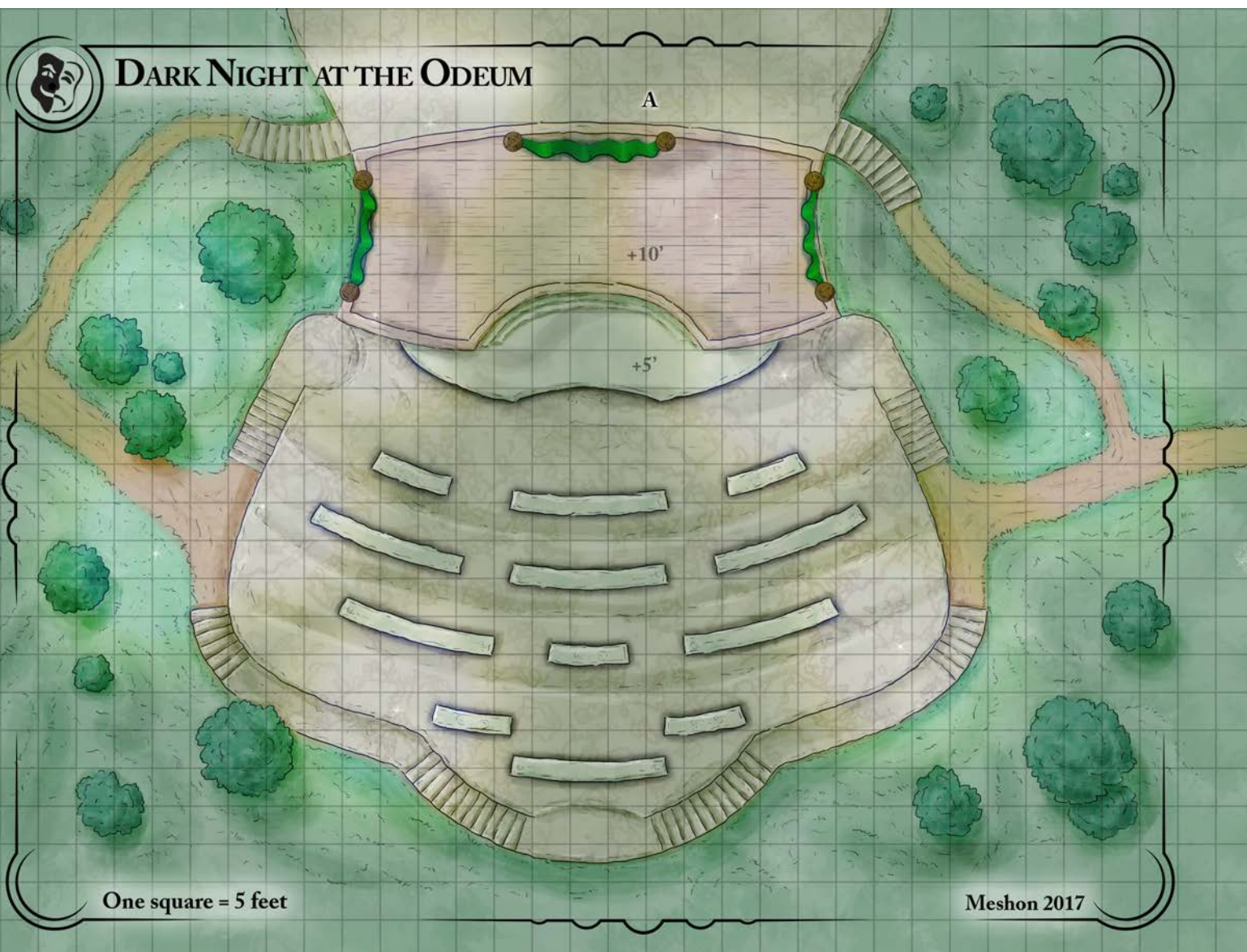
ACT 1: REVELRY

It was a festival to celebrate festivals, and even the mice danced.

In the first act, three clowns appear on stage. They engage in a number of entertaining and humorous antics. There is juggling, bawdy poems, obscene limericks, and other performances meant to celebrate the silly and trivial. Toward the end of the act, the clowns play an energetic jig. Many audience members



DARK NIGHT AT THE ODEUM



stand and dance along with the performers. The PCs must succeed a DC 16 Wisdom save or be compelled to dance as well. The dancing ends quickly, and there are no other effects. Be sure to keep the mood light in the first act; feel free to bring your own limericks to the table.

ACT 2: PORTENTS

Winter came, and shadows grew; a new star rose in the night sky.

In the second act, two crones arrive onstage and deliver somber monologues. The crones philosophize and praise entropy. The theme of their performance is dark portents—the arrival of unwanted gifts, the grotesque faces of those in despair. Toward

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a fey community large enough to support a theatre. It assumes the party attends the performance. The herald of darkness is a grand corruptor of the fey and has managed to enter the fey city under false pretenses. The performance is divided into acts, which you may supplement with found or created material that suits the theme of the act.

The **herald of darkness** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with a **medusa** in addition to the priests.

IN MIDGARD

In the Forest of Arbonesse, nestled in the trees a few miles from the River Court itself, lies the small, fey village of Rigsbottom. Built in the ruins of an ancient elven town, Rigsbottom is populated by all manner of fey creatures who trade freely with their brethren and the elves of the River Court. The village is famous for its restoration of an old elven performance house, and a theatrical festival is held in Rigsbottom each year. The party is drawn to the town during their adventures in Arbonesse where the plot unfolds.

the end of the act, the crones begin talking with the audience members. They begin revealing information about the audience that they should not know. Have the crones announce facts about the PCs that the performers would not know nor be capable of guessing. The tone of the second act is serious and slightly ominous. Bring your own grim verses to add tension to the act.

ACT 3: DARKNESS ARRIVES

“And now, to close our humble show—the lady of loneliness, the mistress of melancholy—our true master of ceremonies.” A performer draws back the curtain and reveals an impossibly tall elf. She smiles, and it is dreadful and beautiful at once. “I bring you such gifts . . .”

The woman is a **herald of darkness**, and she begins to sing a low and frightening song. The fey audience clasp their ears or begin to writhe ecstatically. Combat begins with the herald onstage (A) and her two (CR 11) or three (CR 12) **priests** spread out near the front of the stage. The herald uses her majesty of the abyss at the beginning of the combat and shadow form to position herself best for embrace the darkness. The priests heal and assist the herald in bringing down the PCs, whose presence has frustrated the herald’s corrupting plans. Slaying the herald ends the corrupting influence on the audience.

AUDIENCE PARTICIPATION

The audience begins to tremble, wail, and thrash. The song sung by the creature onstage has a strong effect on the fey around you. Limbs elongate, jaws unhinge—what shadows burst from their heart cages?

The orations and singing of the herald of darkness have a profound effect on the fey audience members sitting beside the PCs. While some are able to reject the corrupting gifts offered by the herald, many cannot. The audience members do not move and should be treated like hazards—though the party can slay them automatically with any attack. The herald and her minions are unaffected by the audience. Distribute corrupted fey throughout the theatre as you wish, and use the following effects to add flavor and danger to the encounter.

Wailer: On initiative 20 of the first round, all wailers cry

uncontrollably, their bodies wracked by sobs. In their coherent moments, they can be heard complaining about the cold. PCs within 10 ft. of a wailer must succeed a DC 16 Charisma save or become inconsolably sad. Affected PCs receive disadvantage on saving throws until the end of their next turn.

Thrasher: Thrashers’ limbs extend unnaturally, and their movements become unpredictable. Their twisting forms are a danger to any who step too close. PCs who start or end their turn within 5 ft. of a thrasher, or whose movement passes beside a thrasher, must succeed a DC 16 Dexterity save or be pushed 15 ft. in a random direction and be knocked prone.

Dreamer: On initiative 15 of the first round, all dreamers project their waking dreams into the world via a burst of psychic energy. The projections vary—some are clouds of butterflies, others are waves of blood, and still others are sail boats navigating stormy seas. These projections have no mechanical effect but provide an opportunity to fill the theatre battle with strange objects and visions. They remain manifested in the world until the herald is slain.

Devourer: The audience member’s mouth and teeth grow large—its jaw unhinges, and it gropes blindly for something to satiate its sudden hunger. PCs who start or end their turn next to a devourer are subject to . . .

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +6 hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. Hit: 8 (1d6+4) piercing damage.

REWARDS

Provided the party didn’t slay any of the audience, the fey community reward the party with a *ring of shooting stars*. An escort to the limits of the fey’s domain is earned for slaying the herald, and the party earn the favor of a fey community.

WHAT’S NEXT

The herald’s ploy has brought her success in the past. Perhaps she and her priests have left a trail of corrupted fey, human, and goblin communities behind her. What might save these communities from the corruption?

THE TANGLED TEMPLE

FOUR 8TH- TO 9TH-LEVEL PCS

“Tell your secrets to the jungle.”

SUMMARY

While travelling through a jungle expanse, the party meet a trader named Smera with a strange tale. Turned away from a nearby outpost, the trader is now heading back to civilization. Curiosity leads the party to the outpost, which has been destroyed. A strange disease has taken the outpost’s inhabitants, who built the place in support of a scholarly excavation of a nearby temple ruin. Following the path carved through the jungle by the excavation team, the PCs find the temple and its

secrets. In this moss-covered and dark adventure for eighth- and ninth-level PCs, the party explores an old temple, faces its verdant guardians, and finds the source of the strange disease.

SMERA’S TALE

A local trader meets the PCs as they travel or camp near the road. She and her entourage of ten guards (**thugs**) are returning to civilization after selling their goods to the remote communities living in the jungle. She is a charismatic woman with a keen wit and a penchant for drinking. Smera was supposed to make a stop at an outpost but was turned back a few days ago by its inhabitants due to some sort of illness taking hold there.

I was paid well to bring supplies to an outpost not far from here. Some scholars from away decided one of the old temples was worth their gold and time. Built a stronghold of sorts—brought soldiers and servants and everything! Cut their path a few miles up the road.

Smera provides the following information:

- The outpost is in support of an excavation of some nearby temple site.
- She is surprised anyone thinks the old ruins of the jungle are worth that kind of coin and effort.
- The location of the footpath leading to the outpost—about a day's travel farther along the road.

MINERAL ROT

Upon contracting the disease, the creature feels immediately unwell and gains a level of exhaustion. During its next long rest, the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution save or lose half its Charisma as its flesh begins transforming into a pock-marked, stony surface. The disease can be cured by magic during this stage.

The creature must repeat the save during its next long rest, fighting off the disease entirely on a successful save or succumbing to it on a failed one. Creatures who fail are changed into twisted moss and stone covered versions of themselves. Mindless and malicious, the creature attacks any living thing it meets. From this point on, creatures bitten by the afflicted must make a DC 14 Constitution save or contract the disease. Once fully transformed, only a wish *spell* can restore them.

MINERAL ROT TEMPLATE

Use the following template to apply the end stage of mineral rot to monsters faced by the party. The disease raises a creature's challenge rating by 1. Adjust encounters accordingly.

- Increase the AC by 2.
- The creature gains resistance to slashing damage from non-magical sources.
- The creature is immune to disease and poison.
- The creature's unarmed attacks are magical.
- The creature gains extra hp equal to half its stated hp total.
- If it does not already have one, the creature gains a bite attack with hit and damage ranges appropriate to its CR. Creatures

bitten by this attack must make a DC 14 Constitution save or contract mineral rot. A successful save results in immunity to contracting the disease for 24 hours.

THE AFFLICTED OUTPOST

The smoldering remains of the outpost sit before you. Its timber walls appear torn apart in several places. Through the gaps, you can see the wooden edifices of the place in various states of ruin.

The exploration outpost built to support the excursion to the temple fell to the infection several weeks ago. The workers and hired mercenaries fought against one another and against the infected animals that prowl the region.

Exterior: The exterior of the outpost hints at the battles that occurred here. A DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check deduces that some of the inhabitants of the outpost died while trying to flee. Near the outpost is a recently cut path through the jungle.

Interior: The outpost is destroyed. The living quarters and mess hall have been badly damaged by fire. Small animals flit here and there amongst the rubble and ash. Corpses litter the interior space of the outpost. The women and men who dwelled here died or succumbed to the mineral rot and fled into the jungle.

Storehouse: *Several humanoid figures sit staring vacantly at the dirt floor. Their clothing has fallen away, revealing a moss-covered, stony crust spreading across their skin.* Three (CR 8) or four (CR 10) afflicted mercenaries sit panting mindlessly in the half-dark of the storehouse. They sprint at the PCs and attempt to bite them. Treat the mercenaries as **berserkers** with the mineral rot disease template applied to them. They do not use weapons; instead treat their bite attack as follows . . .

Bite. *Melee weapon attack:* +5 hit, reach 5 ft., 1 target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8+3) piercing damage and the creature must make a DC 14 Constitution save or contract mineral rot. A successful save results in immunity to contracting the disease for 24 hours.

There are still some intact supplies here: 20 days' worth of rations, several barrels of good drinking water, and two healer's kits can be found in the rubble.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires the party to be travelling through or near a jungle. It assumes the party meets and interacts with NPCs on the road while travelling. There is an outpost and ancient temple placed in the jungle.

The **vine troll skeleton** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with two **trolls**. If you make this substitution, only allow one troll to use the lair actions each round. This scenario is a straightforward delve into a dark temple. It uses a disease to add color and a unique threatening element. It could easily be used as an introduction to a larger dungeon expedition.

IN MIDGARD

Princess Perititi of Nuria Natal has funded an expedition into the deep jungles of the south. She is hunting for old artifacts from a long ago expired tribe who worshipped Veles. She has received no word from the expedition in several weeks and hires (500 gp contract) the party to travel by river to the expedition site. The party meets Smera in their travels who informs them she was turned away when she tried to trade. The princess will be keenly interested in the magical staff the party find in the temple and offers them a 1,000 gp in exchange.



THE TANGLED TEMPLE

One square = 5 feet

Meshon 2017

1—TEMPLE ENTRANCE

A sliver of a passage has been excavated, allowing access to the temple interior. The thin passage eventually opens into a small entry chamber. Piles of moss covered stones sit against the walls of this place. A stone staircase descends deeper into the darkness.

The walls here are marked with glyphs and pictographs. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check suggests the glyphs are likely a warning of some sort. A DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) deduces that the temple was likely abandoned and sealed at some point in the distant past in order to contain a threat.

There is some equipment belonging to the excavation team on the floor here. Broken tools and spilled parchment cases litter the ground.

Piles: The two piles of stones are the remains of most of the expedition team. The mineral rot has fused the remains together, forming two sentient piles of limbs and mossy crust. The piles are **shambling mounds** (CR 9), and attack the party once they arrive into the entry. The mounds attempt to grapple the PCs and drag them down the stairs into the chamber below.

2—CHAMBER OF SEALED URNS

The bottom of the stairs opens into a great, circular chamber. The roots of the jungle have penetrated this stony place, and a tangle of vines spread down from above. In the center of the chamber are six stone urns. All but one are sealed tight. One urn appears opened; its lid sits on the floor nearby.

The urns contain the remains of ancient humanoids afflicted by the mineral rot disease. Unable to cleanse the corpses properly and afraid the disease would spread, the builders of this temple locked the corpses away—successfully stopping the transmission of the disease. The recent excavation unearthed the remains and allowed the disease to find new hosts.

Stone Urns: Each urn contains the desiccated remains of an afflicted human. A pictograph on the exterior of the urns shows the stages of the disease. Opening an urn risks contracting the disease and triggers a DC 14 Constitution save to avoid doing so. Each urn contains 200 gp worth of gold and silver jewelry. The valuables in the open urn have spilled out onto the floor.

The Tangle: The roots from above hide a malevolent guardian (**vine troll skeleton**). Awakened by the excavators, the creature descends and attacks the PCs, attempting to surprise them from its hiding spot (Stealth 19). The guardian remains attached to the tangle as it fights. On initiative 1 of each round, the guardian may take one of the following lair actions:

- **Vine Escape.** The guardian ascends into the tangle and reappears in any unoccupied space in the chamber. Opportunity attacks made against the guardian as it escaped this way are made with disadvantage.
- **Whip.** Two vines lash out from the tangle and attempt to trip any creature standing in the chamber. Targeted creatures must make a DC 15 Dexterity save or be knocked prone.

REWARDS

In addition to the jewelry in the urns, a *staff of the python* clatters to the ground from the tangle once the guardian is defeated. It is very old and covered in glyphs similar to the ones found in the entrance.

WHAT'S NEXT

The disease may have spread beyond the temple and outpost. One of Smera's guards could easily have contracted the mineral rot, bringing it to nearby civilization. Alternatively, the temple's urn-filled chamber may provide access to a larger structure where the nature of the disease becomes clear . . .

THE SPARKING SPIRE

FOUR 8TH- TO 9TH-LEVEL PCS

"What dwells at the top of that spire? Bad memories and scaled malice—stay away from there."

SUMMARY

The spire has existed for as long as locals can remember. Rising above the sand near the ocean, the spire is topped by a natural cave system. Stories about the place circulate around the docks and taverns of the nearby towns—dark tales of ritual sacrifice and the worship of long dead gods of lightning and storm. Many claim the victims of the old cult still crawl through the tunnels accessible at the peak of the spire. Others say a new scaly threat now lairs there, and the storms of late have been most violent near that place. In this explorative and perilous adventure for eighth- and ninth-level PCs, the party ascends a great rocky spire to face the place's past and the blue dragon that presently resides there.

TO THE SPIRE

Leading the PCs to explore the spire can be achieved in a number of ways. The locals are generally afraid of the place and avoid sailing by it, let alone walking near it. The spire looms large in the imagination of the people living nearby. The PCs might hear of the spire as they travel the coastal region, though the stories about the place vary from person to person.

Alternatively, the party may be sailing and spy the impressive stony finger from afar—a single flash of lightning emanates from its peak. Perhaps their own curiosity takes them to it.

The caves at the top of the spire were once used for rituals of a sinister and electric nature. It could be that the party is led to the site by some priest who wishes its religious significance explored. You may of course add what details you need to weave the spire into your unique campaign.

SPIRE EXTERIOR

The rocky spire rises from the sand, a great stone finger pointing at the sky. A few gulls circle lazily above its peak, and the sound of the ocean mixes with their cries. A few scuttling things break into panic before your steps, their pearlescent shells gleaming in the sun.

The spire is roughly 500 ft. in diameter and rises 60 ft. into the air. The rocky face of the spire provides many hand- and footholds for those endeavoring to climb. The dragon has pushed the bones of the creatures it has eaten out of its lair, and they have formed a pile at the bottom. All manner of sea-creature and humanoid remains are found in the large pile. A careful search of the bones and a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check uncovers a few very long strands of black hair mingled in with the bones. The hair belongs to the drowned maidens who dwell in the chamber outside the dragon's lair. PCs who touch the hairs find them clinging and difficult to remove.

CHARGED CORAL

The walls of the caves inside the spire are made from magical coral that feeds on electricity. The coral glows, alternating vibrant blue and pink. The entire cave system is lit with dim light from this spectacular display. Creatures who come into contact with the walls must succeed a DC 14 Constitution save or be shocked for 7 (2d6) lightning damage. On a failed save, the creature is also affected by one of the following effects (choose or roll randomly):

- **1–2 Twitchy.** The PC feels overly alert. They receive advantage on their initiative rolls but disadvantage on Dexterity checks for an hour.
- **3–4 Humming.** The PC emits a constant audible hum. The hum is soothing and restores them to full hp, and they receive disadvantage on Stealth checks for an hour.
- **5–6 Buzzed.** The PC feels intoxicated by the electrical fields. They have advantage on saves against spells and effects that cause fear, and they receive disadvantage on Intelligence checks for an hour.



THE SPARKING SPIRE



Note: Once a PC has been affected by the coral's electrical magic, they are immune to the extra effects for 24 hours. However, they may still take damage from coming into contact with the walls.

A DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check suggests the coral was once used as storage for magic energy. It seems likely the magic animated the coral in unpredictable ways. A DC 17 Wisdom (Nature) check reveals the coral has adapted to live out of water and likely uses electricity to maintain itself.

Living Arcs: At random times, the coral manifests small humanoid-shaped beings of pure electricity (dust mephits). These living conduits act unpredictably; they may attack the party, follow them curiously, or attempt to aid them. Use these creatures to reinforce the mystery of the place. They may come to the defense of the dragon if the battle seems very one sided.

1—THE MAIDENS' POOLS

This large, rocky chamber is punctuated with stalagmites and stalactites. The walls of this cave system appear to be made from stone and coral. The coral sheds dim blue light that crackles and hums. The slight sound of lapping water is heard from farther inside.

A few of the unhappy victims sacrificed in this strange place remain trapped here; the pools in this chamber serve as the resting place for these bitter spirits. The spirits are relatively

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a coastal setting. It suggests the caves at the top of the spire were used for rituals and worship. There is a magical altar inside a dragon's lair.

The **drowned maidens** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced with **ropers**.

This scenario can be used as content for a quest provided by one of your campaign's NPCs or as an exciting and dangerous place to explore while the party adventures along the coast.

IN MIDGARD

A high-ranking member of the Order of the White Lions in Perunalia has discovered an ancient tome of worship to Perun. In it, she also found a single sheet of parchment detailing a very old ritual site where some of the first Perunian priests performed magic and rites to their god. The text suggests the site contained an altar powered by a magical pearl. The party is tasked with finding and exploring the old spire and recovering the pearl from the altar for the paladin, though what they do with such a treasure is ultimately their choice . . .

neutral about the dragon's decision to occupy the upper chamber of the spire. The few explorers who have come before have been trapped and eaten in these grim and watery caves long before reaching the dragon's lair.

Bitter Cries, Spectral Sighs: The caves sound with the angry and mournful cries of the dead. Each PC who hears the sounds must succeed a DC 14 Wisdom save or feel a deep sense of dread. On a failed save, PCs begin their next round of combat frightened by the nearest enemy. The effect lasts until the end of their next turn.

Floating in the Water: The largest pool contains two **drowned maidens**, who attempt to pull the PCs into the pool with their grasping hair. The maidens receive advantage on hair attacks made while standing in their pool.

2—ISONDIM'S LAIR

The ceiling of this large natural cavern is almost entirely open to the air. In the center is a very old-looking stone and shell altar that sparks occasionally. A very big pearl has been embedded in the top of the altar; it crackles audibly. The coral walls here are aglow with electrical energy, shedding bright light throughout. There are blue scales littering the floor, and the walls show evidence of being scraped or clawed.

This is the lair of Isondim, the **young blue dragon**. He has grown very attached to the altar and enjoys its affect on him and the coral walls. He assumes the PCs have arrived to steal the pearl and will likely attack them immediately. Isondim may engage the party in conversation if they make a large effort to avoid combat. He might spare them provided they offer him something valuable. He will not tolerate deception or exploration of his lair. He begins combat in the skies above the spire and uses his breath weapon before landing and continuing his attacks.

Master of the Altar. On initiative 1 of each round, Isondim draws on the magic of the altar to do one of the following:

- Summon a living arc (see "Charged Coral" above) to assist him. Isondim can never summon more than one living arc at a time.
- Heal half the amount of damage he successfully dealt with his breath weapon this round.
- Expel a shockwave emanating 30 ft. in all directions from the altar. Any creature caught by the shockwave must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be thrown 40 ft. away from the altar. If the creature strikes a wall during this movement, they take 1d6 bludgeoning damage for each 10 ft. they are thrown. Remember that touching a wall has additional effects covered in "Charged Coral" above. Isondim may only use this effect once each 24 hours.

THE FULMINATING ALTAR

In the center of the old ritual chamber (now the dragon's lair) is the ancient altar once used in sacrificial rites by forgotten worshippers. The altar maintains some of its original power, and its effects on creatures within 50 ft. of the spire are as follows:

- Spells that deal damage have a 50% chance of dealing lightning damage instead.

- Spells that deal lightning damage have a 50% chance of dealing maximum damage automatically.
- The dragon's breath weapon is altered when used inside its lair, increasing its recharge rate by one (recharge 4–6), though the damage of the ability remains the same.

The altar is powered by a massive pearl embedded in its top. The pearl is worth at least 3,000 gp. Removing it requires a set of thieves' tools and a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

REWARDS

Isondim has amassed a small hoard of treasure inside his lair. There are 1,100 sp and 700 gp spread about the dragon's chamber. There are also 1d8×10 precious stones of various types (25 gp value each) stored in ornate wooden boxes stacked amongst the coins.

WHAT'S NEXT

The altar is surely desired by a variety of creatures. Perhaps Isondim's presence prevented the others from attempting to claim it, and now with the dragon slain, an opportunity presents itself. The magical pearl in the altar might be sought by dark forces who look to seize it from the party should they keep it . . .



VALLEY OF BLACK TEARS

FOUR 10TH- TO 11TH-LEVEL PCS

"In this lost place, even the stones weep."

SUMMARY

An evil oracular being has taken up residence in a lonely valley. The only access to the valley is through a thick, dead wood whose shadows draw out foul memories from those who travel there. The oracle, Lurinax, has recently divined the season in which the world will end. This knowledge is greatly prized by many, so the evil fortune teller hides in his lair, protected by maddening winds and the souls of those he slew to obtain his knowledge. In this grim and dark adventure for tenth- and eleventh-level PCs, the party must travel the trail of shadows, face the manifestations of Lurinax's victims, and finally the evil oracle himself.

LURINAX, MASTER OF VISIONS

Lurinax is a powerful magical being (**spirit naga**) who has spent centuries studying calendars and prophecies related to the end of the world. He appears as a great spectral serpent with an old man's bearded head. Twisting, shadowy arms float beside him, unhinged and disconnected from his scaly body. Some say he was once an elf wizard who went mad after discovering some uncommunicable mathematical truth. Others say he is a traveller from beyond the stars who has studied cataclysms on multiple worlds. Though his origins are unknown, his nature is obvious. Lurinax is a deeply evil creature—so evil that his very presence in the valley has transformed the nearby region. The dead woods and valley itself have been drawn partly into a demi-plane: a place caught between the material world and a dark magical realm. Lurinax is not interested in bargains or conversation.

Through magical rituals involving the destruction of mortal souls, Lurinax has recently discovered a shocking truth: the season in which the end of the world will occur.

Wizards, bards, madwomen, colleges, and scholars might be keenly interested in obtaining this knowledge. The party may be hired by some agent to explore the valley, and recover his tomes in hopes of learning the truth. How the agent came to learn of Lurinax's discovery is unknown.

Alternatively, the PCs may find themselves on the trail of shadows by accident as they travel the wilds pursuing their own ends.

THE TRAIL OF SHADOWS

Through the dead wood, a path uncoils. The lifeless branches above form a dense canopy, blotting out all but tiny specks of sky, which appear like stars in the darkness. Shadows grow long here, and the dry air leaves a bitter taste in your mouth and a burning in your lungs.

The path through the dead wood is the only reliable means of reaching the valley. PCs who attempt to fly, scry, or otherwise find an alternate route find themselves unable to pierce the obscuring magic of Lurinax. The trail of shadows leads the PCs from the mortal world to the demi-plane of the evil master oracle.

Dark Heart: The PCs' thoughts become troubled the deeper into the wood they go. Their fears and troubles begin to manifest amongst the dead trees around them. Each PC must name their fear and describe how they might overcome it. Encourage the PCs to assist one another in overcoming their fear. You may summon an appropriate monster for them to fight or keep it strictly a roleplaying experience. If this roleplaying does not suit your table, you may instead ask the PCs to succeed a DC 15 Wisdom save or be shaken by their time in the woods, losing inspiration, and receiving disadvantage on their next ability check or attack roll.

THE VALLEY

The woods open into a long and grim valley. The stone walls rise upward into a shifting grey sky. No evidence of the world beyond the valley can be seen. It bends ahead and opens further. A terrible wind blows through this place. Nothing grows from the blasted, slate ground.

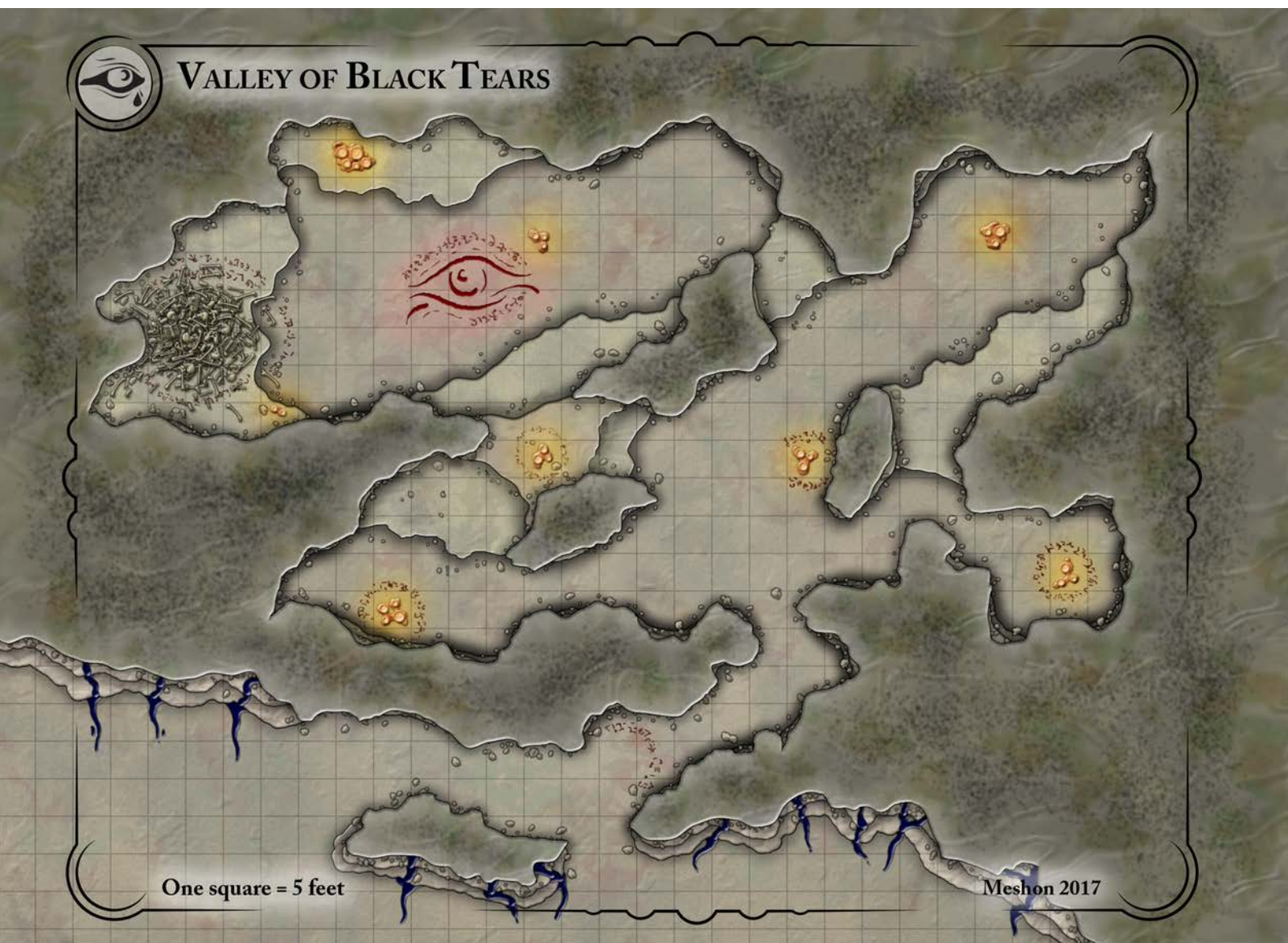
The valley stretches on for a little over a mile. Lurinax's lair is near the end of the valley. Travelling here is dangerous (see "Dust and Madness" below), and the air causes living things to become extremely thirsty. After each half hour of travel, each PC must make a DC 15 Constitution save or be compelled to drink half their carried supply of water. If they fail this save and have no water to drink, they suffer one level of exhaustion. Other PCs may offer their water to stave off this effect. Linger in the valley is dangerous; the threat of the unnatural thirst may lead the party to move more quickly than is prudent.

As the party travels through the valley, they are witness to a strange phenomenon. The walls of the valley begin sweating—the condensation collecting and eventually running down the stony face. As it goes, the water collects the black dust that swirls through the valley, creating a tear-streaked effect. The walls appear to weep these blackened tears. Touching the tears triggers a DC 15 Constitution save to avoid being poisoned for an hour.

DUST AND MADNESS

A howling wind blows eternally through the valley. It shapes small cyclones of dust and grit from the floor of this forlorn place, blowing it here and there. The dust is made from the sundered souls of the unfortunate visitors who came before. Lurinax has means to tear the spirit from the flesh, render it into something tangible, and crush it—destroying the creature permanently. The dust in the valley contains traces of all the creatures Lurinax has annihilated in his search for knowledge. Use the dust and maddening wind described below to add tension and danger as the party traverses the valley.

Annihilum: The swirling dust can form a humanoid shape with a twisted visage caught in eternal open mouth scream. These eyeless beings are evil and want to draw the life from any creature entering the valley. The annihilum (**air elementals**) protect the valley and appear in groups of two (CR 9) or three (CR 13). A DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check made



IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a dead wood or forest and a valley setting. It assumes the location can be partially in the material world and partially in a plane created by magic. It deals with prophecy and information about the end of the world. At the heart of the adventure is a clue about the apocalypse and is easily used in a quest involving scholars or prophets.

IN MIDGARD

The haunted lands of the giants is the perfect location for Lurinox's valley and lair. Perhaps one of the theurgs of Bourgund has had her own prophetic vision; in secret, she hires the party to travel to the lonely ghost-infested stretch south of the Pytonne mountains. Or one of Baba Yaga's daughters, a blind and beautiful vela, bargains with the party—offering them audience with Grandmother if they return Lurinox's grim booklet to her.

while observing the annihilum suggests that, while they appear elemental in nature, the magic that created them is necromantic. Each annihilum repeats the horrible pleading last words of their long dead living form. Even in combat, the monstrous beings beg those around them to let them live.

Mad Gusts: Every so often, a powerful plow wind blows through the valley. Creatures caught in the path of the wind must succeed a DC 15 Dexterity save or be knocked prone, taking 14 (4d6) bludgeoning damage as they hit the stony ground. Creatures knocked prone by the wind must also make a DC 15 Wisdom save or be incapacitated for 1d4 rounds as they experience maddening visions caused by Lurinox's magic.

LURINAX'S LAIR

A short stony tunnel leads to a massive cave in the side of valley. Large piles of candles reveal hundreds of strange glyphs and sigils painted on the floors and walls. Bones are scattered here and there; skulls leer silently. A massive painted eye dominates the floor of the main chamber. A trick of the light gives it the illusion of moving—watching you as you arrive.

Lurinax (**spirit naga**) meditates near the back of the lair on a pile of splintered bone. He does not appreciate interruption and sees the PCs as little more than fuel for his continued research. A large mortar and pestle sits near Lurinax and is surrounded by various arcane tomes. A pile of armor and equipment taken from his victims sits near his meditation mound.

Ocular Sigil: The great eye painted on the floor of the room is infused with protective magic. On initiative 20 of each round of combat in which Lurinax still has hp remaining, the eye stares at one randomly chosen enemy of Lurinax. That creature must make a DC 17 Wisdom save or feel a sense of impending doom, suffering disadvantage on its attacks against Lurinax until the end of its next turn.

Eyes of Lurinax: Two **gibbering mouthers** patrol the lair and join Lurinax in combat (CR 14). Their gibbering trait is empowered by Lurinax, increasing the save DC to 12. The mouthers utter a constant stream of nonsense prophecies, likely involving the PCs or their loved ones.

Soulgrinder: Lurinax's mortar and pestle is designed to grind the essence from a living creature. Its interior is coated with

a foul mix of dried blood and powered bone. This alchemical implement radiates magic and evil; it weighs 50 lb. and would surely fetch a tidy sum to a collector of such things. A DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check allows a creature to activate the mortar and pestle—Lurinax's remains could be slowly destroyed this way, ensuring the beast's permanent death.

REWARDS

The oracle has many tomes stacked up in his lair. Among his research is a thin booklet bound in humanoid flesh. In it is a simple statement written in the infernal tongue that details the season in which the world will end. Also in the stacks is an ancient text filled with elven prophecies. The book is actually a *tome of understanding*.

WHAT'S NEXT

Knowledge such as this is a dangerous thing. What might the PCs do or be forced to do with the knowledge? Who might work against them to take possession of Lurinax's thin booklet?

A SHROUD FOR AGANATHA

FOUR 11TH-LEVEL PCS AND UP

"The shroud was a gift, brought by a traveller from the East. She said it had fooled the gods themselves in the past—though who it was that crafted it, she could not say."

SUMMARY

A bargain struck between a dwarf chieftain and a great divine power forms the heart of this adventure. The chieftain, unwilling to step down from her position as ruler, seeks a way to hide from the god. When the party rescues some of her kin, they are offered riches for recovering a long lost magical shroud with the power to obscure mortals from the eyes of the gods. But recovering the shroud draws the attention of the god's agents, and the party must choose a side. In this storied and fate-filled adventure for eleventh-level and up PCs, the party must battle their way through a ruined dwarven armory before deciding the fate of the chieftain.

SOUNDS OF BATTLE

The party hears the unmistakable sounds of a battle raging over the next ridge. Investigating, they discover a small unit of dwarf warriors losing a battle to five **hill giants**. Two of the giants have engaged the dwarves in melee while three more are positioned on a nearby ridge, taking pleasure in throwing rocks down on the battered defenders. Once the dwarves are aware of the party, the leader, a grim faced dwarf with a badly broken arm, signals the rock throwers as the real threat.

If the party assist the dwarves, the leader asks them outright to take on the giants on the ridge. If they leave the dwarves to their fate, ensure they encounter the five hill giants shortly after leaving the scene.

Provided the party assisted in the fight, the dwarves invite the PCs to receive thanks from Aganatha in the Hall of the Unmoved.

HALL OF THE UNMOVED

Powerful columns rise from the stone floor into the darkness above. Great metal braziers have been lit, casting light and smoke into the impressive hall. Tall banners depicting an axe, a hammer, and an ornate chalice hang from the columns. Here and there, dwarves mill about; they regard you as they pass, nodding at the warriors with whom you walk this sturdy place.

The dwarves of the Unmoved happily trade with the PCs, who may also rent a humble but clean room from the clan's single inn: the Yellow Stone.

The principal experience in the hall should be an audience with the chieftain, Aganatha the Ageless, who thanks the PCs for assisting her scout with the giants and suggests they dine with her at the next reasonable occasion. If they refuse her invitation, the chieftain likely attempts to speak with them about her dilemma immediately, having recognized the PCs as possible allies in her personal plight.

Feast with Aganatha: The party is well fed and toasted by the chieftain and a dozen or so dwarves of import. After the meal is over, Aganatha bids her brethren goodbye, ushering them out, so she might speak with the party alone. During this meeting, she explains her situation and attempts to enlist the party's aid. Her story can be improvised using the following information:

- A 100 years ago, her health was failing.
- Her people were fighting a war against orc tribes and needed a strong leader.

- She summoned a medium from afar with the ability to speak with divine powers.
- For days, Aganatha and the medium attempted to contact the gods in hopes of granting Aganatha more life—enough to lead her people through the wars.
- Eventually, a divine being of unknown origins agreed to grant Aganatha a whole century of vigor, and in exchange, Aganatha would die and serve the being eternally.
- Her time is coming to an end, and the dwarf wishes to continue on as leader.
- She has found record of an ancient magical object with the power to hide a mortal being from the gods: the *Shroud of Oth* (see "Appendix"). The shroud was a gift to the dwarves, but it was abandoned in an armory in one of the countless wars.
- She would see the party retrieve it for her, and in exchange, the dwarves would give them two objects of great magical power.

AGANATHA, THE AGELESS CHIEFTAIN

I've seen my clan through countless wars, invasions, plagues, and cataclysms. Each time, the three banners of the Unmoved triumphed. I'll not give up my rule for something as changing as fate.

What She Wants Most: To extend her rule over her clan.

Physical Traits: Aganatha is a broad-shouldered dwarf with emerald eyes and a permanent wry grin. Her white hair is worn in three long braids, each tipped with a silver figurine representing the three symbols of her clan: the axe, the

hammer, and the chalice. Out of battle, she wears simple clothing and a wide, leather belt with a dragon's tooth on the buckle. In combat, she wears a suit of magical adamantine armor with milky quartz adornments on the breastplate and gauntlets. The chieftain is incredibly strong and, as her bargain dictated, has lost none of her vitality to time.

Personality/Roleplaying: Aganatha is a warrior at heart.

Having survived numerous battles, she is extremely confident and unshakable. In her younger years, the bright fire in her spirit won her the hearts of her people. She has been the leader of the Unmoved for almost 200 years, and her role as chieftain is a part of her being. She is direct and places little value in small talk and niceties although she has an excellent gallows sense of humor.

What She Knows:

- The location of the abandoned armory.
- The mountains around the armory are wild and dangerous.

JOURNEY TO THE ARMORY

The armory is located 30 miles from the Hall of the Unmoved. The mountains and hills of the region are difficult to traverse, and the party's normal travel speed is reduced by half. Use the following encounters to challenge the party as they travel.

Bulette Storm: A flash storm precedes an attempted ambush by 3 (CR 13) **bullettes**, who use the heavy rain and thunder to mask their approach. The monsters leap on the party from above.

Ettins in Love: The party hears a terrifying series of screams and curses emanating from a cave in the mountains. Investigating, they discover three **ettins** (CR 10) feuding with one another. Their conversation suggests that a love-triangle of sorts exists between several of the heads, creating a confusing and loud confrontation.

1—ABANDONED ARMORY ENTRANCE

This long crumbling hall reeks of waste and rot. Humanoid and animal bones litter the stony floor.

The entrance is the lair of six (CR 9) to eight **ogres** (CR 12). Their leader, a smarter than average brute named Turg, wields a +2 *magical greatclub* and has the maximum number of hp. The ogres have not explored the deeper sections of the armory; the cold winds and hissing are enough to keep them out. The ogres have erected crude walls at either end of the entry hall. They defend their lair with mindless violence. Once two or more of their number fall in combat, the rest attempt to flee into the collapsed chamber—their fear of the PCs outweighing their fear of the depths. Any ogres who manage to escape can be heard dying horribly in the darkness of the collapsed chamber, slain by the **wraiths** that live there.

IN YOUR CAMPAIGN

This adventure requires a hilly or mountainous terrain. It assumes a clan of dwarves could be allies of the PCs. It refers to dwarven halls and armories built into the stony terrain and uses giants as an enemy to set up the initial plot hook.

The **skein witch** (see *Tome of Beasts*) can be replaced by a **deva**. If this substitution is made, have the deva offer a treasure reward instead of the skein witch's *sealed destiny* ability.

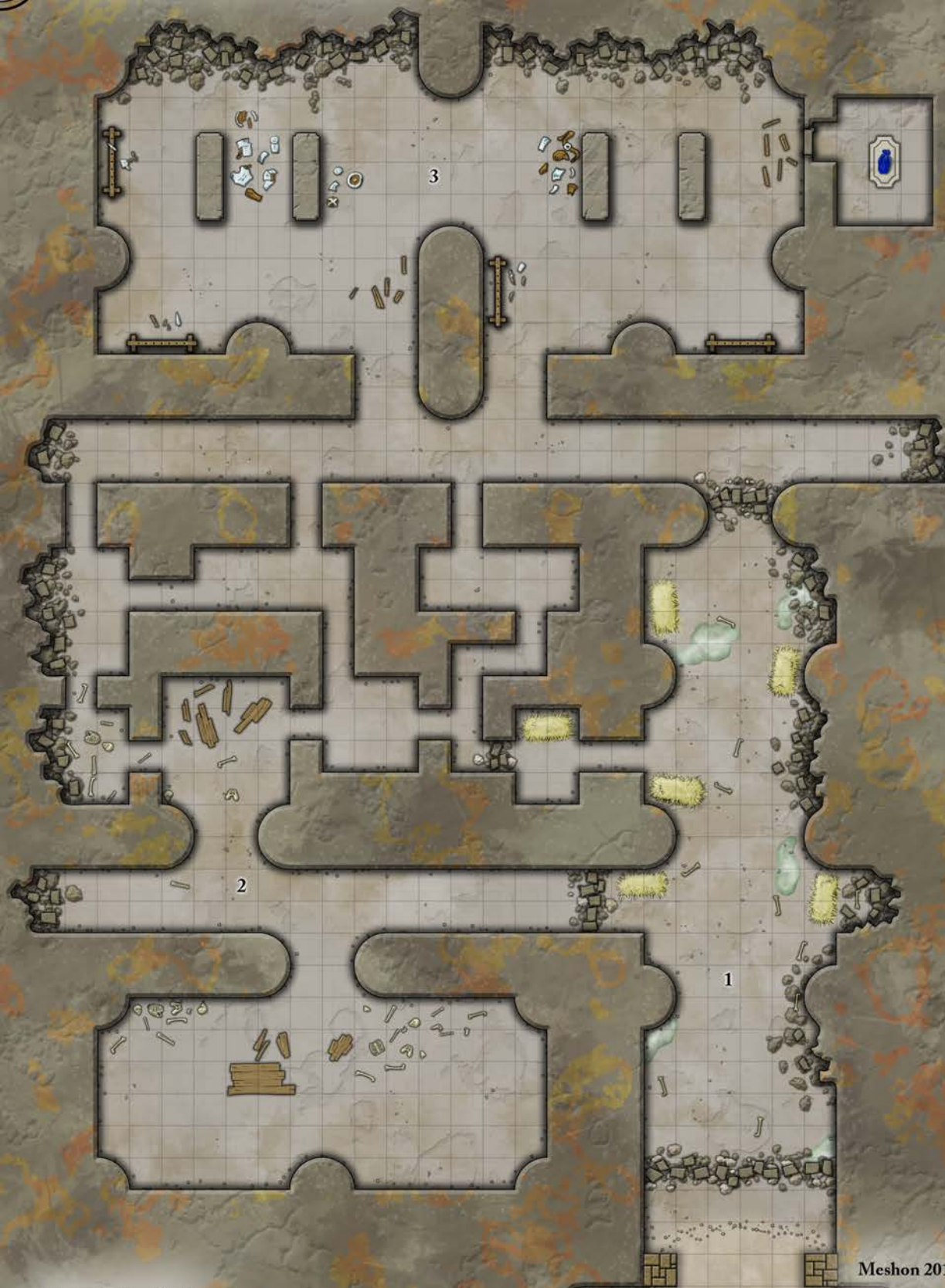
This adventure can be used to establish the PCs in the region and, depending on their choices, can lead to further plots and stories with the NPCs.

IN MIDGARD

Travelling through the Ironcrag for their own reasons, the party discovers the Unmoved, a breakaway from the minor canton of Templeforge. Aganatha carries with her some knowledge of creating the gearforged, and her hall's defenses may be bolstered by automatons. Aganatha and her people worship Volund, but her bargain was made with Khors, who recognized the Unmoved would fall to shadow should its venerable ruler die. Khors is angered by Aganatha's refusal to uphold her end of the bargain.



A SHROUD FOR AGANATHA



One square = 5 feet

Meshon 2017

2—THE EMPTY HALLS

The air is stale here, and all is in ruins. These rooms and passages might have once served as living quarters for those who worked the armory. A few skittering things flee from your footsteps.

The halls and chambers beyond the ogre lair are mostly empty. They can serve as a place for the party to hunt down fleeing ogres. A few dwarf-sized skeletons are found as the party moves through the place. A DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check suggests they died of injuries caused by weapons of some kind. Before the party reaches the collapsed chamber, they hear agonized screams and ghostly battle sounds that come from no specific direction.

3—THE COLLAPSED CHAMBER

This chamber once served as a storeroom for weapons and armor. Dwarf-sized suits of plate and scale mail lie corroding in piles on the floor. Empty weapon racks line the wall. The back quarter of the room has collapsed and stony rubble prevents further access.

Three (CR 13) or four (CR 15) dwarf-shaped **wraiths** haunt this chamber. Having freshly killed any fleeing ogres, the wraiths spend the first round of combat raising the fallen beasts as **specters**. The wraiths guard the *Shroud of Oth* (see "Appendix"), which is kept in a secret room (DC 14 to spot the entrance) connecting to the chamber. The shroud is rolled around a platinum cylinder (worth 500 gp) stored inside a large silk bag.

Fate's Enforcer: Should the party recover the shroud, as they leave the armory, they will be met by a divine agent. Sent by the power with whom Aganatha has made her bargain, the agent appears as a floating faceless humanoid with magical strands

swirling around its body. The **skein witch** (CR 13) does not attack. Instead it attempts to explain that Aganatha cannot be allowed to break the bargain. It demands that the shroud be taken far away and that the PCs must not concern themselves with the fate of the Unmoved. It offers to use its sealed destiny ability to entice the PCs to agree and explains the consequences of this gift. After making its case, it awaits for the PCs' response. It will attack if the PCs refuse its request.

RETURNING THE SHROUD

Aganatha is true to her word. She rewards the party with two rare magic items (GM's choice) and provides them and honorary estate within the walls of her hall. The PCs make a powerful ally who might assist them in a variety of ways in their future adventures. Aganatha uses the shroud to obscure herself from the divine being.

REWARDS

The PCs are free to keep the Shroud of Oth for themselves. Though the great witch who made it will undoubtedly come to reclaim it.

WHAT'S NEXT

Keeping the shroud leads to a confrontation with the minions of its creator. Returning the shroud to the great witch might result in further adventures as the witch has lost many such items. Returning the shroud to the dwarf likely makes the divine power angry; the party may have to contend with its servants or make amends by performing some other task.

APPENDIX

CENTAUR WRIST-WRAPS

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement)

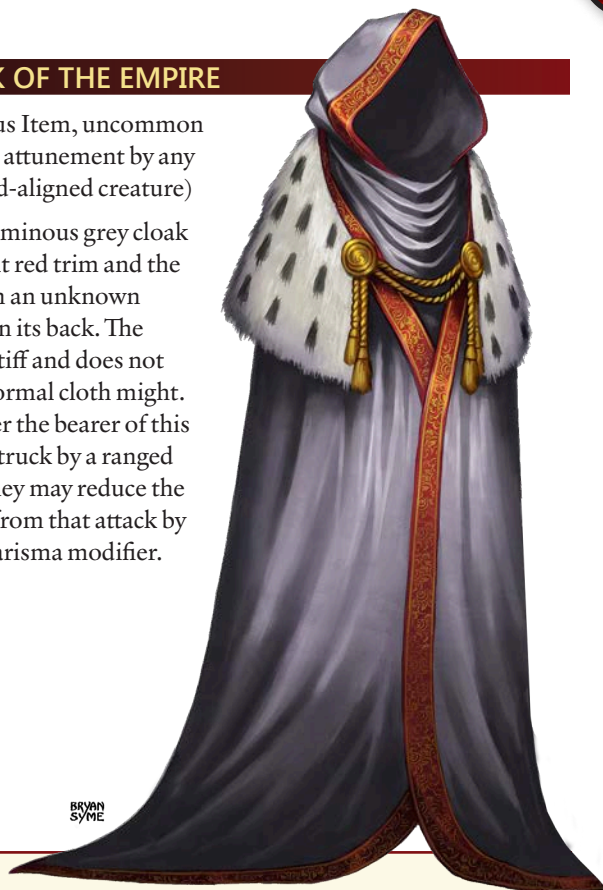
These leather and fur wraps are imbued with centaur shamanic magic. The wraps are stained a deep orange color, and intricate motifs painted in blue seem to float above the surface of the leather. The bearer of these wraps may call on their magic to reroll any attack made with a short- or longbow; the resulting roll must be used instead. Once used this way, the wraps must be held in wood smoke for 15 minutes before their magic can be used again.



CLOAK OF THE EMPIRE

Wondrous Item, uncommon (requires attunement by any non-good-aligned creature)

This voluminous grey cloak has bright red trim and the sigil from an unknown empire on its back. The cloak is stiff and does not fold as normal cloth might. Whenever the bearer of this cloak is struck by a ranged attack, they may reduce the damage from that attack by their Charisma modifier.



In Midgard, this shroud belongs to Baba Yaga. It was stolen from her by a mystic in whom she put great trust and invited into her hut for dinner. The mystic betrayed the witch's trust, making off with several of her powerful magical objects. Grandmother can see the bearer of this shroud whenever they cast it over themselves. She knows their location and learns a detail about them each time she sees them. Inevitably, the witch will come for her shroud, sending one of the vela or some less comely minion to retrieve it. Should the party return the shroud to Baba Yaga, they may gain a small boon from her, though as can be expected by the inconstant crone she may also transform them into cutlery.

SHARK-TOOTH CROWN

Wondrous item (helm), rare (requires attunement)

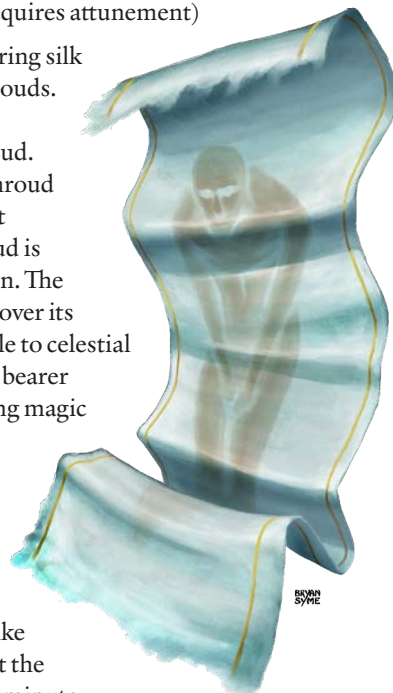
Shark's teeth of varying sizes adorn a simple leather headband. The teeth pile one atop the other in a jumble of sharp points and flat sides. Three particularly large teeth are stained with crimson dye. The teeth move slightly of their own accord when the bearer is within a mile of a large body of saltwater. The effect is one of snapping and clacking, producing a sound not unlike a crab's claw. The bearer of this crown receives advantage to all Wisdom (Survival) checks to navigate on large bodies of saltwater. Additionally, the bearer gains:

Lord of Waves and Deep (2/day). As a bonus action, the bearer may cast *command* (use Charisma to determine spell save DC). If the targeted creature is an aquatic dwelling beast, it fails the saving throw automatically.

SHROUD OF OTH

Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)

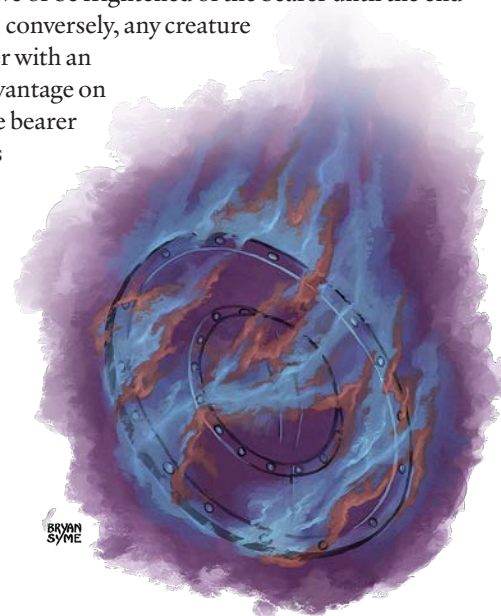
The strands of this shimmering silk shroud swirl like wisps of clouds. A plain golden band runs around the edge of the shroud. Creatures attuned to this shroud receive resistance to radiant damage as long as the shroud is on or carried on their person. The bearer may cast the shroud over its head to render itself invisible to celestial creatures. Additionally, the bearer cannot be targeted by scrying magic or abilities used by celestial creatures. While hidden by the shroud, the bearer sees the faint outline of a bent humanoid form staring at it from a point nearby. Ever-watching, the crone-like figure occasionally points at the bearer ominously. For each minute the bearer is hidden by the shroud, they must make a DC 12 Wisdom save or become afraid and forced to remove it, ending the hidden effect.



VOID-TOUCHED BUCKLER

Wondrous Item (buckler), very rare (requires attunement)

This simple wood and metal buckler belonged to an adventurer slain by a void dragon wyrmling. It sat for decades next to a small tear in the fabric of reality which lead to the outer plains. It has become tainted by the void and has acquired magical traits that reflect the cold chaos of the beyond. The buckler is a +1 shield. As an action, its bearer may invoke the power of the void. For 1 minute, a swirling magical aura envelops the buckler: any creature that misses the bearer with an attack must make a DC 14 Wisdom save or be frightened of the bearer until the end of their next turn; conversely, any creature that hits the bearer with an attack receives advantage on attacks against the bearer until the end of its next turn. This ability cannot be activated again for 24 hours.





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