

— BLEEDING EDGE ADVENTURE #5 —

Temple of the Death Goddess

A D20 ADVENTURE FOR FOUR TO SIX CHARACTERS OF 4TH TO 6TH LEVEL -



By Joshua Cole

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The following text is Open Gaming Content: All traps and game mechanics found in Chapters One through Five and the entirety of Appendix I and II.

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Introduction

Zombies! Why does it always have to be Zombies!

While common folk may quail at such an exclamation, even low-level adventurers know how to deal with these shambling undead menaces. Zombies are too slow, too dumb, too easily turned by a competent cleric for them to be too great a threat... unless, of course, they move faster and hit harder than any zombie has a right to, shrug off slashing damage as readily as any other type, and shuffle forward entirely undeterred by the mightiest clerics of the land!

Adventure Background

Erburg's troubles began centuries ago when the powerful Church of the Death Goddess established a temple in the region. Either ignorant or scornful of the local druid traditions, the goddess's clerics raised a formidable chapel in the deep woods, just a few miles from the local stone circle. In short order, cleric and druid came to blows. The clerics accused the druids of ambushing supply caravans bringing food and valuables to their temple, while the druids claimed temple clerics captured animals from their sacred grove to use in magical experiments.

Kemahyr-Eral, a half-orc steeped in the predatory aspect of his order, commanded the druid circle. He made one half-hearted attempt to resolve the matter peacefully, but was rebuffed as an uncivilized brute by the temple's high priest, an arrogant man named Sarios Dorma.

Kemahyr returned to his circle and demanded their support in an all-out assault upon the temple. He swore he would not rest until every stone was wrenched from the ground and every cleric slain. Fired by his determination, the druids gathered their forces and crashed upon the temple like a tidal wave.

Sarios proved no fool, however; he had provoked the druidic leader intentionally, hoping to end the standoff by breaking the druidic tide upon the rocky cliffs of his temple. In preparation, he assembled formidable defenses and numerous traps and secret tunnels.

The battle might have dragged on for months if workers from Erburg had not intervened. The local villagers had long been loyal to the druids, but the Death Goddess's coin enticed them to construct the temple. They gave Kemahyr detailed descriptions of the tunnels and bulwarks they had raised, and the druid leader launched a massive assault on that basis.

The temple clergy were butchered, easy prey for the druids and their bestial followers once the latter breached the walls. Nonetheless, attrition killed dozens of lesser druids as they fought their way through the temple. Finally, only Sarios and Kemahyr remained, battling in the depths of the temple atop a ruined summoning circle. In a flash of errant magical energy, the two leaders became frozen in ghostly stillness.

For centuries, the temple lay empty, a forgotten storehouse of magical knowledge. The people of Erburg, fearing a curse for their betrayal of the temple, stayed well away and warned travelers to do the same. In time, even the memory of the temple faded into legend.

Then came Arneus Ferg. A wizard and scholar with a passion for creating strange items and an unhealthy fixation on death magic, Arneus knew the local legends

and suspected magical secrets lay locked within the temple. He picked his way through its traps and hazards, studiously avoided the ancient foes in their ghostly prison, and collected as many magical tomes as he could. He found the location so convenient and defensible that he decided to establish his laboratory in the caverns below.

Unfortunately, Arneus's experiments required a raw material unavailable in the long-abandoned temple, but plentiful in nearby Erburg: the bodies of the recently dead—or of the not-yet-dead!

The disappearances began subtly. How long ago? Only Arneus truly knows, and he keeps his peace. A few unwanted souls vanished in the night: beggars, vagabonds, fledgling adventurers. Few noticed. Few cared. Life went on much as it ever had in the thriving village.

Within a few months, 'visible' people started disappearing. The watch took notice, doubling patrols and bolstering its forces with mercenaries. The watch soon got a look at the menace threatening their village, when a band of disheveled humanoid figures lurched from the misty night to carry off the unwary—zombies!

Now, cold dread creeps over the village, feeding the fires of panic and hate. Merchants and travelers, once the lifeblood of Erburg, chart other courses. With the village coffers dwindling and the danger apparently rising, many of the mercenary companies backing the town watch see no reason to stay on. Many depart without a word of warning, leaving swaths of the village completely unprotected.

Worse, while the villagers scurry about in fear of a divine curse, Arneus continues his dread experiments unhindered. The mayor counts herself among the handful that still clings to hope. What little coin remains in her coffers, she offers to any adventurers willing to find and stamp out the source of the strangely resilient zombies.

Adventure Synopsis

When abnormally powerful zombies assault the village of Erburg, the villagers desperately turn to bold heroes to save them from near certain doom. Following rumors in town, or maybe just the tread of the zombies themselves, the characters find themselves in deep and murky woods, haunted by strange horrors and terrifying beasts. Tracking the undead to their lair, the PCs eventually come upon a ruined temple, appropriately dedicated to the Goddess of Death. Within its crumbling columns and dark stone walls, the PCs find more zombies, some even more powerful than the ones they've seen, as well as terrible dangers from the natural world that vie for control. A killer plant and a monstrous spider menace the characters, zombies bar their way, and two deadly paths lead inexorably downwards into the dreaded lair of the mad wizard, Arneus Ferg.

Using this Adventure

Temple of the Death Goddess is an adventure for four to six 5th-level characters. The characters should gain one or two levels by the time they finish. This adventure may be played by itself or as part of a larger Bleeding Edge campaign.

Bleeding Edge

Green Ronin Publishing's **Bleeding Edge Adventures** provide challenging and entertaining scenarios that cater to the tastes and interests of the modern gamer. Within these adventures, you will find a wealth of material designed to take advantage of the intricacies of the d20 system and give you everything you need to create an exciting adventure experience.

Each adventure in the Bleeding Edge line stands on its own, so you need not have them all to enjoy them. However, the series can also be linked together to provide a complete campaign.

Finally, these adventures can be slotted into any campaign setting. Many of the locations used in the adventures are found in the larger *World of Freeport*, but if you do not use Freeport, you can still use the adventure by changing the names and places to suit your own setting.



Adapting *Temple of the Death Goddess*

Erburg and its immediate environs are not necessary to use this adventure. The PCs might happen along the temple while journeying to some other destination or you could expand the scope of the adventure so that the iron zombies are a massive threat, descending on a large city or striking at numerous smaller hamlets rather than against just one village.

Scaling the Adventure

While suited for four 5th-level characters, you can run *Temple of the Death Goddess* as is for parties of levels ranging from 4th to 6th, creating a greater challenge for lower level characters and less of a challenge for higher level characters. To adapt this adventure for more powerful or less powerful groups, consider the following suggestions.

Weaker Parties (3 or fewer characters, or lower than 4th level): Lower-level parties will likely lose characters to some of the more dangerous traps in this adventure. Lower the Search and Disable Device DCs of the magic traps by 2 for every level below 4th that the characters were at the beginning of the adventure, and lower the damage of the *flame strike* to 7d6. Replace Aulk with a giant crocodile, and replace the old assassin vine with a normal assassin vine. Remove a cleric level from Sarios and a druid level from Kemahyr, reduce the current hit points of each by 10, and remove all of their prepared spells over 2nd level. Finally, remove all of Arneus's prepared spells over 2nd level.

Stronger Parties (7 or more characters, or higher than 6th level): Add 4 to the caster level of all the magic traps, and increase the CR of the non-magic traps by 1 by adding additional damage or increasing the save, Search, and Disable Device DCs. In any instance where iron zombie humans appear, increase their numbers by 50%, rounding up. Add a second troll to Aulk, and add 50% more troblins to their encounters. Advance the old assassin vine to 14 HD. Advance the libramite to 10 HD and give it a *wand of ice storm* (CL 7th) with 8 charges. Increase Sarios's cleric and Kemahyr's druidic avenger levels by 2. Advance Arneus to a 9th level wizard and his flesh golem to 9 HD.

Preparation

To run this adventure, you need the *PHB*, *DMG*, and *MM*.

Starting the Adventure

Temple of the Death Goddess assumes the PCs were already in Erburg after the events of *A Dreadful Dawn*. Having dealt with the evil Cult of the Slaughter God, the PCs are the first choice to handle the matter of the iron zombies. If you didn't play through the events of the previous adventure, consider using any of the following hooks.

Embarrassed by the zombie attacks allegedly stemming from one of his church's temples, a local cleric of the Death Goddess asks the PCs to exonerate her worshippers by finding the real culprit. If one of the PCs is a member of his church, he may feel this embarrassment himself.

While on the road near Erburg (or, for those who favor wilderness travel, near the entrance of the woods), the PCs suffer an attack by iron zombies and discover for themselves the peculiar nature of these 'undead' opponents. Tracking the zombies' path offers the PCs a lead on the ruined temple.

If you want to set the adventure's timeline back somewhat, the PCs might be among the first itinerant adventurers attacked by the iron zombies. If they react promptly (and survive, of course!), Erburg suffers far less. The Mayor offers no reward under these circumstances, so this is a good approach if you need to scale back the party's wealth.

The Bleeding Edge Campaign

As mentioned, *Temple of the Death Goddess* falls on the heels of Green Ronin's *A Dreadful Dawn*. Having uncovered the sinister plot of a vile cult to murder a prominent villager and transform him into an undead abomination, the characters are regarded as heroes. Allow the PCs some down time to recover from their wounds, to train, craft magic items, and do whatever else they like. Once they start feeling restless and ready to move on, you're ready to begin.

- Chapter I: The Invasion of the Iron Zombies -

The adventure begins in the village of Erburg, a community that lies along the Silver River and on the main road to Silverus, one of the largest cities of the Ivory Ports. This chapter presents all the information you need to run adventures set in this village and also sets the stage for the terrifying doom that hangs above the villagers like an executioner's axe.

Erburg

Population 766 (village); Power Center Conventional (LG)

Erburg is a small farming community about 20 or so miles northwest of Silverus, about four days south of a ghost town reputed to be the site of a haunted opera house, and about five days south of the former Golden Curtain, a popular roadside boarding house and theater that recently burned to the ground. Erburg is anything but special and might be overlooked if it weren't for the fact that it is a convenient stopover for travelers bound for Silverus and offers a quaint last taste of civilization for those bound north. More importantly, Erburg attracts adventurers, since the woods around the place are infested with orcs, goblins, restless dead, and rumors of much worse. Ruins of dead villages and battlefields left from ancient wars offer plenty of chances to uncover old forgotten treasures. As a result, most would-be adventurers in these lands are bound to stop off here at some point in their career.

Layout

The Silver River runs from the northeast to the southwest, creating a glittering path through the countryside. As it courses through Erburg, it forms a few branches, feeding some of the smaller ponds found in the woodlands just east of town. It passes the mill, feeding the waterwheel that in turn grinds the grains into flour. It moves beneath the Last Crossing, an ancient bridge far older than

the village and purported to be the site of some terrible battle in ages past. It then merrily flows through the rest of the community until it comes to the tannery, where it picks up some of the filth from the stinking building, only to deposit it on the banks as it makes its way to the sea. The buildings here are all arranged around the river, and docks line both sides for river barges to make a few extra coins selling to the locals. Most structures stand on stone foundations, but are generally wooden, using timber culled from the nearby forests to the east. A few cobbled roads lead off from the Ivory Road, but these see little traffic, leading to homes and a few shops. In fact, nearly all of the shops face the main thoroughfare.

Economy

Erburg is a farming community, with over half of its population working the patchwork lands to the west. Living in isolated farmsteads, they come to the town to sell their crops, for news, and to pick up finished goods. Those people not involved in agriculture or that don't run a shop in the community work as fishermen. About a mile out of town, north of the eastern woods, there is a large lake. Fishermen have had a lot of success here, and they pickle their catch in large oak barrels that they then send off to various villages and towns throughout the region. So famous are their pickled fish that they get a high price in the larger inland cities, and demand seems to be growing. Characters looking to do some shopping can pick up any equipment worth up to 200 gp.

Key Locations

All of the following are key locations in Erburg. The listed DCs are for Knowledge (local) and Gather Information checks made to ascertain information about the structure or NPCs found within them.



- Chapter I: Invasion of the Iron Zombies -

1. The Old Mill

Easily the most impressive structure in Erburg, the Old Mill is a large three-story building with an attached waterwheel, by which the millstone turns inside. The walls are wooden, and mossy wooden shingles cover the roof. A path branches off from the main road up to a pair of large wooden doors where farmers unload sacks of grain for workers to turn into flour.

Lord Tylus owns the Mill, but knows nothing about milling and leaves the day-to-day operation to his manager, Felicity Crump (LG female human commoner 5) (DC 10). She is a stout, no-nonsense woman with blond hair and rugged features. Famed for her honesty, Felicity is a prominent figure in Erburg, and her voice carries a lot of weight with the mayor (DC 15).

2. Mikken's Supplies

Across from the Old Mill stands another landmark building. Mikken's Supplies was once an auction house, but after the owner's mysterious death, a traveler named Mikken (NE male human commoner 9) purchased the place for a steal (DC 15). He now runs a general store, selling everything from dry rations to spirits to coils of rope to an assortment of weapons and armor (DC 10).

Mikken does a good business since he sells everything at a 10% discount (DC 10). He can afford to do so, since many of his supplies come from a thieves' guild in Silverus. These criminals steal goods from merchants and tradesmen and fence them through Mikken's storefront (DC 25). In exchange, Mikken keeps half of the profits (DC 30). He has no qualms about this practice since he has long followed the teachings of Gravicarius, the daemonic exarch of greed (DC 35).

3. Laughing Badger

The most successful inn and tavern is the Laughing Badger. The owner, Maddock (NG male human expert 4), built the place ten years ago, investing every gold coin he could scrape together to make a good life for his family (DC 5). In this time, he's enjoyed a great deal of success, and the reputation of his establishment extends far beyond this small village. In fact, this is the favored watering hole for most adventurers, who come from miles around to sample Maddock's fine ale and get a glimpse of his pretty daughter, Gwen (NG human female expert 1) (DC 10). Helped by his wife, Cambrie (NG female human commoner 2), and their son, Kent (NG male human expert 1), they are a tight-knit family who works well together (DC 10).

Recently, though, the Laughing Badger has fallen on hard times (DC 5). A few weeks ago, the inn was attacked in the night by a group of wicked cultists (DC 10). The villains murdered a number of the guests and tortured Maddock and his family in the basement (DC 15). If it wasn't for the brave efforts of a group of heroes, most believe the losses would have been far more appalling (DC 15). The surviving members of the Laughing Badger have recently reopened for business. They buried their dead and mourned their losses, but they are undeterred and intend to keep the place open (DC 10). Unfortunately, the attack and the deaths have marred the Badger's reputation, and few people are willing to spend the night, let alone sit at the bar and reminisce about old times (DC 10).

The Laughing Badger is fully detailed in Green Ronin's *A Dreadful Dawn*. If you ran that adventure, you may need to modify the description and the NPCs present to account for the outcome. Even if the entire family was slain, be sure to keep the Laughing Badger open for business; just replace them with new, less friendly, owners.

4. Temple of the God of Light

The God of Light has a large following in Erburg, overshadowing the smaller shrines and temples that have set up shop in this town. Standing on the south bank of the Silver River, it is constructed of white marble and features the golden symbol of the sun god above the front doors. Stained glass windows run along both sides of the building, using brightly colored glass to fill the interior with the holy light of the god.

Mother Yeag (LG female human cleric 2) runs the church (DC 5). New to her post, she's finding her place in the community, and to ensure her coffers are full, she regularly tends to the locals, treating their injuries, aiding the sick, and giving food to the poor (DC 10). She's had some success, and folks still turn out to hear

her sermons on holy days, but people are slow to accept her since she did little to help poor Maddock when the Laughing Badger fell under attack (DC 15).

5. Smithy

Cane (NG male commoner 5) runs the smithy facing the village square (DC 10). He does good work, and nearly all the local farmers use tools made by his hand (DC 12). While most of his talents at metalworking are suited for shoeing horses and making useful goods, he dabbles a bit in weaponsmithing (DC 15). He can produce a serviceable sword, but has not had much luck creating anything of exceptional quality (DC 17).

6. Town Hall

The town hall sits across Temple Way, facing the Temple of the God of Light. This building houses the offices of the mayor, an auditorium for meetings, and a courtroom to try the occasional criminal. Erburg's mayor is Ellen Dreifus (LG female human aristocrat 3; Diplomacy +8) (DC 5). Having served the community for a few years, she is a popular leader, praised for her fair-minded ways and shrewd judgments (DC 10). Since the attack on the Laughing Badger, she has spent more coin to expand the ranks of the militia (DC 15). Ellen lives in a small house on the east side of town (DC 15).

7. Watch Headquarters

Erburg's watch operates out of a modest-sized building on the Silver Road, across the street from the Laughing Badger. Erburg's militia has never been particularly talented, but their unresponsiveness during the attack on the Laughing Badger has exposed their incompetence (DC 10). The mayor fired the head of the watch and has yet to find a new replacement. She's courting a half-orc named Heb (male half-orc fighter 3), who spent many years adventuring in the Towers, but came to the town to retire (DC 10). He's reluctant to step into the mess, but his love for the town outweighs his reticence, and he's expected to make a decision by the end of the week (DC 15).

Currently, Erburg's watch consists of one 4th-level Warrior, two 2nd-level warriors, and five 1st-level warriors. Should the town fall under attack, the mayor can scrounge up 37 volunteers, mostly 1st-level warriors, but also including a ranger, a barbarian, and a couple of fighters.

8. Tannery

At the southern edge of town is the tannery. A crude dwarf named Filthy Shem (N male dwarf expert 4) runs the place. He does a good business, but his unconcern for the effect his work has on the Silver River frequently puts him on the receiving end of Ordena's (N female halfling druid 3) harangues (DC 15).

Citadel of Ceranir

About three days walk to the east is the fabled Citadel of Ceranir. An academy and outpost, the wizards that study there protect the lands around it (DC 15). War wizards patrol the lands, defend the smaller towns and hamlets, and track down criminals and bandits. On occasion, a Ceranir wizard may even act as judge (DC 20). Of late, the Citadel has been quiet, and as a result, there have been more attacks and monstrous threats in the neighboring lands (DC 20). Locals speculate that something has happened to the place, and Lord Tylus (see following) is willing to pay anyone who can learn the fate of these wizards 2,000 gp (DC 20). For more details, see Green Ronin's *Escape from Ceranir*.

Tylus Estate

About a mile east of Erburg is a large estate surrounded by a tiny hamlet of tenant farmers. For centuries, the Tylus family has ruled these lands, including Erburg and the surrounding forests (DC 5). The estate itself is impressive, being a large fortified manor house surrounded by a low wall. The peasants working their lands have cleared away much of the forests for farming, and so a rolling patchwork of quaint houses and bountiful fields encircle the structure. Just beyond the fields are trees that form the Old Forest, wherein lays the Tylus family crypt (DC 10).

The current lord is Eddrin Tylus, a reserved man who grapples with the responsibilities of his station. He has no wife and no heirs (DC 5). His brother

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and sister are both dead (DC 10). His sister took up a life of adventure and was slain somewhere in the north (DC 20), while his brother, Gavril, was cast out of the family for killing another man (DC 15). Nursing vengeance, Gavril joined a cult of the slaughter god (DC 25) and returned to Erburg to get revenge (DC 20). Luckily, a band of heroes stopped the plan and destroyed the cult (DC 10). Gavril was one of the casualties (DC 20). (See Green Ronin's *A Dreadful Dawn* for details.)

Eddrin withdrew from public view after the scandal involving the cult and now spends nearly all of his time cloistered in his estate (DC 10). He entrusts the town to its mayor (DC 10), Ellen Dreifus, whom many believe will succeed Eddrin as the area's new lord upon Tylus's death (DC 15). Eddrin meets with the mayor once per fortnight (DC 15), inviting her to stay at the estate while they discuss matters of Erburg, and the mayor reports on current happenings (DC 20). Some suspect that Eddrin courts the mayor and intends to legitimize her claim on his lands by marrying her (DC 25).

Notable Locals

In addition to the key locations and figures, there are a number of notable people who live in Erburg.

Adren

As one of Erburg's only actual thieves, Adren (NE male elf rogue 3) does a good bit of business preying on travelers (DC 15). He's smart enough to leave the locals alone and has a standing arrangement with Mikken to sell the more interesting things he picks up (DC 25). He leads a small gang of bandits called the Black Arrows (DC 30). He is thin, with shifty eyes and a constant smirk. For statistics, see Chapter Five.

Druella

Living deep in the forests south of Erburg is Druella (NG female half-elf adept 4), who serves as the local wisewoman and healer. She makes her rounds through the

community, tending the people and their animals alike (DC 10). She has auburn hair flecked with gray, pleasant, if angular, features, and a warm smile.

Frund

There's gold in the nearby hills, or at least so says Frund (NG male human ranger 2) (DC 15). He's found a few nuggets so far, but not enough to convince others to join him in his ventures (DC 12). One might think that even the hint of gold would be enough to lure all sorts of prospectors, but the hills where Frund works are infested with the Black Tongue tribe of goblins, a group known for their viciousness and perverse worship of demonic gods (DC 15).

Harold Cress

After the embarrassing attack on the Laughing Badger, Harold Cress (LN male human warrior 6) lost his job (DC 10). He admits he should have been more vigilant in having his men make rounds, but he nurses his hatred of both Tylus and the mayor (DC 15). He'd leave Erburg altogether, but he doesn't have the money (DC 17). He spends most of his time drinking at a dingy watering hole near Mikken's named the River Cask (DC 20). He was muscled, but is now getting a bit flabby. He's lost his hair and hasn't shaved in weeks.

Jemine

Jemine is a local guide and cartographer (DC 10). She's never in Erburg for more than a few days at a time, instead walking the countryside and learning the lay of the land (DC 12). To make ends meet, she sometimes sells her services as a guide to local hunters and travelers (DC 15). Jemine has short-cropped auburn hair and pleasant, freckled features. She embarrasses easily, and when paid a complement, she blushes furiously.

Korg the Fool

About six weeks ago, Korg the Fool (CN male halfling barbarian 3) wandered into Erburg (DC 10). He wasn't sure where he came from or what he had been about, but he knew he had escaped something terrible (DC 15). Since his arrival, the people have sheltered the poor halfling, taking turns feeding him and offering him a place to sleep (DC 15). Those who have housed him report he has terrible nightmares, screaming and shrieking about some place called Swiftwater (DC 20).

Kresha

A local celebrity and popular entertainer, Kresha (CG female elf bard 5) has done a number of free performances at the Laughing Badger to help the family restore their business (DC 10). She has long blond hair and striking features. Most young men have dreams of wedding the ageless minstrel.

Lahkma

Easily one of the strangest of Erburg's citizens, Lahkma (N female dromite psion 4) lives in a small hut a few miles to the west (DC 15). She rarely comes to town, and when she does, it's under the heavy cover of a brown cloak (DC 17).

Pepper

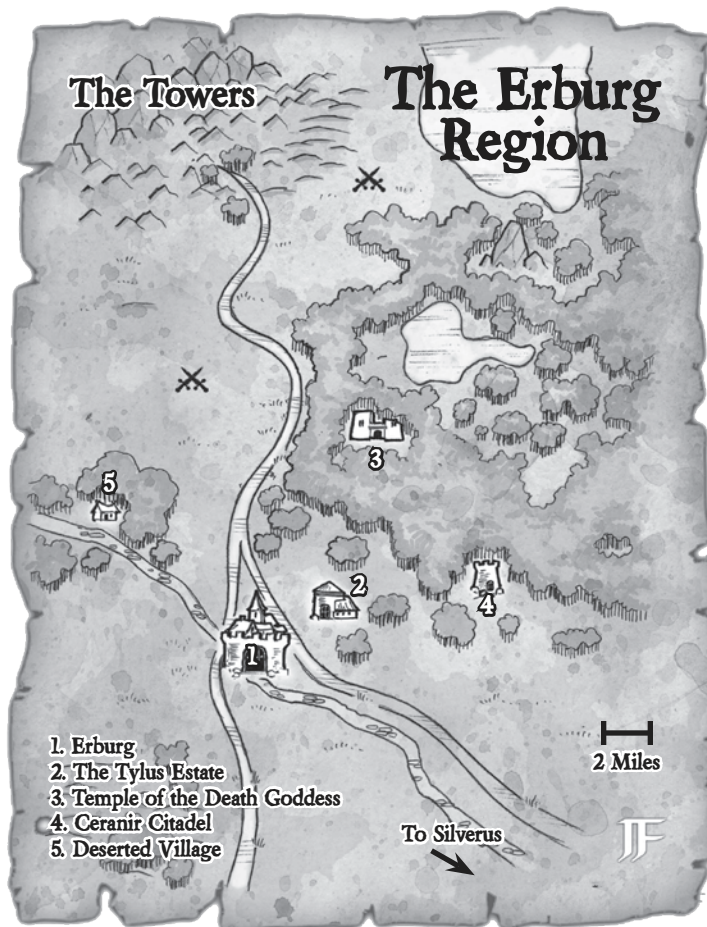
Like any town in the region, Erburg has its criminal elements. Pepper (N female human rogue 5) is a smuggler who until recently had specialized in moving artifacts out of a distant outpost in the north called Lonely Shore down to collectors and fences in Silverus (DC 25). Her contact, Sly Pete, has gone silent, and she's beginning to worry (DC 27). She has black hair flecked with silver, hence the name, and plain features. She does, however, have a quick wit and sharp tongue.

Pordrus Olien

A minor cleric of the Death Goddess, Pordrus Olien (LN human cleric 1) maintains a small shrine to his goddess alongside the Silver River (DC 10). An unpopular character, he works hard to establish his faith in the community (DC 12). He knows about the ruined Temple of the Death Goddess, but he has not worked up the courage to reopen it, for he suspects some malevolent force has taken control of it. He has not mentioned this to the other villagers, lest he further tarnish the name of his fearsome goddess.

Quen

Another entertainer, Quen (CG male human sorcerer 4) makes his money performing magical tricks to impress the locals and children (DC 10). Unstudied,



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he developed his talents for magic by accident (DC 15). He wears a gaudy orange robe trimmed in gold, and a floppy hat sits on his head.

Reina and Ud

A reclusive man, Ud (LG male aasimar monk 3) came to Erburg a few years ago after a stint as an adventurer along with his companion, Reina (LG female gnome paladin 2) (DC 10). The pair never speaks of their exploits and don't work, having gold enough to support themselves (DC 15). From time to time, the pair goes off for a few weeks and then returns sporting new bruises and cuts (DC 15). They claim they're retired, but their actions speak otherwise.

Wallien

Having left Silverus under a cloud of suspicion, Wallien (N male half-elf wizard 4) settled in Erburg (DC 20). For the first year, Wallien rented a room in the Laughing Badger, becoming quite close to Maddock and his family (DC 10). He now advises the mayor in nearly all things and spends most of his time at the Town Hall (DC 15).

Others

Adept 2nd (×2), 1st (×1); Aristocrat 1st (×3); Bard 2nd (×2), 1st (×4); Cleric 1st (×1); Commoner 3rd (×4), 1st (618); Druid 1st (×2); Expert 4th (×1), 2nd (×4), 1st (×11); Monk 1st (×2); Paladin 1st (×2); Psychic Warrior 2nd (×2), Rogue 3rd (×1), 1st (×4); Sorcerer 2nd (×2), 1st (×4); Wilder 1st (×2); Witch 1st (×1); Wizard 2nd (×2), 1st (×4).

Events

Erburg has suffered a terrible tragedy with the attack on the Laughing Badger, and the villagers struggle to put things back together with the violation of one of their havens. The cult of the God of Slaughter was just the beginning though, and a far greater evil threatens to shatter the lives of this simple community.

If the PCs have played through *A Dreadful Dawn* proceed with **Event 1**. Otherwise, skip it and move onto **Event 2**.

Event 1: Zombie Attack (EL see text)

This event occurs at dusk at any point while the PCs are in Erburg. Spreading through the twilight streets of the village is a horde of iron zombies, dispatched from the Temple of the Death Goddess. These creatures are under orders to kill or capture all of the inhabitants. While the PCs deal with their own encounters, other attacks are occurring all over the village. The iron zombies find the PCs wherever they may be at this hour, whether on the streets or while having dinner at the Laughing Badger, or elsewhere as the PCs decide.

Creatures

Strange creatures shuffle out of the gloom. They appear to be zombies, their rotting flesh hanging loosely from their bones, but a frame reinforces their arms, legs, torso, and head, almost entirely encasing them in some sort of strange metallic harness. There should be one-and-a-half iron zombies for each PC (round down). In the event that PCs are scattered throughout the village, the same ratio is present, but be sure to account for any NPCs that might also be present.

Iron Zombie Human (Varies): hp 25 each, see **Appendix I** for statistics.

Tactics

The iron zombies lurch forward and attack, trying to knock out or kill the nearest character. When its nearest foe falls dead or unconscious, the iron zombie picks up the body and carries it out of the village, heading to the northeast. The iron zombies fight until destroyed.

Development

There's no help coming for the PCs. Attacks occur throughout the village, and the screams of their victims pierce the night. The village eventually rallies and destroys or drives off the remaining iron zombies. At your option, feel free to create a few more encounters for the PCs to participate in if they choose to rise to Erburg's defense.



About 15 minutes after the attack begins, the iron zombies withdraw, dragging the dead or unconscious villagers back the way they came. The rest of the evening is spent accounting for the dead or missing and securing the community's perimeter. Player characters who assist the watch should gain experience as if they had defeated a CR 4 creature for their part in helping the locals.

Characters thinking to follow the iron zombies can track the zombies if they have the Track feat. The Survival DC is 16 if the characters pursue at night or 13 if they wait until the next morning. The zombies move quickly, covering a lot of ground. Characters can catch up with iron zombies laden with dead or unconscious villagers (75% chance for the villager to be dead) in pockets of 1d4 creatures. Characters thinking to follow the iron zombies to their lairs may do so. Should this happen, move on to the next chapter.

Alternatively, during one combat with the iron zombies, allow the PCs to make a DC 15 Spot check. Characters that succeed notice a saw-toothed man dressed in black robes, looking on the melee in horror. Characters that succeed by 5 or more notice he's wearing a small silver skull on a chain around his neck. After 1d3 rounds, the man flees into the town.

Event 2: A Grim Dawn

This event occurs on the morning after the iron zombie attack or when the PCs first arrive in the village.

The next morning is especially somber as the villagers are mourning their lost loved ones and trying to repair damaged homes and property. After scouring the village, the watch has determined that nearly 50 villagers are dead or missing. A pall hangs in the air. No one turns out to do business, and the streets are practically empty, aside from a few patrols of grim-faced guards.

If new to the village, the guards don't bother to accost or question travelers, though they are quick to warn the characters if they are approached, saying, "You'd best be off. This town is cursed!" PCs who press the guards get a thumb pointing toward the Town Hall before someone else in need gets their attention.

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Talking with the Locals

Following the attack, the PCs may want to snoop around the town and see what the locals know. The following entries describe the most likely NPCs the PCs might meet and a snapshot of the character's attitude, as well as any information she might be able to offer.

Cane

Cane, the village smith (**Location 5**), fought alongside the watch and lost an eye for his efforts. When the PCs come to speak to him, they notice the bandage across his face. Cane is indifferent to the PCs when they first arrive, but if they took part in the town's defense, they gain a +4 circumstance bonus to Charisma-based skill checks to improve his attitude. If improved to friendly, he confides in them by revealing one of the zombies was old Karl, a trapper. Cane fashioned for him several new traps just last season. If asked where the man did most of his trapping, Cane points toward the northeast, across a stretch of fields to a dark line of forest a few miles in the distance.

Druella

At the time of the attack on the town, Druella was away in her home a few miles south of the community. She is unaware of what happened and wasn't planning to go to town for another few days. The player characters might seek her out and if so, they have a relatively trouble-free trek to her cottage in the forest. Once there, she is friendly—she rarely receives visitors and is happy to talk to them. She is appalled at word of the attack, and she quickly gathers her things to help the victims. She's not entirely certain about what force is behind the attack, but she suspects that it may have something to do with the old Temple of the Death Goddess.

"Nothing good has ever come of that cursed place. Years ago, the Ceranir wizards wiped out the cultists. I have nothing against the Death Goddess's servants, but she seems to attract no shortage of mad and villainous types to her cult."

She can give the PCs directions to the temple. If the characters offer to escort her to Erburg, her attitude improves to helpful, and she supplies them with free healing spells as long as they need them.

Felicity Crump

As one of the most prominent citizens in town (**Location 1**), Felicity emerges as a leader in the aftermath of the attack. She pitches in to help families who've suffered from the attacks, supplying food, drink, clothing, and even paying for shelter at the Laughing Badger for those whose homes have been damaged. She's busy, so she doesn't have a lot of time to talk.

If the characters pitched in to help defend the town during the attack, Felicity is friendly. Otherwise, she's indifferent. Characters that improve her attitude to friendly discover that she blames the Tylus family for the attacks, saying,

"They were good and noble, but it's clear after the scandal in their crypts that their blood has thinned. Why, it was Tylus's own brother who was responsible for the attack on the Laughing Badger!"

Jemine

Jemine returns to Erburg from an expedition the morning after the attack. She brings dire news. While away, she encountered a few bands of iron zombies carrying the corpses of the villagers. Terrified by what she saw and helpless to do much of anything about it, she goes to report her findings to the mayor, although she leaves before the PCs arrive. Should the characters seek her out for help in finding the temple, she agrees and does so at no cost to them. She's angry about the developments in the village, and she gladly casts her lot in with the PCs to bring the villains to justice.

JEMINE	CR 7
Female human expert 8 LG Medium humanoid Init +3; Senses Listen +15, Spot +15 Languages Common, Goblin	
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 15; Dodge (+3 Dex, +4 armor, +1 deflection) hp 28 (8 HD) Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +8	

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares); Run
Melee mwk spear +6/+1 (1d8–1/×3)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +10 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 14, Cha 14

Feats Alertness^B, Dodge, Run, Track

Skills Jump +8, Knowledge (geography) +12, Knowledge (nature) +14, Listen +15, Profession (cartographer) +13, Profession (guide) +13, Search +12, Spot +15, Survival +13 (+15 avoid hazards or getting lost, +15 aboveground natural environments, +15 follow tracks)

Possessions combat gear plus +1 studded leather, masterwork spear, masterwork light crossbow with 20 bolts, *ring of protection* +1, *boots of striding and springing*, traveler's outfit, backpack, 3 days rations, waterskin, 4 torches, flint and steel, 3 maps of the region

Maddock and Family

If Maddock and his family still live (**Location 3**), and if the PCs helped them successfully in *A Dreadful Dawn*, the PCs can stay at the Laughing Badger at no charge for as long as they like. In fact, the characters never need to spend another coin at this inn for as long as Maddock owns it. Unfortunately, no one in the family has been keeping tabs on local happenings as they've been focused on rebuilding their lives. Although they may leave empty handed, Kent does mention to them that they should seek out Wallien, for the boy has been taking lessons from the wizard in the hopes of learning enough to protect his family. He says in somber tones, "Wallien is a great man, one of the greatest wizards to come to Erburg. He'll set this town aright, I'll warrant."

Mikken

Mikken (**Location 2**) puts on a good face, but he's as corrupt as they come. His association with the largest criminal syndicate in Silverus and his willingness to sell stolen goods makes him one of Erburg's worst citizens. However, he hides his villainy well, being friendly and pleasant to everyone who comes into his shop, even going so far as to offer a good discount to his customers.

Mikken doesn't know anything about the attack, but he senses an opportunity. Characters that approach him for information learn little, but if they reveal they are going to deal with the "undead" and are working for the mayor, Mikken's interested. Knowing the PCs are likely to come back to town with a great deal of wealth, he sets up an ambush for them when and if they return. It takes three days for him to recruit his thugs. See **Ambush** in **Chapter Five** for details.

Mother Yeag

The attacks on Erburg have shaken Mother Yeag (**Location 4**). After her inability to help at the Laughing Badger, she was one of the first citizens to leap to the town's defense. Fighting the zombies, though, has led her to question her faith. "I fear my god has abandoned me, for when I invoked his power, the zombies ignored me and continued to wreak havoc and kill with abandon."

Wallien

Although he has no proof, Wallien secretly believes that the zombies have something to do with the reason he left Silverus in the first place. He won't volunteer this information, but PCs who successfully intimidate him learn the following.

"Okay, okay. I'm not certain, but I suspect these zombies were sent for me. Why? I made some enemies in my former home. A colleague of mine, a dabbler in necromancy, had been plundering the catacombs beneath the city for months. Ordinarily, I wouldn't sully my hands by getting involved, but I feared for my friend's soul, for he began to change. I reported his activities to the guild. I don't know what happened, but my friend disappeared from the city. Two weeks later, I found my familiar murdered and a note of warning saying that I was next. Naturally, I fled and wound up here."

The attack on the village has nothing to do with Wallien, but it serves as a potential red herring and an adventure seed for further adventures, if desired. Characters trying to follow up on this lead find next to nothing, although you might plant ideas in the players' heads if you'd like.

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Event 3: Town Hall

Concerned PCs might take the initiative to find out what's going on, especially if they weren't around for the attack the previous night. Alternatively, if the characters helped out in defending the town, Ellen Dreifus sends a few guards to round them up and bring them to her. As the characters approach the Town Hall (see page 5), they overhear an argument coming from inside.

"You're a fool, Ellen! The gods have cursed this town, and nothing you do – aye, and no mercenaries paid with what's left of our coin – can change that."

"I'm not the one fool enough to stay in a town I believe doomed to die."

Rather than wait for an answer, the owner of the first voice—a half-orc dressed in splint armor—slams his way through the double doors and stalks down the steps. He pauses and eyes you warily for a moment, then, scowling, trudges up the street.

The half-orc is Heb, the mayor's top choice to command the watch. He's been reluctant to take the job, but current developments are nudging him forward. He ignores the PCs unless they stop him, in which case he berates them for their insolence and orders them to get out of town before they suffer the same doom it soon will.

The argument between Heb and the mayor is about the recent troubles. After the attack on the Laughing Badger and now this new threat, Heb believes the town lies under a curse. Ellen, the mayor, disagrees, and she points to Ceranir's silence as the source of the recent troubles. For now, though, these "zombies" must be dealt with before they attack again.

Once the PCs step inside the Town Hall, they find the mayor waiting for them.

Beyond the sturdy wooden doors of the Town Hall, you find the entrance, a long corridor with a polished wooden floor, high vaulted ceiling, and wooden walls from which hang portraits of haughty-looking lords and ladies. Standing in the center of the hall, looking a bit disheveled, is a woman wearing a long black dress. Her features, while attractive, look haunted. Her hair hangs about her face in disarray.

This is the mayor, Ellen Dreifus. She spots the PCs immediately, composes herself, and approaches them. She sticks out a hand and introduces herself. After the introductions, she leads the characters into her office, a small room dominated by a huge desk covered with papers, quills, ink pots, and a small bag of sand. In a cage hanging from the ceiling are six pigeons that coo and flap their wings as the PCs enter.

Ellen is friendly to the PCs and helpful if they were involved in saving the family at the Laughing Badger. She welcomes them, but wastes little time in getting down to business.

"Thanks for coming. I'm sure people in your line of work have had many of these sorts of meetings, but you'll have to forgive me - I've never hired adventurers before. As you may know, last night, Erburg fell under attack. A veritable army of undead set upon us, bent on slaughter and destruction. From reports around the town, the zombies killed their victims, picked them up, and headed back the way they came. Several of my soldiers were killed in the attack, leaving me with just a few capable men and women to protect Erburg in case of another attack, something many believe is inevitable.

"Some folks think that this town is cursed, what with the deplorable attack on Maddock and his family and with the troubles on the roads and forests, but I disagree. Something is going on, and I want you to find out what it is."

Lord Tylus wisely set aside 4,000 gp for such a problem and has authorized Ellen to use it to hire a group of capable adventurers. If Ellen is helpful to the PCs, she can go as high as 4,500 gp, making up the extra out of her own funds. The PCs may have some further questions, and Ellen is happy to answer to the best of her ability.

What attacked the village?

Zombies, or at least, they seemed like zombies. They were definitely dead, but they were far more coordinated and faster than others anyone here has heard about.

Where did they come from?

They entered the village from the northeast and spread out from there.

How many?

One or two score? Maybe more, maybe less. The reports are conflicted.

Were there any bodies?

The zombies we destroyed were committed to fire this morning lest they rise up and attack again.

Were they followed or Where did they go after the attack?

They headed back the way they came, back to the northeast. I sent out a few trackers, but none have yet returned. I'm beginning to fear the worst.

What happened at the Laughing Badger?

It was a tragedy. From what I can tell, a group of cultists dedicated to the violent God of Slaughter infiltrated Lord Tylus's tombs and set about to animate his family's remains. Why they stayed, no one is really sure, except that one night, they attacked and took over the Laughing Badger. They killed the bouncer and dragged the family to the cellars where they tortured them. A few guests rose up and defeated the cultists and saved the family. They later went down to the Tylus crypt and destroyed the cult.

Who's the half-orc?

Heb? He's a retired mercenary who has settled in Erburg. I've been trying to recruit him to take over the watch after the last watch commander failed to respond to the attack on the Laughing Badger. Unfortunately, Heb hasn't been interested in the job, though he might be coming around with this current mess. I must believe Heb loves Erburg, or he would have just picked up and moved on already.

What makes you think there will be another attack?

Well, I don't know for sure, but I cannot risk the innocent lives of the townsfolk by sending an expeditionary force into the forest, leaving the community defenseless. I'm working on recruiting a militia, but this takes time, and many people are frightened - for themselves and their families.



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Can you think of any other local experts on undead?

Certainly. I imagine Pordrus Olien would be your best source since he's a priest of the Death Goddess. He has a rather small following, having been unsuccessful in convincing people to his faith. I believe he has a small shrine on the east bank of the river. You should be able to pick it out with no trouble.

Consequences

If the characters accept the job, Ellen is relieved and thanks them. She encourages them to set out at once while it's still early. She gives them a credit that they may take to Mikken's Supplies to get whatever they need for the expedition. The writ gives them a 500 gp allowance. If the characters refuse the job, the feared attack occurs, but this time among the other faces, the villagers see loved ones and old friends, victims from the previous attack. The attacks continue each night, killing and capturing 2d% villagers until Erburg is emptied. During this time, many people flee to the Tylus Estate and other nearby villages. If the PCs still do nothing, the scourge spreads to other towns and villages, swelling the ranks of the shuffling iron zombies. What happens next is up to you, but the attacks will eventually escalate until the entire region is plunged into war.

Event 4: A Clandestine Meeting

This event occurs any time while the PCs are still in Erburg. As the characters go about their business, they hear "Psst. Psst! Here. Over here!" whispered from a dark alley. If they go to investigate, they see the following.

Huddled in the shadows is a thin man with gaunt features and greasy black hair plastered to his head. He wears black robes that blend in with the shadows cast by the buildings on either side of this narrow path. He's obviously nervous, but steps forward. Around his neck, hanging from a silver chain, you see an odd symbol depicting a grinning skull.

This man is Pordus Olien, the only priest of the Death Goddess in Erburg. He's frightened because of his suspicions, and worries that if they should become widely known, the village would lynch him. He introduces himself as Pordus, a humble priest of the Lady of Mystery. Characters succeeding on a DC 10 Knowledge (religion) check can identify the symbol as the sign of the Death Goddess.

He apologizes for the rude surroundings, smoothing his robes and looking about him while he talks.

"It's just that I have no choice. For you see, they'll kill me if they learned the truth." He stops for a second, considers what he just said and stammers, "Not that I've had anything to do with the attacks. I detest those necromancers who call upon the restless dead! Not all, though, share my abhorrence for such magic, and I suspect someone of my order may be behind these attacks."

The characters undoubtedly press him for more information, and he's clearly reluctant, as if he's mentally wrestling with his predicament. He finally coughs up what he called the PCs for in the first place.

"About five miles out of town—northeast...where the things went—there's an old temple of the Death Goddess. I've known about this place for months, but I haven't been able...haven't found the time to investigate. But I've been having dreams. Nightmares really. They fill my mind with awful visions of this sacred place being used for villainy. You must understand that most folks are afraid of the Mistress. I suppose with good reason. I am not a pillar of courage, as I'm sure you can see. But I have been charged with spreading the word of my goddess to Erburg. If it became known that the goddess might be involved somehow... well I'm sure you could imagine what the people here would do to me. Please, let's keep this to ourselves. I want these attacks to stop as badly as you do, but I cannot allow the Lady's name to be drawn into a scandal. I'm sure you understand?"

PORDRUS

CR 1

Male human cleric of the Death Goddess 1

LN Medium humanoid

Init +2; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Celestial, Common, Draconic

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 10 (+2 Dex)

hp 4 (1 HD)

Fort +4, Ref +2, Will +5

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee mwk quarterstaff +0 (1d6–1)

Ranged dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)

Base Atk +0; Grp –1

Special Actions death touch 1/day (1d6), turn undead 2/day (–1, 2d6, 1st)

Combat Gear arcane scroll of mage armor, magic missile, shield, oil of invisibility, wand of shocking grasp (25 charges)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 1st):

1st—cause fear (DC 14)^D, hide from undead, sanctuary (DC 14)

0—detect magic, guidance, resistance

D: Domain spell. Domains: Death, Magic

Abilities Str 9, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 14, Wis 16, Cha 8

SQ employ arcane spell completion items (1st), faint aura of law

Feats Great Fortitude, Skill Focus (Profession: mortician)^B

Skills Concentration +4, Heal +7, Knowledge (religion) +6, Listen +3, Profession (mortician) +10, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork quarterstaff, dagger, silver holy symbol

Moving Forward

Once the PCs feel as though they have adequately prepared themselves and know where they're headed, proceed to **Chapter Two: Into the Forest**.

Chapter II: Into the Forest

Armed with information gained from the villagers in Erburg, the adventurers are ready to set out, find out who's behind the attack, and prevent further attacks on the village. This chapter describes the journey to the temple, starting with some general information about the countryside before moving on to discuss the exploration of the deep forest, wherein the Temple of the Death Goddess waits.

Setting Out

Whether the characters rashly set out after the iron zombies and track them to their lair or spend time investigating the facts in the village to get an idea about where the attack came from, the journey is the same. The temple is about 12 miles away, through light forest and then into dense forest. The characters move as fast as the slowest character, so PCs with a speed of 20 feet cover 2 miles per hour, and those moving at 30 feet cover 3 miles per hour. In areas of light forest, they move at half speed (1 mph or 1-1/2 mph), and in areas of dense forest, they move at quarter

speed (1/2 mph or 3/4 mph). Assuming the PCs travel by the most direct route, they should reach the temple after about 17 hours of constant walking for a speed of 20 feet or 11-1/2 hours for walking at a speed of 30 feet. Horses can speed this up through the light forest, but they are useless in the dense woods.

Directions

If the characters follow directions picked up from Pordrus or Druella, they do not have to fear getting lost until they enter the forest. Once inside, the lead character must make a DC 15 Survival check every hour to maintain her bearings (make these rolls in secret). In case of a failure, the PCs are entitled to another Survival check (DC 20, –1 per hour of wandering). On a success, the characters realize they've lost their way and can reset their course by succeeding on a new Survival check (DC 15 +2 per hour spent moving lost). For more information, check out **Getting Lost** in **Chapter 3: Adventuring** of the DMG.

Following the Tracks

Without directions, the characters are left with the tracks to lead them to their destination. In addition to the risk of getting lost, they have to keep a careful eye out for tracks. The tracks are clear in the fields, but they become harder to follow once the PCs enter the woods. The base DC is 10 for firm ground, modified by their numbers. Every day that passes from the night of the attack increases this DC by +1. Furthermore, each day, roll for random weather as described under **Weather** in **Chapter 3: Adventuring** of the *DMG* (the adventure assumes temperate climate, though the season is up to you). Each hour of rain increases the DC by +1. Since the forest is dense, snow cover only increases the DC by +5.

Guide

If the PCs secured Jemine's help in finding the temple, they don't need to worry about tracking or getting lost, since she knows exactly where the temple lies. She also reduces the chances for random encounters (see following).

Random Encounters

The route to the Temple is not without peril, as these woods hide many strange and terrifying creatures. Each hour the PCs travel, they have a 5% chance of triggering a random encounter (3% if accompanied by Jemine). Should an encounter result, roll or select one from **Table 2–1**. Each encounter should occur just once, so re-roll duplicate results.

Assassin Vine

This malevolent plant hangs its tendrils from the canopy in the hopes of ensnaring a meal.

Giant Constrictor Snake

This dangerous predator looks for easy prey.

Iron Zombies

A mob of lost and confused iron zombies lash out at any living creature they encounter.

Troblins

These strange creatures hunt for elf flesh. They are hostile, but if the PCs do not include any elves and they manage to improve their attitudes to indifferent or better, the troblins offer to lead the characters to the temple.

Owlbear

This monstrosity is half-starved, having just awoken from hibernation.

Aulk

One of top hunters in the forest, this troll has become more brazen in its attacks. It prowls the forests in searching of people to kill and eat or eat and kill.

Fighting in the Woods

When running combats in the forest, you should keep track of the following special rules.

Trees

A creature standing in the same square as a tree gains a +2 bonus to Armor Class and a +1 bonus on Reflex saves (these bonuses don't stack with cover bonuses from other sources). The presence of a tree doesn't otherwise affect a creature's fighting space, because it is assumed the creature is using the tree to its advantage when it can. The trunk of a typical tree has AC 4, hardness 5, and 150 hp. A DC 15 Climb check is sufficient to climb a tree.

Massive trees take up an entire square and provide cover to anyone behind them. They have AC 3, hardness 5, and 600 hp. Like their smaller counterparts, it takes a DC 15 Climb check to climb them.

Undergrowth

Vines, roots, and short bushes cover much of the ground in a forest. A space covered with light undergrowth costs 2 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment. Undergrowth increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 2 because the leaves and branches get in the way. Heavy undergrowth costs 4 squares of movement to move into, and it provides concealment with a 30% miss chance (instead of the usual 20%). It increases the DC of Tumble and Move Silently checks by 5. Heavy undergrowth is easy to hide in, granting a +5 circumstance bonus on Hide checks.

Wild Elf Warriors

These elves are murderous, bent on killing the troblins that raided their tree-top village. They carry a number of troblin scalps on their belts. They question the PCs briefly to see if they've encountered any such creatures and then move off. They know nothing about the temple, though they have killed a few iron zombies.

Worgs

This pack of worgs hunts for meat, but is patient and careful. It stalks the PCs for a few miles before attacking, preferably at a time when their hands are full with another opponent.

Keyed Encounters

In addition to the threats of random encounters, many obstacles stand in the PCs' way. Each keyed encounter occurs sometime when the PCs enter the hex containing the encounter.

Table 2–1: Random Encounters

Roll	Creature	EL	Reference
01–15	1 assassin vine	3	See <i>MM</i> for statistics
16–20	1 giant constrictor snake	5	See <i>MM</i> for statistics
21–70	1d8 iron zombies	2–8	See Appendix I: New Monsters for statistics
75–82	1d4+1 troblins	2–7	See Appendix I: New Monsters for statistics
83–88	1 owlbear	4	See <i>MM</i> for statistics
89–92	Aulk	5	See page 12 for statistics
93–96	1d8+1 wild elf warriors	1–4	See <i>MM</i> for statistics
97–100	1d4+1 worgs	2–7	See <i>MM</i> for statistics

- Chapter II: Into the Forest -

A. Ghostly Mutters (EL 11)

Just as the forest thickens, the PCs come upon a small clearing. If the characters have been traveling for a while or got a late start, this might be a good place to camp.

Light filters through the canopy here, illuminating a broad clearing. Clumps of grass eke out an existence near the center, standing like lonely citadels against the encroachment of the arboreal. Even these bastions seem to have suffered, as patches of grass have been smashed to the soil by some heavy tread. Nonetheless, a comforting stillness hangs over the clearing.

During the day, the clearing is empty, but at night, the characters receive a visitor.

Creatures

Sarios is not a true ghost, but rather a spirit separated from its time-frozen body. As such, he is immune to all attacks, turn undead attempts, and more or less anything, functioning as a *project image* spell. He hopes to rectify the situation by freeing his body from the malfunctioning summoning circle (see **Room 3–12**), but he needs the assistance of living creatures to achieve this.

Tactics

Sarios makes *no* effort to attack living creatures, though his looming presence keeps most animals and simple beasts at bay. He stands to gain little by attacking the PCs, at least if they go closer to the temple. If the PCs turn around and head back to Erburg, Sarios may attempt to use his malevolence ability to possess a wizard or cleric who could free him. He attempts to control the character without tipping off the rest of the party, so you should roll the victim's save in secret and pass a note to the player if Sarios succeeds. Sarios generally uses the same tactics as his living host would.

If attacked, Sarios returns to the Ethereal Plane. He also flees as though turned should any cleric attempt to turn him, even if the turning check fails.

Development

Sarios's "ghost" never speaks. He beckons for the characters to follow him deeper into the woods, and leads them along the fastest path to the temple if they choose

to follow. However, he makes no attempt to warn them about (or aid them against) traps and monsters.

Sarios wants to be restored to the living world or, failing that, be given the chance to join his goddess in true death. He has no interest in the plight of Erburg or the PCs, but the latter offer him a chance to escape imprisonment.

Random encounters never occur in this area, and you should not count time spent here when determining if the PCs face such an encounter elsewhere in the forest. Thus, the PCs can rest here safely.

B. Green Pond (EL 7)

About two miles out from the temple, the PCs come upon a small pond covered by a thick layer of green algae. Lichen-covered trees press close to the area, and only a few gaps in the canopy overhead reveal the sky above. Aside from a few mossy stones peaking up on the shores of this watering hole, there doesn't seem to be much activity here.

Creatures

Hidden behind the trees and in the underbrush are Aulk the troll and 2 troblins. Aulk is a particularly lazy hunter, and so he waits here for the inevitable forest creature to come for a drink. His smaller companions join him, hoping for scraps.

TROBLIN	CR 2
Usually CE Medium monstrous humanoid (goblinoid) Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +2 Languages Goblin	
AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex , +2 armor , +2 natural) hp 22 (3 HD); regeneration 2 Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+3) and bite +1 (1d6+1) or Melee club +6 (1d6+3) and bite +1 (1d6+1) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +3; Grp +6	
Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 7 SQ mutation Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness Skills Hide +3, Listen +0, Move Silently +3, Spot +2 Possessions leather, club Regeneration (Su) Acid and fire deal normal damage to a troblin. If a troblin loses a limb, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump. Mutation (Ex) No two troblins are exactly alike, largely due to the uncertain nature of their regeneration ability. All troblins have one mutation, as determined by rolling on the table in Appendix I . Furthermore, whenever a troblin takes a critical hit, it has a 25% of gaining an additional mutation. See Appendix I for a complete list of mutations.	

RAGING AULK	CR 6
Male troll barbarian 1 CE Large giant Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +12, Spot +11 Languages Giant	
AC 15, touch 10, flat-footed 12 (–1 size , +3 Dex , +5 natural , –2 rage) hp 83 (7 HD); regeneration 5 Fort +15, Ref +5, Will +6	
Spd 40 ft. (8 squares) Melee 2 claws +14 (1d6+10) and bite +9 (1d6+5) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. Base Atk +5; Grp +19 Atk Options rage 1/day, rend 2d6+12 Combat Gear 3 <i>potions of cure light wounds</i> , <i>potion of greater magic fang</i> +1	



- Chapter II: Into the Forest -

Abilities Str 31, Dex 17, Con 27, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 4

Feats Alertness, Iron Will, Track

Skills Climb +11, Hide —1, Listen +12, Spot +11, Survival +1, Swim +11

Possessions combat gear plus 20 gp

Rage: When not raging, Aulk uses the following statistics:

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 14

hp decrease by 14

SV Fort +13, Will +4

Melee claw +12 (1d6+8) or **Melee** 2 claws +12 (1d6+8) and bite +7 (1d6+4)

Grp +17

Abilities Str 27, Con 23

Skills Climb +9, Swim +9

Rend (Ex): If Aulk hits with both claw attacks, he automatically deals an additional 2d6+12 points of damage.

Tactics

Aulk usually lurks under the water, since he can remain completely submerged for more than four minutes at a time without danger. Because he can crouch just below the surface and emerge without being impeded by the water, he uses his first action to charge any character that approaches the water. Once engaged in melee, he rends the character he selected as his prey.

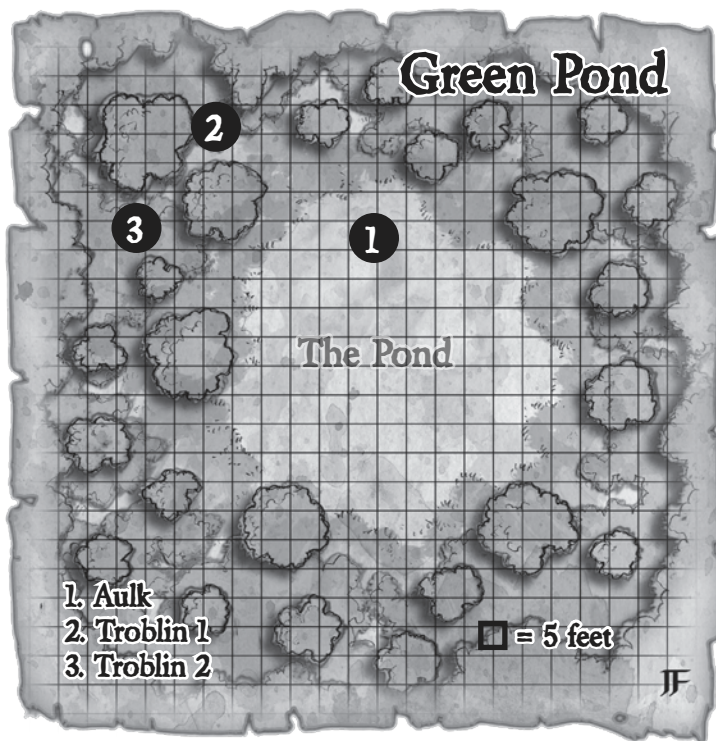
Unless faced with a fire- or acid-using opponent, Aulk shows no fear, attacking until knocked out. If menaced by attacks capable of negating his regeneration, however, he uses the pond, ducking underwater to avoid thrown weapons and submerging himself to escape fire damage.

If hard-pressed, Aulk swims to his potion stash and drinks a *potion of greater magic fang* +1.

The troblins sweep around the battlefield to get flanks on characters that Aulk attacks. Failing this, they simply attack the closest opponents. If Aulk goes down, the surviving troblins flee.

Development

Aulk cares nothing for either the temple or Erburg; he simply wishes to make a meal of any passerby. The troll prefers live prey and leaves the iron zombies alone unless



attacked by them. If one or more PCs speak Giant, they may be able to pacify and communicate, or even cooperate, with Aulk. He is untrustworthy and paranoid, but smart enough to see when helping the PCs is better for him than devouring them. He finds bribes of food or weapons particularly interesting.

Treasure

Aulk keeps a stash taken from previous victims hidden in the reeds on the far bank. A DC 25 Spot or DC 20 Search check reveals whatever potions he did not consume in the battle and a ratty sack of gold with 20 gp inside.

Chapter III: The Ruined Temple

After miles of hiking through the woods and contending with the dangers found therein, the PCs eventually come upon the ruined temple and, presumably, the source of the recent attack. A tangle of undergrowth conceals much of the crumbling ruin. All around, the trees press in close, as if desperate to swallow this structure, yet somehow prevented from doing so.

1–1. Clearing (EL 7+)

Light: The lighting depends on the time of day and weather.

Sound: The usual forest sounds are not present. A DC 11 Listen check (–1 penalty for each 10 feet of distance) reveals the sounds of movement coming from the area designated with an “X” on the corresponding map.

Buried beneath a mass of vines and close-hanging branches, covered with moss and grime, is an edifice of dark stone that looms in the woods. It appears to be some sort of temple, but whatever runes or sigils may have once dedicated it to a particular god has long decayed. One of the small towers rising from either side of its doors has collapsed upon itself, while the other stands, black and silent against the sky, as though issuing some unspoken challenge. The front arch is open; the rotten ruins of wood cluttering the ground in front of it.

The open archway in the front of the structure leads to the antechamber of the ruined temple.

Traps

Just inside the clearing is a concealed pit. The troblins dug the pit to snare prey. Naturally, since no animals come near here, they’ve had little success.

CAMOUFLAGED PIT TRAP

CR 4

Search DC 22; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** manual

Trigger Location

Melee 1d4 spikes +10 (1d4+4/×2)

Effect Reflex DC 20 or fall deals 2d6 damage plus spikes.

Disarm Disable Device DC 17

Creatures

Arneus instructed 3 **iron zombies** to defend the entrance to the ruined temple.

Iron Zombie Humans (3): hp 25 each, see **Appendix I** for statistics.

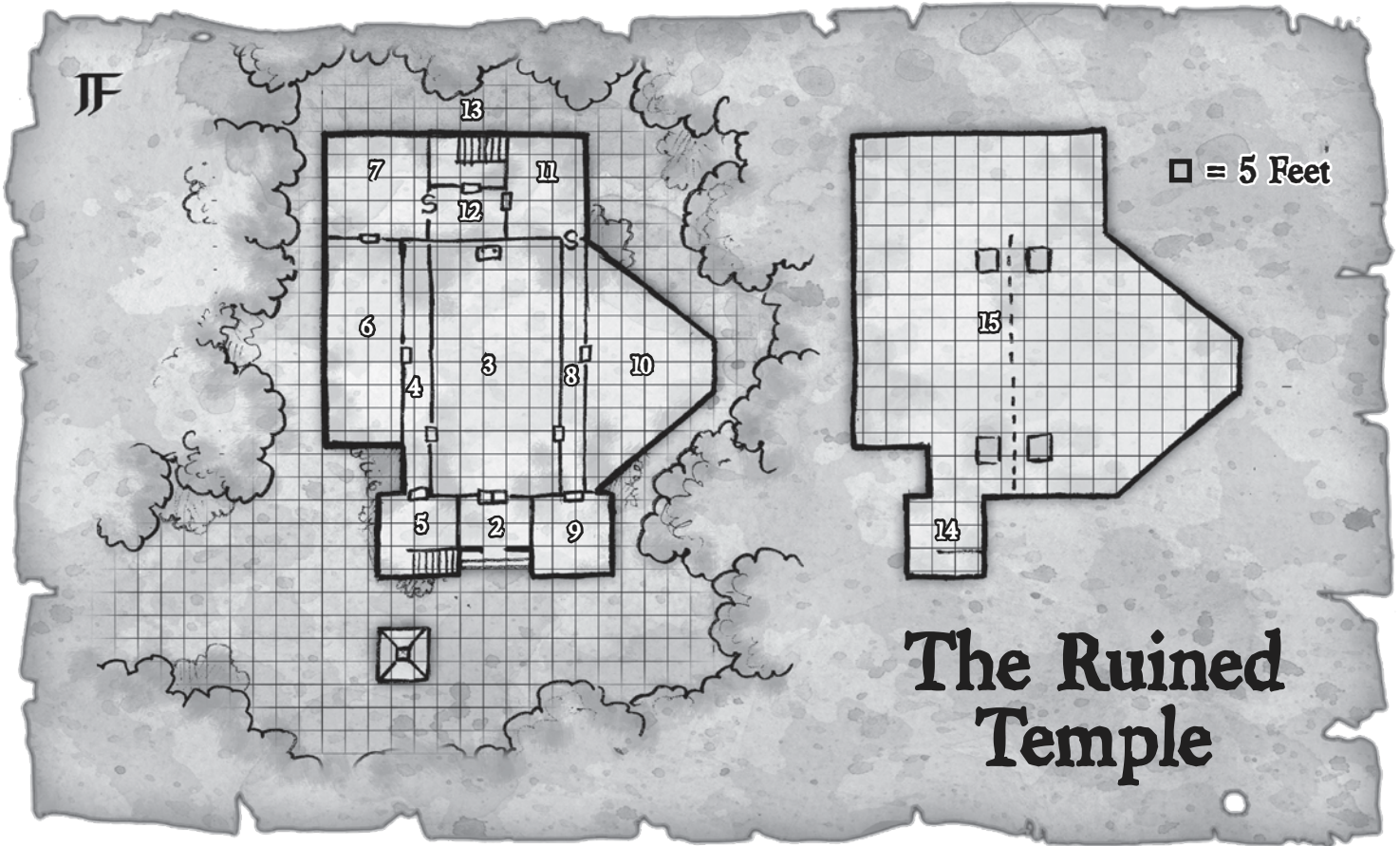
Tactics

The iron zombies fight until destroyed.

Development

If Aulk—the troll from **Chapter Two**—is alive, he may investigate the sounds of battle. For every round of combat after the first, have the troll attempt a DC 20 Listen check. Particularly loud actions, such as a *shout* spell or a raging barbarian’s battle cry, may give Aulk a +2 or even +4 bonus to his check, at your discretion. If he succeeds on the check, Aulk arrives in 1d4+1 rounds and attacks the first creature he sees.

- Chapter III: The Ruined Temple -



In addition, if the battle lasts more than 4 rounds, roll once on **Table 2-1: Random Encounters**. If the rolled encounter is not iron zombies, ignore it. However, if the rolled encounter is iron zombies, add those zombies as reinforcements.

If Sarios is with the party, he returns to the Ethereal Plane and departs as soon as they enter. He fears if he approaches the summoning circle where his body lies trapped, his spirit may be imprisoned as well.

1-2. Antechamber

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This cramped, vine-choked room is small. Its low ceiling barely caps squat windows whose shards of long-broken glass glitter among the creeper vines and moss. Metal frames, twisted by age and ill-use, hint at the strange forms the windows once housed. A graveyard stench fills the room.

A DC 22 Knowledge (religion) check identifies the symbols in the metal frames as those of the Goddess of Death. Clerics of the goddess get a +4 bonus on this check, but they must make the check anyway, since the symbols have fallen out of use in the intervening centuries.

Heavy wooden doors bar the way to **Room 1-3**. The doors are locked from the inside. These were once strong wooden doors, but time and moisture have weakened them considerably.

Temple Doors: Hardness 5; 15 hp; Open Lock DC 25, break DC 18

1-3. Chapel (EL 6)

Light: Shadowy. Light leaks through shattered skylights in the roof. At night, this room is dark.

Sound: A DC 25 Listen check reveals some faint scratching noises coming from the roof. These are from the spider that makes its lair in **Room 1-14**.

Moss covers the stone walls of this large chamber. Rotten remains of three rows

of wooden pews litter the floor. A stone altar squats on the raised dais at the far end of the chapel. Whatever decoration this room and altar may have once had apparently decayed years ago. Grime covers everything.

This room once served as the chapel. Little remains of its former splendor.

Traps

The altar itself is trapped. Anyone approaching it without speaking the proper command word (or disabling the trap) is subjected to a *flame strike* spell. The trap is easier to find than normal because an unfortunate druid or animal triggered it during the attack on the temple, leaving a burned area in the sanctuary. If a PC notices the burned area (DC 10 Spot check) and specifically avoids it, he gains a +4 bonus on his Search check and on his Reflex save to avoid damage if he triggers the trap.

FLAME STRIKE TRAP

CR 6

Search DC 30; Type Magical; Reset Automatic

Trigger Proximity

Effect As *flame strike* (Reflex DC 17 half, CL 9th)

Disarm Disable Device DC 30; Bypass command word (*Finitas*)

Development

Because there are more and clearer religious symbols here than in the antechamber, characters require only a DC 18 Knowledge (religion) check to identify them as those of the Death Goddess. Again, that goddess's clergy get a +4 bonus on their check.

There are wooden doors on the east and west walls. Empty skylights pierce the ceiling, and beneath them are old leaves, broken glass, and rubble.

Treasure

Characters examining the altar and succeeding on a DC 15 Search check find two golden candlesticks on the floor, buried beneath some debris. Each is worth 150 gp. Those PCs succeeding by 5 or more also find a small platinum icon of the

- Chapter III: The Ruined Temple -

temple's goddess that is worth 600 gp. (The icon is worth half again its normal value if returned to one of the goddess's active temples.)

1-4. West Passage

Light: None.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check made at the door to **Room 1-6** lets the character hear a metallic creaking noise from the decaying iron zombies milling about there.

This hallway is dank, dark, and partly collapsed on the north end. A wooden door stands on the west wall, and another stands at the end of the corridor to the south.

A pile of rubble buries the northernmost 10 feet. A DC 25 Search or DC 30 Spot check reveals the floor has also partially collapsed. Characters can clear away sufficient rubble by succeeding on a DC 22 Strength check to reach **Room 2-6**. Up to four characters can assist, and they add a cumulative +2 bonus for each that succeeds on a DC 10 Strength check.

1-5. West Watchtower

Light: None.

Sound: A DC 15 Listen check reveals faint scratching noises coming from the roof. These are from the spider that makes its lair in **Room 1-14**.

This room was once an armory.

Aside from a wooden staircase leading up and an old weapon rack that holds a couple of crossbows and pole-arms, this filthy room is empty.

The stairs are covered in slime and moss, and choked with webs. They follow a tight circle, all the way up to a trap door in the ceiling. Characters that succeed on a DC 10 Spot check sense fresh air wafting down through the trapdoor.

Treasure

The weapon rack on the far wall contains three masterwork heavy crossbows and three glaives.

1-6. Refectory (EL 4)

Light: None.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check made at the door to **Room 1-7** lets the character hear a rustling noise made by the iron zombie war dog that moves about there.

This 40 foot long room once served as the temple's refectory. It now guards the 'kitchen' and the secret door to the lower regions, and so has older iron zombies stationed in it as defenders.

The charnel stench hanging over the temple is stronger here. The remains of wooden tables litter the floor, mingling with the dust, weeds, and vines.

The creatures move to attack when the door opens.

Creatures

The **4 iron zombies** here guard against spider or animal attacks, but they fight PCs just as readily. Because these zombies have been dead for close to six months and are reaching the limits of Arneus's ability to preserve them, they are somewhat weaker than typical iron zombies, having minimum hit points and taking a -2 penalty to attacks, damage rolls, saves, and checks.

Weakened Iron Zombie Human (4): hp 21 each, see **Appendix I** for statistics.

Development

Because their orders command otherwise, the stronger iron zombies from **Room 1-7** never come to assist.

1-7. Kitchen (EL 6)

Light: None.

Sound: None.

Arneus uses this 20 foot square room to store newly acquired bodies because it's close to the secret entrance to the lower levels and reasonably cool and dry. Leaving

bodies here also explains the presence of guards, which he hopes discourages further investigation.

This room, crowded with high counters and rusted hanging chains with savage hooks, seems to be the source of the foul smell clinging to the temple. Three human corpses hang limply from the hooks in the ceiling, as though meat for some grim feast.

The creatures in this room are under orders to kill any intruders.

Creatures

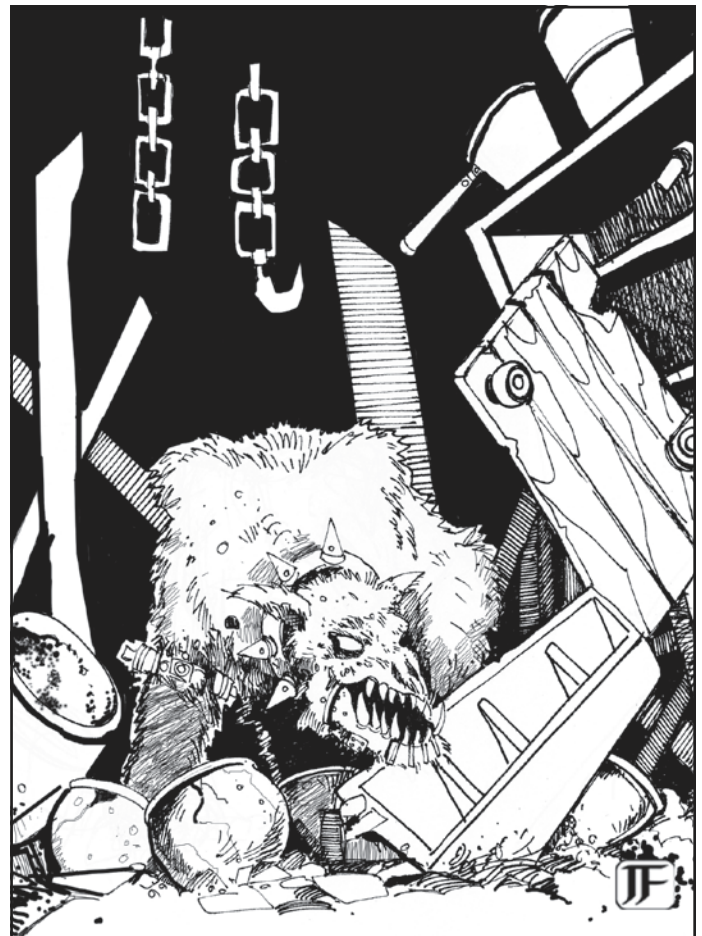
Before the characters can accomplish any searching or burial, they must deal with the **2 iron zombies** and an **iron zombie war dog** guarding the chamber.

Iron Zombie Humans (3): hp 25 each, see **Appendix I** for statistics.

IRON ZOMBIE WAR DOG	CR 3
N Medium construct	
Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0	
AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural) hp 31 (2 HD); DR 5/adamantine	
Immune construct immunities	
Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0	
Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)	
Melee bite +6 (1d6+7) or slam +6 (1d6+7)	
Base Atk +1; Grp +6	
Atk Options magic strike	
Abilities Str 21, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1	
Skills Listen +0, Spot +0	

Tactics

These zombies attack the nearest living creature until slain.



- Chapter III: The Ruined Temple -

Development

The only apparent exit from this room is the door back to **Room 1–6**, but a locked secret door to **Room 1–12** is nestled in the eastern wall, buried beneath a stack of corpses. A DC 24 Search check reveals the hidden door.

Secret Door: Hardness 8; 90 hp; break DC 25; Open Locks DC 25.

1–8. East Hallway

Light: None.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check made near the northern end of the corridor reveals the faint sound of someone muttering. The dread allip insanely flutters about that chamber (**1–11**) lamenting its fate.

This hallway is a mirror of the western one, except the north end is intact.

In place of the carnal stench that pervades this ruin, there's a thick musty odor. A mournful wind whispers from the northern stretch of the corridor.

A secret door (Search DC 20) at the north end of the hall opens to **Room 1–11**. This door is unlocked because Arneus prefers not to send his minions near Liare's lair.

1–9. Collapsed Tower

Light: None.

Sound: A DC 5 Listen check reveals a faint creaking of the rubble.

This room was once a tower, but it collapsed during the druids' attack.

This room appears to have once been a watchtower, but the roof has collapsed, filling the staircase with rubble.

The rubble could conceivably be cleared away (allowing characters and, possibly, iron zombies to climb to the roof), but nothing of interest lies beyond it.

1–10. Prayer Room (EL 7)

Light: Depends on time of day. During the day, faint light glimmers through stained glass windows, shrouding the room in shadowy light. At night, it's dark.

Sound: A DC 30 Listen check reveals the sound of faint muttering coming from the northern end of the hall (**Room 1–8**).

This room once served as a place of reflection and quiet for the temple's priests.

While the whole temple complex seems to be home to innumerable roots, vines, molds, and fungi, this chamber, which tapers off to a shattered stained glass window on its east wall, seems to be the heart of the infestation. Plant life almost completely covers this room, crowned by a tangle of particularly thick vines, mottled gray-brown.

This room is overgrown by plants and, in particular, a carnivorous one.

Creatures

A monstrosity old and powerful assassin vine lurks here. Arneus and his creations avoid this side of the temple to keep from antagonizing it.

OLD ASSASSIN VINE	CR 6
N Huge plant Init –1; Senses blind-sight 30 ft., low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +2	
AC 16, touch 7, flat-footed 16 (–2 size, –1 Dex, +9 natural) hp 85 (9 HD) Immune electricity Resist cold 10 and fire 10 Fort +11, Ref +2, Will +4	
Spd 5 ft. (1 square) Melee slam +13 (2d6+13) Space 15 ft.; Reach 15 ft. Base Atk +6; Grp +23 Atk Options constrict 2d6+13, entangle, improved grab	

Abilities Str 28, Dex 8, Con 20, Int —, Wis 14, Cha 9

SQ camouflage, plant traits

Skills Listen +2, Spot +2

Constrict (Ex) An assassin vine deals 2d6+13 points of damage with a successful grapple check.

Entangle (Su) An assassin vine can animate plants within 30 feet of itself as a free action (Ref DC 16 partial). The effect lasts until the vine dies or decides to end it (also a free action). The save DC is Wisdom-based. The ability is otherwise similar to *entangle* (caster level 4th).

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, an assassin vine must hit with its slam attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can constrict.

Camouflage (Ex) Since an assassin vine looks like a normal plant when at rest, it takes a DC 20 Spot check to notice it before it attacks. Anyone with ranks in Survival or Knowledge (nature) can use one of those skills instead of Spot to notice the plant.

Tactics

If not spotted, the assassin vine lies in wait until three or more creatures have come within 30 feet of it. It activates its entangle ability as soon as any creature tries to leave that radius and then strikes with its powerful slam attack.

Development

The assassin vine slew Liare Irnya, the temple's junior priestess, during the druids' attack. The creature has long since digested her body, but her spirit persists as a dread allip at **Area 1–11**. Slaying the assassin vine would alleviate her illogical terror of the rest of the temple, setting her free to roam this entire level, but it might also allow the PCs to reason with her.

Treasure

Liare's +1 *ghost touch dagger* is buried in the pulpy bark of the assassin vine. A DC 15 Search check locates it.

1–11. Hidden Vestibule (EL 7)

Light: Dark.

Sound: When first entered, a DC 10 Listen check reveals the sound of faint muttering echoing throughout the chamber.

This chamber served as a vestibule.

This secluded chamber seems to have been a vestibule for the priests of this temple. Cabinets line the northern and eastern walls, and a long-faded and blackened icon hangs beside the western door. The outline of some god or champion seems almost to have been burned into the icon's surface, distinct from the rest of the moldy canvas. The air is clearer here than in the rest of the temple, yet strangely cold.

A restless spirit now lairs here. The secret door from **Room 1–8** is plainly visible on this side. Another door stands on the west wall.

Creatures

Liare Irnya lacked the personal power to become a ghost, but she now haunts the vestibule as a dread allip. Even in death, she suffers from a pathological fear of the assassin vine that claimed her life, so she secludes herself in this chamber.

LIARE IRNYA	CR 7
Female dread allip* cleric 4 *Advanced Bestiary CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid, incorporeal) Init +6; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5 Languages Common, Elven	
AC 18, touch 18, flat-footed 16 (+2 Dex, +6 deflection) hp 29 (4 HD) Immune undead immunities Fort +4, Ref +3, Will +7	
Spd fly 30 ft. (perfect) Melee incorporeal touch +5 (1d6 Wis drain)	

- Chapter III: The Ruined Temple -

Base Atk +3; Grp —

Special Actions babble, command allips, create spawn, death touch (touch +5, 4d6), dominating trample, rebuke undead 9/day (+8, 2d6+4, 4th)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th):

2nd—*darkness* (melee touch +5), *death knell* (DC 15)^D, *eagle's splendor*, *hold person* (DC 15)

1st—*bane* (DC 14), *cause fear* (DC 14)^D, *command* (DC 14), *doom* (DC 14), *obscuring mist*

0—*detect magic*, *guidance*, *inflict light wounds* (×2) (melee touch +5, DC 13), *resistance*

D: Domain spell. Domains: Death and Magic

Abilities Str —, Dex 15, Con —, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 22

SQ turn resistance +4

Feats Combat Reflexes^B, Improved Initiative, Toughness

Skills Concentration +2, Diplomacy +15, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +5, Spot +5

Babble (Su) All creatures within 60 feet must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be affected as though by a *hypnotism* spell for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting, compulsion effect. Creatures that save cannot again be affected by this ability for 24 hours. In order for Liara to cast spells, she must suppress this ability, which she may do as a free action. The babble effect resumes at the start of her next turn.

Command Allips (Su) Liara automatically commands normal allips within 30 feet as a free action.

Create Spawn (Su) Creatures slain while dominated by Liara rise as a dread allip in 1d6 rounds if they committed suicide, died fulfilling an obviously self-destructive command, or had a 0 Wisdom and were within 30 feet of the dread allip at the time of death. The new allip is under the command of its creator. If you have Green Ronin's *Advanced Bestiary*, then the subject gains the dread allip template instead.

Dominating Trample (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, as a standard action, Liara may take a single move in a straight line. Any creature she moves through may take an attack of opportunity or attempt a DC 18 Reflex save to avoid the attack. Subjects failing to avoid the dominating trample must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become controlled as per the *dominate monster* spell. Those who succeed on the Will save cannot again be affected by this ability for 24 hours. Liara can give simple commands as noted in the spell's description as well as commanding creatures to "commit suicide." If she gives this command, the subject is entitled to another Will save (at a +15 circumstance bonus) to break her control. Failure means the creature must perform a coup de grace attack on itself on its next action. Each subsequent round, the subject may attempt a new save (though only at a +5 circumstance bonus).

Madness (Su) Any creature targeting Liara with a thought-detecting, mind-control, or telepathic effect automatically takes 1d6 points of Wisdom damage, though the effect otherwise works normally.

Tactics

If she has time to prepare, Liara casts *eagle's splendor* prior to combat, increasing the DCs of all of her supernatural abilities by +2. Once combat begins, she's well aware of the power clerics and similar characters have over her undead form, so she focuses her attacks against divine spellcasters first. If none are present, she targets arcane spellcasters. She uses dominating trample first, and if she succeeds, she orders the dominated subject to help her attain flanks. Once she reduces a character to 0 Wisdom, she instructs her slave to kill the victim, before retreating into the walls. There she waits for her victim to transform into an allip. If the opponent's allies prevent this, she resumes her attack. She uses a mixture of spells, but only if her babble proves to have no effect. She uses *hold person* and *darkness* to improve her chances to create additional allips and reserves *obscuring mist* in case she faces a particularly powerful party.

Regardless of all other considerations, Liara hurls herself at anyone carrying her magic dagger and only halts her assault if turned or rebuked, or offered her weapon.

Development

Liara usually allows characters to pass unmolested during the daylight hours. However, if they inspect the cabinets containing hers and Sarios's vestments, or if



one of them carries her dagger from **Room 1–10**, she attacks the offender. Liara always attacks characters entering this chamber at night.

If the PCs pacify Liara or otherwise hold her at bay (with a successful rebuke attempt, for instance), she babbles insanely about the 'arms' choking her (a reference to the assassin vine) and how she stabbed it. The PCs can persuade her to communicate with a DC 30 Diplomacy check. A cleric of the same goddess gains a +4 competence bonus on this check, and any character who offers Liara her dagger gets a +4 circumstance bonus.

Liara is insanely preoccupied with her lost dagger and the plant responsible for her death; she begs PCs who manage to talk with her to slay the vine and reclaim her possession, provided they have not already done so. If they complete her task, Liara offers what information remains to her time-addled and darkened mind: namely that wicked druids attacked the temple without provocation and butchered the clergy and guards and that recently, an unknown intruder has taken up residence in the sacred ground.

No matter how successful the PCs' communication with Liara is, she refuses to provide any assistance other than information and attacks the PCs if they encounter her again. Worse, if they slay the assassin vine, Liara roams this entire level.

Treasure

The cabinets contain three gold-lined vestments (175 gp each) and four golden candlesticks similar to those on the altar (150 gp each). One of the vestments is, in effect, a *cloak of resistance* +1 marked with the goddess's symbol.

1–12. Hidden Antechamber (EL 5)

Light: Dark.

Sound: If the PCs haven't yet dealt with Liara in **Room 1–11**, they are entitled to a DC 20 Listen check to hear her babble. Those that succeed must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or be affected as described in that encounter location.

This hidden antechamber provides the only route down to the temple basement.

- Chapter III: The Ruined Temple -

This room is almost identical to the antechamber at the entrance to the temple, save for the placement of its doors. The northern door, however, looks different from the rest of the architecture. It is made from rough pig iron, beaten into a strong, functional shape, and it stands out against the crumbling ruin.

Characters standing in this room can clearly see the secret door to **Room 1–7**.

Traps

The door to **Room 1–13**, which Arneus installed after his arrival, cannot be properly locked. He has sealed it with a *hold portal* spell and placed a *fire trap* on it, hoping to deter intrusion. Unfortunately for Arneus, even with his spell, the door is barely attached to the badly eroded walls and can be easily broken down once the trap is either triggered or disabled.

Iron Door: Hardness 10; 60 hp; break DC 18

FIRE TRAP	CR 5
Search DC 29; Type Magical; Reset No reset Trigger Spell	
Effect as <i>fire trap</i> (CL 7th, Reflex DC 16 half)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 29	

1–13. Stairs Down

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

The stairs in this room lead down to **Room 2–1**.

Stairs descend into the darkness below, worn almost to a ramp by the tread of many—or heavy—feet and the trickle of water condensed into a miniature waterfall and running down the steps.

1–14. Watchtower Second Floor (EL 4)

Light: Depends on time of day. During the day, it's shadowy. At night, it's dark.
Sound: None.

A gap in the wall, choked with webbing, leads to the roof, **Room 1–15**.

Creatures

A large webspinner monstrous spider dwells here.

HORRID LARGE MONSTROUS SPIDER	CR 4
N Large vermin Init +3; Senses darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +4	
AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (–1 size, +3 Dex, +2 natural) hp 38 (7 HD) Immune mind-affecting effects Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +2	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft. Melee bite +6 (1d8+3 plus poison) Space 10 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +5; Grp +11 Atk Options poison (DC 14, initial and secondary 1d6 Str) Special Actions web 8/day (ranged touch +8, Escape Artist DC 14, Break DC 18)	

Abilities Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 2

SQ vermin traits

Skills Climb +11, Hide +3 (+11 in webbing), Jump +2, Move Silently +3 (+11 in webbing), Listen +0, Spot +4

Tactics

The spider usually squeezes into one 5 foot square unless it is attacking prey. It waits for one or more creatures to become stuck in its web, delaying an entire round to trap as many prey as possible. At the end of the round, it attacks and continues to fight until slain.

Development

The whole area is covered with decades of the spider's webbing, visible with a DC 18 Spot check. Each square has 12 hp and hardness 5, and requires either a DC 14 Escape Artist check or a DC 18 Strength check to escape. The webs automatically catch the first creature ascending the stairs. Webs choke the passage to **Room 1–15**.

Treasure

Webs shroud the body of the temple's guard captain. A DC 25 Spot or Search check (or by burning all of the webbing) reveals his mortal remains, along with his equipment. He carried a +1 *heavy crossbow*, a masterwork longsword, a breastplate, 32 crossbow bolts and 47 gp.

1–15. Temple Roof

Light: Depends on time of day.

Sound: None.

The roof is generally flat, though it peaks sharply above the chapel.

The roof of the temple seems in good repair. Beyond it lays the broad expanse of choking forest, impenetrable to the eye. Although heavily shadowed by the trees, the temple still receives more light than its grounds. The iron frame of a circular stained glass window opens onto the chapel.

The temple's roof provides refuge to characters who wish to escape the dangers of the temple for a while.

Development

The temple roof is the safest location on this level, bar none. Provided they maintain a watch, characters can rest and regain their strength here in relative security, at least for one night. If the players fail to recognize this, give their characters DC 20 Knowledge (dungeoneering) or Knowledge (architecture) checks to do so.

The roof spreads across the entire temple, including the secret **Rooms 1–11** and **1–12**, and clever players may notice the unaccounted for parts of the temple below. A DC 25 Knowledge (architecture) check also reveals this information.

The only ways up to the roof are through **Room 1–14** or through the skylights in **Room 1–3**. Arneus never sends his minions through **Room 1–14** for fear of losing them to the spider, and they cannot climb effectively through **Room 1–3**. Characters with adequate rope can lower themselves through the skylights into **Room 1–3**.

If a character explores the eastern edge of the roof, he may attract the attention of the old assassin vine at **Room 1–10**. It attacks only lone creatures on the roof, because its *entangle* ability cannot reach there.



Chapter IV: Temple Underground

The hidden temple's underground once housed an extensive magical library, as well as facilities for arming its defenders and summoning outsiders. Unlike the upper floor, it has survived assault and age mostly intact, and many of its non-human inhabitants remain very active.

Arneus's iron zombies pose significantly less danger to the characters on this floor, at least when compared to the defenses, which include several deadly traps. If the party has no rogue, consider weakening some of the traps accordingly.

Depending on the PCs' decisions, they may end up freeing the long-trapped combatants—Sarios Dorma and Kemahyr-Eral—from a malfunctioning summoning circle on this level. If they do so, and survive the ensuing battle, they might persuade one of these powerful NPCs to assist them for a time, though neither is trustworthy.

2-1. Stairs Up

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

The stairs here lead up to **Room 1-13**.

The stones grow wetter and moldier as you descend the stairs. At their base, a room opens on the right, with water that looks dark, dead, and ankle-deep covering its floor. Something appears to be moving beneath the surface.

Leeches dwell in the water condensed on this room's floor. They are unpleasant and somewhat painful, but, unless ignored for long periods, do little real harm.

Traps

Each round the PCs linger here, there is a 10% chance for each character to acquire a leech. To notice a leech, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Spot check, though inspection of the skin automatically reveals the offending vermin. A leech can be removed easily (a DC 10 Heal check, or with flame or knife). However, if left alone, the leeches deal 1d2 points of damage each hour.

2-2. North Underground Book Storage (EL 6)

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This chamber housed a variety of texts relevant to the study and understanding of various aspects of the Death Goddess.

Above the water, ringing the walls, are rows upon rows of mostly empty shelves. Rot and fire have left them in varying states of disrepair, but a few house heavy tomes. It appears this once served as a library of sorts.

The Death Goddess is also something of a goddess of magic, somehow linking the notion of death with the possibilities afforded by magic. As a result, her followers often included a number of necromancers and similar sorts who found arcane enlightenment through the revelations granted by this complex goddess.

Creatures and Traps

The books in this room are trapped. If a character touches one of them without finding and disabling the trap, the shelf and five of the books animate and attack.

ANIMATED OBJECTS TRAP	CR 6
Search DC 31; Type Magical; Reset No reset Trigger Touch	
Effect Triggered trap animates the shelf and 5 spellbooks	
Disarm Disable Device DC 31	
ANIMATED SHELF	CR 3
N Large construct Init +0; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen -5, Spot -5	

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14 (-1 size, +0 Dex, +5 natural)

hp 52 (4 HD); **Hardness** 5

Immune construct immunities

Fort +1, **Ref** +1, **Will** -4

Spd 20 ft. (4 squares)

Melee slam +5 (1d8+4)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +10

Abilities Str 16, Dex 10, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

ANIMATED SPELLBOOKS (5)

CR 1

N Tiny construct

Init +2; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen -5, Spot -5

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 12 (+2 size, +2 Dex)

hp 2 (1/2 HD); **Hardness** 3

Immune construct immunities

Fort +0, **Ref** +2, **Will** -5

Spd fly 20 ft. (clumsy)

Melee slam +1 (1d3-1)

Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.

Base Atk +0; **Grp** -9

Special Actions spell discharge

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con —, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1

Spell Discharge (Sp) Animated spellbooks typically contain 1d2+1 1st-level spells and 1d2 2nd-level spells. When the construct successfully strikes a target with a slam attack, the spellbook releases one of its spells as well (50% chance of 1st- or 2nd-level). The subject of the slam attack becomes the target of the spell, and the spell's parameters are as if the spell was cast by a 3rd level caster. Save DCs are 11 + the spell level. Once the spell is released, the spell is erased from the book.

Roll	1st-level spells	2nd-level spells
1	burning hands	acid arrow
2	cause fear	blindness/deafness
3	chill touch	darkness
4	color spray	daze monster
5	magic missile	hideous laughter
6	ray of enfeeblement	scare
7	shocking grasp	scorching ray
8	sleep	touch of idiocy

Tactics

Once animated, the books attack the nearest creature relentlessly until the spell's duration expires in 9 rounds.

Development

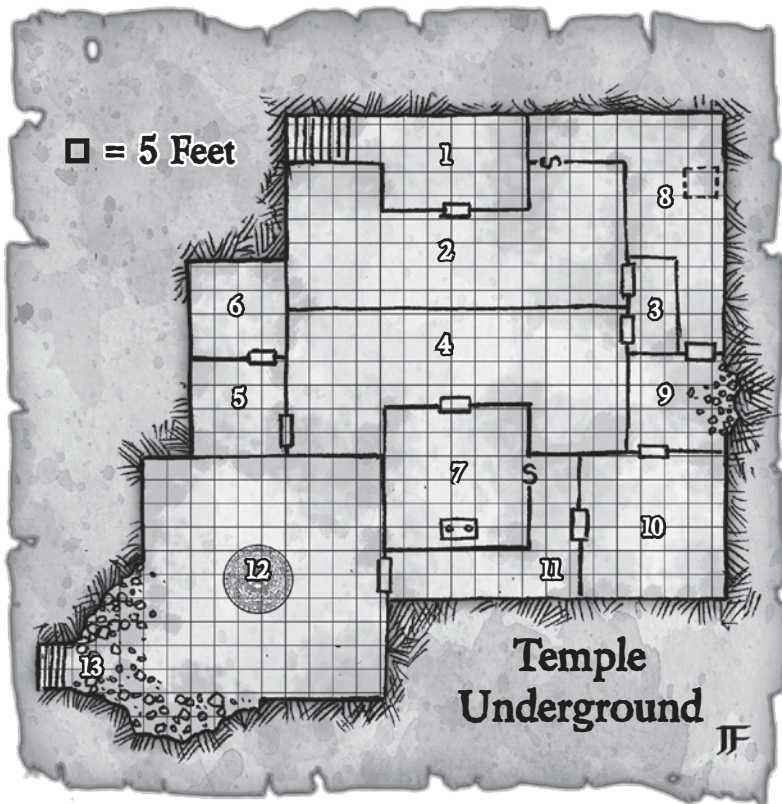
A secret door leading to **Room 1-8** has seen better days, namely those in which troops of iron zombies weren't making regular use of it. A DC 18 Search check reveals its presence. It is unlocked and not trapped.

Treasure

For every book destroyed here, the total value of the treasure is reduced. Characters who realize this (DC 16 Spellcraft check) may wish to wait out the duration of the *animate objects* spell or *dispel* it.

Seven spellbooks (each with 1d2+1 1st and 1d2 2nd level wizard spells) and 4 rare mundane books (100 gp each to collectors) sit on these shelves. For every animated book reduced to 0 or fewer hit points, reduce the total number of spellbooks by one.

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closes to melee only if no other option presents itself. If reduced to 15 hp or less, the libramite retreats to the Ethereal Plane, where it uses its *scroll of cure moderate wounds* while waiting for the proper time to strike.

Development

Despite its bizarre appearance, the libramite is not an evil creature. It only attacks those it perceives as being book thieves. If the characters are carrying any books from **Room 2–2**, the libramite manifests and attacks them without warning.

On the other hand, if the characters are dressed in the vestments from **Room 1–11**, or the party includes an actual cleric of the Death Goddess, the libramite manifests itself and, rather than attacking, offers to assist them. PCs thus garbed receive aid even if they are carrying books.

The libramite is the only real source of information the characters have on the fate of the temple and the nature of its inhabitants. The creature knows everything that transpired. The libramite asks the PCs to free Sarios if they can, and directs them to the *circle of protection* book on the altar at **Area 3–7** as a possible way to break the malfunctioning circle at **Room 3–12**.

If the characters neither carry books nor wear vestments, the libramite ignores them.

2–5. West Guard Room (EL 6)

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This chamber once served as a guard room to protect the temple's most valuable acquisitions, held in **Room 2–6**.

This room smells dry and dusty. It appears devoid of the moisture that plagues most of the temple's underground areas.

Although the original guards are long dead, a pair of extraplanar minions have laid claim to this chamber, presumably to perform the same task as their mortal antecedents. Even if they fail, the trap on the door should be more than sufficient to deal with unwanted guests.

Creatures

Hiding in the recesses of this room are **2 dust mephits**. They wait for a good chance to attack.

Dust Mephits (2): hp 13 each, see *MM* for statistics

Tactics

The mephits fight in concert, trying to weaken and bring down one enemy at a time, preferably a spellcaster. If hard-pressed, they call for the libramite's assistance and flee if it fails to materialize.

Traps

Sarios inscribed a powerful *glyph of warding* on the north door.

GLYPH OF WARDING	CR 6
Search DC 28; Type Magical; Reset No reset	
Trigger Spell	
Targets all within 5 ft.	
Effect As <i>glyph of warding</i> (blast) (CL 16th, 8d8 sonic, Reflex DC 16 half)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 28; Bypass password known only to Sarios	

Development

The door itself is locked and barred from the inside, making it easier to escape than to enter.

Temple Doors: Hardness 5; 20 hp; break DC 25; Open Lock DC 28

2–3. Switchback

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

The appearance of this hall is in a style popular with the clergy of the Death Goddess at the time of the temple's construction.

The dark stone hallway abruptly doubles back upon itself in a tight curve, as though some force bent it in two. Some of the odd, elongated masonry lies scattered upon the floor.

A DC 22 Knowledge (history) check may put PCs' minds at ease about this odd room, and allow them to date the temple as being between 250 and 300 years old. Knowledge (architecture) and Knowledge (religion) each offer a +2 synergy bonus to this check. These synergy bonuses stack.

2–4. South Underground Book Storage (EL 5)

Light: Dark.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check made at the door to **Room 2–5** reveals a faint giggling that stops abruptly with any loud noise.

This underground library is identical to **Room 2–2** except for the placement of its doors. Arneus triggered (and barely survived) the trap here to get at the more potent magical books, mistakenly believing he could find a *golem manual* among them.

Twin to the northern library in seemingly every respect, this large room is also full of shelves and books. Unlike the other, though, this one seems to have been ransacked already, an impression gleaned as much from the sense of violation and anger in the air as from the state of the disheveled shelves.

Creatures

The temple's libramite usually lurks in this chamber, partly to assist in the defense of **Area 2–6**, partly in the vain hope of recovering the books Arneus stole.

Libramite (1): hp 52, see *Appendix I* for statistics.

Tactics

This particular libramite carries a *wand of hold person* and a *wand of magic missile*. It emerges from the Ethereal Plane at a distance, fires its wands, and

2–6. Restricted Book Storage

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

When the temple was active, this chamber stored the really powerful or dangerous books, as well as magical scrolls.

The ceiling of this room has partially collapsed, and most of the contents have been destroyed.

Rubble covers the remaining books and scrolls, destroying nearly all of the precious manuscripts.

Development

The only exit the builders intended there to be from this room is to **Area 2–5**, but if the PCs cleared the rubble from **Area 1–4**, they could potentially climb up here. If not, they can see the rubble above and may be able to clear it out to create a second exit.

The rubble must be cleared out to reach the scrolls. Clearing the rubble enough to reach the scrolls requires four DC 20 Strength checks, each taking 1 minute. Characters can take 10 or 20 on these checks. Characters assisting may attempt DC 10 Strength checks to bestow a +2 bonus on the lead character. Up to four characters can assist.

Treasure

There are four scrolls buried beneath the pile of rubble. With a suitable amount of digging, they can be salvaged. Once the debris is out of the way, the PCs find four wooden scroll tubes, each containing one divine scroll, including a *scroll of dictum*, a *scroll of divine power*, a *scroll of protection from chaos*, and a *scroll of animate dead* (CL 9th).

2–7. Private Chapel (EL 6)

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This room served as the private chapel for the ranking priests in the temple, where they would lead the acolytes in ceremonies to honor their dark goddess.

This crowded room apparently served as a private chapel for the temple's clergy. It escaped the temple's fate unharmed. Even damp and somewhat moldy, it radiates cool confidence and the faintest hint of menace. The altar itself seems to have escaped time entirely; its pale blue cloth, gilded candlesticks, and open holy book all lie as pristine as if they were set just hours ago.

Traps

The altar is trapped. Any character that sprang or disarmed the trap in **Room 1–3** gains a +2 circumstance bonus to a Search check to find this one.

FLAME STRIKE TRAP	CR 6
Search DC 30; Type Magical; Reset Automatic	
Trigger Proximity	
Effect As the <i>flame strike</i> spell (CL 9th; Reflex DC 17 half)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 30; Bypass command word (<i>Finitas</i>)	

Development

The door leading north to **Room 2–4** is obvious. A secret door, well-hidden by the contours of the stone and the wall-hangings opens to **Area 2–11**. A character succeeding on a DC 27 Search check can find this hidden door.

Secret Door: Hardness 8; 90 hp; break DC 25; Open Locks DC 25.

Treasure

The book on the altar is a magical *book of protection* dedicated to the Death Goddess, mostly used to summon and bind her servants (see sidebar for details). The two candlesticks are of the same design as those above, and each is worth 150 gp.



Book of Protection

The *book of protection* is a valuable, if rather limited, item sometimes kept in temples and wizards' libraries that regularly deal with summoned creatures.

Description

The cover of this heavy, iron-bound *book* sports four engraved circles, each set with a different-colored gem. Its pages are thick with magical writing, some to bind power within the pages, others to instruct the reader on how to unleash it.

Activation

To use a *book of protection*, the caster must know at least one *magic circle* spell. Using the *book* is a standard action. A Use Magic Device check (DC 23) allows a non-caster, or a caster who does not know the *magic circle* spell he wants to cast, to use the book.

Effect

Once per day, the *book* provides the magical power necessary to cast a single *magic circle* spell (any type) without the caster expending a spell slot or prepared spell. The *book* can power any of the four *magic circle* spells, but only one the caster can cast normally.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate abjuration (DC 20); CL 5th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *magic circle against chaos/evil/good/law*; Cost 840 + 65 XP.

Weight: 12 lbs.

Price: Price 1,620 gp.

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2–8. Secret Tunnel (EL 4)

Light: Dark.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check made at the door to **Room 2–9** reveals faint metallic creaking noises caused by the movements of the iron zombies.

This concealed tunnel offers access to the inner sanctums of the temple.

This tunnel is low and wet, almost sewer-like in its present state. Nature is having its way with the walls and ceiling of the passage, and huge roots have pushed their way through the stone in places.

A cunningly concealed trap protects this passage.

Traps

A scythe trap is set just around the corner of the tunnel, on the southern side. If detected, it can easily be avoided, even if not disabled.

WALL SCYTHE TRAP	CR 4
Search DC 21; Type Mechanical; Reset Automatic Trigger Location	
Melee scythe +20 (2d4+8/×4)	
Disarm Disable Device DC 18	

2–9. East Guard Room (EL 4)

Light: Dark.

Sound: A DC 20 Listen check at the door to **Room 2–10** reveals faint metallic creaking noises from the iron zombie interred there.

This chamber once extended further east, but the weight of the forest and the druidic attack left half of the chamber buried.

This room feels cramped and smells worse. Roots have shattered most of the eastern wall, and stone litters the floor. The bones of some long-dead animal rest in the crook of two massive roots.

Creatures

Arneus has stationed **2 iron zombie guards** in this area as an early warning system.

IRON ZOMBIE GUARDS (2)	CR 2
Male human warrior 1 N Medium construct Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0 Languages understands creator's commands	
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +4 armor, +3 natural) hp 25 (1 HD); DR 5/adamantine Immune construct immunities Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk glaive +5 (1d10+6/×3) or slam +4 (1d6+6) Base Atk +0; Grp +4 Atk Options magic strike	
Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1 SQ construct traits Feats — Skills Listen +0, Spot +0 Possessions masterwork chain shirt, masterwork glaive	

Tactics

These zombies attack any creature that is not Arneus. If a character gets inside the threatened area of their glaives, they drop the reach weapons to engage in hand-to-hand. With so little room to maneuver, Arneus never bothered to give them detailed instructions, but they have been equipped with armor and weapons from **Room 2–10**.

2–10. Armory (EL 7)

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This chamber served as the temple's armory.

This room is large and in good condition, perhaps because of the heavy timbers that reinforce its walls. It houses several racks of weaponry and armor.

The armory now supplies the arms and armor for Arneus's iron zombie guards.

Creatures

Arneus keeps **1 iron zombie guard** stationed here with **3 iron zombie war dogs** to prevent intruders from reaching his laboratory or releasing Sarios and Kemahyr.

IRON ZOMBIE GUARD	CR 2
Male human warrior 1 N Medium construct Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0 Languages understands creator's commands	
AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +4 armor, +3 natural) hp 25 (1 HD); DR 5/adamantine Immune construct immunities Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee +1 glaive +5 (1d10+7/×3) or slam +4 (1d6+6) Base Atk +0; Grp +4 Atk Options magic strike	
Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1 SQ construct traits Feats — Skills Listen +0, Spot +0 Possessions masterwork chain shirt, +1 glaive	

IRON ZOMBIE WAR DOGS (3)	CR 3
N Medium construct Init +2; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision, scent; Listen +0, Spot +0	
AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17 (+2 Dex, +7 natural) hp 31 (2 HD); DR 5/adamantine Immune construct immunities Fort +0, Ref +2, Will +0	
Spd 40 ft. (8 squares) Melee bite +6 (1d6+7) or slam +6 (1d6+7) Base Atk +1; Grp +6 Atk Options magic attack	
Abilities Str 21, Dex 15, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1 Skills Listen +0, Spot +0	

Tactics

The iron zombie fights from behind the iron zombie dogs, using the pole-arm's reach to keep foes at bay. The iron zombie dogs attack anything that comes into the room.

Treasure

In addition to the iron zombie guard's possessions, there are two more masterwork chain shirts here, three masterwork glaives, two heavy maces, two light crossbows, and a barrel of 50 bolts.

2–11. Rear Tunnel

Light: Dark.

Sound: None.

This tunnel accesses the deeper chambers of the temple's underground.

This narrow tunnel runs south and then turns sharply to the west.

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A secret door (as yet unknown to Arneus) opens onto **Area 2–7**. It can be found with a successful DC 25 Search check.

Secret Door: Hardness 8; 90 hp; break DC 25; Open Locks DC 25.

2–12. Summoning Chamber (EL 9)

Light: A faint luminescence from the ghostly images fills this chamber with shadowy light.

Sound: None.

When the temple was active, the priests used this chamber to summon extraplanar servants.

It is clear this room once served some magical purpose, likely involving the conjuring of creatures. A mostly-intact magic circle still marks the floor, and arcane and divine sigils cover the walls. At the center of the pentacle, two half-real, insubstantial figures are frozen in a moment of deadly combat: one dressed in elegant vestments and clutching a morning star in his upraised hand, the other in rough furs, a bestial snarl on his lips.

The ghostly images of High Priest Sarios and the druid Kemahyr-Eral remain here, frozen in the final moments of their battle by the power of the damaged summoning circle.

Creatures

If the PCs either *dispel* the summoning circle (CL 9th) or repair it with *magic circle against chaos/good/evil/law*, they release the pair. Rather than emerging as ghosts, however, Sarios and Kemahyr appear as living beings in full health. This astonishes the two combatants as much as it may the characters, causing them to separate from their death-grip and face off at the edges of the circle.

KEMAHYR-ERL	CR 9
Male half-orc barbarian 1, druidic avenger 8 CN Medium humanoid (orc) Init –1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +12, Spot +8 Languages Common, Orc	
AC 11, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (–1 Dex, +2 armor) hp 60 (9 HD) Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +11; +4 against fey spell-like abilities	
Spd 50 ft. (10 squares) Melee unarmed strike +13/+8 (1d3+6) Base Atk +7; Grp +16 Atk Options Power Attack, rage 3/day Special Actions wild shape (3/day, Large) Combat Gear feather token (whip) Druid Spells Prepared (CL 8th): 4th— <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>summon nature's ally IV</i> (×2) 3rd— <i>cure moderate wounds</i> , <i>poison</i> (melee touch +12, DC 17), <i>speak with plants</i> , <i>spike growth</i> (DC 17) 2nd— <i>barkskin</i> , <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>soften earth and stone</i> , <i>summon nature's ally II</i> 1st— <i>charm animal</i> (DC 15), <i>cure light wounds</i> , <i>entangle</i> (DC 15), <i>faerie fire</i> , <i>obscuring mist</i> 0— <i>create water</i> , <i>cure minor wounds</i> (×3), <i>read magic</i> , <i>resistance</i>	
Abilities Str 21, Dex 9, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8 SQ trackless step, wild empathy +3 (–1 magical beasts), woodland stride Feats Improved Grapple, Improved Unarmed Strike, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack Skills Climb +9, Handle Animal +3, Intimidate +11, Knowledge (nature) +12, Listen +12, Spot +8, Survival +14 (+16 aboveground natural environments) Possessions combat gear plus masterwork leather, <i>amulet of mighty fists</i> +1, <i>cloak of resistance</i> +1, <i>gauntlets of ogre power</i>	
Rage (Ex) When raging, Kemahyr uses the following statistics. AC 9, touch 7, flat-footed 9 hp 78 (9 HD) Fort +13, Will +13	



Melee unarmed strike +15/+10 (1d3+8)

Grp +18

Abilities Str 25, Con 18

Skills Climb +11

Wild Shape (Sp) Kemahyr assumes the form of a dire ape when he wild shapes and then immediately enters a rage. Use the following statistics.

KEMAHYR (RAGING DIRE APE FORM)	CR 9
CN Large humanoid (orc) Init +2	
AC 13, touch 9, flat-footed 11 (–1 size, +2 Dex, +4 natural, –2 rage) Fort +13, Ref +4, Will +13; +4 against fey spell-like abilities	
Spd 50 ft. (10 squares), climb 15 ft. Melee 2 claws +14 (1d6+8) and bite +9 (1d8+4) Base Atk +7; Grp +19 Atk Options Power Attack, rage 3/day, rend 2d6+12	
Abilities Str 26, Dex 15, Con 18, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 8 Skills Climb +12, Disguise –1 (+9 as dire ape)	

SARIOS DORMA	CR 9
Male human cleric of the Death Goddess 9 LE Medium humanoid Init +0; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3 Languages Auran, Common, Infernal	
AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 23 (+0 Dex, +9 armor, +3 shield, +1 insight) hp 49 (9 HD) Fort +9, Ref +5, Will +9	
Spd 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base speed 30 ft. Melee +1 <i>morningstar</i> +9/+4 (1d8+2) Base Atk +6; Grp +8 Atk Options Combat Expertise	

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Special Actions death touch 1/day (9d6), rebuke undead 7/day (+6, 2d6+9, 9th)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th):

5th—dispel chaos (CL 10th, melee touch +6 or +8, DC 18)^D, flame strike (DC 18)

4th—divine power, order's wrath (CL 10th, DC 17)^D, restoration

3rd—animate dead^D, bestow curse (DC 16), cure serious wounds, magic circle against chaos, prayer

2nd—augury, calm emotions (DC 15)^D, cure moderate wounds, death knell (DC 15) (×2), undetectable alignment

1st—bless, cause fear (DC 14) (×2), doom (DC 14), endure elements, protection from chaos^D

0—cure minor wounds (×2), guidance, read magic, resistance, virtue

D: Domain spell. Domains: Death and Law.

Abilities Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 17, Cha 18

SQ strong aura of evil

Feats Combat Expertise, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes^B

Skills [(3+2 Int)×12 =60] Concentration +13 [12, 1 Con], Diplomacy +16 [12, 4 Cha], Hide -6 [0, 0 Dex, -6 ACP], Knowledge (religion) +14 [12, 2 Int], Knowledge (the planes) +14 [12, 2 Int], Listen +3 [0, 3 Wis], Search +2 [0, 2 Int], Spellcraft +14 [12, 2 Int], Spot +3 [0, 3 Wis], Survival +3 (+5 on other planes) [0, 3 Wis, 2 K/tp]

Possessions +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 morningstar, hand of the mage, ioun stone (dusty rose prism) and 580 gp

Tactics

Each of the combatants has his priorities and fighting style. Depending on who the PCs aid, the other adjusts accordingly.

Kemahyr

Once he comes to grips with Sarios, Kemahyr ignores the PCs, whether they aid him, attack him, or simply leave him alone. However, if the PCs attack Sarios, Kemahyr takes the opportunity to wild shape into a dire ape. He rages before launching his first attack and grapples Sarios to prevent him from casting spells or fighting back effectively.

If faced with Sarios and several PCs, Kemahyr casts at least one *summon nature's ally IV*. He usually *summons* 1d3 dire wolves and commands them to trip or grapple nearby opponents, and may *summon* an additional 1d3 with a second spell if he doesn't have enough to attack all the PCs. Once these creatures have occupied the other characters, the druid attacks Sarios directly.

Druid Variant: Druidic Avenger

The druidic avenger channels her inner fury to wreak vengeance upon those who injure the natural world. This comes at a price however, since the avenger must give up some of her own sensitivity to nature. A character that selects this option replaces Diplomacy with Intimidate.

Fast Movement

The druidic avenger increases her base speed by 10 feet. In exchange, she does not gain an animal companion.

Rage (Ex)

An avenger can enter a furious rage, identical to that of a barbarian. An avenger can use this ability once per day at 1st level, and one additional time per day for every five levels above 1st. In exchange, the druidic avenger may not channel stored spell energy into summoning spells.

Tireless Rage (Ex)

At 17th level and higher, an avenger no longer becomes fatigued at the end of her rage. In exchange, she takes a -4 penalty on wild empathy checks.

While raging, Kemahyr ignores any danger he may find himself in. If his rage expires before he or all his foes lie slain, he considers his tactics more carefully and may attempt to retreat or bargain with the PCs. Kemahyr never stops fighting if Sarios yet stands.

Sarios

If supported by the PCs, Sarios hangs back to cast defensive spells on them. He prefers spells to ward them against chaos, since these provide them with no protection should they turn on him after finishing Kemahyr—or should Sarios turn on them, as he very well might.

If Sarios fights one on one, or against Kemahyr and the characters, he focuses on damaging the druid. He uses spells targeting Reflex saves, such as *flame strike*, favoring those that also hurt nearby PCs. Only after Kemahyr dies does Sarios turn his attention to the rest of the characters.

Sarios fights Kemahyr to the death, but if badly injured (14 hp or less) while fighting the PCs, he retreats to **Room 2–4** in the hopes of joining forces with the libramite. He knows all the secret passages in the temple, and, as a spirit, he explored the underground as well.

Development

The only apparent way out of this room is the door back to **Area 2–11**. However, an *illusory wall* (DC 18) covers the large hole burrowed in the southwest corner, **Area 2–13**.

If Sarios's ghost contacted the characters before, he expects them to assist him against Kemahyr. Otherwise, he and the druid each ask for assistance against the other, promising rewards for victory. Neither places great trust in the PCs, and neither presently has the resources to make good his claims (though Kemahyr doesn't yet know it), but neither wants them to aid his nemesis.

If the PCs choose to aid either Sarios or Kemahyr, they must fight the other. If the characters ignore them, or attack both, Sarios and Kemahyr concentrate on each other until one is dead, and then attempt to punish the PCs for their indifference. Regardless of the party's decision, treat this as an EL 9 encounter—even if they attack both, the pair concentrate on each other, harming PCs mostly with splash damage.

Depending on their health and state of mind, whichever of the two survives (if either does) is equally likely to turn on, assist, or ignore the PCs. Neither attempts to interact with the *illusory wall* in the southwest corner of the room.

Kemahyr wants the temple razed to the ground and everyone involved with it slain. He initially acts unfriendly toward the PCs, even if they aided him against Sarios, but harbors no malice toward them. If the characters try to prevent him from destroying the temple or otherwise offend him, he attacks, but he deals subdual damage if he feels confident of victory. Unless convinced otherwise, he assumes that the iron zombies came from the temple, which trucked with undead on a regular basis.

In the long term, Sarios wants to make contact with the hierarchy of his church. However, he prefers to do so with a potentially valuable magical discovery in hand: the secret to Arneus's iron zombies. Although confident of his ability to subjugate Arneus, he fears the flesh golem in the lab below. If the PCs seem inclined to capture Arneus and turn him over to Sarios, the high priest happily cooperates with them; if they appear to want the wizard dead, Sarios attempts to leave in search of church-supplied backup. Sarios is indifferent to the PCs by default.

Treasure

The only treasure in this room is the equipment of Sarios and Kemahyr, which the PCs may be able to scavenge if one or both perish in their battle.

2–13. Hidden Cave

Light: None

Sound: None.

The walls here are rough-hewn rock and rougher-packed dirt, peppered with masonry from the temple. It appears some beast ripped its way in here many years ago. A narrow passage descends into the earthen walls.

Open to **Room 2-12** except for Arneus's *illusory wall*, the hidden cave has a passage to **3–1**.

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The cave system beneath the temple is half-natural, half-constructed. When Kemahyr's druids attacked, they instructed powerful burrowing animals to dig into the temple from below, bypassing many of its defenses. They discovered a natural cavern (leading down, possibly into the Underground) but chose to ignore it in preparation for their assault.

Arneus set up shop in the natural cavern because he has ample room there for laboratory equipment and no living person knows of its existence. If not for this equipment, which would be difficult to move unnoticed, he might have departed the temple soon after constructing his flesh golem.

Most of the encounters on this level are easy, particularly if the PCs have rested since clearing out the temple basement. The major exception is the battle with Arneus, his golem, and a trio of iron zombies. If the players choose to press on and face them without resting after **Area 3–3**, this climactic battle could easily spell death for one or more PCs. If you're feeling merciful, remind the players of any 'safehouse' areas they discovered on the upper floors.

3–1. Cave Hall

Light: None

Sound: A DC 15 Listen check made at the secret door leading to **Room 3–4** reveals the sound of something large moving about. A DC 15 Listen check at the western door reveals the tell-tale sound of things shuffling about. Any character that has heard the iron zombies move in the rooms above can automatically identify what these sounds indicate.

The rough-hewn tunnel descends into the earth, eventually leveling out into a low-ceilinged passage barely wide enough to accommodate a tower shield. Where the packed dirt seems it might widen to a more comfortable span, thick roots take its place. At the end of the passage is a wooden door set in a stone frame.

A character succeeding on a DC 10 Knowledge (architecture) check can tell animals excavated the tunnel by the old claw marks impressed in the walls. A dwarf may utilize his or her stonemasonry bonus on this check.

A DC 20 Search check made to examine the southern wall reveals a concealed door, cunningly painted to blend in with the earthen walls.

3–2. Excavated Cavern (EL 5)

Light: None.

Sound: None.

This room was widened to serve as a staging area for the druids' attack. Now, Arneus's minions guard this place to ward off animal attacks.

The walls of this chamber are earthen, and in places, pale orange roots break through the dirt. The floor here is smooth, and footprints and animal spoor are obvious.

Creatures

Arneus keeps 3 **iron zombies** stationed here.

Iron Zombie Human (3): hp 25 each, see **Appendix I** for statistics.

Tactics

These zombies attack any intruders.

3–3. Druid Tunnel

Light: None.

Sound: None.

This tunnel winds through the earth, gradually rising until it breaks the surface of the forest floor, nearly a half-mile away.

The air in this tunnel feels slightly fresher than in the rest of the cave, but it bears the same signs of rough construction and long neglect.

Characters succeeding on a Knowledge (architecture) check notice the gradual rise in the floor of the tunnel. Dwarves add their stonemasonry bonus to this check.

Development

Should the characters follow this passage to its exit, they emerge about a dozen paces from an abandoned and overgrown stone circle. There is a feeling of great power here. Druids and rangers cast spells at +1 caster level, though this is not apparent until such a character casts a spell.

Characters may safely camp here for 1d8+4 hours. After this time, things begin to stir in the woods around them. You should roll for random encounters as described in **Chapter Two: Into the Forest**, but ignore all iron zombie results.

3–4. Meat Rack (EL 6)

Light: None.

Sound: None.

This chamber holds the meat Arneus uses to construct his iron zombies. To guard against hungry predators as well as his enemies, the wizard placed one of his deadliest servants here.

This chamber, too, has an earthen floor, walls, and ceiling. Attached to the ceiling some 20-feet overhead are dozens of hooked chains from which hang bloated corpses.

Creatures

Clinging to the wall above the secret door is Arneus's guardian, a **Huge iron zombie monstrous spider**.



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HUGE IRON ZOMBIE MONSTROUS HUNTING SPIDER CR 6

N Huge construct
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages understands creator's commands

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 16 (–2 size, +3 Dex, +8 natural)
hp 84 (8 HD); **DR** 5/adamantine
Immune construct immunities
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +2

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +9 (2d6+10) or
Melee slam +9 (2d6+10)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +19
Atk Options magic strike

Abilities Str 25, Dex 17, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1
Feats —
Skills Climb +15, Listen +0, Spot +0

Tactics

The zombie spider is one of Arneus's prized creations, the largest beast to which he has successfully applied his *golem harness* and the only one with an exoskeleton. Since its poison glands no longer function, its primary mode of attack is snatching creatures up in its jaws and lifting them from the ground. The spider can move freely on the ceiling of this chamber without having to squeeze, but it cannot get out of melee range of Medium characters on the ground.

The hanging corpses provide a +2 cover bonus to Armor Class and a +1 cover bonus on Reflex saves to characters standing in these spaces. A single corpse can take 10 points of damage before it falls to rotting gobbets on the floor.

Development

The bodies hung here await animation as iron zombies. A DC 15 Heal check or DC 20 Search check discovers the corpses have been installed with metal grafts hidden just beneath the skin.

3–5. Golem Storage (EL 5)

Light: None.

Sound: None.

This chamber is where Arneus crafted his flesh golem servant.

A large, empty table dominates this earthen hollow. Heavy manacles and straps hang from the table. At least one appears to have been ripped from its housing by whatever was held here.

The door to the south is locked and trapped.

Iron Door: Hardness 10; 60 hp; break DC 25, Open Lock DC 25.

Traps

The iron door bears a nasty trap.

FIRE TRAP CR 5

Search DC 29; **Type** Magical; **Reset** No reset
Trigger Spell

Effect as *fire trap* (CL 7th, 1d4+7 fire damage, Reflex DC 16 for half)

Disarm Disable Device DC 29

Development

The table to which Arneus's flesh golem was strapped dominates the room, forcing Medium creatures to squeeze if they do not go directly between the archway and the door.

If the PCs trigger the *fire trap* or break down the door, the sound of its explosion alerts Arneus to the presence of intruders. If so warned, he rushes his golem and iron zombies here to hold the PCs at bay, while he casts spells to prepare himself for the fight.

3–6. Large Cavern

Light: Bright light shines through the three alcoves extending out 10-feet into the room. The rest of the cavern is in shadowy light.

Sound: A DC 15 Listen (–1 per 10 feet) check allows a character to hear Arneus muttering if the PCs have been quiet and not alerted him to their presence.

If the PCs set off the trap in **Room 3–5**, they may encounter the flesh golem and iron zombies here.

This cavern seems different from the rest: Its roof glistens with the polish of hard stone rather than packed dirt, and its stalactite columns look naturally formed. Light spills from the chamber ahead, bathing the cavern in weird shadows.

The cavern is 15 feet wide and 20 feet long. The north door returns to **Area 3–5**. The southern end of the cavern joins with **Area 3–7** between a series of stalactites.

Development

If the PCs have been quiet through the last two rooms and thought to extinguish their light (if any) before entering this room, they may be able to sneak through the chamber undetected.

Assume Arneus simply takes 10 on his Spot and Listen checks, giving him an 11 on both.

3–7. Arneus's Laboratory (EL 10)

Light: This room is lit by lanterns, filling the chamber with bright light.

Sound: None.

The circumstances of this encounter depend on whether or not Arneus is aware of the PCs. If unaware, he's surprised. Otherwise, he may have sent his flesh golem and iron zombies to deal with the intruders in **Room 3–6**, while he cast defensive spells.

The cavern widens here. Even so, it barely accommodates rack upon rack of tables, beakers, books, and esoteric equipment. Stains from blood and alchemical fluids mar the stone floor. A body lies face-down on one of the tables, its back cut open, a strange apparatus of dark iron lying beside it.

Arneus Ferg and the last of his creations—including his pride and joy, a flesh golem he created using the temple's *golem manual*—await the PCs here. Source of the iron zombie menace, Arneus is not the type to come quietly, and he and his minions pose a significant threat to the characters.

Creatures

The following creatures may be present depending on developments in these tunnels: **Arneus Ferg**, **1 flesh golem**, **1 iron zombie guard**, and **2 iron zombie humans**.

ARNEUS FERG CR 7

Male human wizard 7
 NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Abyssal, Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnome

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12 (+2 Dex, +2 armor)
hp 19 (7 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +8

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee dagger +2 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *wand of shocking grasp* (27 charges)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 7th):

4th—*illusory wall* (DC 19), maximized *shocking grasp* (melee touch +2)
 3rd—*blink*, *lightning bolt* (DC 18) (×2)
 2nd—*alter self*, *mirror image*, *scare* (DC 17), *spider climb*

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1st—*expeditious retreat*, *grease*, *shield*, *shocking grasp* (melee touch +2) (×2), *unseen servant*

0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 15, Con 11, Int 21, Wis 12, Cha 9

SQ familiar (none)

Feats Craft Construct, Craft Magic Arms and Armor^B, Craft Wondrous Item, Iron Will^B, Maximize Spell, Scribe Scroll^B

Skills Appraise +5 (+7 alchemical goods, +7 leather goods, +7 metal goods), Concentration +10, Craft (Alchemy) +10, Craft (leatherworking) +15, Craft (metalworking) +15, Heal +8, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (history) +10, Knowledge (religion) +10, Listen +1, Spellcraft +12, Spot +1

Possessions combat gear plus dagger, light crossbow with 10 silver bolts, *bracers of armor* +2, *headband of intellect* +2, healer's kit, spellbook, 60 gp

Spellbook all prepared plus all cantrips, *alarm*, *animate rope*, *color spray*, *hold portal*, *identify*, *magic weapon*, *arcane lock*, *fox's cunning*, *dispel magic*, *hold person*, *fireball*.

Flesh Golem (1): hp 79, see *MM* for statistics.

IRON ZOMBIE GUARD

CR 2

Male human warrior 1

N Medium construct

Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0

Languages understands creator's commands

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17 (+1 Dex, +4 armor, +3 natural)

hp 25 (1 HD); **DR** 5/adamantine

Immune construct immunities

Fort +0, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Spd 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +1 *glaive* +5 (1d10+7/×3) or

Melee slam +4 (1d6+6)

Base Atk +0; **Grp** +4

Atk Options magic strike

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1

SQ construct traits

Feats —

Skills Listen +0, Spot +0

Possessions masterwork chain shirt, +1 *glaive*

Iron Zombie Humans (2): hp 25 each, see *Appendix I* for statistics.

Tactics

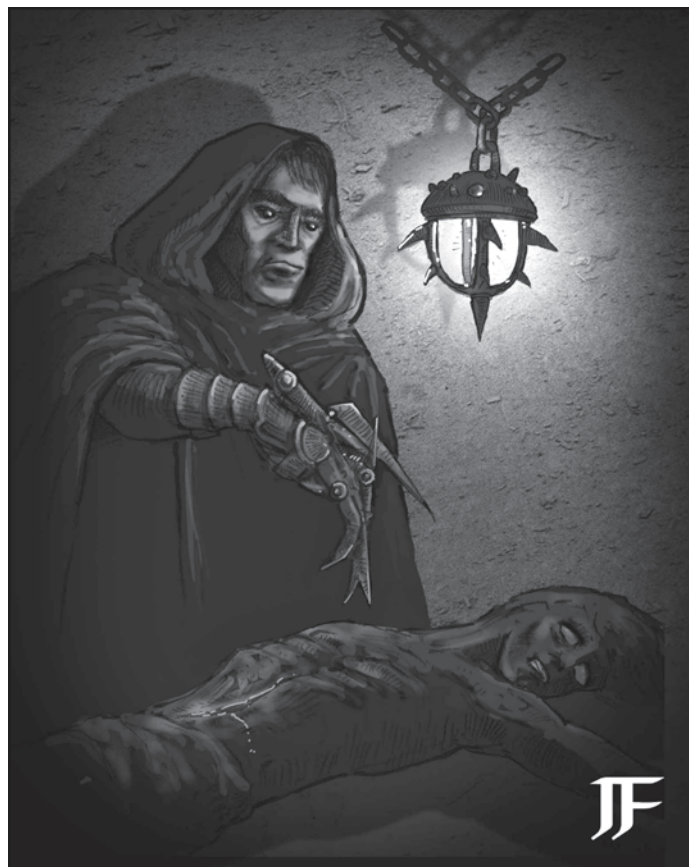
Once he spots intruders, Arneus retreats to the back of the room to direct his minions. He begins battle by casting *shield* (increasing his AC to 18), *blink*, and *mirror image* and then concentrates on controlling the battlefield. He knows to use *lightning bolt* and *shocking grasp* spells to restore his flesh golem and often tries to catch one or more characters in the line of the former.

The golem and iron zombies fight in a straightforward manner, unless Arneus specifically commands them otherwise. Normally, they attempt to form a line to prevent access to their master and then attack the nearest opponents.

Development

For all his brilliant artifice, Arneus lacks the nerve of a combat wizard. He flees to **Room 3–8** and through the secret door to **Room 3–9** if the PCs reduce him to 5 hp or less, destroy his flesh golem, or if the golem goes berserk. In his panic, he casts *expeditious retreat* on himself on the round he chooses to flee, even if doing so provokes an attack of opportunity. Although he doesn't know what lies beyond **Room 3–9**, he's willing to chance the unknown danger rather than face death or capture at the party's hands.

If prevented from fleeing, Arneus throws himself upon the party's mercy. He hopes to escape before reaching Erburg and makes every attempt to do so. Arneus attempts to *dispel* the circle of protection at **Area 2–12** (he assumes, rightly or wrongly, it remains in effect), to lead them past Liare and the assassin vine at **Areas 1–11** and **1–10**, and to strike an alliance with Aulk the troll. If all these attempts fail, he tries to fight his way free.



Treasure

Two *golem harnesses* lie unattached in this room, along with 750 gp worth of raw materials for more such harnesses (or a single Large-sized harness).

3–8. Arneus's Office (EL 4)

Light: This room is lit by a single lantern.

Sound: None.

Whatever purpose this subterranean outpost once served, it now seems to have been converted into an office and bedchamber by its present inhabitant. A small, simple wooden desk stands against the far wall, with a bedroll lying next to it.

This room is crowded, with Arneus's desk and bed occupying the southeast corner. Characters searching the west wall and succeeding on a DC 22 Search check (DC 17 if they witness Arneus fleeing through it) find a secret door.

Traps

Arneus's office and bedroom contains only one threat, a minor one if the PCs have cleaned out the rest of the temple (and have either no need or no desire to pursue the wizard himself), but dangerous if they haven't. The trap is attached to the drawer beneath Arneus's desk, where he keeps his most valuable belongings: his notes on the construction of the *golem harness*.

POISONED NEEDLE TRAP

CR 4

Search DC 21; **Type** Mechanical; **Reset** Manual
Trigger Touch

Ranged needle +10 (1 plus giant wasp poison)
Effect Fortitude DC 18, initial and secondary damage 1d6 Dex

Disarm Disable Device DC 21; **Bypass** Search DC 21

Treasure

Arneus's notes contain all the information necessary to create a *golem harness*. In addition to informing the reader about the physical and magical construction of the harness, they serve as an extra spellbook containing the arcane spells *animate*

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rope, false life, and lightning bolt. The greatest value of Arneus's notes—at least to PCs who don't intend to craft and employ *golem harnesses* of their own—is to prove the wizard's culpability in the invasion of the iron zombies.

3–9. Escape Tunnel

Light: None.

Sound: None.

This tunnel leads deeper into the earth. Cold, moist air wafts upwards, perhaps hinting at an underground lake or river, or perhaps a sprawling and frigid cavern system.

The 'end' of this hallway represents the limits of the temple grounds, but the GM may wish to tie it to another published adventure or one of his own dealing with the deep underground—particularly if Arneus Ferg escaped to craft again!

Concluding the Adventure

Having thwarted or driven off Arneus Ferg, the PCs are free to return to Erburg and declare the threat to the village at an end. However, depending on what they did and who they spoke to while in the community, they may have one final encounter to face.

Ambush (EL 7)

If the PCs revealed to Mikken the nature of their business (see **Chapter One**), the daemon-worshiper arranges for the heroes to meet an ugly end. Mikken is indeed grateful for the service the PCs performed for his town, but his greedy nature prevents him from letting the PCs keep the undoubtedly vast treasures they've acquired. To this end, he dispatches a group of bandits called the Black Arrows, led by a local thief named Adren. Mikken watches for caravans and other travelers and then tips off his friends. In exchange for his help, he gets a cut of the take.



As the characters approach the village, have them make Spot checks opposed by Adren's and his allies' Hide checks. If the PCs fail to detect the bandits, the Black Arrows gain surprise.

Creatures

The bandits consist of **Adren** and **6 human bandits**.

ADREN	CR 3
Male elf rogue 3 NE Medium humanoid (elf) Init +8; Senses low-light vision; Listen +1, Spot +1 Languages Common, Elven, Thieves' Cant	
AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+4 Dex, +4 armor) hp 16 (3 HD) Immune sleep Resist evasion Fort +2, Ref +7, Will +0; +2 against enchantment spells and effects	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk longsword +4 (1d8+1/19–20) Ranged mwk composite longbow (Str +1) +7 (1d8+1/×3) Base Atk +2; Grp +3 Atk Options Point Blank Shot, sneak attack +2d6 Combat Gear <i>potion of blur</i> , 2 <i>potions of cure light wounds</i> , 2 tanglefoot bags, 2 thunderstones	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 19, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 12 SQ able to notice secret doors, trap sense +1, trapfinding Feats Improved Initiative, Point Blank Shot Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +3, Disable Device +9, Disguise +1 (+3 acting), Hide +10, Intimidate +3, Gather Information +9, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +1, Move Silently +10, Open Lock +12, Search +3, Sleight of Hand +12, Spot +1 Possessions combat gear plus +1 studded leather, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite longbow (Strength +1) with 20 arrows, masterwork thieves' tools, backpack, one day of trail rations, waterskin, signal whistle, 7 cp	

BLACK ARROW BANDITS (6)	CR 1
Male and female human expert 1/warrior 1 NE Medium humanoids Init +5; Senses Listen +4, Spot +4 Languages Common	
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 armor) hp 8 (2 HD) Fort +2, Ref +1, Will +2	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee longsword +2 (1d8+1/19–20) Ranged mwk composite longbow +3 (1d8/×3) Base Atk +1; Grp +2 Combat Gear <i>elixir of hiding</i> , <i>potion of cure light wounds</i> , tanglefoot bag	
Abilities Str 12, Dex 13, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8 Feats Improved Initiative, Stealthy Skills Climb +2, Hide +7, Intimidate +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +7, Spot +4, Survival +4 Possessions combat gear plus studded leather, longsword, masterwork composite longbow with 10 arrows, backpack, three days of trail rations, two waterskins, 5 gp	

Tactics

During the surprise round, the bandits fling their tanglefoot bags at the PCs in the hopes of immobilizing them, while Arden throws a thunderstone at a spellcasting PC. Once combat begins in earnest, Arden peppers spellcasters with arrows, while the bandits use their ranged attacks against any character that attempts to close on them. Should the PCs surrender, Arden strips them nude and leaves the PCs to their own devices. Otherwise, the bandits flee if four of their number fall or if Arden falls.

Development

Capturing any of the bandits alive is a fine opportunity to discover who was behind the attacks, should the PCs think to do so. The bandits hold out against the characters, simmering in their hostility. However, if the PCs succeed on an Intimidate check or use *charm person* or some other means to improve their attitudes, they admit that they were hired by Mikken to ambush the characters on their way back to the village. The captive goes on to reveal everything he knows about the arrangement, effectively damning Mikken and exposing his whole enterprise.

Characters returning to Erburg may be tempted to confront and kill Mikken. Should they try this, Mikken has already skipped town. If the PCs go to the authorities, the watch rounds up the man and imprisons him. Characters that drive Mikken out of Erburg or otherwise deal with him earn bonus experience as if they had dealt with a CR 4 encounter.

Back in Erburg

If the PCs slew Arneus and recovered his notes or captured him, they can present proof of their success to Mayor Ellen Dreifus, who happily pays every coin she owes them. An intact *golem harness* also qualifies as evidence, but inconclusive evidence. The Lord Mayor offers only half the reward until she's certain the PCs have stopped the iron zombie menace for good.

Pordus Olien is likewise grateful, although more for sparing his church's reputation than for sparing the town. However, the only reward he considers within his means is a 10% discount on scrolls he scribes, and he offers even that only if pressed.

Further Adventures

Although *Temple of the Death Goddess* is at an end, this doesn't mean it's the end of Erburg's story. Having proved themselves more than worthy adventurers, Mayor Dreifus may have more work for the PCs. In fact, there's this matter of the Citadel of Ceranir's silence and their inability or unwillingness to deal with the iron zombies themselves (look for details on this adventure in Green Ronin's *Escape from Ceranir*). If you haven't yet run Green Ronin's *A Dreadful Dawn*, you might reverse the order of these adventures, running this one first and scaling up Bleeding Edge #4 so that the events that occur there follow the ones described here.

If either Sarios Dorma or Kemahyr-Eral survived the battle in the temple, they represent a significant shift in the local power structure. Both number among their old allies beings to whom a few centuries are meaningless, so they soon regain their positions within their respective hierarchies.

Sarios departs the Erburg region for less than a month, returning to take over from Pordus once he reestablishes himself within the church of the Goddess of Death. What this means for Erburg is up to you, but you can bet it won't be pleasant.

Kemahyr restores the druid grove and proceeds with his plan to raze the temple to the ground. However, he soon becomes horrified at the spread of Erburg, a mere village when he vanished from the living world. Unless persuaded otherwise, he eventually rallies savage tribes and another host of beasts to reduce the town to a more manageable size.

Arneus Ferg may well escape justice at the PCs' hands, or, if brought back alive, whatever attempts Erburg's defenders make to imprison him. If so, he harbors abiding hatred toward those who stopped his experiments and destroyed his laboratory. His schemes and dread inventions could easily provide many further adventures for the PCs.

Appendix I: New Monsters

This appendix presents all of the new monsters that appear in this adventure.

Iron Zombie

An iron zombie is a corpse bound within a magical iron 'frame' called a *golem harness*. The craftsman surgically attaches these frames to the bones of the corpse. Because of the genius of the creature's construction, it benefits from the surviving skeletal structure, muscle mass, and physical traits of the corpse. However, unlike true zombies, iron zombies must be maintained in good physical condition, usually by means of alchemical treatments or *gentle repose* spells. Barring such precautions, an iron zombie decomposes after 1d4 weeks. Iron zombies are no more intelligent than any other animated object. They obey the orders of their creators without question or initiative.

Iron Zombie Human

A decaying humanoid form shambles toward you, arms outstretched. Its slack features and slumped posture mark it as a zombie, but its movements seem surprisingly coordinated and its flesh in relatively good condition.

IRON ZOMBIE HUMAN	CR 2
Male human warrior 1 N Medium construct Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +0, Spot +0 Languages understands creator's commands	
AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13 (+1 Dex, +3 natural) hp 25 (1 HD); DR 5/adamantine Immune construct immunities Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee slam +4 (1d6+6) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +0; Grp +4 Atk Options magic strike	

Abilities Str 19, Dex 12, Con —, Int —, Wis 10, Cha 1
SQ construct traits
Feats —
Skills Listen +0, Spot +0

The most common variety of iron zombie, this loathsome servitor uses its great strength to carry out the commands of its creator, heedless of difficulties or dangers that might have sent it fleeing for the hills in life.

This iron zombie uses a 1st-level human warrior as the base creature. It had the following ability scores before gaining the template: Str 13, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 10, Cha 8.

Creating an Iron Zombie

"Iron zombie" is an acquired template that can be added to any corporeal creature of at least Small size that has a skeletal or exoskeletal system (referred to hereafter as the base creature).

- ♦ **Challenge Rating:** Depends on Hit Dice, as shown on the following table.

Hit Dice	Challenge Rating
1/2 or less	1
1	2
2–3	3
4–5	4
6–7	5
8–10	6
12–14	7
15–16	8
18–20	9

- ♦ **Alignment:** The base creature's alignment changes to neutral.

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- ♦ **Size and Type:** The base creature's type changes to construct. It retains any subtypes except alignment subtypes and subtypes that indicate kind. It does not gain the augmented subtype. It uses all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.
- ♦ **Senses:** The base creature loses all senses and gains darkvision out to 60 feet and low-light vision.
- ♦ **Languages:** The base creature loses the ability to speak any languages, though it understands the commands of its creator.
- ♦ **Armor Class:** Increase the base creature's natural armor bonus by +3.
- ♦ **Hit Dice:** Drop any Hit Dice from class levels (to a minimum of 1) and change the remaining Hit Dice to d10s. As a construct, an iron zombie gains bonus hit points based on size. Small creatures gain +10 hit points, Medium creatures gain +20, Large +30, Huge +40, Gargantuan +60, and Colossal +80.
- ♦ **Damage Reduction (Ex):** The base creature gains damage reduction 5/adamantine.
- ♦ **Immunities:** The base creature gains immunities common to all constructs.
- ♦ **Saving Throws:** The base creature's base saving throws are +1/3 HD for Fortitude, +1/3 HD for Reflex, and +1/3 HD for Will.
- ♦ **Speed:** The base creature's speed is unchanged. If the creature can fly, its maneuverability rating drops to clumsy.
- ♦ **Attacks:** An iron zombie retains all the attacks of the base creature and also gains a slam attack if it didn't have one. If the base creature can use weapons, the iron zombie retains this ability. An iron zombie fighting without weapons uses its slam attack or its primary natural weapon. When armed with a weapon, it can attack with the weapon or slam attack.
- ♦ **Damage:** An iron zombie has a slam attack. If the base creature does not have this attack, the iron zombie's slam attack deals damage based on its size as described on the following table.

Size	Damage
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6
Gargantuan	2d8
Colossal	4d6

- ♦ **Base Attack:** An iron zombie's base attack bonus equals one-half its Hit Dice.
- ♦ **Attack Options:** An iron zombie loses all of the attack options of the base creature, but gains the following attack option.
- ♦ **Magic Strike (Su):** An iron zombie's natural attacks count as magical for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction.
- ♦ **Special Actions:** An iron zombie retains none of the base creature's special actions.
- ♦ **Abilities:** An iron zombie's Strength increases by +6. As a construct, it has no Constitution or Intelligence score. Its Wisdom changes to 10, and its Charisma changes to 1.
- ♦ **Special Qualities:** An iron zombie loses all of the special qualities of the base creature. It gains those qualities common to all constructs.
- ♦ **Feats:** An iron zombie has no feats.
- ♦ **Skills:** An iron zombie has no skills and loses any racial bonus on skill checks, except for those granted as a result of having a climb speed or swim speed.
- ♦ **Environment:** Any land and underground.
- ♦ **Treasure:** None.

Tactics

The basic iron zombie is a dangerous opponent, despite its lack of cunning. It relentlessly attacks the nearest foe, or a target its creator designates, shrugging off most blows from normal weapons and retaliating with its powerful slam attacks.

Encounters

Iron zombies are only a populace as their creators have resources. They can typically be found in gangs of three to five, though there are whispers of larger forces, horrible armies of shuffling magical machines bound to rotting flesh.

Sample Encounter (EL 5): In the shadow of a looming wizard's tower, three iron zombies do as commanded, working the fields, planting seeds, and tilling the soil, all in a mockery of life.

Ecology

Iron zombies are unnatural creatures, created by spellcasters to be mindless servants. Iron zombies are cheaper to create, because the apparatus that gives them the semblance of life is smaller and easier to produce. Some creators use iron zombies as servants and laborers, though most use them in the same ways that other mindless undead serve.

Physical Characteristics

Most iron zombies are made from recently slain humans and kept relatively 'fresh' by their creators, lest their bodies and abilities decay. Depending upon the length of their service (and the care with which their creator maintains them), some iron zombies appear considerably more decayed than others.

Iron Zombie Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (arcana) can learn more about iron zombies.



DC	Knowledge (arcana)
12	This creature is an iron zombie. Although it appears to be an undead creature, it is in fact a construct. This result reveals all construct traits.
17	Iron zombies are created by surgically attaching an inexpensive magical device called a <i>golem harness</i> to a corpse's skeleton or exoskeleton.
22	Iron zombies are resilient to damage, and only adamantite has a hope of breaching their defenses.

Treasure

Iron zombies have no treasure. Should an iron zombie be reduced to 0 hit points, the *golem harness* can be extracted with a Heal check against the same DC required to install it.

Advanced Iron Zombies

Iron zombies do not advance or gain Hit Dice. To create a more powerful iron zombie, one must bind the *golem harness* to a larger or tougher creature.

Construction

An iron zombie cannot be created outright. Instead, a *golem harness* (see **Sidebar: Golem Harness**) must be constructed and surgically attached to the base creature's body. Attaching a *golem harness* to a Medium iron zombie requires a DC 15 Heal check. The DC increases by +2 for every size category larger or smaller than Medium that the base creature is. Thus, a Large or Small iron zombie requires a DC 17 Heal check, while a Colossal iron zombie requires a DC 23 Heal check.

Libramite

A quartet of ropey tendrils materializes in the air before you. One of the tendrils pauses and drifts in your direction, and a moment later a large round eye opens in the middle of its bizarre anatomy. It looks at you curiously, betraying neither hostility nor compassion.

LIBRAMITE	CR 5
Usually LN Large aberration (extraplanar) Init +4; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +1 Languages Abyssal, Common, Celestial, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.	
AC 12, touch 9, flat-footed 12 (–1 size, +3 natural) hp 52 (7 HD); regeneration 1 Immune critical hits Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +6	
Spd fly 20 ft. (perfect) Melee 4 tentacle rakes +5 (1d4+1) Space 10 ft.; Reach 10 ft. (20 ft. with tentacle rake) Base Atk +5; Grp +10 Atk Options improved grab Special Actions ethereal jaunt Combat Gear <i>divine scroll of cure moderate wounds</i> , <i>wand of hold person</i> (11 charges), <i>wand of magic missile</i> (17 charges)	
Abilities Str 13, Dex 10, Con 17, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 11 Feats Diligent, Improved Initiative, Skill Focus (Use Magic Device) Skills Appraise +11, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (history) +9, Knowledge (religion) +9, Knowledge (the planes) +14, Listen +1, Spellcraft +16, Spot +1, Survival +1 (+3 on other planes), Use Magic Device +13 (+17 scrolls) Possessions combat gear	
Regeneration (Ex) Cold iron deals normal damage to a libramite. If a libramite loses a tentacle, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. These creatures can reattach severed tentacles instantly by holding it to the stump. Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a libramite must hit with its tentacle rake attack. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking an attack of opportunity. On a successful grapple check, a libramite deals 1d4+1 points of damage.	

Golem Harness

The *golem harness* is a magical item designed to turn an ordinary corpse into a sort of lesser flesh golem.

Description

This item appears to be a series of jointed, hollow, half-cylinders, typically about the size of a human's spinal cord, upper arms, and thighs. Strange hook-like protrusions extend all along its length, as though it were designed to attach to a series of ropes or pulleys.

Activation

To function, the *harness* must be surgically attached to a corpse (by means of a Heal check), which then animates as an iron zombie. A *golem harness* can be harvested from a destroyed iron zombie to animate another and may be fitted to any creature of roughly the same size and form as the one it was initially designed for.

Effect

The *golem harness* applies the iron zombie template to a creature to which it is bonded.

Aura/Caster Level: Faint transmutation; CL 5th.

Construction: Craft Construct, *animate rope*, *false life*, *lightning bolt*, caster must be at least 5th level; Cost 750 gp + 250 gp per size category over Medium + 40 XP.

Weight: 35 lbs.

Price: 1,000 gp + 500 gp per size over Medium.

Ethereal Jaunt (Su) A libramite can slip from the Ethereal Plane to the Material Plane as a swift action, and shift back again as a move action. This ability is otherwise identical to the *ethereal jaunt* spell as cast by a 15th-level caster.

Libramites are strange creatures that reside in the Ethereal Plane.

Tactics

Inoffensive creatures, libramites attack only when commanded to or when they or their collections are threatened. A libramite always carries some type of magical armament, usually in the form of wands, scrolls and, in the case of advanced libramites, staffs. It prefers to use these items with Use Magic Device before closing in on its foes. Once it engages in melee, a libramite grapples its foes, trusting in its ability to slip into the Ethereal Plane should it become overwhelmed.

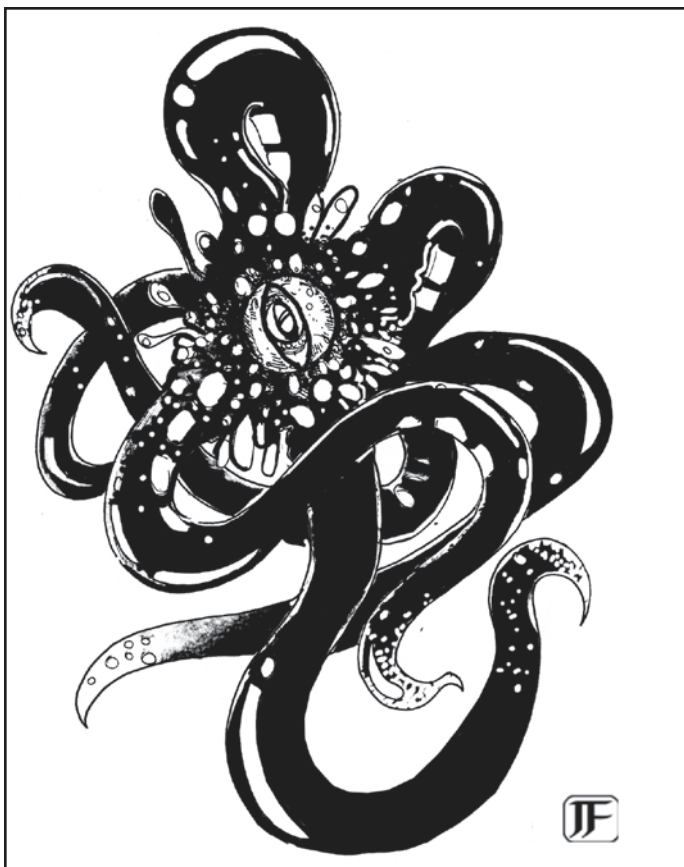
Encounters

Libramites are rare, and thus, they tend toward a solitary existence. On occasion, a cluster of two to four libramites gathers to see to some great task relating to their endless pursuit of arcane magic.

Sample Encounter (EL 7): A pair of libramites settles in the crumbling ruins of a wizard's tower. There, they seek any magical objects left by plunderers as well as to understand the nature of the tragedy that brought this place to ruin.

Ecology

Legend holds that some long-forgotten wizard created the first libramites to tend his expansive library. Over time, other spellcasters, clerics of the gods of knowledge and magic, and even mundane librarians sought the assistance of these useful creatures. The libramites, effectively immortal, outlived their creators, and many migrated to other planes of existence, while others hired themselves out to likely employers who would give them access to the mystic libraries they crave. A few libramites still dwell in the antediluvian archives where they were first spawned, tending to crumbling ruins without knowing or caring that the world has passed them by. Libramites can be found in any land.



Physical Characteristics

This unusual creature resembles a floating starfish. It uses its five arms to manipulate objects, typically wands. It has a large unblinking eye in the centre of its body that features an exotic color such as lavender, teal, or red. Its mouth is underneath, directly below the eye. A libramite floats in the air with the assistance of odd organs in its arms. Its body naturally produces a lighter-than-air gas that it collects in pockets in its body. In fact, these creatures actually weigh very little, less than 20 pounds. A libramite's body measures 12-feet in diameter and is 18-inches thick.

Libramite Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (dungeoneering) can learn more about libramites.

DC	Knowledge (dungeoneering)
15	This odd creature is a libramite, an aberration obsessed with the collection and study of enchanted objects. This result reveals all aberration traits.
20	Generally peaceful, these creatures would much rather be left to their own devices than to fight, though they defend themselves with their magic items if attacked.
25	A libramite can always flee to the Ethereal Plane if hard-pressed, which it often does to avoid its enemies' attacks.

Society

These creatures are obsessed with all things magical and spend most of their time considering new magical systems from a variety of Material Planes. Hence, they are attracted to spellbooks, magic items, and people who have a natural talent with magic. They are content to be alone, endlessly examining various theories of magical study.

Alignment

Libramites have little interest in morality and put the pursuit of knowledge and laws of magic ahead of most other considerations. As a result, libramites are usually lawful neutral.

Treasure

Given the libramite's attraction to objects of magical power, it should come as no surprise that what treasure the libramite accumulates is always in the form of magical items. A libramite has double the normal value (approximately 3,200 gp) for its Challenge Rating and always carries 1d3 extra wands, each with a randomized number of charges.

Advanced Libramites

As a libramite accumulates magic items, it grows in power. A typical Large libramite has 8 to 14 Hit Dice, while the eldest and most learned of their kind grow to Huge size and have between 15 and 21 Hit Dice. Libramites are not appropriate for use as player characters.

Troblin

A twisted creature emerges from the shadows, its misshapen head warped into an appalling mess of tissue. In fact, while this creature has the general shape of a humanoid, it seems its body is an unholy fusion of limbs, scars, and scraggly black fur.

TROBLIN	CR 2
Usually CE Medium monstrous humanoid (goblinoid) Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +0, Spot +2 Languages Goblin	
AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14 (+1 Dex, +2 armor, +2 natural) hp 22 (3 HD); regeneration 2 Fort +5, Ref +4, Will +3	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee 2 claws +6 (1d4+3) and bite +1 (1d6+1) or Melee club +6 (1d6+3) and bite +1 (1d6+1) Space 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft. Base Atk +3; Grp +6	
Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 8, Wis 11, Cha 7 SQ mutation Feats Great Fortitude, Toughness Skills Hide +3, Listen +0, Move Silently +3, Spot +2 Possessions leather, club	
Regeneration (Su) Acid and fire deal normal damage to a troblin. If a troblin loses a limb, the lost portion regrows in 3d6 minutes. The creature can reattach the severed member instantly by holding it to the stump.	
Mutation (Ex) No two troblins are exactly alike, largely due to the uncertain nature of their flesh regrowth. All troblins have one mutation, as determined by rolling on the following table. Furthermore, whenever a troblin takes a critical hit, it has a 25% chance of gaining an additional mutation.	
Roll	Mutation
1–2	<i>Extra Forearm:</i> The troblin gains an additional claw attack.
3–4	<i>Extra Foreleg:</i> The troblin gains a +2 racial bonus to Balance checks and a +2 racial bonus to checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on solid ground.
5–6	<i>Massive Scarring:</i> The troblin increases its natural armor bonus by +1.
7	<i>Enhanced Musculature:</i> The troblin gains a +2 inherent bonus to Strength.
8	<i>Enhanced Reflexes:</i> The troblin gains a +2 inherent bonus to Dexterity.
9	<i>Extra Organs:</i> The troblin gains a +2 inherent bonus to Constitution.
10	<i>Extra Leg:</i> The troblin gains a +4 racial bonus to Balance checks and a +2 racial bonus to checks made to resist being bull rushed or tripped when standing on solid ground. The troblin also gains a +10 enhancement bonus to its speed.
11	<i>Extra Arm:</i> The troblin gains an additional claw attack.
12	<i>Extra Head:</i> The troblin no longer takes a penalty when fighting with two weapons. The troblin also gains a +2 racial bonus on Listen, Search, and Spot checks.
13–20	<i>No Mutation</i>

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A troblin is an unholy fusion of a goblin and a troll. Cursed with an abominable existence, it lives to cause harm and suffering in others.

Tactics

Troblins that operate in groups are disorganized and have little concept of strategy. They simply attack with as much strength and ferocity as they can muster. Since these wretches acquire their courage from superior numbers, they often flee when they face larger groups.

Encounters

Troblins are craven, so they rarely go it alone. Instead, they prefer to organize themselves into warbands consisting of two to five members. These groups sometimes include a leader (barbarian 3), who gains his position by having an impressive number of strange mutations. The largest group is an encampment, which consists of up to 20 members plus 3 leaders and a chief that is 4th level or higher.

Sample Encounter (EL 6): Three troblins creep through the forest in search of prey. They've had good hunting so far, and the runt of the trio drags the carcass of a young girl behind him. They aren't satisfied though, noting there is not much flesh on her bones, and so they intend to use the corpse as bait to attract something a bit larger.

Ecology

Troblins are not natural creatures, and their presence in an ecosystem can be disastrous. They have no regard for conservation and quickly strip an area of its resources, butchering every living thing they find, stripping the trees of bark, and defiling the soil with their leavings. Once depleted, the troblins pick up and leave, searching for new hunting grounds to despoil. Troblins prefer temperate woodlands, but they have been discovered underground and in tropical jungles.

Physical Characteristics

A typical troblin, if there is such a thing, stands just over five feet tall and weighs about 160 pounds. They are terrible to look upon, their bodies covered in strange growths and suppurating sores. Most troblins bear some mutation, some extra part that grows as a result of their regeneration.

Troblin Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (nature) can learn more about troblins.

DC	Knowledge (nature)
13	This creature is a troblin, an unsettling blend of goblin and troll. This result reveals all monstrous humanoid traits.
18	Troblins inherit some ability to regenerate, recovering from their wounds with alarming speed. However, when they do, they sometimes sprout unexpected growths.
23	Troblins are especially vulnerable to acid and fire.

Society

Troblins do not have a real society, congregating in loose bands led by a powerful chieftain. Their ravenous hunger and disregard for their surroundings



means they must move around a lot, and so they adopt a semi-nomadic life, picking up and moving when resources become scarce. Leadership of a tribe is determined by might, but also from mutations. Troblins respect the unusual growths that appear and often defer to the more monstrous members of their band.

Alignment

Troblins are cruel and malicious, usually being chaotic evil. They have little use for order and look out for themselves first.

Treasure

While simple creatures with simple needs, troblins do collect some treasure. Much of what they keep is in the form of coins or gemstones stolen from their victims. A typical troblin has a stash of 600 gp hidden away somewhere in its encampment.

Advanced Troblins

Troblins typically advance by character class. Their favored class is barbarian. Troblin clerics deny the existence of gods, hating them for their agonizing forms. Instead, they venerate the spirit of Troblin-kind, granting themselves the Chaos and Evil domains.

Level Adjustment: +2.



Appendix II: Pre-generated Characters

This appendix includes a number of pre-generated characters for use with this adventure. If the players already have characters, you can use these as extra NPCs or as replacement characters for fallen PCs.

ANGRIST THE CLEAVER	CR 5
Male dwarf fighter 5 LG Medium humanoid Init +1; Senses darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2 Languages Common, Dwarven	
AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22; +4 against giants (+1 Dex, +9 armor, +3 shield) hp 47 (5 HD) Resist stability (+4 against bull rush or trip) Fort +8 (+10 against poison), Ref +3, Will +3 (+5 against spells and spell-like effects)	
Spd 20 ft. in plate mail (4 squares), base speed 20 ft. Melee +1 <i>dwarven waraxe</i> +10 (1d10+6/×3) Ranged mwk composite longbow (Strength +3) +7 (1d8+3/×3) Base Atk +5; Grp +8 Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, +1 on attacks against orcs and goblinoids Combat Gear alchemists fire, oil of bless weapon, 2 potions of cure moderate wounds, potion of shield of faith +3, 2 tanglefoot bags, thunderstone	
Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 6 SQ stonemasonry Feats Cleave ^B , Great Cleave, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (dwarven waraxe) ^B , Weapon Specialization (dwarven waraxe) ^B Skills Appraise +0 (+2 metal or stone), Climb –1, Craft +0 (+2 metal or stone), Intimidate +5, Jump +0, Listen +2, Search +0 (+2 stonework), Spot +2 Possessions combat gear plus +1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 dwarven waraxe, masterwork composite longbow (Strength +3), cloak of resistance +1, antitoxin, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, quiver with 20 arrows, 12 gp	

DIERDRA	CR 5
Female human cleric 5 NG Medium humanoid Init –1; Senses Listen +3, Spot +3 Languages Common	
AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21 (–1 Dex, +9 armor, +2 shield, +1 natural) hp 31 (5 HD) Fort +5, Ref +0, Will +7	
Spd 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base speed 30 ft. Melee +1 heavy mace +6 (1d8+3) Ranged mwk light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20) Base Atk +3; Grp +5 Atk Options Divine Might, Power Attack Special Actions feat of strength +1, greater turning 1/day, turn undead 8/day (+3, 2d6+6, 5th) Combat Gear holy water, potion of bear's endurance, potion of bull's strength, potion of cure moderate wounds, potion of lesser restoration, 2 scrolls of command, 2 scrolls of divine favor, 2 scrolls of sanctuary, wand of cure light wounds (25 charges)	

Divine Might

Prerequisites: Str 13, turn or rebuke undead ability, Power Attack.
Benefit: As a free action, spend one of your turn or rebuke undead attempts to add your Charisma bonus to your weapon damage for 1 full round.

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th):
3rd— <i>dispel magic</i> , <i>magic vestment</i> ^D , <i>prayer</i> 2nd— <i>aid</i> , <i>align weapon</i> , <i>bull's strength</i> , <i>heat metal</i> (DC 15) ^D 1st— <i>bless</i> , <i>divine favor</i> , <i>enlarge person</i> ^D , <i>magic weapon</i> , <i>shield of faith</i> 0— <i>detect magic</i> , <i>guidance</i> , <i>light</i> , <i>resistance</i> , <i>virtue</i> D: Domain spell. Deity: God of the Sun. Domains: Strength, Sun
Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 13 SQ strong aura of good Feats Divine Might ^B , Extra Turning, Power Attack Skills Concentration +6, Diplomacy +6, Knowledge (history) +3, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +3, Spellcraft +6, Spot +3 Possessions +1 full plate, heavy wooden shield, +1 heavy mace, masterwork light crossbow, amulet of natural armor +1, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, case with 10 bolts, wooden holy symbol of the sun god, three torches, 2 gp, 5 sp

ELOTHIN	CR 5
Male elf wizard 5 CG Medium humanoid Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Listen +5, Spot +5 Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Sylvan, empathic link	
AC 15, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+3 Dex, +1 armor, +1 natural) hp 14 (5 HD) Immune sleep Fort +1, Ref +4, Will +5 (+7 against enchantments)	
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee longsword +2 (1d8/19–20) Ranged mwk shortbow +6 (1d6/×3) or mwk shortbow with +1 arrows +6 (1d6+1/×3) Base Atk +2; Grp +2 Combat Gear 2 potions of cure light wounds, 2 scrolls of acid arrow, scroll of burning hands (DC 12), scroll of expeditious retreat, scroll of obscuring mist, scroll of sleep (DC 12), wand of magic missiles (CL 3rd, 50 charges), wand of invisibility (50 charges) Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 2nd; 1d20+7 to overcome SR): 3rd— <i>fireball</i> (DC 17), <i>haste</i> 2nd— <i>blur</i> , <i>cat's grace</i> , <i>scorching ray</i> (ranged touch +5) 1st— <i>burning hands</i> (DC 13), <i>mage armor</i> , <i>shocking grasp</i> (touch +2), <i>true strike</i> 0— <i>acid splash</i> (ranged touch +5), <i>detect magic</i> , <i>light</i> , <i>ray of frost</i> (ranged touch +5)	
Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 16, Wis 13, Cha 8 SQ able to notice secret or concealed doors, familiar, share spells Feats Alertness ^B (if familiar is within 5 ft.), Craft Wand ^B , Scribe Scroll ^B , Spell Focus (evocation), Spell Penetration Skills Concentration +8, Decipher Script +11, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +5, Listen +5, Search +5, Spellcraft +13, Spot +5 (+8 in bright light) Possessions combat gear plus longsword, masterwork shortbow with 20 arrows and 10 +1 arrows, amulet of natural armor +1, bracers of armor +1, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, 10 candles, map case, three pages of parchment, ink, inkpen, spell component pouch, spellbook, quiver Spellbook all prepared plus all cantrips, 1st— <i>expeditious retreat</i> , <i>magic missile</i> , <i>obscuring mist</i> , <i>shield</i> , <i>sleep</i> ; 2nd— <i>invisibility</i> , <i>mirror image</i>	

STRIFE	CR —
Male hawk N Tiny magical beast (augmented animal) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +16 Languages empathic link, speak with master	

- Appendices -

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 17 (+2 size, +3 Dex, +5 natural) hp 7 (5 HD) Resist improved evasion Fort +2, Ref +5, Will +6
Spd 10 ft. (2 squares), fly 60 ft. (average) Melee talons +7 (1d4–2) Space 2-1/2 ft.; Reach 0 ft. Base Atk +2; Grp –8 Atk Options deliver touch spells
Abilities Str 6, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 6 Feats Alertness, Weapon Finesse ^B Skills Concentration +8, Listen +4, Spot +16

FERRA CR 5

Female halfling rogue 5 N Small humanoid Init +4; Senses Listen +9, Spot +7 Languages Common, Elven, Halfling
AC 23, touch 16, flat-footed 23; Dodge, Mobility, uncanny dodge (+1 size, +4 Dex, +4 armor, +2 shield, +1 deflection, +1 natural) hp 25 (5 HD) Resist evasion Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +1 (+3 against fear)
Spd 20 ft. (4 squares) Melee mwk short sword +6 (1d4+1/19–20) Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d6/19–20) or mwk light crossbow +9 (1d6+1/19–20) with +1 <i>bolt</i> Base Atk +3; Grp +0 Atk Options sneak attack +3d6 Combat Gear <i>elixir of hiding</i> , <i>elixir of sneaking</i> , <i>potion of blur</i> , 2 <i>potions of cure moderate wounds</i> , <i>potion of jump</i> , tanglefoot bag
Abilities Str 12, Dex 18, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 10 SQ trap sense +1, trapfinding Feats Dodge, Mobility Skills Balance +8, Bluff +6, Climb +4, Diplomacy +2, Disguise +0 (+2 acting), Disable Device +11, Hide +16, Intimidate +2, Jump +7, Listen +9, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +11, Search +8, Spot +7, Tumble +14 Possessions <i>mithral shirt</i> , +1 <i>buckler</i> , masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow, 3 +1 <i>bolts</i> , <i>ring of protection</i> +1, <i>amulet of natural armor</i> +1, <i>universal solvent</i> , backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, masterwork thieves' tools, hooded lantern, three pints of oil, case with 10 bolts, 29 gp

GERALD CR 5

Male gnome bard 5 CG Small humanoid Init +5; Senses low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +0 Languages Common, Draconic, Dwarven, Gnome
AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 15; +4 against giants (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 armor) hp 30 (5 HD) Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3 (+5 against illusions)
Spd 20 ft. (4 squares) Melee mwk longsword +4 (1d6–1/19–20) Ranged +1 <i>light crossbow</i> +6 (1d6+1/19–20) Base Atk +3; Grp –2 Atk Options +1 on attacks against kobolds and goblinoids Special Actions bardic music 5/day (inspire competence, inspire courage +1, fascinate 2 targets, countersong) Combat Gear 2 flasks of acid, 4 flasks of alchemist fire, antitoxin, 2 <i>potions of cure light wounds</i> , 3 tanglefoot bags, thunderstone, <i>wand of color spray</i> (13 charges) Bard Spells Known (CL 5th): 2nd (2/day)— <i>blur</i> , <i>daze monster</i> (DC 17), <i>eagle's splendor</i>

1st (4/day)— <i>cause fear</i> (DC 15), <i>cure light wounds</i> , <i>lesser confusion</i> (DC 16), <i>sleep</i> (DC 16) 0 (3/day)— <i>daze</i> (DC 15), <i>lullaby</i> (DC 15), <i>message</i> , <i>open/close</i> , <i>read magic</i> , <i>resistance</i>
Spell-like Abilities (CL 1st): 1/day— <i>dancing lights</i> , <i>ghost sound</i> (DC 14), <i>prestidigitation</i> , <i>speak with animals</i> (burrowing mammal, 1 minute)

Abilities Str 8, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 18 SQ bardic knowledge +7 Feats Improved Initiative, Spell Focus (enchantment) Skills Bluff +10, Concentration +8, Craft (alchemy) +7, Diplomacy +14, Disguise +4 (+6 acting), Gather Information +11, Hide +8, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (local) +7, Listen +6, Perform (wind instruments) +14, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +8, Spot +0, Use Magic Device +8 (+10 scrolls) Possessions combat gear plus +1 <i>studded leather</i> , masterwork longsword, +1 <i>light crossbow</i> , <i>cloak of Charisma</i> +2, <i>feather token</i> (bird, fan), backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, masterwork lute, flint and steel, three torches, case with 10 bolts, flute, spell component pouch, 5 sunrods, 15 tindertwigs
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HELEN CR 5

Female half-elf ranger 3/rogue 2 NG Medium humanoid (elf) Init +3; Senses low-light vision; Listen +8, Spot +8 Languages Common, Elven
AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +4 armor) hp 24 (5 HD) Immune sleep Resist evasion Fort +3, Ref +9, Will +3 (+5 against enchantments)
Spd 30 ft. (6 squares) Melee mwk longsword +6 (1d8+1/19–20) or mwk longsword +4 (1d8+1/19–20) and mwk kurki +4 (1d4/18–20) Ranged +1 <i>composite longbow</i> (Strength+1) +8 (1d8+2/×3) or +1 <i>composite longbow</i> (Strength+1) +6/+6 (1d8+2/×3) w/ Rapid Shot Base Atk +4; Grp +5 Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot, favored enemy outsiders (evil) +2, sneak attack +1d6 Combat Gear <i>elixir of hiding</i> , <i>potion of cat's grace</i> , 3 <i>potions of cure light wounds</i>
Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 12 SQ trapfinding, wild empathy +4 (+0 against magical beasts) Feats Endurance ^B , Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot ^B , Track ^B , Two-Weapon Fighting Skills Balance +5, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +5, Hide +10, Jump +8, Knowledge (nature) +5, Listen +8, Move Silently +9, Search +4, Spot +8, Survival +9 (+11 aboveground natural environments), Tumble +10 Possessions combat gear plus +1 <i>studded leather</i> , masterwork longsword, masterwork kukri, +1 <i>composite longbow</i> (Strength +1), <i>amulet of health</i> +2, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, three torches, quiver with 20 arrows

JOLINE CR 5

Female human avatar* 2/paladin 3 *See Green Ronin's <i>Avatar's Handbook</i> for details. LG Medium humanoid Init +1; Senses Listen +1, Spot +1 Aura courage (10 ft.) Languages Common
AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22 (+1 Dex, +9 armor, +3 armor) hp 39 (5 HD) Immune disease, fear Fort +11, Ref +5, Will +8
Spd 20 ft. in full plate (4 squares), base speed 30 ft. Melee mwk longspear +6 (1d8+1/×3) or mwk morningstar +6 (1d8+1)

- Appendices -

Ranged mwk light crossbow +6 (1d8/19–20)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5

Atk Options Power Attack, smite evil 1/day (+3 attack, +3 damage)

Special Actions lay on hands (9)

Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Avatar Spells Known (CL 2nd):

1st (4/day)—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds*, *shield of faith*, *summon monster I*

0 (6/day)—*cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 13), *guidance*, *resistance*, *virtue*

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):

At will—*detect evil*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 16

SQ moderate aura of law and good

Feats Augment Summoning, Power Attack, Spell Focus (conjuration)^B

Skills Concentration +5, Diplomacy +4, Heal +4, Knowledge (religion) +4, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +1, Ride +3, Sense Motive +3, Spellcraft +4, Spot +1, Survival +1 (+3 on other planes)

Possessions +1 *full plate*, +1 *heavy steel shield*, masterwork longspear, masterwork morningstar, masterwork light crossbow, *periapt of Wisdom* +2, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, case with 10 bolts, wooden holy symbol, three torches

ZED

CR 5

Male human thanemage* 4/barbarian 1 *See the *Advanced Player's Manual* for details.

N Medium humanoid

Init +1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +1

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven

AC 16, touch 11, flat-footed 15 (+1 Dex, +4 armor, +1 shield)

hp 38 (5 HD)

Resist evasion

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +5

Spd 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 *battleaxe* +8 (1d8+3/×3) or mwk morningstar +8 (1d8+2)

Ranged masterwork composite longbow (Strength +2) +7 (1d8+2/×3)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +7

Atk Options Cleave, Combat Expertise, Power Attack, rage 1/day, spirit strike 2/day

Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of jump*, *potion of shield of faith* +2, 2 tanglefoot bags

Thanemage Spells Prepared (CL 4th):

1st—*true strike*

0—*daze* (DC 12), *detect magic*, *ray of frost* (ranged touch +6)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 15, Wis 10, Cha 8

Feats Cleave, Combat Casting, Combat Expertise^B, Power Attack^B

Skills Concentration +9, Intimidate +3, Jump +12, Knowledge (arcana) +9, Listen +4, Ride +8, Spellcraft +11, Spot +1, Survival +5, Swim +6

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *studded leather*, masterwork light steel shield, +1 *battleaxe*, masterwork morningstar, masterwork composite longbow (Strength +2), *cloak of resistance* +1, backpack, waterskin, one day's trail rations, bedroll, sack, flint and steel, quiver with 20 arrows, wooden holy symbol, three torches

Spellbook all prepared plus *acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*magic missile*

Rage (Ex) When raging, Zed uses the following statistics for 7 rounds:

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 13

hp 48

Fort +8, **Will** +7

Melee +1 *battleaxe* +10 (1d8+5/×3)

Melee mwk morningstar +10 (1d8+4)

Grp +9

Abilities Str 18, Con 18

Skills Jump +15, Swim +10

Spiritstrike (Su) As a free action, Zed can charge a weapon or his hand with supernatural energy. As part of an attack or full attack, he may deliver the spiritstrike with a melee touch attack or in conjunction with a melee weapon, though not as part of a touch spell. This attack can strike incorporeal creatures without the usual miss chance and ignore damage reduction as though the weapon were magical. On a successful touch, the spiritstrike deals 1d6 points of damage. If used with a weapon, the weapon deals an additional 1d6 points of damage. As well, if he confirms a critical hit with a weapon augmented by spiritstrike, he doesn't multiply the spiritstrike damage, but instead deals an additional 1d10 points of damage with his morningstar and 2d10 with his battleaxe.

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