Dungeons & Dragons® Campaign Accessory

Forgotten Realms®

Mysteries of the Moonsea

Thomas M. Reid Sean K Reynolds
Darrin Drader Wil Upchurch

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® CAMPAIGN ACCESSORY

FORGOTTEN REALMS®

DESIGNERS: **WIL UPCHURCH (Melvaunt), SEAN K REYNOLDS (Hillsfar), DARRIN DRADER (Mulmaster), THOMAS M. REID (Zhentil Keep)**

EDITORS: **JOHN THOMPSON, GARY SARLI**

EDITING MANAGER: **KIM MOHAN**

DESIGN MANAGER: **CHRISTOPHER PERKINS**

DEVELOPMENT MANAGER: **JESSE DECKER**

SENIOR ART DIRECTOR D&D: **STACY LONGSTREET**

DIRECTOR OF RPG R&D: **BILL SLAVICSEK**

PRODUCTION MANAGERS: **JOSH FISCHER, RANDALL CREWS**

FORGOTTEN REALMS ART DIRECTORS: **RYAN SANSAVER, MARI KOLKOWSKY**

COVER ARTIST: **WILLIAM O'CONNOR**

INTERIOR ARTISTS: **RON LEMEN, WILLIAM O'CONNOR, FRANCIS TSAI, FRANZ VOHWINKEL**

GRAPHIC DESIGNER: **ROBERT RAPER**

CARTOGRAPHERS: **KYLE HUNTER, ROBERT LAZZARETTI**

GRAPHIC PRODUCTION SPECIALIST: **ANGELIKA LOKOTZ**

IMAGE TECHNICIAN: **CHRISTINA WILEY**

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Wizards of the Coast, Inc.
P.O. Box 707
Renton, WA 98057-0707
(Questions?) 1-800-324-6496

EUROPEAN HEADQUARTERS
Hasbro UK Ltd
Caswell Way
Newport, Gwent NP9 0YH
GREAT BRITAIN
Please keep this address for your records

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Table of Contents

Introduction 4
How to Use This Book 4
Book Organization 4
DM Navigation Tips 5
Where to Start 5
Work You Have to Do 5
Moonsea Primer 5
Facts to Keep in Mind 5
How to Introduce the Region 6
What You Need to Use This Book 6

Chapter 1: Melvaunt and the North 8
Geographical Overview 8
The Campaign in Melvaunt 8
Melvaunt, City of Swords 9
Government and Law 10
Politics 10
Crime 10
Defenses 10
Trade 10
Adventurers 10
Religion 11
City Locations 11
Villains of Melvaunt 13
Rumors in Melvaunt 17
Melvaunt Quests 17
Devil's Fire Tavern 17
Halls of Metal, Blood of Stone 20
The Cursed Warehouse 24
Trouble in Pain 26
Northern Moonsea Quests 29
Adventuring in Thar 29
Rogues' Camp 30
Vorbyx's Watchpost 33
Chambers of Bone 36
Ogres' Stronghold 38
The Tomb of Vorbyx 42

Chapter 2: Hillsfar and the South 45
Geographical Overview 45
The Campaign in Hillsfar 45
Hillsfar, City of Trade 46
Government and Law 47
Politics 47
Crime 48
Defenses 49
Trade 49
Adventurers 49
Religion 49
City Locations 49
Villains of Hillsfar 51
Rumors in Hillsfar 56
Hillsfar Quests 57
Rogue's Redoubt 57
Deadly Arboretum 60
Urban Dungeon 63
Mordak's Tower 66
Red Wizards Enclave 69
Southern Moonsea Quests 75
Roadside Shrine 75
The Bell in the Depths 77
Ruins in Cormanthor 80
Abarat's Folly 84

Chapter 3: Mulmaster and the East 88
Geographical Overview 88
The Campaign in Mulmaster 88
Mulmaster, City of Danger 89
Government and Law 90
Politics 90
Crime 91
Defenses 91
Trade 91
Adventurers 91
Religion 91
City Locations 91
Villains of Mulmaster 94
Rumors in Mulmaster 97
Mulmaster Quests 98
Undercity Sewer 98
Zhentarim Safe House 100
Partially Flooded Dungeon 103
Assassin's Nest 105
Thayan Enclave 108
Eastern Moonsea Quests 112
The Seaside Caves 112
The Pillar of Fire 114
Excavation Site 117
The Elemental Scourge 119

Chapter 4: Zhentil Keep and the West 122
Geographical Overview 122
The Campaign in Zhentil Keep 122
Zhentil Keep 123
Government and Law 124
Politics 125
Crime 125
Defenses 125
Trade 126
Adventurers 126
Religion 126
City Locations 126
Villains of Zhentil Keep 129
Rumors in Zhentil Keep 132
Zhentil Keep Quests 132
Sinister Inn 134
Slave Auction 137
Monster Emporium 139
Beholders' Lair 141
The Temple of Bane 143
Western Moonsea Quests 146
The Blemished Altar 146
Lost Temple 148
Dragons' Lair 151
Citadel of the Raven 154
The Enchanted Pool 158

Introduction

The Moonsea is rich, indeed . . . gold and jewels, valuable pelts, and old ruins ripe for plundering. But it is a hard place to live—cold, brutal, and dangerous, and it makes the men who live there into something much the same, tempering the soft iron of their spirits into cold, sharp steel. The people of the Moonsea are hard and unforgiving because if they weren't they'd be dead at the hands of monsters, tyrants, or the cruel turns of nature herself."

—Khelben "Blackstaff" Arunsun

"*Dare—and beware!*"

—Moonsea battle cry

How to Use This Book

Mysteries of the Moonsea takes a different approach from other regional Forgotten Realms books; it's a box of ready-to-use campaign pieces rather than an instruction manual on how to make those pieces yourself. Instead of you having to read an entire regional book and then come up with your own campaign based on that region, this book gives you the basic background information you need to run a campaign in the area and provides you with a large number of completed adventures from which to pick and choose.

Rather than a comprehensive description of every person, place, and thing in the Moonsea region, *Mysteries of the Moonsea* focuses on four main cities and provides scores of miniadventures (sometimes called "quests" hereafter) for a Moonsea-based campaign. Each quest is tied to a particular part of the Moonsea, and some have links to one or more other quests in that area or another area, allowing you to string them together into a long campaign starting at 1st level and ending around 18th level. Roughly half of the quests are set in or very close to one of the four main cities, and the other half are located farther away.

The quests have a lot of overlap in terms of character level, which allows you to pick and choose appropriate adventures for your PCs based on their abilities and interests and what sort of campaign you want to run. For example, if you're planning a city campaign you can just use the in-city quests, while a group of heroes consisting of barbarians, druids, and rangers might enjoy all of the outlying quests and only rarely enter the cities. The overlapping quests and the many links allow you to build a nonlinear adventure that responds to the actions the PCs take. It's possible to run an entire campaign using only half of the included quests, and run a later (or simultaneous) campaign using the other half, with each sets of PCs hearing about the other's activities and sometimes helping or hindering each other. You can also plan to use all forty adventures in one campaign, particularly if the PCs deal with plot elements quickly or prefer combat adventures rather than themes involving diplomacy, intrigue, and mystery.

Because the quests are self-contained, you can also use them for stand-alone "side treks" in campaigns set elsewhere in Faerûn—for example, a Dalelands campaign might divert into the southern Moonsea area and deal with one of the quests there, an Anauroch campaign might make use of one of the Zhentarim quests in the western Moonsea, and so on. Some city quests might fit well in another city entirely. Finally, with so many *portals* all over Faerûn, it's quite possible for the PCs to stumble across a Moonsea quest through a *portal,* either returning to their original location when they're done or sticking around to follow up on the links to other Moonsea quests.

Book Organization

After the remaining short explanatory text at the beginning of this introduction section, the book gives an overview of the territory around the Moonsea, expanding on the information presented in the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting.* The remaining four chapters cover one of the four rough quadrants of the Moonsea, starting with low-level adventures and culminating in high-level adventures: North (focusing on Melvaunt), south (focusing on Hillsfar), east (focusing on Mulmaster), and west

(focusing on Zhentil Keep). The expanded Moonsea map on page 7 shows the general borders for each of these quadrants.

Each chapter starts with a short geographical overview of the quadrant, then follows with several pages of more detailed information on its primary city-state, giving you key locations, city demographics, influential groups, and full game statistics for several level-appropriate villains. Following the villains is a list of rumors the PCs can overhear using skill checks (some of which are false or red herrings, some of which are plot hooks to various quests or other quadrants). Next are location-based quests set within or immediately nearby the city, followed by another set of quests that take place in outlying areas of the quadrant.

DM Navigation Tips

The easiest way to navigate the book is to determine what adventure levels you're looking for and jump to that chapter. The north quadrant (Chapter 1) is for PCs of 1st–7th level, the south (Chapter 2) is for 6th–12th level, the east (Chapter 3) is for 9th–14th level, and the west (Chapter 4) is for 12th–18th level. If you plan to run a long campaign using this book, you'll start at the beginning and work your way back as the campaign progresses. The events in and around these adventures take place in the last half of the Year of Rogue Dragons (1373 DR).

Where to Start

If you're planning on running a campaign in the Moonsea, read the Moonsea Primer later in this introduction. Once you have a grip on the background material, figure out where you want to start the campaign or at what level you want the PCs to start (one greatly influences the other, at least if you don't want to modify the NPCs and monsters to suit a different party level), then pick the chapter appropriate to your answer and read up on that quadrant and its quests.

If you're going to pick and choose material from this book for an ongoing campaign outside the Moonsea, you can skip the Moonsea Primer and jump right to the chapter that has quests for the target levels you need (see DM Navigation Tips in this introduction).

Work You Have to Do

This book is not a super-adventure with one common plot linking it all together. It's not a detailed adventure path with comprehensive answers for many possible actions. It's up to you as the DM to help create solid links for the quests in this book so the PCs can go from one to another in the order you want. You'll also need to fill in some details depending on which aspects of the cities and quests they want to explore. You'll also need to watch what the players are doing and read up on the future quests to push the connections they might be interested in and deemphasize the ones that you don't want to pursue or are inappropriate for the party. This book provides a lot of component pieces that you can easily assemble, but you have to do the assembling—here are the bricks, you provide the mortar and the elbow grease.

Mysteries of the Moonsea assumes the PCs are good or at least neutral. Some quests expect that PCs will want to get involved to fight an injustice (such as freeing slaves), defend innocents (such as protecting a village from raiders), and the like, whereas many evil parties have no interest in such things, unless there is a profit to be made. If your campaign's PCs tend to be on the evil side, you'll need to modify the quests to suit their interests. In some cases the "villains" of each major city might end up as potential allies, or you could change the "villains" to be more neutral or good so as to remain obstacles for the PCs.

Moonsea Primer

Before continuing in this section, familiarize yourself with the description of the Moonsea region provided on pages 159–165 of the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting*.

Facts to Keep in Mind

Weather: Moonsea is located in the northern part of Faerûn. While not as cold as the Silver Marches, it is much cooler than the Dalelands or Waterdeep, and people dress warmly all year round (a fur cape or cloak is a common article of clothing in the Moonsea). Anyone who walks around in light clothing during cold weather is obviously either a fool or someone who is using magic to stay warm and doesn't care if people know it (and thus a fool). Minor magic items that protect against the cold, such as rings or potions that give resistance 3 against nonlethal damage caused by cold, are in common use among the wealthier people of the Moonsea, who enjoy not having to wear bulky clothing all the time (and these people are the ones who can afford bodyguards to protect them from robbers who would take such luxuries from them). The lake itself is fed by glacial meltwater and even in summer it can be cold enough to kill a swimmer. Because of this, most people who make their living on the water can't swim, since they've never had the opportunity to practice; instead, they have learned more practical skills such as fire building and how to not fall out of a boat.

In the winter months much of the sea freezes over, making travel across the ice possible but (due to the great distances involved) not very common. The larger cities sometimes use icebreaking ships, summoned monsters, or fire magic to keep their dock areas somewhat clear of ice, though this is impractical on a large scale. Ice fishing is common, with fishermen walking to their favorite spots rather than boating. The first snow usually falls in early to middle Uktar, and the land is consistently snowy from Nightal to Alturiak, with occasional snowfalls happening through Tarsakh.

The frequent cold and limited technology means that Moonsea inns usually have a small number of large rooms rather than a large number of small rooms; this reduces the number of individual fireplaces needed and the overall risk of fire. Some inns have just one large common room heated by a large hearth. This means these places have less privacy than a typical adventurer's inn but attacks are less likely because there are so many witnesses. The places with smaller rooms tend to use closed metal braziers full of hot coals to offset the chill.

Refer to Cold Dangers, *DMG* 302, for more information on dealing with cold environments. Summers usually are not cold enough to be considered a cold hazard (with highs about 60°F, 16°C). Spring and autumn are routinely in the cold weather category (40°F, 4°C

or below), and winter is usually in the severe cold category (0°F, –18°C or below), often dipping into extreme cold (below –20°F, –29°C) several times over the course of the winter.

Because of the natural cold, those who have the means to magically protect themselves against cold (such as adventurers, spellcasters, and other wealthy folk) often do so, and in turn are aware that their enemies might have similar protection. This means that magic-using NPCs are less likely to use cold attacks. since doing so is often a waste of time (though the followers of Auril, unpopular even in the Moonsea, would disagree). PCs who gird themselves against magical cold in anticipation of many "cold mages" in the area might be surprised that *fireball* and *lightning bolt* are just as common here as in warmer lands.

City-States: Because of the danger of bandits, monsters, and military rivals, civilized populations gather in large settlements and behind walls for protection and comfort; every town has at least a wooden palisade wall. Adventurers traveling cross-country are much less likely to stumble across a hamlet or village here than elsewhere in Faerûn. Most settlements don't allow visitors after dark, and some even refuse entry to strangers during the day except under special circumstances—even visiting merchants must make their deals outside the town wall.

Monsters: Though most parts of Faerûn have at least occasional problems with marauding monsters, the Moonsea is particularly dangerous in this regard. Surrounded by old mountains and ancient forests, and divided by a mysterious deep sea, the land here has more than its fair share of strange beasts. In particular, the lake was once called the Sea of Dragons because of the many dragons that came here to mate; its forests and mountains are still riddled with dragon lairs. Moonsea folk do not scoff at rumors of monsters—they tighten their belts, sharpen their swords, and expect the worst. Monster trophies do not impress them; such things hang in the main hall of most towns that have managed to survive for more than a few years.

Religion: The common faiths of the Moonsea reflect its dangerous nature; most of the gods worshiped here are of the "worship me or bad things will happen to you" variety, and the rest fall into the "worship me or I will do bad things to you" category. Whether overt or subtle, these faiths influence how the local people think. Visitors who worship bright and noble gods are likely to be scoffed at behind their backs, while those who worship "frivolous" deities such as Eldath, Lliira, Milil, Sharess, and Sune are often derided to their face. Adventurers who proselytize "foreign" religions quickly draw the attention of Banite loyalists and others who openly serve the evil deities favored here. Most Moonsea folk pay lip service to these deities just to keep potential threats away, not necessarily fully embracing the dark philosophies of these deities.

Suspicion: Because of their frontier situation and the many threats in the Moonsea (particularly from rival city-states), the people of the region are mistrustful of any stranger, since any unknown person could be a spy or assassin from a rival settlement. Unlike other harsh lands where a culture of hospitality to all became the norm for the sake of survival, the Moonsea folk have more of a "take care of your own" attitude. This also makes them reluctant to turn to outsiders for help except under great duress, or when they have no questions about a person's motivations (for example, even in the Moonsea a paladin of Torm is someone you can trust to help you without an ulterior motive). Strangers must prove their worth before earning even a small measure of free hospitality. While the people of the Moonsea are not inherently evil or distrustful (any more than the people of the Dales are inherently friendly and good), that is the attitude bred into them by a culture where survival is hard work and the kind-hearted are usually taken advantage of.

How to Introduce the Region

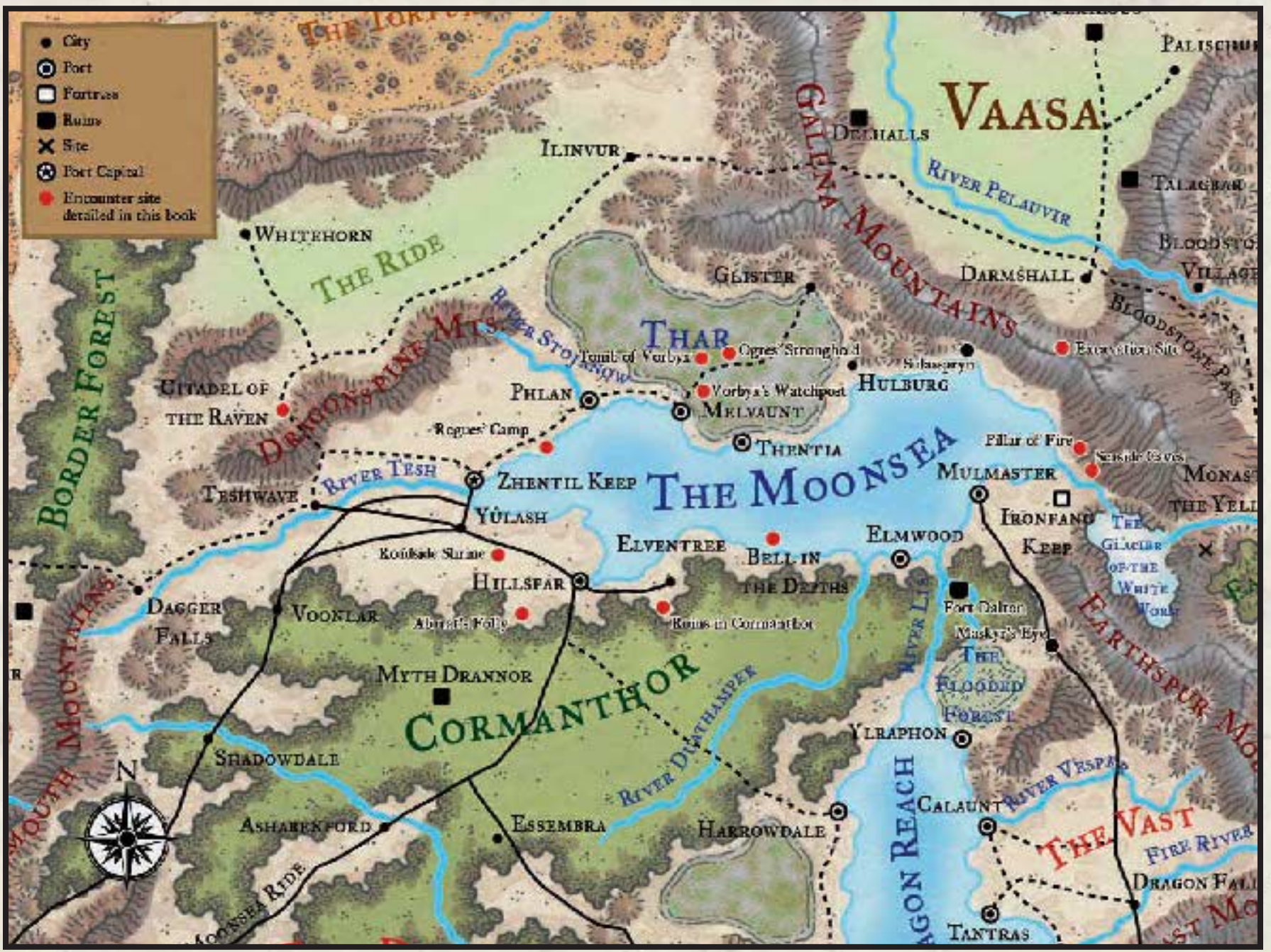
The best way to express the feel of the Moonsea is in real-world terms. If you combine the "harsh land makes a strong people" themes of the Viking civilization with the "we will persevere against adversity" attitude of the pre-Soviet Russian commoners and the strike-it-rich frenzy of the California gold rush, you get a reasonable approximation of the region's temperament. Civilized humans settle there in the hopes of becoming rich or at least living well; they remain out of stubbornness to an almost fatalistic extent, and continue to prosper in each generation because those who work hard succeed—and because failure means death. The Moonsea is not a nice or safe place to live; its settlers are driven people who want make their own choices about their lives, were driven out of their old lands, or know that they are the ones who will triumph.

When running a Moonsea campaign, try to reinforce those three themes. The people of the Moonsea aren't helpless and are content to solve their problems themselves. If they can't solve it themselves they'll endure tyrants or threats in the interest of long-term survival. All of them know that fate could tip the balance in their favor any day now and they'll be rewarded for their hard work. Local PCs should represent these qualities. Foreign PCs should encounter these qualities often as a contrast to your typical Faerûnian peasant. Moonsea folk are not foolish or stupid, just very determined to beat the odds.

What You Need to Use This Book

To use this supplement, you need the three D&D core rulebooks—*Player's Handbook* (*PH*), *Dungeon Master's Guide* (*DMG*), and *Monster Manual* (*MM*)—in addition to the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting* (*FRCS*). Because some of the characters here use the revised regional feats and prestige classes presented in the *Player's Guide to Faerûn* ([PG]), you will find that book helpful. Some of the NPCs presented here use spells from *Player's Guide to Faerûn, Magic of Faerûn* ([Mag]) or *Unapproachable East* ([Una]), but none of those spells are critical to using those NPCs, so you can swap out those spells for others if you don't have those books. In addition, many of these spells were updated and included in *Spell Compendium* ([SC]), so you can refer to those versions if you have that book.

Several encounters are magical locations, which are a new type of resource explained fully in *Dungeon Master's Guide II,* though all the information on the locations in this book is provided for you, and *DMG II* is optional (though you might find it useful for modifying the locations or creating your own).


City
Port
Fortress
Ruins
Site
Port Capital
Encounter site detailed in this book
Vaasa
Ilinvur
Delhalls
Galena Mountains
River Pelauvir
Talagbar
Whitehorn
The Ride
Border Forest
Dragon's Point Mts
Glister
Darmshall
Bloodstone Pass
Thar
Tomb of Vorbya
Ogres' Stronghold
Excavation Site
Hulburg
Citadel of the Raven
Phlan
Vorbya's Watchpost
Melvaunt
Rogues' Camp
Thentia
Pillar of Fire
Seaside Caves
River Tesh
Zhentil Keep
The Moonsea
Mulmaster
Teshwave
Yulash
Ironfang Keep
Elventree
Bell in the Depths
Elmwood
Kenku Shrine
Hillspar
Dagger Falls
Voonlar
Abbot's Folly
Ruins in Cormanthor
Fort Dalton
Misky's Eye
Earthspur Mts
Myth Drannor
Cormanthor
River Lis
The Flooded Forest
Ylraphon
Shadowdale
River Dathamper
Ashabenford
Essembra
Harrowdale
Dragon Reach
Calaunt
River Vespar
The Vast
Fire River
Tantras
N

Melvaunt and the North

"You're seeking a good deal in Melvaunt? I think you're better off looking for a happy man in Thay, my friend! The greatest merchants in the Realms are inside these walls, and they're selling the best merchandise. And don't forget, after you've been overcharged at the stall you've still got to pay the nobles just for the privilege of shopping in their city! No, my friend, I don't think you'll be finding any deals on this afternoon . . . say, didn't you have a money pouch on your belt when we left the inn?"

—Carolin deMark, traveler and resident drunkard at The Breakwater

Geographical Overview

The city of Melvaunt sits on the northern coast of the Moonsea, and serves as the port of entry to many travelers coming to the region. The Northern Moonsea region stretches inland from the shore all the way to the edge of The Ride, encompassing all of Thar. The River Stojanow marks the region's western border; the Galena Mountains frame the region to the east. The city of Glister at the northern edge of Thar is nominally a part of the region, but its people and customs differ significantly from those along the coastline.

The Northern Moonsea is a harsh place whose independent cities are not well connected by roads; most of the region's famed trade takes place by boat. None of the area's rulers want to spend time and money making it easier for armies to march upon them, so roads remain a low priority. The Phlan Path is perhaps the region's most proper road, but even it resembles nothing more than a rutted dirt trail in places.

Ships from Melvaunt constantly shuttle goods to Mulmaster and Hillsfar, where these items can be more efficiently distributed around the region. Legitimate trade with Zhentil Keep is dangerous and rare, but the black market is alive and well, despite the city's attempts to crack down on "traitors" that would do business with their enemies in the west.

The geography of the Northern Moonsea area can be described in three words: drab, marshy, and cold. Vast swaths of the region have little to no vegetation, and the landscape is rarely broken up by trees, hills, or rivers. Building roads through the land is expensive, time-consuming, and ultimately futile, because the stones sink farther into the marsh year after year. Structures outside the major cities encounter much the same problem, and few people have found a compelling reason to build fortifications to defend such unwelcoming terrain.

With little vegetation, frequent incursions by monsters, and a cold climate, farming is relatively unknown along the Northern Moonsea. In the western section, along the River Stojanow, a fertile belt allows for the sowing of some grains and a few hardy vegetables. Without the protection of a major city, however, no large-scale food production takes place. Few small communities pop up in the north for similar reasons, so most of the region's population is concentrated in its cities.

The Great Gray Waste of Thar occupies a large section of the north. It is a bleak and desolate region of marshlands and cold plains, with the occasional mountain or rock formation to break up the landscape. Tribes of orcs and ogres rule, making their homes wherever they can carve out a niche. Scavengers and predators roam the land, from the ubiquitous monstrous vermin to green dragons to the animated skeletons of the unfortunate dead.

The Campaign in Melvaunt

The lands north of the Moonsea are among the most dangerous in all of Faerûn—where better to serve as a proving ground for a band of hardy adventurers who aim to make their mark in the world? If they can't survive the frontier city of Melvaunt or the

wild lands surrounding it, they certainly won't fare well with the intrigues of the Zhentarim, Red Wizards, and mad mages found in the region's other cities.

This section begins the journey your players' characters will take across this dangerous and intrigue-laden territory. Even low-level adventurers have skills and wits superior to those of the average person, and they'll need every advantage they can muster to escape the city and its environs alive. The reward for their hard work is an invitation to even more challenging and dangerous adventures in the city of Hillsfar and beyond.

The quests found in this section are suitable for beginning characters and will take them into the middle levels of their careers. These quests can all stand alone or be pieced together to create a longer story arc, and also serve to prepare the characters for the challenges ahead. Small tidbits here and there refer to adventures in other chapters, from a mysterious corpse deep in an ogre stronghold to a group of tattooed slaves who share an origin with others found in cities across the Moonsea.

Even though they are built for low-level characters, many of the quests in this section are quite difficult. When characters have few hit points and minimal magic, even a single orc can decimate the party with a few lucky rolls. You should encourage the players to use tactics and stealth to pursue their goals . . . not being seen by your enemies is the best way to not get hurt by them. In some cases, a frontal assault by the PCs will surely end in their death, so you must plan for and allow alternative methods for the characters to deal with their adversaries. Remember, in many cases, the PC's foes will be just as interested in staying alive as the characters are. You can reward clever ideas by setting DCs low enough for low-level characters to meet, or by forgoing a skill check here and there and just assuming success.

The quests are presented for a range of character levels, so you must know the capabilities of your players' characters before beginning the adventure. If you don't think your PCs are up to a particular job, then use side adventures (such as those hinted at by the hooks in the rumors section) to supply them with helpful items, hints about what is to come, and experience.

Melvaunt, City of Swords

Melvaunt squats on the Moonsea's northern coast, lit by a thousand forges. It is a city of metalsmiths and merchants, where slaves are traded on the open market but laws are made behind closed doors. Smoke from the workshops hangs like a black curtain over the city, warning away would-be conquerors from Zhentil Keep as well as the savage inhabitants of Thar.

Those who live in Melvaunt either ally themselves with one of the three ruling families or keep their heads low as they go about their daily business. Much of that business revolves around industries that service the craftsmen and sailors that make Melvaunt their home. The city does a bustling trade in a wide variety of goods, most coming in by ship from Mulmaster or other towns across the Moonsea.

Melvaunt is cold and clammy, with a persistent mist that defines the city in the eyes of many foreigners. This moisture mixes with the smoke and ash to kill most traces of vegetation, and it leaves an oily residue on buildings, ships, and people.

Illustration by Ron Lemen

Melvaunt, City of Swords

Melvaunt (metropolis): Conventional; AL CE; Spending limit 80,000; Assets 137,600,000 gp; Population 34,408; Races isolated (humans 95%, dwarves 2%, other 3%).

Authority Figures: Ghunduilith Leiyraghon (NG male human fighter 9), Lord Chancellor; Halmuth Bruil (NE male human fighter 13), Lord of Keys; Meldonder Nurian (LN male human wizard 13), Lord of the Waves.

Important Characters: Ulblyn Blackalbuck (NG male halfling bard 6/Harper agent[PG] 2), Harper; Abarel Stendale (NG male human fighter 13), mercenary captain); the seventeen other Lords Councilor.

Notable Imports: Grain, leather, livestock, ore, timber, vegetables.

Notable Exports: Armor, arms, slaves, and finished metal goods of all types.

Government and Law

A Council of Lords nominally rules the city of Melvaunt, although most of the current lords pay more attention to their mercantile interests than to the city's administration. Because trade rules all activity in the city, every member of the council must be a merchant of some repute (although it is often half-joked that such reputation need not be good or honorable). Lords rule at their pleasure until they die, at which time they are replaced by a vote of the remaining council members. A candidate must meet the following requirements in addition to being a merchant of the city:

- Must not be implicated in the death of a lord.
- Must not be, or ever have been, allied with enemies of Melvaunt—including Mulmaster or Zhentil Keep.
- Must make a cash payment of 100,000 gp in trade bars to the council as a show of good faith.

New seats can be purchased directly, should an impatient merchant desire a position of power before an existing lord dies—but such hubris is costly. The aspiring lord must make a donation of 2,000,000 gp to the city coffers, in addition to meeting all of the above requirements.

Politics

Three mercantile families hold the majority of power on the council—the Nanthers, the Leiyraghons, and the Bruils, in descending order of influence. Together they hold thirteen of the twenty-one seats currently existing on the council, through blood or alliance. Seven of the other seats are all held by individual merchants who sell their allegiance to the houses on a case-by-case basis. There is currently one vacant seat—that of Lord Envoy, ruler of the council.

The recent death of Dundeld Nanther, patriarch of the family and former Lord Envoy of the council, has weakened the Nanthers' tenuous grasp on power; Dundeld's experience and title legitimized the family's claim to rightful rulership of the city. Now, the power vacuum after his death has mobilized the family's ambitious enemies, and an all-out political war surrounds the choice of the next Lord Envoy.

Crime

Crime is abundant in Melvaunt; most of the lords are more concerned with their business dealings and family status than maintaining order in the city. The Lord of Keys tries to curb crime as much as possible—captured criminals provide him an outlet for his sadistic streak—but the portion of the army he designates as the city guard is not large enough to keep tabs on the entire metropolis.

Crimes against ordinary citizens are usually punished with fines, but those against the noble families (and their minions) or merchants and tradesmen merit imprisonment, impressment into the navy or army, or even death.

Defenses

Melvaunt's wall is patrolled day and night by a contingent of the city's army, which consists of five thousand men-at-arms, led by Halmuth Bruil, the Lord of Keys. Bruil recently took the title of general for political purposes. The city's former general, Abarel Stendale, was demoted after a manufactured scandal caused him to lose his honorary lordship. Stendale's hatred of the Bruil family burns bright, and he utilizes his new position as captain of the City Guard to impede the Briul's machinations wherever he can.

The army also watches the city's environs, though its patrol radius has shrunk as pressure from Thar has made the outer reaches of the old patrol range increasingly dangerous. Melvaunt's small but effective navy patrols the nearby waters of the Moonsea, driving away pirates and escorting important shipments into the docks.

Trade

Guilds hold quite a bit of power in the city, as one would expect in such a mercantile power. Some are legitimate trade organizations that collect dues, ensure quality, and represent their trade's interests to the council. Others are simply fronts for organized crime, running neighborhood protection rackets and making foreign traders feel very uncomfortable when undercutting local craftspeople. Several guilds have direct ties to one of the city's ruling families, meaning that the line between official law and guild law is often blurred; the Bruils rule the Metalworkers Guild, the Leiyraghons control the Brotherhood of Carpenters and Shipwrights, and the Nanthers head the Jewelers Guild and Council of Silversmiths.

Adventurers

Adventurers are welcome in Melvaunt, and they are often hired to put a neutral face on the more direct political maneuverings of the ruling families. They also help control nearby threats from Thar, leaving the city's army to defend against threats from pirates and the Zhentarim. In fact, the council regularly publishes a tract listing rumors of treasure and monsters in nearby Thar, making it easier for adventurers to launch forays from the city. The fact that this brings significant wealth back into Melvaunt also motivates the council.

Religion

There are three major temples in Melvaunt. The oldest is the Purple Portals, a temple and workshop dedicated to Gond the Wonderbringer. The Resting Place of the Whip was constructed after Loviatar's clerics saw the potential for corrupting the merchant nobles who ran the city. The newest temple is the Hall of Laughter, dedicated to Lliira. Many of the city's wildest parties are held here, some sponsored by the Leiyraghons, the most notable patrons of the Lliiran clergy.

The city also boasts shrines to Tempus and Tymora, as well as a festhall dedicated to Sharess where the most decadent citizens go to quench their religious thirst.

City Locations

The following are noteworthy locations within the city of Melvaunt.

1. Marketplace

This open area in the middle of the city is the heart of Melvaunt's bustling trade. A wide variety of goods from all over Faerûn can be found here, traded in open stalls, covered tents, and the livestock pen. The smoke and ash of the smithies seems far away here, and it is the one place in the city where the tension of rival families isn't overtly felt. Sixteen city guardsmen patrol here at all times.

2. Leiyraghon Manor

The most ostentatious dwelling within the city, this sprawling castle occupies a large plot of land abutting the southeastern wall. While the family was known for holding public tournaments on their grounds to display its power and wealth, all such events were cancelled earlier this year upon the death of Dundeld Nanther. Publicly, the family says it is observing a time of mourning, but it is far more concerned with letting large groups of people onto its property during this time of political uncertainty. As a result, the Nanthers have doubled their usual guard from twenty-four to forty-eight men-at-arms, calling in their operatives from around Melvaunt; while this move has strengthened the family's ability to defend the castle, it has weakened the Nanthers' grip on the rest of the city.

Whispers around town have it that the Leiyraghons were comfortable with the Nanthers in power, and that the family has now descended into paranoia and internal strife as it tries to decide how to assert itself in city politics.

3. Nanther Keep

North of Leiyraghon Manor near Melvaunt's northeastern wall sits Nanther Keep. The small castle is draped in black tapestries to mourn the loss of its patriarch, Dundeld Nanther; it is frequently said around town that what is truly mourned is the loss of the Nanthers' power. With the Bruils firmly in control of the city's army, the citizens rightly feel the winds of change blowing through the upper echelons of government. Currently 20 private soldiers guard Nanther Keep, most brought in from outside the city (the Bruils make life hard for local men-at-arms who take the post).

Nanther Keep is well known for its exotic garden that features specimens from all across Faerûn. The gardener uses magic to mimic the atmospheric conditions of environments as diverse as the jungles of Chult and the Calim Desert.

4. Bruilhaven

This ivy-covered mansion is home to the Bruil family. Of modest design and built of brick, the building's exterior reflects the outwardly austere ethic of the clan that calls it home. Inside, however, the family indulges in ultrachic furnishings and lavish adornments, especially in the kitchen and dining rooms. Fifteen men-at-arms patrol the grounds at all times, a large force relative to the size of the estate. The Bruils have recently upgraded the arms and armor of their guards, presenting evidence of their strength in preparation for their push to control the Council of Lords.

5. Asberyth

This plain, square building holds the offices of all government employees as well as the chambers of the Council of Lords. The council meets here once a month to decide the city's business, and these meetings usually last anywhere from one to five days, depending on the importance of the issues and the political maneuvering taking place between the three families. Twenty-four armed guards stand watch here during council sessions, with about two-thirds that number at all other times.

6. Shipyards

The Brotherhood of Carpenters and Shipwrights builds all of Melvaunt's ships here, both warships and trading vessels. It is the most heavily guarded area of the city, with no fewer than thirty city guardsmen patrolling day and night. Several of the city's tax assessors are based here, as are the ship inspectors who check all incoming vessels.

7. Melvaunt Docks

The Melvaunt docks are not the largest on the Moonsea but are probably the most organized and tightly controlled. No ship enters the docks without being examined and taxed, although the three major families all have ways around the system if needed. Inspectors can be found here day and night, and a special retinue of soldiers is under the direct control of the chief inspector. As the primary loading and unloading point for all seagoing mercantile activity, the docks are lined with warehouses and sleeping quarters for sailors. Most of the bunkhouses are seedy places, but one new inn, the Floating Fighter, caters specifically to captains and other more respectable clientele.

Ships find their way into the docks with the help of the Finger of the Gods, a 120-foot-tall, cast iron lighthouse that stands at one end of the docks. A magical light shining through its lens guides ships to port. Jered Wavetamer (CG human fighter 5) watches the lighthouse and makes sure no one tampers with its magic. The old sea dog is filled with stories from the city's history, and he somehow picks up a fair amount of current news. He enjoys company and will happily share his stories, especially if his visitors give him new tales to store away.

8. The Temple of Gond

The Wonderbringer's temple in Melvaunt is a hub of activity. Known as the Purple Portals, it attracts pilgrims (mostly gnomes) who come here to see and utilize the impressive lab and workshop facilities within its walls. Initiates of Gond witness the creation and modification of a diverse array of specialized machinery, and can even take part in classes on techniques developed by the High Artificer and his acolytes. The High Artificer (N human cleric 12 [Gond]) is a quirky man named Hlessen Muragh who traveled here from Baldur's Gate more than two decades ago to witness the spectacle of metalsmithing that pervades the city. Eight priests (human and gnome clerics of levels 3rd–8th) serve him full time, and a number of worshipers acting as helpers and apprentices rotate through regularly.

9. Temple of Lliira

Lady Joyworker Shandar Lyrintar (CG halfling cleric 11 [Lliira]) established this temple, nicknamed the Laughing Halls, after she moved to Melvaunt from Hillsfar. She now oversees seven priests in spreading joy through what is known widely as a humorless town of smiths and politicians. Shandar is a comely woman with a pitch-perfect voice, which she shares during the legendary parties thrown by the temple every fortnight or so.

10. The Temple of Loviatar

Followers of the Maiden of Pain worship their dark mistress at the Resting Place of the Whip. High Whipmistress Suzildara Sharranen (LE human cleric 14 [Loviatar]/hierophant 3), a slender, stunning beauty with dark eyes and hair, presides over the temple. She personally oversees the church's Candle Rites as well as the seasonal Rite of Pain and Purity. Sixteen lesser priests serve under her, each with a degree of autonomy to pursue the church's interests.

The Resting Place is not a particularly popular temple, nor has worship of Loviatar spread much in a city that values hard work and success over the narcissistic pursuit of pleasure. Still, it survives, thanks in no small part to the worshipers' alliance with a cult dedicated to the return of Iyachtu Xvim.

11. The Breakwater

The Breakwater used to be where ship captains, adventurers, and men and women of taste stayed when they came to Melvaunt by sea. The recent opening of the Floating Fighter has taken away much of that business—whether or not it will be a permanent thorn or just a flavor of the day remains to be seen. Still, rumors persist that The Breakwater's owner is not taking the situation well, and he might be hiring local thugs to give the new inn and its patrons a hard time.

The Breakwater still does its fair share of business, though, thanks to its large, well-appointed rooms and excellent concierge service. The houseservant, Tavis, is available 24 hours a day to arrange livery and laundry services, weapon and armor repair, entertainment, or just about anything else a guest could want.

12. The Livestock Pen

Despite its name, this area is not for animals at all—it is where slaves are brought as they are groomed for the trading block. Though it sits at one end of the Center Market, a separate force of twelve city guards protects the merchants' property that is found within.

13. Hermuk's Allgoods

Known throughout Melvaunt as an excellent merchant shop, Hermuk's is better known to adventurers and rogues as a good place to fence "acquired" property. Hermuk himself (CN human rogue 9) is well connected to Melvaunt's black market, even trading with pirates and others who bring illicit goods into the city. He can obtain a wide variety of exotic items, including poisons and drugs, sometimes with startling speed.

14. Blackalbuck's Swap Shop

Blackalbuck's is as much a trading post as it is a shop. It has a large outdoor area with benches for people to lay out goods for trade. The proprietor, Ulblyn Blackalbuck (NG halfling bard 6/Harper agent[PG] 2), is always up for trading for equipment and information from adventurers.

In addition to his role as trader, Ulblyn is the chief Harper operative in the city of Melvaunt. He particularly loathes the city's slave trade and works feverishly to disrupt it wherever and whenever he can. His identity as a Harper is a well-kept secret, however, so he tries to encourage adventurers to do his dirty work for him. Occasionally he leads forays himself, but only when the risk of discovery is low or the potential payoff is high.

15. The Floating Fighter

Established by a disgruntled former barkeep from The Breakwater, this inn is aiming to take much of that inn's respectable dockside business . . . and it's doing a pretty good job. In addition to serving above-average fare and offering well-appointed rooms, the Floating Fighter has a steam room and hot bath in its basement. This relaxing space is quickly becoming a favorite of nobles and merchants from around the city, and there is already talk of expanding the chamber into its own business by adding more baths, imported tile, and catering to an even more exclusive membership.

Killian Kreel, the fallen son of Nanther

Illustration by William O'Connor

villains of Melvaunt

The following NPCs are active in Melvaunt, and adventurers spending a significant amount of time in the city are likely to run into one or more of them. Any of these villains could appear as the PCs begin the Melvaunt and Northern Moonsea quests found later in the chapter.

Killian Kreel (Nanther)

As if the Nanther family didn't have enough trouble with the death of its patriarch, Dundeld, one of its rising stars, recently joined the clergy of Loviatar, leaving city politics behind him. Killian Nanther was a charming youth with a head for numbers, the perfect combination for great success within Melvaunt's political and mercantile worlds. He was trained on the knee of his father, and would sometimes offer astute analysis of the day's transactions. His perfect smile and curly blond locks left the wives and daughters of opposing merchants fawning over him whenever they would visit.

But there was a hidden dark side to the boy. He spent hours each week learning how to inflict pain—on himself and on others. He captured animals from his neighborhood and used them in vile experiments, and when that thrill wore off, he began to do the same to himself. He scarred his body in places where the wounds were not likely to be found, finding pleasure not just in the pain but in the creative ways in which he could cause it.

After a while, the bright young man realized he had taken things as far as they could go, and he left his pursuit behind to immerse himself in his studies. At the age of fifteen, he was given control of a minor shipping interest, which he grew significantly by deceiving his competitors into signing bad contracts. Although legal, the tactics didn't sit well with many of the city's merchants, and they pressed the Nanthers to rein in the boy. But, due to its ascendant status within Melvaunt's council, the family brushed off the criticism and allowed him free rein.

This decision turned out to be a mistake, however, when Killian's quick success turned to boredom in a flash. One day while scouting properties, he wandered near the Resting Place of the Whip. Filled with a sudden urge to enter the dark temple, he abandoned his surveying and stepped inside. It is not known what happened that day, but when Killian emerged, he was a changed man. He resigned his position from not only his business interests, but from the family as well, explaining nothing. The mysterious circumstances surrounding Killian's disappearance still provide fodder for rumors and insults in taverns across the city.

Killian's youth is hidden behind a wicked mask he wears at all times, not to hide any scars but to protect his true identity. The black leather mask consists of a skullcap with three curved, daggerlike projections that frame his face. He also adorns his traditional priestly vestments with jewels and gold far beyond the means of a lowly temple cleric.

Although he left his old life behind, he still enjoys keeping up with the politics of the city. Killian might hire characters to gather information on recent goings on, or to act as surprise muscle to augment the forces of his former family. The Nanthers might hire the PCs to find their missing prodigy in hopes of shoring up their weakened position in the city. It takes a DC 30 Gather Information check to find evidence of Killian's true identity, and a DC 35 Diplomacy check to convince Killian to reveal the information himself.

Killian Kreel (Nanther) CR 2

Male Damaran human cleric 2 (Loviatar)
NE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13
hp 12 (2 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk light mace +1 (1d8–1)
Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +0
Atk Options strike of vengeance 1/day
Special Actions rebuke undead 5/day (+4, 2d6+4, 2nd), spontaneous casting (*inflict* spells)
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*, *potions of sanctuary*, scroll of *doom*, scroll of *shield of faith*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 2nd):
1st—*cause fear* (DC 13), *endure elements*, *enlarge person*[D] (DC 13), *obscuring mist*
0—*create water*, *cure minor wounds*, *detect magic*, *mending*
D: Domain spell. Domains: Retribution, Strength. Deity: Loviatar.

Abilities Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 13, Wis 15, Cha 14
SQ feat of strength 1/day, moderate aura of evil
Feats Persuasive, Scribe Scroll
Skills Bluff +5, Diplomacy +5, Heal +6, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +2
Possessions combat gear plus studded leather armor, mwk light mace, diamond-studded holy symbol

Forjia Chase

Illustration by William O'Connor

Forjia Chase

Forjia Chase was a refugee from Zhentil Keep at the age of seven, fleeing alongside a train of survivors after the armies of Cyric sacked the city. Her parents were killed in the destruction, and she latched onto any family that would let her hang around. As desperation set in for the refugees, however, there weren't many people willing to care for a scrawny orphan girl. Forjia's last contact with the people from Zhentil Keep occurred at a campsite near Phlan, when her last "surrogate" family attempted to sell her to slavers from Melvaunt.

She escaped during the transaction, but followed the slavers over the next week as they traveled toward Melvaunt, scavenging what she could in order to survive. Once in the city, she lived day-to-day by her wits and instincts alone, on the very edge of survival. It took her two years to decide that mere survival wasn't an acceptable lifestyle choice, but she still didn't know or trust anyone. So she went to the only face she knew as something other than just a mark—the slaver she had escaped from two years earlier. Fearing simply being captured and sold, she arranged her first job sight unseen. After pulling off the job despite unexpected resistance from a meddling Harper, Forjia figured she had earned enough respect from the slaver to reveal herself to him—and she was right. Despite her tender age, the slaver took her on as a messenger and errand runner. Now, three years later, Forjia is still the skinny, dirty girl who crawled from the ruins of Zhentil Keep. She is also an operative in one of the toughest cities in Faerûn, and her skills have almost advanced to the point where she can go independent, forgoing the protection (and abuse) of her employer.

Forjia has curly brown hair that she keeps chopped short and uneven using her dagger. Her face has a constant layer of dirt, and her speech isn't much cleaner. While she has upgraded her armor and the tools of her trade, she still uses an old dagger that was the first thing she ever stole. She doesn't trust anyone, and she tries to do her job without being seen whenever possible. Having never had a family of her own, Forjia looks for any opportunity to steal from fathers and mothers, to deny their children the happiness that she herself never knew.

Characters will likely encounter Forjia in her role as messenger for one of the city's slavers, or as victims of her "off-time" vocation as a pickpocket. Characters investigating the Melvaunt slave trade can find out her name with a DC 10 Gather Information check, and can attract her with the promise of gold or goods. She isn't particularly loyal to her employer, nor is she quick to sell him out at the first sign of an offer. Her initial attitude toward adventurers is unfriendly, but for a price she'll give information to anyone who can adjust her attitude to indifferent or better.

Forjia Chase — CR 2

Female Damaran rogue 2
CN Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13
hp 7 (2 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort –1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee dagger +2 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dagger +3 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear tanglefoot bag, *potion of jump*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 8, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 14
SQ trapfinding
Feats Stealthy, Street Smart[PG]
Skills Bluff +5, Climb +4, Disguise +3, Escape Artist +5, Gather Information +7, Hide +7, Intimidate +5, Jump +3, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +4, Sleight of Hand +5, Spot +5, Tumble +4, Use Rope +5
Possessions combat gear plus studded leather, dagger, thieves' tools, 22 sp.

Corkin Markov

Corkin Markov is a product of Melvaunt through and through. He is a skilled blacksmith and rumormonger who can move through the city's elite political landscape as easily as he can knock back a round of ale with a group of hardworking smiths. Indeed, he makes his living among the smiths, providing arms and armor to the city's army and navy as well as the private forces of the noble families. Balancing his diverse customer base against the backdrop of Melvaunt's political climate is what sets Corkin apart from the smiths that exclusively service one family. Of course, it also makes his "night job" that much easier.

Corkin might not be the most skilled smith in town, but his contacts reach deep into the city's elite. He utilizes these contacts to gather information about the current goings-on within the city; some of this information he sells to rival families, some he uses personally to negotiate better contracts, and the rest he simply enjoys as he watches plots and plans unfold. He also runs a message service, etching hidden and coded messages into metal goods that are then sold to those for whom the messages are meant. When he needs to infuse his goods with magic, he turns to the reclusive dwarf wizard Theoderus Stoneblood, whose abilities with metal have become legendary among the smiths and warriors of the region.

Corkin Markov

Illustration by William O'Connor

Corkin's success can be partially attributed to his image. He is a very large man who shows off his muscles at every possibility, but underneath the brawny exterior is a shrewd mind with a knack for details. He prefers a workmanlike wardrobe, even when he's visiting a noble manor or attending a party. At these events, he tends to stay in the background, letting business and information come to him. This passive demeanor serves him well, since the noble families would be very dismayed to find him selling secrets to someone other than themselves.

Corkin often acts as an intermediary between the families and their hired swords. If the PCs are working for one of the families, they could be sent to Markov Steelworks to receive their instructions. Such messages are usually encoded on some type of object, requiring the PCs to make payment to receive it. Although the blacksmith is a canny fellow, he does a lot of business around town, so characters with inside information about a pickup might be able to bluff their way into getting the information before it can be passed off. PCs looking for a fence or informant will be directed to Corkin with a successful DC 10 Gather Information check. Corkin is normally indifferent toward new business, but he will work with anyone who can adjust his attitude to friendly.

Corkin Markov — CR 6

Male Damaran human bard 6
CE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Draconic

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 35 (6 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+1 warhammer* +7 (1d8+4/×3)
Ranged mwk javelin +6 (1d6+2)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Special Actions bardic music 6/day (*suggestion* [DC 15], inspire confidence, inspire courage +1, *fascinate* [2 creatures], countersong)
Combat Gear *potion of bull's strength, potion of blur, potion of cure moderate wounds*
Bard Spells Known (CL 6th):
2nd (3/day)—*cloud of bewilderment*[PG, SC] (DC 14), *locate object*
1st (4/day)—*alarm, charm person* (DC 13), *cure light wounds, detect thoughts* (DC 13), *unseen servant*
0 (3/day)—*daze* (DC 12), *detect magic, flare* (DC 12), *light, mage hand, mending*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 14
SQ bardic knowledge
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Scribe Scroll

Skills Appraise +9 (+11 with armor, weapons, and metalwork), Craft (armorsmithing) +9, Craft (blacksmithing) +9, Craft (weaponsmithing) +9, Diplomacy +8, Gather Information +8, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +11, Listen +5, Perform +11, Profession (smith) +6, Sense Motive +7, Spellcraft +5, Spot +5
Possessions combat gear plus *+2 chain shirt, +1 warhammer,* masterwork javelin, *Heward's handy haversack*

Daumar Gudenny

Daumar Gudenny was happy in his homeland of Rashemen, hunting and tracking through the lands he loved. One night he took refuge from a storm inside an empty cave, one that he could have sworn had not been there before. As he slept, he dreamed of a twisted realm where he could see the true nature of all he encountered. When he awoke, he felt different, as if he no longer existed wholly on the Material Plane. As he ventured across Rashemen looking for answers about his new condition, he realized things had changed. The spirits of the land now shunned him, following and harassing him wherever his journey led. It was as if the very land had turned against him. Slowly the spirits soured his heart, making him hate Rashemen and all who dwelt there. He left in disgust traveling west, where the people and spirits of his former land would not be found.

Daumar Gudenny

Daumar wandered for a few months, finding trouble in the Galena Mountains and Thar before finally settling in Melvaunt. Hunting people through the city streets kept his mind off his condition, and he found that he enjoyed using his skills in this way. Wanton killing lost its luster quickly, however, so he searched for purpose among the shadier elements of the city. Eventually he came into the service of one of the noble families, the Bruils. They first used him as an assassin, until it was revealed that he had spent time in Thar. They then began to send him there seeking lore and alliances with the creatures that lived there, but this didn't suit Daumar. After a few missions in Thar, he sought employment with other families after murdering the Bruil representative that tried to refuse his leave.

Daumar stands a few inches over 6 feet tall, and his green eyes glow with an otherworldly light. He keeps his clothing well tailored and clean, dusting himself with a custom compound that masks his scent. He appears much younger than he is, thanks to the smooth skin of his race. His hair is long, brown, and thick, and he lets it hang freely about his head and shoulders, where it resembles a lion's mane.

Characters searching for an assassin or tracker within Melvaunt will be directed toward Daumar, who can be found with a successful DC 15 Gather Information check. Keep in mind that Daumar chooses who finds him and who doesn't, and he will always be the first to make contact with anyone searching for him; this way of working enables him to follow potential clients for a bit to discern their motives and abilities.

He has recently become obsessed by the history and legends of Vorbyx, first King of Thar. He is fixated on a theory that the old king was actually of spirit folk lineage, and has been flirting with returning to Thar in search of proof of these rumors.

Daumar Gudenny CR 6

Male mountain spirit folk[Una] ranger 6
NE Medium outsider (native)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +9, Spot +14
Languages Common, Giant, Rashemi, Sylvan

AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 14
hp 42 (6 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +9, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), climb 30 ft.
Melee mwk longsword +9/+4 (1d8+3/19–20)
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +10/+5 (1d8+3/×3) or
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +8/+8/+5 (1d8+3/×3) with Rapid Shot or
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +6 (2d8+6/×3) with Manyshot
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8
Atk Options favored enemy humans +4, favored enemy giants +2, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot
Combat Gear *potion of pass without trace, potion of cure moderate wounds*
Ranger Spells Prepared (CL 3rd):
1st—*animal messenger, longstrider*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 1st):
1/day—*speak with animals*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 11
SQ animal companion (none at present), wild empathy +8 (+4 magical beasts)
Feats Endurance[B], Manyshot[B], Otherworldly[PG], Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Rapid Shot[B], Track[B]
Skills Balance +5, Climb +10, Diplomacy +2, Handle Animal +7, Hide +7, Jump +11, Knowledge (geography) +8, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Ride +5, Search +8, Spot +14, Survival +9 (+11 following tracks), Tumble +7
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 studded leather armor, +1 composite longbow* (+2 Str bonus), masterwork longsword, *cloak of resistance +1, eyes of the eagle,* 48 gp

Illustration by William O'Connor

Rumors in Melvaunt

If the PCs spend time talking to locals to hear rumors, have them make a Gather Information check and consult the following table.

Check	Result
15–19	Roll 1d10 and consult the Rumors list below.
20–24	Roll 1d10+4 and consult the Rumors list below.
25–29	Roll 1d10+8 and consult the Rumors list below.
30–34	Roll 1d10+12 and consult the Rumors list below.
35+	Roll 1d10+15 and consult the Rumors list below.

Some of the items in the following list are false rumors and some are adventure hooks left open for individual DMs to embellish.

Rumors

1 The Bruils have become more aggressive lately because they're going to try to take over the city.
2 Some smiths are complaining that taxes have become too high, and they are pressuring their guilds to fix the situation.
3 The Lord of the Waves has banned the importation of livestock because of a spreading disease. (false)
4 One of the city's most well-known citizens is a Harper agent in disguise.
5 Dire rats have been pouring out of drains in the northern part of the city. (hook)
6 Dwarves will soon be forced to register with the city and their population controlled because they are dominating the city's smithies. (false)
7 An assassin from the east with glowing eyes prowls the streets at night.
8 Pirates have caves and hideouts all over the nearby coastline.
9 Someone has been breaking into Nonya's Jewels every night, but takes nothing. (hook)
10 Captain Stendale of the City Guard has a burning hatred for the Bruils.
11 The Leiyraghons appear to be in control, but internal fighting is tearing the family apart.
12 Halmuth Bruil is a vampire. (false)
13 Orc bands have been ranging out of Thar and attacking travelers along the Phlan Path. (hook)
14 The temple of Loviatar is buying slaves off the black market.
15 The navy recently destroyed an attack fleet from Zhentil Keep. (false)
16 A beggar outside the city walls has been distributing blessed wafers that cure disease and heal wounds. (hook)
17 The Red Wizards have been trying to infiltrate the city with spies.
18 Nobles from other cities have been trying to buy the seat of Lord Envoy, but the council has rejected all such offers so far.
19 The gnomes at the Purple Portals have been working on something special for the next Shieldmeet celebration.
20 A green-robed wizard has rented a house near the docks, and a strange creature has been seen flying from its roof in the middle of the night. (hook)
21 A halfling with control over the weather has been accompanying mercantile vessels from Hillsfar and regaling folks at The Breakwater with tales of adventure.
22 The Nanthers have constructed a shrine to Bane in the cellars of Nanther Keep in a bid to keep power. (false)
23 Foreign mercenaries have been streaming into the city since the Bruils took control of the city's army.
24 The magic that holds together the garden at Nanther Keep is failing, and the family doesn't know why. (hook)
25 A new Lord Envoy will be announced soon.

Melvaunt Quests

These miniadventures take place inside, under, or in the immediate vicinity of Melvaunt. They're set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Northern Moonsea quests in the next section. Some of them can also link to adventures in other chapters.

These adventures center around a group of slaves with strange tattoos on their ankles. The tattoo's design also shows up as a strange symbol on some cursed weapons and armor. These tattoos are part of a Red Wizard plot to infiltrate the Zhentarim; in theory they will allow the Red Wizards to scry on the Zhentarim and have controllable assets behind enemy lines. Eventually the Red Wizards want to be able to store spells in the tattoos that the slaves can then be commanded to cast, but it's not known how far they have come in implementing this plan. These tattoos are similar to those created years ago when the Red Wizards and the Zhentarim were allied, so great care has been taken to keep the tattoos unobtrusive and undetectable through magical means.

Devil's Fire Tavern

Devil's Fire Tavern is a short adventure designed for characters of 1st–3rd level. It takes place in a tavern in the western portion of the city, and in the caves beneath it.

Background

The Devil's Fire is one of Melvaunt's newer establishments, barely more than a year old. An ex-pirate named Corwyn Jaffe bought the building from a merchant who had long since moved to a better location, and he hired local vagrants and beggars to renovate the place. At first thought to be an act of generosity, this event later spawned rumors of disappearing laborers and an underground slave ring (any market that bypasses the city's tax system is illegal). No wrongdoing was ever proven, thanks to a few well-placed bribes and threats.

Unsurprisingly, Corwyn had not left his prior vocation to become an honest businessman. A coincidental discovery he made while serving as the first mate of a pirate ship led to the building's purchase. While he and his crew were stowing their latest "catch" in a cave just outside the city, Corwyn stumbled across a natural passage that led underneath the city wall. Within a tenday, the

pirates had purchased the building and begun construction on a basement with a secret link to the tunnel.

The pirates continue to use the caves as a place to store their booty, and have recently added a kennel so they can keep guard dogs there. They now also have a convenient way to smuggle goods into the city, as well as a place to fence them. Four nights ago they ran across what looked to be easy pickings—a passenger ship sailing west from Mulmaster. Unfortunately for them, the boat turned out to be carrying a Red Wizard and his retinue. The battle was fierce, but with a little luck the pirates survived. When they went to loot the ship, though, they found little of value other than a small hold full of slaves. Normally they would have left the slaves on board while they scuttled the ship, but since the fight had been costly and other treasure light, the pirates put the poor wretches in irons and stowed them away in the hold of their ship.

Returning to their hideaway in a damaged ship, the pirates unloaded the slaves and docked their ship until they could figure out what to do. They made contact with buyers actively—a turnabout from their usually passive mode of fencing goods—but only managed to sell off a few slaves to a dark-robed buyer. Word has spread, however, meaning that antislavery forces in the city now have a target that won't bring about official inquiries. Others in the city have taken notice as well, including a mage in the employ of the Red Wizards in Mulmaster that suspects he knows the origins of the slaves. The pirates have temporarily retreated to their wilderness camp to cool their heels and figure out their next move, but adventure waits for no one in Melvaunt!

Adventure Synopsis

A Harper operative in disguise approaches the PCs with a job offer—find out everything they can about a recent pirate cache that is hidden somewhere in the city. Clues lead them to the Devil's Fire Tavern, a haven for scoundrels with rumored ties to the pirates operating in nearby waters. Investigation leads the PCs to a series of hidden tunnels and caves beneath the tavern, and ultimately to a surprising pirate's treasure.

Character Hook

The PCs can become involved in this adventure through the use of the following character hook.

- Ulblyn Blackalbuck contacts the PCs with the intention of hiring them to keep an eye on the Devil's Fire. Something's going on there, and Ulblyn thinks it has to do with an illegal slave shipment that recently came into the city. He has suspected the proprietor of being a smuggler, but this is the first he's heard of rumors connecting Corwyn to the underground slave trade.

  Ulblyn contacts the PCs himself if they have a good reputation or are clearly of good character; otherwise he acts through an intermediary. He needs information within a week, and is prepared to pay the adventurers 150 gp each to gather information where they can. He wants to know if there are slaves involved with Jaffe's new commercial venture, and if so, where they are being held. He does not accept the first piece of information without the second.

The Devil's Fire Tavern

This tavern is located on the impoverished lower west side of the city. It derives its name from the red glow that magically escapes the tavern's windows after the sun goes down, an ornament added by the current proprietor. The inside of the place is inhospitable, to say the least. The floor is made of irregular stone tiles that are covered by a damp sludge of ash and mud, and the rarely used fireplace reeks of some unknown substance. The furniture is old, but serviceable. Still, Corwyn serves good ale for a fair price, has an irregular supply of local and exotic wines and other delicacies, and serves up a cheap ploughman's lunch to dockworkers.

The tavern's regular clientele is composed of beggars lucky enough to have a copper to spare, dockworkers avoiding their wives after a day's work, and representatives of the city's various criminal elements. Corwyn often works the bar himself, aided by a cook and a serving girl with whom he is having an affair. He also arranges meetings with fences that can move his partners' stolen goods within the city. At least half of every day is spent either meeting with contacts or traveling down to the caves to check on the kennel and any goods stored there.

Ever since the slaves arrived, Corwyn has spent less time in the caves and more time tracking down potential buyers. His nerves are frayed and he hasn't slept much, since getting caught smuggling slaves would certainly mean the gallows. To make matters worse, some of the slaves have gone missing. He believes one of his men secretly sold them himself, but won't start questioning his crew until the rest of the slaves are long gone.

1. Tavern Room

Corwyn (LE male human rogue 1/expert 4; see statistics on page 15) has arranged meetings with everyone he knows who might take the slaves off his hands. He can be found at a corner table several times each day and night, furiously negotiating with the lowest of Melvaunt's criminals. He's too distracted to notice snooping PCs, but that's why he hired a pair of local toughs (male human rogue 1) to keep an eye on anyone new who comes into the bar. At least one of them is here at all times, and they eavesdrop on unfamiliar faces, including the PCs. If they sense anything strange, the two will follow the PCs once they leave the tavern, possibly confronting one or more if they catch them alone.

There are several possible clues the PCs can pick up by staking out the tavern:

- At one point a man dressed in sailor's garb emerges from the back of the tavern. A DC 15 Spot check reveals that the man never entered through the front door. He also tracks wet, red mud onto the tavern floor. A DC 10 Knowledge (Moonsea local) or Gather Information check identifies this mud as coming from the Moonsea coast.
- A PC who reads Corwyn's lips (DC 17 Spot check, due to Corwyn's flavorful manner of speech) can catch several key words and phrases: "slaves," "keeping them in the cavern," and "not going down there until there's a buyer."
- One of the possible buyers gets angry at Corwyn for trying to sell him "cursed goods" and storms out of the building. Corwyn sends one of the thugs to follow the man, but instructs him to just put a scare into him. Still, a successful Diplomacy or Intimidate check could convince the man to

tell the PCs that Corwyn has a cache of very dangerous goods stored near the docks.
- Corwyn slips down to the cellar twice a day for an hour and then returns with nothing, tracking in the same red mud as the sailor.

2. Kitchen
This kitchen is typical for a tavern, except that it has its own built-in bread oven. Two huge stewpots simmer on a fire at all times, and wheels of white cheese coated in red wax are stacked in one corner. The cook (male human expert 4), a thin older man with few teeth, is in and out at irregular intervals. When he's not here, he can be found at his nearby home sleeping or making cheese. He is loyal to Corwyn and won't be a good source of information without extreme and unpleasant efforts by the PCs.

3. Barrel Room
Empty barrels are stored here, while full ones are slid into the wall for serving on the other side. A small keg filled with bitter red wine sits atop an empty ale barrel. A pair of battleaxes, two short swords, a light mace, and a light crossbow are all stored here in an unlocked chest for use by the staff when a fight breaks out. A trap door in the floor (Search DC 15) allows access to a shaft and a tunnel that leads to room 5.

4. Loft
A ladder leans against the wall opposite the doorframe, leading up to a loft where Corwyn sleeps. The ladder has a trick rung (Search DC 20) that breaks when any weight is applied to it. The fall isn't enough to cause harm, but it serves to alert Corwyn or his employees to an intruder (Listen check DC 0 in the room, DC 18 when out in the tavern). Corwyn keeps some of his treasure up here, as well as a snake-handling stick he uses for the viper in area 7.

The lower part of this room has only a tattered cot, a simple, unlocked wooden chest, and the cellar entrance. The chest contains two pairs of clothes and a silver chain (5 sp) belonging to the serving girl, who sleeps here.

The cellar entrance here has a removable ramp for rolling barrels, and the stairs down are built for barrel rolling as well. The wooden cellar lid isn't locked when Corwyn is in the tavern, but is locked from the inside when he visits the caves (Open Lock DC 30).

Treasure: Small coin pouch with 50 gp and an amethyst ring (25 gp), *potion of cure light wounds.*

5. Clay Room (EL 2)
The hall into this room has a simple deadfall trap of falling bricks affecting both squares marked T on the map. Wooden frames have been built into the earth on the two sides of the room with doors, while a large tapestry hangs on the southern wall, concealing the door to the tunnels beyond (Search DC 15). Several rugs cover the floor here, an attempt by Corwyn to mask his tracks. The rugs add 5 to the DC of tracking Corwyn through this room (which easily leads to the concealed door).

Falling Bricks from Ceiling Trap: CR 2; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; Atk +12 melee (2d6, bricks); multiple targets

(all targets in two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

6. Storerooms (EL 1)
These two rooms both have simple wooden doors (hardness 5, hp 10, break DC 13) and locks, although they are unlocked 80% of the time.

6a: This is the dry-goods storage room. There is little of value here, and the boxes and crates have a thick layer of dust. Four dire rats nest here in a box of linens they have managed to chew open. They stay hidden unless someone searches near them, in which case they jump out to attack.

Dire Rats (4): hp 5 each; MM 64.

6b: Any character who searches the door to this storeroom notices that the wood is cold to the touch. The room is kept at a constant 38° F by a magical effect placed on the walls. Corwyn stores a variety of meats and cheeses here, as well as a cask of expensive chilled wine from the north.

7. Ale and Wine Storage (EL 1)
This room contains barrels and casks of ale, wine, and beer. One cask contains some of Corwyn's personal treasure, as well as a guardian viper.

Medium Viper: hp 9; MM 280. A character using the snake-handling tool found in Corwyn's room can make a DC 15 Dexterity or Handle Animal check to incapacitate the snake.

Treasure: 12 silver trade bars (50 sp each), three small rubies (20 gp each), and a Moonsea treasure map written in invisible ink. The map appears to be nothing more than a piece of blank parchment; where it leads and how it is deciphered is left for the DM to decide.

8. Tunnel to the Sea (EL 3)

This tunnel winds for about a mile underneath the city before opening into the pirates' caverns. It is 10 feet wide most of the way, with some tighter spots here and there. About midway through it narrows to barely 2 feet wide, so Corwyn has built a system of locked portcullises that both forbids intruders and lets him pass goods through. He also blocked the passage with eight interconnecting metal bars (hardness 10, hp 60, break DC 24) that prohibit anyone larger than Small size from moving through (and even a Small character must make a DC 25 Escape Artist check to squeeze through).

The portcullises are closed and locked with simple locks (Open Lock DC 20). But unless a character makes a successful DC 20 Search check, the trap is sprung.

Trap: If the lock on either portcullis is not triggered properly (the key must be turned left, then right), then a trap is armed. The portcullis opens normally, but once someone is inside, it slams shut (DC 15 Reflex save to avoid 1d6 points of damage for the second person trying to enter) and locks. At the same time, a brick falls from the ceiling, dealing no damage but releasing a patch of brown mold.

Box of Brown Mold Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; 5-ft. cold aura (3d6, cold nonlethal); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 20.

9. Dog Pens (EL 2+)

At a site that was formerly a campsite for the pirates, Corwyn's crew recently built five pens for a pack of guard dogs under the control of a half-orc rogue named Chork. The dogs and Chork constantly bark at one another, so sounds of combat here won't alert the pirates in area 10 unless they persist for more than 3 rounds.

Four dogs are currently penned here, and it requires a move action to open a pen. Once Chork detects the PCs, he moves to open one pen per round until they are all open. The dogs are trained to attack, and Chork yells the orc word for "kill" as he opens the pens. The dogs charge the nearest opponent as soon as a pen is opened, and even if Chork is defeated, any released dogs will press the attack until subdued or killed.

Chork **CR 2**

Male half-orc rogue 2
CE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Common, Damaran, Orc

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13
hp 13 (2 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +2, **Ref** +4, **Will** +1

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk short sword +5 (1d6+3/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +4
Atk Options Power Attack, sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds, potion of bull's strength*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding
Feats Power Attack
Skills Balance +3, Handle Animal +2, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Profession (sailor) +2, Spot +6, Tumble +8
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, silver-inlaid dog whistle (15 gp)

Riding Dogs (4): hp 13 each; *MM* 272.

10. Slave Pen (EL 3)

This huge cave smells and sounds like the sea, and the walls and ceiling are damp and dripping. A dozen slaves are being held here, bound and huddled in one corner. Two pirates remain here to guard the slaves, accompanied by one of the dogs from area 9. The guards are nervous; they believe the identical tattoos on the slaves are some form of curse. To make matters worse, at random times throughout the day, one or more slaves enters a state of waking catatonia, in which they become unresponsive to outside stimuli but quickly dart their heads and eyes around at random (an effect of their tattoos). The slaves don't know why they are here or what the tattoos signify, but are very grateful if set free. They can tell the PCs that they came here by ship, and that four of their number were sold off two days before, to a man in black robes.

The pirates immediately attack anyone they don't know and fight to the death.

Pirates, Male Human Fighter 1 (2): hp 11 each; the pirates are carrying 81 gp and 32 sp.

Riding Dog: hp 13; *MM* 272.

Concluding the Adventure

If the PCs report the slaves' location to Ulblyn without assaulting the pirates, he offers them an extra 250 gp to liberate the slaves. If the PCs took the initiative, he pays them the sum and offers them a lifetime 10% discount at his shop. Of course, the discount is to keep them coming back around so he can offer them jobs from time to time, but they don't need to know that. He is very interested in the slaves and their tattoos, especially the missing four individuals, which he would very much like to recover.

Corwyn will be rattled by any assault on the caves and will immediately seal the tunnel and cover up the old door to it. After the attack, he will close the Devil's Fire and take off for the Rogues' Camp adventure site, which is detailed starting on page 30.

Halls of Metal, Blood of Stone

Halls of Metal, Blood of Stone is a short adventure designed for characters of 3rd–5th level. It takes place at the home of an eccentric dwarf wizard with a dark secret in his past.

Background

Theoderus Stoneblood was a promising young student in the wizard academy located within his clanhold. His family was renowned for its stonework, and was proud to have a wizard with such potential take its work to the next level with his magic. But for all his brilliance, Theoderus had a problem relating to other people. He had never been successful with women, and his "friends" routinely took advantage of this awkwardness. One such acquaintance would prove the most damaging of all.

A Red Wizard spy within the school recognized Theoderus's gullibility and was determined to take advantage of it. She recruited the young dwarf to help her with several experiments, many of which crippled or killed other dwarves in the community (without Theoderus's knowledge). When some of the destruction was traced back to Theoderus, he had no defense, but his "friend" stepped in and offered an alibi, temporarily saving him and his family from embarrassment. Unable to take the pressure of concealing his involvement, Theoderus decided to leave the clanhold. But the Red Wizards weren't finished with him.

In return for keeping his secret, they demanded he move north to the city of Melvaunt and act as their eyes and ears. He was to establish himself as an eldritch artisan and gain contacts that would make it easier for the Red Wizards to get an enclave in the city. As a punishment to himself, Theoderus dropped his clan name and quit working with stone altogether, surrounding himself with metal instead. Now he lives as a recluse with his dark secret, waiting for the day he can rid himself of his burden and return to his home.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters must break into the home of the eccentric wizard, Theoderus, in order to get answers to recent questions. While there, they encounter wicked traps and cleverly animated defenders on their way to the reclusive dwarf's inner sanctum. Once they reach him, they might find that plots in the City of Swords are never as simple as they dared imagine.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- A successful DC 15 Gather Information check points the PCs to Theoderus, and from there it's easy to get the location of his home. A result of 20 or higher when investigating Theoderus reveals other tidbits:
  — Theoderus almost never leaves his home; weapons and armor to be magically enhanced are dropped into a metal box nearby and delivered when they are finished.
  — The dwarf has been in the city for only a year, and despite his reclusive nature he is very well known in both the smith and magic-using communities.
  — Not all of his recent enhancements have worked correctly. Nobody knows what has happened to the incorrectly enchanted items, but some people speak in fearful or hushed tones when discussing them.
- If the PCs take another tack by exploring the Red Wizard connection or the markings on the slaves (see the Devil's Fire Tavern adventure, above), word eventually makes its way to Theoderus, who takes an interest. He sends a group of thugs to find out what the characters know about the slaves and the tattoos. In the course of conversation, the thugs let it slip that Theoderus is their boss, and they reveal the location of his home so the PCs can approach him on their own.
- If the PCs still aren't making the connection with Theoderus, Ulblyn can help. He requests a meeting with the PCs, then directs them to Theoderus based on rumors that the dwarf once attempted to enhance several pieces of armor and weaponry with a symbol very similar to the tattoo found on the slaves.

Theoderus's Home

Theoderus has built his subterranean home just outside the city, underneath a plot of land he purchased upon arriving in Melvaunt. The only clues that the plot is occupied are the metal depository box and the gated entrance that leads into the ground. The interior walls are built with 8-inch-thick stone blocks reinforced by half-inch-thick iron plates, which can also be found along the walls of the entrance hall. All of the home's traps are cleverly concealed within the metal plating, increasing the Search DC to find them. Anyone with 5 or more ranks in Craft (metalworking) gains a +2 bonus on Search checks made to find any one of the traps, effectively negating the increased DC.

1. Entry Hall (EL 3)

A metallic dome rises out of the ground above a tunnel leading to the home's front door. A locked iron gate (Open Lock DC 20, break DC 25) prevents entry, and nobody ever answers the bell that hangs from the top of the gate.

The tunnel leading down into the abode is covered in iron panels that have star-shaped impressions cut into them. The door at the end of the tunnel is a false door. If anyone tries to open it, a *magic mouth* appears and says, "Leave your business at the door and then begone!" It is built into the stone and cannot be broken in, and anyone who tries to pick its fake lock or force it open springs the trap.

The secret door can be found with a successful DC 20 Search check, then jimmied open with a DC 25 Open Lock check or forced open with a DC 28 Strength check. The star-shaped key that opens the door can normally be found on a chain around Theoderus's neck.

Several of the star-shaped impressions in the walls conceal spring-loaded spears that strike repeatedly at any creatures that are in the entry hall when the false door is investigated as described above.

Wall Spear Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +10 melee (1d8/×3, spear); multiple targets (1d3 spears per target in the entry hall); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 20.

2. Depository (EL 2)

When local smiths want their arms and armor magically enhanced, they drop it into this large metal bin with a note bearing their sigil and the enhancements requested. The goods are finished and returned by courier, and payment is made to a local merchant. Nobody knows how the goods get to Theoderus, but those who pay promptly have never had trouble getting what they want.

In truth, a metal chute leads from the depository to the wizard's arcane laboratory. A pair of animated workers comes to life whenever anything is deposited; they then bring the items to the lab and alert Theoderus that work has arrived. A Medium character could squeeze into the depository and through the chute with two successful DC 20 Escape Artist checks, while a Small character can climb in and through the chute without a problem.

The depository workers are two hovering metal spheres with arms ending in pincers. They attack any living creature in the depository or the chute. They have no special attacks or qualities.

Small Animated Objects (2): hp 15 each; *MM* 13.

3. Living Area (EL 3)

This room includes two tables and several chairs, as well as a dining table near the kitchen that lies through an archway in the eastern wall. Two animated objects guard this room and attack any strangers that enter.

On the northern wall is a revolving door made of iron that leads to Theoderus's private area. Unless the door is revolved a quarter-turn to the right before walking through to the left, a buzzsaw slices down at anyone walking through the door.

Buzzsaw Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; Atk +20 melee (2d4+8/×4, scythe); Search DC 23; Disable Device DC 18.

The first animated object is an iron lazy susan that spins off the table at intruders. The second is an animated grill from the kitchen. When it animates, it spends 1 round heating up before attacking. It deals 1d4 points of fire damage in addition to its normal slam damage when it strikes a living foe.

Medium Animated Objects (2): hp 31 each; *MM* 13.

4. Library

Theoderus enjoys spending time in his library reading. The walls here are free from metal plating, and the shelves are carved from stone. This room is the only link to his former life, and the shelves are filled with books of dwarven legends, magecraft, and theology. He keeps his journal near a reading chair carved from stone and covered by a thick, comfortable fur. By reading his journal (which is written in Dwarf), the PCs can learn about his exile and his desire to return home. This information could be used to negotiate with him later in the adventure. He does not mention specifically why he is here or that he is beholden to the Red Wizards.

5. Magic Laboratory (EL 4)

This room is where Theoderus magically enhances weapons and armor sent to him by local smiths. It also houses his collection of spell components and the inks and parchment used in his spellbooks and scrolls.

The two animated metal spheres that collect deliveries can be found here, and they attack anyone other than Theoderus that enters the room. These are the same two that attack characters in the crawlspace leading from area 2. In addition, an animated chain attacks any intruders as well.

Small Animated Objects (2): hp 15 each; *MM* 13.

Medium Animated Object: hp 31; *MM* 13. This chain has the constrict special ability.

Treasure: There are 800 gp worth of spell components in this lab, including two 100-gp pearls needed to cast *identify*. Two masterwork short swords and a masterwork buckler are waiting here to be enhanced. A note bearing the seal of Ganza's Arms and Armor accompanies the items. In addition to detailing the magic to be placed on the items, the note also warns Theoderus, "*No further experimentation, dwarf! Those cursed sigils cost four their lives, and I hold you responsible!*" (See the Cursed Warehouse quest, below, for more details.)

6. Baths (EL 3)

A sunken bath in this room is fed by a natural spring and heated by a steam mephit that Theoderus has befriended. The room also contains a bench and a clothing rack.

This steam mephit has been Theoderus's companion since before he came to Melvaunt. It followed him here seeking distractions and adventure, but finds it enjoys relaxing in the baths too much to seek out these opportunities in earnest. If it detects adventurers, it spends a round heating the baths to boiling before bursting out and using its *rainstorm* spell-like ability to start combat.

Steam Mephit: hp 13; *MM* 184.

7. Inner Sanctum (EL 6)

This room is lavishly appointed, containing several bits of comfortable furniture, a fireplace, and several tapestries and art

pieces. Theoderus waits here, confident that his traps and animated servants can take care of any intruders. He has doused all the lights in this area, figuring that his darkvision will give him an advantage should any survive to confront him. The moment he detects intruders, he uses his scroll of *mage armor*. He casts *bear's endurance* and *shield* as soon as the PCs penetrate the revolving door. The bonuses from these spells are already included in the statistics block below.

Theoderus first tries to talk to the PCs, to find out what they want and see if they can avoid combat. He is unfriendly toward them at first, and dismisses any accusations based on the javelins used by his skum mercenaries. The matter of his exile, which the PCs might have found out about from reading his journal, is a tender subject. Any PC who brings it up must make a single DC 15 Diplomacy check; failure makes Theoderus hostile, while success indicates that he is interested in listening to what they have to say. If the PCs accuse him of being involved with the slaves or of working with the Red Wizards, he immediately becomes hostile. If Theoderus becomes hostile at any point, the PCs have 1 round to calm him down before he attacks.

If the PCs can sway his attitude to indifferent or better, Theoderus admits to being interested in the tattooed slaves as well. He offers to buy them from the PCs for 100 gp per slave. If the PCs just want information about the tattoos or the pirates' curse, Theoderus proposes a solution that might benefit them both. He tells them that a "secret benefactor" gave him a sigil that looks just like the one they describe and asked that it be woven into magic equipment. Unfortunately, the sigil cursed the equipment and led to the deaths of four people. The equipment is hidden underneath a warehouse in the city, and it might hold a clue to the origin and power of the tattoos. Theoderus tells the PCs to contact Jemel Ganza, a smith who uses the warehouse and who can show them the way beneath it.

Theoderus is only being partially truthful here, and if the PCs pick up on that by means of Sense Motive and press him, he relents and tells them he needs their help. He is being blackmailed, and is afraid that if the secret of the cursed equipment gets out, he'll be forced to leave the city. He begs the PCs to help him, but will not reveal anything further.

Theoderus keeps a belt of animated tools on his person at all times. It is a move action for him to loosen the belt and toss it up to 15 feet, whereupon the tools animate and attack anyone nearby. He does this on the first round of combat, also drawing his *potion of mirror image* from his potion belt and drinking it. After that, he casts spells as necessary to protect himself and aid his animated defenders in taking down his foes; he likes to cast *cause fear* to send the subject through the buzzsaw trap in the revolving door.

Theoderus — CR 5

Male shield dwarf wizard 5
CN Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Draconic, Dwarven, Giant, Undercommon, empathic link

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AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; +4 dodge vs. giants
hp 42 (5 HD)
Resist stability (+4 to resist bull rush or trip when standing on ground)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +6; +2 against poison and spells

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Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +1 *quarterstaff* +4 (1d6+2)
Ranged mwk dagger +4 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3
Atk Options +1 attack against orcs and goblinoids
Combat Gear coil of rope (for *animate rope*), *potion of mirror image*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *mage armor* (3rd)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 5th):
3rd—*dispel magic* (DC 17), *ray of exhaustion* (+4 ranged touch, DC 17)
2nd—*bear's endurance*, *ghoul touch* (+4 melee touch, DC 16), *glitterdust* (DC 16)
1st—*animate rope*, *cause fear* (DC 15), *magic missile*, *shield*
0—*daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 12, Dex 13, Con 20, Int 19, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ familiar (share spells), stonecunning
Feats Alertness[B] (if familiar is within 5 ft.), Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor[B], Iron Will, Scribe Scroll[B]
Skills Appraise +4 (+6 stone or metal items), Concentration +8 (+12 casting defensively), Craft (blacksmithing) +10, Craft (stonecutting) +10, Decipher Script +12, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +7, Knowledge (the planes) +6, Listen +2, Spellcraft +14, Spot +2
Possessions combat gear plus +1 *quarterstaff*, masterwork dagger, *headband of intellect +2*, potion belt
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*chill touch*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*blur*

Toad Familiar — CR —

N Diminutive magical beast (augmented animal)
Init +1; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages empathic link, speak with master

AC 18, touch 15, flat-footed 17
hp 21 (5 HD)
Resist improved evasion
Fort +2, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

Speed 5 ft. (1 square)
Melee —
Space 1 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** –15
Atk Options deliver touch spells

Abilities Str 1, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 8, Wis 14, Cha 4
SQ amphibious
Feats Alertness
Skills Concentration +3, Decipher Script +7, Hide +21, Knowledge (arcana) +7, Knowledge (dungeoneering) +2, Knowledge (the planes) +1, Listen +4, Spellcraft +9, Spot +4

Tiny Animated Objects (8): hp 2 each; *MM* 13.

Treasure: The two tapestries (150 gp each), three paintings (75 gp each), and two small sculptures (200 gp each) in this room will all sell easily in Melvaunt's markets.

8. Bedroom

This room is in a sunken alcove just off the wizard's inner sanctum. It contains a simple bed, a small writing desk, and a chest. The chest has been *arcane locked* and contains 100 pp, 123 gp, four jade figurines (100 gp each, 500 gp for the set), a *potion of cure moderate wounds*, and a *potion of neutralize poison*.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs should leave Theoderus's home with enough information to lead them straight to the warehouse in the next quest. If they raided the home of a citizen, killed him, and looted the place, they might be in for some trouble with the law. Ulblyn will advise them to hurry to the warehouse and find evidence that links Theoderus to the black-market slave ring. If they can do that before word of what happened spreads, he thinks they won't be prosecuted—although a bribe or two might be necessary, even in that event.

The Cursed Warehouse

The Cursed Warehouse is a short adventure designed for characters of 4th—6th level. It takes place in a warehouse shared by four smithies that has been haunted for some time.

Background

As part of Theoderus's mission in Melvaunt, he was to test several new magic sigils being developed by his Red Wizard masters. As an enchanter of weapons and armor and not much of a slave trader, the dwarf naturally experimented on weapons and armor first. In addition to placing the requested enchantments upon a suit of studded leather, a chain shirt, a dagger, and a longsword, Theoderus emblazoned each of these items with a sigil identical to the one seen on the slaves. All seemed to go well, and when the work was done Theoderus sent the enhanced weapons back to a warehouse where many of his goods were stored.

Before the weapons could be shipped off to his masters for inspection, a drunken smith brought a group of partygoers back to the warehouse to continue the evening after they were kicked out of a local pub. One of them was a rogue who couldn't help taking a peek inside some of the crates that were bound for Mulmaster. He donned a suit of studded leather bearing with a strange symbol and immediately challenged others among his mates to a mock duel. Three of the other partygoers donned the remaining armor and picked up the weapons—and seconds later, all four of them keeled over dead.

Theoderus was called to the warehouse to examine the bodies, and he quickly insisted that the entire affair be covered up. The bodies were disposed of in a discreet manner (quickly sold to a priest of Loviatar; see the Trouble in Pain quest, below, for more information).

Adventure Synopsis

While searching for clues regarding the strange nature of the rescued slaves, the characters are directed to a warehouse. While exploring caves beneath the warehouse, the PCs find armor and weapons tainted by twisted magic and bearing the mark of the slaves.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If the PCs were able to talk to Theoderus in the last quest, he might have broken down and told them of the deaths in the warehouse and asked them to help him get rid of the problem. They might also have picked up evidence in his arcane laboratory that points them to Jemel Ganza, who will also ask for their help.
- As usual, Ulblyn can be used to steer them in the right direction if they aren't asking the right questions of the right people, but they'll miss out on important information and the keys to the warehouse and the trapdoor (see below).
- If the PCs didn't go through the last quest, Jemel Ganza contacts them and explains his situation. He asks them to go down into the warehouse and retrieve the cursed items.
- If either Theoderus or Jemel sends the PCs here, that individual tells the PCs that the cursed equipment is in a secret chamber on the southern wall of a natural cave beneath the warehouse. Jemel also gives the PCs a key that opens the warehouse and the trapdoor at its center.

The Four Quarters Warehouse

The warehouse is located in the heart of the smiths' district in the city's northern quarter. It adjoins four smithies, the largest of which is Ganza's Arms and Armor. Its owner, a rough-mannered human named Jemel Ganza, is the characters' most likely contact. Should they take more than a few days to come to the warehouse, he might even inadvertently contact them in his search for someone to rid the warehouse of the cursed goods.

This warehouse is fairly typical, with most of its floor space being taken up by stacked barrels and boxes. It has four large sliding doors, one on each wall, which are locked by the smith who accesses them. If the PCs are helping Jemel Ganza, he happily lets them in his door, but he warns that he will lock it behind them until they have located all the cursed items. Otherwise, it requires a successful DC 25 Open Lock check to open one of the locks.

1. Basement

The smiths have taken everything not associated with the cursed goods out of here, fearing contamination. The floor shows signs of recent movement and places where boxes, some of which were slightly rotted, have been moved.

2. Collapsed Area (EL 5)

The corridor leading to this area collapsed just after it was built, but not before several boxes were moved in. This room was meant to be the main storage area, but after its collapse, the diggers found the natural cavern at area 5 and decided to use it instead (since presumably it was stable). A character who makes a successful DC 10 Search check realizes that an open chamber exists on the

other side of the collapsed stone and earth. Clearing the rubble to gain access to room 2 takes 1 hour.

A wraith lurks in the crumbled stone, waiting for a living creature to approach. It attacks anyone who investigates the rubble.

Wraith: hp 32; *MM* 258.

Treasure: The crates in the room beyond the rubble hold 3 longswords, 3 battleaxes, 12 shortspears, 3 heavy steel shields, and 6 daggers. In addition, a small, carved wooden box lined with velvet holds a masterwork longsword, a masterwork dagger, and a masterwork breastplate.

3. Secondary Storage and Living Areas (EL 5)

These rooms were built to store more goods as well as to house people in case the basement ever needed to be used as a shelter. There is a mattress, a chest with basic camping supplies, and a lantern in each room. A *+1 dagger*—one of the four cursed items the PCs are charged with finding—is half-buried under the mattress in the middle room (Spot DC 15 or Search DC 10). See area 5 for the details of the curse that afflicts this enchanted dagger.

The shadows stay hidden, hoping to ambush the PCs if they split up to search these rooms. If the characters stay together, the shadows attack them in the middle room as they find the cursed bracer.

Shadows (2): hp 19 each; *MM* 221.

4. Natural Cave

This cave is normally used by the smiths to store goods that they want to hide from the tax collector as well as valuable masterwork weapons that require extra security beyond the warehouse. Food and survival equipment was also stored here. Everything has been moved out of the cavern recently, however.

A secret door is hidden in the southern wall of this cave.

5. Secret Room (EL 6)

The door to this room requires only a DC 20 Search check to find, and the characters might already know exactly where to look. When it is opened, the floor and wall rotate to deposit the opener in the secret room, a fact that is noticed only if the initial Search check succeeds by 10 or more. Only one person can enter the room at a time, and the door can only be opened from the outside. This feature ensured that one person could never steal what was placed within.

Other than the creatures, this room contains a few old barrels and crates. Only one of the crates has anything in it, and it has been ripped open and its contents spilled. A *+1 longsword* and a suit of *+1 studded leather* are on the floor near the crate. Both bear the tattoo sigil, and both are cursed. Donning this armor and wearing it for more than 2 rounds, or picking up the weapon and holding it for 2 rounds, activates the first part of the curse: The wearer or wielder is overcome with dread as the cursed nature of the item becomes apparent. If the armor is not taken off or the weapon is not dropped immediately, the wearer or wielder must succeed on a DC 14 Will save, or else his or her body falls to the ground as if dead. This save must be repeated in each round thereafter for as long as the item remains attended. When one of the cursed items claims a victim, that individual rises 24 hours later as a wight. (This fact was not known to Theoderus before

he sold the bodies of the four partygoers to Jonah Strake, the priest of Loviatar; see the next quest.)

A thief sent by Jonah Strake (see the next quest) to investigate the place a few days ago made his way into the warehouse basement, where he found the secret door in this chamber. Just as he was opening it, a pair of gricks that had come in through the collapsed section attacked him. The three were trapped inside the secret room, where the thief picked up and tried to use the cursed longsword to defend himself. He dropped dead on the spot, and (since the gricks had recently fed) his body lay untouched on the floor for 24 hours before suddenly coming back to unlife as a wight. All three of the monsters have been trapped in here for days, hungry for living flesh (preferably humanoids). The wight sits on the secret door, waiting for someone else to open it so it can escape, while the gricks have nested in a shallow hole they dug near the ceiling to escape the wight's rage. The gricks attack whoever comes into the room upon opening the door, while the wight attacks anyone still outside.

Wight: hp 26; *MM* 255. The wight has AC 20 because of the armor it is wearing, and a +1 bonus on all saving throws thanks to its cloak (see Treasure, below).

Gricks (2): hp 9 each; *MM* 139.

Treasure: The wight is wearing a suit of *+2 studded leather armor* and a *cloak of resistance +1*, and it dropped a satchel inside the secret room containing 180 gp, a *figurine of wondrous power* (*serpentine owl*), and *potions of spider climb* and

neutralize poison. Also inside the satchel is a note detailing the job the thief was to do:

Break into the Four Quarters Warehouse and seek out a secret room in the caves below the main floor. There you will find four items bearing a mark like the one found at the bottom of this page—a longsword, a suit of studded leather, a chain shirt, and a dagger. Bring them to me at the temple.

—J.S.

Accursed Creature of the Earth (EL 6)

A xorn found its way to the secret room, attracted by the scent of the cursed equipment. It devoured the cursed *+1 chain shirt* before realizing the metal was tainted; the experience drove the creature insane. It now lurks nearby, waiting to attack whoever comes to claim the rest of the cursed items. If the characters appear to be removing the cursed items from the secret room, the xorn appears and attacks whoever is in the natural cave. It chases them into the warehouse above, and out into the city if it must. The final piece of cursed equipment can be found inside its stomach, intact.

Xorn: hp 48; *MM* 261.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs, who know they are here to suss out the cursed items, should be smart enough not to attempt using any of the items they find as treasure inside the warehouse. The 2-round delay before the curse takes effect is enough time for a character to pick up an item, transport it a short distance (if necessary), and drop it into a sack or other form of container. After they retrieve all four of the cursed items and read the note in the thief's satchel, they will be able to figure out that their next stop should be the temple of Loviatar.

Their best clue is the note, which identifies a temple worker with the initials "J.S." as a party interested in the cursed equipment. A successful DC 15 Gather Information check points the party toward the city's temple of Loviatar and a priest named Jonah Strake. If the check succeeds by 5 or more, they learn that Jonah rarely takes part in normal services, leading his own worship in a private wing of the temple that has outside access.

Trouble in Pain

Trouble in Pain is a short adventure designed for characters of 5th–7th level. This encounter takes place in a wing of the temple of Loviatar in Melvaunt.

Background

Jonah Strake felt like his life was going nowhere. It had been ten years since he dedicated himself to the Maiden of Pain, coming into her fold through great personal sacrifice—yet he could not even penetrate the inner circle of a temple as minor as the one in Melvaunt. His discontent was well known, so when he expressed the desire to experiment with negative energy and undead, the other priests were happy to give him his own wing of the temple to get him out of their hair. He even took a smattering of followers with him, but this was no matter, because the temple didn't thrive on outward shows of piety anyway.

He worked for years raising zombies, skeletons, and even a stray ghoul or two—but Loviatar remained unimpressed. His skill had grown, though, and he was ready to branch out. His first experiments were done on his followers, but that well soon ran dry. He turned to slaves, but the church leaders worried that they would be seen as slave traders—a reputation they wished to avoid. Strake was forced to buy his slaves from the black market, always negotiating the deals himself. It was through these contacts that he learned of a new batch of slaves fresh off a pirate ship from the Moonsea.

He contacted the pirates and went to their hidden cove, buying four slaves and promising to come back for more. When he got them to the temple, he found that he could not work his normal magic upon them. After days of experimenting, he realized that the tattoo they all had on their ankles was not merely a brand—it was a magic sigil. Wanting to learn more, he began surreptitiously asking around town.

While investigating the tattoos, he ran across a strange rumor—equipment bearing the same symbol was the cause of four deaths, and this equipment was lying buried beneath one of the city's warehouses. He immediately procured the bodies of the dead for a pittance in return for quickly removing them from the warehouse, and then sent a thief to retrieve the cursed items. The thief never returned, and all of Strake's attempts to decipher the power of the tattoos have failed. Strake plans to dedicate an elaborate ritual to Loviatar involving some of his creations, and that, he hopes, will unlock some divine inspiration . . . what could go wrong?

Adventure Synopsis

After finding cursed goods bearing the slaves' sigil, the characters are compelled to find victims of the sigil's corruption. Their search leads them to the temple of Loviatar, where one of the clerics is preparing for an upcoming holy day by creating undead as a gift to his goddess. The PCs must break into his private chambers, defeat the horrors found within, and remove the curse from the afflicted items (so that Jonah Strake cannot claim the items and use them to easily manufacture more wights).

Four slaves bearing the same mark that appears on the cursed items are currently imprisoned beneath the temple; these are the four missing from the pirate's cave (see the Devil's Fire Tavern quest, above). Once the last of these slaves has been accounted for, Ulblyn comes forth with a request that can launch the next phase of the PCs' careers.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of at least two ways.

- Once the characters acquire the cursed equipment from the warehouse, it shouldn't take them long to try to get rid of it. A fairly simple investigation uncovers the identity of the person who sent the thief after the equipment. Now all it's going to take is a bold intrusion into the temple of one of Faerûn's most evil deities to solve the mystery and discover the fate of the remaining tattooed slaves.
- If the characters aren't coming from the cursed warehouse, then they might catch wind of an evil ritual taking place in an isolated wing of the temple of Loviatar. Ulblyn, one of the city leaders, or even a cleric from one of the good

temples might want them to investigate what is going on—and put a stop to it.

Temple of Loviatar: Jonah Strake's Wing

Jonah Strake has managed to gain control of an entire wing of the temple of Loviatar. Some of the priests see it as an affront for a low-ranking priest to have access to this large an amount of resources, but the head priest decided it was an acceptable way not to jettison a devout priest while keeping him and his obsessions at a safe distance.

1. Outside the Temple (EL 6)

Two guards stand at the outside entrance to Strake's wing of the temple of Loviatar. The doors are open to worshipers during the day, but at sunset they are closed, and anyone who approaches is turned away, forcefully if necessary.

The temple guards have strict orders not to interrupt their master, so they fight to the death to bar entry into the temple.

Temple Guards (2): hp 34 each; see below.

Temple Guard CR 4

Male human fighter 4
LE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Chondathan, Common

AC 19, touch 11, flat-footed 18
hp 34 (4 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +9 (1d8+5/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Power Attack
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Persuasive, Power Attack[B], Weapon Focus (longsword)[B], Weapon Specialization (longsword)[B]
Skills Bluff +2, Climb +0, Intimidate +8, Jump –6, Listen +3, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork banded mail, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, 28 gp

2. Shrine of Loviatar (EL 6)

Evil exudes from this small temple. No benches or chairs are visible, but bloody mats where supplicants are whipped are laid out in rows on the floor. Services take place in the evening before sundown, and in the mornings Jonah meets with other priests from the temple in his meeting hall.

Two armed guards are posted here at all times. If they hear sounds of combat outside the temple, they do not run out to help. Rather, they take up defensive positions in this room and wait to ambush intruders.

Temple Guards (2): hp 34 each; see above.

3. Meeting Hall

Jonah's mornings are taken up by meetings in this room, where he conducts business and keeps in touch with the other priests who live and worship in the main temple. While the meetings are often contentious, Jonah knows that as long as he keeps drawing large numbers of people to his services, the others won't kick him out of his wing of the temple. The room is plainly furnished

with a desk, a wooden, oval-shaped table, and several hard brown chairs. The double doors can be locked from this side, although Jonah rarely locks them.

4. Strake's Bedroom (EL 7)

This room doesn't show the same sense of restraint and frugality as the meeting hall. Everything here is of exceptional quality, from the bed and bedding to a beautiful ivory-inlaid chest of drawers.

Strake keeps his door trapped, mostly to dissuade nosy guards and clerics from interfering with his work.

Glyph of Warding (Blast) Trap: CR 6; magic device; touch trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 16th-level cleric, 8d8 sonic, Reflex DC 14 half; multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

Treasure: Hidden in a false back of the chest of drawers (Search DC 26) is Strake's personal wealth. It consists of a *potion of neutralize poison*, a scroll of *cure serious wounds*, a bejeweled masterwork dagger (450 gp), and 16 assorted gems with a total value of 1,275 gp.

5. Prison Cells

This hall contains eight tiny prison cells, two of which are currently occupied by slaves whom Strake bought from a band of local pirates. Each of these male humans has a strange tattoo on his ankle. They are underfed and miserable, although Strake is doing what he can to keep them alive so he can kill them when he wants to and then try to raise them.

The PCs can learn the story of how the slaves got here from the pirate cave by talking to them. They have no memory of where the tattoos came from, knowing only that one minute they were living their lives in Mulmaster and the next they were on a ship bound for somewhere else. What happened in between is a mystery to them. They have seen Strake commanding horrid undead creatures, and they can tell that he is having trouble performing magic upon them due to their tattoos; he just took one slave out of his cell minutes before the PCs arrived and dragged him down the hall to the south.

6. Corpse Chamber

This chamber contains several dead bodies that have had *gentle repose* cast on them (so they can be saved for later animation into creatures other than skeletons). One of the corpses has been recently mutilated and bears the slaves' tattoo on his ankle. The room has the feel of a slaughterhouse, but none of the blood or stench. In fact, the room is incredibly clean and well organized—the bodies are all neatly stacked (except for the mutilated corpse), and a table holds three scrolls (two of *gentle repose* and one of *create undead*), a small urn of salt, and 24 cp.

7. Altar of Loviatar (EL 9)

This room contains an altar to Loviatar, including a towering statue of the Maiden of Pain. The chamber has been *desecrated* by Strake to empower the undead he creates here and to make his mistress's malevolence palpable within the room. A red velvet curtain hangs diagonally opposite the entry arch, hiding an altar from prying eyes during the evenings when Strake performs his animation rituals. It is closed when the PCs enter, because he is in the process of trying to animate one of the tattooed slaves from his prison. The slave has just been killed as the PCs enter the room.

If any PC enters the altar room and Strake notices, he immediately pulls the curtain back and orders his undead to attack. On his first turn he bolsters his undead minions and moves up onto the altar, drawing his *+1 unholy light mace*. He then casts the following spells in order—*magic circle against good, bear's endurance,* and *shield of faith*—unless two or more of his minions go down, in which case he casts *hold person* on an obvious fighter in the group and readies his weapon for an attack. He interrupts these preparatory spells if he sees a good opportunity to use *silence* to shape the battlefield or *dispel magic* to get rid of opposing magic.

Since the shrine is *desecrated,* the undead inside it gain a +2 bonus on all attack rolls and damage rolls, as well as saving throws. In addition, all turning checks are made with a –6 penalty.

Jonah Strake — CR 6

Male Damaran human cleric 6 (Loviatar)
LE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 23, touch 12, flat-footed 22
hp 40 (6 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee *+1 unholy light mace* +6 (1d6+2)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +5
Atk Options strike of vengeance (*FRCS* 65) 1/day
Special Actions rebuke undead 9/day (+4, 2d6+9, 7th)
Combat Gear *wand of hold person* (7 charges, CL 5th), *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of barkskin* (6th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th):

- 3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds, dispel magic* (DC 17), *magic circle against good*[D] (CL 7th)
- 2nd—*bear's endurance*[D], *cure moderate wounds, death knell* (DC 16, CL 7th), *hold person* (DC 16), *silence* (DC 16)
- 1st—*cause fear* (DC 15), *cure light wounds, detect undead, obscuring mist, shield of faith*[D]
- 0—*create water, cure minor wounds, detect magic, light, mending*
- D: Domain spell. Deity: Loviatar. Domains: Evil, Retribution.

Abilities Str 12, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 19, Cha 15
SQ strong aura of evil
Feats Craft Wand, Extra Turning, Improved Turning, Scribe Scroll
Skills Concentration +11, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +3, Knowledge (religion) +10, Spellcraft +4
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 full plate,* heavy steel shield, *ring of protection +1, +1 unholy light mace,* light crossbow, 10 bolts, *cloak of resistance +1,* scroll of *desecrate* and *animate dead,* 78 gp

Wights (4): hp 34 each; MM 255.

Development: The four undead here are the cursed corpses Strake bought after they died at the Four Quarters Warehouse (see the previous quest). Much to the priest's surprise, the bodies came "alive" as wights a few hours after he brought them here from the warehouse. (That turn of events is what prompted him to send out a thief to recover the items.) If the PCs have the cursed equipment with them, Strake will stop at nothing to take ownership of the items. He explains, in typical over-the-top villain fashion, that these things are just what he needs to raise an entire army of undead. (This is the information that enables the PCs to know that they should not relinquick the items to him under any circumstances.)

If the fight ends successfully for the PCs, the next thing they might try is to remove the curse from the items. Unfortunately for them, the *remove curse* spell doesn't work on objects; however, any character who makes a DC 15 Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (arcana) check can discern that this unusual curse can be removed from one item if a cleric expends one of his daily turn undead attempts to do so.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 125% of the normal experience for defeating the undead, due to the *desecrate* effect on the shrine. If they succeed in removing the curse from all four of the items, award them additional experience as for an EL 7 encounter.

Concluding the Adventure

The PCs should be ready to get out of the temple quickly, before the other priests discover their invasion. Ulblyn will happily take in the slaves rescued from the temple, and offers the PCs a reward of 1,500 gp for retrieving them. Once the slaves have been hidden away, Ulblyn suggests that the PCs leave the city for a while. They have infuriated pirates, harassed a well-respected local mage, and have now invaded the temple of Loviatar and killed one of the Maiden's priests. Ulblyn offers them a job, if they want it: 2,000 gp to go to Hillsfar and find out where the ship carrying the slaves was headed, and who was there waiting for it. He suggests that the Red Wizards might be a good place to start.

Northern Moonsea Quests

These miniadventures take place within the immediate vicinity of Melvaunt. They're set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Melvaunt quests in the previous section. Some of them can also link to adventures in other chapters.

This section revolves around the discovery of lore regarding one of the Northern Moonsea's greatest legends—Vorbyx, the First King of Thar. All that is known about Vorbyx is that he united Thar's tribes of ogres and orcs under his banner, forming a kingdom of great size and power. All that remains of that kingdom today are legends and feuds, their origins long forgotten. Much of Vorbyx's success came from his control over some of Thar's most powerful magical locations, which granted him abilities that aided him in his rise to power. Two such places, a watchpost in the southern marshes and a cave rumored to be his tomb, feature prominently in the quests below.

Some of Thar's denizens believe that *Vorbyx's Hammer*, a legendary artifact wielded by the king, is hidden behind a magic stone seal underneath an ogre stronghold in central Thar. A hammer-shaped key unlocks the power of the location behind the seal; part of this key was broken off and taken out of the tomb before it was sealed. It is now the key to several locations important in the quest to find Vorbyx. If a suitably adventurous and knowledgeable group of adventurers were to find this shattered piece of stone, it could lead them on a chase through Thar after one of the region's most celebrated legends.

Adventuring in Thar

Thar is an inhospitable land that offers many dangers to those who travel its marshes and hills. Three of the quests in this section—Vorbyx's Watchpost, Ogre's Stronghold, and The Tomb of Vorbyx—take place in Thar, meaning the PCs will have to travel across this bleak land in pursuit of their goal. The Glister Road is the only real path through the land of Thar, and it's assumed that first-time travelers into the region take it. All three of the quests take place within a half-day's travel of the road.

Terrain and Weather

Adverse weather and the terrain of Thar hinder and oppose the PCs as they adventure here.

Getting Lost: Characters who leave the Glister Road to explore the moors, swamps, or hills of Thar must succeed on a Survival check or become lost in the fog or difficult terrain. See Getting Lost, *DMG* 86–87, for details.

Difficult Terrain: Thar has marsh terrain and hills terrain. Marshes include both dry moors and watery swamps. Hills include both gentle hills and rugged hills. See Marsh Terrain and Hills Terrain, DMG 88–89, for details.

Weather: Thar is quite cold this time of year. The temperature falls between 0° and 40° F. during the day and is 10 to 20 degrees colder at night. Once every 12 hours, roll on the following table to determine the weather conditions for that time period.

d%	Weather	Conditions
01–70	Normal weather	Fog (20% chance)
71–80	Abnormal weather	Heat wave (01–30) or cold snap (31–100)
81–90	Inclement weather	Rain or snow, fog (50% chance)
91–100	Dismal weather	Downpour

Fog: Fog obscures all sight, including darkvision, beyond 5 feet; creatures 5 feet or farther apart have concealment with respect to one another.

Heat Wave: Raises temperature by 10° F. Annoying clouds of normal insects beset unprotected characters, but the abnormally warm weather has no adverse game effects.

Cold Snap: Lowers temperature by 10° F. See Cold Dangers, *DMG* 302, for possible effects.

Rain: Rain reduces visibility ranges by half and imposes a –4 penalty on Listen, Search, and Spot checks as well as ranged attack rolls. Rain douses unprotected flames and has a 50% chance of extinguishing protected flames such as lanterns. See *DMG* 94 for more about rain effects.

Downpour: A heavy downpour has the same effect as rain and fog combined (see above) and lasts for 2d4 hours. It also washes away tracks left during the previous 12 hours.

Wandering Encounters in Thar

Check for random wilderness encounters every 6 hours (morning, afternoon, evening, and late night). There is a 1 in 6 chance of an encounter.

The more difficult encounters appear at the high end of the table. To make it more likely that a higher-level party will have a higher-EL encounter, add an amount to the roll equal to 5 + the average level of the PCs.

d%	Encounter	Source
06–15	2 orcs (EL 1)	*MM* 203
16–30	4 orcs (EL 2)	*MM* 203
31–40	Locust swarm (EL 3)	*MM* 239
41–50	Dire wolf (EL 3)	*MM* 65
51–60	Ogre zombie (EL 3)	*MM* 267
61–70	2 troll skeletons (EL 5)	*MM* 227
71–80	Troll (EL 5)	*MM* 247
81–90	2 werewolves (EL 5)	*MM* 173
91–100	Ettin (EL 6)	*MM* 106
100+	Eight-headed hydra (EL 7)	*MM* 157

Rogues' Camp

Rogues' Camp is a short adventure designed for characters of 1st–3rd level. It takes place in a hidden crag on the coast of the Moonsea about a day's ride outside Melvaunt.

Background

The pirates of the Moonsea have many places to hide from the naval patrols of the four great cities, but very few have respites within a day's ride of one of them. The crew of one particular pirate ship has just such a place, a camp they share with a group of half-orc bandits that prey on travelers moving between Melvaunt and Phlan along the Phlan Path. Not all of them are here at any given time, but in total about forty bandits and pirates share the hideout.

There are more pirates here than normal because their ship was recently involved in a battle that left them confused and broken—and their vessel badly in need of repairs.

The bandits, for their part, aren't really interested in sea life. They have been reasonably successful ambushing travelers on the Moonsea's northern coast. These half-orcs recently lost their leader when a vicious band of orcs came out of Thar and attacked the bandits where they lay in ambush. Although the orcs were eventually beaten, the bandits took heavy casualties. They did collect a fat bag of loot from their vanquished foes, however, which has only served to make them even more paranoid and fractious without their leader to control them.

So now the camp finds itself in a dangerous place—bandits and pirates mingling, both sides itching for action, but also afraid to make the first move. Neither side has a viable leader, let alone anyone with the initiative and strength to take control of both sides of the camp. This state of affairs has made both groups sloppy and disorganized, a situation that could lead to the discovery of their camp and an end to their predations.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters seek out a band of rogues in order to retrieve some recently stolen goods. Upon tracking the rogues to their seaside hideout, they find the rogues in disarray. The two factions sharing the hideout are on the verge of killing one another, making it a dangerous environment in which to parlay. Adding to the inherent peril of the job is the fact that strange monsters have taken residence inside the rogues' treasure cavern; the PCs will have to deal with the monsters (and perhaps some rogues) before they can retrieve what they came for.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If this is the beginning of your campaign, the PCs could be members of either group (the bandits or the pirates) who have decided it's time to strike out on their own. They just want their share of the treasure and they'll be on their way. Of course, the other rogues aren't happy about further reducing their ranks or divvying up their loot with traitors.
- If the PCs are traveling along the Phlan Path, a haggard-looking man and woman come running up to them. They've just been attacked by bandits and lost everything, including several valuable family heirlooms. They're willing to pay 2,000 gp (which they have secreted away in Melvaunt) if the PCs can retrieve these items. The heirlooms are a ruby-encrusted insignia ring, a gold and silver necklace, and a scroll bearing the deed to a plot of land in Phlan (where the man and woman were heading when they were ambushed). The PCs can track the rogues back to their hideout from the point of attack with relative ease, since the rogues have gotten careless without their leader.
- If the PCs are in Melvaunt, Ulblyn Blackalbuck approaches them with an urgent job: Follow a man named Corwyn out of town to his hideout to the west of the city. They must then find a way to search the recent plunder brought to the hideout by a band of pirates. He is looking for any pieces that have a strange marking on them (see the tattoo from the Melvaunt Quests section). He offers 1,500 gp—half up front—to do the job.

Ambush on the Path (EL 2)

As the PCs approach the camp, they will be ambushed by a group of four bandits before they reach the watchtower. The bandits are returning from a raid in which they were almost overtaken by orcs; they are obviously injured, but use good tactics and coordinate their attacks when possible.

Bandits (4): hp 5, 4, 3, 3; three of the bandits were wounded in the previous battle and have not yet fully healed.

Treasure: In addition to their possessions, these bandits have a bag of loot that includes 208 gp, a silver dagger, 4 gold rings (30 gp each), and a broken jade obelisk about a foot long with a silver inlay running across one side. This obelisk is important to the other quests in this section. It radiates faint abjuration, divination, and transmutation magic, and grants whoever is carrying it a +2 bonus on Fortitude saves.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs only 90% of the normal XP for defeating the wounded bandits.

The Rogues' Camp

The land dips sharply here at the edge of the Moonsea, about five miles west of Melvaunt. A crack in the landscape provides a flat shelf of rock that is very difficult to see from a distance. Two groups of criminals, a crew of human pirates and an assembly of half-orc bandits, use this area as a staging ground and place to temporarily store loot. It's also used as a hideout when things start to get dangerous in the field.

A camouflaged watchtower lets guards keep an eye on the surrounding territory, and a pool of fresh water provides sustenance and marks a natural demarcation between the two factions. A cave cut into the rocky shelf serves as a storage area for food reserves and loot.

Both the pirates and the bandits have recently lost their leaders and are in a state of flux. A pirate named Corwyn has just arrived from Melvaunt; he is nominally in charge of the sailors at the moment, but his control is tenuous. None of the bandits has come forth to claim leadership over their group, so they've been raiding as loose bands whenever the desire strikes. Their lack of organization and carelessness threatens to expose the hideout, a prospect the pirates aren't keen to see come to fruition.

In all, thirteen bandits and eleven pirates share the camp at the moment, so a direct assault isn't likely to end well for the PCs. Negotiating with two dozen nervous criminals isn't a settling thought, either, but fortune favors the bold! It wouldn't take long for an infiltrator to note the tension in the camp, since both sides have loose lips and aren't hiding their mutual disdain. So, one tactic would be to infiltrate the camp in disguise and inflame the tension of one or both camps. New members come and go occasionally, so characters using the Disguise skill to blend in don't come under immediate suspicion. It's quite possible to foment enough distrust and animosity that the two sides will attack one another. Doing so would require liberal use of Bluff, Diplomacy, and Intimidate checks to drive the negative emotions. Any fight that breaks out is likely to end in a full-scale skirmish, allowing stealthy PCs to slip into the treasure cave and acquire what they came for (although therein lies trouble as well; see area 4 below for details). Less meddlesome PCs might decide to try direct negotiation, especially if they realize they can play on the confusion in the camp.

If the characters are looking for specific items (see Character Hooks), they can try to negotiate for them outright, although such talks are met with unfriendliness from the pirates and outright hostility from the bandits. In either case, failure to win over the criminals ends in combat, although if the PCs run, their foes won't chase them very far.

Negotiating with the Pirates: If the PCs enter camp or make contact in some other way, Corwyn steps forward as the negotiator. If the PCs can change his attitude to indifferent, he offers to give them what they seek for 250 gp if they'll clear the caves of the monsters that lurk inside them (see area 4). If they can change his attitude to friendly, he gives them the copper ring for 150 gp and sends two pirates along with the PCs to confront the monsters.

Negotiating with the Bandits: The bandits aren't in the mood to talk to strangers, but they're much readier than the pirates to part with their loot for the right price (none of them understands that without a fence checking over things, they might be letting valuable magic go for a steal). Intimidation works best with the bandits, who don't want to be seen as fools by the pirates and don't want their hideout to be compromised at this sensitive juncture. PCs get a +2 bonus on Intimidate checks made against a bandit as long as it isn't done in plain sight of the pirates. If the bandits are intimidated or if their attitude can be changed to indifferent or better, they will sell the PCs the three heirlooms for 300 gp on the condition that they first clear out the monsters in the caves.

Bandit — CR 1/2

Male half-orc warrior 1
NE Medium humanoid (orc)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Damaran, Orc

AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13
hp 5 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee short sword +2 (1d6+1/19–20)
Ranged shortbow +2 (1d6/×3
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 7
Feats Alertness
Skills Climb +1, Intimidate +0, Jump +1
Possessions studded leather armor, short sword, shortbow, 20 arrows, 18 gp

Corwyn Jaffe — CR 4

Male human rogue 1/expert 4
LE Medium humanoid
Init +7; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +8
Languages Common, Chondathan, Damaran, Orc

AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Dodge
hp 21 (5 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +4 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 16, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ trapfinding
Feats Athletic, Dodge, Improved Initiative
Skills Balance +7, Bluff +7, Climb +5, Diplomacy +7, Hide +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Profession (sailor) +6, Search +6, Spot +8, Swim +5, Use Rope +7
Possessions studded leather armor, masterwork rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts, dagger, 213 gp

Pirate — CR 1

Male human rogue 1
LE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +4
Languages Common, Chondathan, Damaran, Orc

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 13; Dodge
hp 7 (1 HD)
Fort +1, **Ref** +4, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee rapier +1 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +2 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6

Abilities Str 12, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Athletic, Dodge
Skills Balance +6, Bluff +3, Climb +5, Hide +5, Jump +4, Move Silently +5, Profession (sailor) +4, Search +6, Spot +4, Swim +3, Use Rope +6
Possessions studded leather armor, rapier, light crossbow, 10 bolts, dagger, 13 gp

Encounters

1. Watchtower (EL 1 or 1/2)

This camouflaged, 10-foot-tall structure gives lookouts a bit of extra height for keeping watch over the surrounding land as well as the waters to the south.

One guard is posted here at all times at the spot marked G. A pirate takes the morning watch, and the overnight is taken by a bandit (to utilize his darkvision). The afternoon watch rotates between pirates and bandits on a daily basis.

Pirate: hp 7; see above or
Bandit: hp 5; see above.

2. Main Camp (EL 5–8)

The pirates make their campsite near the cliff on the eastern side of the pool. They spend most of their time practicing the skills of their trade—sewing sails and clothing, fixing barrels and crates, and tying knots. In the evenings they drink rum and beer around the fire and sing sea chanteys, annoying the bandits to no end.

The rogues make camp around the cave mouth on the opposite cliff. Most of them are idle when they don't have guard duty, lying about or gambling with their latest cut of loot. They sleep through the morning and afternoon and are most active between sundown and the early morning.

Horses are stabled in a covered structure by the cliffside.

In addition to the guard in the watchtower, two guards (both from the same group) are posted at the top of the slope leading down into the camp. This job is generally considered a break from other duties, because the guard in the watchpost already surveys the land around camp and calls out warnings if anyone approaches. Thus, the guards here are rarely paying attention—and at night they often just wander down into the camp and join in the activities.

Any of the nineteen bandits or pirates not on guard duty are roaming around the camp, except for 2d4 of them who will be out hunting, fishing, or just keeping busy outside camp during the day, with 1d4 gone in the evening.

Bandits (number varies): hp 5 each; see above.
Pirates (number varies): hp 7 each; see above.

3. Guard Cave (EL 2)

This cave holds two guards, one from each group, at all times. Occasionally others wander in here, lured by the presence of treasure even though they can't get at it. Dice games and storytelling are common activities among the guards here.

A rancid scent has recently crept into this cave from the treasure caves beyond.

Bandit: hp 5; see above.
Pirate: hp 7; see above.

4. Treasure Caves (EL 3)

These caves hold some of the collected booty of the pirates and bandits, although neither side stores a great deal here out of mistrust of the other. Both caves are littered with the carcasses and bones of small animals on which the creatures herein have been feeding. This refuse is the source of the sour smell in area 3.

Recently, a small clutch of darkmantles moved into these caves, and they have proven dangerous, as the two skeletons in the bandits' treasure cave illustrate. The pirates and bandits are deathly afraid of the creatures and stay out of these caves as a matter of course now. They know that eventually they will have to get rid of the menaces, but after losing two of their number they have decided that caution is the best approach. There are 1d3 darkmantles in one cave at any given time, with the remainder (if any) in the other cave.

Darkmantles (3): hp 10, 7, 6; *MM* 38.

Treasure: The pirates' cave contains a crate of dark, salty jerky, four barrels of beer, and six casks of rum. In addition, they keep a small box filled with cheap jewelry here (total worth about 120 gp), and six bolts of fine Hillsfar silk (100 gp per bolt). A copper ring (1 sp) wrapped in paper sits on one of the crates. A crude rendition of the slaves' sigil (see the Melvaunt Quests introduction) is scribbled on the paper (as a warning to the other pirates, since the ring came from of one of the slaves).

The bandits' cave is less organized, with jewelry, coins, and goods scattered across the floor or dumped out of small chests and coffers. In total there is 237 gp, 1,710 sp, two uncut chunks of jade (25 gp each), a necklace of small black pearls (125 gp), and a small purple vial containing *elixir of truth*.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have gotten what they came for, they might look to head back into town. After collecting their reward, they will be asked to look into another job by Ulblyn Blackalbuck. The bandits and pirates are too busy and distracted to follow the PCs or care what they do once they've left the campsite, so the PCs won't have to worry about reprisals if they made trouble.

As for the piece of jade recovered from the orc bandits, much can be learned by taking it to a sage or attempting to sell it in the city. For 50 gp, any sage will research the piece for a week before uncovering its secret—it is part of a key that will reveal the burial place of Vorbyx, first King of Thar. If the characters sell the piece, it is quickly brought to the attention of Ulblyn, who divines its origin and asks the PCs to find where the key must go and then take it there. This assignment leads to the next quest in this section, Vorbyx's Watchpost.

Vorbyx's Watchpost

Vorbyx's Watchpost is a short adventure designed for characters of 2nd–4th level. It has the PCs exploring a jutting spire of stone in the land of Thar, northeast of Melvaunt.

Background

The orcs and ogres of Thar tell stories of the legendary Vorbyx, first King of Thar and the only being to ever unite the various warring tribes and races of that harsh land. No one remembers who Vorbyx was outside of these legends—or even what kind of creature he was. The ogres and orcs each claim him as one of their own, but many sages feel Vorbyx could just as easily been another type of creature altogether—a demon or devil, perhaps, or maybe even a phaerimm or a beholder. Whatever Vorbyx was, his deeds have found a place in the historical traditions of the Moonsea region.

Vorbyx's rise to power took much more time than is generally thought, and required the patience of someone with a longer life span than an ogre or orc. There was no singular event that caused the uniting of the tribes—rather, each tribe was assimilated one by one as the might of Vorbyx's army was brought to bear. In the early days of the conquest of Thar, Vorbyx spent a lot of time in hiding. He hadn't yet raised his army, and he needed a place where he and his followers could see threats coming from afar. Thus, Vorbyx's Watchpost was born.

Now the place is nothing more than an abandoned memory, with little to identify it as a place of great historical significance. Strange creatures still haunt the caverns within, however, and anyone brave enough to explore the depths of the plateau might find a link to a history that's long been dead and buried.

Adventure Synopsis

The PCs come upon a plateau of stone jutting from the cold plains of Thar that is rumored to be connected to Vorbyx. Many dangerous creatures now call the tunnel-ridden plateau home, however, and the characters must fight their way through level after level of danger to finally reveal the secret that they have come searching for.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- After learning of the true nature of the jade key they found in the previous quest, the PCs attempt to find out where it goes. After a couple of days of fruitless searching, a mysterious figure appears to them in the night. He gets their attention from a rooftop, introduces himself as Daumar Gudenny (see page 16), and says that he can direct them to Vorbyx's Watchtower if they promise to inform him of what they find. He warns them that he is an experienced tracker who will stop at nothing to find them should they fail to deliver on their part of the bargain.
- Ulblyn Blackalbuck knows of the key's nature and wants the PCs to investigate. He thinks he might know where it goes. Friends of his sometimes camp atop a tall plateau when they are forced to cross Thar's southern edge. They don't know what is inside, but legend has it that it was once the resting place of Vorbyx.
- If you're running this as a stand-alone adventure, the PCs might be crossing Thar when a horrible storm overtakes them. The only shelter for miles is a plateau that appears to have several caves carved into its face.

The Plateau

Located about forty miles northeast of Melvaunt, Vorbyx's Watchpost is a limestone plateau that rises 60 feet above the surrounding marshlands. It not only gave Vorbyx an easily

defensible position, but its proximity to the Moonsea and trails leading east made a hasty retreat an easy option if needed. The land surrounding the plateau is relatively flat for two miles in all directions, making it exceedingly easy to spot movement. Of course, the plateau itself sticks out like a sore thumb as well—one can't make it a home for long, which is why Vorbyx eventually abandoned it.

1. Lower Cavern (EL 4)

A ramp leads steeply up from a rift at the base of the plateau into this chilly cavern. A depression near the entrance is filled with bits of cloth, foliage, and other insulating materials to make a nest for the shocker lizards that currently live here. Another steep ramp leads up out of the room along the eastern wall.

Two patches of about a half-dozen holes each can be seen in the ceiling of this cavern with a DC 20 Spot check. These are small tunnels used by the eyeball beholderkin to fly between levels.

Two shocker lizards make their home in the shallow depression, living off whatever animals they can catch as well as scavenging the remains of the prey brought here by flying predators (see below). They're not intimidated by size, and they immediately attack anyone who enters the chamber. One lizard runs out to act as the "spotter" so that anyone within 20 feet of it is affected by the lizard's lethal shock. They do so until one of them falls, at which time the other lizard hides in the depression for cover and uses its stunning shock attack.

Shocker Lizards (2): hp 13 each; *MM* 224.

Treasure: A DC 14 Search check in the shocker lizards' nest turns up a few valuable bits, totaling 127 gp, 86 sp, a gold necklace (75 gp), and a scroll of *shatter*.

2. Central Cavern (EL 3)

This cave is even colder than the one below; it is damp and smells of rotting fungus and vegetation. A group of holes on the floor (Spot DC 15) provides access to the other caverns for the eyeball beholderkin who live in this cave. There are two exits in this room; a short tunnel to the north, and an upward-sloping ramp in the southeast corner.

The eyeballs lurk just beneath the surface, swarming a party that was severely weakened by the shocker lizards, or joining in the fray if the PCs disturb the wolf skeletons on the lower watchpost. They can move between any room connected by tunnels with a move action.

Eyeball Beholderkin (4): hp 3 each; see below.

vorbyx's watchpost

Lore: Any character can make a Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check to remember details about this location. Because this watchpost was created so long ago, the DCs of the lore checks are higher than normal.

DC 15: This place has been abandoned since the kingdom of Thar crumbled.

DC 20: Vorbyx once commanded this high ground and used it as a rallying point for his troops in southern Thar.

DC 20: Anyone who spends enough time here gains sharper eyes and quicker reactions than normal.

DC 25: Vorbyx's Watchpost is more powerful than a normal magical location of this type.

Prerequisite: Only a creature with an Intelligence score of 5 or higher can benefit from the effect of *Vorbyx's Watchpost.*

Location Activation: A creature must spend 8 hours in the colored pool (which is actually quite warm and soothing) to draw forth the power of this location. The pool can affect up to five creatures simultaneously.

Recharge: Once *Vorbyx's Watchpost* has conferred its ability on five creatures, it cannot do so again for 24 hours.

Special Ability (Su): *Vorbyx's Watchpost* grants a creature a +2 enhancement bonus on initiative rolls and a +10 bonus on Spot checks as long as it remains within the watchpost and for 24 hours after leaving it. It also doubles the range of low-light vision and darkvision for the same period.

Aura: Moderate divination.

Ability Value: 1,750 gp (350 gp per affected creature).

Beholderkin, Eyeball CR 1/2

NE Tiny aberration
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., all-around vision; Listen +8, Spot +2
Languages none

AC 16, touch 15, flat-footed 13; Dodge, can't be flanked
hp 3 (1 HD)
Immune charm and command effects
Fort –1, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Speed 5 ft. (1 square), fly 40 ft. (good)
Melee bite +0 (1d3–2) or
Ranged eye rays +5 touch (see below)
Space 2-1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +0; **Grp** –10

Abilities Str 6, Dex 16, Con 9, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ flight
Feats Alertness[B], Dodge
Skills Hide +11, Listen +2, Search +2, Spot +8

Eye Rays (Su) An eyeball can use one of its four eye rays each round as a free action. If it uses its *daze* or *ray of frost* eye ray, it can't use that ray again until 2 rounds later.
Each eye's effect resembles a spell (caster level 4th), but follows the rules for a ray (see Aiming a Spell, *PH* 175). Each eye ray has a range of 35 feet and a save DC of 10. The save DCs are Charisma-based. The four eye rays include:
Cause Fear: The target must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell. Eyeballs use these rays to open combat, hoping to divide their enemies.
Daze: The target must succeed on a Will save or be affected as though by the spell. When fighting a single opponent, an eyeball uses this ray to immobilize the opponent while its packmates bite and freeze it.
Mage Hand: As the spell, except an eyeball can move an unattended object that weighs no more than 5 pounds up to 15 feet as a free action each round.
Ray of Frost: This works like the spell, dealing 1d3 points of cold damage.

All-Around Vision (Ex) An eyeball's many eyes gives it a +4 racial bonus on Spot and Search checks, and it cannot be flanked.

Flight (Ex) An eyeball's body is naturally buoyant, allowing it to fly at a speed of 40 feet. This buoyancy also grants it a permanent feather fall effect (as the spell) with personal range.

3. Lower Watchpost (EL 2)

This room is honeycombed with beholderkin tunnel holes on the floor, ceiling, and walls. These tunnels provide access to the lower cavern and the roof. In addition, the western wall opens up to the outside, where a flat stone slab provides a good view of the countryside to the west. Blood stains the slab, and the bones and other remains of several humanoids are scattered near the entrance to the cavern. A successful DC 22 Survival check reveals markings made by several large birdlike predators that regularly bring their catches here to feed (although they've been avoiding this slab lately because of the wolf skeletons).

Two wolf skeletons lie just inside the room near the outcropping. They jump up to attack any creature that appears on the outcropping or tries to access it from inside the room.

Wolf Skeletons (2): hp 13 each; *MM* 226.

Treasure: A harmless orc skeleton on the rocky shelf wears a masterwork chain shirt and carries twelve *+1 bolts* for his missing crossbow. A DC 14 Search check turns up his pack hanging precariously by a strap from the ledge. The pack contains 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, a vial of alchemist's fire, 76 gp, and a sack of spoiled rations.

4. Upper Cavern (EL 5)

This cave smells awful, and its floors and walls are nearly covered by a thick layer of guano (it costs 2 squares of movement to move through each square of the stuff). A half-buried skeleton holding a sword can be seen poking up out of the guano (marked X on the map). To the east is a stone outcropping used as a watchtower by previous inhabitants and a feeding area by the cloaker and other flying predators in the area. The eyeballs do not enter this room.

On the cave wall behind the skeleton—not obscured by guano—is a painting depicting Thar and marking the location of a false tomb, meant to lure Vorbyx's enemies and grave robbers to their deaths.

A cloaker lurks among a swarm of bats that live in the stalactites on the ceiling. It attacks anyone who enters the room, waiting first to see if any characters will wade into the guano. It begins combat by using its nauseating moan, followed by other moan abilities as needed against anyone who isn't immediately incapacitated. Once it has the characters in a weakened state, or if the group detects it among the stalactites and attacks, it swoops down to engulf one victim at a time until all are dead, using its shadow shift ability to create dancing images.

When the cloaker first moans, the bats on the ceiling swarm down through the cavern, engulfing any character who fails a DC 18 Reflex save for 1 round before flying out of the cave.

Cloaker: hp 44; *MM* 36.

Treasure: The skeleton holds a *+1 greatsword*, and it also wears a *ring of protection +1*. Characters digging through the guano find 132 gp buried around the bones.

Development: This is a very difficult battle, especially for lower-level PCs, who might need to retreat. The cloaker will not follow the PCs if they retreat to a lower level, but it does harass them if they leave the plateau.

On the northern wall of the cave is a map depicting the plateau and the location of what Vorbyx wanted people to think was his secret hideaway (and after his death, his tomb). It is in fact a trap-laden red herring meant to kill or delay anyone pursuing him from the watchpost. The map has a compass rose, but all directions are marked N for north. The only way to decipher the true direction of the tomb is to insert the broken jade into a depression at the center of the compass rose. When this is done, the stone scrapes in a circle until the obelisk points to true north, showing the PCs the way to the hideaway (marked by a glowing, hammer-shaped sigil). Hidden landmarks also appear, including

the coast of the Moonsea, further improving the usefulness of the map. Removing the key causes the invisible landmarks to disappear and the map to spin and swirl before resting again in its indecipherable state.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs 125% of the normal XP award for defeating the cloaker because of the difficult circumstances of the encounter. In addition, if the characters figure out how to read the map, grant them experience for a second CR 5 encounter.

5. Upper Watchpost

This stone slab is stained with blood like the one at area 3, and a DC 22 Survival check here reveals similar information, although the character also notices that activity here is much more recent than that on the lower slab. An iron-rung ladder is bolted into the stone here, allowing a character to climb safely up to the roof of the plateau.

6. Roof (EL — or 4)

The roof of the plateau is windswept and empty except for a shallow pool of strangely colored liquid at its center. This pool is infused with magic, and is part of what made this place such an effective watchpost for Vorbyx during his time.

Encounters: Characters who spend more than 4 hours at a time up here have a 33% chance of attracting a hungry griffon (01–40) or swarm of six stirges (41–100).

Treasure: The pool of strangely colored liquid is a magical location known as *Vorbyx's Watchpost* (see the sidebar).

Concluding the Adventure

Once the PCs have the location of the false tomb, they can either go there immediately or head back to Melvaunt to gear up and report what they've found to Ulblyn or Daumar. The former isn't that interested—the PCs aren't telling him anything he didn't already know—but Daumar is keen on the new information, and is eager to see if they find anything at the site of the tomb. If they go straight to the tomb, or return to *Vorbyx's Watchpost* before heading there, they will be able to utilize the magic of the pool as they explore it.

chambers of bone

Chambers of Bone is an adventure designed for characters of 3rd–5th level. It takes place in a false tomb constructed by Vorbyx to destroy his enemies and punish those who sought to steal the sources of his power after his death.

Background

As Vorbyx gained power by uniting the ogres and orcs of Thar, he realized that he was becoming a tempting target for jealous enemies. Because he relied so heavily on magical locations and the abilities they conferred upon him, he needed a way to throw his enemies off his trail. As threats from outside Thar grew and Vorbyx considered abandoning his outlying watchpost, he hatched a plan. He would draw a map to his "base" for those brave and clever enough to find it. He wouldn't make it easy to get to, in order to maintain the illusion, and he would hide its true functionality behind a shield of magic. This tactic ensured that only the most persistent and powerful enemies would be fed into his trap.

So he ordered the Chambers of Bone to be built in a remote hillside in central Thar. He began to spread rumors of his hillside fortress, and he made sure to mention that it would one day be his tomb. Thus were the legends born. As it happens, nobody would spring his trap until long after he was dead, and even then infiltrators have been few and far between. Still, the magic protecting his false sarcophagus has never failed, and the Chambers of Bone are as deadly today as when they were first built.

Adventure Synopsis

Spurred on by the map found at Vorbyx's watchpost and the thrill of uncovering a historic mystery, the PCs travel to what they think is the tomb of Vorbyx. Once there, they need to decipher the riddle of the fountain and survive its many dangers before making their way through the tomb's trapped corridors. Once they finally reach the sarcophagus that should hold the remains of Vorbyx, they will find that their search is far from over—and that they are far from safe.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of the following ways.

- If the characters explored the plateau in the Vorbyx's Watchpost quest and found the map painted on the cave wall, then they know how to get here. Ulblyn Blackalbuck or Daumar Gudenny will ask them to explore the old tomb, if they aren't driven there by their own curiosity.
- A merchant in Melvaunt has recently come into possession of several ancient maps of the region. The most interesting of the set is a map of Thar with a hidden mark that only appears underneath the full moon. This mark is in the shape of a hammer, leading the merchant to believe it contains a buried treasure hoard that includes the *Hammer of Vorbyx*. He offers the PCs 2,500 gp to bring him a more accurate map of the site and an idea of what lies inside.

The Barrow Mound

The entrance to the tomb can be found in a low-lying valley in the hilly region of central Thar. It isn't very obvious, being overgrown with thick moss, long grass, and thorny bushes. Clearing this brush causes 1 point of nonlethal damage to anyone not wearing protection on the arms and hands. Even after following a map to the area, it requires a DC 18 Survival check to find the cave. PCs might take several days looking for the entrance, during which time they will be subject to random encounters (see Wandering Encounters in Thar, page 30)

The walls and floor inside the cave are built from cut stone with wooden supports throughout. Open archways lead from room to room-—there are no doors except for the secret panel behind the fountain. Every room in the tomb is well lit by everburning torches set in wall sconces and braziers at regular intervals and near major architecture, except where noted.

1. Fountain Room (EL 4)

A large, three-level stone fountain dominates the center of this room, which is surprisingly clean and inviting for the entrance to a tomb. Two archways on the northern wall lead out of the room. A secret door (Search DC 20) in the center of the wall opens onto a corridor that leads to the Hall of Statues. A mosaic depicting a mountainside with two elevated caves has been pieced together between the archways. A message written in Giant is built into the mosaic.

The fountain is filled with clean water. It radiates moderate conjuration and faint transmutation magic if detected. No matter how much water is removed from the fountain, its level never diminishes (although the water itself has no magical properties). Carvings of orcs circle the base of the fountain, while those on the second level depict ogres in battle. Four gargoyle heads colored red, white, green, and blue are carved into the stone of the small third level. Capping the fountain is an upright hammer carved from white marble and inlaid with gold and platinum.

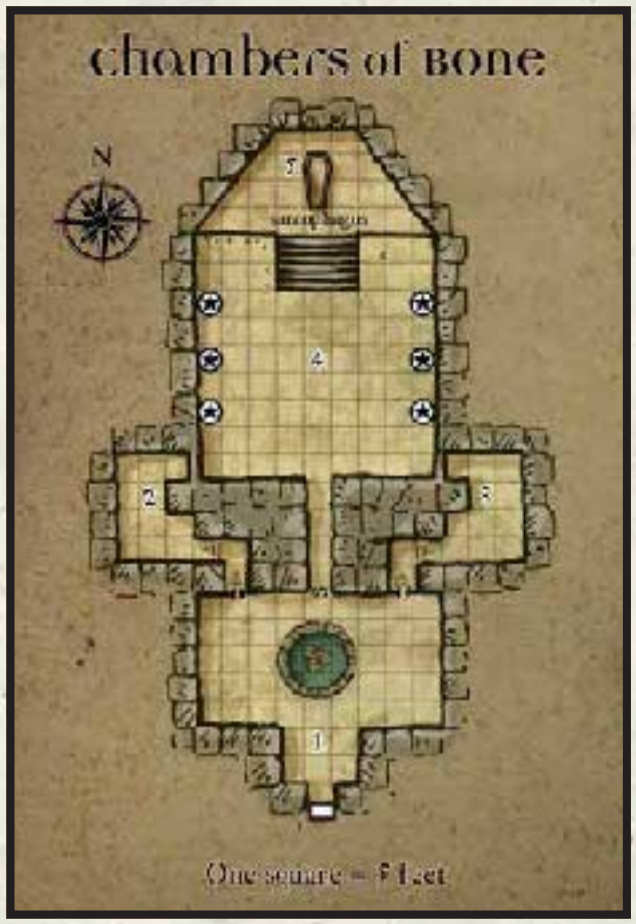
The mouths of the gargoyles are carved deep into the stone, sized and shaped perfectly to receive the jade key. Inserting the key into the correct gargoyle's mouth reveals the outline of the secret door behind the mosaic (it can also be found with a DC 40 Search check before this). Once revealed, it can be opened by locating a pressure switch in the mosaic (Search DC 15).

The message built into the mosaic is a riddle that holds clues as to which gargoyle reveals the safe path through the tomb. A DC 20 Decipher Script check allows a character to learn the gist of the riddle even if he doesn't speak Giant.

"Look here to find the middle,
Look here to answer the riddle.
Green stone in a gargoyle's mouth,
The safest route is to the south.
But should you wish to travel on,
Place the key in monster's yawn.
One path is safe, three mouths lie,
Every one will help you die.
Which color do I like the best?
That word is the answer to this test."

The riddle is thus:
"I love high, but hate heights,
Best is better than good.
The color that I like
Is like neither tree nor fire nor grave.
It more resembles a map or chart,
But never a globe."

The first part instructs the characters to place the jade inside a gargoyle's mouth to find the safe path through the tomb. Whenever the jade is placed in a gargoyle's mouth, several things happen. First, the top level of the fountain swiftly spins around, then slows down to a stop again. A baleful effect then unerringly strikes whoever placed the jade into the gargoyle's mouth. Finally, the hammer dips down in the direction indicated on the table below and emits a beam of light at the doorway in that direction. The effects of each direction are given below.



Color	Direction	Baleful Effect	Doorway Effect
Red	North	Gout of flame (3d8 fire)	Outlines secret door
Blue	Northwest	Bolt of lightning (3d8 electricity)	Dispels *wall of force*
White	Northeast	Freezing ray (3d8 cold)	Dispels *wall of force*
Green	South	Nauseating ray (3d4 Str)	Summons a fiendish dire ape in the entry hall

The second part is the riddle to determine which mouth to place the jade inside to reveal the true path. Three of the colors when spelled out have two vowels (green, white, and blue); one has one (red). The riddle makes negative references to words with two vowels and positive references to words with only one. If your players are having trouble deciphering the riddle, encourage them to write it down along with the colors.

Fiendish Dire Ape: hp 35; *MM* 62 (dire ape) and *MM* 108 (fiendish template).

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs XP for a CR 5 encounter for each baleful effect they trigger. They should also get 400 XP each for figuring out the riddle on the first try, –100 XP per wrong guess.

2. Trapped Foyer A

The remains of several pieces of furniture can be seen around this room and little else. A close inspection reveals that the furniture does not appear to have been broken, but simply rotted away in a very unusual fashion. This is due to the trap described below.

The corridor leading out of the room appears to lead to a tomb filled with piles of treasure—gold, gems, weapons, magic items, and so forth. This is nothing more than an illusion cast on a solid stone wall. Anyone stepping into the corridor activates the trap.

When the trap is triggered, the room begins to fill with a slightly acidic liquid spraying from several pipes hidden in the walls. The liquid deals 1 point of acid damage per round to anyone standing in it, so trapped characters can avoid damage by climbing the walls, levitating, or otherwise getting on high ground. The room fills with acid in 5 rounds, at which point the characters must hold their breath to avoid drowning.

Clever players will realize that the acid must drain away somehow after each triggering of the trap. The drain in this room is hidden beneath one of the stone tiles that forms the floor of the room and can be found with a successful DC 18 Search check. It requires a DC 15 Strength check to dislodge the stone and begin draining the room (which takes 5 rounds, though characters can breathe after the first round). The drain automatically opens after 50 rounds.

Acid-Filled Room Trap: CR 5; mechanical; location trigger; automatic reset; hidden switch bypass (Search DC 18, Strength DC 15) ; multiple targets; never miss; onset delay (5 rounds); liquid; Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 23.

3. Trapped Foyer B

This room was once well appointed in a similar fashion to area 2, but the furniture here has been smashed beyond recognition. The walls show signs of combat, both old and new.

The corridor leading out of the room ends in a stone wall as in area 2, but the illusion on this wall merely shows a dusty tomb with none of the enticing trappings of the other illusion. Anyone stepping into the corridor activates the trap.

When the trap is triggered, 1d4+2 stone hands erupt from the floor and walls of the room and attack anyone in it. The rocky appendages can meld into the stone and reappear anywhere in the room to attack. Each hand has AC 18, hardness 8, 6 hit points, an attack bonus of +6, and deals 1d6+3 points of damage on a successful melee attack. *Shatter* destroys one stone fist outright, while *soften earth and stone* lowers the fists' hardness to 0 and damage to 1d2+3. The fists attack until no living creature remains in the room or they are destroyed.

Stone Fists Trap: CR 5; magic device; location trigger; automatic reset; multiple targets (stone hands attack everyone in the room); Search DC 22; Disable Device DC 23.

Treasure: Under the wreckage of a smashed dresser lies a sack containing 37 pp and 122 gp.

4. Hall of Statues

Six well-rendered statues line this room, each standing between from 4 to 7 feet tall. The statues on the left are an orc, an ogre, and a beholder. The statues on the right are a dwarf, a human, and a bearded devil. In the northern end of the room, stairs descend to an area bathed in darkness. While ominous, these statues present no threat to the PCs.

5. False Tomb (EL 3)

This area is under the effect of a permanent *unhallow* spell and is bathed in permanent *darkness* as a result. The walls are carved in bas-relief depicting an army of evil humanoids, devils, and dragons on a battlefield against magic-using humans and celestial beings. The central wall shows a floating humanoid being, surrounded by energy, wielding a great hammer.

A 10-foot-long stone sarcophagus sits in the center of the chamber, an ornate hammer embossed in platinum on its lid. A 3-foot-high slab of black marble elevates the sarcophagus off the floor.

Creature: An animated troll skeleton lies in the sarcophagus, a deadly surprise for anyone who has made it this far into the false tomb. It leaps out to attack anyone who disturbs the lid of the sarcophagus, which also triggers a *magic mouth* that makes it appear as if the glowing figure in the bas-relief is speaking:

"*Did you really think you could track down my tomb and my greatest weapon? If you survive, you may have this hammer with my compliments, and to serve as a reminder that even in death I have bested you!*"

Troll Skeleton: hp 39; *MM* 227. The *unhallow* effect gives the skeleton the benefit of *magic circle against good;* turning checks made against it take a –4 penalty. It wields a *+1 warhammer* in place of one of its claw attacks (+9 melee, 1d8+7/×3).

Treasure: Vorbyx occasionally buried some personal items in a chest hidden by a false bottom in the sarcophagus (Search DC 18) to attract *locate object* and similar spells to this location. The items inside are a *cloak of resistance +1,* a *ring of climbing,* and a pair of *lesser bracers of archery.*

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs 150% of the normal XP for defeating the troll skeleton thanks to the *unhallow* effect.

Concluding the Adventure

While the PCs might be disappointed that they didn't find Vorbyx's tomb, they should be happy they escaped alive (and with some nice treasure to boot). They can take their findings back to Melvaunt, where some investigation into the mosaic and painting found in the false tomb might turn up yet another lead in their search.

ogres' stronghold

Ogres' Stronghold is an adventure designed for characters of 4th–6th level. The PCs must enter a fort controlled by ogres and confront an evil that lurks below.

Background

The ogres of Thar have a long-held tradition of claiming kinship or fellowship with Vorbyx, the first King of Thar. All such claims are ridiculed or ignored by those outside Thar, but within that desolate land they are a matter of honor and

pride that has led to many long-standing feuds. The ogre leader that commands this stronghold claims to be descended from Vorbyx's lieutenant, and evidence found in the caverns beneath the stronghold might prove that he is closer to the truth than he might think.

For as long as any ogre can remember, the stone gate beneath this stronghold has been impenetrable. Legends say what lies beyond is the last resting place of Vorbyx . . . and of his great weapon, the *Hammer of Vorbyx*. Many have come to this place in search of the weapon, often destroying whoever lived in the stronghold at the time. Because of these losses, the current ogre leader has adopted a policy of allowing search parties to enter the caves and try to open the seal. He figures that no one's going to succeed anyway, so why should ogres die trying to stop the attempt? Of course, if someone does succeed, then he's not going to allow the weapon to be taken away as long as a single ogre is left standing.

The ogres aren't the only ones drawn to the legend of what lies beneath the stronghold. A diseased spirit naga has been lurking about the stronghold looking for a way into the chamber beyond the gate, where it thinks it can find a cure for its ailment. It formerly led a band of troglodytes, but one of their shamans poisoned the naga in a coup attempt, causing it to bring several loyal followers with it on a quest to find a cure. The naga and troglodytes were merely passing through the caverns beneath the stronghold when the naga found the gate and discovered the legend. Now it will do anything to be the first to get inside.

Adventure Synopsis

The characters come to the ogre fort seeking the *Hammer of Vorbyx* or to find the remains of a sacked caravan. Once there, they either fight or talk their way into the caves beneath the fort, where a great stone seal is all that stands between them and the resolution of their quest. The characters must also deal with a terror that lurks beneath the ogres' fort before they can make their way through the seal.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of at least two ways.

- If you are following up the previous quests in this arc, then the PCs are likely back in Melvaunt exploring their options. If they ask around town about the bas-relief and mosaic in the false tomb, they are rewarded with some information. Such a two-caved hill does exist in Thar, north of Melvaunt and west of the Glister Road. A local ranger can draw them a map for 100 gp.
- A wealthy Melvaunt merchant sends a note to the PCs asking them to investigate a missing caravan that was coming from Glister. It left Glister three days ago and should have reached Melvaunt by now. While searching for clues along the road, the PCs find a survivor who relates tales of orcs and ogres; this survivor can show them where the attack took place. It is easy to track the ogres back to the fort from there.

The Denizens of the Fort

The orcs that reside outside the caves live in servitude to the ogres—but it's not really a bad life (comparatively), so few of them complain. They act as lookouts and first defenders should the fort come under attack. That said, the orcs know that the ogres often treat with visitors and do not immediately attack anyone who approaches the camp (they're shy about combat on the shelf because the manticore lobs tail spikes indiscriminately whenever a fight breaks out).

Nine ogres, including the chieftain, currently live in the fort. The ogres know that the seal occasionally brings visitors to the fort, and powerful ones at that. The chieftain, Dagryg, believes it makes him more important to have visitors that he doesn't kill or eat (a trick he learned from a hill giant chieftain he once worked for). He knows that reprisals often come after raids, though, so he has put two of his best ogres at the wall to make sure the orcs don't screw anything up. The ogres call down to anyone approaching the fort, asking their business, in what is likely to be a startling event to anyone who expects the ogres to simply attack intruders. The characters can learn about the ogres' willingness to parlay and bargain by talking to trackers and adventurers in Melvaunt. If they don't think to do this, you can have a ranger run across them as they march through Thar who freely offers up this information.

Ogres inside the fort move around, so the numbers given in the various rooms aren't static—the manticore needs to be fed, the seal and wall guarded, and meals prepared and eaten. If the PCs attack in the evening, for instance, most of the ogres and Gywahier will be found in the Great Hall instead of in their rooms.

Dagryg currently has a visitor, although it's not who he thinks it is. An annis hag named Gywahier, posing as a frost giant using her *disguise self* ability, is staying in one of the guest rooms. She hopes to convince the ogre chieftain to become her follower. He has been resistant so far—he likes being the boss—but her entreaties are slowly wearing down his will. If the PCs assault the fort, she aids in the battle as well as she can without giving away her disguise, hoping to convince the chieftain of her combat prowess and worthiness as a leader.

1. Fort Exterior (EL 9+)

A 15-foot-tall stone wall is the main defensive feature of this fort, with a wood-and-iron gate at its center to allow entry. Two caves plunge into the sheer stone wall that forms the fort's rear. The builders created an elevated area inside the wall to allow for easy entry to the lower cave; the fort's orcs all live on this elevation, which is tall enough for them to rain arrows down on enemies outside the wall. A ramp at the fort's northern end provides the only convenient way to climb up to the cave.

At the fort's southern edge between the elevation and the wall is a mound of old broken things—crates, barrels, a couple of wagons the ogres brought back from raids, and even a catapult that once defended the fort but fell into disrepair long ago; one way the PCs can win favor with Dagryg is to offer to repair the catapult.

Two ogres and four orcs patrol the wall day and night. They do not immediately attack anyone who approaches, instead calling down to find out why the visitors are here.

Creatures: The orcs are spread all over the outer shelf and wall, while the ogres mostly remain inside during the day.

Ogres (2): hp 29 each; *MM* 199.

Orcs (21): hp 5 each; *MM* 203. These orcs are all armed with shortbows in addition to their normal equipment.

Development: Any combat inside the wall draws fire from the manticore in area 6. The ogres inside the fort and Gywahier also join any fray outside, with one ogre first going downstairs to release the manticore to fly out over the battle.

2. Great Hall (EL 7)

This room is where the ogres eat their meals and the chieftain goes about his daily business. It is cleaned up and used for "official" dinners as well when the fort has friendly guests. A large fire pit in the center of the room is almost always in use, roasting meat on a spit or boiling large pots filled with stews and soups.

A curtain separates the room from the chieftain's private quarters. An ogre guard is posted behind the curtain at all times, even when the chieftain is in his bedroom or out and about elsewhere in the fort.

Ogre: hp 29; *MM* 199.

Dagryg, 4th-Level Ogre Barbarian: hp 79; *MM* 199.

3. Chieftain's Bedroom

A large, sturdy bed takes up one corner of this room, which also features a private fire pit and a large chest filled with the chieftain's valuables. Otherwise, the room is rather plain, because Dagryg isn't interested in ostentatious displays or comforts and fineries.

Treasure: The chieftain doesn't like keeping all his eggs in one basket, so a portion of his treasure sits in the chest here, with the other portion in area 7. The chest is locked (Open Lock DC 30) and trapped (see below), and contains 240 pp, 1,710 gp, a *+1 handaxe*, a *ring of feather fall*, and a *wand of magic missile* (CL 7th, 13 charges).

Poison Needle Trap: CR 7; mechanical; touch trigger; repair reset; lock bypass (Open Lock DC 30); Atk +17 melee (1 plus poison, needle); poison (deathblade, Fortitude DC 20, 1d6 Con/2d6 Con); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

4. Guest Rooms (EL 6)

Crude beds and mismatched furniture and accessories (looted from caravans here and there) can be found in all three of these rooms, which are kept clean despite the infrequency of visitors to the fort.

Gywahier is staying in the room at the end of the hall, and the PCs will be given the first room should they choose to stay as guests of Dagryg.

Gywahier, Annis Hag: hp 45; *MM* 143.

Treasure: Gywahier keeps her treasure in a sack underneath her bed. It contains 414 gp, a *potion of fly*, and a *potion of cure serious wounds*.

5. Ogres' Rooms (EL varies)

These rooms are used by two or three ogres at a time as living quarters, although many choose to sleep in the great hall, outside by the wall, or on the orcs' level. They are furnished similarly to the guest rooms, but everything is of lower quality, and the rooms themselves are not kept as clean. There is a 60% chance that an ogre is in one of these rooms at any given time, with multiple ogres present 10% of the time.

Ogres (number varies): hp 29 each; *MM* 199.

6. Manticore Pen (EL 5)

A manticore trained by the chieftain is kept locked in this cave by a portcullis of steel bars. The portcullis can be raised by a lever found at the bottom of the sloped tunnel that leads here from below. The manticore is a particularly stupid specimen that stays here as little more than Dagryg's trained pet.

Manticore: hp 57; *MM* 179.

7. The Great Seal (EL 5)

The fort was originally built to protect this seal, which leads to an underground complex that was once integral to Vorbyx's rule. After Vorbyx locked the seal, the key was taken away and the fort abandoned, left to whoever had the strength to hold it. The seal is a 12-foot-diameter circular slab of perfect jade that is covered with arcane symbols inscribed with silver and gold inlays. It can be opened only by inserting the broken jade obelisk (which the PCs obtained earlier from a group of bandits; see page 31) into a hole on its surface of the same size and shape. Doing so completes the circuit of arcane symbols and causes the stone slab to slide to the side. Removing the key causes the seal to close once again.

The seal is immune to all physical and spell damage, and it prevents extradimensional movement into the chambers beyond.

Because the ogres always guard this area to keep an eye on the seal, they also use this chamber as a treasure repository. Coins, jewels, and other miscellaneous loot are strewn about the room carelessly.

A hole in the northern wall marks the entrance to a rough tunnel barely large enough for a Medium character to squeeze through. It descends down into a subterranean cavern currently occupied by a diseased spirit naga that believes its body can be healed by whatever lies beyond the seal.

Creatures: Two guards are posted here at all times to watch the treasure, keep the naga and its slaves from ambushing the fort, and make sure nothing comes out of the chambers beyond the seal.

Ogres (2): hp 29 each; *MM* 199.

Treasure: This room holds 487 gp, 16,432 sp, eight pieces of jewelry (100 gp, 75 gp ×3, 50 gp ×4), a *+1 quarterstaff*, a *+2 heavy wooden shield*, a *pearl of power* (1st), and a *Quaal's feather token* (swan boat).

Development: If the characters breach the seal without first exterminating the naga and its minions, the creatures follow them into the tomb of Vorbyx and attempt to ambush them at an opportune time.

8. Subterranean Lake (EL 9)

This underground lake is 10 feet deep at its edges and 25 feet deep at its center. A small island of rough black rock juts up through the water's surface. It is currently home to a spirit naga that is searching for a way to remove the disease ravaging its body.

A crack in the southern wall leads to a series of caverns that currently contain the naga's servants, the remnants of a tribe of troglodytes that it once commanded.

Creature: The spirit naga is in a weakened state, but it is still a dangerous foe. Upon its first contact with the PCs, it attempts to use its charming gaze on whoever looks the weakest-willed or seems to be in charge. It stays on its rocky island as long as possible, calling for aid from the troglodytes and using its spells to ward off attacks. If it is in danger, it slithers into the 10-foot-deep waters of the cave, hiding from the PCs as long as it can.

Spirit Naga: hp 40. *MM* 192, except as follows:

Fort +3
Spells Known (CL 7th):
3rd (5/day)—*fireball* (DC 16), *ray of exhaustion*
2nd (7/day)—*invisibility, Melf's acid arrow, summon swarm*
1st (7/day)—*cause fear* (DC 14), *cure light wounds, magic missile, sanctuary* (DC 14), *shield*
0 (6/day)—*cure minor wounds, daze* (DC 13), *detect magic, mage hand, open/close, ray of frost, read magic*
Abilities Con 10
Skills Concentration +9

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs only 75% of the normal XP for defeating the naga thanks to its weakened state.

9. Subterranean Caverns (EL 4)

The floors of these caverns are littered with sharp stones, but are otherwise empty except for the troglodytes that recently moved in and their accumulated detritus (primarily meatless carcasses and waste). One of the caves holds the naga's treasure, and another holds a half-eaten carcass with a bronze amulet showing a jellyfish and a scabrous hand (see the Rogue's Redoubt quest on page 57 for more details).

Creatures: If the troglodytes hear sounds of combat from area 8, they rush to defend the naga. Otherwise they stay in here, amusing themselves or scrounging food.

Troglodytes (4): hp 13 each; *MM* 246.

Treasure: 420 gp, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, a *potion of heroism*, and a *potion of eagle's splendor*.

Concluding the Adventure

However the PCs accomplish their goal of opening the seal, they should be ready to go straight into the next quest, The Tomb

of Vorbyx. They might want to return to Melvaunt to stock up on supplies, but Dagryg doesn't like that idea at all. It takes a successful DC 20 Diplomacy check to persuade him to let the PCs leave and return, and even then only with the promise that they won't bring others back with them. If the characters leave the fort to restock after having destroyed the ogres instead of negotiating their way inside, who knows what or who will move in by the time they get back?

The Tomb of Vorbyx

The Tomb of Vorbyx is an adventure designed for characters of 5th–7th level. The tomb is found deep below the land of Thar.

Background

As Vorbyx's life came to a close, he sealed himself in a series of catacombs along with several loyal followers. Legend has it that this was to be his tomb, and no one ever saw him again. During his lifetime, the caverns held one of the many magical locations he used to cement his power, and it remains here, unused since the time of his disappearance. When he sealed the caverns, he left a trusted lieutenant with a key—a jade obelisk broken off from the seal itself.

The key, lost for generations, was recently carried out of Thar by an ogre ravager that fell to a band of highwaymen on the Phlan Path (and even more recently claimed by the PCs after they defeated those same bandits).

When the great seal is breached, one of Thar's greatest mysteries might be solved once and for all . . . or will the revelation of Vorbyx's final resting place merely generate more questions than answers?

Adventure Synopsis

The characters enter Vorbyx's tomb to find his body, and any evidence of it, missing. A hall shielded by powerful magic conceals a portal that might hold a clue to the truth behind Vorbyx's mysterious disappearance, but the PCs will have to assemble a magic hammer from parts scattered around the tomb in order to access it. To make matters worse, clever traps and powerful creatures guard the parts of the hammer.

Character Hook

No character hook should be necessary for this adventure, since it is designed to follow immediately on the heels of the previous quest.

Encounters

1. Chamber of the Hammer

A tunnel leads sharply down from the great seal, winding around and doubling back on itself, causing even the most experienced dungeoneers to feel a bit disoriented. After traveling nearly a mile through the tunnel, delvers are deposited into this 40-foot-diameter circular chamber.

Four other tunnels lead out of the chamber. In the center of the room is a 10-foot-diameter stone cylinder that rises 3 feet out of the ground. Lines etched into the top of the cylinder give it a wheellike appearance, and they converge in the center of the stone's flat top to surround a 2-inch-wide depression. A message written in Giant surrounds the hole and reads, "Assemble the hammer upon this stone to unlock your fate."

The three pieces of the *Hammer of Vorbyx* are scattered throughout the caves. If the hammer's handle is brought here and placed in the hole, the first of the *prismatic walls* in area 7 disappears. Placing the head on the handle next causes the second wall to drop, and then binding it all together with the iron bands causes the final wall to drop, revealing and activating the *portal* at area 8. In the event that the characters miss the invisible bands in area 5, they can make Intelligence checks to remember the hammer depicted in previous quests and that it had near-transparent iron bands along the handle and over its head.

2. Gemstone Cave (EL 5)

The walls of this cave are covered with hundreds of precious and semiprecious stones, ranging from pearls to rubies to garnets to diamonds. The stones all appear to be a naturally occurring part of the cave walls and cannot be removed.

Creature: A gibbering mouther currently makes its home here, and it attacks any creature that enters the cavern.

Gibbering Mouther: 42 hp; *MM* 126.

Treasure: This cave is actually a powerful magical location known as the Cave of Gems (see the sidebar).

3. Cave of the Hammer's Head (EL 7)

This cave features three abrupt elevation changes, each 10 feet in height, essentially creating four levels to the room. Anyone stepping on the first or second escarpment (flying over it doesn't count) triggers the trap described below. The third level is dominated by a 6-foot-tall statue of a featureless humanoid holding the head of a hammer in its outstretched hands. Any character can remove the hammer by moving adjacent to the statue and taking a standard action to grab it away.

Trap: Each of the first two escarpments has a *summon monster* trap built into it. Stepping on the first escarpment summons 1d3 Large fiendish monstrous scorpions; stepping on the second summons a chaos beast.

Summon Monster Trap (2): CR 7; magic device; proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset after 24 hours; spell effect (*summon monster VI*, CL 11th), Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Creature: If any of the PCs removes the hammer's head from the statue's hands, it transforms into a flesh golem and attacks.

Flesh Golem: hp 79; *MM* 135.

Treasure: The object in the statue's hands is the hammer head needed to activate the stone cylinder in area 1.

4. Empty Cavern

This cavern is empty.

5. Lair of the Stalker (EL 7)

This cave appears to be as empty as the last one, but that isn't the case. The hammer's iron bands can be found in this room, although they have been rendered permanently *invisible*. The bands become visible only when they are slipped onto the assembled hammer. It requires a DC 20 Search check to find the bands on the floor of the cave along the wall opposite the entrance.

Creature: To further protect the bands, Vorbyx placed an invisible stalker here that attacks anyone who enters the area.

Invisible Stalker: hp 52; *MM* 160.

6. Glittering Cave (EL 5)

This cave is filled with water that ranges from 5 feet to 20 feet deep the farther one goes back into it. The surface of the water is black, but the walls of the room sparkle and glitter. This effect is created by the combination of the light from a type of bioluminescent fungus, the reflection from the pool, and a metallic mineral that coats the cave's walls.

A small island breaks through the water's surface near the deep end of the pool. Sitting upon the rock waiting for visitors is a djinni that was bound here centuries ago and who strongly desires to be free. It is bound here until Vorbyx comes to retrieve the hammer's handle, which lies at the bottom of the deepest part of the pool. Sadly, the PCs aren't Vorbyx, and the djinni is compelled to do all it can to keep them from retrieving

The Cave of Gems

Lore: Any character can make a Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (history), or bardic knowledge check to remember details about this location.

DC 15: It is said that Vorbyx's lieutenants carried weapons sheathed in flame, surrounded by auras of cold, or even charged with electrical energy.

DC 20: The Cave of Gems is said to be a legendary location that imbues weapons with elemental magic.

DC 25: The magic of the gems can be transferred to any weapon by coating it in blood and holding it to one of the gems. The gem type chosen determines the type of energy imbued into the weapon.

Prerequisite: Only a creature with at least five character levels and no ability to cast arcane spells can access the power of the Cave of Gems.

Location Activation: A creature must coat a constructed masterwork weapon (not a natural weapon, and it need not be magical) in its own blood and hold it for 1 minute against one of three types of gemstones embedded in the walls. The type of gemstone chosen determines the ability conferred.

Recharge: Once the Cave of Gems has conferred its ability on three weapons, it cannot confer it again for one week.

Special Ability (Su): The Cave of Gems causes up to three weapons to gain an energy-based special ability, depending on the type of gem chosen.

Gemstone	Ability
Ruby	flaming (*DMG* 224)
Diamond	shock (*DMG* 225)
Pearl	frost (*DMG* 224)

Aura: Moderate transmutation.

Ability Value: 6,000 gp (2,000 gp per affected weapon).

the hammer's handle. If defeated, the djinni is sent back to its home plane for 24 hours, after which time it reappears on the island.

Creature: If the djinni uses its whirlwind ability in this room, the whirlwind picks up water, which in addition to the ability's normal effects, threatens to drown anyone caught in it who fails a DC 20 Reflex save. Upon failing the first such save, a character begins to drown (*DMG* 304). One tactic the djinni employs is to pick up heavily armored characters and drop them in the deep end of the lake.

Djinni: hp 45; *MM* 114.

Treasure: The hammer's handle is found at the bottom of the underground pool near the back of the cave. It is pitch black beneath the water's surface, and even with a light source, finding the handle requires a DC 18 Search check.

Ad Hoc Experience Award: Grant the PCs 125% of the normal XP for defeating the djinni because of the added danger of its watery lair.

7. Hall of Doom

Anyone looking down this hall sees only a shimmering field of multicolored energies. There are in fact three such fields in the hall, each of which is a permanent *prismatic wall* (meaning that any creature with fewer than 8 HD that views one from 20 feet or less is blinded for 2d4 rounds). The only way to bypass these walls safely is to assemble the hammer.

8. Chamber of Vorbyx

This chamber contains a natural rock formation shaped like a huge curtain. If the hammer is assembled and left in the stone cylinder, the curtain shimmers with magical energies. This is a one-way *portal* whose final destination is left up to you; it could even be a variable *portal* with several destinations known only to Vorbyx himself. Regardless, none of the destinations have a matching *portal* that leads back here. It is assumed that Vorbyx used this portal on many an occasion, including one final time after he shut the seal and ended his living legacy forever.

Concluding the Adventure

Thus ends the characters' search for Vorbyx's tomb. While they might have been frustrated at times, they have delved deeper into the mystery of a legend than any creature in centuries. It's now time that they move on to further adventures, perhaps those centered around Hillsfar and the Southern Moonsea. The *portal* could lead to a remote cave just outside Hillsfar, if you're inclined to get them moving quickly in that direction.

If the characters don't take the *portal*, they might have to fight their way out of the ogre stronghold (or sneak out by way of the manticore's pen), because Dagryg doesn't want anyone who has been beyond the seal to leave and spread word of what is here. He will be waiting for them when they emerge from the tunnel.

Hammer of Vorbyx

The *Hammer of Vorbyx* is named after its last owner, an ogre king who ruled Thar. However, Vorbyx allegedly plundered the weapon from an ancient unmarked barrow, so its true origins are lost in time. More than a mere scepter, it served as a symbol of Vorbyx's authority over the unruly ogre and orc tribes of Thar, and when he died without a worthy successor, his most loyal followers buried the weapon with him, believing that he would need it to wage wars in the afterlife.

Lore: Characters can learn the above information with a successful DC 20 Knowledge (history) check. The following bits of information about the *Hammer of Vorbyx* can be gained by making Knowledge (history) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 25: An ogre mage hermit named Essul Blackmoon once prophesied that the weapon would find its way into the hands of a "true king," and that this king would found an empire, precipitate a war, and condemn his enemies to "eternal darkness." Vorbyx might have believed that Essul's prophecy spoke of him, although his death seems to suggest otherwise.

DC 30: Vorbyx spent most of his plundered wealth on the construction of a small portal network. The ogre king hoped to use the portals to move his forces quickly from one location to another. He paid a cabal of wizards to build the portals and attuned them to his hammer, so that only he could activate them.

Description: The *Hammer of Vorbyx* is a hefty maul with a crude iron head, a thick wooden handle, and iron bands holding it together. It does not shed light.

Activation: Drawing or wielding the weapon is sufficient to activate its base qualities described below.

Effect: The *Hammer of Vorbyx* is a *+1 thundering maul* that resizes as appropriate for any Small, Medium or Large wielder (see *FRCS* 97 for the maul's statistics). In addition, once every 24 hours the weapon grants 1d10+10 temporary hit points to anyone who draws it. These temporary hit points last for up to 10 hours.

In addition to its abovementioned qualities, the *Hammer of Vorbyx* is the "key" to activating a small network of portals that Vorbyx paid vast amounts of treasure to build. Vorbyx made certain that the locations of the various portals were never recorded, and it's uncertain how many of the portals were completed before his death. The sly ogre king took that knowledge to his grave.

Aura/Caster Level: Strong necromancy; CL 10th.

Construction: Craft Magic Arms and Armor, *blindness/deafness, false life,* 8,157 gp, 653 XP, 8 days.

Weight: 20 lb. (when sized for a Medium creature).

Price: 16,315 gp.

Hillsfar and the South

Some say that Zhentil Keep is the most evil city on the Moonsea. They're fools to even think that. Hillsfar is worse—they force elves and other nonhumans to fight to the death in an area. Their mage-ruler Maalthiir tolerates anything in the city that doesn't interfere with trade, and he tortures people in his dungeons for sport. Maalthiir's private army will protect you if you pay the right bribes, and rob and murder you if you don't. At least the Zhents admit to their evil—the folk of Hillsfar ignore the evil around them so they can make a profit. They are the worst of human nature."

— Dyrlar Graywinter, elf scout of Cormanthor

"Zhentil Keep? Hillsfar? Who can tell which is the lesser of two evils?"

—Moonsea saying

Geographical Overview

Much of the Southern Moonsea's coast abuts the forest of Cormanthor, or at least where the forest once grew before human settlers cut it back. Including the ancient elven tower called Abarat's Folly in the west, this area holds three settlements, several ruins, a sunken city, two rivers, and countless acres of thick forest. Roads connect Hillsfar west to ruined Yûlash and beyond, Ashabenford and Essembra in the south, and Elventree to the east. Well-walked trails also connect to locales in the Dragon Reach, making this area the best-connected coast of the Moonsea in terms of land traffic.

The River Duathamper (also called the Elvenflow) carries water north and east from Cormanthor into the Moonsea. East of that is the River Lis, which carries water south into the Dragon Reach, and eventually connects to the Sea of Fallen Stars. Both rivers are gentle and easy travel by ship or barge. Because the Lis is the only waterway that leaves the Moonsea, many vessels pass (and make port along) the southern shore as they travel to other parts of Faerûn. Most places on the southern shore are rocky or otherwise unsuitable for a port; most of the few places safe enough to stop are already controlled by human settlements such as Hillsfar and Elmwood, and the rest are little more than simple trading posts with a few shacks and some spare lumber to quickly patch a damaged ship. Well connected by water and land, the southern coast is at a trade advantage compared to the Moonsea's other shores, since it is able to do commerce by land or by sea even when the winters freeze much of the lake.

Because this territory lacks any mountains or sources of ore, the southern region's economy is based partly on fishing and lumber but mainly on trading materials from hunters, miners, and crafters from other parts of the Moonsea and beyond. Though it has no significant natural barriers to prevent invasion, the southern shore is relatively well protected by its more dangerous rivals to the west, east, and south; anyone wishing to attack Hillsfar or the other settlements here must go through the Zhentarim (backed by the power of Bane), Mulmaster's army (backed by the Thayans), or the elves in Cormanthor (both surface elves and drow). This leaves the people of the Southern Moonsea to focus on their own interests, usually involving profit and intrigue.

The Campaign in Hillsfar

The quests in this chapter are designed for characters of 6th–12th level. Around this time PCs start to get some really interesting abilities and can hold their own without worrying about a lucky critical hit. They're also increasingly mobile, with access to *fly*, *dimension door*, and even *teleport*; this means they're often able

to make hit-and-run attacks against powerful opponents or escape from dangerous situations very quickly. This tends to make them particularly confident and ready to take on the world, and gives you the opportunity to set them against challenges that will make a name for them as PCs—while just about every adventurer has fought orcs and goblins, few can say they've slain the masters of a mysterious sinking island, faced the plant monsters of the Red Wizards of Thay, or plumbed the far corners of an ancient elven site and survived. These deeds are of the sort that helps a PC attract cohorts and followers . . . and the interest of the Zhentarim and other powerful groups.

If the PCs are coming to Hillsfar after completing some of the Melvaunt quests, there are many ways you can get them involved in what's going on in the City of Trade. The details are left vague to allow you to easily shape the campaign's direction. Tie-ins from the Melvaunt section could include the following people and places.

Tattooed Slaves: These poor souls might have something to do with the local Red Wizard enclave—the agents working with the dwarf Theoderus could be representatives of the head of the enclave. The wizard Mordak, apprentice to the ruler of Hillsfar, could be responsible; perhaps he is trying to find some way to leverage power from his master in a subtle and indirect way that doesn't violate his magical compulsions (see the Mordak's Tower quest). Weapons bearing Theoderus's runes might show up in the hands of Red Plume officers in and around the city (see the Roadside Shrine and Urban Dungeon quests, as well as the villainous Red Plume, Serag Kull).

Corwyn Jaffe: Some of this rogue's pirate friends might know that wererats are planning to take over the Hillsfar rogue's guild (see the Rogue's Redoubt quest, page 57), or might even be wererats from that clan. Consider placing documents in his tavern's cellar referring to "the attack on the Rogues Guild" and "best to use wereform."

Vorbyx's Chambers of Bone: Because this war leader was alive long ago, he could very well have had some information about the elf settlements north of Cormanthor (see the Ruins in Cormanthor quest). Perhaps an elf explorer traveling through Thar stumbled upon the outer chambers of Vorbyx's false tomb and died in a trap, leaving behind a journal or letters between Abarat the Alabaster (see the Abarat's Folly quest) and his cousin Talarith.

Ogre Stronghold: Gywahier the annis hag might know some of the scrags who live in the Moonsea and can give the PCs information about the "sea drow" that battle the scrags for territory (see the Bell in the Deep quest).

Hillsfar, City of Trade

Hillsfar is a powerful city-state ruled with an iron hand by a merchant-mage and his private army of mercenaries.

Perched on a rocky bluff overlooking the sea, Hillsfar is a powerful trade city on the Southern Moonsea, importing raw materials and exporting finished goods. Its First Lord, a wholly evil wizard named Maalthiir, keeps the city in a constant state of martial law, enforcing his oppressive edicts with the Red Plumes—a mercenary company that has grown to the size of a private army, loyal only to itself and its wizard leader. The Red Plumes take care of civilian unrest, and Maalthiir keeps the city's wealthy merchants in line. "Do not interfere with trade in the city" is the paramount law of Hillsfar, and even Red Plumes

Illustration by Ron Lemen

Hillsfar, City of Trade

(known to harass and extort locals and visitors alike) are careful not to push too far in their own quest for loot.

Only fifteen years ago, Hillsfar was ruled by a moderate council of humans, half-elves, and representatives of the Elven Court. Then, through blackmail and threats of violence, Maalthiir overthrew the council and installed himself as its First Lord, a position that holds absolute power within the city and its environs. He installed the Red Plumes as the new city guard; most former guardsmen saw the wisdom of joining the Plumes, since the likely alternative was arrest and execution as a troublemaker or traitor. Maalthiir then banned all nonhumans from the city, showing his paranoid distrust of all other races, and began using the city arena as a convenient way to eliminate undesirables and distract the common folk with bloodsport. The merchants grudgingly tolerate Maalthiir's cruelty, because his shrewd mind for business has made the city, and its merchant class, even wealthier.

Hillsfar has a small but powerful Thayan enclave. Its leader, Tola Vrass, maintains close ties with Maalthiir to make sure her followers have full access to the city, aren't harassed by the Red Plumes, and don't suffer too much from arbitrary edicts. The favored presence of the Red Wizards annoys the city's Mages Guild, which have been secretly working to overthrow Maalthiir and training their apprentices to rebel against him in their hearts and minds. Girella Scatterstar, the head of the mage's guild, is careful to maintain diplomatic ties with the First Lord and the khazark (the enclave's leader) to keep her guild legal within the city, even if she can't guarantee its absolute safety.

Hillsfar (metropolis): Magical; AL NE; 100,000 gp limit; Assets 199,850,000 gp; Population 39,976; Isolated (human 99%).

Authority Figures: Maalthiir (NE male human wizard 18), First Lord of the city; Jorgen Berginblade (NE male human fighter 14), general of the Red Plumes; Mordak Brelliar (CN male human wizard 9), traitor and Maalthiir's second-in-command.

Important Characters: Girella Scatterstar (NE doppelganger wizard 12), head of the Mages Guild; Swipe (NE male human rogue 18), head of the Rogues Guild; Tola Vrass (NE female human illusionist 7/Red Wizard 6), khazark of the Thayan enclave.

Mages Guild (33): wizard 14, sorcerer 13, wizard 10, sorcerer 9, wizard 8, sorcerer 6 (2), wizard 6, wizard 5, wizard, sorcerer 3 (3), sorcerer 2 (1), wizard 3 (2), wizard 2 (3), sorcerer 1 (4), wizard 1 (10).

Red Plumes (5,000): warrior 14, warrior 13, warrior 10, warrior 9, warrior 8, warrior 7 (2), warrior 6 (4), warrior 5 (5), warrior 4 (40), warrior 3 (200), warrior 2 (1,000), with the remainder all warrior 1.

Thayan Enclave (200): transmuter 8/Red Wizard 3, abjurer 8/Red Wizard 1, illusionist 7, enchanter 6, transmuter 6, enchanter 5, illusionist 5, transmuter 5, conjurer 4, transmuter 4, illusionist 4, abjurer 3 (2), transmuter 3, abjurer 2 (2), enchanter 2 (2), illusionist 2 (2), necromancer 2 (2), transmuter 2 (2), abjurer 1 (3), conjurer 1 (3), enchanter 1 (2), illusionist 1 (2), necromancer 1 (1), transmuter 1 (4), plus cleric 5 (Kossuth), cleric 3 (Kossuth) (2), cleric 1 (Kossuth) (4), plus fighter 7/Thayan Knight[LoD] 2, fighter 5 (6), fighter 3 (20), with the remainder all fighter 2.

Notes: Nonhumans are not allowed in the city; those who even resemble nonhumans (such as humans who look like half-elves) are often arrested.

Government and Law

The law in Hillsfar is simple: Whatever Maalthiir says is law. Fortunately, there are only two Great Laws and a handful of lesser laws worth noting.

Great Law of Trade: Do not interfere with legitimate trade.

Great Law of Humanity: Only humans are allowed in the city.

Passes: Citizens of Hillsfar must carry a pass at all times. In addition to showing legal residency, this pass permits the citizen to enter or exit the city without paying a fee.

Visitors: Visitors must state the nature of their business at the city gate, have their names and descriptions recorded in the Strangers' Log, and pay an appropriate fee (normally 2 gp). Visitors are allowed to stay in the city for up to thirty days and must carry a pass indicating their last legal date to be within the city.

Weapons: All weapons must be peace-bonded. All bows must be unstrung. Violators will have their weapons confiscated permanently.

Magic Use: Use of all magic is monitored carefully. Use of magic on another person without his or her permission is illegal.

Punishment: Unless a lesser punishment is indicated, violators of the city's laws are subject to imprisonment, execution, or battle to the death in the arena.

Red Plumes: The Red Plumes are the agents of First Lord Maalthiir. They are empowered to search anyone within the city, any residence, or any business, seizing any evidence of crimes or conspiracy against the city. Disobeying the commands of a Red Plume might result in any of the punishments described above.

From time to time Maalthiir has been known to ban the use of all magic (including magic items) until sundown of the next day, generally in response to a crisis or a personal affront. He has done this less often in the past two years because it annoys his Thayan allies in the city enclave, but it happens often enough that Hillsfar has about half as many mages and priests as a city its size normally would.

Politics

Several factions within and around Hillsfar are contesting for power, influence, and wealth, in addition to those who wish to overthrow Maalthiir entirely.

Drow

While there are no physical connections between the Underdark and the city, Hillsfar's proximity to the Forest of Cormanthor means that surface drow colonies have relatively easy access to Maalthiir's territory. Some of the drow houses in the northern forest tried making contact with the city under the cover of darkness, but the racism they found there was far in excess of anything they expected, and they had to flee several large Red Plume patrols sent to capture them before they reached the

safety of the forest. Now all the surface drow know of Hillsfar's "hospitality," and they enjoy taking their revenge on Red Plume patrols that wander too far south or too close to drow bolt-holes. The irony is that the drow could be a source of exotic and valuable trade materials, but Maalthiir's xenophobia has closed the door to that possibility.

Maalthiir

The First Lord has long wanted to expand the territory he controls, and in particular he would love to push eastward and take over the lands held by the Zhentarim. For years the Zhents and Red Plumes have clashed in many pointless battles, shifting their shared border for a short time but not to any lasting effect. With the return of Bane, the Zhents are more organized and rational, and probably could overwhelm Hillsfar with one big push if they chose to (at significant cost); fortunately for Maalthiir, the Banites have other factors keeping them from such an attack, and he has toned down his aggression while he works on a new plan of conquest. Though many argue that he is neutral because of his devotion to trade, Maalthiir is a greedy, selfish, evil man; no person could endorse arbitrary executions or torture and not be evil.

Mages Guild

The local guild is small for a city of this size, because Maalthiir's policies make the use of magic a hazardous occupation from time to time, and the guild's friendly nature doesn't sit well with the city's gloomier attitude. For years, the guild's main concern was simple survival while it worked on a secret agenda to overthrow the First Lord; even now, it trains its apprentices in secrecy to rebel against him. The guild also harbors a few elf and half-elf spies, who watch the Red Plumes when they venture outside the city. Frustrated by the reduced aggression between Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar (the guild planned to stage a coup if the Zhents ever decisively defeated the Red Plumes), the guild is now reworking its strategy. The guildmaster, Girella Scatterstar, claims to be the sister of the former guildmaster who disappeared mysteriously over a year ago—some suspect she merely faked her own death to avoid a conflict with Maalthiir or the Red Wizards, and "Girella" is her new persona.

Merchants

Several small merchant guilds control various aspects of trade in Hillsfar, though they exist only at Maalthiir's approval, and several guildmasters have been executed and replaced for annoying the First Lord. The merchant guilds mainly concern themselves with squabbling over tariffs, rights to build within the city, and distribution of new trade contracts.

Red Plumes

Though technically a separate force, the Red Plumes are essentially the main arm of Maalthiir's will, and the group's influence in the city stems from that relationship. On a smaller scale, the Red Plumes are quite capable of harassing anyone who annoys them, though after much experimentation they understand the limits of this power, and they never press so hard that the complaining voices draw Maalthiir's attention. Red Plumes wear splint mail and carry a longsword and heavy crossbow.

Rogues Guild

All career criminals in Hillsfar eventually join the Rogues Guild, or are exiled or killed (see the Crime section in this chapter). Thus, the guild has a chokehold on the city's criminal activity, but it wisely keeps a balance between too little (would cause it to lose power) and too much (would annoy the merchants and disrupt trade), making the leadership comfortable but not lavishly wealthy. The guild has close ties to the Red Plumes, forewarning them about nonguild thieves and passing on news of nonhumans, merchants not paying protection money, and so forth; guild rogues are the extended eyes and ears of Maalthiir, who tolerates their small drain on trade because of the amount of information they provide him. Recently the guild has been dealing with a large group of wererats coming in from the Moonsea through the sewers. Some senior members of the guild suspect that Guildmaster Swipe (who has always looked thin and ratlike) is in league with the wererats.

Freelancing thieves in Hillsfar are eventually found by the Rogues Guild, at which time they are offered a choice: Join the guild, leave the city forever, or be turned over to the Red Plumes. Guild thieves pay 30% to 50% of their take back to the guild hierarchy (depending on seniority); in exchange for these dues, the guild intervenes if a member thief is caught by the Red Plumes.

Thayan Enclave

The leader of the enclave does not claim any special treatment for her entourage other that what is stipulated in the standard enclave contract. She prefers that her staff should function like any other merchants guild in the city. Of course, she does have unusual leverage with Maalthiir (see the enclave entry in the City Locations section) and isn't afraid to use it to influence city politics.

Zhentil Keep

It is certain that the Zhentarim keep a number of human spies within the city, secretly reporting on Maalthiir's activities and whatever they can learn about troop deployments. The exact number of these spies is unknown (though Maalthiir expects there are at least two dozen), as is the extent of their infiltration; they might be involved in the merchant guilds, senior officers in the Red Plumes, or even in the First Lord's personal staff. Though Hillsfar would probably be the first to fall under the Zhent war machine should it go on the offensive, for now the Banites are content to watch and listen.

Crime

Like many places operating under martial law, Hillsfar has below-average crime for a city its size, because suspects are dealt with quickly and harshly. While no official laws prohibit murder and other assaults, technically these offenses are violations of the Great Law of Trade, and are therefore punishable as crimes—usually by execution in the arena. For lesser infractions such as petty theft, burglary, and vandalism, fines are the

norm, though these suspects are often beaten by the Red Plumes during an arrest.

Defenses

Hillsfar is surrounded by a wall, which Maalthiir built higher once he took control of the city, and then used his magic to reinforce and protect it. Certain areas are rumored to bear blasting spells to stop climbers and siege weapons. The city's main gate is magically reinforced steel and can be held closed with four large steel bars.

The most versatile city defense is the Red Plumes, the mercenary army paid for by Maalthiir. A majority of the Red Plumes are outside the city at any point, either patrolling for monsters, Zhents, or incoming caravans needing an "escort." Of course, the mercenaries are corrupt, and they usually try to extort these caravans for safe passage to the city, sometimes attacking if they are refused. Despite their innate greed, members of the Red Plumes know their primary purpose is to protect the city, and they quickly marshal to its defense when threats loom.

Trade

Hillsfar is an excellent place to take incoming raw materials and convert them into finished goods for export. The city takes in raw ores, uncut gems, untreated furs, and grain; typical exports include fine cloth, faceted gems, fine furs, and a brandylike liquor called dragon's breath. Goods leave and arrive daily by land and water, and there is always work for people willing to risk their lives guarding someone else's profit. Though the four great cities of the Moonsea are trade rivals, goods from all four quarters enter Hillsfar, usually through the hands of intermediaries.

Adventurers

In general, adventurers are discouraged from visiting Hillsfar. Maalthiir and the Red Plumes know they often cause trouble, and that's exactly the sort of thing they don't want in the city. However, Maalthiir recognizes their usefulness from time to time in dealing with difficult situations or for use as scapegoats when plans go awry, so adventurers are tolerated as long as they keep a low profile and don't try to shift the status quo. Adventurers who wish to avoid harassment within the city should present themselves as caravan guards, elite bodyguards, or skilled workers, and should do their best to conceal unusual and attention-grabbing possessions such as *ioun stones, helms of brilliance, demon armor,* brilliant energy weapons, magic steeds, and so on. Otherwise, adventurers will likely be targeted by the Red Plumes for interrogation and search under the pretense of rooting out "illegal activity" (although such activity is never clearly defined). Conventional businesses are hesitant to deal with adventurers for fear of being marked as collaborators if the adventurers are ever arrested. Of course, adventuring groups with nonhuman characters aren't admitted at all, and might be arrested at the gate.

Two businesses in Hillsfar—Titys's Emporium and the Diamond in the Dung—are much more comfortable dealing with adventurers, though still not so much as places in Waterdeep, Shadowdale, or even Arabel. In these places, even the most overt adventurer can get decent service as long as he behaves himself and doesn't cause trouble. The Thayan enclave also sells items to adventurers, but it is careful to never offer items that can be used offensively—at least not openly.

Religion

Tempus is the only god with a large temple in the city. Smaller temples to Lliira and Chauntea exist within the walls, and there are many small shrines to Waukeen and a lesser number for Umberlee, Malar, and Torm.

City Locations

The following are noteworthy locations within the city of Hillsfar.

1. Diamond in the Dung

This is a large inn with a stable attached at the rear. It is the only inn that sees to the special needs of adventurers or even allows them to stay at all. The inn is comfortable and clean, the staff quiet but friendly, and the food surprisingly good. The owner, Oswul Farnf (NG male human fighter 1/expert 2), is a retired mercenary who got out of that business before his twenty-fifth year and now enjoys running his inn. Food and rooms are double the *Player's Handbook* rates, but Oswul also accepts equipment in trade (which he uses to bribe the Red Plumes to leave his place alone).

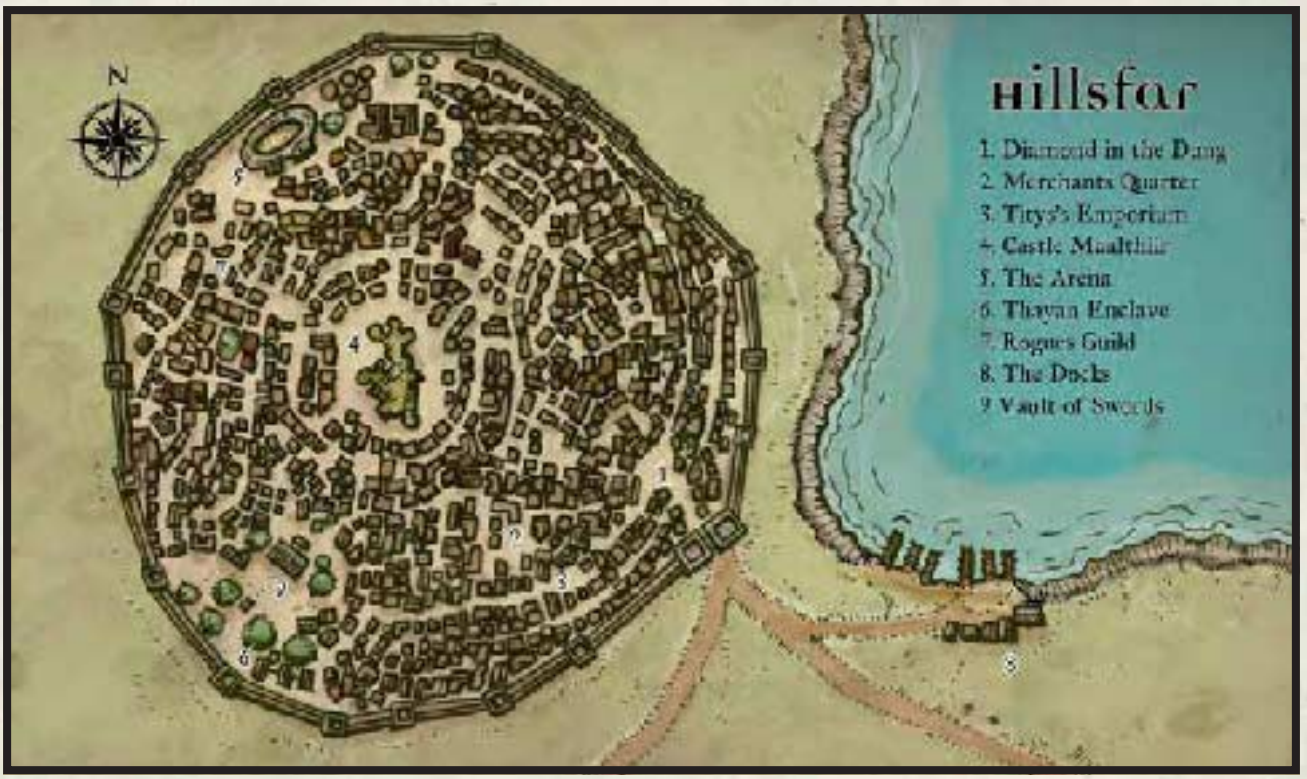
2. Merchants Quarter

The southeastern part of Hillsfar is home to most of the city's mercantile establishments. Most merchants also live in this area, often on the second floor above their shop, though wealthier merchants live in richer parts of town and rent out their upper story to their employees. Most items available here are local trade goods and general items necessary to run a house, farm, or business, though a few places carry imported goods such as exotic woods from Tashalar, art and metal goods from Waterdeep, and so on—though of course never anything identifiably crafted by nonhuman hands.

This quarter of the city is heavily patrolled by the Red Plumes. The mercenaries harass foreigners and suspicious-looking characters, turning the slightest provocation into an excuse for a beating, arrest, or worse. This is all done to show the local merchants that the Red Plumes are working hard to keep them and their goods safe. While it does keep the incidence of petty larceny in the area very low, it also tends to make some visitors nervous, and from time to time the merchants have to send letters to Maalthiir requesting that the Red Plumes be gentler with customers.

3. Titys's Emporium

This store sells miscellaneous gear and bulk goods at normal prices. Its owner, Titys (NG male human rogue 7/expert 1), is a gray-haired old man who also fences goods. He welcomes adventurers for their unusual treasures, and his fencing business



thrives with the rarities they bring in; he will buy almost anything that's not obviously evil. He's also well aware of all the hottest local rumors, particularly those involving the Red Plumes, and is willing to share this information for the right price. Titys is planning to retire in the next couple of years and would like to find someone to take over the business for him, whether that person is a local from the Rogues Guild or an enterprising, silver-tongued visitor.

4. Castle Maalthiir

Once known as Vultureroost, the First Lord's palace is an imposing sight, with many towers, spires, sub-buildings, and connecting walls. One of the attached buildings is a barracks holding one thousand Red Plumes. Maalthiir resides here along with his thirty-two elite guards (NE male and female human fighter 8), guests, friends, associates, staff, and servants. He allows few strangers into the palace, mainly foreign diplomats and potential trade partners, for he fears spies (particularly those acting on behalf of various nonhuman races) and assassins.

The land under the castle is honeycombed with caverns, tunnels, and finished rooms, some quite pleasant, some half-flooded and dank. The First Lord sometimes entertains special guests in these underground chambers, throwing lavish parties featuring hedonistic delights contrasted with the wailing of the tortured. Some of the tunnels connect to subterranean areas beneath the arena; others might lead beyond the city wall or to flooded exits within the lake.

5. The Arena

The main structure of this huge oval building is made of solid granite blocks; tall banners wave from the upper structure to announce events. Despite the air of excitement from its visitors, the arena is a place of death. Criminals are executed here in front of large crowds, and gladiator-style battles to the death (usually involving criminals, slaves, monsters, or those captured in violation of the city ban on nonhuman visitors) draw even more cheering citizens, usually filling the place to capacity (8,000 people). At least once a year Maalthiir orders the four large arena drains closed, floods the floor with lake water, and enacts small-scale naval battles in front of the crowds, usually with slaves and captured Moonsea pirates.

Underneath the arena is a network of tunnels and chambers that most citizens never see. Some of these rooms are dungeons holding undesirables, future contestants in the arena, and political enemies of Maalthiir. Others rooms are torture chambers or holding pens for slaves used for various ugly tasks. Secret passageways connect to areas beneath Castle Maalthiir, allowing the Red Plumes to secretly transport people between the two structures. The great drains on the arena floor connect to a separate system of tunnels that empties into the Moonsea.

One hundred Red Plumes are stationed at the arena at all times. Most of them are green troops who guard the catacombs and double as crowd control during city events. The Red Plumes use secret tunnels under the arena to quickly reach the surface levels quickly in times of emergency; these tunnels are blocked at each end by one-way doors that can only be opened from the underground side, preventing unauthorized access to the catacombs.

The most famous gladiator of the arena is Tonorok (LE male minotaur warrior 3), an exceptionally strong and rather dumb minotaur. Tonorok is cheered when he is in the arena and given a wide berth when he walks the city streets. His only real friends

are certain members of the Red Plumes, and he drinks beer with them at least once a tenday at their favorite tavern, the Rat's Nest. Otherwise, he prowls a series of tunnels under the arena given to him by Maalthiir.

6. Thayan Enclave

This large mansion and its two outbuildings were purchased by the Red Wizards of Thay in 1371 DR and converted, with Maalthiir's permission, for use as a Thayan enclave. The edge of the enclave is marked by a 3-foot-high wall insufficient in physical terms to prevent unwanted guests from entering; but as a symbol of Thayan territory and power, it's enough to keep all but the most foolish or determined folk from crossing. Visitors are not allowed in the enclave without permission, and those wishing to purchase their goods must wait at the easternmost part of the grounds to be invited inside.

The khazark (leader) of the enclave is Tola Vrass (LE female human wizard 8/Red Wizard 5), a charismatic and beautiful woman who serves Mythrellaa, the Thayan zulkir of illusion magic. Vrass and Maalthiir are involved in an elaborate courtship dance, not quite lovers but certainly interested out of mutual attraction, respect for power, and business sense. Both are aware of the political power gained through a successful alliance–marriage such as the one between the High Blade of Mulmaster and the tharchion of Eltabbar, and they look forward to a similar alliance in their future—the only question is where exactly the balance of power stands between the two of them.

The Red Wizards have a policy of not selling weapons or items mainly suitable for adventurers. Most of their work involves crafting potions or the hired spellcasting of spells such as *alarm*, *blur*, *comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *ironguts*[Mag], *mage armor*, *protection from arrows*, *see invisibility*, and *unseen servant*—magic that a wealthy merchant might want to show off in front of guests or a paranoid one might want to keep his skin and property. They also have a thriving business in various types of pleasure drugs. The Thayans are quite aware of the laws of the city, and Tola Vrass has authorized a small black-market business selling potions of disguising spells such as *alter self* and *disguise self* at double the normal price (all of which disguise the wearer as a nondescript human); unlike normal enclave potions, these contraband potions are not marked with the enclave or Thayan symbol in any way.

Hillsfar once had a private magic shop owned by a rude and unpleasant man named Laris. A few days after the Thayan envoy arrived in the city, Laris offended the Red Plumes or Maalthiir in some way, and subsequently lost his life in an arena battle with a behir shortly thereafter—leaving a void in the market that Tola Vrass and her entourage were only too happy to fill with their enclave.

7. Rogues Guild

This building was once a charnel house used to hold the bodies of dead plague victims. Now it has been officially condemned but secretly renovated on the inside with traps, pitfalls, and guard stations. The upper level connects to an underground complex of rooms that hold the guild's headquarters. The complex contains meeting rooms, a dormitory for thieves hiding from the law or from enemies, several storerooms, and a small cell for holding hostages or valuable enemies of the guild.

8. The Docks

This small hamlet houses no more than three hundred people, and while technically a separate settlement outside the walls of Hillsfar, it is firmly under the thumb of Maalthiir. Because of the First Lord's paranoia, he prefers to keep nonessential visitors out of the city, so the presence of the docks as a separate settlement satisfies his preference to keep common laborers and tradesmen (such as sailors) out of the city proper. There is little here other than a few warehouses, maintenance facilities for ships, trading company offices, and two inns: the Rusty Nail, which caters to adventurers, and the Mermaid's Bosom, which is best described as a dive. One hundred Red Plumes are stationed at the docks permanently in a stone tower that doubles as a barracks and lighthouse. Members of the Rogues Guild keep an eye on things here, as do members of the Knights of the North, a secret military order dedicated to overthrowing the Zhentarim. The Knights circulate news and rumors about Zhent activities to help the Red Plumes take on the Banites.

9. Vault of Swords

This large building is the biggest temple in the city. Serving Tempus, its great halls are decorated in normal Tempuran style, with well-used armor and weapons hanging everywhere. Its high priest, Dounalis Guff (CN male human cleric 18 [Tempus]), is a loud man in his mid-forties, still very physically fit, who insists that salvation from cowardice and mediocrity is found through death in battle. Guff serves as the chaplain for the Red Plumes, and his priests and acolytes provide nonmagical healing to them for free.

villains of Hillsfar

In a city where everything is tightly controlled, the most effective villains are those who have multiple faces—one for strangers, one for allies, and one for enemies. All of the villains in this section are well connected in the city, and most have something to hide.

Captain Serag Kull

This brutal, scarred man is everything that's wrong with the Red Plumes and simultaneously the epitome of what makes them so effective. There are a dozen captains like him—mean, sly, and smart—who have advanced to this level in the organization through determination, toughness, and the right bribes. Kull is well connected with the Rogues Guild, has extorted money from most of those in the Merchants Quarter at one point or another, and knows key people involved in gambling, prostitution, and other shady activities. Kull has beaten street urchins to death in front of witnesses in retaliation for being pickpocketed, sliced the face of a festhall girl when she questioned his manliness, and more than one suspect arrested by him arrived at a city guard station with injuries they didn't have when they were caught. Kull acts like a thug because doing so is effective and it makes people underestimate him, but he's a smart man who doesn't get manipulated. He has fought against the Zhentarim

Captain Serag Kull

Illustration by Francis Tsai

and keeps a cool head in battle, preferring to let off steam by threatening caravan masters or shopkeepers who can't defend themselves. The only people he leaves alone are the Thayans, since he has little experience dealing with magic. Kull believes the strong should rule the weak—and he has made sure he's one of the strong.

Campaign Use: Captain Kull is best used as a recurring thorn in the side of PCs in Hillsfar. They can meet him outside the city, extorting a caravan for "safe escort"; he'll happen to be the captain on duty the first time they run into trouble within the city, and they'll have the bad luck to run into him randomly other times as well. Unless the PCs are bloodthirsty and try to kill the Red Plumes (making them enemies of the city), Kull is going to be around for a while and enjoy disrupting their lives during their stay, if they get on his bad side. Less savory PCs might use him to connect with the Rogues Guild, though he'll make them pay through the nose for his knowledge. He avoids getting into a physical conflict if his opponents seem superior (and any small group of strangers who work as a team are probably adventurers in his mind, and therefore doubly dangerous), preferring to throw grunt-level Red Plumes at them to bring them down or give him time to escape and make a report.

Description: Kull is almost 6 feet tall and broadly built. His neck is thick and his jaw is strong, but not in an attractive way. His hands are meaty, calloused, and scarred, and he has a scar on his neck near his jaw from a Zhentarim soldier who got a bit too close. He normally looks angry and a little dull, though his eyes burn with a fierce intelligence when he drops this facade.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Captain Kull will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Captain Kull is the sort of man who would break your arm if he caught you pickpocketing; shopkeepers pay him protection money so he doesn't wreck their stores.

DC 15—Kull has killed at least one person for resisting arrest, even for a minor offense. The caravan masters don't like him because his bribes for safe passage into the city are higher than most.

DC 20—Kull acts like a dumb thug, but he's not a stupid man. He has friends in the Rogues Guild, and he's a veteran of many skirmishes against the Zhentarim.

Captain Serag Kull — CR 4

Male human warrior 4
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +3
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 16
hp 24 (4 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +9 (1d8+4/19–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +6 (1d6/×3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of invisibility*, potion belt

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Improved Initiative, Street Smart, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Bluff +2, Climb +4, Gather Information +1, Intimidate +8, Jump –2, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +4, Sense Motive +5, Spot +3, Swim –7
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork banded mail, masterwork longsword, masterwork shortbow, *everburning torch*, masterwork manacles with average lock, 5 tindertwigs, set of loaded dice, blade boot, 553 gp

Rowan Blackwood

This meek wallflower is actually a skilled thief, burglar, disguise artist, and liar. Although she has been in Hillsfar only a few years, she has worked her way deep into the Rogues Guild's trust and is a respected member. She was born in Waterdeep but left that place after some unspecified "trouble," coming to Hillsfar because her enemies won't look for her here. She helps the guild with confidence schemes, spying, and high-risk burglary. When not on the job, she goes out of her way to make herself plain and unnoticeable, living as a young widow in a tiny apartment above a tanner's shop.

Much of Rowan's persona is false. That isn't her real name, she isn't from Waterdeep, she isn't on the run from enemies, and she isn't meek in any sense of the word. Rowan was born a wererat and is the lead agent of her extended lycanthrope family, which is trying to infiltrate Hillsfar and its Rogues Guild. Because she's

a natural lycanthrope, she doesn't suffer involuntary changes to wereform, and she controls unwanted lycanthropic urges with drugs (the few people in the guild who know about her special drugs assume they're the reason she left Waterdeep). She is in the process of memorizing all of the rooms, tunnels, and exits to the guild headquarters so she can redraw them perfectly in a later meeting with the other wererats.

The lycanthropes plan to sneak into the city through sewer tunnels, kill or incapacitate most of the guild rogues, and take over the guild. The wererats will infect key guildmembers whom Rowan believes are trustworthy and eat the rest. Rowan and the other lycanthropes believe that Hillsfar is an excellent place for them to live and hide—in their human forms they are inconspicuous, yet they can use their alternate forms for spying and infiltration.

Rowan is ruthless and perfectly willing to murder a friend in cold blood if it would protect her family or advance her interests; she has already had to kill one guild member who stumbled upon a clue to her past. Her wallflower guise is just an act; she's driven, smart, and charismatic, and the senior guildmembers know it, which is why they have allowed her to advance to her current position. She is wary of Maalthiir, uncertain if he has magic that can reveal her secret, but since he has little direct interaction with the guild, she is cautiously confident that he'll treat the matter as a guild war and let it sort itself out as long as it doesn't disrupt trade.

Campaign Use: As a foil to the PCs, Rowan might be sent to spy on them, steal from them, or plant something incriminating in their room. She might pretend to be a young woman in distress, especially if she is discovered during a raid on the guild (she's likely to use her alternate forms to sneak into one of the guild's prison cells during the attack to aid in her disguise). Using her disguise skills, she might pretend to be several different people when meeting with them. If the PCs try to become involved with the guild, she might arrange to be their contact person, then frame them for some serious offense if she thinks they're too dangerous. If they try to destroy the guild, she could try to influence their timing to help her cause.

Description: Rowan is a little over 5 feet tall, with fair skin, dark eyes, and midnight-black hair. She is slender with angular features, and her hands have long, delicate fingers. She normally dresses in a simple gray tunic, a pair of short breeches, and thick leather sandals. A thin belt at her waist holds a pouch and a slender dagger. She sometimes wears simple cheap jewelry (made of carved ornamental stones and polished wood), though she usually keeps it tucked within her clothing. In hybrid or rat form she is colored like a hooded rat, with a white-gray body, a black head, and a black stripe running down her back; she specifically wears clothing that's easy to remove during her shapeshifting, and all of her jewelrylike magic items are loose-fitting enough that she can wear them in any form.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Rowan Blackwood will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Rowan is from Waterdeep; her husband was a local tanner but he died of a fever, and now she does housekeeping in her brother-in-law's shop.

Illustration by Francis Tsai

Rowan Blackwood

DC 20—She spends little time in the tanning shop or in her small apartment above it, and she talks to few people. She has turned away at least one potential suitor.

DC 30—Rowan is actually a mid-level member of the Rogues Guild. Her role as a tanner's widow is a ruse.

DC 35—She had to flee Waterdeep because of some kind of trouble, probably a falling-out with a rival thief.

Rowan Blackwood — CR 8

Female human wererat rogue 7/ranger 1
LE Medium humanoid (human, shapechanger)
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +6, Spot +14
Languages Common, Chondathan, Damaran

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 16
hp 41 (8 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +6, **Ref** +12, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+1 dagger* +10/+5 (1d4/19–20)
Ranged *+1 dagger* +10 (1d4/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Combat Expertise
Special Actions favored enemy humans +2, sneak attack +4d6
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds, potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 17, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 16, Cha 13
SQ lycanthropic empathy (rats), trapfinding, trap sense +2, uncanny dodge, alternate form
Feats Alertness[B], Combat Expertise, Improved Feint, Iron Will[B], Persuasive, Stealthy, Track[B], Weapon Finesse[B]
Skills Balance +10, Bluff +12, Climb +10, Diplomacy +8, Disguise +11, Gather Information +5, Heal +6, Hide +15, Intimidate +10, Jump +1, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +5, Listen +6, Move Silently +15, Open Lock +8, Search +10, Sleight of Hand +8, Spot +14, Survival +6, Swim +10, Tumble +10
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 dagger, bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2,* 648 gp

Mordak Brelliar

Maalthiir's most recent apprentice, Mordak, works as one of the First Lord's primary agents, searching for spies and relaying orders to the citizens of the city. Mordak believes that if Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar were to ally, they would be unstoppable, controlling the entire Moonsea and spreading outward from there to rule the Dalelands and even Sembia. Unfortunately for him, Maalthiir doesn't want to play second lyre to Manshoon and the other Zhent mages, so the possibility of an alliance is essentially zero while he is in power. Most merchants see Mordak as a toady and have little respect for him, though he has nearly a hundred followers among the Red Plumes, nonguild mages, guild rogues and priests who have seen his determination and want to help him form such an alliance.

For several years, Mordak secretly planned to overthrow Maalthiir, but the First Lord knew of his treachery and tolerated this plan; when Mordak tried to put his scheme into motion, Maalthiir blocked it and used his own potent magic to mind-control his apprentice. Now Mordak suffers under *dominate person, suggestion,* and *geas* spells that control his behavior, preventing him from directly working against Maalthiir but encouraging him to recruit other people for his group who would like to see Maalthiir overthrown; in this way, Maalthiir can easily identify potential threats and receive updates on them from their own leader. Now Mordak is a miserable traitor, unable to ever achieve his goals and unlikely to learn much more magic than he currently knows.

Campaign Use: Due to his connections with the Red Plumes, the Rogues Guild, and many temples in the city, Mordak soon hears of any adventurers who make their presence known in the city. As Maalthiir's most loyal servant (involuntary as this loyalty might be), he uses spies to investigate any visitors who speak ill of the First Lord. Those who wish to speak to Maalthiir must first go through Mordak, because he takes care of day-to-day governing for the First Lord.

Description: Mordak has mid-length dark hair, fair skin, and a thin, scruffy beard and moustache. Mordak dresses in black robes with dark green piping and silver embroidery on the inner and outer edge of the sleeve—but inevitably has darker spots on the robe from food and wine stains. If Khelben Arunsun of Waterdeep had a younger, more poorly groomed, and less charismatic brother, he might look much like Mordak.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Mordak will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Mordak is Maalthiir's apprentice and a powerful wizard in his own right. He speaks for Maalthiir.

DC 15—Mordak visits the commanders of the Red Plumes, the city temples, or other important folk almost every day, sometimes accompanied by commanders, priests, or influential guild members.

DC 20—Mordak wants the city to ally with Zhentil Keep to become an even greater power on the Moonsea, but Maalthiir refuses to even contemplate such an idea.

DC 30—For a time, Mordak talked of making such an alliance when Maalthiir was no longer First Lord, but he hasn't voiced this idea in many months.

Illustration by Francis Tsai

Mordak Brelliar

Mordak Brelliar — CR 9

Male human wizard 9
CN Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Chondathan, Damaran, Draconic, Elven

AC 15, touch 12, flat-footed 14
hp 31 (9 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk dagger +4 (1d4–1/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +3
Combat Gear *potion of cure serious wounds*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 9th):
5th—*hold monster* (DC 20)
4th—*charm monster* (DC 19), *dimension door, lesser globe of invulnerability*

3rd—*hold person* (DC 18), *lightning bolt* (DC 17), *suggestion* (DC 18), *tongues*
2nd—*Aganazzar's scorcher*[FRCS, SC], *daze monster* (DC 17), *detect thoughts*, *invisibility*, stilled *unseen servant*
1st—*burning hands*, *charm person* (2) (DC 16), *magic missile*, *unseen servant*
0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 13, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 14, Cha 10
Feats Craft Wondrous Item[B], Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Persuasive, Scribe Scroll[B], Spell Focus (enchantment), Still Spell
Skills Bluff +6, Concentration +10, Diplomacy +4, Gather Information +2, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (arcana) +12, Knowledge (history) +5, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +5, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +7, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +13, Spot +7
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork dagger, *bracers of armor +3*, *ring of protection +1*, *cloak of resistance +2*, *headband of intellect +2*, 448 gp
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *mending*, *message*, *open/close*, *ray of frost*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*alarm*, *comprehend languages*, *feather fall*, *ice dagger*[Mag], *ironguts*[Mag], *mage armor*, *spirit worm*[Mag]; 2nd-—*arcane lock*, *Gedlee's electric loop*[Mag]; 3rd—*explosive runes*, *reverse arrows*[Mag], *sepia snake sigil*; 4th—*fire trap*, *illusory wall*, *locate creature*; 5th—*hold monster*

Girella Scatterstar

Illustration by Francis Tsai

Girella Scatterstar

Girella has only been master of the Mages Guild for just over a year, filling the gap left by the mysterious disappearance of her predecessor, who also happened to be her sister. Though some conflicts arose with other guild members when she arrived and insisted on filling her sister's position, most guild members are happy to have a competent and strong-willed mage at the helm again. Girella is much like her sister in looks and personality and is fighting hard to protect the guild.

Though many in the guild suspect that their old guildmaster faked her own death and is now the new guildmaster, that's not actually true. "Girella" is a doppelganger wizard who spent enough time with the missing guildmaster to learn her habits, personality, and enough memories to successfully pass herself off as a family member. Whether "Girella" is in Hillsfar on the old guildmaster's behalf or is actually her murderer is unknown. The doppelganger has sufficient skill in the Art to imitate almost any wizard or even create a new persona; it is doubtful she would have freely picked such a mage-hostile city as her home. She might be here out of thanks for an old favor or to avenge an old slight. Her actual nature is rather spiteful and contrary to the pleasant personality of the former guildmaster. The doppelganger has her own agenda, and is slowly inserting her own ideas into the guild's meetings. If she stays on as guildmaster, the group will probably shift to a more moderate position over time or even slowly become shifted toward evil, as old members leave and new ones who appreciate her philosophy join the guild. Under her influence, the guild will probably eventually ally itself with Maalthiir (acting as a lever against the monopoly of the Thayan enclave) and drop its agenda of seeding a conflict with the Zhentarim.

Campaign Use: As the head of the only "good" faction in Hillsfar, Girella is a key figure for good-aligned PCs trying to find a safe place to stay in Hillsfar. Any PCs trying to do some good in the city are likely to attract her attention, and might receive surreptitious aid from other members of the guild. Any mage who wishes to join the guild requires her final approval. She might decide to eliminate rival mages or meddling PCs if they interfere with her agenda, regardless of their alignment. If they establish themselves as enemies of the Thayans, she might push them to take direct action against the enclave.

Description: Girella looks like a typical middle-aged woman from the Moonsea, with gray eyes, dark hair, fair skin, and the start of a few heavy lines around her mouth and on her neck. She has a small, light-colored mole on her upper lip and normally wears large earrings. She dresses in brown, gray, and black, preferring a long-sleeved shirt, a modest fitted-leather corset, and a long skirt with heavy boots.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Girella will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Girella is the head of the Mages Guild.

DC 15—She replaced the old guildmaster, who disappeared a year ago, and is actually the former guildmaster's sister.

DC 20—Some believe the former guildmaster faked her own death and returned as Girella.

Girella Scatterstar **CR 16**

Doppelganger wizard 12
NE Medium monstrous humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +9; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +13
Languages Common, Damaran, Giant

AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 20
hp 64 (16 HD)
Immune sleep, charm
Fort +8, **Ref** +15, **Will** +15

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee slam +10 (1d6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +10
Special Actions *detect thoughts* (CL 18th, DC 13)
Combat Gear *wand of magic missile* (CL 9th, 10 charges), *wand of fireball* (CL 10th, 5 charges), *wand of fox's cunning* (CL 10th, 7 charges)

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 12th):
6th—*acid fog*, *mass suggestion* (DC 20)
5th—*dream*, extended *fire shield*, *Lutzaen's frequent jaunt*[Mag]
4th—*charm monster* (DC 18), *fire shield*, *greater invisibility*, *stoneskin*
3rd—*dispel magic*, extended *resist energy*, *fly*, *Mestil's acid breath*[Mag, SC] (DC 17), *vampiric touch* (+10 melee touch)
2nd—*battering ram*[Mag, SC], *cat's grace*, *death armor*[Mag, SC], *see invisibility*, *web* (DC 16)
1st—*alarm*, *charm person* (DC 15), *corrosive grasp*[Mag, SC] (+10 melee touch), *sleep* (DC 15), *true strike*
0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *mending*, *open/close*
Abilities Str 10, Dex 20, Con 12, Int 19, Wis 17, Cha 14
SQ change shape
Feats Alertness, Craft Wand[B], Craft Wondrous Item[B], Dodge, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes, Scribe Scroll[B]
Skills Bluff* +7, Concentration +10, Decipher Script +10, Diplomacy +9, Disguise* +7, Heal +5, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (arcana) +18, Knowledge (Dalelands local) +5, Knowledge (Dalelands geography) +5, Knowledge (Moonsea geography) +5, Knowledge (Moonsea history) +5, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +6, Knowledge (the planes) +4, Listen +11, Sense Motive +8, Sleight of Hand +7, Spellcraft +19, Spot +13
* When using her change shape ability, Girella gets an extra +10 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks. If she can read an opponent's mind, she gets a further +4 circumstance bonus on Bluff and Disguise checks.
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +4*, *ring of protection +2*, *gloves of Dexterity +4*, 1,050 gp
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—*acid splash*, *arcane mark*, *dancing lights*, *daze*, *detect poison*, *disrupt undead*, *flare*, *ghost sound*, *light*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *touch of fatigue*; 1st—*comprehend languages*, *expeditious retreat*, *identify*, *Laeral's cutting hand*[Mag], *mage armor*, *magic missile*, *shocking grasp*, *Tenser's floating disk*; 2nd—*fox's cunning*, *invisibility*, *knock*, *Melf's acid arrow*, *mirror image*, *misdirection*, *spider climb*; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance*, *displacement*, *fireball*, *slow*; 4th—*Leomund's secure shelter*, *remove curse*, *shadow well*[Mag], *spell enhancer*[Mag]; 5th—*dismissal*, *dominate person*, *Mestil's acid sheath*[Mag], *teleport*, *wall of force*; 6th—*analyze dweomer*, *chain lightning*, *disintegrate*, *eyebite*

Rumors in Hillsfar

If the PCs spend time talking to locals to hear the latest rumors, have them make a Gather Information check and consult the following table.

Check	Result
15–19	Roll 1d10 and consult the Rumors list below.
20–24	Roll 1d10+4 and consult the Rumors list below.
25–29	Roll 1d10+8 and consult the Rumors list below.
30–34	Roll 1d10+12 and consult the Rumors list below.
35+	Roll 1d10+15 and consult the Rumors list below.

Some of the items in the following list are false rumors and some are adventure hooks left open for individual DMs to embellish.

Rumors

1 The Rogues Guild has a hideout somewhere in the city that even the Red Plumes don't know about.
2 The Red Wizards keep a garden of twisted and magically bred plants. Some of these plants can move on their own.
3 Some of the people arrested by the Red Plumes are held in dungeons underneath the arena.
4 Priests of Umberlee are planning to use sea monsters to justify increasing their protection fees. (hook)
5 The Rogues Guild's hideout is under the basement of the Vault of Swords. (false)
6 The Silver Ravens of Sembia are trying to start their own sword-training academy in the city. (hook)
7 Some of the elves captured by the Red Plumes are used in magical experiments by the Thayans.
8 Maalthiir bans the use of magic in the city whenever the Red Plumes capture an elf. (false)
9 Mordak handles the day-to-day administration of the city, enforcing Maalthiir's will, though he is less enthusiastic about it than in years past.
10 Crossing the Red Plumes is the quickest way to the gibbet. They are the corrupt, brutal enforcers of Maalthiir's will.
11 A strange fungus is eating away at part of the western city wall. (hook)
12 The Rogues Guild is having problems with a clan of were-rats in the sewers.
13 The Red Wizards feed prisoners to their carnivorous plants.
14 A Halruaan mage and his demonic familiar are causing a stir with the Mages Guild and the Red Wizards. (hook)
15 Mordak is undead, and he sucks souls from victims he keeps in his wizard tower. (false)
16 The minotaur Tonorok keeps a group of slaves under the arena for food.

17 Strange men and women from the west riding flying beasts sometimes visit Mordak's tower. (hook)
18 Maalthir is about to launch an offensive against his most hated rival, the Zhentarim. (false)
19 Undead stalk the sewers of Hillsfar. (hook)
20 Maalthiir is actually a demon in disguise. (false)
21 First Lord Maalthiir is courting the leader of the Thayan enclave.
22 An unarmed foreigner has been challenging Red Plumes to single combat and breaking their weapons with his bare hands. (hook)
23 Mordak would like to take Maalthiir's place as First Lord but cannot contest his power.
24 The head of the Mages Guild murdered her predecessor. (false)
25 A member of the Rogues Guild is actually a wererat spy.

Hillsfar Quests

These adventures take place in, under, or within the immediate vicinity of Hillsfar. They're set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Southern Moonsea quests in the next section. Some of them also link to adventures in other chapters.

Rogue's Redoubt

This adventure is designed for characters of 6th–8th level.The Rogue's Redoubt is a hideout for members of the Rogues Guild. Located under the basement of a building in the city, it was built decades ago by a cult that venerated Talona and Umberlee, and later abandoned when the cult tore itself apart due to internal conflict. The guild discovered it, swept up the dust, and now uses it as a safe house, bolt-hole, and secondary headquarters.

Background

Guild members like the redoubt because it's close to the water and across town from the main guildhouse. The redoubt also has a significant wererat problem—a group of lycanthropes living in the sewers would like nothing better than to tunnel into the redoubt, kill the rogues, and loot the area. The PCs could arrive at the redoubt in pursuit of one of the thieves, to retrieve stolen goods, or perhaps even in an effort to become allies of the guild.

The walls of the redoubt are made of stone, roughly chipped from the city's bedrock. Most walls are carved with at least one symbol of Talona or Umberlee; the rogues leave these symbols alone, though in many places they are covered up by furniture. All guild rogues are human; each carries one dose of "drow" sleep poison (actually made by the Thayans) and a *potion of invisibility* in addition to his or her other gear.

Encounters

1. Murder Room (EL 6)

A trapdoor in the floor of a shop basement leads to this room, which is unlit. There is no ladder or rope to climb, just a 10-foot drop (normally the thieves hang from their hands to land safely, but characters experiencing this adventure might have access to magic that lets them fly or levitate). This room is divided into two parts: the central part the rogues call "the wood room;" and the outer hall, between the wood room and the stone walls. The walls of the wood room are made of planks added by the thieves. Painted wooden statues line the inner side of the wooden wall, and each of the four walls has at least one murder hole. Four 2nd-level rogues are on duty here, waiting with light crossbows to shoot anyone who comes through the trap door without calling out the password. The wooden statues are here to confuse visitors as to the source of the incoming crossbow bolts. The four rooms marked 1A have two simple beds each, where the guards sleep when they're not on duty. The secret door into the southern hallway is only hidden from the wood-paneled side—from the south, it's obviously a door.

Guild Rogues (4) **CR 2**
Male human rogue 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 12
hp 11 (2 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +1, **Ref** +5, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk short sword +4 (1d6+2/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear vial of sleep poison, *potion of invisibility*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
SQ trapfinding
Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (light crossbow)
Skills Bluff +4, Climb +3, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Gather Information +0, Intimidate +6, Listen +7, Move Silently +7, Open Lock +7, Sleight of Hand +9, Spot +7, Tumble +6, Use Rope +7
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow, masterwork thieves' tools, silk rope, 10 gp

2. Kitchen. (EL 6)

There are normally four 2nd-level rogues in this area, either sleeping or eating quietly. This is where the rogues do their food preparation and eating, but since they don't have a full-size stove or a way to make a camplike cooking fire without filling the place with smoke, they get by on wine, jerky, hard cheese, and dried fruits. Two lanterns hanging on wall hooks provide light.

A grate in the southeast corner connects to an 8-inch-diameter pipe that empties into the sewer; the rogues keep the grate covered with a blanket and barrel when they're not using it (to dump garbage and waste into the sewer) in order to keep the smell of sewage out of their lair. The areas marked 2A contain two simple beds, each like those in area 1A. The areas marked 2B are for food storage, plus a few barrels of water for washing

(mainly to hide evidence such as bloodstains rather than a desire to be sanitary). A portion of the sewer is directly under this room (through several feet of stone), and a very attentive listener can hear the water below, though this might require putting an ear to the ground.

Guild Rogues (4): hp 11 each; see above.

3. Old Temple

This is where the cultists held their ceremonies for Talona and Umberlee, goddesses of evil and destructive waters. The floor here is covered with a few inches of dirt, as if at one point this area was kept deliberately muddy (the cultists believed that covering themselves in mud was a way to bring themselves closer to the goddesses). Four stone pillars reach from floor to ceiling, each carved many times with the symbols of the goddesses. The northwest corner of the ceiling has collapsed; the rogues have wedged a few boards in place to help keep it from collapsing further.

The alcove to the south holds an altar (a plain stone slab with a depression in it) and a pair of wooden statues representing the goddesses—a woman covered with sores stands next to a woman wearing a jellyfish cloak and holding a trident. Anyone who defaces or damages any of the pillars or statues is immediately infected with green slime (*DMG* 76). The use of *consecrate* to break this place's connection to the goddesses' power does not cause this attack and ends their retaliatory infections.

A section of the wall is a pivoting secret door; the rogues know about the secret door but don't bother to use it because of the danger in area 5. The rogues use this room for the unusual times when they need to hold a meeting for a large number of people in this area, but otherwise leave it as is and don't spend much time here.

4. Rogue-Priest's Chamber (EL 8)

One of the few clerics in the guild (most guild members buy potions from the Thayans or spellcasting from the Vault of Swords), this human female lives here semipermanently. Because of her faith and hidden location, the rogues always have access to magical healing, even when Maalthiir bans the use of magic (for the ban is only enforceable in public, and this place is quite hidden). She knows about the creature living in area 5 and never opens the stone door to that room, and usually keeps a large trunk pushed in front of the door just for good measure.

In addition to her personal effects and a bed, the room has a desk, lantern, and a few chairs so she can talk privately if necessary. On the desk are several papers about various recent and upcoming guild jobs—planned burglaries, wealthy visitors in town they'd like to rob, and so on—all written in the local guild slang to prevent them from incriminating themselves (treat as using the Bluff skill to deliver a secret message). One of the papers refers to a magic item called the *Chauntean sphere* with power over plants, which the Thayan wizards are using to maintain control over a magical garden they have growing outside the city (see the Deadly Arboretum quest); the rogues would like to steal the sphere and either sell it (to a wealthy visitor or the Mages Guild, perhaps) or give it back to the Thayans, claiming either that it was fenced to them and they recognized it as Thayan property (hopefully increasing the guild's esteem in the eyes of the enclave) or as a way to show the Thayans they need to increase their security—and then offering their services for that purpose. One desk drawer contains 10 *potions of invisibility* and 10 doses of sleep poison, all clearly labeled, since the cleric is responsible for assigning these items to the rogues staying in the redoubt.

Guild Priest — CR 8

Female human rogue 4/cleric (Mask) 4
NE Medium humanoid
Init +8; **Senses** Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 19, touch 15, flat-footed 15; uncanny dodge
hp 42 (8 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +6, **Ref** +9, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk short sword +11/+6 (1d6–1)
Ranged *+1 light crossbow* +11 (1d8+1/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Special Actions good fortune 1/day, rebuke undead 3/day (+2, 2d6+4, 4th)
Combat Gear *pearl of power* (1st)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 4th):
2nd—*cure moderate wounds, hold person* (2) (DC 14), *invisibility*[D]
1st—*cure light wounds* (2), *entropic shield*[D], *shield of faith* (2)
0—*cure minor wounds* (2), *detect magic, detect poison, mending*
D: Domain spell. Domains: Luck, Trickery. Deity: Mask.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 14, Cha 10
SQ trap sense +1, trapfinding, moderate aura of evil
Feats Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Weapon Finesse
Skills Bluff +5, Climb +4, Concentration +7 (+11 casting defensively), Diplomacy +7, Gather Information +5, Hide +13, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +7, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +10, Move Silently +13, Search +6, Sleight of Hand +8, Spellcraft +10, Spot +10, Tumble +9
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 studded leather, ring of protection +1, +1 light crossbow,* 20 bolts, masterwork short sword, *gloves of Dexterity +2,* assorted jewelry (500 gp), 80 gp

5. Plague-Ooze Lair (EL 6)

While the cult's goddesses are not allied, someone involved got some unusual magic working and summoned a servitor creature, a fiendish ochre jelly, which lives in this area. It obeyed the high priest of the cult, which it recognized by the unique holy symbol he wore, a bronze amulet showing a jellyfish and a scabrous hand, and will not attack anyone wearing the holy symbol. It will also obey simple commands to the best of its ability if the possessor of the amulet can speak Abyssal. The ochre jelly's slam attacks

infect its opponent with slimy doom (*DMG* 292) if it fails a DC 14 Fortitude save. It refuses to move about in daylight and prefers to guard its temple home rather than traveling around the world as a creature companion. The jelly is unable to open doors and can't flatten itself enough to fit through the cracks around the doors keeping it in this area, so it has to wait here until someone lets it out. It is very hungry, and any new "master" should feed it one Medium or two Small creatures per week to keep it satisfied.

Fiendish Ochre Jelly CR 6

NE Large ooze (extraplanar)
Init –5; **Senses** blindsight 60 ft., blind; Listen –5, Spot –5
Languages Abyssal

AC 4, touch 4, flat-footed 4
hp 69 (6 HD); **DR** 5/magic
Immune poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, *polymorph*, mind-affecting spells and abilities, critical hits, flanking, slashing, piercing, electricity
Resist cold 5, fire 5; **SR** 11
Fort +8, **Ref** –3, **Will** –3

Speed 10 ft. (2 squares), climb 10 ft.
Melee slam +5 (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +10
Atk Options constrict (2d4+3 plus 1d4 acid), improved grab, smite good 1/day

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Abilities Str 15, Dex 1, Con 22, Int 3, Wis 1, Cha 1
SQ split
Feats —
Skills Climb +19

Acid (Ex) An ochre jelly secretes a digestive acid that dissolves only flesh. Any melee hit or constrict attack deals acid damage.

Constrict (Ex) The creature crushes its opponent, dealing slam and acid damage after making a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) If the creature hits an opponent of up to Huge size with its slam attack, it deals normal damage and attempts to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. The creature has the option to conduct the grapple normally, or simply use the part of its body it used in the improved grab to hold the opponent. Each successful grapple check it makes during successive rounds automatically deals the damage indicated for the attack that established the hold, in addition to constrict damage.

Smite Good (Su) Once per day the ooze can make a normal melee attack to deal an extra 6 points of damage against a good foe.

Split (Ex) Slashing and piercing weapons and electricity attacks deal no damage to an ochre jelly. Instead the creature splits into two identical jellies, each with half of the original's current hit points (round down). A jelly with 10 hit points or less cannot be further split and dies if reduced to 0 hit points.

6. Glyph Room (EL 5)

The cultists created several *glyph of warding* traps (5d8 *fire blast glyph*) in this room so they could retreat here if they were attacked by a superior force; the glyphs trigger for anyone who isn't a follower of Talona or Umberlee. The rogues inadvertently set off one of the glyphs (killing the rogue that found it) and carefully searched the rest of the floor to find the others, and they now know the room's safe areas. If they have to, the rogues will continue to fall back to rooms 7 and 8.

Glyph of Warding (Blast) (5): CR 6, spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], CL 16th, 8d8 sonic, Reflex DC 14 half); multiple targets (all targets within 5 ft.); Search DC 28; Disable Device DC 28.

7. Armory

This is a storage area for weapons, armor, and items useful to thieves—mainly knives, hand crossbows, grappling hooks, rope, thieves' tools, and climber's kits. Altogether, there is about 800 gp worth of such equipment here. The guild keeps this cache here for emergencies and doesn't allow members to remove items from it without permission. In addition to the useful goods, the guild keeps a few small chests here to hold stolen goods, but such items rarely stay here for more than a few days.

8. Storage and Exit (EL varies)

This room is dusty and littered with rock debris and digging tools—picks, hammers, and so on. Hanging on the wall is a simply sketched map of the nearby sewer tunnels. The cultists planned to dig all the way to the sewer, but never finished due to disagreements over the goals of the cult and the purposes of accessing the sewer. The rogues have been working on the tunnel off and on, and for the past few weeks the only barrier between the redoubt and the sewer is about an inch of stone (hardness 8, 15 hit points); breaking the wall creates a 3-foot-diameter space.

If the rogues have to fall back to this location, at least one of them will try to break through the wall and escape into the sewers. However, just as the battle reaches this room, a group of eight wererat 2nd-level rogues in hybrid form start working on the wall from the sewer side. The lycanthropes want to eliminate the guild thieves and aren't really concerned about the PCs. The wererats would like to loot the redoubt, but the presence of the characters complicates things. If the characters fight the wererats, the lycanthropes will respond in kind—but they are willing to negotiate for a fair share of the lair's treasure if given the opportunity, a possible doorway to an alliance between the characters and wererats. When the wererats leave, they drag any dead rogues with them, both to confuse the surviving guild members and for food. The wererat leader carries a map of the redoubt from Rowan, a wererat spy who infiltrated the guild. The note isn't signed, but a reader can use the Forgery skill to recognize her handwriting if he or she has seen it before, and if so, will realize that Rowan (in whatever guise she is known) is involved with the guild and the wererats.

Guild Rogues (number depends on how many made it out of area 7): hp 11 each; see page 57.

Wererat Rogues (8) (Hybrid Form) CR 4

Male human wererat rogue 2
NE Medium humanoid (shapechanger)
Init +5; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +8, Spot +8
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 20, touch 15, flat-footed 15; **DR** 10/silver
hp 18 (3 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +4, **Ref** +10, **Will** +5

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +8 (1d6+2/18–20) and bite +1 (1d6+1 plus disease)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +3
Atk Options sneak attack +1d6
Special Actions curse of lycanthropy, disease

Abilities Str 14, Dex 21, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Iron Will[B], Stealthy, Weapon Finesse[B], Weapon Focus (light crossbow), Weapon Focus (rapier)
Skills Balance +7, Climb +9, Escape Artist +9, Hide +14, Move Silently +14, Sleight of Hand +7, Swim +8, Tumble +9
Possessions masterwork studded leather armor, masterwork short sword, masterwork light crossbow, 20 bolts

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Curse of Lycanthropy (Su) Any humanoid or giant hit by a wererat rogue's bite attack must succeed on a DC 15 Fortitude save or contract lycanthropy.
Disease (Ex) Filth fever—bite, Fort DC 13 negates, incubation period 1d3 days, damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.

If a wererat rogue assumes human form, use the following changed statistics:
Init +2
AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14
Fort +3, **Ref** +7
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6+2/18–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +5 (1d8/19–20)
Abilities Dex 15, Con 13
SQ alternate form, rat empathy, trapfinding
Skills Balance +4, Bluff +4, Climb +6, Diplomacy +1, Escape Artist +6, Gather Information +3, Hide +11, Intimidate +1, Jump +1, Listen +8, Move Silently +11, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +8, Survival +3, Swim +5, Tumble +6

Alternate Form (Su) A wererat rogue can assume a bipedal hybrid form or the form of a dire rat.
Rat Empathy (Ex) Communicate with rats and dire rats; +4 racial bonus on Charisma-based checks against rats and dire rats.

If a wererat rogue assumes dire rat form, use the following changed statistics:
Speed 40 ft. (8 squares), climb 20 ft.
Melee bite +6 (1d4+2 plus disease)
Skills Balance +7, Climb +17*, Escape Artist +9, Hide +14, Jump +8, Move Silently +14, Sleight of Hand +7, Swim +8, Tumble +9
* A wererat rogue can always take 10 on Climb checks in dire rat form, even if rushed or threatened.

9. Sewer

This is a section of the city sewer. It connects with other sewer tunnels in both directions, and traveling northeast eventually reaches the point where it empties into the Moonsea.

Deadly Arboretum

This location is a garden of magically bred and mutated plants, created and maintained by the local Thayan enclave. The following adventure is designed for characters of 7th–9th level.

Background

The Red Wizards have always been fond of experimenting on living things, and the Hillsfar enclave's proximity to the Forest of Cormanthor gives them an amazing opportunity to get their hands on plants and animals cultivated and bred by generations of elves. The Thayans took samples of animals and plants from the forest, replanted them in a private grove, and started experimenting (in some cases just by using failed or miscreated potions to water the plants). Now they have a strange garden that's part hedge maze, part death trap, and part druid's nightmare. Thayan guards only lightly patrol the place, since its status as property

of the Red Wizards and the obvious strangeness of the plants are enough to deter most intelligent creatures (they also have small signs posted about 100 feet away with the Red Wizard symbol and a warning message in Common and Thayan). This place might be outside the city walls, or within the city walls in an area of trees just outside the enclave.

Guards: Eight Thayan guards (see below) watch over the arboretum. They stand watch or patrol in groups of two; squares marked G indicate guards standing watch, while the patrolling guards circle opposite sides of the garden within the area defined by the warning signs. At night they use torches for light. The guards challenge anyone who approaches, warning non-Thayans that the area is off limits to all but the Red Wizards and their servants. Because their orders come directly from Tola Vrass herself, they refuse to accept any countermand to their orders unless it comes from her or one of her superiors (each guard shift carries paperwork with orders to return to the enclave and the names of the guards in the new shift replacing them). The guards shout an alarm if there is any sort of disturbance, falling back to the garden to take advantage of its walls and defending creatures; the noise of an alarm gives all guards within earshot plenty of opportunity to prepare themselves for battle, including drinking potions (they are well stocked from the enclave).

Thayan Guard — CR 3

Male Rashemi human fighter 3
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +4
Languages Common, Mulhorandi

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20
hp 27 (3 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +2, **Will** +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +7 (1d8+2/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite longbow +6 (1d8+2/×3)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +5
Atk Options Power Attack
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of bull's strength*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (composite longbow)[B], Weapon Focus (longsword)[B]
Skills Climb –3, Intimidate +1, Jump –9, Knowledge (arcana) +1, Knowledge (Thay local) +1, Spot +4
Possessions combat gear plus full plate, heavy steel shield, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite longbow (+2 Str bonus), 20 arrows

Plant Repellent: All Thayans who come here from the enclave first apply to their bodies an alchemical substance that smells bad, tastes bad, and has slight herbicidal properties; the aggressive plants here recognize the smell and taste of this substance and do not attack those marked with it. Any aggressive plants that are unable to sense this marker or attack despite it have been killed and removed from the garden; other creatures that come near without using the repellent are fair game. The repellent is not stored here; doing that would make it too easy for someone to steal the repellent and immediately infiltrate the garden. The repellent has no effect anywhere but in the arboretum.

Prisoners: Other than the Thayans and the animated plants, the only creatures normally in this area are a few prisoners—mainly humans but occasionally an elf, half-elf, or dwarf—that the Thayans use to feed the garden's carnivorous plants. These poor souls are left bound and gagged before they're given to the plants, and in some cases they're given strange drugs or potions to see what effect the ingestion of these chemicals has on the plants. Any bodies or parts left after feeding are ground up and used as fertilizer; bone fragments cover much of the ground in the arboretum much like bark is used in common gardens. Most captives are purchased from the slavers at the arena (see the Urban Dungeon, page 63), and any rescued prisoners will tell the characters there are many more being held there.

Once the characters discover what goes on here, they might decide to take on the enclave directly. However, because this quest is keyed for characters of 7th–9th level and the enclave has several characters who are too powerful for PCs of those levels to deal with in a fight, it's best to steer them toward another quest (such as the Urban Dungeon) to give them time to earn more experience before confronting the enclave.

Encounters: Plants

Letters on the map indicate different types of unusual plants in the arboretum. Most of the plants in the arboretum are basically normal, though they might be slightly discolored or have strangely shaped leaves. The immobile plants are likely to die if anyone without the proper knowledge of plant care tries to relocate them. The plants have no treasure.

A. Roper Tree

This thick-trunked Large oak tree has all the game statistics of a roper except it has the plant type, Intelligence 1, and its Hide bonus applies to swampy or forested areas instead of stony or icy areas. It tends to attack anything that comes near it except for things marked with the repellent.

Roper Tree: hp 85; *MM* 215. This creature has the plant type, Intelligence 1, and its Hide bonus applies to swampy or forested areas instead of stony or icy areas.

B. Healing Apple Tree

A rare positive breakthrough for the Thayans, these Medium apple trees bear red fruits that if eaten cure 1 point of damage, much like the berries from a *goodberry* spell (they do not count as a full meal, though they are as filling as any other apple). The Thayans aren't exactly sure what they're going to do about these trees, because a free source of healing that literally grows on trees is bad for their potion business, but in the short term, they see the merits of having such a plant at their disposal. Each tree produces about 100 apples per growing season. The plants are immobile and unintelligent.

C. Bloodsucker Bulb

This plant is a Tiny bulb with many dark green leaves and one thick hollow vine that can drain blood and reaches up to 10

feet. It has all the game statistics of a stirge except as noted below. They grow in clusters (each letter C on the map indicates a cluster of four bulbs).

chauntean sphere

This wooden sphere is about 2 feet across, carved with Moonshaean geometric patterns and various kinds of plants. Once activated, it sends out invisible pulses of energy that are soothing to nearby plants; plants that attempt to move more than 200 feet from the item must succeed on a DC 22 Will save; failure means the plant remains within 200 feet of the sphere. Ambulatory plant creatures sown within its area of influence have a –5 penalty on their saving throws to resist the item. Activating or deactivating the sphere requires a command word, which is carved on the sphere and disguised as an elaborate knot.

Aura/Caster Level: Moderate transmutation; CL 10th.

Construction: Craft Wondrous Item, *command plants* or *sympathy*, 2,500 gp, 100 XP.

Price: 5,000 gp.

Weight: 15 lb.

Bloodsucker Bulb (Stirge): hp 5; *MM* 236. This creature has the plant type, no land speed or fly speed, and Intelligence 1.

D. Manticore Vine

This thick vine grows to a length of 5 feet or more and has flat, broad leaves bearing multiple finger-length spines. It usually curls itself around trees but sometimes winds its way across the ground. The vine becomes agitated if disturbed (rapid movement or taking aggressive action fall into this category), flicking its spines at threats in the manner of a manticore using its tail. It has the game statistics of a Small animated object except as noted below.

Small Animated Object: hp 15; *MM* 13. This creature has the plant type, a speed of 5 feet, and its attack is a ranged attack (range 30 feet, no range increment) instead of a melee attack.

E. Poison Apple Tree

This tree's apples look identical to the healing apples, and taste quite good—but each one is poisonous (Fortitude DC 15, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con). The Red Wizards have many plans for this creation, and they hope to surreptitiously sow its seeds in their enemies' lands. Each tree produces about 100 apples per growing season. The plants are immobile and nonintelligent.

F. Assassin Vine

This creature is a normal assassin vine.

Assassin Vine: hp 30; *MM* 20.

Encounters: Locations

Numbers on the map indicate open areas in the arboretum. The trees are planted and grown around a series of wooden trellises, and in most parts of the arboretum, the taller trees have grown together above the "corridors" and "rooms," leaving only a few places where the interior areas are visible from the air. Each of the areas within the arboretum has a small bench, a pail with gardening tools, and one or more clay jars filled with water. Every plant or group of similar plants has a small wooden sign near its base bearing a number in the Thayan alphabet (Infernal) which corresponds to a master list kept at the enclave recording the original type of plant and what has been done to it.

1. Healing Apples

This area is arranged like a little orchard, surrounded on three sides by apple trees bearing fruit. The sign at the base of each fruit tree has an additional remark carved in it ("safe to eat" in Thayan). If desperate and out of healing, the Thayan guards might come here (or to area 5), grab a few apples as a move action, and flee back to the enclave.

2. Vampire Garden (EL 3)

The bloodsucker bulbs in the adjacent hedges can reach just about any place within this open area, though they're not particularly hungry because of the "snack" the Thayans left for them—two barely alive human merchants hogtied and dumped in the mulch. The humans each have 2 points of Constitution remaining and probably won't live more than a few more hours before the plants finish them off. Despite being somewhat sated, these bloodsucker

bulbs react to the presence of fresh meat if the PCs come within 5 feet (though their actual reach is 10 feet).

The merchants were arrested for "conspiring with foreign races," though their actual offense is complaining too much about having to pay bribes to the Red Plumes. They were imprisoned in the arena dungeon, sold to the Thayans, and taken here to be fed to the plants. If they are rescued, the merchants gush their thanks and tell the PCs that several of their friends—all just as innocent of true crimes as they—are also being imprisoned under the arena. The merchants can't afford to pay the heroes, because their businesses were confiscated when they were arrested, but they promise to find some way to compensate them in the future.

3. Manticore Hall (EL 6)

The vines in this area normally don't react to intruders unless the visitors move quickly or take aggressive action.

4. Assassin Garden (EL 6)

The three hostile vines here attack any creature that comes within their 20-foot reach.

5. More Good Apples

As in area 1, the signs here say the apples are safe to eat.

6. Bad Apples (EL 2)

The signs marking the poison apple trees say (in Thayan) "Poison, do not eat." They are not otherwise marked with any symbols that indicate they're dangerous—after all, if an unauthorized person comes here and steals a few apples, the Red Wizards don't want to warn the thief against eating the apples by putting skulls on the sign. (See area E, above, for poison statistics.)

7. Bloodless Corpse (EL 2)

Unlike those in area 2, the Hillsfaran merchant tied up here is quite dead, sucked dry by bloodsucker bulbs. He has been dead for most of the day, and the plants are now quite hungry again, lashing out at any creature within reach.

8. Center Grove (EL 5)

Two guards are stationed here at all times to look after the *Chauntean sphere*, which is resting on a metal and wood sled in the southwest corner. In the center of this area is a small campfire, barely large enough to hold a cooking pot and mainly used for illumination at night. The guards wear the alchemical plant repellent, so the nearby roper tree ignores them; it attacks any unauthorized (unmarked) creature that comes near, alerting the guards. Because they know the Red Wizards will punish them for allowing the sphere to fall into enemy hands, they will fight to the death.

Urban Dungeon

Hillsfar's arena is not only a place for bloodsport entertainment, but also a place to hold undesirables before their execution or death-spectacle in the jaws of a savage monster. Under the arena are a network of tunnels that allow the Red Plumes to move about and perform their duties, prisoner holding cells, and pens for monsters.

This adventure is designed for characters of 8th–10th level.

Background

The many possible ways the PCs might come to this quest include a deliberate invasion to rescue wrongfully imprisoned merchants at the direction of former prisoners in the Deadly Arboretum quest, stumbling across this area accidentally while wandering about the arena, or being jailed or imprisoned here by the Red Plumes for some real or trumped-up offense. This particular branch of the nonpublic arena tunnels is just one of many similar branches that run through and under the structure. If the PCs go off course or decide to explore more of the arena's undertunnels, use this quest's map to create similar areas for them to explore.

The Arena

The arena is a huge open-roofed structure with a large oval area in the center called the Great Floor, which is used for battles and executions. Surrounding the Great Floor is a 15-foot-high wall that separates it from the audience's area, the entirety of which is called the Balcony and divided into sixteen radial sections (named by direction, such as the North Balcony, the North-Northeast Balcony, and so on). A tunnel called the Great Hall leads from the arena's main exterior doors to several sets of stairs allowing access to the balcony seats; tapestries depicting past arena battles hang on both sides. Doors on the Great Hall are always guarded and connect to administration areas, holding cells, and barracks; small structures between balcony sections have doors that lead to these private areas, and these doors are usually unguarded. Any door that divides a public area—namely the Great Hall and the Balconies—from a private area (anywhere else) is a strong door, wood bound in iron, with a good lock (Open Lock DC 30). All the people of Hillsfar know that interfering with the Red Plumes' duties (which include patrolling the arena) is punishable by imprisonment or execution, so very few ever try to get into these restricted areas—and sometimes the Red Plumes, in their arrogance, are a little lax in locking the doors.

Four large and eight small metal gates in the wall allow access to the tunnels and hidden chambers beneath the balcony. The gates are controlled by large cranks within the tunnels; they cannot be opened from the outside. The Red Plumes use the small gates to bring in prisoners for execution and in times of emergency (for example, if a group of battling prisoners started attacking the audience and needed to be suppressed by force). They use the large gates to bring in monsters from the larger dungeon area for particularly dramatic battles—although technically the Red Plumes do not "lead" the monsters anywhere, since they rarely have any control over the beasts and don't want to risk themselves just to put on a good show. In these cases, the Red Plumes can use a different crank to remotely open the doors to the monster cells and the large gate—eventually the hungry creature finds its way up a ramp and into the arena. Tonorok, the city's famous minotaur, is probably the only creature that uses the large gates to the exclusion of the small gates, and certainly the only one that operates the gate himself.

Southeast Dungeon

This quest takes place under the Southeast Balcony, which is the area on the eastern side of the Great Hall. If the PCs are here to rescue the falsely imprisoned merchants, they start the adventure in the Great Hall near room 1. If the PCs are themselves imprisoned, they begin in the cells south of room 5 or the cells in room 7. Otherwise, their starting location depends on their reason for being here. The upper level of the map depicts the ground-level rooms underneath the balcony seats; the lower level is 15 to 20 feet below that, which allows the monster lairs to be safely underground and away from the public. The ceilings on the upper level are no more than 8 feet high; those in the lower level are approximately 10 feet high. The upper level is clean, with fresh air, and is generally well kept, while the lower level is more dungeonlike with many areas of hewn stone, mold, and stale air mixed with the reek of monsters and fear. All Red Plumes in this quest are 3rd-level warriors, and all prisoners are low-level commoners or experts, unless noted otherwise.

Arena Red Plume — CR 2

Male or female human warrior 3
NE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 16 (3 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +6 (1d8+1/19–20)
Ranged mwk shortbow +4 (1d6/×3)
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +5, Listen +4, Spot +4
Possessions masterwork splint mail, masterwork longsword, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows

Wererats: If the PCs reached a peaceful resolution with the wererats in the Rogue's Redoubt quest and have a way to contact the lycanthropes, the PCs might be able to negotiate for their help when the time comes to get into the arena dungeon. Depending on the results of the negotiation, the wererats might agree to sneak in separately (probably through the drains connecting the underground to the sewer) and hold back Red Plume reinforcements from connecting tunnels while the characters take care of what they need to do, or join with the PCs to form a larger group. In the latter scenario, consider allowing each player to control his or her character as well as a cohortlike lycanthrope through this adventure. Regardless of the nature of the wererats' involvement, they're not willing to die for the PCs, and they will flee if they're in mortal danger.

Encounters

1. Administration Desk (EL 2)

This is the only part of the private tunnels that free citizens normally ever see. A Red Plume warrior is stationed here behind a desk, recording the names and professions of anyone arrested and brought here, and likewise accepting bribes to release said prisoners. This person here only has the authority to release prisoners held in area 2; if anyone asks about other prisoners, he directs them to the equivalent rooms in other wings, but does not acknowledge that there are prisoners held anywhere else other than these publicly known holding cells. Only Red Plumes and prisoners are allowed beyond the eastern door.

Arena Red Plume: hp 16; see above.

2. Jail Cells (EL 2)

One Red Plume warrior stands watch here whenever there are prisoners in the cells (which is most of the time). He or she has the keys to the cell doors but only opens them at the direction of the administrator in area 1. The prisoners are just drunks and troublemakers from the last arena event, sleeping off their ale and waiting for their friends or family to pay the fine to free them, and are not at risk of being sent to fight in the arena or given to Tonorok unless they are left here more than a tenday. There are normally four or five people in the cells at any time, or double that number immediately following an event at the arena.

Arena Red Plume: hp 16; see above.

3. Flop Room

The three couches in this room double as beds during times when the guards stationed here need a quick rest. In idle times, the guards pull the couches into a circle and gamble. The eastern hall leads to the lower dungeon level. Going north from this room leads to a locked gate opening to the Great Floor; north then east connects to a similar set of rooms on the eastern end of the Southeast Balcony.

4. Barracks (EL 6)

This is the barracks facility for the Red Plumes stationed here at the arena, with six double beds. The underground levels have enough of these small barracks that the guards don't have to share beds with others on different shifts. There are usually four guards sleeping here at any time of the day.

Arena Red Plumes (4): hp 16 each; see above.

5. Offices and Cells

The rooms adjoining this area are offices for ranking Red Plumes or cells for prisoners next in line to enter the arena (each office has a desk, chair, and set of shelves). The two pillars in the middle of this room have metal rings so the Red Plumes can shackle prisoners here temporarily (usually for the fun of beating them up). The hall leading westward out of this room goes under the Great Hall and connects to another group of rooms similar to those shown on the map.

A. Major (EL 6)

This office belongs to a major in the Red Plumes who is in charge of all of the arena guards and staff. She is just as ruthless as one would expect of someone of her rank and responsibilities. The major carries a set of keys that unlock the cells in areas D and E.

Red Plume Major — CR 6

Female Damaran human warrior 7
NE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19
hp 38 (7 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +1 longsword +11/+6 (1d8+4/19–20)
Ranged *+1 composite shortbow* +8/+3 (1d6+3/×3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9
Atk Options Power Attack
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +9, Listen +6, Spot +6
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 full plate, +1 longsword, +1 composite shortbow* (+2 Str bonus), 20 arrows

B. Captain (EL 3)

This office belongs to the Red Plume captain in charge of the Southeast Balcony. He is loyal to the major more than he is to the rest of the Red Plumes, and he acts to help her before any of the men in his command. The captain's keys also unlock the cells in areas D and E.

Red Plume Captain — CR 3

Male Damaran human warrior 4
NE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 18, touch 10, flat-footed 18
hp 22 (4 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +1, **Will** +0

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +8 (1d8+3/19–20)
Ranged mwk composite shortbow +5 (1d6+2/×3)
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Combat Gear *potion of cure light wounds*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +6, Listen +4, Spot +4
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork full plate, masterwork longsword, masterwork composite shortbow (+2 Str bonus), 20 arrows

C. Weapons

This room is cluttered with dozens of rusty and inferior weapons for use by the prisoners in the arena. Most of the weapons are spears, daggers, clubs, handaxes, and short swords, though there are a few longswords and battleaxes, a trident, and two nets.

D. Prisoners

These locked cells contain six prisoners awaiting execution. There are usually a few such people here on any particular day. Prisoners who are physically fit are sentenced to death by combat, but these poor souls are too old, fat, and weak to put on a good show in the arena, and they're certainly in no shape to help PCs in a jailbreak or do anything more than try to get away. Each cell and cell door is made of iron bars and locked with a good lock (Open Lock DC 30).

E. Prisoners

These locked cells hold people sentenced to die in arena combat. The current prisoners are a visiting Waterdhavian thief (CN male human rogue 4) who refused to join the Rogues Guild, a murderer (N male human expert 2), and a group of four elf explorers (LG cleric 4 [Corellon], NG fighter 4, NG rogue 4, and CG wizard 4) who were exploring ruins south of Elventree hoping to find magic they could use against the drow invading Cormanthor. Unfortunately for the elves, they encountered drow at the ruins and had to flee, then were subsequently captured by the Red Plumes and brought here. The elves are happy to tell the PCs about the ruins (see the Ruins in Cormanthor quest, page 80),

since they don't want to go back and risk getting captured again; they also tell the PCs that one of their comrades was taken away by the guards after a minotaur picked him out of the group. The thief and murderer independently claim they were imprisoned for not bribing the Red Plumes.

F. Armor and Shields

The defensive counterpart to the weapon room, this place has a few sets of partial leather armor (to allow for some bloodshed without quick ends to fights), several rusty small spiked shields and bucklers, and a few heavily armored gauntlets in poor condition.

6. Tonorok's Room (EL 6)

The minotaur gladiator Tonorok lives in this room behind an overlarge door with squeaky hinges. Because of his good hearing, he's likely to be aware of anyone outside his door, and the squeaky hinges all but guarantee that he notices anyone opening the door, even if he's asleep. If awakened by intruders, he shouts an alarm to get the attention of the Red Plumes, then attacks his foes. If the PCs encounter Tonorok elsewhere and he is badly hurt, he tries to retreat to area 8, where he can release some monstrous allies. He carries the keys to his "pantry" (area 7).

Tonorok the Gladiator **CR 6**

Male minotaur warrior 3
LE Large monstrous humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +7, Spot +7
Languages Common, Giant

AC 14, touch 9, flat-footed 14; natural cunning
hp 58 (9 HD)
Immune *maze*, cannot become lost
Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee Large greataxe +14/+9 (3d6+9/×3) and gore +9 (1d8+3)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +17
Atk Options Power Attack, powerful charge (4d6+9)

Abilities Str 22, Dex 10, Con 15, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Track
Skills Intimidate +4, Listen +7, Search +2, Spot +7
Possessions Large greataxe

7. Tonorok's Pantry

These locked cells hold prisoners—Tonorok's future meals—that the minotaur has selected from the captives held under the arena. He's allowed a wide berth in doing this, though the Plumes don't let him choose very dangerous or especially wily people because of the risk of escape. The current prisoners are a male elf (CG fighter 4), a plump baker's wife (N commoner 1) accused of poisoning her husband, and a fire genasi (CG cleric 2 [Sune]). The double door dividing this room from area 8 is normally kept barred for extra security.

8. Monster Pens (EL 6)

This area holds a few interesting monsters for use in arena battles, particularly against elf and dwarf prisoners. Its floor is another 10 feet below the balcony area in the northwest corner (marked by an asterisk on the map). Each pen has a portcullis in the front that is operated by a crank in the northwest balcony. Opening or closing a portcullis requires a DC 15 Strength check to open it as a move action; otherwise it takes a full-round action.

Usually the monsters kept here are savage and unintelligent, but from time to time a smarter one is housed here; Maalthiir likes having one of these around in case something happens to Tonorok and the city needs a new "monster gladiator hero." Maalthiir's law says that no creature that can easily escape or harm the audience is allowed in the battles, which rules out flying creatures and those with breath weapons or other ranged attacks. Cell 8A holds a dire wolf, 8C a centaur, 8D a bugbear, and 8E an owlbear; the other three cells are empty. If the centaur is released, it is likely to join the side of the PCs against the Red Plumes and other monsters (the EL for this room does not include the centaur's CR), while the remaining three creatures are hungry enough to start attacking anything within reach.

Bugbear: hp 16; *MM* 29.
Centaur: hp 26; *MM* 32.
Dire Wolf: hp 45; *MM* 65.
Owlbear: hp 52; *MM* 206.

Mordak's Tower

The following adventure is designed for characters of 9th–11th level. It takes place in the tower home of Mordak, second-in-command of the city of Hillsfar.

Background

When Maalthiir took over Hillsfar, he planned to have this tower torn down, because it was built in the elven style by a half-elf. Mordak asked for ownership of it, citing its value as a lookout tower (it's located on the western end of town wherever you find suitable), a place for aerial steeds to land, and its obvious and hidden magical properties. Since the First Lord did not know at the time that Mordak planned to usurp him, he relented and gave him the tower. Though Maalthiir now knows of Mordak's treachery, he lets his apprentice keep the tower—partly because he doesn't want to cut the legs out from under his chief city official and partly because he enjoys the irony of keeping a slave (under the effect of a *dominate person* spell) in a magical tower that shows its inhabitant's auras.

The Tower: The tower is a beautiful sight, with high ceilings, grand arched windows to let in air and light, and intricate elven carvings on many surfaces. Anyone who has ever seen elven architecture recognizes the work as authentic, or at least a well-researched homage. All doors in the tower are finely crafted wood, as are the window shutters (kept in storage in the warmer months of the year, but mounted to the windows in cooler seasons). Unless otherwise noted, all ceilings are 15 feet high, and all windows are large enough for a human-sized creature to pass through without any reduction in speed. Near the stairwell on each level is a set of eight small bells attached to wires; each bell corresponds to one of the levels of the tower, and pulling

on a bell or its cord causes the appropriate bell to ring, alerting everyone within earshot of the stairwell that something is afoot on that floor (for example, pulling on the first bell cord causes the first bell on all eight floors to ring).

The tower's main feature is that any magical effects on a creature (including worn items such as magic armor or a *belt of giant strength*) manifest a gentle aura of colored light. The light is the equivalent of a candle, only affects creatures (but not objects, unless they are equipped), and cannot be turned off. Creatures can make Spellcraft checks to identify the school of these auras as if using a *detect magic* spell. The creator of the tower built this effect to alert himself and his guests to what magic those present might have, and to make sure that everyone could find their way in the dark.

Guards: Mordak's steward is a Red Plume 9th-level warrior, a stern man who has grown tired of the shakedowns and extortion common to the lower ranks and is quite enjoying his status and better pay as Mordak's right-hand man. The steward's keys can open any locked door in the tower.

Under the steward are twenty Red Plume 3rd-level warriors (use the statistics for the arena Red Plumes on page 64), all hand-selected for their higher standards of grooming and greater acceptance of magic (since Mordak has to deal with diplomats from time to time). Guards on duty normally stand near the stairwells.

Mordak also has two stone golems that he controls with a magic ring (the ring only affects these two golems). The golems used to belong to Laris, the city's former purveyor of magic goods, but when Laris was arrested, Maalthiir awarded the ring and golems to Mordak (after of course spending a short time altering the ring so that the golems ignore any command to attack Maalthiir himself). The golems have standing orders to attack anyone who isn't Mordak or a Red Plume (Mordak amends these orders when he has invited guests). One watches over area 1, and the other follows Mordak at all times.

Mordak's Steward — CR 8

Male Damaran human warrior 9
LN Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 21, touch 12, flat-footed 20
hp 49 (9 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +5, **Will** +4

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +1 *longsword* +13/+8 (1d8+4/19–20)
Ranged +1 *composite shortbow* +11/+6 (1d6+3/×3)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11

Abilities Str 14, Dex 12, Con 12, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 10
Feats Alertness, Improved Initiative, Negotiator, Persuasive, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Bluff +6, Diplomacy +6, Intimidate +10, Listen +6, Sense Motive +6, Spot +6
Possessions +1 *full plate, ring of protection +1, +1 longsword, +1 composite shortbow* (+2 Str bonus), 20 arrows, *cloak of resistance +1*, 1,000 gp in coins, jewelry, and other valuables

Stone Golem: hp 107; *MM* 136.

Traps: Wherever Mordak keeps written records, he displays at least one document (folded, sealed with wax, and addressed to important people in the city) containing either *explosive runes* or a *sepia snake sigil;* his hope is that any thief will focus on these important-looking documents and get a little surprise when he tries to read them (Mordak has a special way of writing the name on the outside of a document so he doesn't confuse it with an actual letter he intends to send). Several doors in the tower are warded with a *fire trap*, and only he and the steward can safely open them. Other doors are held shut using *arcane lock,* and only Mordak can open them without force or magic. Illusory walls block off some parts of the tower; while these are not a physical deterrent, they can be confusing to those unfamiliar with the tower's layout.

Mordak: The wizard expects the golems and guards to take care of most threats and only enters combat if he has to. He might investigate a disturbance after casting *invisibility* on himself (though his aura will still be visible because of the tower's magic) and leave once his curiosity is satisfied. However, Mordak's dilemma is that he wants to be free of Maalthiir's mental shackles, and while he can't oppose the First Lord directly (which includes trying to dispel the spell effects or asking others to do so) there's nothing stopping him from entering a fight and allowing himself to be captured. Trying this is tricky, for if his enemies kill him or decide not to help him, he loses. If the characters seem weak, allowing himself to be captured by them could alert Maalthiir to his plans, because weak PCs shouldn't be able to capture him under normal circumstances. If the characters are too powerful, they might kill him accidentally in the battle. He also has to worry that at any moment the First Lord might be using their connection through the *dominate person* spell to monitor his activities, so any discussion of this matter with his captors must be brief.

If he believes the characters can help him (particularly if they have one or more spellcasters with them), Mordak enters the battle using weak and ineffective spells, and when threatened, he begs that the PCs capture, bind, and gag him because he is under a series of mind-affecting spells (which they can see in his aura). If he is captured, Mordak tells the PCs that if they take him out of the city and remove the spells, he'll help them in any way he can. He would prefer to help by giving them access to his tower and all the knowledge he has of Maalthiir and any conspiracies against him, but if pressed, he will join the group as a spellcaster (though he might desert them by means of *teleport* at the first opportunity) and even lend them his golem-controlling ring.

Encounters

1. Entry Hall (EL 11)

The ceiling in this ballroom is 20 feet high. The floor and interior walls are fine white marble lined with streaks of green, making it look like vines are growing everywhere. The doors face eastward to catch the morning sun. Two guards are on duty here at all times, and one of Mordak's stone golems stands in the middle of the room like a statue, attacking any intruder.

Stone Golem: hp 107; *MM* 136.

Red Plumes (2): hp 16 each; see Arena Red Plume, page 64.

2. Common Room
This area connects several meeting rooms, six of which are converted into barracks for the Red Plumes. A large table takes up most of the center of the room; the tower staff serves food for the guards here four times a day.

3. Guards (EL 4)
These rooms are converted to a small barracks for Mordak's Red Plume guards. When not defending the tower, they spend much of their time in the common room gambling.

Red Plumes (2): hp 16 each; see Arena Red Plume, page 64.

4. Meeting Room
Mordak uses this room to meet with important guests.

5. Guest Room
The tower's builder expected to have many guests, and set aside four rooms for this purpose. Mordak has far fewer visitors, so three of these rooms are rather dusty and their furniture (a bed, wardrobe, table, and chair) is covered in drop cloths. His guests are typically a wealthy merchant from another city, a representative of a major foreign temple (Waukeen in particular), or a minor diplomat from another Moonsea city. If the PCs attack the tower while a guest is here, the guest reacts appropriately to his or her nature and holds Mordak responsible for the outcome.

6. Guards (EL 4)
These small barracks are similar to those downstairs. Normally these would be servants' quarters for visiting guests, but the tower has enough spare guest rooms that the two guards can stay here permanently.

Red Plumes (2): hp 16 each; see Arena Red Plume, page 64.

7. Garden
An *illusory wall* closes the stairwell. This room was built to provide food and a stunning view for the tower's inhabitants. This floor is 50 feet above the ground, meaning that anyone here can look out over the city and even over the city walls. The windows are large enough that the sun can be seen almost any time of the day, and Selûne is visible for most of her journey as well. In the hands of anyone else, this place could be an excellent shrine to Lathander or Selûne. Mordak takes his dinner here.

8. Landing (EL 4)
An *illusory wall* separates this room from the stairwell. Two guards stand duty here. The door connecting this room to room 9 has a lock but is usually left unlocked.

Red Plumes (2): hp 16 each; see Arena Red Plume, page 64.

9. Study (EL 9 if Mordak is present)
Mordak uses this area as his office. It has a large oak desk and chair and a small fireplace. Scattered all over the desk is paperwork relating to city matters—guild discussion, trade issues, shipments to be taxed, and so on—and several false letters trapped with *explosive runes* and *sepia snake sigil*. Among the paperwork are letters from the Thayan enclave discussing his "condition," the enclave's offers to remove the spells on him, and hints at the cost of such help—all couched in subtle terms that don't precisely spell out the condition or their price (so Maalthiir can't realize what Mordak is trying to do), but incriminating enough that someone can read between the lines and realize that the Thayans want Mordak to spill his guts to help them take over the entire city. (Armed with this knowledge, the PCs might decide to take on the Red Wizards; see the Red Wizards Enclave quest, page 69.)The door connecting the study to room 10 is warded with an *arcane lock*. Mordak spends most of his time here during the day. If the PCs have managed a relatively stealthy incursion into the tower, Mordak will be here; if not, he will be in his sanctum, below.

Mordak Brelliar: hp 31; see page 54.

10. Bedroom (EL 3)
This bedroom is designed for relaxing evenings, with large windows to catch beautiful sunsets. The room also has a wardrobe, two chairs, and a bedside table. Mordak sometimes brings women here, but he is so constrained by the *charm* spells of Maalthiir that he spends most of his time alone because he's never sure when Maalthiir will use magic in some way to humiliate him. The door connecting the bedroom to room 9 is warded by *arcane lock*; the door to room 11 is bound in iron and protected by a *fire trap*. An illusory wall obscures the door to room 11.

Fire Trap: CR 3; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*fire trap*, CL 3rd, 1d4+3 fire, Reflex DC 13 half); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 27.

11. Sanctum (EL 9 if Mordak is present)
This small room was designed to be the last secure place the owner and his family could retreat to if the tower was attacked; it is lined with many shelves that hold food and three barrels of fresh water. Mordak keeps an unfurled scroll of *feather fall* tied to a string next to the window—if he has to flee, he can grab the scroll, jump out the window, cast the spell, and escape safely. Kicked into a corner is one of his letters trapped with a *sepia snake sigil*. Mordak is here if he is aware of the PCs' entry into his tower; otherwise, he is in his study (area 9).

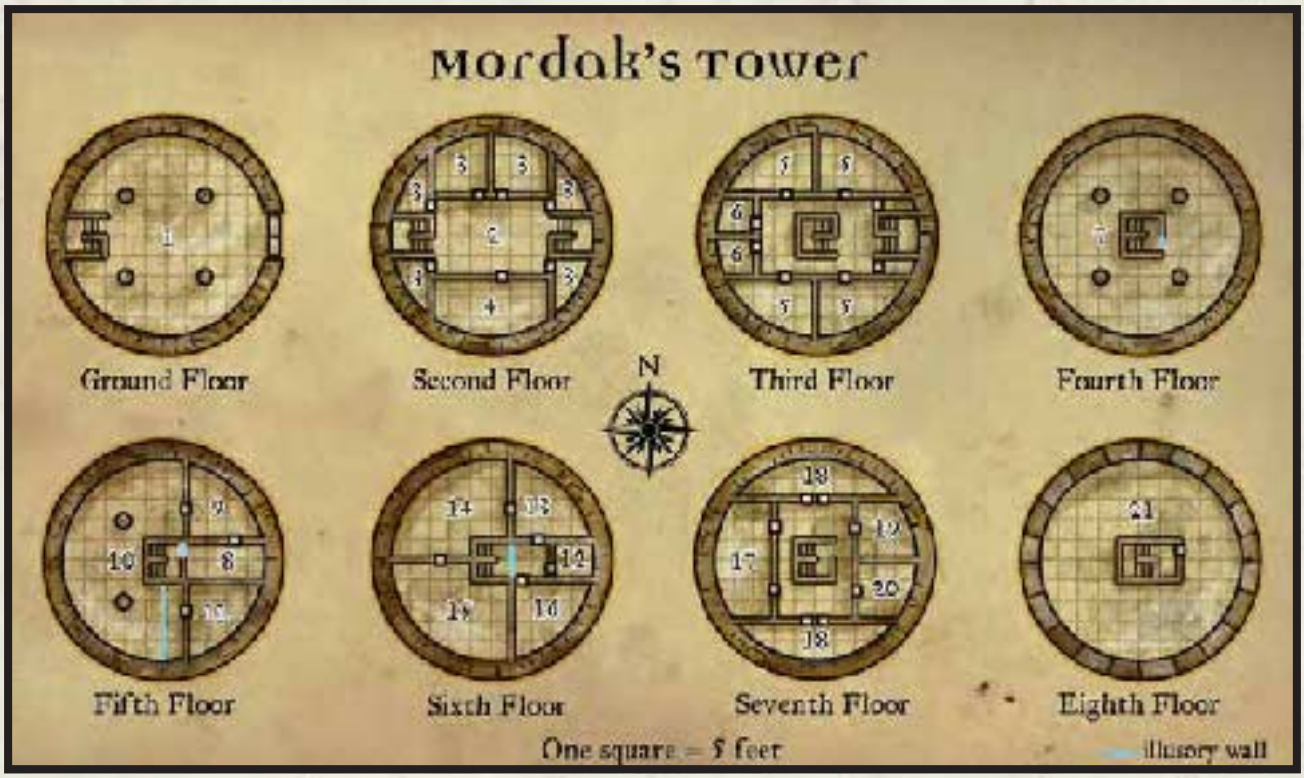
Mordak Brelliar: hp 31; see page 54.

12. Storage
This room holds miscellaneous small household supplies such as brooms, pails, a hammer, and the like.

13. Steward (EL 8)
This is the room of the steward. He always keeps his door locked, as well as the door connecting to room 14. The curtain is here so he can have some privacy if Mordak needs to use the library or the laboratory, which can only be reached by passing through the steward's room.

Mordak's Steward: hp 49; see page 67.

14. Library (EL 3)
This sad excuse for a library has just two dozen books, most of them on fairly mundane topics such as common herbs, animal taxonomy, and a history of famous Faerûnian mages. Mordak has cast *sepia snake sigil* on several of the books. Both doors are locked, and the door to area 15 is warded with *arcane lock*.



15. Laboratory (EL 3)

This is Mordak's lab, where he performs spell research and crafts magic items. The place is a mess, and since his official duties take up most of his time, he has almost no time to do any research. About 3,000 gp worth of various magical reagents and lab materials can be found here, as well as a small wood-burning stove near the window and a cord of wood stacked along the eastern wall. Mixed among the notes on the table are two pages bearing a *sepia snake sigil;* Mordak is sure to not read them by accident because he scribed the entire page in red ink.

16. Guards (EL 8)

This area serves as a barracks for six of Mordak's guards.

Red Plumes (6): hp 16 each; see Arena Red Plume, page 64.

17. Pantry and Storage

Most of this room is used as a pantry, and the rest is miscellaneous storage.

18. Large Storage

The staff stores large items such as extra furniture, extra tapestries, and the window shutters here.

19. Servants

The gardener, maid, and cook live here—a middle-aged couple and their daughter, all of whom couldn't care less about city politics and will surrender rather than fight.

20. Kitchen

This room contains nothing out of the ordinary.

21. Roof

This large open area has a decorative parapet and two large iron rings hammered into the floor. Mordak had the rings added so visitors with flying steeds (such as the occasional Zhentarim skymage diplomat) could tie their mounts here. The original owner of the tower built the roof to be very accessible to flyers, intending it for magically flying mages, pegasi, and so on.

Red Wizards Enclave

This location is the heart of the Thayans' power in Hillsfar. Whether the PCs conflict with the Thayans because of slaves found dead in the Deadly Arboretum, the adventure ties from Melvaunt, or for entirely different reasons, the Red Wizards are waiting here in their sanctuary, secure in their reputation—and their defenses of steel and arcana.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 10th–12th level.

Background

Though the plan of "Attack the Red Wizards in their stronghold" is a simple one, this has the potential of being a very complex encounter. Not only are the main opponents high-level spellcasters with many combat options, they're surrounded and supported by thirty other wizards and the protection of over a hundred soldiers. They can even call on the Red Plumes if need be. There are several ways the PCs might decide to engage the enclave or its inhabitants.

Onslaught: This is the most dangerous and chaotic option for the PCs. If they attack the enclave outright, the Red Wizards have the time to bring to bear all of their forces on the attackers. Though the PCs might be 10th level or higher, a force of

over a hundred Thayan soldiers (most likely using archery to maximize the number of attacks against each invading PC) can wear them down.

Furthermore, there are twenty-five 1st- or 2nd-level wizards in the enclave; each has at least one attack spell prepared per day. While a single 1st-level wizard is inconsequential to a 10th-level party, a group of twenty-five of them casting combinations of *charm person*, *magic missile*, and even *Nybor's gentle reminder*[Mag] can wear down a high-level group of PCs, and the Thayans will almost certainly have extra *wands of fireball* and similar items ready for use by low-level wizards if the enclave is attacked. The many other Thayan wizards will use their spells as well, employing *fireball* or *lightning bolt* on strong foes, aiding their fellows with *blur* or *invisibility*, and so on. All of these distractions give the 9th-, 11th-, and 13th-level Thayans time to react to the attack either by retaliating directly, moving behind the attackers in order to surround the PCs, going to the Red Plumes for reinforcements, or simply leaving their underlings to die and going straight to Maalthiir for protection and support.

Under these circumstances, if the PCs get killed, they have only themselves to blame; taking on an entire enclave of two hundred Thayans is foolish even at 12th level. If the players decide to have their characters do this, it's fair to warn them that it's dangerous, and very fair to give the PCs a chance to run away when dozens of mages arrive backed by a hundred soldiers—but if they persist, it's also fair and realistic to mop the floor with them.

Mageduel: A bard, sorcerer, or wizard PC might challenge one of the Thayan wizards (including Tola Vrass herself) to a mageduel, with the result of the duel determining other consequences. For example, a PC mage could make a mageduel challenge to Tola Vrass, offering a rare spellbook if he loses, but requiring her to free all slaves within the enclave if she loses. Though not accustomed to nonlethal spell battles, Thayan wizards are just as familiar with the concept and rules of a mageduel (*Magic of Faerûn* 14) as those from other parts of the world. It is customary to allow a challenged mage one day to prepare for a duel; otherwise a citybound researching mage would be at a disadvantage compared to a battle-mage who spent the day readying for an adventure.

As the absolute leader of the enclave, Tola Vrass can deny the right of any of the other enclave wizards to participate in a mageduel—but, out of curiosity, she is unlikely to do so. She also has the legal right to act in place of her challenged underling, though the challenger can withdraw the challenge with no stigma if she does so. If she is challenged herself, the reward for her success must be significant (such as a rare tome, a unique spell, or a large amount of reagents); she is busy and considers herself too important for frivolous duels that might reveal too much about her power and knowledge to her enemies. She has the authority to free slaves, donate magic items, create a custom item, ban the collection of slaves within the enclave for a year, remove a curse or other spell, intercede on behalf of the PCs in some Thayan diplomatic matter, or a whole host of other possibilities. She cannot, however, close the enclave for any reason, regardless of the outcome of a mageduel.

When roleplaying Tola Vrass, remember that she is a shrewd, very intelligent, charismatic woman who wields significant power, backed by the Red Wizards of Thay; she is a mage, a businesswoman, and a diplomat all rolled into one, and no clever PC bard making a few good Diplomacy checks is going to convince her to give up the farm with nothing to show for it. She requires that any agreement regarding the mageduel "prize" (with win, loss, and draw conditions) be in writing and signed in blood by both parties (herself and her mageduel opponent); she is sure to point out that she would enact a terrible revenge on anyone who violated an oath signed in blood. This document must be held by a neutral third party (Tola Vrass insists this be Dounalis Guff, high priest of the Vault of Swords).

Tola Vrass suggests using the open area to the west between the enclave and the city wall for a duel; the magic of the mageduel prevents spells from damaging anything outside the duel area's defined borders, and the area she proposes is already used for larger-scale spell practice by the Thayans. If the PCs propose an alternate location outside the city, she agrees as long as it is within view of its walls. She does not cheat in the mageduel (such as by having her minions cast protective spells on her beforehand) and objects strongly if the PCs try to cheat; likewise, she holds herself to the terms of the duel and expects her opponent to do so as well. She does not want to deplete all her spells in the duel—this would leave her vulnerable to an attack later—so when she has cast approximately half of her spells, she verbally proposes a draw (if the other duelist verbally agrees, the mageduel ends instantly). She will do so again when she has approximately one-fourth of her spells left, and if that offer is rebuffed she duels to the finish.

Infiltration: Sneaking into the enclave is a much more survivable scenario than a frontal attack, though it is still quite dangerous. The group's best bet is to quickly enter one of the buildings (either by running, traveling ethereally, or by teleportation), do what it needs to do, and get back out again quickly (possibly followed by fleeing the city). A quick strike (or steal or search, as the case may be) is the least likely to attract unwanted attention, though if the group's goal is to kill one of the enclave's high-level wizards, it is unlikely to be able to do so in such a short amount of time.

Assassination: This scenario assumes the PCs are smart enough to not attack the Thayans in their own enclave and instead attack them in small numbers within the city (the Thayan wizards never travel alone, always having bodyguards at least equal to the number of wizards in the party). This sort of plan means the risks of immediate Thayan reinforcements are low, but the chance of incidental damage and intervention by the Red Plumes is much higher. Using this tactic can put the odds in the PCs' favor but (as with the infiltration scenario) is likely to get them imprisoned or executed by city officials if they don't leave Hillsfar immediately.

Consequences: Because the laws of the enclave state that this territory is Thayan soil, those who attack the Red Wizards in the enclave are subject to harsh Thayan law. Those who dare harm a Thayan wizard within the enclave are subject to enslavement, torture, or execution. If the PCs decide to attack the enclave, they should have plenty of in-game warning of the consequences (all adventurers in Faerûn are well aware of the

reputation and persistence of the Red Wizards) and should be absolutely sure they either eliminate all the Thayans or guard their identities to prevent retaliatory attacks—and since the Red Wizards have magical divination at their disposal, the second option is no easy task. Remember also that the Thayans here aren't doing anything illegal; slavery is legal in Hillsfar, so it's perfectly acceptable for the enclave to have slaves. Likewise, any other strange or morally questionable acts they commit within the enclave are on Thayan soil and therefore not subject to local laws. Righteous characters might have a moral imperative to deal with the Thayans, but they have no legal right to attack them simply for being Thayan. If the Thayans are feeling generous, they might turn over captured PCs to the Hillsfar authorities, giving any remaining PCs a chance to free them before (or during) an execution or arena combat.

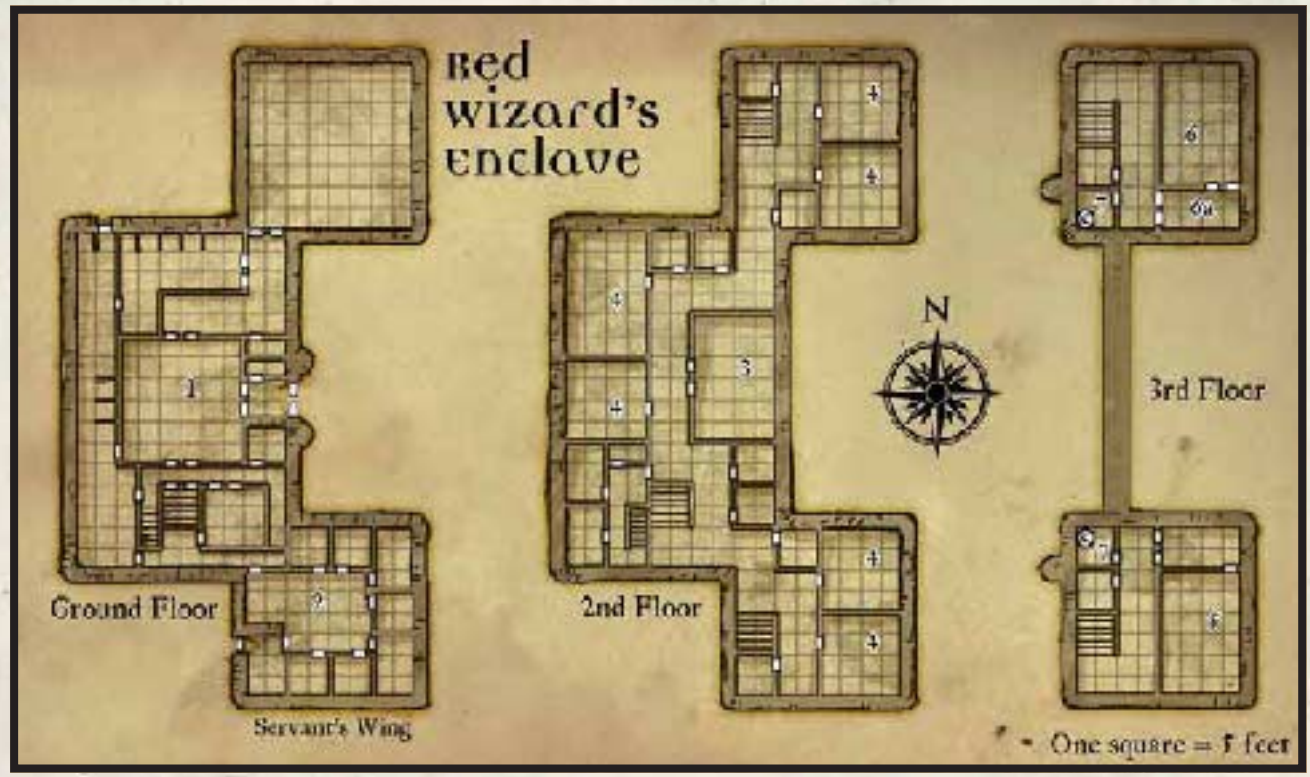
The Enclave

The enclave consists of three large buildings connected by vine-framed walkways. It was originally two mansions and a barn owned by a wealthy human merchant. The Thayans bought his property when they got permission to create the enclave and renovated it to accommodate their special needs. The west building houses the senior wizards, the middle one the soldiers and some of the slaves, and the eastern building holds the weakest wizards, a handful of clerics, and the remainder of the slaves. This configuration lets the soldiers react to attacks anywhere on the enclave with equal speed. The characters can learn the general configuration of the enclave (what sorts of Thayans live in each building) with a successful DC 15 Gather Information check. The two wooded areas near the enclave manor are part of the enclave and contain fruit and nut trees the Thayans use to supplement their food. The perimeter of the enclave is defined by a 3-foot-high fence with a gate on the east end; the fence is intended to be symbolic rather than physically capable of keeping undesirables out. Anyone crossing the fence draws the attention of four patrolling soldiers (LE human male fighter 2), and any combat on the grounds alerts other soldiers who sound an alarm.

Unless the PCs are needlessly cruel and just want to enjoy cutting down low-level opponents that aren't a threat, there is no reason for them to attack the central or eastern building; the Encounter Levels of the residents are probably too low to earn the PCs any XP, and handling that many enemies at once is a nightmare for the DM. The map for this quest depicts the western building, where the highest-level Thayans live. The area has many *alarm* spells guarding it, so any intrusion quickly awakens the entire building and results in a coordinated defense, with the weaker mages augmenting the more powerful ones with spells, and the augmented mages taking on the intruders.

Many rooms in the mansion have no interest to adventurers—storage areas for furniture or food, sitting rooms, kitchens, servants' quarters (local people who agreed to be charmed to ensure their loyalty), and unused rooms. These rooms are not tagged on the map, and nothing useful to adventurers is found there. Despite being home to the Thayans, the place isn't decorated strangely or with morbid souvenirs; the Thayans are here to do business and encourage trade, and obviously evil trappings tend to scare off customers.

All doors are strong wooden doors, and all windows are protected by metal bars (shutters on the outside can be opened or closed from within the room but the bars prevent Small or larger creatures from entering).



Encounters

1. Living Room

This living area is used when the senior Thayans need to meet with important city officials or dignitaries from nearby lands.

2. Servant Wing

All the rooms adjoining this area belong to the servants for this mansion. All are local people who agreed to *charm person* and mind-reading spells to insure their loyalty. They are treated well by the Thayans and will not betray them, but are not willing to die for their employers.

3. Library

This library contains a few histories of Thay, Thayan propaganda materials (in the guise of Thayan fiction, poetry, and history), and other nonmagical books. The materials here are worth 1,000 gp to a collector.

4. Wizard Bedroom (EL 5, 6, 7, or 9)

These six bedrooms are the living spaces for the mid-level Thayan wizards: an abjurer 8/Red Wizard 1, illusionist 7, enchanter 6, transmuter 6, enchanter 5, illusionist 5, and transmuter 5. Two of the 5th-level wizards share the southeast bedroom. Each room contains one bed, small table, chair, wardrobe, and locked chest (containing personal items) per inhabitant.

The wizards have trained together, support each other magically in combat, and are familiar with each other's common practices. Each room is guarded by a silent *alarm* spell that wakes the occupant(s) automatically if a creature enters. See Thayan Wizards, page 73, for statistics for these spellcasters.

5. Senior Wizard Bedroom (EL 11)

This is the bedroom of the lieutenant wizard to Tola Vrass. The room has a bed, a locked chest with personal items, a wardrobe, two tables, two chairs, and a small couch.

The lieutenant's room is warded by an *alarm* spell, and his door is held closed by an *arcane lock* spell. If he is awakened by noise elsewhere in the building, he immediately goes to Tola Vrass's foyer (area 6a) to make sure she is not in danger, but does not disturb her unless he believes the enclave is under attack.

Senior Wizard **CR 11**

Male Mulan human transmuter 8/Red Wizard 3
LE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Mulhorandi, empathic link

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AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 14
hp 43 (11 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +6, **Will** +11; +2 against transmutation spells

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Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk dagger +5 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +4
Combat Gear *wand of fireball* (50 charges), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, scroll of *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *protection from arrows*, and *shield*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 12th):
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 19), *disintegrate* (DC 21)
5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *cone of cold* (DC 18), quickened *magic missile*
4th—*dimension door*, *fire shield*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *shout* (DC 17)
3rd—*blink*, *deep slumber* (DC 16), *fireball* (2) (DC 16), *haste* (2)
2nd—*knock*, *scorching ray* (4) (+7 ranged touch), *touch of idiocy* (+4 melee touch)
1st—*alarm* (3)†, *burning hands* (DC 14), *expeditious retreat*, *shield*
0—*dancing lights*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (+7 ranged touch)
† Already cast
Prohibited schools: illusion, necromancy, abjuration

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ familiar, spell power +1
Feats Alertness[B] (when familiar is within 5 ft.), Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor[B], Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll[B], Spell Focus (transmutation), Tattoo Focus, Toughness
Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +15 (+19 casting defensively), Craft (alchemy) +9, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +17, Knowledge (Thay local) +17, Listen +3, Spellcraft +19, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +2*, *ring of protection +1*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow, *cloak of protection +1*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all except illusion, necromancy, and abjuration; 1st—*charm person*, *magic missile*, *sleep*; 2nd—*fox's cunning*; 5th—*feeblemind*, *teleport*

Snake Familiar **CR —**

N Tiny magical beast (augmented animal)
Init +3; **Senses** scent; Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages empathic link, speak with master, speak with reptiles

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AC 21, touch 15, flat-footed 18
hp 21 (11 HD)
Resist improved evasion
Fort +3, **Ref** +6, **Will** +10

Speed 15 ft. (3 squares), climb 15 ft., swim 15 ft.
Melee bite +10 (1 plus poison)
Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +5; **Grp** –6
Atk Options deliver touch spells, poison (DC 16, 1d6 Con/1d6 Con)

Abilities Str 4, Dex 17, Con 11, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 2
Feats Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +11, Climb +11, Concentration +15, Hide +15, Listen +6, Spot +6, Swim +5

6. Tola Vrass's Bedroom (EL 13)

This is the bedroom of Tola Vrass, head of the Hillsfar enclave. The room has a bed, a locked chest with personal items, a wardrobe, two tables, two chairs, and a small couch. Paperwork on one of the desks pertains to enclave functions (income and expenses, vendor lists, tallies of items created), the other more personal records (notes on spells she has heard of and wants to investigate, partially written correspondence to Maalthiir, and so on).

One Thayan soldier (fighter 5) is stationed in her foyer (area 6a) at all times.

Tola Vrass's room is warded by an *alarm* spell, and her door is shut with an *arcane lock*.

Tola Vrass — CR 13

Female Mulan human wizard 8/Red Wizard 5
LE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Mulhorandi, empathic link

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AC 17, touch 13, flat-footed 15
hp 50 (13 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +13; +2 against evocation spells

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Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk dagger +6/+1 (1d4–1/19–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +9 (1d8/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Combat Gear *wand of fireball* (50 charges), *potion of cure serious wounds*, scroll of *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*, *protection from arrows*, *shield*, and *teleport*
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 15th):
7th—quickened *fireball* (DC 20), *prismatic spray* (DC 24)
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 21), *geas/quest*
5th—*baleful polymorph* (DC 20), *cone of cold* (DC 22), *feeblemind* (DC 20), quickened *magic missile*, *teleport*
4th—*dimension door* (2), *fire shield*, *lesser globe of invulnerability*, *shout* (2) (DC 21)
3rd—*blink*, *deep slumber* (DC 18), *fireball* (2) (DC 20), *fly*, *haste*
2nd—*knock*, *scorching ray* (4) (+8 ranged touch), *touch of idiocy* (+5 melee touch)
1st—*alarm*†, *burning hands* (DC 18), *charm person* (DC 18), *magic missile* (3), *shield*
0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *open/close*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (+7 ranged touch)
† already cast
Prohibited schools: illusion, necromancy, abjuration

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 20, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ circle leader, familiar, spell power +2
Feats Alertness[B] (if familiar within 5 ft.), Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor[B], Craft Wand[B], Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll[B], Spell Focus (transmutation), Tattoo Focus, Toughness
Skills Bluff +2, Concentration +17 (+21 casting defensively), Craft (alchemy) +13, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (arcana) +21, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +21, Knowledge (Thay local) +21, Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +23, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +3*, *ring of protection +1*, *amulet of natural armor +1*, masterwork dagger, masterwork light crossbow, *cloak of protection +2*, *headband of intellect +2*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all except illusion, necromancy, and abjuration; 1st—*sleep*; 2nd—*fox's cunning*; 6th—*contingency*; 7th—*ethereal jaunt*

Cat Familiar — CR —

N Tiny magical beast (augmented animal)
Init +2; **Senses** low-light vision, scent; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages empathic link, speak with master, speak with felines

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AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 25 (13 HD)
Resist improved evasion
Fort +3, **Ref** +5, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee claw +10/+5 (1d2–4)
Space 2 1/2 ft.; **Reach** 0 ft.
Base Atk +6; **Grp** –6
Atk Options deliver touch spells

Abilities Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 7
Feats Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +10, Bluff +2, Climb +6, Concentration +17, Hide +14, Jump +10, Listen +3, Move Silently +6, Spot +3

7. Guarded Roof Access (EL 3)

Both of these rooms contain an audible *alarm* spell (cast by the lieutenant from area 5 each morning). A guard (fighter 3) stands within the hallway at all times, ready to respond to the sound of the spell and call for reinforcements if necessary. Since the Thayans don't use the roof, anyone going to or from the roof is immediately under suspicion.

Roof (not depicted on map)

A 4-foot-high wall surrounds the roof of the manor. The Thayans almost never go on the roof, though if a battle breaks out on the enclave grounds a wizard can come here to observe and assist with ranged spells. A few nonperishable items (planks, nails, and so on) are stored here, but otherwise the roof has nothing of interest to adventurers other than as a possible means of entering the building.

Thayan Wizards

This location contains many Thayan wizards. Rather than using a tremendous amount of space giving each of them a statistics block, their information is presented here in the table format used in *Lords of Darkness* (page 62). The material here is based on the Thayan wizard table in *Lords of Darkness* but is updated to take into account the changes in the Red Wizard prestige class and regional feats from the D&D 3.5 revision.

NPC Thayan Wizards

Level	hp	AC	Init	Speed	Dagger (1d4)	Light Crossbow (1d8)	F/R/W	Spellc/Kno (Any 3)	Con	Craft (Alch)	Spells/Day
1st	7	12	+2	30 ft.	–1	+2	+1/+2/+3	+6	+5	—	4/3
2nd	9	12	+2	30 ft.	+0	+3	+1/+2/+4	+7	+6	—	5/4
3rd	12	12	+2	30 ft.	+0	+3	+2/+3/+4	+8	+7	—	5/5/3
4th	14	13	+2	30 ft.	+1	+4	+2/+3/+5	+10	+8	—	5/5/4
5th	17	13	+2	30 ft.	+1	+4	+3/+4/+6	+11	+9	+4	5/5/4/3
6th	19	13	+2	30 ft.	+2	+5	+4/+5/+7	+12	+10	+5	5/5/5/4
7th	22	14	+2	30 ft.	+2	+5	+4/+5/+7	+13	+11	+6	5/6/5/3/3
8th	24	14	+2	30 ft.	+3	+6	+4/+5/+8	+14	+12	+7	5/6/5/4/4
9th*	27	15	+2	30 ft.	+3	+6	+5/+6/+8	+15	+13	+8	5/6/6/4/3/3
10th	29	15	+2	30 ft.	+4	+7	+5/+6/+9	+16	+14	+9	5/6/6/4/4/4

Spellc/Kno: Spellcraft and Knowledge check modifier. **Con**: Concentration check modifier. **Alch**: Craft (alchemy) check modifier.

* This table shows the game statistics for Thayan wizards of levels 1st–10th, but the only 9th-level character in the enclave actually has one level of the Red Wizard prestige class. That one level in the prestige class has only a small impact on his game statistics compared to the values on the table (Fort and Ref saves are 1 lower, Will save is 2 higher).

Ability Scores: Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 15 (16 at 4th, 17 at 8th), Wis 12, Cha 10.

Combat Spells: Because the Thayan wizards sell their magical services (either directly or through making magic items), some of their daily spell slots are set aside for that purpose and (given how most enclave items are nonaggressive) unavailable or inappropriate for combat use. For the sake of simplicity, assume that half of an enclave wizard's prepared spells are used for taking care of its daily duties (including practice and study) and the remainder can be used for offense and defense.

Equipment: Thayan wizards tend to have more magic items than characters from other regions because their magic gear was acquired in Thay, from an enclave at a 10% discount, or they made it themselves.

The typical magic equipment for a Thayan wizard of 1st through 10th level is given below. When an option appears in parentheses preceded by "or," this change applies to Thayan wizards who have specialized in the school of divination, enchantment, or illusion.

1st Level: potions of cat's grace, cure light wounds, and *spider climb;* scrolls of *Aganazzar's scorcher* (or *shadow spray*), *Snilloc's snowball swarm* (or *invisibility*), *dispel magic, fly,* and *shield* (2).

2nd Level: wand of magic missile (CL 5th, 20 charges) (or *sleep*); *potions of cure light wounds,* and *invisibility; elixirs of hiding* and *love;* scrolls of *Aganazzar's scorcher* (or *shadow spray*), *Snilloc's snowball swarm* (or *invisibility*), *dispel magic, fly, shield* (2), and *web.*

3rd Level: wand of magic missiles (CL 5th, 20 charges) (or *sleep*); *potions of invisibility, intelligence, cure moderate wounds* (2), *jump* (CL 3rd), and *mage armor* (CL 3rd); scrolls of *Aganazzar's scorcher* (or *shadow spray*), *Snilloc's snowball swarm* (or *invisibility*), *dispel magic, fly,* and *shield* (2).

4th Level: wand of magic missiles (CL 5th, 20 charges) (or *sleep*), *bracers of armor +1, wand of detect magic* (CL 5th, 50 charges); *potions of cure moderate wounds* and *fox's cunning;* scrolls of *dispel magic, web, fly, shield* (2), and *lightning bolt* (or *hold person*).

5th Level: bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, wand of mage hand (Cl 5th, 20 charges); *potions of cure serious wounds* and *fox's cunning;* scrolls of *dispel magic, web* (2), *shield* (2), *wall of fire* (or *confusion*), and *fireball* (2) (or *displacement* [2]).

6th Level: wand of blindness/deafness (CL 5th, 25 charges), *bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, Quaal's feather token (whip); potions of cure moderate wounds* and *fox's cunning;* scrolls of *dispel magic, web, shield* (2), and *ice storm* (or *improved invisibility*).

7th Level: bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, wand of Melf's acid arrow (CL 5th, 30 charges); *potion of protection from elements (fire);* scrolls of *dispel magic, web, shield* (2), *create magic tattoo* (2), and *Melf's acid arrow* (CL 7th).

8th Level: bracers of armor +1, cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, wand of magic missile (CL 9th, 25 charges) (or *shocking grasp* [CL 9th, 25 charges]); *potion of cure serious wounds; elixir of fire breath;* scrolls of *dispel magic, web, shield* (2), *wall of ice* (2) (or *charm monster* [2]), and *fireball* (CL 7th) (or *summon monster III* [CL 7th]).

9th Level: cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, bracers of armor +2, hand of the mage; potion of cure serious wounds; scrolls of *dispel magic, web, shield* (2), and *summon monster IV* (CL 8th).

10th Level: cloak of resistance +1, ring of protection +1, bracers of armor +2, wand of lightning bolt (CL 9th, 25 charges) (or *dispel magic* [CL 9th, 25 charges]), *brooch of shielding; potion of fox's cunning;* scrolls of *protection from arrows, web, shield* (2), *fireball* (CL 10th) (or *dispel magic* [CL 10th]), *flesh to stone,* and *teleport.*

Feats: All Thayan wizards are human, and therefore all of them have a total of three feats at 1st level (including the Scribe Scroll feat from being a wizard). The typical feat selection for a Thayan wizard is as follows: 1st, Scribe Scroll, Tattoo Focus, Toughness; 3rd, Brew Potion; 5th, Craft Magic Arms and Armor; 6th, Combat Casting; 9th, Spell Focus; 10th, Quicken Spell.

Southern Moonsea Quests

These adventures are set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Hillsfar quests in the previous section. Some of them also link to adventures in other chapters.

Roadside Shrine

Hillsfar and the Zhentarim have been rivals for years, and First Lord Maalthiir's desire to expand his territory westward hasn't helped the situation. The Red Plumes clash with Zhent soldiers in at least one large battle every year.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 6th–8th level.

Background

On the road between Hillsfar and Yûlash are several graveyards at the sites of past conflicts between Hillsfar and the Zhents; one in particular is the site of a great battle known to the Red Plumes as the Battle of Falling Wasps, where at great cost to themselves the Plumes wiped out a large number of Zhent ground troops and a dozen skymages. The surviving Plumes built several cairns for their fallen comrades, and over time they established a tradition of leaving small tokens (such as weapons they have bloodied in battle) or other offerings at the cairn closest to the road.

Recently, Dounalis Guff—the high priest of Tempus in Hillsfar—declared the scattered cairns a holy site to the Lord of Battle and consecrated the graveyard in Tempus's name. The shrine is important to the Red Plumes; not only does it represent a significant victory against the forces of Zhentil Keep, but almost all of the Plumes lost a friend, a comrade, or at least a gambling buddy in the battle. Since Guff also serves as chaplain for the Red Plumes, his blessing reinforces their devotion to their dead friends.

Of course, the battle is also a thorn in the memory of the Zhentarim survivors, and recently one of Zhentil Keep's priests, Ivold Nakarof (LE human male cleric 6 [Bane]), took it upon himself to avenge the death of his older brother, one of the skymages who fell here, and has been sneaking into the graveyard with two minions (LE human rogue 4), digging deep enough to expose buried bodies, casting *animate dead* on them, then loosely covering them up again. Now he has created as many skeletons as he can control (twelve) and is looking forward to unleashing them on the next group of Red Plumes in the area. Luckily for him, the characters arrive just as a group of Red Plumes—twenty 1st-level warriors and a 2nd-level warrior lieutenant—are at the shrine. The Plumes, with their typical arrogance, insist that the PCs leave offerings for the fallen soldiers—a weapon will do, or a cup of wine, or something similar.

The Red Plumes aren't interested in robbing the PCs (for once), they just want some respect for their slain comrades, and the PCs can determine the honesty of their intent with a DC 10 Sense Motive check. If the characters refuse to make an offering, the Plumes start arguing with them (which might escalate into a brawl, though the Red Plumes won't draw weapons unless the PCs do) and Ivold, who is watching the area from a nearby hiding place, will use this opportunity to have his skeletons attack. If the PCs agree to leave an offering, Ivold waits until the PCs have moved at least 50 feet away before unleashing his undead.

However, strange magic is afoot in this area, and instead of attacking as a pack of individual skeletons, the undead merge together into a single bigger skeleton (treat as the equivalent of a Large ettin skeleton with turn resistance +4) that is free of Ivold's control. Every round thereafter, another skeleton animates, rising from its grave to join the aggregate skeleton (in effect giving it fast healing 15). The group-skeleton continues to add more bodies to itself; when twenty-four skeletons have fused, it increases to Huge size and 19 HD (treat as a cloud giant-sized skeleton with turn resistance +4). As long as it remains in the graveyard or any other place where bodies are plentiful, the skeleton has fast healing 15, absorbing one new skeleton per round.

Naturally, the Red Plumes are horrified at the sight of their dead comrades rising up to fight as undead, and they will leave as quickly as possible, not wanting to dishonor their fallen friends by striking them. Ivold and his minions don't know what's going on, and will try to escape unnoticed during the chaos of the battle.

If all of its enemies flee, the mega-skeleton walks northward into the Moonsea (perhaps never to be seen again, or perhaps reappearing later as you see fit).

Encounters

1. Shrine

Following the blessing by Dounalis Guff, the church of Tempus placed a carved marker here, bearing the battle's name and a short blessing. Some of the Red Plumes have taken to stealing cobblestones from Hillsfar and placing them here, building a paved area around the marker. Each of the stones bears the name, scratched into its surface, of a fallen comrade.

2. First Cairn (EL 7)

Standing almost 6 feet high, this is the largest cairn on the battlefield, and the one closest to the road. The stones in the outer layer are rather large, leaving plenty of room for the Red Plumes to leave their offerings. The moist air and harsh winters of the Moonsea cause most weapons to rust away fairly quickly, but at any time there are at least two dozen offerings visible. When the PCs arrive, the group of Red Plumes is gathered at the south end of this cairn.

Red Plumes Warriors (20): hp 7 each; see below.
Red Plume Lieutenant: hp 12; see below.

Red Plume Warrior — CR 1/2

Male or female human warrior 1
NE Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 7 (1 HD)
Fort +3, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee longsword +3 (1d8+1)
Ranged shortbow +1 (1d6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8

Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Spot +3
Possessions longsword, shortbow, 20 arrows, splint mail

Red Plume Lieutenant — CR 1

Female human warrior 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +0; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +4
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 16
hp 12 (2 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +0, **Will** –1

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee mwk longsword +5 (1d8+1)
Ranged mwk shortbow +3 (1d6)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3

Abilities Str 13, Dex 11, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (longsword)
Skills Intimidate +3, Listen +3, Spot +4
Possessions masterwork longsword, masterwork shortbow, 20 arrows, masterwork splint mail

3. Hidden Zhents (EL 8)

Ivold and his two allies hide behind this cairn while they wait to unleash their skeletons. Normally they camp at least 100 yards away in the heavy grass south of the road, but now that his creations are ready, Ivold needs to be nearby to command them, and wants to have a good view of the outcome. He and his minions stay prone until he moves the skeletons into position (they unearth themselves from this cairn, the one to the northwest, and the one to the northeast), at which time Ivold will crouch behind the cairn to watch what happens. It's very difficult for anyone at area 1 or 2 to spot Ivold, but if the PCs have moved down the road (for example, if they left after making an offering) they can spot the Zhents more easily. The skeletons' fusion surprises Ivold, but he waits to see what happens. When more skeletons start animating and joining with his skeletons, he realizes things are out of control and sneaks out of the graveyard heading west, running as soon as he thinks he can do so without being seen or caught. His rogue allies do the same.

Ivold Nakarof: hp 35; see below.
Zhent Rogues (2): hp 24 each; see below.

Ivold Nakarof — CR 6

Male human cleric 6 (Bane)
LE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 17, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 35 (6 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +2, **Will** +8

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee *+1 heavy mace* +7 (1d8+4)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +6
Special Actions spells, rebuke undead 4/day (+3, 2d6+1, 6th)
Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th):
3rd—*bestow curse*[D] (DC 16), *cure serious wounds, prayer*
2nd—*bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, hold person* (DC 15), *scare*[D] (DC 15), *spiritual weapon*
1st—*command* (DC 14), *cure light wounds, divine favor, doom*[D] (DC 14), *sanctuary*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect poison, light, mending, virtue*
D: Domain spell. Domains: Evil, Hatred (*FRCS* 63; once per day choose one opponent and get a +2 profane bonus on attack rolls, saving throws, and armor class for 1 minute)

Abilities Str 14, Dex 10, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 12
SQ strong aura of evil
Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative, Street Smart
Skills Concentration +6, Diplomacy +5, Gather Information +4, Intimidate +5, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +2, Knowledge (religion) +5, Listen +5, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +2, Spot +5
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 chainmail*, *+1 heavy mace*, *ring of protection +1*, 320 gp

Zhent Rogue — CR 4

Male human rogue 4
N Medium Humanoid
Init +8; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot +7,
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; uncanny dodge
Resist evasion
hp 24 (4d8+4 HD)
Fort +2, **Ref** +6, **Will** +0

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk short sword +5 (1d6+1/19–20 plus poison)
Ranged mwk shortbow +6 (1d8/19–20 plus poison)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +4
Atk Options sneak attack +2d6
Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, 3 doses Large scorpion venom (applied to short sword and two arrows—Fortitude DC 14, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con)

Abilities Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +1
Feats Improved Initiative, Stealthy, Thug
Skills Appraise +2, Balance +4, Bluff +7, Diplomacy +2, Gather Information +5, Hide +11, Intimidate +7, Jump +3, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Search +7, Sleight of Hand +4, Spot +7, Tumble +9, Use Rope +8
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 studded leather*, masterwork short sword, masterwork shortbow, 50 arrows, 277 gp

4. Union Point (EL 5)

Ivold's skeletons come together at this point and begin fusing into a single creature.

Large Ettin-equivalent Skeleton: hp 69; *MM* 227. The creature has turn resistance +4, and the train of skeletons joining it effectively give it fast healing 15.

Huge Cloud Giant-equivalent Skeleton: hp 110, *MM* 227. Same turn resistance and fast healing as above.

The Bell in the Depths

Northkeep was the first civilized human settlement on the Moonsea. Its large citadel brought prosperity, order, and trade to the area, and became a starting point for human exploration of northern lands. Unfortunately, the evil humanoids of the north shore saw Northkeep as a threat to their control of the area and in 400 DR they amassed a large army and fleet to sack the city. When their attack was over, a large number of humanoid priests and shamans called out dark prayers to their gods, and the gods responded by splitting the earth and causing the ruins of Northkeep to slide into the sea along with the priests who dared call on them. The bells of the high towers in the city still ring when the current moves them, and are heard as far away as Hillsfar. The place is now called the Bell in the Depths; sailors believe the place is haunted, and a race of evil aquatic elves unique to the Moonsea watch over it.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 8th–10th level.

Background

One of the largest buildings in Northkeep was its grand city hall, where representatives met to make laws and rule on disputes. Many people retreated here during the city's last hours only to die at the hands of the invading orcs or in the sinking of the city. When the Red Wizards established an enclave in Hillsfar, a Red Wizard named Aloth Kakanos learned about the site and decided to investigate in search of lost magic. He and his followers collected several bags of treasure while exploring the ruined buildings, but once they reached the city hall they were discovered and attacked by the strange elves that guard the city. Though the wizard managed to slay his opponents, a poisoned wound killed him before he could get to safety, and now the two forces lie on the floor of the city hall, their flesh eaten away by fish. The wizard's *bottle of air* continues to leak its contents upward, partially filling the domed ceiling with breathable air.

Kakanos is a former apprentice of Tola Vrass (head of the Hillsfar enclave), and Vrass wants to reclaim his body and certain items he had with him when he died. She knows he went into the city and, based on some divinations purchased from the Vault of Swords, that he is in a room with a large dome—but that is the extent of her knowledge. Vrass is willing to fund an expedition into the ruins to find Kakanos. She will provide up to 4 *potions of water breathing* and 4 *elixirs of swimming* to the group beforehand, pay 5,000 gp upon the return of his body and certain of his "signature" magic items (his robe, *bracers of armor +1*, and *bottle of air*), and give the group anywhere from a 10% to 20% discount (depending on the quest's success and the strength of the PCs' negotiations) on items bought at the Hillsfar enclave. Based on the results of the quest, Vrass might throw in a map of some elven ruins near Elventree (see the Ruins in Cormanthor quest, page 80).

From the description of the room scried (or Tola Vrass's limited knowledge), any experienced Moonsea ship captain can tell the PCs the location is part of the Bell in the Depths and give them the general location of the building they're looking for.

The Water: The Moonsea is a cold lake, and because cold chills a creature faster than air, it is treated as cold weather (below 40° F; see Cold Dangers, *DMG* 302) even though the water isn't quite that temperature. Unprotected characters take nonlethal damage from exposure, and since water penetrates clothing and armor, the only reliable protection from the cold is magic.

The Marels: The Moonsea is home to this unique subrace of elves with pale white skin, blackish-green hair, and eyes that sometimes glow with a green phosphorescent light. They are evil

and corrupt, worshiping Umberlee instead of the elven pantheon and committing vile rites in her name. Some call the marels "sea drow," but they are not related to the drow in any way. They have the same abilities as aquatic elves. The marels have lived in the Moonsea since before the founding of Northkeep and used to be normal aquatic elves; elf scholars believe they were transformed into evil guardians of the sunken city for their refusal to help the people of Northkeep against the humanoid horde.

A marel patrol consists of six 2nd-level warriors, a 6th-level sorcerer, and a 6th-level cleric of Umberlee. Though marels enjoy boarding ships in the middle of the night and silently killing the crew, they spend most of their time looking after the ruined city and trying to find a way to silence its bells, though they are physically unable to do so. They welcome the opportunity to take out their frustration on any surface creatures exploring their territory. Marels wear armor made of shells (equivalent to chainmail) and fight with tridents, spears, and nets. Some of them adorn their piercing weapons with tiny poisoned spines from rare plants (equivalent of blue whinnis poison). Marel spellcasters typically cast *dispel magic* on enemy air-breathers in the hope of dispelling whatever magic is allowing them to breathe underwater.

A marel patrol is searching the city for a group of three scrags that have infiltrated the area. The scrags are hiding in the city hall, and as the PCs get close to the building, the marels realize their prey is in the hall and swim in to attack, setting up a surprise meeting between the two groups.

Marel Soldier — CR 1

Male marel warrior 2
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)
Init +1; **Senses** superior low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Aquan, Elven

AC 17, touch 12, flat-footed 15
hp 11 (2d8 HD)
Fort +6, **Ref** +13, **Will** +3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), swim 30 ft.
Melee mwk shortspear +4 (1d6+1 plus poison) or
Melee mwk dagger +3 (1d4+1)
Ranged mwk net +4 (entanglement)
Base Atk +2; **Grp** +3
Combat Gear *potion of cure moderate wounds,* blue whinnis poison (injury, Fortitude DC 14, 1 Con/unconsciousness)

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 15
SQ aquatic elf traits (*MM* 103)
Feats Alertness, Weapon Focus (spear)
Skills Listen +3, Spot +3, Swim +6
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork shell armor (equivalent to masterwork chain mail), masterwork shortspear, masterwork dagger, masterwork net, 30 gp in gold coins and tiny pearls

Marel Mage — CR 6

Male marel sorcerer 6
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)
Init +7; **Senses** superior low-light vision; Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Aquan, Elven

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13
hp 35 (6 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +5, **Will** +6

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft.
Melee shortspear +2 melee (1d6–1/×3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *potion of blur*
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th):
3rd (3/day)—*dispel magic*
2nd (6/day)—*blindness/deafness* (DC 14), *death armor*[Mag, SC]
1st (7/day)—*forcewave*[Mag, SC] (DC 13), *magic missile, magic weapon, summon monster I*
0 (6/day)—*dancing lights, daze* (DC 12), *detect magic, detect poison, disrupt undead, mage hand, mending*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 8, Wis 12, Cha 15
SQ aquatic elf traits (*MM* 103)
Feats Combat Casting, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative
Skills Concentration +5, Knowledge (arcana) +4, Listen +3, Search +1, Spellcraft +1, Spot +3, Swim +7
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +1, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1,* 300 gp in gold coins and tiny pearls

Marel Priest CR 6

Female marel cleric 6 (Umberlee)
CE Medium humanoid (aquatic, elf)
Init +4; **Senses** superior low-light vision; Listen +6, Spot +7
Languages Aquan, Elven

AC 10, touch 10, flat-footed 10
hp 41 (6 HD)
Resist electricity 5
Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +7

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), swim 40 ft.
Melee *+1 shortspear* +5 (1d8+1/×3)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4
Atk Options rebuke undead 4/day (+3, 2d6+7, 6th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th):

3rd—*cure serious wounds, magic circle against good*[D] (CL 7th), *prayer*
2nd—*gust of wind*[D], *shield other, silence, spiritual weapon, summon monster II*
1st—*divine favor, entropic shield*[D], *faith healing*[Mag, SC] (2), *remove fear*
0—*cure minor wounds* (5)
D: Domain spell. Domains: Evil, Storm (*FRCS* 65).

Abilities Str 10, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 12
SQ aquatic elf traits (*MM* 103), strong aura of chaos, strong aura of evil
Feats Alertness, Combat Casting, Improved Initiative
Skills Concentration +6, Knowledge (religion) +7, Listen +6, Search +2, Spellcraft +5, Spot +7, Swim +8
Possessions *+1 shell chainmail, +1 shortspear, amulet of natural armor +1,* 130 gp in gold coins and small pearls

Encounters

1. Courtyard

Six bronze statues line what used to be a paved walk to the front of the city hall. The statues represent the city's founders and heroic figures from the early years of Northkeep, but now all of them have been defaced (two of them decapitated) and overgrown with tiny marine flora. The entrance to area 2 used to have a set of double doors, but they rotted away long ago. This entire piece of ground (including everything on the map) is on a slight downward tilt toward the southeast.

2. Waiting Room (EL 4)

When the city was flourishing, citizens wishing to speak to the city leaders would wait here. Now this room is the lair of four gars (use Medium shark statistics) that rest and hide here when not hunting for food. Although the gars are predatory, they would rather avoid a fight with a group of similar-sized creatures, so when the PCs enter their territory they scatter for a while (as they did when the scrags arrived) unless the PCs are all Small or smaller, or creatures traveling with the PCs (such as a familiar) that would make a good snack. As with the exterior doors, the double doors leading to area 3 are gone.

Gars (4): hp 16; see Medium shark, *MM* 279.

3. Hearing Room

This large room is almost square and designed to handle a large number of people. The center of the room contains a dais and displays the aftermath of a battle (see area 4). Scattered bones and debris litter the area. The southwest corner has a large hole in the floor, and the entire southwestern corner of the building is in bad shape, with ruined portions large enough for an upright human to easily pass through. Five doorways line the east and west walls, the doors long gone. The halls and offices beyond the doorways are in a state similar to that of the room itself, and were looted when the city was sacked. Slightly more debris is found in the northwest corner of the room, because the ceiling has suffered some damage there.

4. Dais and Dome (EL 8 if patrol is present)

A 20-foot-square, 2-foot-tall dais sits in the center of the hearing room. The remnants of the legs of four wooden chairs are still attached to the floor, though the chairs themselves were smashed long ago and the pieces are part of the room's mess. A battle occurred here between a group of Thayans and a marel patrol, with both sides falling. Now their bodies (reduced to skeletons by the attention of hungry fish) are strewn about the dais around a group of leather sacks, one of which is torn open to reveal gold and valuables. The Thayan group consisted of a Red Wizard (the aforementioned Aloth Kakanos), a priest of Kossuth, and five guards. The dead marels were members of a standard patrol. They all still have their gear, and the bags of treasure are filled with 7,000 gp worth of coins, jewelry, and minor magic items. Aloth Kakanos's "signature equipment" that Tola Vrass is looking for are his robe (nonmagical but decorated with distinctive symbols), *bracers of armor +1* (engraved with a unique design), and a *bottle of air* marked with a Thayan symbol.

The ceiling over this area is a 40-foot-diameter hemispherical dome painted to depict the smiling goddess Selûne, showing her face in the night sky among a field of bright stars. The air leaking from the wizard's bottle has filled much of the dome, giving air-breathing creatures a large space of relatively fresh air, though floating debris fills much of the lower part of this area.

The scrag-hunting marel patrol is likely to turn up while the PCs are investigating this area, or immediately after the group's fight with the scrags. Although they fanatic about protecting this area, they aren't suicidal, and if the battle turns against them, they will flee. If any marels get away from the PCs, they describe their foes to the leaders at the nearby marel village, who will use divination magic to identify and track the heroes while they are in or near the Moonsea, and plan ambushes against them.

Marel Patrol: Sorcerer 6, cleric 6, warrior 2 (6); see above.

5. Scrag Hole (EL 8)

The scrags encountered here wandered into this building in the hope of finding a place to hide from the patrolling marels, and then discovered this hole. Depending on how far you want to extend the aquatic portion of this adventure, the hole might just be a deep hole, or it could connect to the city sewers or even to the upper Underdark (not implausible, given the depth of the Moonsea).

Scrags (3): hp 63 each; *MM* 247.

Ruins in Cormanthor

Many elves of Cormanthor saw it as their duty to build way stations, fortresses, or even small towns in more remote parts of the forest, both as a way to ensure expansion and to push back the frontier of the borderlands held by monsters and evil humanoids. One such elf was Talarith. Born into a line of clever mages, he decided to establish a community near the Moonsea. After building a small fortress in 605 DR, he invited several families to move there under his protection. Bolstered by Talarith's magic, the community thrived for more than a century, but the inhabitants were forced to evacuate quickly after several drow raids, a skirmish with a wandering dragon (believed to be a clutchmate of the ancient green dragon Claugiyliamatar), and the attacks of the Army of Darkness against the elf nations of Cormanthor that culminated in the loss of Myth Drannor. The mage barely had time to activate his tower's wards (intended to keep creatures out of his sanctum rather than guard a hoard of treasure) before he evacuated his people to the Elven Court.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 9th–11th level.

Background

In the centuries since the abandonment of Talarith's settlement, some of the outbuildings have been damaged and a few of the rooms on the tower's lower level broken into, but the wards are still holding . . . barely. In the past month, a drow scout found the site and reported back to his superiors, who have since sent an exploratory party to investigate the ruins, because their research indicates this place has information on a series of *portals* through Cormanthor. Unfortunately for them, Talarith's wards were made specifically to repel drow, and the wards' effects have hit the dark elves hard. Now the drow are looking for a skilled ally to help them loot the tower. The drow are evil, but still quite willing to bargain with the PCs—though they don't have much in material goods with them, they can offer letters of safe passage through their territory, a few drow-made weapons, drow sleep poison, information on rival drow houses, or even offers of a combined attack against another house. They're also willing to divert or attack the Red Plumes—due to the poor reception the drow got from Maalthiir's representatives, the drow are more than happy to have an excuse to attack the Hillsfar military (several drow in the patrol here carry one or more long red feathers as trophies of their kills). Whether or not the drow hold to any deal depends on how well the PCs bargain, how strong they appear, and how badly hurt they look when they leave the tower.

Homes: The twenty-odd homes in the settlement (not all of which are on the map) are made of mortared stone and carved deadwood; some of them have wooden roofs, but others are bare to the sky, their woven-grass roofs decayed long ago. They lack anything of value—the wards do not protect them—and animals, looters, and the elements have taken care of anything within.

Drow: The drow party consists of the leader, Varzek, a 6th-level cleric of Vhaeraun; Chall, a 6th-level sorcerer; three 1st-level fighters; and three 1st-level rogues. They have been working together for years, have been on the surface for eleven months, and are all well practiced at optimizing their team tactics, particularly stealthy combat. (One of Chall's spells is *invisibility*, and since Varzek has the Trickery domain, she has access to that spell as well.) If Varzek is incapacitated, Chall will take over—but he is less bold than the cleric, and is more likely to order his troops to retreat into the forest than stick around to fight with adventurers.

The drow are staying in some of the homes with roofs, hiding from the sun in the daytime and creeping around at night (but note that Varzek and Chall have the Daylight Adaptation feat).

Varzek — CR 7

Female drow cleric 6 (Vhaeraun)
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +6
Languages Common, Elf, Undercommon

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 16
hp 29 (6 HD)
Immune sleep; **SR** 17
Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7 (+9 against spells or spell-like abilities)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +5 (1d6/18–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +8 (1d8/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +4; **Grp** +4
Combat Gear *potion of cat's grace*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th):
3rd—*invisibility*[D], *invisibility purge*, *searing light*
2nd—*bull's strength*, *hold person* (2), *invisibility*[D], *silence*
1st—*disguise self*[D], *faith healing*[Mag, SC] (3), *magic weapon*
0—*cure minor wounds* (3), *detect magic*, *mending*
D: Domain spell. Domains: Drow, Trickery. Deity: Vhaeraun.
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):
1/day—*dancing lights*, *darkness*, *faerie fire*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 15
SQ drow traits (*MM* 103), strong aura of chaos, strong aura of evil
Feats Daylight Adaptation, Improved Initiative, Lightning Reflexes[B], Stealthy
Skills Bluff +7, Concentration +5, Diplomacy +4, Hide +9, Intimidate +4, Knowledge (religion) +3, Listen +5, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Sleight of Hand +5, Spellcraft +5, Spot +6
Possessions combat gear plus +2 *studded leather*, masterwork rapier, masterwork light crossbow, *ring of protection +1*, 20 bolts, 170 gp

Chall — CR 7

Male drow sorcerer 6
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Common, Elf, Undercommon

AC 16, touch 14, flat-footed 13
hp 13 (6 HD)
Immune sleep; **SR** 17
Fort +2, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5 (+7 against spells or spell-like abilities)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee rapier +3 (1d6/18–20)
Ranged light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +3; **Grp** +3
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 6th):
3rd—*reverse arrows*[Mag, SC]
2nd—*invisibility, shadow spray* (DC 16)
1st—*color spray* (DC 15), *disguise self, expeditious retreat, magic missile*
0—*detect magic, detect poison, flare, ghost sound, mage hand, message, read magic*
Spell-Like Abilities (CL 6th):
1/day—*dancing lights, darkness, faerie fire*

Abilities Str 10, Dex 16, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 18
SQ drow traits (*MM* 103)
Feats Daylight Adaptation, Improved Initiative, Stealthy
Skills Bluff +6, Concentration +9, Hide +8, Knowledge (arcana) +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +11, Search +3, Spellcraft +5, Spot +2
Possessions *bracers of armor +1, ring of protection +1, amulet of natural armor +1, boots of elvenkind,* 20 bolts, 140 gp

Drow Fighters (3) — CR 1

Male or female drow fighter 1
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +1; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +1, Spot +3
Languages Common, Elf, Undercommon

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 5 (1 HD)
Immune sleep; **SR** 12
Fort +2, **Ref** +1, **Will** –1 (+1 against spells or spell-like abilities)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +3 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +4 (1d8/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Base Atk +1; **Grp** +2
Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10
SQ drow traits (*MM* 103)
Feats Blind-Fight[B], Stealthy, Weapon Focus (light crossbow)
Skills Hide +5, Listen +1, Move Silently +5, Search +3, Spot +3
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier, masterwork light crossbow, 25 gp

Drow Rogues (3) — CR 1

Male or female drow rogue 1
CE Medium humanoid (elf)
Init +5; **Senses** darkvision 120 ft.; Listen +5, Spot +5
Languages Common, Elven, Undercommon

AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 14
hp 3 (1 HD)
Immune sleep; **SR** 17
Fort +0, **Ref** +3, **Will** –1 (+1 against spells or spell-like abilities)

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee mwk rapier +2 (1d6+1/18–20)
Ranged mwk light crossbow +3 (1d8/19–20)
Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.
Special Atk sneak attack +1d6
Base Atk +0; **Grp** +1
Combat Gear *potion of invisibility*

Abilities Str 13, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 9, Cha 10
SQ drow traits (*MM* 103)
Feats Improved Initiative, Weapon Focus (light crossbow)
Skills Climb +5, Heal +1, Hide +7, Jump +5, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Search +7, Spot +5, Tumble +5
Possessions combat gear plus masterwork studded leather, masterwork buckler, masterwork rapier, masterwork light crossbow, 25 gp

Hedge: Talarith created and placed eleven stone pillars around his tower, using them to store magical power to preserve and grow the barrier hedge there. The hedge has all the properties of a *wall of thorns* except that it regrows itself at a rate of 1 cubic foot per day for every intact pillar. The spells maintaining the hedge are weakening, and the hedge is overgrowing its normal boundaries.

The hedge is also the home to a green warder (*Monsters of Faerûn* 57) assigned to watch over this place by an elf druid in 1221 DR. The warder, named Thistlebrook, knows the drow are here, but also knows its magical abilities are almost useless against them. It spends its time lurking nearby, and if the PCs happen to encounter it before they encounter the drow, it tries to convince them to help get the dark elves away from the tower. Thistlebrook doesn't want the PCs to loot the tower, either—but if they can convince it they're acting on behalf of elves (or if most of the PCs are elves), it might relent and allow them in, though it doesn't know anything about the tower's defenses or interior.

Tower: Built on an outcropping of rock that Talarith smoothed out with magic, the conical-roofed tower is made of pale gray stone created by *wall of stone* spells. The warding spells placed here have the following effects, all at caster level 16th.

- *Arcane lock* on all doors (although several doors have been broken in).
- Metal objects within the tower (including door handles and ladders) become red-hot when an evil creature is within 10 feet of them, dealing 1d4 points of fire damage in each round when an evil creature touches such an object. Metal animated objects (such as the suits of armor on the upper floors) are

also subject to this effect and deal this extra damage on their attacks against evil creatures.
- *Antipathy* effect targeting drow.
- *Magic circle against evil.*
- *Dimensional lock.*

Any room not keyed on the map is used for storing common items (none of which are of any interest to adventurers), is empty, or is simply a functional but uninteresting room such as a privy.

The main deterrent to looters are the warding spells; the animated items in the tower are only minor threats to a high-level party but are more than enough to rout or kill most low-level thieves. While more powerful guardian constructs exist, it is unrealistic to expect a remote outpost such as this to have a dozen golems guarding it, since that would require over a million gp worth of investment—it is much more practical to build weaker guardians modeled using existing spells such as *animate object* and enhance them with defensive spells. For a more challenging set of encounters, give the animated guardians defensive abilities such as fast healing 5, spell resistance 20, +4 to strength or armor, and so on. As an interesting variant, imbue some of the guardian armors with magic armor special abilities—*arrow deflection*, *blinding*, and *etherealness* are particularly good for this purpose, as is the *magic eating*[Mag] ability. Adding extra defenses or abilities in this matter increases the EL for that encounter by 1.

Encounters

1. Main Hall

When the tower was inhabited, Talarith used this as a meeting area. Now that the doors leading to it are broken open, it has been the lair to many animals over the centuries, and its fine elven decorations are dirty and worn.

2. Guest Bedroom (EL 3)

This simple bedroom is decorated in elven style, with a canopy bed carved to look like vines and leaves, a small table, and a wardrobe. The bed is a Large animated object that attacks any creature that enters the room, but because of its size and configuration, it can't leave the room.

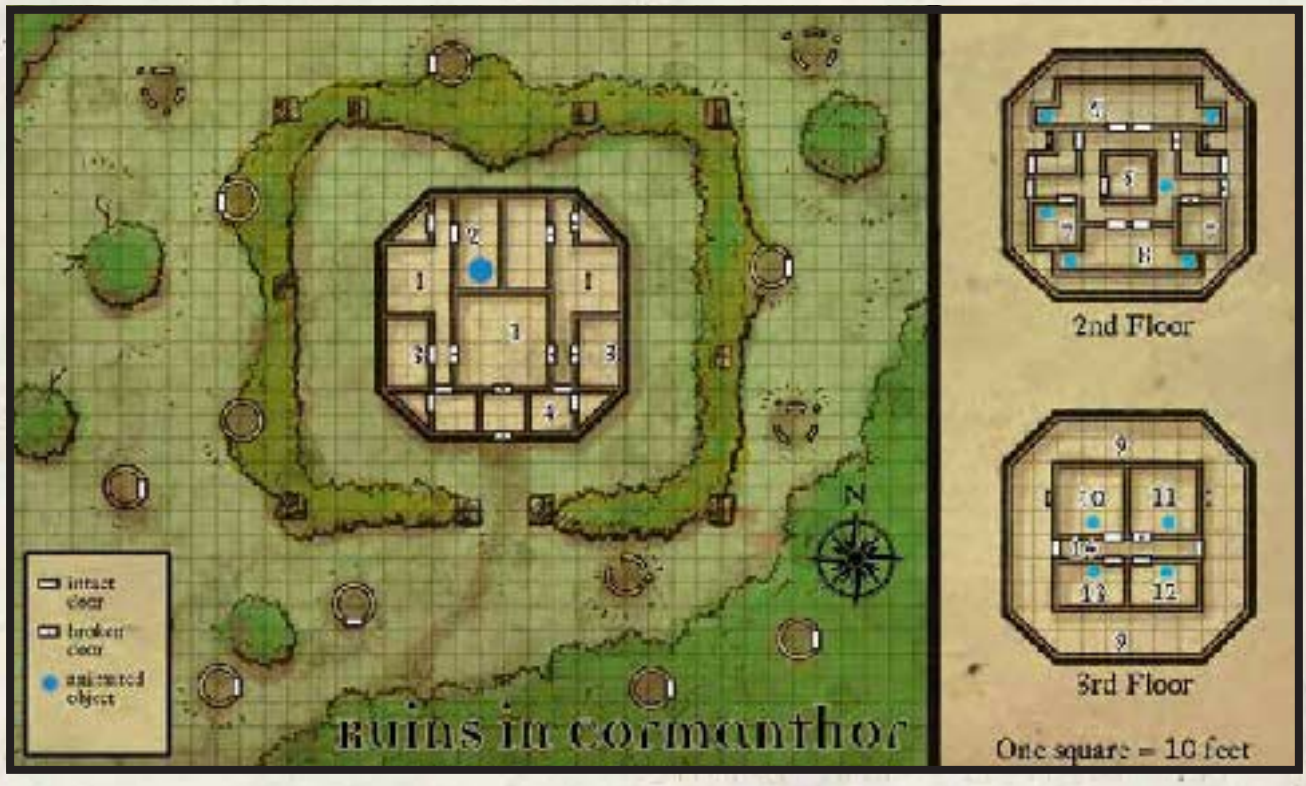
Large Animated Object: hp 52; speed 30 ft.; hardness 5; *MM* 13.

3. Barracks

Talarith housed a few soldiers in his tower to help patrol the village perimeter and intervene if any conflicts between villagers became too physical. This room has two beds and a pair of empty wooden chests. The eastern barracks room has been torn apart by looters, but there are no valuables in either room.

4. Kitchen

This is a simple kitchen with an adjoining pantry. The trail rations stored here are still edible.



5. Armory

Talarith kept a few key items in this room in case the tower was attacked. They are a *+2 keen longsword*, a *+2 mithral shadow light shield*, and a *wand of web* (15 charges), all of elven manufacture.

6. Master Bedroom (EL 4)

This large bedroom is furnished with a bed, two small tables and chairs, two wardrobes, and a coat rack. The windows are small and high enough to allow light in while still allowing for privacy and security. Standing in the east and west alcoves are a pair of animated suits of full plate with longswords; they attack anyone who enters the room or attacks them.

Full Plate, Medium Animated Object (2): hp 31 each; AC 18; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; damage 1d8+1/19–20; *MM* 13.

7. Study (EL 2)

This small room has a tiny fireplace and a large comfortable chair. An animated suit of full plate stands guard. The eastern room of this type has been broken into, and its guardian armor stands in the hall nearby.

Full Plate, Medium Animated Object: hp 31; AC 18; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; *MM* 13.

8. Secondary Bedroom (EL 4)

Talarith planned for this to be his children's bedroom if he ever had any. It stands empty except for two animated wooden elf statues (Medium animated objects) and a painted wall mural showing events from various children's stories. As with the master bedroom, the windows here are small and high up on the walls.

Wooden Statue, Medium Animated Object (2): hp 31 each; speed 40 ft.; hardness 5; *MM* 13.

9. Racks of Arrows

Spaced across the 30-foot span of the inner wall in this area are six quivers of masterwork elven arrows (20 arrows per quiver), kept ready in case enemies attacked the tower. Though exposure over hundreds of years has ruined many of them, the wards and the fine elven manufacture mean that the PCs can salvage 50+1d10 of them.

10. Library (EL 2)

Though Talarith managed to sweep most of his books into a *portable hole* before he closed the tower, he left a few behind—copies of a few common books available at the Elven Court; a copy of the journal of his cousin, Abarat the Alabaster; and three scrolls. Each of the first sort of book is worth 500–1,000 gp to a scholar of elven lore, since these books are quite old and predate the destruction of Myth Drannor. The journal is unusual because it is the only surviving record of the notes Abarat kept while constructing the ivory tower known as Abarat's Folly (see the next quest). An animated suit of full plate stands guard. The scrolls contain the arcane spells *dimensional lock*, *summon monster IV*, and *wall of stone*.

Full Plate, Medium Animated Object: hp 31; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; *MM* 13.

11. Crafting Room (EL 3)

Talarith used this room to craft magic items. It contains all the equipment necessary to brew potions, as well as raw materials for creating magic items (4,000 gp worth) and a suit of elven chain he was planning on making magical. The mage considered this room to be very important for his future work and legacy, and the guardian armor is protected by a *stoneskin* spell (caster level 16th, activated once when it attacks and subject to the spell's duration thereafter).

Full Plate with *stoneskin*, Medium Animated Object: hp 31; AC 18; DR 10/adamantine; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; *MM* 13.

12. Food Storage (EL 2)

This room contains several barrels of dried rations, stockpiled here in case enemies besieged the tower while the master was away. Talarith forgot he also had a *clear spindle ioun stone* and a *Murlynd's spoon* that he brought to the tower to extend their supplies, and these two items are on the floor behind one of the barrels. The animated suit of armor guards the room from intruders.

Full Plate, Medium Animated Object: hp 31; AC 18; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; *MM* 13.

13. Unused Storage (EL 2)

This room went unused when people lived here, but its guardian armor remains in place.

Full Plate, Medium Animated Object: hp 31; AC 18; speed 40 ft.; hardness 10; *MM* 13.

14. Spell Engine

The center of this hallway is the location of a *spell engine*[Mag]. This invisible and incorporeal disk absorbs all spells cast and spell-like abilities used within 10 feet of its center point, absorbs all spells targeted at it except for *disintegrate*, and explodes for 16d6 points of force damage—DC 23 Reflex save for half—if any permanent magic item (not a charged item such as a wand or a one-use item such as a scroll or potion) touches it, or if *disintegrate* is cast on it. When it absorbs magical energy, it becomes visible and starts to glow and spin, providing light as a torch, fading and slowing over the course of 1 hour per spell level absorbed; the *spell engine* remains in place permanently until one of the above conditions triggers its explosion. Preparing spells within the light of a *spell engine* takes half as long as normal. Because of the location of the spell engine, it is impossible to use spells or spell-like abilities on the doors leading to rooms 10, 11, 12, or 13, because the *spell engine* absorbs them.

Abarat's Folly

This magical location is a nexus of *portals* created by Abarat the Alabaster, a long-vanished elf mage from the era before the fall of Myth Drannor. Over the centuries, the interacting magical fields of his *portals* have distorted and weakened each other, making this place a hotspot for monster activity and a treasure trove of world- and plane-hopping adventure opportunities.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 10th–12th level.

Background

Abarat the Alabaster was a well-known elf mage in the 7th century of the Dalereckoning. Always interested in teleportation magic, *portals*, and planar traveling, in DR 669 he resigned his position as head of a wizard's school in Myth Drannor and traveled north to the southern coast of the Moonsea (which at the time was called the Beast Marches by the elves). There he began to build a tower out of magically strengthened ivory, declaring that not only would it be a pillar of strength against the onslaught of evil creatures from the north, but it would connect the elf nations and become a hub for trade and travelers. Unfortunately, his vision never came to pass, for monsters attacked his tower in 671 DR. Those associates who responded to his call for help arrived several hours later and found no sign of him or the monsters, or any indication of a struggle. He was never heard from again, and his tower became known as Abarat's Folly. It remains a beacon for adventurers and an example of the strange things wizards might do when they have too much time on their hands and an inflated notion of their own abilities.

Abarat's plan was to link several key settlements together through *portals* in his tower, make them easily opened by anyone, and encourage his people to use the tower as a gateway for communication and trade between the mythal cities. His enthusiasm for the project caused him to cut corners and begin creating the *portals* even before the tower was finished. The close proximity of so many *portals* and the ongoing magic used to build and shape the tower fatigued the boundaries between planes and warped the function of his *portals*. Some unknown creatures came through one of them, attacked Abarat, and dragged him away before help could arrive. Now the tower stands empty of its intended inhabitants, but over the centuries its magic has continued to distort—and now dangerous creatures from one of the *portal* destinations have learned how to reach the tower and are trying to exploit its powers for their own purposes.

Abarat's home city was Myth Drannor, and one of the *portals* leads there. The city fell long after Abarat disappeared, so he had no way to know that it would become overrun with devils, undead, and phaerimm. Recently a group of devils learned how to open the damaged *portal* from their prison in Myth Drannor, but their taste of freedom was short-lived, since the only way creatures that enter the tower through a *portal* can leave it is by another *portal*. These devils currently occupy the tower and are trying to figure out how to use the other *portals* in order to end their imprisonment and expand their reach into greater Faerûn.

The Tower: The tower itself is a four-story structure made of magically hardened ivory (2 inches thick, hardness 20, hp 80 per 5-foot square). The fourth floor and roof are unfinished, but the magic here tends to ward away animals, so it has rarely been used as a lair. The tower's architecture clearly shows its elven origins. The tower exterior is a very smooth surface (Climb DC 30), though it's a simple matter to attach a rope and hook to the edge of the unfinished wall for an easier climb. The ground-level door is also made of hardened ivory and is held shut by an *arcane lock* spell (break DC 38).

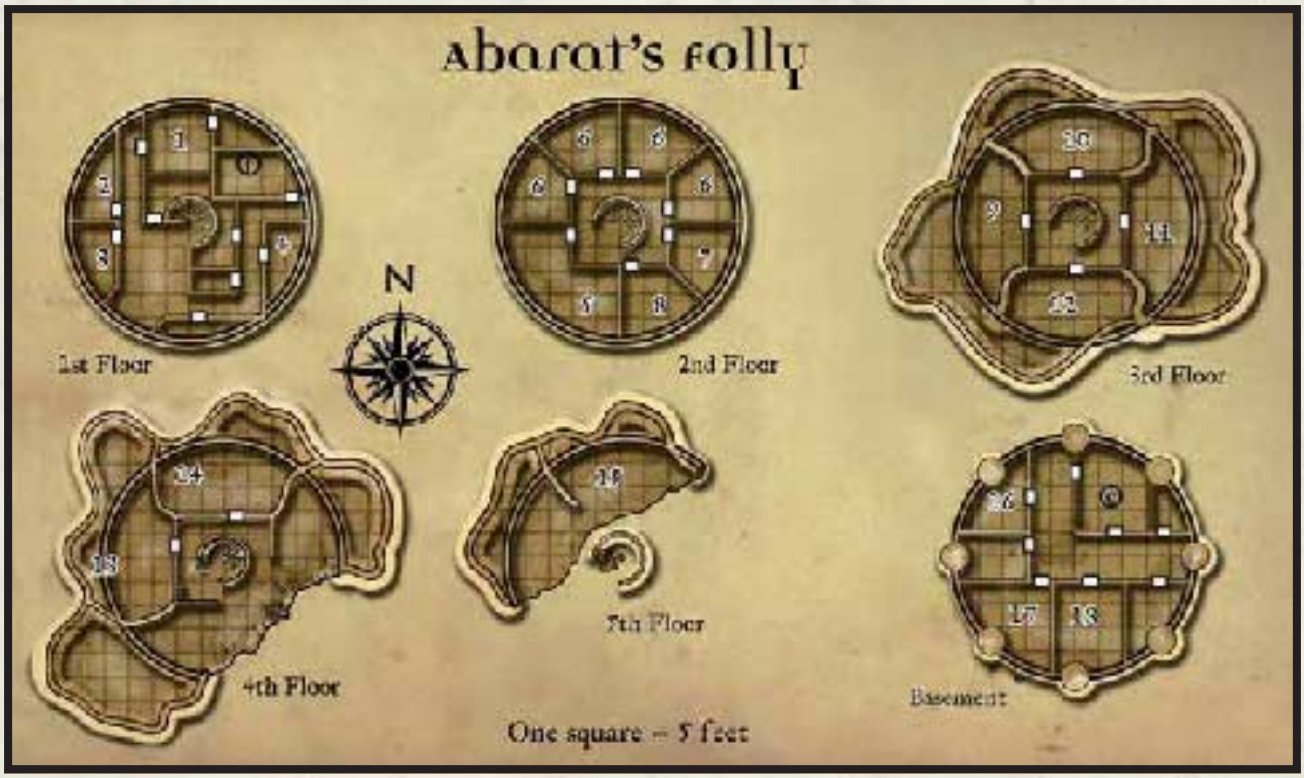
The Portals: Five active *portals* and one inactive *portal* are located in the tower; each appears as a set of magical elven runes carved around a circle on the wall. All the active *portals* are keyed (*FRCS* 60). Because of the interfering magic auras, the entire tower is a sort of quasi-*portal* that traps *portal* travelers within it. A creature that arrives in the tower through a *portal* can only leave the tower through another *portal*—it can't leave by the front door (even if it's open), the hole in the roof, digging underground, breaking through the walls, or any other means (such as *teleport*). The entire area bars interdimensional travel to all creatures (including those that enter by mundane means, so *dimension door* and similar spells used within the tower have no effect). This is good news for the people of the Moonsea, else the devils of Myth Drannor would issue from the tower in an infernal wave, but bad news for creatures living near the other *portal* exits. Once the devils figure out how to activate those *portals*, a small army of fiends will be on the loose in Faerûn.

Keys for these *portals* work for travel in both directions. The destinations and keys described later in this quest are their current states only. Their destinations might shift over time in a years-long cycle. This explains why such a wide array of creatures seems to have come through the *portals* over the centuries since the tower was built, even though all but one of the *portals* currently point to locations on Faerûn. Feel free to make the *portals* a bit more random to prevent the PCs from becoming complacent about their use—though the randomness shouldn't be used to punish PCs, just to encourage caution.

Because of the *portal*'s distortion effects, some of the rooms within the tower are larger than its outside diameter. This has no negative effect on creatures, spell effects, and so on, though it might confuse those trying to map the tower.

The Devils: The leader of this group of outsiders is Oluubarga, a gelugon (ice devil). It serves the pit fiend Aglaeroch (who remains in Myth Drannor) and is in charge of examining the other *portals* and determining their function. Evilly intelligent and with insectlike efficiency, the gelugon has its servant devils bringing objects to and from Myth Drannor in an attempt to find what keys it needs to activate the *portals*. This means the tower is bustling with activity; the creatures described below are just a typical assortment of fiends from a typical day—some days might have more or fewer creatures.

The devils rarely stay in one place for more than an hour; the routine is to bring a handful of objects from the city, test them out on a *portal*, and return to the city for more once those items are tested. Because the devils have no way to know what the keys are (they could be almost anything), each devil carries an



odd assortment of items—its "treasure" might be bits of metal, bones, plants, potions, and so on. Because the *portals* might be timed as well as keyed, items are tested at all times of the day and night before being discarded; useful items end up as permanent treasure for one of the devils, and other things become litter in the tower.

Being what they are and resentful of their long imprisonment in the city, the devils are inclined to attack any nondevil they see, and reinforcements quickly arrive from elsewhere in the tower should a battle break out (here the PCs have an advantage if they entered the tower by mundane means, because they can retreat out of the physical reach of the devils). A charismatic or powerful group of PCs might be able to bargain for a meeting with Oluubarga, particularly if the characters have useful information (such as the copy of Abarat's journal found in the Ruins in Cormanthor quest) or access to *portal*-identifying magic (such as *analyze portal*).

Encounters

1. Kitchen
This simple kitchen was looted long ago. The door to the east leads to a small pantry, also empty.

2. Guard Room
Though he didn't foresee any conflicts, Abarat built this room to house an experienced elf soldier to help deal with monsters or unruly guests. The room has been looted and still contains some wrecked furniture. It was never used; Abarat lived alone until he disappeared.

3. Wizard Room
Similar to room 2, this space was intended for an on-duty wizard and was never actually used.

4. Servants' Room
This room was made to house two servants to cook and clean for those in the tower. Like rooms 2 and 3, it was never used.

5. Master Bedroom
This is Abarat's bedroom. A series of windows faces southwest toward the forest and the sunset. Comfortable couches lie broken and dusty, and sturdy bookshelves are now empty of their contents.

6. Guest Bedroom
These four rooms were well decorated and clearly intended for the use of honored guests, but like almost everything else here, they have been looted and were never used.

7. Used Bedroom
Unlike most other rooms in the tower, this room has been used within the past few years. Otherwise decorated and furnished like the other guest bedrooms, some creature made a simple bed of torn cushions, built a fire on the floor out of broken furniture, and left a few gnawed animal bones in one corner.

8. Skeleton Room
This guest bedroom contains two sprawled human skeletons (one male, one female). Both wear the tattered remains of clothing and leather armor, though anything valuable is missing. Based on their clothes, they were wealthy and lived about two hundred years ago.

The male skeleton has marks on the right forearm indicating a very strong creature bit him there, and both skeletons have skull fractures as if they had been hit by a heavy, blunt object.

9. Elven Court Portal (EL 10)

As a well-known mage of Myth Drannor, Abarat had many contacts in the Elven Court as well as several relatives in important positions. Now five bearded devils test possible keys to this *portal*, which opens near a surface drow settlement. The key is a bottle of wine with its original stopper still in place.

Bearded Devils (5): hp 45 each; *MM* 52.

10. Myth Drannor Portal

Abarat built this *portal* to point to a wooded grove area outside the wizard school where he used to teach so he could visit his students and close family. The target point within Myth Drannor is sometimes blocked by the expanding and contracting borders of a nearby dead magic area, rendering both *portals* nonfunctional for a few days each month. Unlike the other portals in the tower, the devils already know the key to this *portal* (an elf skull, with a living elf's skull working just as well as a dead one's) and aren't wasting their time testing it or even guarding it.

11. Myth Glaurach Portal (EL 11)

Abarat's sister married a prominent elf noble living in Myth Glaurach, and he built this *portal* to encourage relations between his sister's city and their home city of Myth Drannor. His disappearance made people disinclined to try out the *portal*, and eventually it was forgotten, and it remained unused when Myth Glaurach was overrun by orcs less than two hundred years later. The *portal* and ruined city are a short distance east of what is now Hellgate Keep, and if the devils learn of the demonic presence there (however diminished and contained it might be), they will increase their efforts to open this *portal* in particular. Three erinyes are here trying to find the proper key (a *moonblade* or any elf-forged weapon that has struck a *moonblade*).

Erinyes (3): hp 85 each; *MM* 54.

12. Myth Lharast Portal (EL 9)

Abarat once saved the life of a sorcerer named Daramin, and the two became friends. When Daramin moved to the Selûnite

Abarat's Nexus

Though Abarat's tower was not intended as a site that granted its user magic power, the bleeding and blending of magic has made it such a place. Only a very few have entered the tower, and even fewer know that it is more than just a collection of magical *portals*. Currently inhabited by many devils, the place normally stands empty for years at a time.

Lore: Abarat's Folly is the wizard tower made of ivory south of the Moonsea. It was made by an elf mage who disappeared. He was rumored to be a planar traveler, and he disappeared mysteriously a few years after building it. Characters can gain the following information about the place and its builder by making a Knowledge (arcana) or bardic knowledge check.

DC 20: Abarat's Tower contains *portals* that lead to other places in Faerûn and other planes.

DC 25: Abarat taught magic at a wizard's academy in Myth Drannor before the city fell.

DC 30: Abarat was attacked in his tower and magically requested help from his allies. By the time his friends arrived, Abarat and his attackers had already vanished.

Description: The Nexus is an area of overlapping magical fields centered approximately on the 3rd-floor staircase of Abarat's Folly. The tower is constructed of magically hardened ivory 2 inches thick—the equivalent of adamantine. It is rather plain and undecorated for an elf-built structure, but its overall shape and design are clearly elven. Each of the component portals of the Nexus makes a sound like water droplets when activated, and the Nexus itself sounds like a brief burst of raindrops when a creature gains its special power. There is no visual disturbance associated with the release of the tower's abilities.

Prerequisite: The Nexus only confers its special ability on elves or half-elves.

Location Activation: To gain the powers of the Nexus, the activating creature must touch the center of each of the tower's six *portals* within a 24-hour period. The *portals* do not need to be active. When the creature touches the third of the *portals*, its eyes begin to glow in a similar fashion to an *arcane sight* spell; after touching all of the tower's *portals*, this glow subsides.

Recharge: The Nexus recharges in 20d6 days. The recharge period does not affect the abilities of the individual *portals*.

Special Ability: The Nexus gives a creature the ability to recognize an active or inactive *portal* on sight; no roll or action is needed. By concentrating on the portal for 1 round and making a DC 10 Concentration check, the creature knows if the *portal* is keyed or has a command word (but not what the key or command word is), special circumstances such as timed activation, one-way or two-way, random, variable, creature-only, or malfunctioning—one feature revealed per round of successful concentration. Once per day, the creature can make a DC 15 Concentration check as a full-round action to glimpse for 1 round where a *portal* leads.

Duration: The ability lasts 1d20 days.

Aura: Moderate conjuration.

Ability Value: 2,000 gp.

city of Myth Lharast, Abarat decided to build a *portal* that would connect there. The city was blasted out of Faerûn and into a demiplane about fifty years later, damaging the portal's link. The city becomes "in phase" with Faerûn only on the night of a full moon and only when the moon is directly overhead (a period of about two hours every month), during which times a cleric or druid of Selûne can see it as a kind of mirage, and even bring creatures in or out of it by touch (outside of this short window, all creatures in the city—including its now-evil lycanthrope inhabitants—are trapped there). All other creatures in Faerûn merely see an empty field in Tethyr and cannot enter the demiplane. The portal functions randomly; 75% of the time it transports creatures to the empty field (where a Selûnite priest can see the city, if it is the right time of the month), but 25% of the time it opens to a random place on the Astral Plane. A bone devil works here to find the key (an iron box containing three copper nails).

This *portal* is unique among those here in that when used from the Astral Plane, it requires no key, and it looks exactly like a color pool (*DMG* 154). This means that creatures native to the Astral Plane are slightly more likely to enter the tower than creatures coming through the other *portals*. If the PCs are having an easy time dealing with the devils, consider using this *portal* to force a run-in with a band of githyanki hunters or some stranger creature native to the Astral Plane.

Bone Devil: hp 95; *MM* 52.

13. Unfinished Portal (EL 11)

Abarat didn't get a chance to start working on this *portal* before he was attacked. It is completely nonfunctional and nonmagical. DMs looking to move the PCs to another quest site in this book can have this *portal* active, tied to that location, and keyed to something one of the PCs carries. Alternatively, it could lead to somewhere else in the Faerûnian cosmology, giving the PCs an excuse (and easy means) to do some planar adventuring.

Targashtrox, the barbed devil bodyguard of Oluubarga, spends most of his time in this area so he can remain close to his leader and screen anyone who comes through the tower to talk to it. If a fight occurs here, Oluubarga comes down to assist if the barbed devil calls for help.

Targashtrox, Barbed Devil: hp 126; *MM* 51.

14. Arvandor Portal (EL 11)

The portal in this room leads to an open glade on Arvandor, home of the elven pantheon. Though the devils fear to go there, they might test the *portal* anyway, as a last-chance option for escaping their imprisonment. The key is a gold or silver coin with Corellon's symbol on one side and Sehanine Moonbow's symbol on the other; this is the original key for this *portal*, unchanged since Abarat created it, perhaps because of some influence of the elven pantheon. Unlike the other *portals* in the tower, this is a one-way *portal*—there is no return portal on Arvandor, and any creature using this *portal* to leave the tower must find another way back.

Three red abishai are testing keys for this *portal*.

Red Abishai (3): hp 60 each; *Monsters of Faerûn* 13 (use erinyes, *MM* 54, if you don't have that book).

15. Roof

Oluubarga spends most of its time here, brooding. The gelugon considers itself above the mundane and repetitive act of testing various portals, and it likes the colder weather of the Moonsea area, so it sits on the roof level and enjoys the breeze.

Oluubarga, Ice Devil: hp 147; *MM* 56.

16. Portal Materials

Though much of this material has deteriorated or been stolen, 3,700 gp worth of Abarat's supplies for crafting *portals* remain here (the materials are also suitable for creating any other magic item that relies on teleportation or plane-traveling effects).

17. Ivory Storage

The source of Abarat's ivory is unknown, though eleven pieces of the raw material are stacked along the wall in this room. The pieces are approximately 1 foot square and 1 inch thick, almost as if some animal's horn or tusk was somehow unrolled like a scroll to form a flat sheet. Other than their shape, the sheets are normal ivory (not magically hardened) and worth 200 gp each.

18. Writing Room

Abarat used this room's walls to work out various magical formulas. Though the full meaning of the writings is now obscured due to water damage, time, and overlapping handwriting, some sections are clear enough to make out by a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Knowledge (arcana) check: the basic parts of a few spells, coordinates for teleportation, and information on how to assign keys to a portal. The writing is not valuable; anyone of sufficient level to work on portals or teleporting would already know this information, and it is too fragmentary to be of use to any others.

Mulmaster and the East

"There is a new order in Mulmaster—my order. For too long, we have allowed ourselves to be second to powers like Zhentil Keep and Hillsfar. Under my guidance, Mulmaster will soon rise to become the dominant force in the Moonsea!"

— High Blade Rassendyll "Selfaril" Uoumdolphin

Geographical Overview

From the sea, Mulmaster looks captivating enough. A pirate once likened it to a gleaming pearl washed up on shore. Gabled rooftops, slender alabaster towers, and a thicket of wooden masts rise up behind the pale gray walls that neatly enclose the harbor and shoreline districts. The city crawls up the slopes of mountains that peak to its south, and set upon these peaks are some of the most majestic spires overlooking the entire Moonsea.

Mulmaster's charm fades quickly as one navigates the overcrowded harbor or passes through the city's fortified gates. Never mind the occasional body floating in the harbor, the dour guards at the gates, or the rotten stench! The buildings nearest the docks are dilapidated and weatherworn, the people here live in squalor, and criminals strike with impunity. Farther up the mountainside, where the air is fresher, hateful fences and intimidating walls separate the homes of the wealthy elite from the ghettos, and desperate beggars are openly berated and beaten in the streets.

The highest spur of land in mountainous Mulmaster is the site of the Towers of the Blade, a sprawling cluster of residential spires where the ruling families of the city abide in luxury. Here the guards are well paid and jovial, the cries of the poor are stifled by the chill north wind, and local law is written with bribes. Cloaked figures skulk about, but their business remains their own. One can easily fall in love with the world from up here, where the air is thinner and the people are fatter.

Mulmaster sits on the edge of a cruel, cold, rugged tract of land dominated by the western Earthspur and Galena Mountains. Although the mountains offer some protection against bitter winds and heavy snow from the north and east, they are treacherous to cross and don't grant Mulmasterites safe and easy passage to the Unapproachable East. Most land traffic from Mulmaster heads south, along a well-traveled trade road that skirts the eastern edge of Cormanthor and plunges headlong into The Vast, east of the Dragon Reach.

Scores of despondent refugees from Zhentil Keep camp in shacks and shanties outside the city walls, relying on the uncharacteristic charity of the city's corrupt nobility. Mulmasterites generally resent and distrust the newcomers, who take food from the mouths of poor city folk and offer precious little in return. Beyond Mulmaster, the eastern Moonsea region boasts little else in the way of settlements apart from a smattering of fishing villages, monasteries, and citadels.

The White River slips between the jagged Galena and Earthspur Mountains, heading east toward Narfell, Damara, and Impiltur. The black basalt fortress known as Ironfang Keep looms over the river's mouth and remains a constant source of worry and consternation among Mulmaster's nobility, although the dark wizards who dwell there have yet to raise a finger toward their corrupt neighbor to the west.

The Campaign in Mulmaster

The quests in this chapter are intended for characters of 9th–15th level. Presumably the PCs will wander into Mulmaster after having spent some time exploring the northern and southern Moonsea regions around Melvaunt and Hillsfar. In all likelihood, they have traded horses and seafaring vessels for *teleport* spells and other forms of expeditious magical travel, allowing them to hop between these cities as they please.

Mulmaster is a decadent sprawl riddled with crime and corruption. Mulmasterites believe their neighbors plot against them, and the city has long felt isolated from the rest of the Moonsea. Fear breeds intrigue, and nefarious schemes abound in Mulmaster. Characters who come to the city hoping to skirt the intrigues of the Red Wizards and the Zhentarim will be gravely disappointed, since both organizations figure prominently in the quests described in this chapter. Thay and Zhentil Keep have important long-term plans for Mulmaster, and PCs who meddle in their affairs might find themselves caught in the middle or impaled on the business end of an assassin's blade.

Mulmaster is a predominantly evil place filled with evil people. Good-aligned characters should never feel entirely welcome or comfortable here. That said, Mulmaster needs adventurers as much as any city. To keep the PCs interested in Mulmaster (and to keep them coming back), you will need to tread carefully and allow them room to conduct their affairs without interference. If spies and assassins harangue them constantly, their interest in the city will evaporate. To help invest the PCs in Mulmaster, have the city reach out to them occasionally. Establish strong ties between the characters and certain individuals and locations within the city. For example, upon hearing that a new group of adventurers has arrived, clerics at the Temple of Tymora might extend their friendship by offering the PCs discounted healing potions and scrolls. Similarly, characters might bond with a morally ambiguous or morally challenged NPC who doesn't regard them as a threat—someone who can help them navigate the city's labyrinthine political landscape. Look for occasions to subtly alter the PCs' perceptions of the people who live here. An evil noble might suffer a crisis of conscience and come to them seeking redemption. An assassin hired to eliminate them might spare their lives for no reason other than he admires their willingness to sacrifice all for a city that doesn't deserve their affection. Paint Mulmaster as a city worth saving, and the characters might be persuaded to stay for a time.

In short, there isn't much good in Mulmaster. With good folk in such short supply, evil tends to prey on itself. Several of the short adventures in this chapter revolve around the mounting conflict between the Red Wizards of Thay and the Zhentarim. As the story unfolds, characters will have opportunities to hinder and help both groups through their actions and involvement, even if Mulmaster itself cannot be saved.

Mulmaster, City of Danger

Mulmaster is a bustling center for trade, commerce, and intrigue. While most other cities in Faerûn are surrounded by vegetation, Mulmaster is nestled among the completely barren rocky hills that lead to the Earthspur Mountains. Mulmaster relies upon fish pulled out of the Moonsea and other imported foodstuffs to feed its people. The entire city bears the odor of steelworking and raw fish, something that most visitors find nauseating at first and difficult to adapt to.

The city's climate is uncomfortably cold, windy, and wet due to its proximity to the sea. Mulmaster controls no land, but its power stems from its strategic position and the commerce that flows through the city.

Mulmaster (metropolis, magical): AL NE; Spending limit 100,000 gp; Assets 233,195,000 gp; Population 46,639; Races isolated (humans 96%, other 4%).

Illustration by Ron Lemen

Mulmaster, City of Danger

Authority Figures: High Blade Rasseddyll "Selfaril" Uoumdolphin (NE male human ranger 2/fighter 20); Tharchion Dmitra Flass of Eltabbar (LE female human wizard 5/Red Wizard 7); other Blades of Mulmaster.

Important Characters: Thurndan Tallwand (CE male human wizard 20), Senior Cloak; Branislav Semyon (NE male human fighter 6/blackguard 5), Assassin of the High Blade; Gulgath (CN male human wizard 23), Mulmaster's only independent wizard.

Notable Imports: Foodstuffs, cloth, liquor, luxury items.

Notable Exports: Arms, armor, ships, jewelry.

Government and Law

A governing council known as the Blades rules the city in name only. The true leader of the city is a male human known as Selfaril Uoumdolphin who carries the title High Blade. Ruthless and feared, Selfaril demands absolute loyalty from the other Blades. The nobles are coerced into supporting him. Those who oppose him publicly or move against him in the shadows are either intimidated into submission or assassinated and replaced by those more willing to see things his way. Such fear and reverence has been instilled in his subjects that the High Blade is almost never questioned. (In fact, nobody even noticed when his twin brother Rassendyll assumed his identity, nor objected when he made drastic changes to city policy; see below for more information.)

Politics

One of the strategies employed by the High Blade is using powerful foreign alliances as an implied threat against any political enemies within the city. Selfaril married the Tharchion Dmitra Flass of Eltabbar, a Red Wizard, in 1368 DR. Thay has maintained a noticeable presence in the city ever since. As a result, Szass Tam and the remainder of the leadership in Thay have taken considerable interest in Mulmaster, viewing it as an eventual gateway to expansion into the heartlands of Faerûn. Dmitra is unaware that her husband has been replaced (by his twin brother Rassendyll), and this state of affairs is unlikely to change since she spends the majority of her time in Eltabbar.

Rassendyll has maintained the tight grip on power that Selfaril established, though he has made some changes to the city's alliances. Historically, Mulmaster has been an enemy of the Zhentarim, but one of the first things Rassendyll did after seizing power was to establish an alliance with Fzoul Chembryl. Using the resources provided by the Zhentarim and the Red Wizards, Rassendyll is easily able to uncover and eliminate any plots against him before they become a real danger. While both groups are loyal to him (as long as it suits them), it has become a balancing act for Rassendyll to keep the two groups from working against each other within the city while maintaining good relations with both.

Brotherhood of the Cloak

Magic can be a powerful threat to leadership. This threat is somewhat lessened if the practitioners of magic are watched, controlled, and indoctrinated into the service of the city. Whether or not this philosophy is correct is irrelevant, because it is the reason for the existence of the Brotherhood of the Cloak. Any wizard of 4th level or higher is required to join the Cloaks, upon penalty of exile. Anyone who chooses not to join and is then caught casting a spell is dealt with harshly; penalties include torture, maiming, and often death.

The Cloaks bear the responsibility of supporting the High Blade. This was a more difficult task under the leadership of previous High Blades, given the fact that Rassendyll requires everyone with any amount of power to support him. There are nearly three hundred Cloaks, of which thirty five are considered Senior Cloaks (10th level or higher).

The leader of the Brotherhood of the Cloak is Thurndan Tallwand, a highly regarded wizard whose reputation for culture and wit is matched only by his diabolical nature and cruelty. He presides over his organization from the Tower of Arcane Might. Although he gives every outward appearance of fully supporting the High Blade, he quietly watches for any opportunity to gain an advantage and take power himself. The close relationship between the Red Wizards of Thay and the High Blade has so far stood as a solid barrier he has not been able to pass.

Only foreign officials can practice magic within the city; none of the Red Wizards are required to join the Cloaks, nor are the magic-using representatives from the Zhentarim.

The Blades

The Blades are a council of sixteen lords. The positions were originally established to provide representation for the nobles, and to temper the amount of control the High Blade possesses over the city. When an initiative is proposed, the Blades evaluate it and vote on it, then pass it on to the High Blade, who either gives final approval and signs it into law, or vetoes it. Vetoes go back to the Blades, and if at least fourteen reapprove the measure, the High Blade's veto is overturned.

While this system has historically worked well, the current High Blade has aggressively worked to weaken the any resistance to him within the Blades. Through assassination and intimidation, he has managed to secure the unquestioning loyalty of almost all of them, as well as a large number of the nobles. Several plots have hatched over the years, but Rassendyll Uoumdolphin, like his brother before him, has been able to uncover these plots and stop them before they could damage his rule.

The Nobles

The least powerful arm of the ruling body in Mulmaster is the nobles. There is a set number of noble Lords (forty-nine) in Mulmaster. These nobles win their appointments through the vote of existing nobles whenever one of their number dies. Anyone can petition to become a noble, but success or failure is typically determined by the candidate's lineage and current wealth. While this system seems orderly on the surface, a great deal of politicking is done through the assassin's blade.

Harpers

The Harpers currently maintain an almost nonexistent presence in Mulmaster, and they would like to improve upon that. In the past, Mulmaster has not been considered a large enough threat to bother watching. Now that its strength has increased and the city is allied with Zhentil Keep, the Harpers are having a difficult time getting agents into the city. The Harper in charge in

Mulmaster is Chesslyn Onaubra (CG female human fighter 11), who has attempted to maintain a low profile. A small number of nobles have discovered her true identity, but they keep this information to themselves, hoping to be able to call on her to help overthrow the High Blade when the time comes.

Crime

Crime is rampant throughout Mulmaster. The citizens have been watching, and profiting, from the illegal activities of the nobles for such a long time that they have come to accept it as the status quo. Thieves, fences, and assassins are plentiful throughout the city, although the Blades deal harshly with criminal organizations that spring up, especially if they impair trade in any way. Numerous criminals have risen to prominence, and a few loosely organized groups have cropped up and so far managed to evade detection by the city.

Defenses

High stone walls protect all but the harbor in Mulmaster. Following the destruction of Zhentil Keep, large numbers of refugees arrived here seeking protection. They were allowed to build permanent houses outside the walls on the east side of the city. In recent years, an additional wall has been built to protect the shantytown that sprang up there.

The army protecting Mulmaster is composed of nearly six thousand soldiers. Most of them are warriors of 1st to 3rd level, and roughly six hundred fifty of them are warriors of 4th level or higher. These warriors are recruited from Mulmaster and the Vilhon Reach, and they fill a variety of roles, such as city guards, patrols, diplomatic envoys, and marines. Each recruited warrior serves a six-year commitment, and the Cloaks periodically employ the Art to test their loyalties.

An additional group of soldiers exists, though its existence is a closely guarded secret. The paramilitary unit known as the Hawks is dispatched throughout Faerûn, charged with advancing Mulmaster's agenda. Their missions include a wide variety of activities, such as assassinating rivals, sabotage, intimidating foreign officials into cooperating with their plans, and other special tasks to advance the city's interests.

Trade

Trade plays a vital role in Mulmaster. Because the city is built on rocky land where no natural agriculture occurs, its very existence is owed to its strategic location along the trade routes. Merchants plying the Moonsea or traveling through the Bloodstone Pass often come to Mulmaster to do business. Despite the corruption and despotism of the government, open trade is necessary for the city's survival. Merchants are allowed to freely enter the city, provided that they do not do anything that would make them unwelcome, such as interfere with the nobles or the Blades.

Adventurers

Good-aligned adventurers often have a difficult time in Mulmaster. The city leadership is largely evil, the merchants are unscrupulous, and the alignment of the general population tends to fall somewhere between neutral and evil. The few good folk of Mulmaster normally find themselves bullied, intimidated, and outcompeted. Adventurers sometimes interfere in such matters and quickly find the various factions of the city moving against them as a result. Adventurers are generally viewed at as interlopers and fools, whose lofty ideals are more likely to get them killed than accomplish anything.

Despite the dim view the residents have of adventurers, the city leadership considers them to be of some value. Aside from the fact that they are frequently employed by the nobles and the Blades to work against those with competing agendas, adventurers are also frequently called upon to handle menaces lurking outside of the city. The land surrounding Mulmaster is filled with ancient ruins, tribes of monsters, and other threats that could affect the city directly or the trade that flows into it. Adventurers are frequently hired to investigate rising threats and eradicate them.

Religion

Numerous religions flourish throughout Mulmaster, indicative of its population, evil gods have the most followers there. Since the reemergence of Bane, the temple of Cyric has dwindled in numbers, but it still boasts a healthy following when compared to the other deities here. Loviatar and Tymora are also widely worshiped, taking the next most popular positions. Tempus and Azuth are also somewhat popular. Many other religions exist here, but their followers are little more than handfuls of people here or there who meet in private houses for worship, prayer, and ceremonies.

City Locations

The following are noteworthy locations within the city of Mulmaster.

1. Towers of the Blade

This opulent and expansive complex is home to the sixteen Blades who officially govern the city, though in recent years those who fill those positions have been forced to support the High Blade's decrees without question. Despite their relative lack of power, this tower is well maintained and protected—the High Blade rewards and protects those who support him. This structure is riddled with secret passageways and places to spy. There are also several secret underground passages, some of which connect to one another, while other areas are isolated and can only be reached by passing through the rooms above. Nearly a thousand guards and soldiers, as well as thirty to forty Cloaks, guard the tower.

2. Tower of the Wyvern

Rassendyll lives here with his (actually, Selfaril's) wife, the Tharchion of Eltabbar, on the occasions when she visits the city. The structure is crafted from the finest marble, and is decorated with large, ornate stained-glass windows; the largest of these is set into the tallest tower and depicts a wyvern. Beneath the tower is a subterranean complex known as the House of Revels, which is used for relaxation, feasting, and other private pursuits. Nearly three hundred guards and soldiers, as well as four Cloaks, guard the tower.

3. Southroad Keep

The oldest building in the city, this squat, circular brick building serves as the constabulary headquarters, information center, tax collection center, visitor's registration, courthouse, and prison. The inner chambers are constantly choked with throngs of people waiting to conduct business with the city, and the overworked officials are never in a great hurry to keep the lines moving. The prison lies underground and has approximately the same area as the aboveground portion. The gatehouse can seal off the city's south gate in the event of a siege. One hundred soldiers are posted here at all times, though the keep can house as many as six hundred when necessary.

4. Temple of Cyric

This foreboding building is tall, with spines jutting out from the numerous locations on the exterior of the structure. Red and violet light streams out from the windows, and the entire structure is guarded by a *protection from good* spell.

Cyric's faithful are allowed burial beneath the temple, but the unbelieving are not allowed to view their loved ones after interment. This is just as well, since here, unlike in most other catacombs, the bodies are not buried at all. Instead, the dead are dumped into an immense pit of festering corpses, which are later animated and used to serve Cyric's dark purposes.

The high priest, Bifely Lyeelm (CE female human cleric 14 [Cyric]), is a half-mad schemer who has managed to ingratiate herself with the High Blade. She converted from the worship of Bane to Cyric during the Time of Troubles, but did not abandon her new god after Bane reemerged. This act angered Bane's faithful within the city, who view her as a traitor.

5. Temple of Tempus

Built in the fashion of a castle, this granite building is the house of worship for those who pray to the god of battle. The exterior is decorated with broken shields, armor, and weapons that have been used in Tempus's name throughout Faerûn. The battlements are decorated with the rotting heads of cowards. The clergy of Tempus serve Mulmaster's army, and a large majority of the city's soldiers worship the god of war.

The high priest is Wunturn Radest (CN male human fighter 8/cleric 5 [Tempus]), an old veteran of numerous campaigns. Driven by the thirst for battle, this powerful gray-maned figure has inspired countless soldiers to take up arms and fight against the enemies of the city.

6. Temple of Loviatar

This is the temple of the Maiden of Pain, from which the wails of the faithful can be heard at all hours of the day and night. The structure is black, constructed from basalt blocks, and the rooms within closely resemble torture chambers. There is nothing here to provide comfort. One common feature of all the chairs, pews, couches, and beds in this room is that causing pain is part of their design. Even the clergy sleep on the floor, or strapped into their torture devices. The Head Whipmistress of the temple is Etwina Arent (LE female human cleric 12 [Loviatar]/rogue 3), a charming, captivating and cruel woman with auburn hair streaked with black.

7. Temple of Azuth

Since the worship of Mystra is all but forbidden within Mulmaster, the majority of the wizards in the city worship Azuth, the god of spells. This temple is a massive, sprawling structure with immense, airy rooms. In addition to the main worship and meditation chambers are numerous libraries and laboratories. Most of the clergy are clerics with levels of wizard; an aged man named Liren Talis (LN male human cleric 5 [Azuth]/wizard 5/mystic theurge 7) presides over the church.

8. Temple of Tymora

This large violet temple is divided into two massive chambers: the worship chamber and the casino. The worship chamber is always bathed in a soothing purple light, and is a place for calm reflection. The casino is where the "holy rites of Tymora" are carried out in the form of a multitude of games of chance. The proceeds are used for the upkeep of the church, and the massive treasure is protected by four massive clay golems. The High Priest is a short, wiry man with shoulder-length black hair named Niskal Rinay (CG male human cleric 6 [Tymora]/rogue 6).

9. Traveler's Cloak Inn

A favorite inn of travelers, the Traveler's Cloak offers a welcome retreat from the cold, damp sea air. Each room has its own fireplace, and dinner and drink are included in the 12 gp per night price (15 gp if a mount needs to be stabled). Dela Alder (N female human commoner 10) runs the inn with her new husband Vesvur Arden (CG male human fighter 5/bard 8). A widow for many years, Dela recently remarried after allowing the bard to pay for his extended stay at the inn by entertaining the patrons. She is unaware of the fact that he is a Harper who reports the goings-on here to Chesslyn Onaubra (see area 15, below).

10. Oxpit Tavern

Famous for its rough-and-tumble atmosphere, the Oxpit is known for its ale and roasted ox. A room and a meal costs 7 gp. The proprietor is a tall, thin man with a boisterous laugh named Cyril (N male human rogue 2/commoner 11). Aside from running the tavern, Cyril trades in secrets. He is more than happy to share ale with his patrons if they have interesting stories to tell.

11. Wave and Wink

The Wave and Wink is the most well-known dance hall in Mulmaster. Many people wanting a good night out on the town go to the Wave and Wink for good, rowdy entertainment. The cover charge is 2 sp. Food is served here, but the wide selection of ales and wines is its largest draw. The Wave and Wink is owned and operated by Anina Ranmore (NG female human bard 4/expert 5), a tall, raven-haired woman known for her flamboyant clothing and good cheer.

12. Docks

The docks are a labyrinthine maze of piers and quays; sailors stopping over in Mulmaster can find a wide variety of cheap taverns and inns nearby. Warships maintain a visible presence in the harbor to repel invaders. Cutpurses, con men, press gangs,

and other unsavory characters spend a great deal of time at the docks since there are plenty of marks, and the area's many nooks and bolt-holes make it easy for these predators to escape when detected.

13. Lighthouse

This lighthouse, constructed from stone and cast iron, towers 150 feet above Mulmaster's harbor. A magical light shining through the lens creates an unflagging beacon for ships putting into the harbor.

14. Red Wizard Enclave

Crafted from red sandstone, this building is decorated with fire opals and wrought-iron sculptures of imps and gargoyles. The interior smells of incense and is decorated in exotic carpets and tapestries from Calimshan, Amn, and Mulhorand.

The enclave is staffed by a dozen Red Wizards, and is overseen by Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger (LE male human wizard 10/Red Wizard 7), an outgoing and energetic man known for his mirth. He not only drives Thay's plans for Mulmaster forward, but also ensures that the customers in their lucrative magic-item trade remain happy. While he is not obligated to take orders from Tharchion Dmitra Flass, he communicates with her constantly to ensure that they are working toward the same goals. In addition to the Red Wizards, twenty-four 3rd-level fighters guard the enclave. All the windows and roof entries are trapped with *symbols of death*, and the front and back doors are *arcane locked* (break DC 35).

15. Harper's House

Chesslyn Onaubra (CG female human fighter 11), a guard at the temple of Tymora, is secretly a Harper functionary given the task of watching the developments in Mulmaster. She lives in this simple and relatively small wood and brick house. Chesslyn doesn't make friends easily, but she does offer a place to stay for fellow Harpers or others seeking to evade the Zhentarim or the Red Wizards.

16. Cloaks' Tower

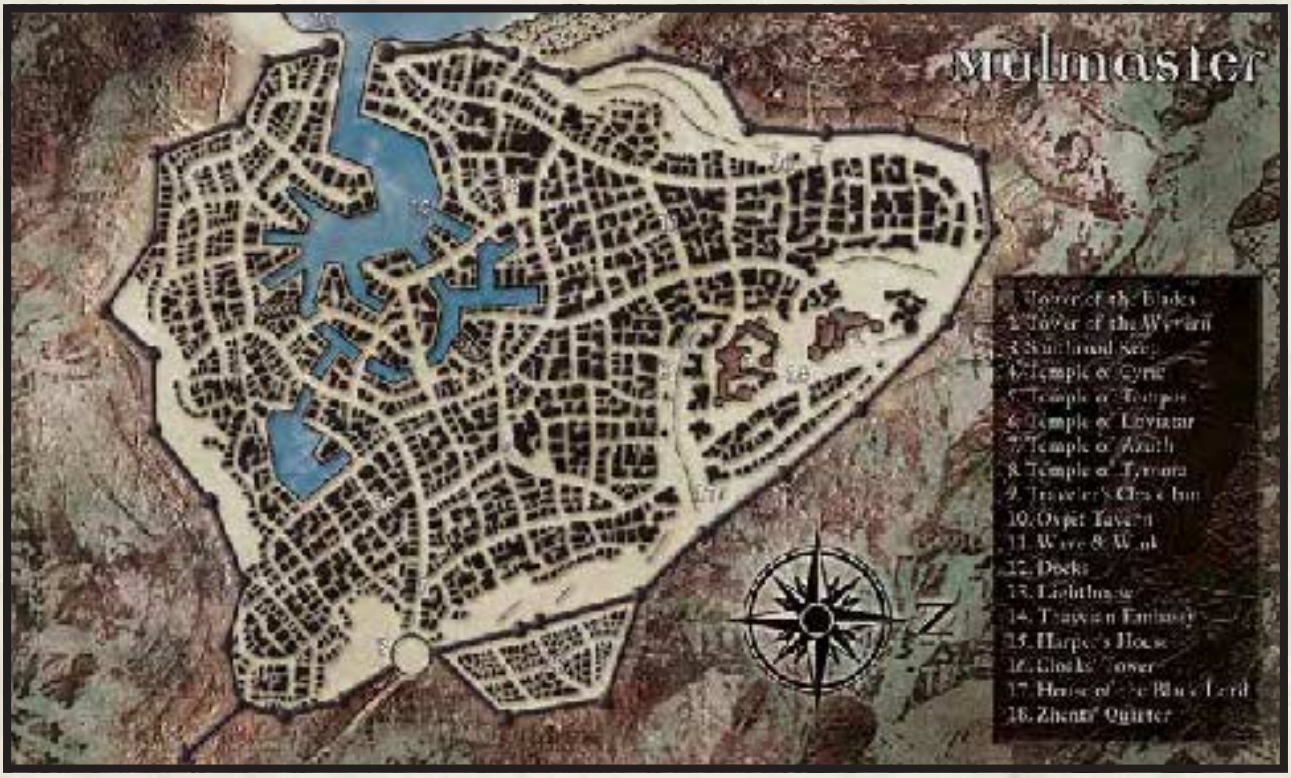
This massive stone tower complex houses the wizards group known as the Brotherhood of the Cloaks. It is modestly referred to as the Tower of Arcane Might, and it has libraries, dormitories, laboratories, and vast storehouses of gold and magic items. The tower is protected by eight golems (two each clay, flesh, iron, and stone), plus numerous defensive spells.

17. House of the Black Lord

Originally intended as a temple to Xvim, this structure is now used to worship Bane; it has been expanded from its original design. Since Bane's return, many of Cyric's followers have left that church and dedicated (or rededicated) themselves to Bane.

18. Zhents' Quarter

Following the destruction of Zhentil Keep, a large number of Zhent refugees arrived at Mulmaster seeking a place to start their lives anew. The Blades initially allowed them to settle outside the walls, and more recently built a wall to protect their small, ramshackle homes. Despite the fact that Mulmaster is now allied with Zhentil Keep, the two cities were enemies for so long that the Zhents have been unable to join Mulmaster society as equals, and most are treated as second-class citizens at best.



villains of mulmaster

Mulmaster is full of villains of one sort or another. Petty thieves ply the streets, making a living from what they are able to lift from their marks. Assassins are readily available to take care of anyone who has become a problem to those who can afford their services, and groups of thugs engage in turf warfare in the city streets. The following individuals are some of the city's most ruthless villains, starting with its current leader.

Rassendyll Uoumdolphin

Rassendyll Uoumdolphin is the High Blade of Mulmaster. His identical twin brother Selfaril was twenty-nine years old when he took office in 1348 DR after killing his predecessor. Selfaril remained in power for twenty-seven years, until Rassendyll replaced him. Rassendyll's age has become apparent at fifty-six, but he still has the ability to maintain his base of power and outmaneuver those who would try to seize control. Rassendyll has not revealed his true identity to anyone, including his brother's wife, though he doubts that she would oppose the switch, since her marriage to Selfaril was one of convenience in the first place.

Rassendyll stands over 6 feet tall, with long, flowing gray hair. He is fair-skinned, with a weathered face, a hawkish nose, and a long mustache that extends to his chin. Despite his age, he remains in top physical shape and is more than a match for almost anyone who dares to challenge him. When not wearing his armor, he typically dresses in dark clothing, preferring black shirts and pants, knee-high boots, and a silver-trimmed black cloak.

Rassendyll remained close with Selfaril when the brothers were growing up, but when his brother assumed the rank of High Blade, Rassendyll was "promoted" to a diplomatic position in Waterdeep. In truth, this position was little more than exile, because Selfaril could neither bring himself to kill his brother or risk keeping him within the city. After spending several years in the City of Splendors, Rassendyll arranged a meeting with the Zhentarim. Fzoul Chembryl was interested in establishing an alliance with Mulmaster, but since the cities were enemies and Selfaril was unwilling to even consider the possibility of an alliance, Fzoul hatched a plot to remove Selfaril and replace him with Rassendyll. By this time Rassendyll harbored an intense hatred toward the brother who had exiled him, so he happily agreed to the arrangement. In his mind, it would not only grant him the vengeance he thirsted for, but it would also lay the groundwork for a lasting peace in the Moonsea area, even if it did mean allying with a long-time enemy.

Rassendyll waited until evening, then walked plainly into the Tower of the Wyvern, passing himself off as Selfaril, escorted by an entourage of fighters and wizards provided by the Zhentarim. Selfaril and his bodyguards challenged their attackers, but lost the battle. Like his brother before him, Rassendyll could not bring himself to slay his brother, so he had one of the wizards cast *trap the soul*, imprisoning Selfaril within a gem that Rassendyll had mounted on the gold hilt of his bastard sword.

Like his brother, Rassendyll is a scheming and conniving ruler. He frequently employs the Cloaks to spy on the Blades and nobles within the city, hoping to uncover plots against him before they hatch. If he suspects the loyalty of any of the Cloaks, he hires a Red Wizard to verify the Cloak's stories. Rassendyll (as did Selfaril before him) employs the assassin Branislav Semyon (see below) to carry out the execution of anyone who is too influential to kill openly.

Rassendyll Uoumdolphin — CR 22

Male Damaran human fighter 20/ranger 2
NE Medium humanoid
Init +7; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +8
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Mulhorandi

AC 34, touch 15, flat-footed 33; Dodge, Mobility
hp 189 (22 HD)
Fort +18, **Ref** +13, **Will** +8

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares); Spring Attack
Melee *+4 defending bastard sword of speed* +32/+32/+27/+22/+17 (1d10+11/17–20 plus 1d6) or
Melee *+4 defending bastard sword of speed* +28/+28/+23/+18/+13 (1d10+11/17–20 plus 1d6) and *+3 heavy shield of bashing* +23 (1d8+3) or
Ranged *+3 keen composite longbow* +27/+22/+17/+12 (1d8+8/19–20/×3) or +3 keen composite longbow +25/+25/+20/+15/+10 (1d8+8/19–20/×3) with Rapid Shot
Base Atk +21; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Sunder
Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure serious wounds* (CL 15th)

Rassendyll Uoumdolphin

Illustration by William O'Connor

Abilities Str 20, Dex 16, Con 16, Int 12, Wis 8, Cha 14
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Dodge[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword)[B], Great Cleave[B], Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword)[B], Improved Initiative[B], Improved Shield Bash, Improved Sunder[B], Iron Will, Leadership, Mobility, Overwhelming Critical (bastard sword)[B], Power Attack[B], Rapid Shot[B], Spring Attack[B], Track[B], Two-Weapon Fighting[B], Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B]
Skills Handle Animal +7, Hide +8, Intimidate +24, Jump +18, Knowledge (nature) +6, Move Silently +8, Ride +5, Spot +8, Survival +4
Possessions combat gear plus *+4 full plate, amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +4, +3 heavy steel shield of bashing, +4 defending bastard sword of speed, +3 keen composite longbow* (+5 Str bonus), 40 arrows, *ioun stone* (*pink*)

Thurndan Tallwand

Thurndan Tallwand is the head of the Cloaks. He is the most powerful magic user within the organization, and his job is to protect the High Blade from any threats. He takes his duty seriously—but hopes to one day find a chink in the High Blade's armor and take control of the city himself.

The Senior Cloak has wispy white hair and a long white beard. He is a favorite at social gatherings because of his wit and charm, though he also delights in the torture of those who are revealed as traitors or enemies of the High Blade.

Thurndan is not aware that Rassendyll has taken the place of Selfaril. If Thurndan were to find this out and reveal that the city's leader has been replaced, he would have every excuse to use the Cloaks to depose Rassendyll and assume power himself, at least until an election was held to appoint a new High Blade—an election that he would easily manipulate to his own ends.

Illustration by William O'Connor

Thurndan Tallwand

Thurndan Tallwand CR 20

Male Damaran human wizard 20
CE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Draconic, Giant

AC 22, touch 14, flat-footed 20
hp 111 (20 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+4 quarterstaff* +13/+8 (1d6+3) or
Melee *+4 quarterstaff* +9/+4 (1d6+3) and *+4 quarterstaff* +5 (1d6+3)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +9
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 20th):
9th—*black blade of disaster*[Mag, SC], *wish* (DC 26), *imprisonment* (DC 26), *meteor swarm* (DC 26)
8th—*mass charm* (DC 25), *mind blank* (DC 25), *sunburst* (DC 25), *trap the soul* (DC 25)
7th—*banishment* (DC 24), quickened *fireball* (DC 20), *greater scrying* (DC 24), *greater teleport* (DC 24), *summon monster VII*
6th—*chain lightning* (DC 23), *disintegrate* (DC 23), *flesh to stone* (DC 23), *greater dispel magic* (DC 23), quickened *scorching ray* (+12 ranged touch)
5th—*ball lightning*[PG, SC] (DC 22), *dismissal* (DC 22), *dominate person* (DC 22), quickened *magic missile*, *teleport* (DC 22)
4th—*detect scrying*, *explosive cascade*[Mag, SC] (DC 21), *ice storm* (DC 21), *scrying* (DC 21), *wall of fire*
3rd—*deep slumber* (DC 20), *dispel magic* (2) (DC 20), *fireball* (2) (DC 20), *fly* (DC 20)
2nd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 19), *claws of darkness* (DC 19), *knock*, *levitate*, *see invisibility*, *shield*, *web* (DC 19)
1st—*corrosive grasp*[Mag, SC] (+9 melee touch), *identify*, *magic missile* (3)
0—*detect magic*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*, *ray of frost* (+12 ranged touch)
Combat Gear 2 *potions of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 16, Int 25, Wis 15, Cha 11
SQ familiar (none at present)
Feats Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and ArmorB, Craft Rod[B], Craft Staff[B], Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Extend Spell, Forge Ring[B], Maximize Spell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll[B], Silent Spell
Skills Appraise +7 (+9 alchemical items), Concentration +23, Craft (alchemy) +26, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Knowledge (the planes) +26, Spellcraft +31, Survival +2 (+4 other planes)
Possessions combat gear plus *bracers of armor +6, amulet of natural armor +2, ring of protection +2, +4 quarterstaff, glove of storing, headband of intellect +6*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*alarm, enlarge person, feather fall, hold portal, protection from good;* 2nd—*arcane lock, spectral hand;* 3rd—*explosive runes, improved mage armor*[Una], *water breathing,* 4th—*animate dead, dimension door, fear, remove curse, polymorph, stoneskin;* 5th—*baleful polymorph, break enchantment, permanency, persistent image;*

6th—*acid storm, veil, wall of iron;* 7th—*mass invisibility, power word blind, Simbul's synostodweomer*[Mag]*;* 8th—*binding, clone, devastate undead, polymorph any object, symbol of death;* 9th—*Elminster's evasion, power word kill, prismatic sphere, shapechange, soul bind*

Denia Vesdar

Denia Vesdar began her career as a soldier protecting Zhentil Keep. When the city fell, she fled to the Citadel of the Raven and joined the Zhentarim forces there. Her wit, fast thinking, and leadership impressed her superiors so much that she was selected to undergo the training needed to become a spy for the Zhentarim. She was pulled from guard duty and taught the ways of deception while she traveled throughout Faerûn. Shortly after she had proven to the Zhents that she could maintain her cover, Zhentil Keep and Mulmaster became allies, and she was assigned to that city.

While not unattractive, Denia is on the plain side. She stands 5-1/2 feet tall, with blonde hair, thin lips, and a pale complexion. She is not overly muscular, overly thin, or overweight. It is her nondescript appearance that allows her to assume any number of covers, playing a variety of roles depending upon what the situation demands.

Denia has established several cover identities throughout the city, playing the part of a merchant, a noble, and a mercenary, but she is able to gather the most information using her cover as a simple serving maid in the Tower of Blades. She frequently listens in on conversations between the Blades that prove to be of interest to Zhentil Keep. She suspects that the Red Wizards are trying to use the unique political situation in Mulmaster to somehow gain access to the Zhentarim, but she has had no success in earning their trust. She has put out some feelers within the city's underworld, offering to pay handsomely for anyone who has verifiable information regarding the Red Wizards' activities.

Denia Vesdar CR 12

Female Chondathan human fighter 4/rogue 3/Zhentarim spy[PG] 5
NE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +7, Spot –1
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Chessentan

AC 24, touch 14, flat-footed 21; Dodge, Mobility
hp 78 (12 HD)
Resist evasion, slippery mind
Immune undetectable alignment
Fort +8, **Ref** +11, **Will** +5

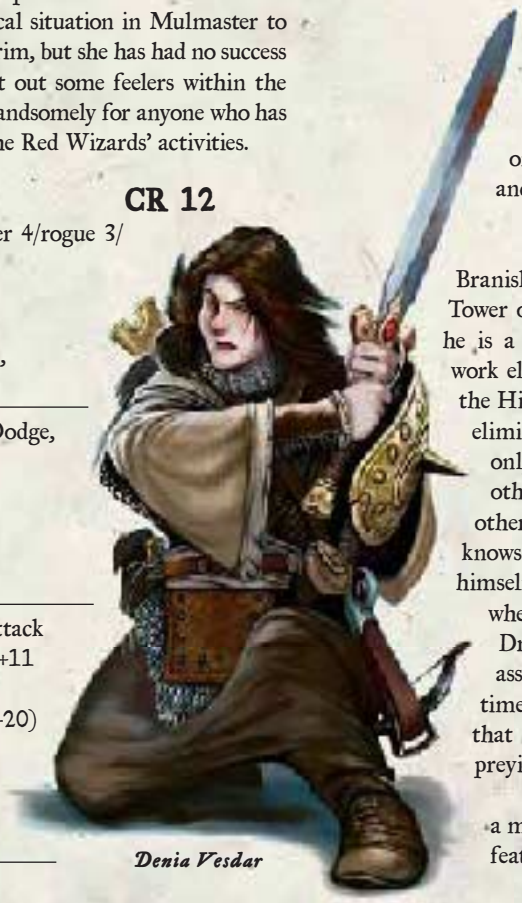
Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack
Melee +*3 rapier of speed* +16/+16/+11 (1d6+5/15–20)
Ranged +*1 dagger* +13 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +10
Atk Options Blind-Fight, sneak attack +3d6
Combat Gear caltrops

Abilities Str 10, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ cover identity, deep cover, poison use, trapfinding, unlikely cover
Feats Deceitful, Blind-Fight, Dodge[B], Improved Critical (rapier), Mobility[B], Spring Attack, Weapon Finesse, Weapon Focus (rapier), Weapon Specialization (rapier)[B]
Skills Bluff +6, Climb +12, Craft (locksmithing) +4, Craft (weaponsmithing) +4, Diplomacy +5, Disable Device +10, Disguise +8 (+10 acting), Forgery +9, Gather Information +6, Hide +11, Intimidate +7, Jump +8, Listen +7, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +15, Sleight of Hand +9, Swim +8
Possessions combat gear plus +*3 chain shirt*, +*2 buckler*, *ring of protection* +*1*, +*3 rapier of speed*, +*1 dagger*, *bag of holding* (type I), grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools

Cover Identity (Ex) Denia has established cover identities as a barmaid (Natali Nemetsk), a mercenary (Miri Greycastle), a merchant (Thayan arms dealer, Shevarra Stayanoga), and a noble (Lady Mara Kulenov). While operating under any of her cover identities, she gains a +4 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks and a +2 bonus on Bluff and Gather Information checks.

Deep Cover (Ex) Denia has established her barmaid and noble identities as being deep cover identities. While operating under any of her deep cover identities, even magical scrying or mind reading at a power level short of deific reveals nothing about her true nature. Only the thoughts, alignment, and emotions of the fictitious persona can be detected.

Unlikely Cover (Ex) Denia has established her noble identity as an unlikely cover identity. While operating under this identity, her cover identity skill bonuses are doubled (+8 circumstance bonus on Disguise checks and a +4 bonus on Bluff and Gather Information checks).



Denia Vesdar

Illustration by William O'Connor

Branislav Semyon

Branislav Semyon serves as a bodyguard in the Tower of the Blades during the day, while by night he is a freelance assassin who has found frequent work eliminating threats, real or perceived, against the High Blade. On more than one occasion he has eliminated the very Blade he was hired to protect, only to have his guard services recommended to other Blades. Branislav also takes contracts from others within the city, but the only person who knows his true identity is Rassendyll. He disguises himself as a mustachioed man ten years his senior when out among the city folk, and calls himself Draazu, the name of one of Mulmaster's earliest assassins. This name has been assumed numerous times throughout the ages, promoting the legend that the original Draazu is still alive and well, preying upon the city.

Branislav stands just under 6 feet tall and has a muscular build, black hair, and strong, chiseled features.

Branislav Semyon

Illustration by William O'Connor

Branislav acquires most of his targets through a few well-established individuals in Mulmaster's underworld. He typically meets his contacts at the Oxpit Tavern, which he frequents two or three times a week. The amount that he charges varies by the abilities of the target and its profile within the city, but typically it ranges from 5,000 gp for an ordinary citizen to 20,000 gp or more for a noble or a Blade.

Branislav Semyon — CR 11

Male Rashemi human rogue 6/assassin 5
NE Medium humanoid
Init +4; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot –1
Languages Chessentan, Common, Mulhorandi

AC 23, touch 15, flat-footed 19; Dodge, improved uncanny dodge, Mobility, trap sense +2
hp 74 (11 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +6 (+8 against poison), **Ref** +13, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack
Melee *+3 shocking burst rapier* +14/+9 (1d6+5 plus 1d6 electricity/18–20 plus 1d10 electricity)
Ranged *+1 shortbow* +12/+7 (1d6+1/×3)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +9
Atk Options death attack, sneak attack +6d6
Combat Gear caltrops
Assassin Spells Known (CL 5th):
2nd (2/day)—*invisibility, spider climb, pass without trace*
1st (4/day)—*disguise self, jump, sleep* (DC 12), *true strike*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 19, Con 16, Int 13, Wis 9, Cha 11
SQ poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +2
Feats Dodge, Mobility, Spring Attack, Track, Weapon Finesse
Skills Balance +6, Disable Device +9, Disguise +14, Hide +18, Jump +4, Listen +8, Move Silently +18, Open Lock +18, Search +10, Tumble +18, Use Magic Device +9
Possessions combat gear plus *+3 leather armor, +2 buckler, ring of protection +1, +3 shocking burst rapier, +1 shortbow,* 20 arrows, *bag of holding* (type I), grappling hook, masterwork thieves' tools

Rumors in Mulmaster

If the PCs spend time talking to locals to hear the latest rumors, have them make a Gather Information check and consult the following table.

Check	Result
15–19	Roll 1d8 and consult the Rumors list below.
20–24	Roll 1d8+4 and consult the Rumors list below.
25–29	Roll 1d8+8 and consult the Rumors list below.
30+	Roll 1d8+12 and consult the Rumors list below.

Some of the items in the following list are false rumors and some are adventure hooks left open for individual DMs to embellish.

Rumors

1 All resident magic users over 4th level must join an organization called the Cloaks.
2 The Blades have little real power, and they are in place so that the people of Mulmaster feel that they are represented in government.
3 The rival Moonsea city of Melvaunt's most powerful lord, Dundeld Nanther, has died, leaving an opening on the city's ruling council that Mulmaster might try to fill with one of its own nobles. (hook)
4 The High Blade has joined forces with fiends. He is secretly harvesting people who oppose him and sacrificing them to gain infernal power. (false; the High Blade has been known to eliminate his political opponents, but fiends are not involved)
5 The Wave and Wink is the perfect place to meet people who can smuggle illegal items in and out of the city.
6 The Zhentarim have been abusing their new presence within Mulmaster to make slaves of the city folk. (false; the Zhentarim have scaled back their slave-taking operations in this area because of the arrangement)
7 The High Blade has been making unusual decisions recently, the most obvious of which is the new alliance with the Zhentarim.
8 Like Mulmaster, Hillsfar is looking to ally itself with the Zhentarim. (false)
9 An army of creatures, including orcs, ogres, and giants are amassing in the wilderness regions to the east. Many are worried that they will attack Mulmaster soon. (This is the focus of the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc.)

10 The Golden Skulls assassins guild is headquartered in a house in central Mulmaster. (hook; the PCs can investigate this further by asking people in that area if they have seen any unusual comings and goings)
11 The High Blade uses outside forces to intimidate would-be political enemies here in Mulmaster. (The Zhentarim and the Red Wizards actively use intimidation against the nobles, as long as they stand to gain from it.)
12 The High Blade has gone insane, which explains why Mulmaster has formed an alliance with Zhentil Keep. (false)
13 The Sleeping Serpent inn is a Zhentarim safe house.
14 Many of the monsters recently encountered in the wilderness to the east have proven to be especially deadly because of their newfound ability to use *fireballs* in combat.
15 There is tension between the Zhentarim and the Thayan enclave here in the city.
16 The Red Wizards are the true power behind the High Blade. Mulmaster is part of Thay in all but name. (not exactly true; the High Blade remains in control of the city)
17 The Harpers can be reached in Mulmaster by contacting Chesslyn Onaubra.
18 The ruins of the northern half of Zhentil Keep are full of both monsters and loot—but few who venture across the river ever return.
19 The High Blade supports an organization known as the Hawks, which has warriors and spies deployed throughout Faerûn.
20 The High Blade Selfaril Uoumdolphin has a twin brother named Rassendyll Uoumdolphin. (In fact, Rassendyll has deposed his brother and seized control of the city.)

Mulmaster Quests

The following quests form a loose adventure arc that exposes a Red Wizard plot to infiltrate the Zhentarim. Each location can be played without using the rest of the story arc, though it might be necessary to do some retooling of the encounters specific to the story.

Thay considers Mulmaster important to its long-term plans because it already has a firm foothold here. Not only does it have an enclave within the city, but the High Blade is married to the Tharchion of Eltabbar. The Red Wizards have of late been less aggressively pursuing conquest through might, instead focusing on economic domination, but this does not mean that they have abandoned their plans for control of all of Faerûn. In order to gain a more permanent foothold in the heartlands, they intend to infiltrate and wrest control of an established organization that already has a presence within the region, and they have set their sights on the Zhentarim. Mulmaster is an ideal gateway to achieve this goal, taking advantage of the new alliance between Mulmaster and the Zhents.

The Red Wizards have already managed to put some agents in place, but they need an additional fighting force on the inside. The Zhentarim constantly purchase slaves, which they either work to death or resell at a profit. One of the Thayan infiltrators has requisitioned the purchase of hundreds of slaves, which are being sold to the Zhentarim through known and trusted merchants, each marked with a magic tattoo similar to the ones they created with the help of the Fire Knives, the cult of Moander, the Zhentarim, and Tyranthraxus so many years ago. The tattoos have been modified to be less noticeable—making it far less likely that the Zhentarim will see what is happening until the plan is already in motion—but they are no less deadly; when commanded, the tattooed slaves will rise as one against their Zhentarim captors.

Undercity Sewer

Mulmaster, like most cities throughout Faerûn, contains a massive sewer system beneath the city. Like many other cities, the sewers quickly became a favored way to travel unseen throughout the city by those conducting business that city officials would frown upon.

Today the sewer system is a maze of tunnels and rooms that mostly serve as lairs for monsters. The main sewage tunnels are 15 feet wide, with a 5-foot-wide walkway on either side of the 5-foot-wide and 10-foot-deep trench through which the sewage flows. Bridges made of metal grating cross over the sewage in some areas.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 9th–11th level.

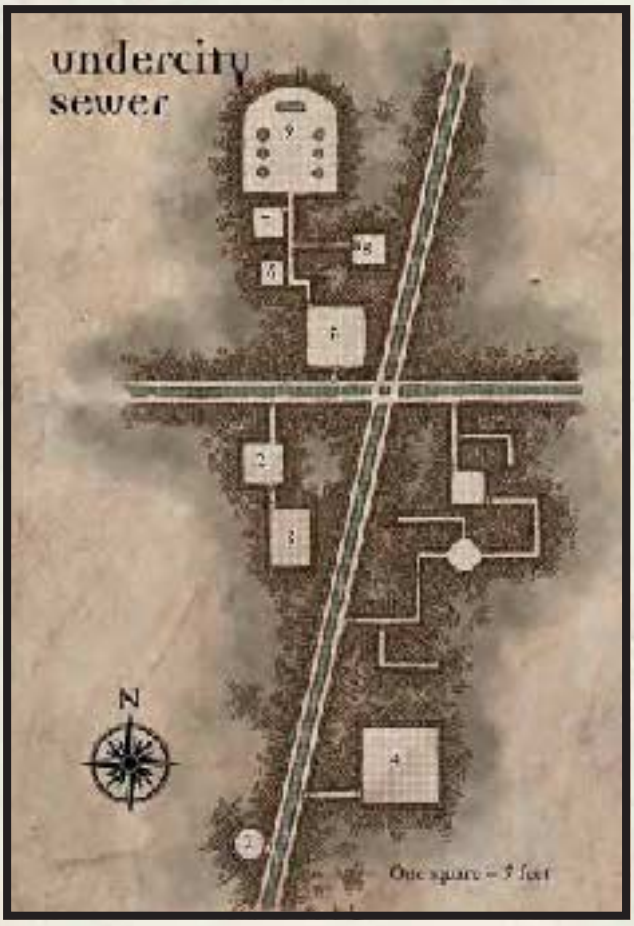
Background

The slave girl Lyetta was brought to Mulmaster and sold to her new owners, the Zhentarim. Before the sale, she was taken to a discreet location, put to sleep, and then marked her with a magic tattoo. Following the sale, when her captors were taking her through the city toward the docks, Lyetta managed to pick the lock on her manacles and flee into the sewers. She initially managed to evade any nearby creatures and accidentally found herself in a secret chamber—which just happens to be the home of a displacer beast pack lord. She managed to climb into a recess where the displacer beast is unable to reach her, but she is trapped there until either someone saves her or death takes her. Her captors went into the sewers to find her, but were badly injured by monsters that were also on her scent.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- The PCs observe the escape and the ensuing chaos. Once the slavers realize that they are not up to the task of retrieving her, they offer the PCs 500 gp for her safe return.
- The PCs see a post requesting the aid of any "capable professionals" who can help retrieve some property; after meeting with an underworld representative of the slavers, they are offered 500 gp for her return.



- A local group that secretly opposes slavery learns of the slave's escape and flight into the sewers. Group members contact the PCs and ask them to help her find her way safely out of the sewers and out of the city.

Encounters

1. Access Shaft

This circular chamber allows access to the street, 15 feet above, by way of a steel ladder inset into the wall. The door leading to the sewers is unlocked.

Once the PCs enter the sewers, they are immediately affected by the horrendous smell and exposed to the numerous diseases that are all too common in the city's waste system. Whenever the PCs do something that could potentially expose themselves to disease—such as fall into or walk through the sewage trench—roll 1d4 and consult the following table to determine which disease they were exposed to, and the DC of the Fortitude save necessary to remain disease-free (*DMG* 292).

1. Blinding sickness, DC 16
2. Filth fever, DC 12
3. The shakes, DC 13
4. Slimy doom, DC 14

2. Abandoned Storage Room (EL 9)

The door to this room is unlocked. This room and room 3 once contained tools the sewer workers used, such as the pikes used to free the gratings from debris. Sewer workers are few and far between in this day and age, and all the items once stored here have since been looted or destroyed. The only items that remain from the original ones in these rooms are the empty, ruined, and broken wooden racks. These rooms have, however, become the homes of some creatures that use this room as their base of operations.

Creatures: This room is inhabited by a pair of umber hulks that immediately attack anything that wanders into their lair. The umber hulks are straightforward and brutal with their tactics, using their confusing gaze ability against any magic-using PCs. If successful, they focus their natural weapons on the front-line fighters, or attempt to grapple them if they deal one of the umber hulks more than 15 points of damage from a single attack.

Umber Hulks (2): hp 71 each; *MM* 249.

3. Abandoned Storage Room (EL 9)

Like room 2, this area was once used for storage purposes The door is closed and unlocked, and is really only half a door because the lower 3 feet of the wood has been eaten away, apparently by some sort of corrosive substance.

The room is now inhabited by two black puddings, which frequently sneak out under the door, hunt for creatures within the sewers, and then return to this lair. Though black puddings lack intelligence, they are smart enough to avoid attacking creatures that might represent a serious challenge unless their lair is invaded, which is why they have left the umber hulks in room 2 alone.

Creatures: The puddings attack the PCs as soon as they become aware of them. They use their improve grab, constrict, and acid attack against the creatures nearest them when combat begins and continue to follow this strategy until they have either won or been killed.

Black Puddings (2): hp 115 each; *MM* 201.

4. Grimnoth's Lair (EL 9)

The door to this chamber is locked (Open Lock DC 30).

Creature: The black dragon Grimnoth cleared out this room to make room for himself and his hoard. He takes pleasure in the fact that the bustling city above remains oblivious to his presence. Grimnoth would prefer not to fight a group of adventurers if he can help it, and he attempts to persuade them to leave. If forced into combat, he drops *darkness* onto the PCs and uses his breath weapon against them.

Grimnoth, Young Adult Black Dragon: hp 152; *MM* 72.

Treasure: Amber (90 gp), black pearl (700 gp), bloodstone (30 gp), blue star sapphire (700 gp), deep blue spinel (500 gp), deep green spinel (140 gp), golden yellow topaz (500 gp), *potion of cure light wounds*, rock crystal (clear quartz, 40 gp), rose quartz (20 gp), sardonyx (80 gp), 3 scrolls of *command undead*, smoky quartz (70 gp), scroll of *protection from evil*, 3 scrolls of *scroll of silence*, scroll of *summon monster I*, 3 scrolls of *warp*

wood, violet garnet (600 gp), *wand of bull's strength* (CL 5th, 20 charges), 8,000 gp.

5. Hidden Temple Entrance (EL 10)

Leaning or pushing on the secret door is all it takes to open the entryway to this room. This was once the entryway for a temple to a long-forgotten god, but it has long since become abandoned. After Lyetta accidentally found her way through here, several creatures have wandered into the area, including the three chuuls that inhabit this room.

Creatures: The chuuls attack the PCs when they enter. Their tactics are to flank the main fighters, then use their improved grab, constrict, and paralytic tentacles to eliminate them. Spellcasters become their primary target if they are presented with an opportunity to get close enough to engage them in melee combat.

Chuuls (3): hp 93 each; *MM* 35.

6. Old and Moldy (EL 6)

This room once held the holy texts for the religious group inhabiting this subterranean temple, but the ravages of age and mold have since rendered the tomes little more than a pasty mush between their barely recognizable leather covers. Creatures entering this room are immediately subjected to yellow mold.

Yellow Mold: *DMG* 76.

7. Hidden Treasure (EL 8)

Several years ago a thief from the surface discovered this room, and decided to use it to store his ill-gotten treasure. He protected it with an insanity mist vapor trap, and periodically returned to add to his growing hoard. The thief was later caught stealing by the Mulmaster guard and put to the sword, leaving his hoard unclaimed.

Insanity Mist Vapor Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; gas; never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (insanity mist, Fortitude DC 15 resists, 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis); multiple targets (all targets in a 10-ft.-by-10-ft. room); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: Citrine (60 gp); ruby (600 gp); *+2 light wooden shield;* 1,028 gp.

8. Pit Trap (EL 7)

This room once contained a valuable treasure for the religious group that used this, but it has long since been looted. The trap created to protect the treasure remains however. Unless the PCs discover the trap, the room appears to be completely empty.

Well-Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 7; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Reflex DC 25 avoids; 70 ft. deep (7d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18.

9. The Sanctum (EL 12)

In her effort to escape the Zhentarim, Lyetta (female human commoner 2) found her way into this room, but then quickly discovered that a powerful displacer beast occupied it. Because this room has no door, and the corridor leading out is straight, she reasoned that it would be all too easy for the brute to follow her. Rather than try to flee the area, she instead quickly located a trap door leading into the marble altar and climbed inside, hoping that the displacer beast would lose interest and find some other prey. It is in this hidden space that the original religious group stored its treasure, which remained undiscovered until Lyetta crawled inside. The displacer beast is hungry, but is waiting patiently for Lyetta to emerge from her hiding place.

If the PCs deal with the displacer beast, Lyetta comes out from hiding and thanks them for rescuing her. Assuming they do not simply capture her and lead her back to the Zhentarim, she reveals her magic tattoo and informs them that there are others like her being held at the Zhentarim safe house. She truthfully answers any question the PCs put to her (if she knows the answer). She has no idea what significance the tattoo might have (although the PCs might have already encountered it in Melvaunt). The PCs can share the treasure with Lyetta or take it all for themselves; if they share it and help her escape the city, give them an additional 10% XP for this encounter.

Creature: An enormous, fearless displacer beast attacks the PCs when they enter the room. At the first sound of combat, Lyetta opens the door and begins to scream, making her presence known; at this point, she would welcome enslavement to a death at the hands of this creature. Despite its size, the displacer beast employs the usual tactics of its kind; if possible, it attempts to use a tentacle to wound any spellcasters hiding behind the melee fighters. It uses its other tentacle and bite attack against any melee fighters. If reduced to fewer than 50 hit points, it attempts to flee into the sewers.

Displacer Beast Pack Lord: hp 203; *MM* 66.

Lyetta, 2nd-Level Commoner: hp 3; *DMG* 108.

Treasure: Emerald (1,300 gp), fire opal (700 gp), 3 *potions of barkskin*, 3 *potions of bull's strength*, scroll of *detect secret doors*, scroll of *magic weapon*, *wand of shocking grasp* (CL 5th, 22 charges), 300 pp.

Zhentarim Safe House

In the previous adventure, it was revealed that the Zhentarim are purchasing slaves in and around Mulmaster and then transporting them to Zhentil Keep to fill an order placed by a Thayan spy. Many of these slaves bear a common tattoo, which the Zhents have either failed to detect or dismissed as unremarkable.

This adventure takes place in a Zhentarim safe house, a small inn called the Sleeping Serpent located in Mulmaster near the docks. This establishment has served as a safe place for the Zhentarim to lay low in the event that they are engaged in activities they do not want Mulmaster to find out about. Ever since the High Blade arranged an alliance with Zhentil Keep, there is less of a pressing need for the safe house, though it still remains a popular spot for Zhent travelers and spies.

The safe house is owned and operated by Seskaya Attnal (NE female human rogue 5/commoner 4). Seskaya is in her mid-thirties with long, raven hair shot through with streaks of gray. She stands nearly 6 feet tall with sharp but attractive features. She has many suitors, most of whom she keeps around just long

enough to learn whether they possess any information that would be useful to the Zhentarim. Seskaya was born in Zhentil Keep, but relocated to Mulmaster with her family as a teenager. Her parents were spies for the Zhentarim, and eventually they were called away on a mission from which they did not return. Even so, she remains loyal to the Zhentarim and dutifully serves them in any way she is asked.

Anyone is welcome to come to the common room. Those wishing access to the safe house quietly present identification proving that they are with the Zhentarim, and Seskaya discreetly takes them downstairs to "show you the wine cellar so you may pick out a bottle." They are then escorted through the secret door and led into the main portion of the safe house. Those who are in trouble with the local authorities might gain access to the safe house by going through the partially flooded dungeon accessed through a trapdoor in room 14. The same passage can be used for escape, eventually depositing its occupants into the sewer system near the docks.

The safe house is used infrequently at best. Aside from Seskaya and any people she is helping, no troops or other Zhentarim are stationed here permanently. To avoid having to staff the place, the Zhents constructed the golems found inside to act as security. The golems can be bypassed peacefully by speaking the password "Deluntem."

The following adventure is designed for characters of 10th–12th level.

Background

The slaves moving through Mulmaster were purchased by a Thayan infiltrator, and he prefers to keep his precious cargo well protected. To accomplish this, he has arranged that after purchase, they all be moved into the safe house while waiting for the ship to depart for Zhentil Keep. The Zhentish slavers were told to look for and purchase slaves who had the tattoo, and to pay whatever amount it took to acquire them.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- Assuming that this adventure is being played after the Undercity Sewer adventure, the PCs should have been pointed to this location as the place where the additional tattooed slaves are being held.
- If they are attempting to contact the Zhentarim, the PCs might be directed here to meet with Etath-Dar, a Zhentish spy sent to gather information on Mulmaster and its residents. Etath-Dar can be found in room 8.
- The PCs might innocently wander into this establishment for a simple round or two of ale—only to realize that they are surrounded by Zhents.

Encounters

1. Common Room

Tables fill this room. Two serving maids flit between the tables, gathering orders and delivering drinks and food to the customers. Several patrons sit on stools at the bar, which is tended by Seskaya Attnal; she also rents out rooms for the night from here. The northeast corner contains a stairwell that leads to level 2.

2. Kitchen

Two cooks toil here, preparing a variety of dishes including gruel, roast mutton, steak, and stew.

3. Stairs

This room is kept locked (Open Lock DC 25). Aside from the staircase leading down, this room is empty.

4. Single Room

Single travelers or couples with little money most commonly rent these rooms. It costs 3 gp to rent one of these rooms for a night. Each room contains one bed that is large enough to accommodate one person comfortably, or two people uncomfortably; a locking chest where guests can store their valuables; and a nightstand with an oil lamp.

5. Double Room

This room is nearly identical to room 4 except that it contains two beds and two chests. It costs 5 gp to rent one of these rooms for a night.

6. Occupied Room (EL 3)

This room is identical to room 5, except that it is occupied by a doppelganger that has assumed the identity of a Zhent traveler. Its goal is to infiltrate the organization enough to find some valuables, shed this identity, and then flee. If the PCs question it about the slaves, it truthfully tells them that it has no information, though it attempts to subtly question them about their knowledge of the organization. The doppelganger is not interested in fighting the PCs, and it flees immediately if attacked.

Doppelganger: hp 22; *MM* 67.

Treasure: Black opal (1,000 gp), climber's kit, violet garnet (300 gp), backpack (2 gp), Zhent traveling papers, 300 gp.

7. Triple Room

This room is identical to room 4, except that it contains three beds, three chests, and two nightstands. It costs 6 gp to rent one of these rooms for a night.

8. Lord's Suite (EL 9)

This is the best room in the inn, priced at 10 gp per night. The benefits of staying here include more space, room service at any time of day and night, and a larger and more comfortable bed.

The Zhentarim spy Etath-Dar currently occupies this room. He is aware of the slaves moving through the safe house, though he is unwilling to discuss their existence unless beaten in combat and threatened with death. Even then, the only thing he can tell the PCs is that the shipment was ordered by a high-ranking Zhentarim official from the Citadel of the Raven. If the PCs come to talk, he is more than happy to listen to any information that the PCs have regarding goings on in Mulmaster that concern the Zhentarim. If the PCs manage to unravel the Thayan plot to take control of the Zhentarim, Etath-Dar is an excellent person to contact with this information.

Etath-Dar, Zhentarim Spy: hp 45; *FRCS* 282.

9. Cellars

This room is where the Sleeping Serpent's wine is kept. Wine racks line all but the west wall. The wine stored here is collected from throughout Faerûn, and ranges in price from 5 sp per bottle for the cheap local stuff to hundred-year-old wine from Mulhorand, which sells for 150 gp per bottle.

There is a secret door on the west wall. A successful DC 20 Search check reveals the pivoting wall that leads to room 10.

10. Guard Room (EL 13)

The secret door in room 9 leads to the guardroom, the first room that is truly part of the safe house. Aside from the pair of stone golems that stand guard, this room is bare.

The stone golems automatically grant the PCs a surprise round, during which they stand motionless, waiting to see if the newcomers are intruders or if they have the password, "Deluntem." If the password is spoken, the PCs are allowed to enter; otherwise the golems attack during the first regular round of combat. Once combat begins, the golems use their slow ability on any front-line fighters, then push their way past them to attack any spellcasters standing in the back of the party.

Stone Golems (2): hp 107 each; *MM* 136.

11. Safe Rooms

These rooms are currently unoccupied, but they function much like the rooms on the second floor of the inn. Each contain a bed large enough to accommodate one person comfortably or two not as comfortably, a nightstand, and a locking chest. There is no charge to stay in these rooms, but they are only available to the agents of the Zhentarim.

12. Bane's Sanctum (EL 13)

This room is a shrine dedicated to Bane, open to anyone who wishes to worship The Lord of Darkness.

Creatures: Because the Zhentarim consider this shrine a holy site, it is protected by a pair of stone golems. Their tactics are identical to the pair located in room 10.

Stone Golems (2): hp 107 each; *MM* 136.

Treasure: The altar in this room has a hidden compartment containing 500 gp and 5 holy symbols of Bane.

13. Slavers' Quarters (EL 11)

This room contains two Zhentarim spies currently engaged in a game of cards. They are with the slavers and attack the PCs the moment they enter the room. The Zhentarim spies begin combat by casting *lightning bolt* to cause as much damage to as many PCs as possible. They then attempt to cast *invisibility* and maneuver themselves into flanking position around the spellcasters. If the first two rounds of combat go poorly for them, they attempt to flee to room 14 to gain reinforcements.

Zhentarim Spies (2): hp 45 each; *FRCS* 282.

14. Slavers' Quarters

This room is identical to room 13, except that a trap door within it leads to a partially flooded dungeon below (see the next quest). The trap door is *arcane locked* (CL 5th) and concealed by a rug. Inside the room are two more Zhentarim spies.

Zhentarim Spies (2): hp 45 each; *FRCS* 282.

15. Prison (EL 13)

The slaver leader, Ardsem Skalarn, and two Zhentarim spies occupy this room, guarding the tattooed slaves they have recently purchased. Ardsem holds the key to the cells; without it, a cell door can be opened with a successful DC 30 Open Lock check.

The slavers attack the PCs the moment they enter the room. Their tactics mirror those of the other slavers in rooms 12 and 14. If Ardsem is reduced to half his hit points, he uses his Tumble skill to attempt to move past the PCs and out of combat, and into the partially flooded dungeon through the trap door in room 14. If Ardsem is slain before he gets the chance to flee, one of the other slavers attempts escape instead.

Zhentarim Spies (2): hp 45 each; *FRCS* 282.

Ardsem Skalarn **CR 12**

Male Vaasan human rogue 6/cleric 6 (Bane)
NE Medium humanoid
Init +8; **Senses** Listen +6, Spot +6
Languages Chondathan, Common

AC 25, touch 17, flat-footed 21; Dodge, uncanny dodge
hp 74 (12 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +9, **Ref** +11, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+3 morningstar* +11/+6 (1d8+3)
Ranged *+2 hand crossbow* +13/+8 (1d4+2/19–20)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +8
Atk Options sneak attack +3d6
Special Actions rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+7, 6th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 6th):
3rd—*invisibility purge, dispel magic* (DC 15), *magic circle against good*[D] (CL 7th)
2nd—*desecrate*[D] (CL 7th), *lesser restoration, resist energy, sound burst* (DC 14), *spiritual weapon* (+10 melee touch)
1st—*bane* (DC 15), *cause fear* (DC 13), *comprehend languages, divine favor, entropic shield, protection from good*[D] (CL 7th)
0—*create water, detect magic, guidance, read magic, resistance*
D: Domain spell; Domains: Evil, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.

Abilities Str 10, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 13
SQ trapfinding, trap sense +2, strong aura of evil
Feats Craft Potion, Craft Wondrous Item, Deceitful, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Rapid Reload
Skills Appraise +8, Concentration +11, Diplomacy +13, Disable Device +8, Disguise +11, Forgery +10, Gather Information +9, Listen +6, Move Silently +12, Open Lock +12, Search +8, Spellcraft +9, Spot +6
Possessions *+3 mithral breastplate, +3 morningstar, +2 hand crossbow,* 20 bolts, *gloves of Dexterity +2*

partially flooded dungeon

This site-based adventure leads the PCs through the partially flooded dungeon beneath the Sleeping Serpent. This adventure can be used as part of the larger story arc for Mulmaster, or it can be used independently.

In the previous adventures, it was revealed that the Zhentarim are purchasing slaves and transporting them to Zhentil Keep to fill an order placed by a Thayan spy—though the characters know not to what end. The PCs entered the safe house where the tattooed slaves were being held and, presumably, defeated the slavers in combat and released the slaves. At least one of the slavers should have escaped through the trapdoor in room 14. Assuming the PCs pursue, they find themselves in these underground passageways.

As the PCs explore this region, they should find the murdered corpse of the slaver they pursued from the safe house. In order to obtain additional information about the tattoos, they need to track down the assassin who carried out the hit on the slaver.

Near an abandoned, hidden temple of Bane, a group of powerful creatures lairs. Most serve an ice devil that was bound here by oaths to priests long dead. Only a beholder and some mercenary ogres can actually leave the place, and the slavers considered the creatures here a fine buffer between the sewers and the Sleeping Serpent. They have bribed the devils and beholder for safe passage, and they know of the traps in the complex.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 11th–13th level.

Background

This dungeon was excavated long before the inn from the previous adventure was converted into a Zhentarim safe house. When purchasing the establishment, the Zhentarim were especially interested in this location because of the dungeon below, since it could easily be used as a backdoor method to enter and exit the safe house. After the Zhentarim purchased this location, an underground stream changed course into the dungeon, flooding a large portion of it. A naturally occurring depression in the floor of the dungeon keeps the water confined to specific areas. The dungeon connects the safe house with the sewers, and numerous monsters have found their way into the various rooms, where they have settled in and established lairs.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If this adventure is being played after the Zhentarim Safehouse adventure, one of the slavers should have escaped and fled here. The PCs are likely interested in pursuing the slaver to learn more about the slaves and their strange tattoos.
- If the previous adventure was not used, a noble who is interested in uncovering this plot tells the PCs of the tattooed slaves. He offers the PCs 500 gp to find out more information regarding the slaves' final destination, and he thinks the tunnels under the safe house hold the key to the mystery.
- In a previous adventure, the PCs find a map to this dungeon. The map suggests that a large, guarded treasure is here—but does not show what might guard it.

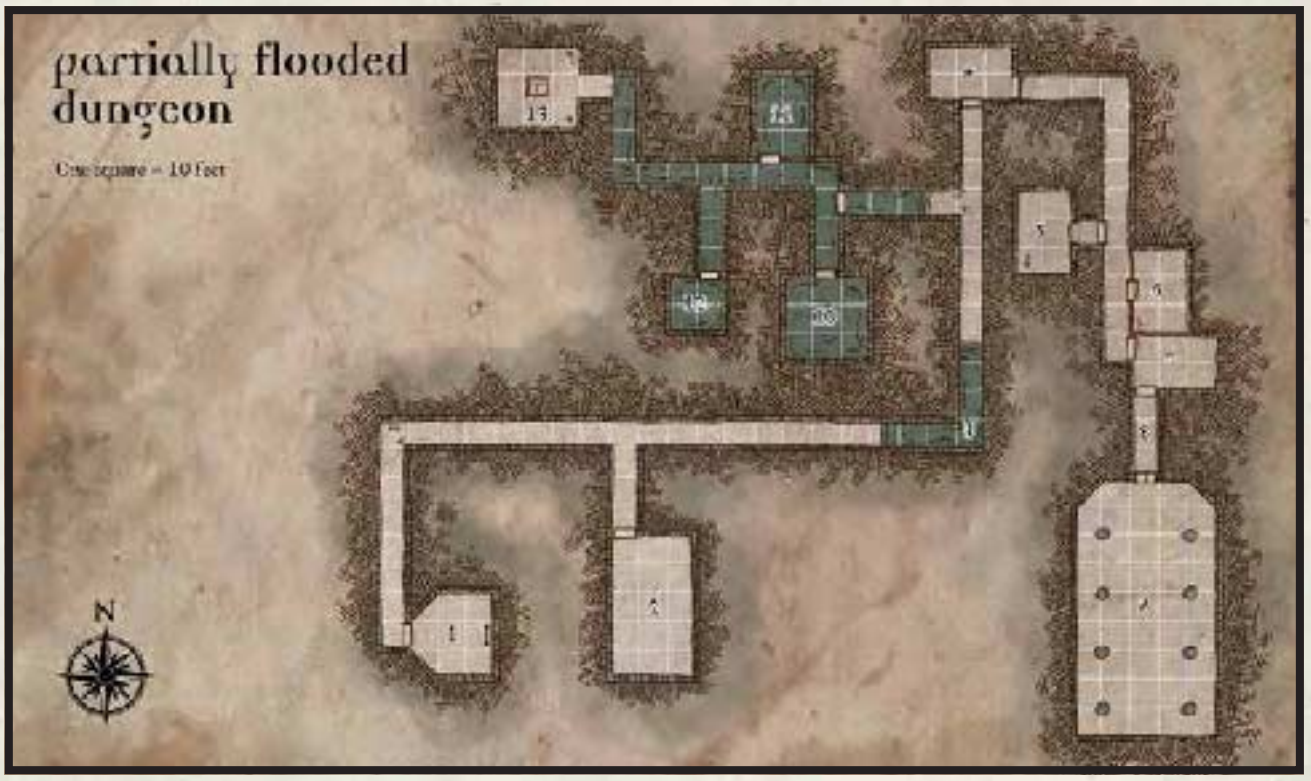
Encounters

1. Dungeon Entrance

A ladder from a trapdoor in room 14 of the safe house drops down into this room. This room is empty, although there is a thin layer of mud on the cobblestones on the floor. A successful DC 15 Search check reveals the tracks of the slaver's boots.

2. Lair of the Basilisk (EL 12)

The basilisk that lairs here is under the command of the ice devil Irunteld (see area 4). The bearded devils in area 5 periodically



catch creatures in the sewers to give to the basilisk for food. The room is littered with the bones of these dead creatures, as well as several humanoids that were turned to stone.

This abyssal greater basilisk immediately attacks any creatures that enter this room. Its initial reaction is to use its bite attack to try to kill the PCs so that it can eat them later, but it resorts to actively using its petrifying gaze if the PCs do not quickly succumb to its attacks.

Abyssal Greater Basilisk: hp 189; *MM* 24.

3. Flooded Regions (EL varies)

The various flooded regions in this dungeon are caused by a depression in the floor of the dungeon, allowing water from an underground stream to flood these areas. Except for the first 5 feet at the edges of these areas, the water is roughly waist-deep and causes hampered movement. Small creatures are completely submerged and must swim or find some other way to function underwater. The water is cold, dealing 1d6 points of nonlethal damage to anyone wholly or partially immersed in it every 10 minutes.

4. Lair of the Ice Devil (EL 13)

The ice devil Irunteld inhabits this room and uses it as its base of operations; it is the master of the greater abyssal basilisk in room 2, the bearded devils in room 5, and the bone devils in room 10. It has a truce with Nelac, the beholder, and the ogres in room 7 work for it.

Irunteld prefers not to enter combat unless left with no other choice, though it immediately attacks if a paladin is in the party. The devil tries to force the PCs to pay 500 gp for safe passage through this room. If the PCs agree, this arrangement lasts for 24 hours. If they decline, Irunteld refuses to let them pass.

If the characters decide to attack the ice devil, it immediately uses its *summon baatezu* ability for reinforcements. After that, it uses its slow and *ice storm* abilities. If faced with death, it attempts to teleport away from the combat. Irunteld's treasure can be found in a cleverly disguised shallow pit under one of the floor sections (Search DC 25).

Irunteld, Ice Devil: hp 147; *MM* 56.

Treasure: *+1 longsword*, bloodstone (60 gp), brown-green garnet (100 gp), eye agate (10 gp), yellow topaz (2) (300 gp), *3 potions of bear's endurance, potion of magic weapon, ring of counterspells*, 4 scrolls *of charm animal*, scroll of *cure light wounds*, 3 scrolls of *mirror image*, 3 scrolls of *owl's wisdom*, scroll of *protection from chaos*, scroll of *summon monster I*, tiger-eye (13 gp), violet garnet (300 gp), 900 pp.

5. Lair of the Bearded Devils (EL 10)

The bearded devils in this room serve the ice devil Irunteld in room 4. Unlike the ice devil, they immediately attack any intruders without attempting to negotiate. If the PCs agreed to pay Irunteld 500 gp (or negotiated a lower amount), the bearded devils warn the PCs away from this room, but they do not attack unless the PCs attack first.

Their tactics are straightforward. They use their glaives to attack any characters they can, and they flank their opponents whenever possible.

Bearded Devils (5): hp 45 each; *MM* 56.

6. Carnage

The ogres in room 7 use this place as a dining area. Within are the remains of numerous creatures they have killed and consumed. Included are the identifiable remains of several goblins, two humans, a carrion crawler, and a chuul. There is no evidence that the ogres cook their food. Aside from the carnage, this room is empty.

7. Ogre Lair (EL 11)

Two ogre mages and two ogre barbarians occupy this room. They work for Irunteld and they honor the ice devil's truce with the beholder in room 9, allowing it to pass safely through this room. The arrangement is advantageous to the beholder because it means that the creature has unpaid guards that sit outside its door, if they don't decide to break their agreement (an eventuality the beholder is prepared for).

The ogres attack any unexpected visitors immediately. The barbarians line up against the melee combatants while the ogre mages hurl spells from the rear. These creatures are sure that either Nelac or Irunteld will kill them if they allow intruders to pass, so they fight to the death. The ogres' treasure is divided among the bedrolls kept out of the way along the walls.

Ogre Mage (2): hp 37 each; *MM* 200.

Ogre 4th-Level Barbarians (2): hp 79 each; *MM* 199.

Treasure: Alexandrite (800 gp), black pearl (500 gp), freshwater pearl (10 gp), lapis lazuli (12 gp), sardonyx (70 gp), red-brown spinel (100 gp), 2,400 gp.

8. Trapped Hallway (EL 10)

A pit has been placed in the square noted by the 8. It blocks the entire hall and protects the beholder from unwelcome guests.

Poisoned Spiked Pit Trap: CR 10; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 30); Reflex DC 20 avoids; 50 ft. deep (5d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-ft. squares); pit spikes (melee +10, 1d4 spikes per target for 1d4+5 plus poison each); poison (purple worm poison, Fortitude DC 25, 1d6 Str/2d6 Str); Search DC 16; Disable Device DC 25.

9. Lair of the Beholder (EL 13)

This massive room was once a hidden temple to Bane, long before the worship of the Black Lord became openly accepted in the city of Mulmaster. The temple's holy relics have long since been cleared out, and it now serves as the lair of Nelac, a beholder that has lived here for generations. It enjoys the open airiness of the room, and it hides its treasure 20 feet from the floor in a hollow portion of the southeastern most column (Climb DC 25; Search DC 20).

Creature: The beholder sizes up its enemies and carefully considers whether to engage the PCs in combat. If they show outward displays of powerful magic, such as glowing weapons, it prefers to parlay to find out their intentions. If the PCs are not aggressive, Nelac is willing to divulge important local information, such as the name of the assassin who killed the slaver in room 11, but it does not know who is responsible for placing the tattoos on the slaves. If it is attacked, the beholder tries to keep a clear line of escape through the double doors.

Nelac the Beholder: hp 93; *MM* 26.

Treasure: Banded agate (8 gp), black pearl (600 gp), chalcedony (60 gp), 2 deep blue spinels (700 gp), golden yellow topaz (400 gp), moss agate (11 gp), 3 *potions of blur*, *potion of enlarge person*, *periapt of Wisdom*, red spinel (60 gp), star rose quartz (50 gp), violet garnet (800 gp), white pearl (120 gp), 8,000 gp.

10. Bone Devil Lair (EL 11)

Two bone devils lounge here in the cold water. They attack anyone who enters their room, dividing their foes between them with *wall of ice* spells.

Bone Devil (2): hp 95; *MM* 52.

Treasure: *+2 shocking longsword*, aquamarine (700 gp), 3 *potions of cure light wounds*, 3 rubies (500 gp), 6,000 gp.

11. The Body

Within this room, the PCs discover the body of the slaver who fled from the Zhentarim safe house. The slaver was apparently stabbed in the back with a poisoned black dagger with a gold skull on the pommel (30 gp), which is still embedded between his shoulder blades. With a DC 15 Search check, the heroes also find a small gold skull (15 gp) tucked under the tongue of the victim. This is an ego signature belonging to the Gold Skulls assassins' guild and is the lead-in to the next adventure.

12. Empty Room

This room is empty, though monsters frequently inhabit it for short periods. A random encounter can be placed here if desired.

13. Exit to Sewers (EL 8)

The trapdoor in this room exits into the sewers, but the clerics that once served in the temple here ensorcelled it to kill or hinder any non-evil creature that uses it. This trap was much more effective when the temple's evil guards watched the trapdoor. The bones of creatures that succumbed to the trap litter the passage underneath the trapdoor.

Blasphemy Trap: CR 8; magic device; proximity trigger (*detect good*); automatic reset; spell effect (*blasphemy*, 18th-level cleric); Search DC 32; Disable Device DC 32. Cost: 46,000 gp, 3,680 XP.

Assassin's Nest

The Assassin's Nest is an adventure that finally reveals much of what has been happening regarding the slaves. This adventure takes place after the Partially Flooded Dungeon quest, assuming that you are playing through the Mulmaster story arc; as always, it can also serve as an independent location if you are not using the story arc.

The Assassin's Nest is a house in central Mulmaster, where three assassins of notable skill have set up a small but notorious informal guild. They have managed to elude the law by keeping their identities concealed—even from their clients—and by keeping prying eyes away from their hideout.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 12th–14th level.

Background

This adventure is intended to take place after the PCs find the body of the murdered slaver in the partially flooded dungeon. The assassin, as indicated by the signature item he left behind, was a member of the Golden Skulls.

The Golden Skulls are not an official guild, nor are the assassins protected in any way by the authorities. They are known for carrying out quick, difficult, and daring assassinations of anyone in the city, from Blades to streetcorner ruffians, as long as the coin is there. The group's unique ego signature is a small golden skull left beneath the tongues of their victims. The Golden Skulls consist of only three members, though the people of Mulmaster believe that the group is larger than it truly is due to their high number of kills. The Skulls strike terror into the hearts of those with mortal enemies who have the money to pay for the best.

The leader of the Golden Skulls is named Inash. Weeks ago, he met with Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger of the Thayan Enclave and accepted a relatively easy job for what would be a great sum of gold compared to his usual fee. Ahryn had one of the Red Wizards at the enclave scry the slavers at all times until they left the city of Mulmaster. If they lost the slaves or if they fled the Zhentarim safe house without the slaves in tow, Ahryn wanted the slavers killed, so that they would not be able to leak word of the plan. When the lone slaver escaped the battle with the PCs in the Zhentarim safe house, Inash was immediately contacted and told to execute the escapee in the partially flooded dungeon. Inash teleported into the hallways near the dungeon's exit and eliminated the slaver, leaving his ego signature under his victim's tongue.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If you are playing through the Mulmaster story arc, the PCs should have discovered the golden skull ego signature used by this group. If they dig deep enough into the underworld, they should be able to learn the location of this place.
- If the PCs did not find the body, or if all the slavers were killed in the Zhentarim Safehouse adventure, the PCs learn of another group of tattooed slaves whose masters were killed by assassins using the same ego signatures as the Golden Skulls assassins guild.
- If the Mulmaster story arc is not being used, the PCs are hired to find the murderer of a local merchant, and they are given the small gold skull as a lead.

Encounters

1. Living Room (EL 13)

This place is a twisted version of a formal room. High-seated, cushioned chairs, lavish couches, and ornate tables are spread throughout the room. Interspersed throughout the room, on display, and tucked away in the corners, are the preserved remains of many of those who have fallen victim to the assassins who live here. Most are skeletons that have been bleached white, or lacquered black or red. Others are constructs that look like they are ready to be animated into some gruesome horror. Aside from the creature comforts of this room, there are no valuables here. A set of stairs rises to area 7.

Lurking in the corners are two devourers that have agreed to protect this residence, provided that they are periodically brought victims to feed upon. The devourers allow the PCs to enter and begin to search the room, hoping to catch them by surprise after they have become comfortable here. The devourers immediately try to use their trap essence ability against the PCs. If this proves unsuccessful, they resort to more traditional claw attacks and spell-like abilities.

The moment combat erupts in either this room or area 7, the assassins realize that they are under attack and group together in room 11 to make their stand.

Devourers (2): hp 78 each; *MM* 58.

2. Dining Area

Two identical ornate tables dominate this large room. Each is crafted from cherry wood and is polished to a near-mirror shine. Each table has a skull for a centerpiece with a black candle melted to the top of it. The chairs are plush and high-backed, with crimson cushions. This room is otherwise empty.

3. Kitchen

This room is possibly the most "normal"-looking room within the house. A wood oven sits against the east wall, while the rest of the room contains countertops for food preparation.

4. Storage

This room is used to store meat, and sometimes human kills. The permanent *wall of ice* that runs along the southern wall chills the room. Within lie several partially eaten food items, as well as the corpse of a slain human that is slowly being stripped of flesh in preparation for turning the body into yet another decoration for the living room.

5. Treasure Room (EL 12)

The assassins use this room to store many of the items they have acquired. The items in this room are scattered throughout several shelves, chests, and display cabinets. The PCs must succeed on a DC 20 Search check to find all the items. If they fail the check, they only find some of the items, depending on the check result.

Failed by 10 or more: They find only the gems.

Failed by 7, 8, or 9: They find the gems and the scrolls.

Failed by 6 or less: They find the gems, the scrolls, and the potion.

Four mohrgs guard this room. They stand in the corners of the room, passing themselves off as decorations, hoping the PCs will not pay attention to them. Unless attacked first, they wait 2 rounds before attacking, hoping to gain surprise. The mohrgs attempt to use their paralyzing touch ability to immobilize the melee combatants opposing them. They move on to any spellcasters in the party after this is accomplished.

Mohrgs (4): hp 91 each; *MM* 189.

Treasure: Banded agate (6 gp), blue quartz (13 gp), *dust of illusion*, malachite (11 gp), *ring of protection +1*, smoky quartz (40 gp), pink pearl (110 gp), rhodochrosite (11 gp), 3 scrolls of *blur*, scroll of *cause fear*, 3 scrolls of *command undead*, 3 scrolls of *darkvision*, scroll of *obscuring mist*, *potion of protection from good*, 2 scrolls of *remove fear*, 4,000 gp.

6. Workshop

This room is where the assassins craft their tools of death. Within are several blades, darts, arrows, and crossbows in various states of completion. Against the west wall is a forge; several other weaponsmithing tools are here as well. Also within this room is a walk-in storage area, currently used to store extra pieces of metal, wood, and other sundry items. The true purpose of this storage area is to hide the secret door (Search DC 30) that allows entry to and exit from the guildhouse.

7. Balcony (EL 15)

The stairs from the living room on the main floor ascend to this balcony, which overlooks the twisted spectacle below. A 3-foot-tall black wrought-iron railing runs along the edge.

Two death tyrants lurk here. Although they are capable of seeing the combat against the devourers below, they are held back in reserve and are instructed not to attack intruders unless they climb to the second floor. As the PC's climb the stairs to the balcony, the death tyrants float out into the open space above the room below to minimize any melee attacks that can be made against them. Once combat is joined, they use their antimagic rays to neutralize any potential magical attacks against them while using their eye rays against the PCs.

Death Tyrants (2): hp 71 each; *FRCS* 309.

8. Assassin's Bedroom

This room contains a bed and a dresser filled with clothing. There is also a small chest requiring a DC 25 Open Lock check to open.

Treasure: 3 scrolls of *cat's grace*, scroll of *Tenser's floating disk*, 17,000 gp.

9. Assassin's Bedroom

This room contains a bed and a dresser filled with clothing. There is also a small chest requiring a DC 25 Open Lock check to open.

Treasure: *Potion of jump*, 2,700 pp.

10. Inash's Bedroom

This is the largest of the bedrooms, and it belongs to Inash, the leader of the Golden Skulls. It contains a bed, a dresser filled with clothing, and a small chest requiring a DC 25 Open Lock check to open.

Treasure: *+1 light crossbow*, black pearl (800 gp), black star sapphire (1,200 gp), deep blue spinel (300 gp), malachite (11 gp), 3 *potions of darkness*, 3 *potions of fox's cunning*, 2 red spinels (80 gp), 3 scrolls of *darkvision*, scroll of *disrupt undead*, scroll of *know direction*, scroll of *mage armor*, scroll of *magic missile*, *wand of color spray* (CL 5th, 14 charges), 100 pp.

11. Assassins (EL 15)

This is a common room as well as an open area where the assassins can retreat in case they are under attack. The room is devoid of furnishings, and has an open window that the assassins can use to escape in the event that they are beaten. The assassins attempt to flank the PCs if possible so that they can employ their sneak attacks. If the PCs are an easy challenge for them, one of the assassins draws back and studies for 3 rounds the character he thinks is the most powerful, and then attacks that character using his death attack ability.

The PCs must take Inash alive if they want to learn who is behind the tattooed slaves. If retreat is blocked and he is reduced to one-quarter of his full normal hit points, he agrees to surrender and provide the PCs with whatever information they request. If asked, he will inform them that the Red Wizard enclave is the source of the tattooed slaves, although he does not know why the Red Wizards are trying to sell these slaves to the Zhentarim.

Assassins (2): hp 74 each; use statistics for Branislav Semyon, page 97.

Inash **CR 15**

Male Vaasan human rogue 6/assassin 9
NE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +8, Spot +17
Languages Chondathan, Common

AC 25, touch 15, flat-footed 22; Dodge, improved uncanny dodge, Mobility
hp 85 (15 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +7 (+11 against poison), **Ref** +14, **Will** +4

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); Spring Attack
Melee *+2 flaming burst longsword* +14/+9 (1d8+5 plus 1d6 fire/19–20 plus 1d10 fire)
Ranged *+1 dagger* +14 (1d4+3/19–20)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, death attack, Power Attack, sneak attack +8d6
Combat Gear 4 *potions of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 14, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 8, Cha 12
SQ hide in plain sight, poison use, trapfinding, trap sense +2
Feats Blind-Fight, Cleave, Combat Reflexes, Dodge, Mobility, Power Attack, Spring Attack
Skills Disguise +19, Forgery +9, Hide +20, Listen +8, Move Silently +20, Open Lock +12, Search +9, Sleight of Hand +11, Spot +17, Use Magic Device +10
Possessions combat gear plus *+4 mithral breastplate, amulet of natural armor +1, +2 flaming burst longsword, +1 dagger, bag of holding* (type II), masterwork thieves' tools

Thayan Enclave

The Thayan enclave lies in the same portion of Mulmaster as the castle and the noble houses. It consists of a patrolled brick wall surrounding a main compound attached to a 40-foot-tall tower. The structure's exterior is exotic, intimidating, and is an open, flaunted symbol of Thayan power. The enclave is considered Thayan ground, so the residents are allowed to deal with lawbreakers and intruders according to the laws of their homeland (which means they can do anything they want with them). They can confine anyone they bring here in their detention center without fear of political repercussions.

The Thayan enclave serves as an embassy, a laboratory for the crafting of magic items, and a base for launching an invasion—which is hypothetical at this point in time. As long as the High Blade remains married to the Tharchion of Eltabbar, Thay considers Mulmaster conquered territory. The enclave is sponsored by Eltabbar and is in competition with the other enclaves throughout the Moonsea region, but this rivalry rarely erupts into a full trade war, since the enclaves' collective profits benefit Szass Tam and strengthen Thay as a whole.

Individuals from Mulmaster are invited to enter the enclave and are allowed to freely wander the main hall (room 1) as well as the rooms where private deals are negotiated (room 9), provided that those rooms are not occupied by people conducting business.

The interior of the enclave consists of workshops where the wizards craft the magic items that they sell. A vast library, a study hall, a kitchen, and a prison also lie on this floor. The tower is where the leaders of the enclave live and spend most of their time. Each floor of the tower is a single chamber that is a combination study, bedroom, and spellcasting chamber. The top level is reserved for Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger, although when he is away from the enclave (as he currently is), that chamber is occupied by his second-in-command, Hayanalof Brezen.

All locked doors in the Thayan enclave require a successful DC 25 Open Lock check to unlock.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 13th–15th level.

Background

Assuming that this adventure is being run as part of the Mulmaster story arc, the PCs should have discovered some similarly tattooed slaves in the custody of the Zhentarim. If the PCs followed the trail, they should have spoken to Inash the assassin, who told them that Thay is responsible for tattooing the prisoners—though to what end, the PCs have yet to discover.

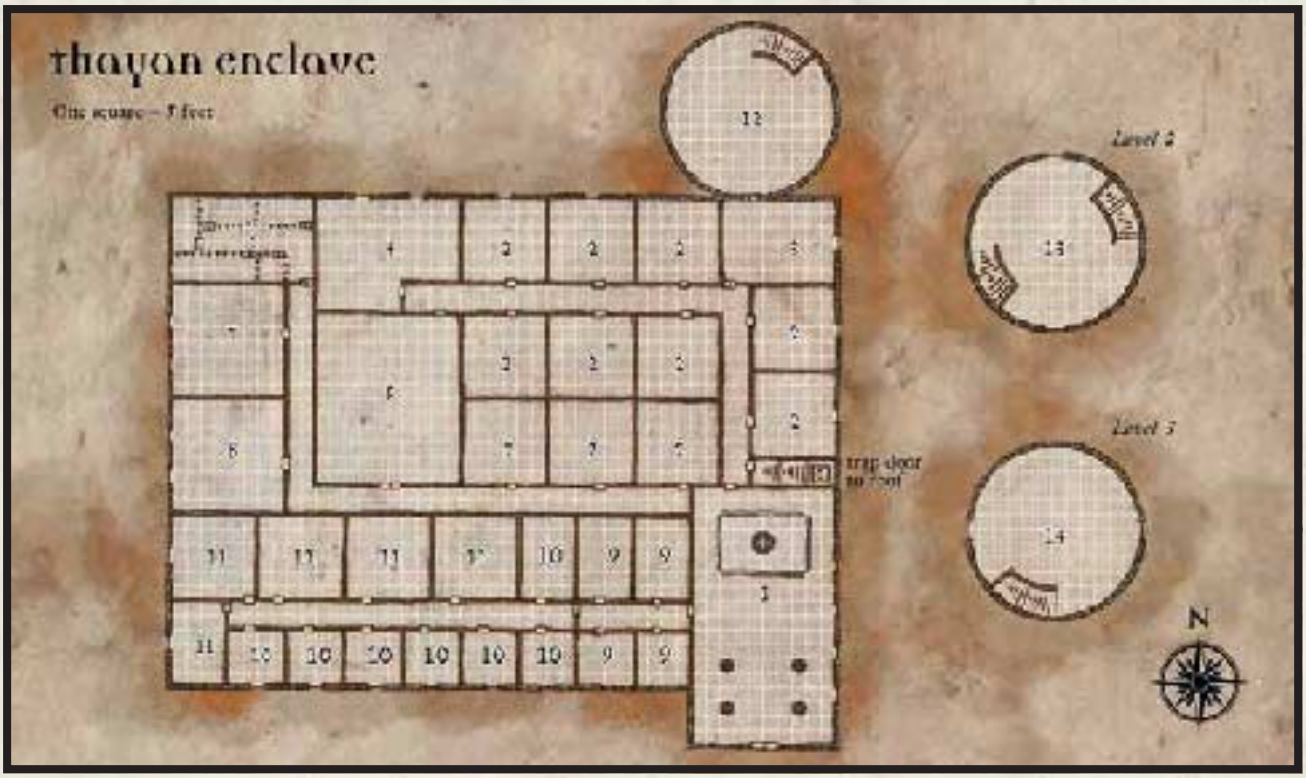
Despite their competitive nature, the various Thayan enclaves have been working in concert with one another to tattoo as many slaves as possible in the hope of getting the majority of them into the Zhentarim strongholds. Red Wizard agents have infiltrated the Zhentarim, and, with the slaves under their control, they hope to seize control of the organization and use it as a vehicle to increase their presence throughout Faerûn. The economic domination of the magic-item trade is just a precursor to an eventual full-scale invasion.

The PCs should be able to enter the enclave peacefully by posing as people interested in purchasing magic items. Once inside, their best approach would be to stealthily make their way into the interior of the building, sneak into the tower, and attempt to unearth any documentation that reveals the Thayan plot against the Zhentarim.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- Assuming that the PCs are following the Mulmaster adventure arc, their trail has led them here.
- If the PCs are not following the Mulmaster adventure arc, they are sent here by the Zhentarim because the Zhents think that Thay might be plotting against them, and wish for the PCs to uncover evidence of its plans.
- The PCs might be drawn here to uncover a powerful magic item that they need for a different quest. The item is not for sale, so it must be taken by force; it is located on the top floor of the tower.



Encounters

1. Main Hall (EL varies)

This room is large and open, displaying four statues depicting various notable Red Wizards from Thay's history, one of which depicts a young Szass Tam before he became a lich. At the northern end of the room is a large, slightly raised dais with a fountain on it. This room is magically lit, and the floor is a red-streaked white marble. Several Red Wizards mill about in this room, each displaying a variety of less powerful magic items for sale. Anyone wishing to purchase more powerful items or have special items crafted is invited to meet with a Red Wizard in room 9 for negotiations.

During daylight hours, 2d6 non-Thayans are here on business along with 2d6 Red Wizards (not necessarily the same number) on hand and a guard patrol consisting of one Thayan guard commander and five Thayan guards. Any attack on the Red Wizards or the guards sets off the alarm, which eliminates any chance of the PCs maintaining stealth or establishing surprise as they explore the remainder of the complex. The two doors in the northern portion of the room always have two guards posted there to prevent people from wandering into portions of the building where they are not welcome. The remaining two guards mill about the room to ensure that all their guests are conducting business peacefully. Any creatures attempting to sneak past the guards are attacked, and the survivors are taken to the detention center (area 6).

The PCs might use a number of methods to pass beyond this room. They can try using *dimension door* to get past the guards; they can become *invisible,* wait for the door to open, and then attempt to sneak through the door as people pass through. If the PCs visit frequently and purchase items often, they might be able to talk a Red Wizard into giving them a tour (opposed Diplomacy check). A further option is to become violent, allow themselves to be arrested, and then escape from their jail cells.

Red Wizards (2d6): hp 40 each; see below.
Thayan Guards (5): hp 64 each; see below.
Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

2. Workshops (EL varies)

The Red Wizards use these rooms to craft the magic items that they sell. Each includes a forge, a laboratory, tables for mixing alchemical components, and other tools for altering various different materials. These rooms are constantly in use, and a small number of Red Wizards are here at any given time. Any creatures other than Red Wizards entering these rooms are attacked on sight unless they are accompanied by a Red Wizard and at least two guards.

Red Wizards (1d4+1): hp 40 each; see below.

3. Guarded Tower Access (EL 14)

Other than an expensive rug from Calimshan and a tapestry on the east wall depicting Thaymount, this room is empty of items. One patrol of guards remains in this room to ensure that only approved visitors enter the tower. The PCs are not allowed in this room under any circumstances, and are immediately attacked if they enter.

The Thayan guards engage their opponents in melee combat, focusing on the front-line fighters first, attempting to flank them

if possible. They will fight to the death to protect the leaders of the enclave.

Thayan Guards (5): hp 64 each; see below.

Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

4. Kitchen

This massive room is where the food is prepared for the enclave. The cooks prepare meals for the residents here, as well as numerous foods offered (for a price) to the enclave's customers. This room is always inhabited by 2d6 cooks, who surrender immediately if attacked.

5. Dining Room

This room is filled with numerous tables where the Red Wizards and guards sit down to eat their meals.

6. Detention Center (EL 14)

This room is where the Thayans detail prisoners. There are currently five slaves here, awaiting the process to add the magical tattoos; also in the room is a patrol of guards.

Thayan Guards (5): hp 64 each; see below.

Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

7. Library (EL varies)

This room is filled with shelves full of books. Roughly half the library is devoted to magical research; all the spells from the *Player's Handbook* and *Player's Guide to Faerûn* can be found here in the hundreds of spellbooks that line the shelves. The other half of the room is filled with books detailing the various regions of Faerûn, and there is a shelf filled with the various philosophies of Szass Tam and the other Thayan leaders. At any time, 1d4 Red Wizards can be found in the library.

Red Wizards (1d4): hp 40 each; see below.

8. Study Chamber (EL varies)

The Red Wizards typically use this room in conjunction with the library. It is a place to sit down and study texts, quietly contemplate, or study spells for the day. There are typically 1d4 Red Wizards in this room at any given time.

Red Wizards (1d4): hp 40 each; see below.

9. Negotiation Rooms

These rooms are used by the Red Wizards to negotiate with anyone interested in purchasing rare, expensive, or unusual magic items. Each room contains an expensive rug, a desk, and several chairs. Anyone is allowed into these rooms, although the doors are locked during negotiations.

10. Guard Barracks (EL varies)

Each of these rooms contains six bunks where the Thayan guards sleep, as well as twelve chests. At any given time, 1d4 guards and a guard commander are in each of these rooms.

Thayan Guards (1d4): hp 64 each; see below.

Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

11. Red Wizard Barracks

These rooms are similar to room 10, except that they contain only four bunks and are occupied only by Red Wizards. Each of these rooms also contains four comfortable chairs where the Red Wizards can prepare their spells for the day. At any given time, 1d3 Red Wizards are in each of these rooms.

Red Wizards (1d3): hp 40 each; see below.

12. Third in Command's Quarters

This chamber belongs to the Red Wizard who is third in command of the enclave. The wizard is gone; his guards are not.

Thayan Guards (5): hp 64 each; see below.

Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

13. Hayanalof Brezen's Chambers (EL 16)

This room is the middle floor of the tower. By the time the PCs arrive, Hayanalof Brezen has learned of their presence in the enclave and has surrounded himself with a force that he believes is large enough to deal with the invasion. Upon their arrival, his first action is to inquire why the PCs are here, since he hopes to settle things peacefully if possible. He also wants to learn how much of the plot to gain control of the Zhentarim they have uncovered, and how much they have revealed. He does not give the PCs any information that they did not have prior to their arrival here.

Hayanalof's primary purposes are to ensure the profitability of this enclave, and to help advance Thay's plans for the region. He will protect his secrets with his life, and will not provide any additional information to the PCs, even under torture, threats, or blackmail. The plan involving the tattooed slaves is outlined in a journal in area 14. Because Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger is currently in Thay, they will be able to search room 14 uncontested if they defeat Hayanalof.

This room contains a bed, a desk, and a plush chair where Hayanalof is able to prepare his spells in silence and comfort. Arcane runes used in conjunction with summoning spells are etched into the floor.

When combat begins, the guards immediately form a protective line against the PCs. Hayanalof will use his *staff of power* to put a *globe of invulnerability* around himself. He then begins casting the highest-level offensive spells he has prepared. If the battle goes poorly for him, or his allies have been slain, he attempts to teleport to the Tower of the Wyvern, where he will attempt to take refuge and bring the brunt of the city's forces to bear against the PCs.

Thayan Guards (6): hp 64 each; see below.

Thayan Guard Commander: hp 94; see below.

Red Wizards (2): hp 40 each; see below.

Hayanalof Brezen: hp 50; see below.

14. Conjuremaster Ahryn Firefinger's Chambers

This room is empty of inhabitants. A locked chest (Open Lock DC 25) containing numerous valuable items held by the enclave, as well as the total cash holdings it currently has (the amount found here is moved to Thay on a regular basis), is held within. Also, in a desk drawer is a journal detailing the plans to take control of the Zhentarim as well as the method of creating the

tattoo used to control the slaves. One recent entry in the journal mentions the Tesh Inn, located in Zhentil Keep, as a place where information is covertly exchanged between the Red Wizards and their companions who are posing as Zhentarim slave merchants. By doing so, those agents hope to gain possession of as many of the tattooed slaves as possible.

Treasure: *+4 full plate armor*, black pearl (500 gp), blue quartz (11 gp), journal (see above), moss agate (13 gp), *phylactery of undead turning*, tourmaline (100 gp), *wand of mirror image* (CL 5th, 17 charges), *wand of false life* (CL 5th, 13 charges), 32,000 gp.

Thayan Guard — CR 8

Male Rashemi human fighter 8
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Mulhorandi

AC 23, touch 11, flat-footed 22
hp 64 (8 HD)
Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +3

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee *+1 bastard sword* +14/+9 (1d10+6/19–20)
Ranged *+1 composite longbow* +10/+5 (1d8+4/×3)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +11
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack
Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Cleave[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave[B], Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Improved Initiative, Improved Bull Rush, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B]
Skills Climb +6, Intimidate +5, Jump +0, Swim +0
Possessions combat gear plus *+1 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +1 bastard sword, +1 composite longbow* (+3 Str bonus), 30 arrows, water flask, keys

Thayan Guard Commander — CR 12

Male Rashemi human fighter 12
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Common, Mulhorandi

AC 25, touch 12, flat-footed 24
hp 94 (12 HD)
Fort +10, **Ref** +5, **Will** +5

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee *+2 bastard sword* +20/+15/+10 (1d10+10/17–20)
Ranged *+2 composite longbow* +15/+10/+5 (1d8+6/×3)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +16
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack
Combat Gear 3 *potions of cure serious wounds*

Abilities Str 18, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Cleave[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bastard sword), Great Cleave[B], Greater Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Greater Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B], Improved Bull Rush, Improved Critical (bastard sword)[B], Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (bastard sword)[B], Weapon Specialization (bastard sword)[B]
Skills Climb +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +4, Swim +4
Possessions combat gear plus *+2 full plate, +1 heavy steel shield, +2 bastard sword, +2 composite longbow* (+4 Str bonus), 20 arrows, water flask, keys

Red Wizard — CR 11

Male Mulan human evoker 8/Red Wizard 3
LE Medium humanoid
Init +2; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Mulhorandi

AC 19, touch 14, flat-footed 17
hp 40 (11 HD)
Fort +4, **Ref** +5, **Will** +10; +2 against evocation

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+1 dagger* +6 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged dart +7 (1d4)
Base Atk +5; **Grp** +5
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 12th):
6th—*chain lightning* (2) (DC 20)
5th—*break enchantment* (DC 18), *cone of cold* (DC 19), *wall of force*
4th—*dimensional anchor, Evard's black tentacles* (+19 grapple), *ice storm* (DC 18), *stoneskin* (DC 17)
3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic* (DC 16), *fireball* (2) (DC 17), *fly, summon monster III*
2nd—*darkness, flaming sphere* (DC 16), *resist energy, web* (DC 15), *scorching ray* (+7 ranged touch), *see invisibility*
1st—*comprehend languages, hold portal, mage armor, magic missile* (2), *protection from good*
0—*dancing lights, daze* (DC 13), *light, ray of frost* (+7 ranged touch), *resistance*
Prohibited schools: illusion, enchantment, necromancy

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ familiar (none at present), spell power +1
Feats Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor[B], Craft Rod, Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Scribe Scroll[B], Tattoo Focus
Skills Appraise +3 (+5 weapons), Bluff +6, Concentration +15, Craft (weaponsmithing) +14, Decipher Script +14, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Intimidate +5, Knowledge (arcana) +17, Spellcraft +19
Possessions *amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2, +1 dagger,* 5 darts
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all except illusion, enchantment, and necromancy; 1st—*alarm, burning hands, endure elements, shield, Tenser's floating disk;* 2nd—*continual flame, gust of wind, shatter;* 3rd—

daylight, Leomund's tiny hut, lightning bolt, wind wall; 4th—*fire shield, wall of ice;* 5th—*Bigby's interposing hand, sending;* 6th—*Bigby's forceful hand, contingency*

Hayanalof Brezen **CR 14**

Male Mulan human evoker 8/Red Wizard 6
LE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1
Languages Chessentan, Common, Damaran, Mulhorandi

AC 21, touch 16, flat-footed 18
hp 50 (14 HD)
Fort +5, **Ref** +8, **Will** +12; +2 against evocation

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee +2 *dagger* +9/+4 (1d4+2/19–20)
Ranged dart +9/+4 (1d4)
Base Atk +7; **Grp** +7
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 17th):
7th—*delayed blast fireball* (DC 23), *prismatic spray* (DC 23), *Mordenkainen's sword* (+22 melee touch)
6th—*Bigby's forceful hand, chain lightning* (2) (DC 22), *globe of invulnerability*
5th—*break enchantment* (DC 20), *cone of cold* (2) (DC 21), *wall of force*
4th—*dimensional anchor, Evard's black tentacles* (+21 grapple), *fire shield, ice storm* (DC 20), *stoneskin*
3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, dispel magic* (DC 18), *fireball* (2) (DC 19), *fly, summon monster III*
2nd—*darkness, flaming sphere* (DC 18), *resist energy, web* (DC 17), *scorching ray* (+9 ranged touch), *see invisibility*
1st—*comprehend languages, hold portal, mage armor, magic missile* (2), *protection from good*
0—*dancing lights, daze* (DC 15), *light, ray of frost* (+9 ranged touch), *resistance*
Prohibited schools: illusion, enchantment, necromancy

Abilities Str 10, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 17, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ familiar (none at present), spell power +3
Feats Brew Potion, Craft Magic Arms and Armor[B], Craft Rod, Craft Staff[B], Craft Wondrous Item, Empower Spell, Forge Ring, Scribe Scroll[B], Tattoo Focus
Skills Appraise +3 (+5 weapons), Bluff +11, Concentration +18, Craft (weaponsmithing) +14, Decipher Script +14, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Intimidate +9, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Spellcraft +22
Possessions *amulet of natural armor +2, bracers of armor +2, ring of protection +2, +1 dagger,* 5 darts, *gloves of Dexterity +2, headband of intellect +2*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all except illusion, enchantment, and necromancy; 1st—*alarm, burning hands, endure elements, shield, Tenser's floating disk;* 2nd—*continual flame, gust of wind, shatter;* 3rd—*daylight, Leomund's tiny hut, lightning bolt, wind wall;* 4th—*fire shield, wall of ice;* 5th—*Bigby's interposing hand, sending;* 6th—*contingency, disintegrate*; 7th—*limited wish*

Eastern Moonsea Quests

The following quests pits the PCs against an unusually well-organized army of creatures bent on the destruction of Mulmaster as well as the other cities of the Moonsea. The PCs begin their journey investigating these creatures after some recent raids in the Eastern Moonsea region. This leads to the discovery of a number of ancient locations that could tip the balance of power in favor of the horde.

The Seaside Caves

This warren of sandstone caves is located on the southern tip of the Galena Mountains. The entrance to the caves is just a few feet above the chill waters of the Moonsea, and the entrance is prone to occasional flooding. The interior of the cave complex has a slight upward rise, causing most of the water that washes in from storms to rapidly drain back into the sea.

Creatures seeking to make the caves their home frequently explore this location; however, few succeed in staying here for a prolonged period of time. Goblins, trolls, orcs, and other creatures move in, only to be thrown out when another group claims it for itself. The bickering lasts until one of the interested groups leaves or is eliminated. A relative peace ensues, then is usually brought to an end when an adventuring group discovers this location and clears the place out, and the cycle begins anew.

This adventure starts the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc. Almost all of the creatures the PCs face have five uses of *fireball* (CL 5th) at their disposal. This advantage increases the challenge rating of each creature by 1. This ability is obtained by traveling to the Pillar of Fire (the second adventure in this arc).

The following adventure is designed for characters of 9th–11th level.

Background

Two months ago, a force led by a pair of fire giants swept into these caverns, cleared out the orcs that were living here, and took up residence. After their conquest of the caves, the invaders used the site as a base to begin launching raids on nearby trade caravans and villages, from travelers in the Bloodstone Pass to ships sailing the Moonsea.

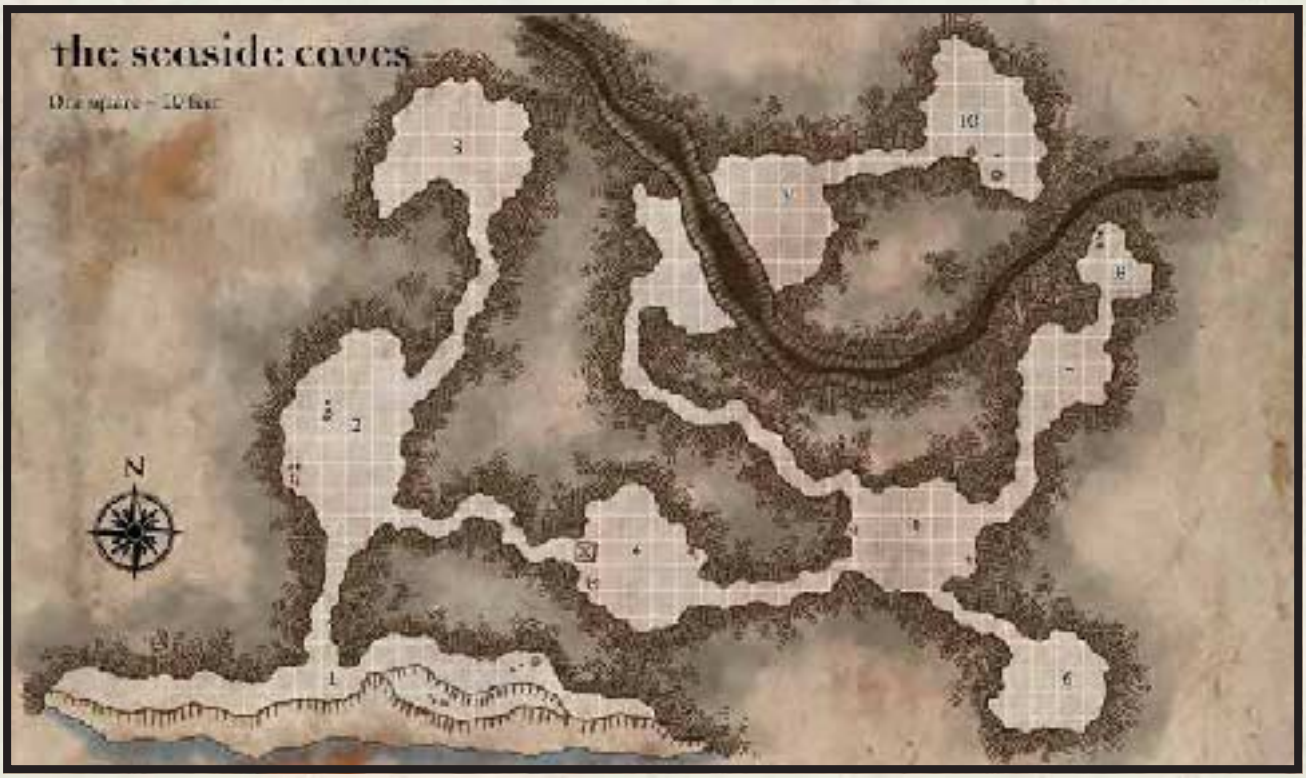
The purpose of the giants' army in settling here is to disrupt the flow of trade through this region in hopes of leaving Mulmaster and the smaller communities in this region more vulnerable to attack.

Since the attacks have increased in frequency, those who live in this difficult terrain have become increasingly concerned with the raids, especially the boldness of some of the attacks.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- Locals who have been traveling through the southern Galena Mountains tell the PCs that a group of vicious monsters attacked them, inflicting heavy casualties. The monsters



retreated to some caves on the southern slopes of the mountains, near the sea.

- Several ships that passed near the southern tip of the Galena Mountains complain that they suffered attacks from the shore; boulders have been hurled and arrows fired, sometimes causing extensive damage.
- The PCs, while traveling through the southern tip of the Galena Mountains, seek a place to rest—depositing them at area 1, below.

Encounters

1. Entrance (EL 9)

The entrance to the cave is 15 feet high and cut from rock 20 feet from the Moonsea's shore. The entrance is well used and easy to locate (Spot DC 10).

Creatures: Two hill giants guard the cave entrance. They immediately attack anyone who nears the area unless the individual is a member of the army they are allied with. The primary creatures that make up this growing army are ogres, trolls, yuan-ti, and giants, so the hill giants will be skeptical of anyone of a different race who tries to enter.

As with all intelligent creatures in this lair, the hill giants have visited the Pillar of Fire. Once their five *fireballs* are exhausted, they switch to throwing boulders if the PCs are still at a distance. If they are within melee combat range, they use their greatclubs against the PCs.

Hill Giants (2): hp 102 each; *MM* 123.

2. Owlbear Pen (EL 10)

The giants and their allies keep owlbears as guards because they are easily trained and controlled, and they can cause a great deal of damage to their enemies. In this room, an ogre barbarian tends to three owlbears. They are accustomed to creatures walking through here, so the PCs have a +5 circumstance bonus for the purposes of determining surprise.

Once combat begins, the ogre barbarian immediately casts its *fireballs* if it can do so without hurting the owlbears. Once its *fireballs* are expended, or it is no longer able to cast them without affecting the owlbears, it goes into a rage and commands the owlbears to attack. The owlbears begin combat by charging the nearest opponents and using their two claw attacks against them. Note that because owlbears are not intelligent creatures, they have no *fireballs* from the Pillar of Fire. If the ogre senses they are losing the battle, it attempts to run to room 3 for reinforcements.

Owlbears (3): hp 52 each; *MM* 206.

4th-Level Ogre Barbarian: hp 79; *MM* 199.

3. Hill Giant Lair (EL 11)

Three hill giants occupy this room. They typically take shifts protecting area 1. The hill giants in this room are currently off duty, granting the PCs a +5 circumstance bonus for the purpose of determining surprise. They do not appreciate intrusions, even from members of their own army, and attack anything that enters this room except for the inhabitants of area 2—in which case the hill giants immediately know that the caves are being invaded and their presence is needed.

The hill giants first use the *fireballs* granted by the Pillar of Fire, then close to melee and attempt to flank their opponents. If possible, they use their reach to attack any spellcasters hiding behind the fighters.

The hill giants keep their treasure locked away in a chest, though they have entrusted a spare key to the fire giants who lead this group. The lock requires a successful DC 25 Open Lock check to open.

Hill Giants (3): hp 102 each; *MM* 123.

Treasure: *Potion of cure light wounds, potion of eagle's splendor, wand of color spray* (CL 5th, 22 charges), 11,000 gp.

4. Trapped Chamber

This room is rarely used by the creatures that inhabit these caves, although they frequently move through the area on their way to other rooms. The inhabitants know of the camouflaged pit trap in this room, and they avoid it when passing through.

Well-Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 8; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Reflex DC 20 avoids; 100 ft. deep (10d6, fall); Search DC 27; Disable Device DC 18.

5. Common Room (EL 11)

This room lies at the intersection of the two primary tunnels in this cave complex. When the PCs enter, a hill giant, an ogre barbarian, and a yuan-ti abomination attack immediately.

All of the creatures in the room use the *fireballs* they gained from the *Pillar of Fire*. They continue to do this for as long as they have *fireballs* remaining and they are able to use them without hitting their allies. Once *fireballs* are no longer an option, they charge into melee combat. The ogre barbarian goes into rage, while the hill giant and the yuan-ti abomination attempt to work together to flank the PCs. If the battle goes poorly and they are able to retreat, they head to the northwest passage and attempt to join their leader in area 9.

Hill Giant: hp 102; *MM* 123.

4th-level Ogre Barbarian: hp 79; *MM* 199.

Yuan-Ti Abomination: hp 67; *MM* 264.

6. Xorns (EL 12)

Four elder xorns occupy this room. Unlike the rest of the creatures in the caves, the xorns are not associated with the giants and their allies. They occupied the caves when the army arrived and chose to remain here. The giants chose not to attack them, and they, in turn, have remained largely nonaggressive. If the PCs leave the xorns alone, they do not attack.

If the PCs choose to attack, the xorns use their claw and bite attacks to defend themselves. If the battle goes poorly for them, they use their earth glide ability to dive into the cave walls.

Elder Xorns (4): hp 260 each; *MM* 260.

7. Yuan-Ti (EL 11)

This room is inhabited by three yuan-ti abominations. These creatures are here to help ensure the loyalty of the various creatures here and assist the fire giants in planning attacks on the surrounding area.

The yuan-ti value their privacy and attack anyone who enters except for the night hag that lives in area 8—including other members of the giants' band. Like the others in the cave, the yuan-ti abominations can use *fireball* as a spell-like ability. They enter melee combat once their magical attacks have been exhausted.

Yuan-Ti Abominations (3): hp 67 each; *MM* 264.

Treasure: Black velvet mask with numerous citrines (120 gp), brass mug with jade inlays (400 gp), carved harp of exotic wood with ivory inlay and zircon gems (800 gp), jeweled anklet (4,000 gp), gold idol (700 gp), 230 pp.

8. Luxewa's Lair (EL 9)

Luxewa the night hag inhabits this room. When the PCs enter, it immediately begins casting spells against the party. Like the other creatures in the caves, it has the *fireballs* granted by the Pillar of Fire, and it uses those against the PCs for as long as possible, then uses its spell-like abilities such as *magic missile*. Once the PCs have closed to melee, it uses its natural weapons, attempting to cause demon fever. Should the battle go poorly, Luxewa uses its *etherealness* spell-like ability and attempts to flee the cave. Luxewa's treasure is located in a bag at the foot of its straw bed (Search DC 10).

Luxewa, Night Hag: hp 68; *MM* 193.

Treasure: Smoky quartz (50 gp), lapis lazuli (11 gp), 1,500 gp.

9. Commander's Chamber (EL 13)

This room is the home of the fire giant brothers Soluf and Gharod, who command the creatures in the sea caves. They are not overly intelligent, so they frequently converse with the yuan-ti and Luxewa when making important decisions about their mission.

Dividing this chamber is a 20-foot-wide chasm, which is 40 feet deep. All of the creatures inhabiting the room begin on the opposite side of the chamber.

Three ogres protect the fire giants. When the PCs enter the room, all the creatures attempt to blast the PCs with their *fireballs*. If the PCs begin to walk across the 10-foot-wide bridge, one ogre charges and attempts a bull rush to throw one character from the bridge. Once the PCs make it across the bridge, all the remaining inhabitants rush to attack. The ogres use simple tactics, attempting to flank the PCs; the fire giants will also wade into melee, using their greatswords against the PCs.

Fire Giants (2): hp 142 each; *MM* 121.

Ogres (3): hp 79 each; *MM* 199.

10. Treasure Chamber

The treasure of the fire giants is spilled across the floor of this chamber. Among the loot is a journal that contains a map noting the locations of the Pillar of Fire and the excavation site (parts two and three of this adventure arc).

Treasure: *Heavy steel shield of moderate fortification*, eyepatch with mock eye of sapphire and moonstone (1,500 gp), silver-plated steel longsword with jet jewel in hilt (200 gp), 2,820 gp.

The Pillar of Fire

The Pillar of Fire is a location imbued with the element of flame. This site is buried deep inside the southernmost tip of the Galena Mountains. Its existence remains undiscovered by sages, although a few lucky creatures and adventurers have stumbled on it over the years, and benefited greatly from it.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 9th–11th level.

The Pillar of Fire lies deep within the earth, connected to the surface through a complex of caverns. The complex's entrance is overgrown with trees and bushes, making it easy to overlook. The tunnel goes straight into the mountain for 3/4 mile, becoming somewhat more difficult to navigate as it nears the location of the pillar. The tunnel finally opens onto a massive cavern, where a small sandy beach meets the icy waters of an underground lake. An enormous stone pillar protrudes from the lake's surface, reaching nearly 200 feet toward the top of the cavern. There are no boats or other means built into the chamber to cross to the pillar. A steep stairway circles the pillar, eventually reaching the flat surface at the top.

Creatures that arrive at the top of the pillar can claim the special ability of the Pillar of Fire and walk away with the offensive power that it grants.

Lore: Little is known about this location, though there are rumors spread by the adventurers who have made it here before. Characters can gain the following information about the Pillar of Fire by making a Knowledge (arcana) or Knowledge (nature) check at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 20: Deep within the southern tip of the Galena Mountains lies a magical location imbued with the element of fire.

DC 25: Those who go to the top of the Pillar of Fire and touch the altar gain the ability to hurl several *fireballs*.

DC 30: The origin of this location is unknown, although it is known that thousands of years ago, a hag coven that worshiped Kossuth resided in these areas and might have wielded great power.

Description: The interior of the chamber where the Pillar of Fire is located smells of smoke and brimstone. A visible fiery aura surrounds the pillar, brightly illuminating the area around it and obscuring anything at the top.

Prerequisite: The Pillar of Fire confers its special ability only upon creatures with an Intelligence score of 5 or higher.

Location Activation: To activate the Pillar of Fire, a creature must possess a rune tile of each of the four elements. These tiles can be obtained only by defeating the elementals guarding them. One hour after they are placed on the altar, the tiles disappear from the altar, and new copies of the tiles appear in each of the chambers where the elementals are encountered. The Pillar of Fire cannot be activated again until all four tiles are obtained and correctly placed once more.

Recharge: The Pillar of Fire recharges instantly after it has conferred its ability to a creature.

Special Ability (Sp): The Pillar of Fire grants the ability to use *fireball* (CL 5th) five times as a spell-like ability. A creature cannot claim the ability again until its initial five *fireballs* have been expended.

Duration: The ability lasts until the recipient uses all five *fireballs* granted.

Aura: Strong evocation.

Ability Value: 4,000 gp.

Background

The Pillar of Fire is a magical location that has been discovered and rediscovered many times over the centuries. Because of its remote location, it is overlooked by sages, but is a boon to adventurers and monsters that happen upon it. The giants and their allies found this location several months ago and have been using it to keep the creatures living in the seaside caves stocked with an arsenal of *fireballs*.

The Pillar of Fire is guarded both by creatures from the giants' band as well as elemental creatures that have been summoned to protect it. The elementals attack any trespassers, but their attacks stop after a creature (or group of creatures) has made it to the pinnacle of the pillar and claimed the special ability of the location. Some additional creatures from the nearby seaside caves provide further protection.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If the PCs are playing through the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc, they should have found a map in the seaside caves pointing to this place.
- If the first adventure in the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc was skipped, the PCs hear rumors of hideous *fireball*-wielding creatures that attack and then flee back to this location.
- If this is being run independently of the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc, one of the sages of Faerûn who has heard of the existence of this magical location asks the PCs to explore it and report their findings.

Encounters

1. Earth Rune (EL 11)

Nearly a mile underground, this is the first chamber the PCs encounter as they travel toward the Pillar of Fire. Any time a creature passes through this room from the outside, an elder earth elemental rises from the cavern.

The earth elemental begins combat by trudging toward the PCs and using its powerful slam attacks against the party. If it becomes flanked by the PCs, it uses its earth glide ability to dive into the cave bottom and reposition itself. After moving to a strategically viable position, it emerges from the stone and attacks again. Because it is a summoned guardian, it fights to the death. Once defeated, the earth elemental disintegrates, leaving a small tile engraved with a rune (earth) sitting at the top of the heap of debris.

Elder Earth Elemental: hp 228; *MM* 97.

2. Crushing Trap

This room contains a *permanent illusion* of a treasure chest lying in the center. This is a malicious trap devised long ago by an evil wizard who intended to lay permanent claim to the Pillar of Fire.

Fate had other plans for him, but his trap remains, long after death. A 10-foot-square pressure plate lying beneath the illusion of the treasure chest activates the trap.

Dropping Ceiling Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; ceiling moves down (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-by-20-ft. space); never miss; onset delay (1 round); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

3. Chimera Lair (EL 11)

This room is the lair of a pride of chimeras. They encountered the members of the giants' band and were defeated in combat—but were allowed to live, provided that they not attack any of the creatures belonging to the army. They have been fed humans and demihumans, and they are encouraged to feed upon creatures of those races.

The chimeras immediately jump into melee combat with the PCs, using their breath weapons. If possible, the chimeras attempt to encircle the party and concentrate their breath weapons inward.

Chimeras (4): hp 76 each; *MM* 34.

4. Air Rune (EL 10)

When a creature enters the room, three huge air elementals appear and attack. The air elementals favor the use of their slam attacks against any party. If one PC appears to be causing more damage than others, one of the air elementals uses its whirlwind ability in an attempt to trap that PC inside it, while the other two hold off the other party members. Once the last air elemental has been slain, a small white tile engraved with a rune (air) is left in its place.

Huge Air Elementals (3): hp 136 each; *MM* 96.

5. Guard Station (EL 12)

The giants have posted guards in this area. Four ogre barbarians wait here, anticipating an attack at any moment. Any creatures not allied with the giants are immediately attacked when they enter. One of the ogre barbarians carries a sack containing the treasure listed below.

The barbarians fly into a rage at the beginning of combat. They then throw themselves at the front lines of the PCs and always attack the nearest foe.

4th-Level Ogre Barbarians (4): hp 79 each; *MM* 199.

Treasure: Blue sapphire (1,300 gp), deep green spinel (130 gp), emerald (1,100 gp), hematite (7 gp), iolite (50 gp), potion of *shield of faith*, sard (80 gp), smoky quartz (30 gp), tiger eye turquoise (13 gp), violet garnet (600 gp), 14,000 gp.

6. Rune of Fire (EL 12)

The fire elementals that guard the rune of fire occupy this room. When a creature enters the room, twelve large fire elementals rise up from the floor and attack. The fire elementals use their slam attacks and burn abilities against the party, attempting to use their superior numbers to force the PCs away from one another. Once the last fire elemental has been slain, a small, charred tile engraved with a rune (fire) appears in the center of the room.

Large Fire Elementals (12): hp 60 each; *MM* 99.

7. Unstable Room (EL 9)

This room is filled with rubble that has fallen from the ceiling. It is unstable and might collapse at any time. If the PCs choose to enter this room, there is a 15% cumulative chance per round that the ceiling will collapse upon them. This works in exactly the same way as the dropping ceiling trap, except that it does not reset.

Dropping Ceiling Trap: CR 9; mechanical; location trigger; ceiling moves down (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all targets in a 20-ft.-by-20-ft. space); never miss; onset delay (1 round); Search DC 20; Disable Device DC 16.

8. Dragon's Hoard

This room appears empty at first glance, but the blue dragon Enthranos (see area 10, below) has magically hidden his hoard within. The hoard is located in a pocket dimension that can only be accessed by the dragon itself. If the PCs have slain the dragon and carry a piece of it with them, the treasure appears on the floor in front of them upon entering the room.

Treasure: Amber (60 gp), carnelian (40 gp), eye agate (9 gp), gold and topaz bottle stopper (300 gp), *Heward's handy haversack*, *incense of meditation*, jade (80 gp), jasper (30 gp), jeweled gold crown (6,000 gp), 3 *potions of bull's strength*, 3 *potions of levitate*, 3 *potions of owl's wisdom*, *ring of protection +2*, silver chalice with lapis lazuli gems (100 gp), 3 scrolls of *darkvision*,

scroll of disguise self, 3 scrolls of *levitate*, scroll of *magic missile*, scroll of *protection from chaos*, silver comb with moonstones (300 gp), 2 gold idols (1,800 gp), silver-plated steel battleaxe with jet jewel in hilt (400 gp), tiger eye turquoise (11 gp), *wand of mirror image* (CL 5th, 24 charges), 12,510 gp.

9. Rune of Water (EL 13)

The Pillar of Fire rises out of the lake in this huge cavern like a blazing, profane finger. The sandy beach runs along the side of the cavern from which the PCs approach. The lake bottom rapidly drops to a depth of 200 feet at the center. Once all the PCs have stepped onto the beach, two elder water elementals rise up from the lake and charge. The water elementals use their drench ability, extinguishing the party's torches in an attempt to blind any human foes. They then use their slam attacks against the party members, causing as much damage as possible. Once the final water elemental is slain, a small blue tile engraved with a rune (water) is left on the sandy beach.

Elder Water Elementals (2): hp 228 each; *MM* 100.

10. The Pillar of Fire (EL 14)

The Pillar of Fire is an immense rock formation that rises out of the small lake in this chamber. Beginning approximately halfway up the structure, the pillar is sheathed in a swirling display of fire. While this does illuminate the room and cause heat, it is not enough heat to cause damage to creatures ascending the pillar.

A steep spiral staircase wraps around the exterior of the pillar. The staircase is 5 feet wide. Each step is 10 inches long by 10 inches high. The entire length of the staircase is 450 feet. Sitting atop the Pillar of Fire is the adult blue dragon Enthranos. The dragon is able to see the PCs once they have reached the halfway point on the staircase. At that juncture, it takes flight and uses its breath weapon against the party. If the PCs reach the altar atop the pillar before destroying the dragon, it lands and fights them for control of the Pillar of Fire. Enthranos uses its breath weapon and spell-like abilities first, targeting the group's spellcasters, then moves on to the melee combatants.

If the dragon is slain, the PCs can claim the ability of the Pillar of Fire. The dragon's hoard is located in room 8, although it is magically protected so that only Enthranos can go back and claim it. To claim it, the PCs must take a piece of the dragon, such as a scale or a tooth, and enter area 8.

To activate the pillar, the PCs must place all four of the rune tiles they obtained from the elementals they faced earlier into the specified square indentations in the altar atop the pillar. Each indentation is marked with the same symbol that appears on the rune.

Any creature atop the pillar at the time of activation is granted the ability. One hour after the tiles are placed on the altar, they disappear from the altar, and new copies appear in each of the chambers where the elementals are encountered. The Pillar of Fire cannot be activated again until all four runic tiles are obtained and correctly placed once more.

Enthranos, Adult Blue Dragon: hp 241; *MM* 73.

Concluding the Adventure

By the time the PCs have won through to the Pillar of Fire, they should have already defeated the creatures allied with the giants that were living in the seaside cave network. The PCs might decide to simply leave this location as they found it, or they might decide that *fireball*-wielding creatures are too much of a threat for the inhabitants of the surrounding region to cope with. If they decide to end the threat, the easiest way to deal with it is to block access to the location rather than trying to destroy the pillar itself. They might wish to create a cave-in at the entrance to the cave network at the base of the mountain, or they might decide to block it off at some point farther inside the tunnel. To cause a cave-in, the PCs must deal 900 hit points of damage to the ceiling and walls (hardness 8) of the passageway to block off a 10-square-foot area.

At this point, the PCs will most likely be interested in exploring the other locations marked on the map found at the caves. The next area in this adventure arc is a ruined town 20 miles south of Bloodstone Pass, currently being excavated by powerful members of the giants' band.

excavation site

The giants and their allies have been seeking out magical locations they can harness before their impending invasion of the Moonsea, and more specifically their first target of Mulmaster. The band's leader has sent a force to one of these locations, and it is frantically searching for a very powerful item; can the PCs get there first?

This excavation site was once a small city known as Skelem. It fell centuries ago and is little more than ruins. A few of the houses remain more or less intact, but the area has been picked over by scores of scavengers, adventurers, and thieves, leaving little of value to salvage. Most of the houses are little more than just walls, most of which stand no more than 3 or 4 feet tall.

Nature has completely reclaimed what was once a thriving human city. Skelem's ruins lie buried beneath a blanket of snow for much of the year; vicious creatures have replaced the humans as the town's residents, and they feed off the unfortunates who wander near their lairs.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 11th–13th level.

Background

Befopre Skelem was overcome, members of the church of Kossuth secretly tunneled out a complex of chambers beneath the house of one of the deity's followers. Within, they spent years constructing an enormous device capable of summoning a small army of elementals.

Now, centuries later, the leaders of the giants' band learned of the location of this place and decided to uncover the ruins in hopes that the magic device built by the followers of Kossuth was still intact. They dispatched a team of yuan-ti abominations and a few patrols of guards to the site in an attempt to locate the device.

Despite the intelligence of the creatures leading this dig, they have misread the clues pointing to the location of the device,

called the Elemental Scourge, and are digging in the wrong place (location Y on the map).

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If you are using the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc, the PCs should be drawn to this location after clearing out the Pillar of Fire. A map recovered previously points to this place as one of importance.
- If the PCs are unfamiliar with the growing threat of the giants and their allies, they are told of this location by travelers who spotted the creatures marching here from the Bloodstone Pass. The locals correctly believe that these sightings represent some sort of growing threat to the region.
- If this is being run independent of the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc, the PCs are drawn here by legends of a mysterious magical location that could grant them the power to summon an army of such destructive force that it could raze a city.

Encounters

1. Flight of Wyverns (EL 11)

This copse is home to a flight of wyverns. The creatures are aware of the presence of the giants' forces, but they have remained out of the way, preferring to ambush the creatures that accidentally wander into the copse as opposed to actively hunting prey. So far, the wyverns have killed and consumed three hill giants and two ogres; the giants and their allies are aware that they are missing comrades, and they are on edge as a result.

The wyverns use their superior numbers against their enemies, focusing their attacks on a single creature until it falls, then moving on to the next one. They use their sting and improved grab to great effect against their opponents.

Wyverns (6): hp 59 each; *MM* 257.

2. Remorhaz Hunting Grounds (EL 10)

This area is the hunting ground for three remorhazes. The creatures seek shelter in the ruins of nearby buildings and emerge only when prey presents itself. The giants' band is not aware of the presence of the remorhazes because the creatures took shelter in the ruined structures to the north when the group searched this area, then returned when the giants had moved on. The remorhazes are cautious about attacking any group of six or more creatures (or three or more giants).

Assuming that the PCs' party consists of six or fewer creatures, the remorhazes will attack. They use their heat ability to melt any weapons that strike them, while using their improved grab and swallow whole abilities to quickly consume their opponents. These creatures focus their attacks on whichever foes are dealing the greatest amount of damage against them.

Remorhazes (3): hp 73 each; *MM* 214.

3. Guard Position (EL 12)

This guard position protects one of the main throughways of the ruined city. The giants assume that any unwelcome creatures attempting to intrude upon their dig site will pass through one

of the main streets of the city, so they have posted a guard patrol here.

Guard Patrol: See area Y, below.

4. Army Encampment Site (EL varies)

This is the camp of the members of the giants' army; it consists of three large tents made of animal hide that surround a massive, 15-foot-diameter fire pit. This area is used mainly as a place to rest, and each tent contains a single guard patrol.

Guard Patrol: See area Y, below.

5. Guard Position (EL 12)

This area is identical to area 3.

Guard Patrol: See area Y, below.

6. Guard Position (EL 12)

This is identical to area 3, except that it guards the westernmost edge of the ruined city. From here the guards can see 1/2 mile to the west, allowing them to see any creatures approaching from that direction well before they become a threat.

Guard Patrol: See area Y, below.

7. Frost Worm Feeding Ground (EL 12)

This area, at the border of a large copse of trees, is the hunting ground of a frost worm. It remains burrowed below ground, waiting for prey to move into this area before emerging and attacking. It is aware of the presence of the giants and their allies, though it has not yet attacked any of them. Like the remorhazes, the frost worm prefers to attack smaller groups of creatures, numbering six or fewer.

The frost worm attacks the PCs when they enter the area, beginning combat with its trill ability. Once it has immobilized as many opponents as possible, it uses its breath weapon against the party. Once it has used these two opening attacks, it switches to its standard bite attacks. The frost worm emerges from a 5-foot-diameter tunnel; if it is explored after the worm has been killed, the PCs will ascertain that the tunnel was made by the worm as it made its way under the ruins. The tunnel loops back upon and crisscrosses itself numerous times, forming a honeycomb of intersecting paths that lead nowhere. While the tunnel holds no treasure, it could make for a valuable hiding place where the PCs could rest.

Frost Worm: hp 147; *MM* 111.

8. Guard Position 4 (EL 12)

This area is identical to area 3, except that it guards the easternmost part of the city. From here the guards can see a full mile to the east, allowing them to spot any creatures approaching from that direction well before they become a threat.

Guard Patrol: See area Y, below.

9. Map House

This is one of the few intact buildings that remain in the city. Inside is a model replica of what the city looked like when it was intact. These include walls and about twice the number of buildings that still stand. When any creatures enter the building, a magic mouth appears on the far wall and asks three questions. Knowing the right answer to a question requires a DC 25 Knowledge check—religion for question 1, dungeoneering for question 2, and history for question 3. A group of PCs needs to succeed on two of these three checks in order to get the pillar to appear at location X. If two or more questions are answered incorrectly, the pillar illusion appears at location Y on the map. The questions and answers are as follows.

Question 1: Who stole Mystra's power in order to become a deity? (Karsus)

Question 2: What is the name of the progenitors of the serpent races? (The sarrukh)

Question 3: What two empires rose six hundred years before the fall of Netheril? (Narfell and Raumathar)

X. Entrance

This is the correct dig site. If the PCs begin digging in this area, they need to move a mere 1-foot depth of earth to uncover a 5-foot-square metal plate. When the plate is moved aside, the PCs can look down into room 1 of the magical location (see the next quest). There is a 30-foot drop to the bottom, so PCs will likely want to make use of the spells *feather fall* or *fly*, or tie a rope around a nearby tree and lower themselves in.

Y. Incorrect Dig Site (EL 13)

This is the excavation area where the giants' band has been digging, believing it to be the correct area to find the next magical location. The excavators do not know that they answered the questions to the puzzle in area 9 incorrectly and are digging in the wrong place. They continue to dig, and in 1d4 days, they will realize the location is incorrect. The ground is torn up, with deep holes dug in numerous locations. There appears to be a complete lack of organization on this dig, and none of the holes are more than 4 or 5 feet deep.

Eleven ogres conduct the dig. Although the giants would be able to move the dirt more quickly, they consider the work to be beneath them, so they force the ogres to do it. While the ogres dig, a guard patrol watches over the dig from the ruins of the large building nearby.

If the PCs enter this area, the ogres immediately attack. The members of the guard patrol are barely interested in the goings-on at the dig, and they don't notice the combat for 1d4 rounds. Once they do, they run to aid their workers.

Ogres (11): hp 29 each; *MM* 199.

Guard Patrol: See below.

Guard Patrol: A guard patrol is made up of creatures sent with the expedition to secure it from hostile forces. Each one includes a yuan-ti abomination commander and a cadre of hill giants and ogres.

Yuan-Ti Abomination: hp 67; *MM* 264.

Hill Giants (3): hp 102 each; *MM* 123.

Ogres (4): hp 29 each; *MM* 199.

The Elemental Scourge

The following adventure is designed for characters of 12th–14th level.

The Elemental Scourge is a magical location that grants an individual the power to quickly destroy large numbers of his enemies. A cabal of wizards allied with the church of Kossuth created it long ago beneath the site of a city named Skelem. In the centuries since the fall of Skelem, the tales of the power of this location have become all but forgotten. The scourge survived, hidden underground, awaiting a willing new master—but these powers will not be bought cheaply.

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the Elemental Scourge by making a knowledge (arcane) check at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 15: The Elemental Scourge came about through an unprecedented collaboration between epic-level wizards.

DC 20: The Elemental Scourge summons forth a virtual army of elementals, which can quickly and effectively bring standing armies to their knees.

DC 25: While the effect of the Elemental Scourge is powerful, it is best used as an opening attack, since the elementals remain for only a brief period of time.

Description: The Elemental Scourge appears to be an immense apparatus of moving parts. These parts include blades, globes, and gauntleted hands at the ends of spindly arms, which appear to be reaching out, or performing odd movements. The object is constantly in motion, emitting subdued light and sounds that have an otherworldly feel.

The chamber in which the Elemental Scourge resides is roughly 50 feet in diameter. Within are four statues, each depicting a life-size representation of the elder elementals that are summoned using the scourge. In front of the apparatus, a pair of concentric circles with runes between them is carved into the stone floor.

Prerequisite: Only a creature with at least 10 Hit Dice or character levels can access the power of the Elemental Scourge.

Location Activation: To activate the Elemental Scourge, a character must kneel within the circle etched into the floor. The power of the elements then pours into the creature, at which time it must make a DC 15 Fortitude save or take 3d6 points of damage. Regardless of whether the creature sustains damage, the creature can then summon the elementals to any location it has visited within 100 miles of Skelem.

Recharge: The Elemental Scourge is fully recharged one year after activation.

Special Ability (Su): Once a creature has claimed the ability of the Elemental Scourge, it can wait to use it for up to one year. The creature can then use this ability to summon a dozen elder elementals, three from all four major elemental types, which follow the commands of the activator.

Duration: The conferred ability can be stored for up to one year, but once used, the elementals remain for only 10 rounds.

Aura: Strong conjuration.

Ability Value: 25,000 gp.

Background

Members of the giants' army have come to this location hoping to unearth the Elemental Scourge. They are led by yuan-ti abominations that are not as familiar with ancient history as they should be; thus, they failed to provide the correct answers in the map building (area 9 in the Excavation Site quest) and have ended up digging in the wrong place. It is likely that given enough time, they will reach the false location buried deep underground, gather the correct answers, and eventually find their way to the correct area, so it is important that the PCs claim the granted ability before their enemies do.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If you are using the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc, the PCs are led here because it is one of the locations marked on the map recovered at the seaside caves (the first adventure in the arc).
- If you are beginning the Eastern Moonsea adventure arc with this adventure, the PCs have heard tales of creatures amassing at the ancient ruins of Skelem. While eradicating the creatures above, the group learns that the giants' goal is to gain control of a powerful magic artifact as a means of launching their opening attack against Mulmaster.
- If you are using this location independently, the PCs hear a rumor of the existence of this place and might decide to go in search of it in hopes of claiming its powerful granted ability.

Encounters

The Elemental Scourge lies in the largest chamber of an underground structure carved out of basalt. All doors are unlocked and wooden (hp 20, hardness 5).

1. Entrance (EL 14)

There is a 30-foot drop from the hatch in the ceiling to the floor of this room. As soon as the first PC sets foot upon the floor, six erinyes and two chain devils are summoned to attack the PCs. If other characters are descending into the room at this time (such as by climbing down a rope), the chain devils and erinyes split their attacks to harry as many of the descending PCs as possible. Any PCs who take damage while clinging to a rope (or some other means of descent) must succeed on a DC 15 Strength check or fall to the floor.

The chamber is unlit. A line of long-decayed spider-webbed corpses is propped up against the walls in a mockery of life. Images of elementals are etched into the walls, and the words "Kossuth's House" is written in ancient Netherese upon the northern wall.

The devils will attempt to use their superior numbers to flank the PCs. The kytons will use their dancing chains ability to strike any characters behind the melee fighters, while the erinyes wade into combat using their flaming longswords. Because they are summoned creatures, they fight to the death.

Erinyes (6): hp 85 each; *MM* 54.

Chain Devils (2): hp 52 each; *MM* 53.

2. Barbed Devils (EL 13)

At 15 feet high, the ceiling in this square room is significantly lower than the ceiling in room 1. This room is a dead end, and it does not contain any treasure.

As soon as this door is opened, two barbed devils are summoned to the center of the room. The floor also fills with spiny barbs, which appear along with the devils. Any creature other than the barbed devils that gets knocked down or otherwise falls onto the barbs must succeed on a DC 15 Reflex save or take 1d6 points of damage. The devils immediately use their *unholy blight* spell-like ability against the PCs. They follow this with *scorching ray*, which they use against any characters who remain behind the main lines of combat. After these actions, they attempt to start a grapple against the melee fighters in front of them. If successful, they deal an additional 3d8+9 points of damage from their impale ability.

Barbed Devils (2): hp 126 each; *MM* 51.

3. Bone Devils (EL 14)

This room is similar to room 2, with the same dimensions and markings found there; however, unlike room 2, this room connects with rooms 4 and 5, allowing further progress toward the Elemental Scourge. Aside from the engraving upon the wall, this room is empty and featureless.

When the PCs enter this room, five bone devils are immediately summoned, and the floor becomes cluttered with the bleached-white bones of long-dead creatures. The presence of the bones slows the movement rate of the PCs by half. Any balance checks take a –5 penalty. The fiends immediately use their *wall of ice* spell-like abilities to divide the party, then jump into melee combat using their poison attack to cause Strength damage. If they begin to lose the battle, the bone devils attempt to regroup and erect another *wall of ice* in front of them to hold off the PCs.

Bone Devils (5): hp 95; *MM* 52.

4. Ice Devils (EL 15)

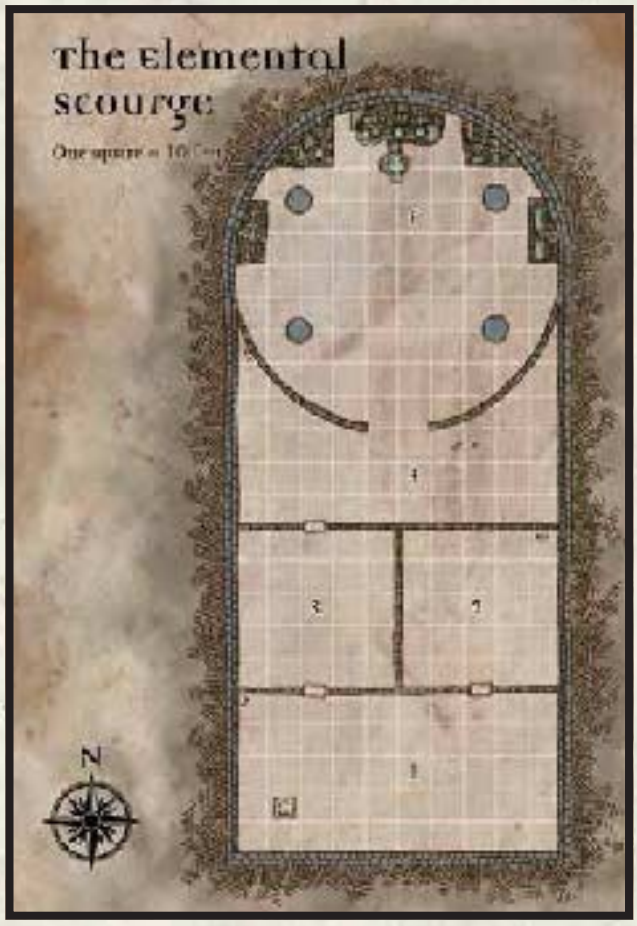
This room has a 10-foot opening that leads to room 5, and the Elemental Scourge can easily be seen through the opening.

When the PCs enter this room, two ice devils are summoned to the center of the room. Upon their arrival, the floor immediately ices over, causing a –5 penalty to any Balance checks the party makes. One ice devil will initially use its *cone of cold* against the PCs while the second casts *wall of ice* to split the party. Unless both devils find themselves in melee combat the following round, they then use their fear aura. If either of them becomes severely wounded, it backs up into a corner and erects a *wall of ice*, hoping to regenerate enough hit points to get back into the fight.

Ice Devils (2): hp 147; *MM* 56.

5. The Elemental Scourge (EL 16)

This room is circular, with a domed ceiling 30 feet above the floor. Dim magical lighting radiates from alcoves in the walls, bathing the room in a dim yellow light. Frescoes adorn the walls, as do pictures that show massive creatures of ice, each depicted as dark, ferocious, and intimidating, with their prey clinging to one another in fear before their apparently inevitable demise.



At the north end of the room is a massive apparatus, the Elemental Scourge. This object spans the full distance from the floor to the ceiling (see the description above). The various pieces of the object are constantly in motion, fueled by the elemental power it taps to grant its powerful effects.

As soon as the PCs enter the chamber, a horned devil *gates* in. When it is able, the horned devil attempts to summon 1d6 bearded devils to aid it. Assuming that its summoning attempt is successful, it commands the bearded devils to attack the PCs while it steps back out of the fight long enough to cast its reserve of *fireballs* and *lightning bolts*. When those spells are exhausted or the bearded devils have been destroyed, the horned devil engages the PCs directly. It puts to use its stun, infernal wound, and regeneration abilities as it attacks the party. It assumes that the PCs will spread out to gain the benefit of flanking and sneak attacks, so it focuses its spiked chain attacks on the most powerful melee fighters while it uses its tail against opposing spellcasters.

As soon as the horned devil has been defeated, the PCs are free to claim the ability granted by the Elemental Scourge by kneeling within the pair of concentric circles in front of the device.

Horned Devil: hp 172; *MM* 55.

Bearded Devils (1d6) (50% chance): hp 45 each; *MM* 52.

Zhentil Keep and the West

"Weak? You think the Black Network is weak? Hah! If anything, the razing of Zhentil Keep made it stronger! Cyric's muddling seemed to be exactly what the Zhentarim needed to get rid of the riffraff and get back to the business of ruling the entire Moonsea region—and everywhere else, for that matter."

—Flobrian Helvar, Sembian caravan master, to one of his employers as they watch several of their wagons burn on the road to Voonlar

Geographical Overview

The western portion of the Moonsea region, which includes the city of Zhentil Keep, stretches from the great body of water from which the territory gets its name all the way to the Border Forest in the west, and from the northern fringes of the mighty Cormanthor Forest to the tribal lands of The Ride in the north. The River Stojanow serves as the region's northeastern border, while Yûlash marks its southeastern limit. Most people also consider Voonlar to be part of the region, demarking its extreme southwestern border. Good roads connect many of the communities, with major traffic flowing along the trade triangle of Voonlar, Zhentil Keep, and Teshwave. Another major route leaves Zhentil Keep and passes through Yûlash on its way to Hillsfar in the east, while minor roads run to Phlan to the northeast and to the Citadel of the Raven, Zhentil Keep's companion community, to the north. Trade continues south out of the Western Moonsea region and into the Dalelands and points beyond.

Within the Western Moonsea, two geographic features dominate the landscape—the River Tesh and the Dragonspine Mountains. The river, which flows from Dagger Falls near the northern tip of the Desertsmouth Mountains, serves as a major trade route, particularly between Teshwave and Zhentil Keep. The Dragonspine Mountains bisect the region from the southwest to the northeast and provide many valuable raw resources as an enticement to the entrepreneurs attempting to carve civilization out of the wild places. Though far from being the largest or tallest mountains in Faerûn, the Dragonspines are rugged and often bitterly cold throughout the year, making them a danger to even the hardiest explorers.

In between these landmarks, the Western Moonsea region features miles of bleak grasslands and moors no one dares travel across alone. A few farms lie scattered throughout, but most people with any sense stay close to the cities and towns, where protection from marauding monsters is readily available. While the Western Moonsea has the greatest concentration of population of any part of the region, this doesn't mean there are folks packed shoulder to shoulder anywhere. Its vast reaches are filled with ancient ruins, dank tombs, remnants of civilizations old even by elven standards, and scores of bloodthirsty humanoids and even more hazardous beasts.

The Campaign in Zhentil Keep

By the time the PCs are ready for the dangers of the Western Moonsea region and the city of Zhentil Keep, they should be tough and hardy adventurers. They most likely worked their way through the previous chapters, gaining experience and insight while exploring the cities of Melvaunt, Hillsfar, Mulmaster, and the smaller locales in between. This section is geared to high-level characters, and if your PCs aren't of sufficient power to face the encounters presented herein, they might quickly be overwhelmed. Even if they are of suitable levels, the challenges available in this chapter will try their abilities and test your players' faculties to the fullest.

As the DM, your job will be just as challenging. You not only have to contend with characters who have a whole slew of unusual and powerful abilities on hand—including potent spells, uncanny

class and prestige class abilities, and devastating magic items—but you also are being asked to run much more powerful creatures, and run them intelligently. That's a lot to handle. There are a few things you should keep in mind now that you are running an upper-echelon campaign.

First, realize that the degree of complexity within the game at high levels means things are going to move more slowly. Be prepared to track a host of different statistics (especially duration for spell effects) during the course of each round of combat, and realize that one big combat in an evening is an acceptable game session. No one ever found two hastily played encounters with sloppy adjudicating to be more entertaining than a single event that is well prepared, coordinated, and memorable.

Second, understand that few creatures in the game can truly threaten a group of high-level characters in a toe-to-toe fight, at least when their CRs are at an appropriate value. This axiom has little to do with game balance and more to do with the host of information-gathering techniques the characters have available to them. At high enough levels, players are more than willing to spend half an hour or more of a game session just having their characters do magical exploration, sending all sorts of spell sensors down hallways, around corners, and even under the surface of the water to see what's lurking nearby. Once they have scouted the area thoroughly, they'll spend another hour or so just prepping for the ensuing confrontation. Scores of "buff" spells get passed around, potions and scrolls are readied, and no one makes a move until the characters are literally glowing with magical protection. Only then will they be ready to tackle the adversaries.

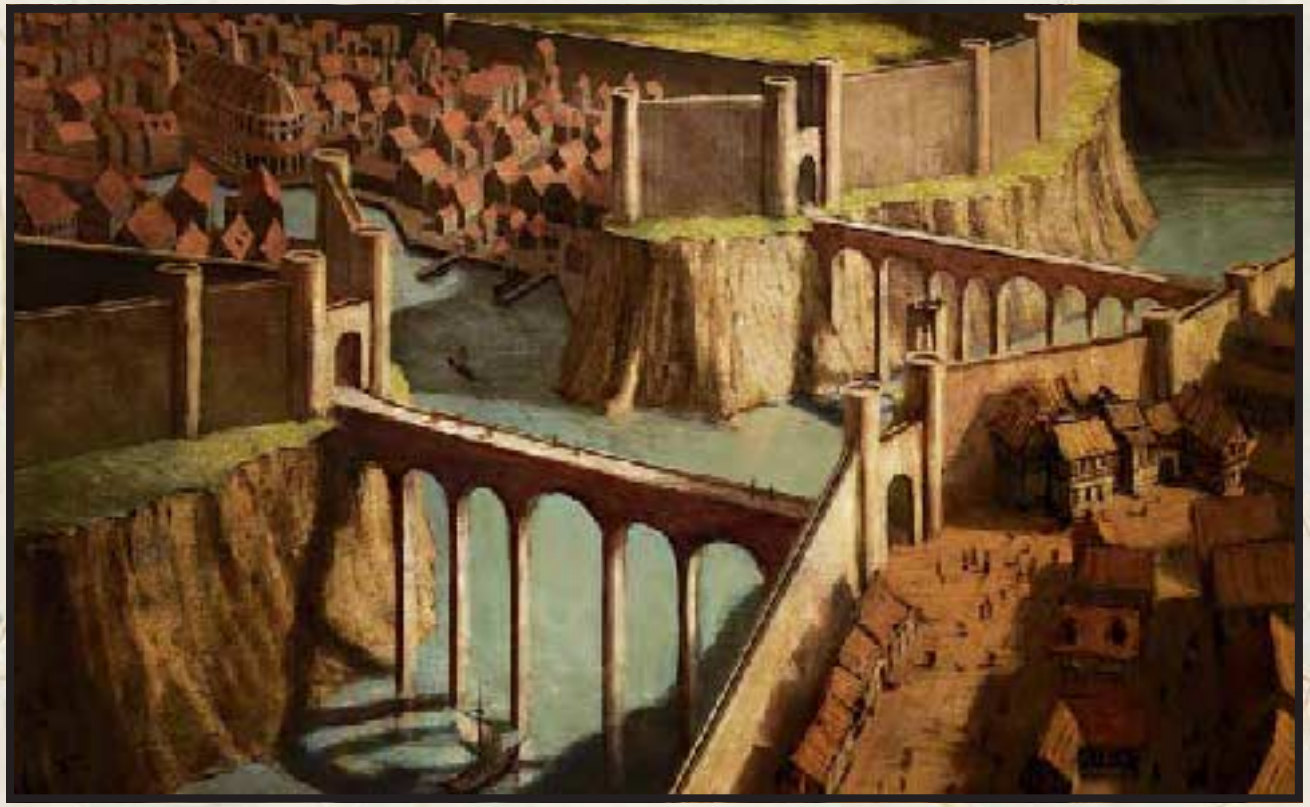
The best way for you to counter this behavior is through cunning, not through simply amassing greater numbers of more powerful monsters. Misdirection and illusion become the order of the day. Anything a monster or pack of monsters can do to siphon off the PCs' most powerful spells in a harmless fashion is cleverness well used. Look, for example, at the Dragon's Lair encounter in this chapter. The illusory dragon sleeping in the middle of the chamber is there to draw fire, making PCs waste their best spells—and they will be itching to use those spells, because that's what the excitement of getting to high levels is all about.

In conjunction with the idea that trickery is your best weapon, remember too that traditional deterrents such as physical barriers are no longer going to be effective. The Citadel of the Raven is a formidable fortress, but it's going to be a simple matter for characters with access to such spells as *teleport* and *ethereal jaunt* to bypass those defenses. So plan accordingly—it's not how the antagonists keep the PCs out; it's how they deal with them after they've made it inside.

Zhentil Keep

Sitting astride the River Tesh where it empties into the frigid waters of the Moonsea, Zhentil Keep has long dominated the region through trade and war. Sometimes also called the Thargate City, Zhentil Keep has historically served as the home of the Zhentarim, also known as the Black Network, a secretive trade organization bent on financial, political, and military domination of the entire region. The city benefits from the vast wealth of natural resources mined from the mountains surrounding the Moonsea. But it, like all the communities of the Moonsea region, also struggles to resist the humanoids and other fell creatures

Illustration by Ron Lemen



Zhentil Keep, heart of the Black Network

that sweep out of the harsh wilds in the hope of destroying the civilizations encroaching on their homelands.

In addition to the natural dangers of the frontier, Zhentil Keep has suffered from the chaos and violence associated with multiple religious power struggles. The most recent of these occurred during the Time of Troubles and the decade afterward, when Bane perished and Cyric held sway over the citizenry for a brief period. Cyric's subsequent downfall only six years ago resulted in the siege and near destruction of Zhentil Keep by white dragons, frost giants, and other humanoids. In the aftermath, the city, once known as the Pride of the North, was but a broken shell of its former self.

The siege left the entire northern half of the city as little more than piles of rubble, while the survivors huddled in the much smaller section on the south bank of the River Tesh, which had once been the foreign quarter. If one word were used to describe the people of the Moonsea, though, it would be persistent. Many of Zhentil Keep's citizens viewed the ruination of a large portion of the city simply as an excuse to rebuild it, making it better than before. After all, this was certainly not the first time a community had been leveled by the harsh realities of the region only to be raised again by those determined not to be beaten.

Today, much of the activity taking place in Zhentil Keep revolves around rebuilding the community. After the attacking force retreated and the initial chaos of food shortages could be dealt with, the leadership (essentially any merchants with enough charisma and coin to effect some sense of command) began the process of reclaiming their lost territory. Workers have repaired the bridges spanning the river, both of which were destroyed during the siege. They have also built a new wall designed to protect the harbor, which is nestled against the north bank of the river, from the predators lurking in the ruins beyond. And finally, the original outer wall that surrounded the northern half of the city has been reconstructed, though it is not quite as stout and thick as it had been before the fighting. The next order of business is the reclamation of the ruins themselves. Such a task involves more than the simple removal of the rubble and the construction of new buildings, for many dangers—bandits and monsters being most prominent—still lurk within the ruins. Slowly but surely, though, new construction is replacing tumbled walls.

Zhentil Keep (large city): Magical; AL LE; gp limit 40,000; Assets 32,846,000 gp; Population 16,423; Mixed (human 84%, half-orcs 12%, orcs 3%, others 1%).

Authority Figures: Fzoul Chembryl (LE male human cleric 17 [Chosen of Bane]/hierophant 2), High Priest of the Temple of Bane and High Lord of the Zhentarim; Scyllua Darkhope (LE female human paladin 5/ranger 4/blackguard 6 [Bane]), Castellan of Zhentil Keep and High Captain of the armies of the Zhentarim; Verblen (LE male human rogue 2/fighter 9), Slave Lord of Zhentil Keep.

Important Characters: Thagdal (LE male human wizard 16), head of the Tower of the Art; Kornah the Crazy (NG human female ranger 10), undercover Harper spy; Tyana Softfoot (N human female rogue 15), head of the thieves guild.

Temple of Bane (99): cleric 15, cleric 12, cleric 10 (2), cleric 9 (3), cleric 8 (5), cleric 6 (7), cleric 5 (6), cleric 4 (11), cleric 3 (14), cleric 2 (21), cleric 1 (28).

Tower of the Art (27): wizard 16, wizard 14, sorcerer 12, wizard 11, wizard 8 (2), sorcerer 7, wizard 6 (2), wizard 5, sorcerer 4, wizard 3 (2), wizard 2 (4), sorcerer 1 (3), wizard 1 (7).

Zhent Army (2,500): cleric 10, wizard 9, cleric 8 (2), wizard 7 (2), cleric 6 (5), fighter 6, sorcerer 6, wizard 6 (4), fighter 5 (4), cleric 4 (25), fighter 4 (6), sorcerer 4 (3), wizard 4 (20), cleric 2 (217), fighter 2 (40), sorcerer 2 (11), wizard 2 (180), fighter 1 (200), sorcerer 1 (15), remainder are warrior 1.

Government and Law

Zhentil Keep has long been under the thumb of the shadowy Zhentarim, though up to the recent past, that group operated from behind the scenes while merchant lords served as the face of government. In the last half-decade, however, with the ruination and subsequent reconstruction of the northern half of the city, the leadership of the Black Network has come to the forefront. Fzoul Chembryl, possessing the titles of High Priest of the Temple of Bane and High Lord of the Zhentarim, now rules the city openly and absolutely. Scyllua Darkhope, Fzoul's right hand within the city, is both the Castellan of Zhentil Keep and High Captain of its armies. Thus, the Zhentarim is no longer just a powerful organization working behind the scenes; it now controls the city in every way.

The hierarchy of the leadership is extremely linear and rigid. Fzoul rules over both the Black Altar (the newly rebuilt temple of Bane) and the city, and subordinate leaders answer to him and carry out his wishes by commanding others below them. Those who try to curry favor (or betray their immediate superiors) by bypassing the established chain of command find themselves in disfavor.

Citizens (both willing and unwilling) of the city must bow absolutely to the will of the government. Fzoul administers the city as an armory and haven for his forces, and the laws he enacts are geared toward furthering those needs. In essence, he maintains a constant state of martial law, limiting where and when people can move about. The city watch, under the command of Scyllua Darkhope, has the authority to stop and question anyone at any time. For the most part, the patrols do not abuse this privilege or use it as an excuse to eliminate adversaries, though such acts are not unheard of.

Perhaps the city's single most oppressive law is its gate fee. Ostensibly enforced to pay for the upkeep of the city's defenses, it in reality also serves to keep the general populace from fleeing the place. Anyone visiting Zhentil Keep must, upon passing through any of the outer gates, obtain a writ permitting him to move freely within the city. The standard fee for one of these visitation writs is 5 gp per tenday of the visit.

Getting into Zhentil Keep is far easier than leaving. Anyone attempting to exit the city must either present an up-to-date writ or pay an exit fee of 100 gp. Fzoul decided to implement such a stringent law to slow the departure of dissatisfied citizens, knowing that few of them can manage to scrape together the funds necessary to pay the fee. After all, he reasons, successful commerce within the city is built upon the backs of the laborers, and it won't do to have them all leaving for more fruitful pursuits elsewhere.

Interested (and desperate) parties can obtain forged writs on the black market (see The Handful of Coins, below). Some of these writs are more authentic than others, but the minimum cost runs at least 20 gp.

politics

There is little in the way of open politics in Zhentil Keep. Because Fzoul Chembryl maintains absolute control over the city, there are no political adversaries to publicly challenge him. Certainly, though, a number of groups work secretly against the power of the Zhentarim and Fzoul in particular. Even within the Zhentarim itself, not everyone sees eye to eye with the High Lord concerning the direction of policy.

The Handful of Coins

Initially established as a coalition of merchants who were not powerful enough to compete individually with the merchant lords of the city (those who nominally ruled as a council before the destruction), the Coins suffered greatly during and immediately after the siege, and its membership dwindled. In the era of reconstruction, the merchants struggled to reestablish themselves and worked closely with Lord Orgauth to develop long-term mercantile goals and lucrative foreign-trade agreements.

With the death of Orgauth and the rise of the Zhentarim as absolute rulers, the Black Network's own caravans and merchants have gained most favored trade status within the city. All other traders wishing to do business suffer even more acutely than before from outrageous taxation and economic prejudice. As a result, the Coins have had to find new ways to survive aside from joining the only officially sanctioned trading organization. The group has become very covert, attempting to remain out of the notice of the Zhentarim. The Coins in effect run a black market, serving visitors, thieves, and anyone else in the city trying to avoid Zhent entanglements. They have even developed a loose association with the thieves guild, serving as fences in exchange for convincing the guild to focus its attention solely on Zhentarim businesses. The Coins even occasionally hire guild members for jobs—mainly forgery, second-story work, and sabotage. At the same time, they look for ways to covertly improve business and undermine the Black Network's price fixing—but so far they have had little success.

Harpers

The Harpers continue to have only a minuscule presence within the city of Zhentil Keep. Beyond the obvious dangers to a Harper's life if one is caught inside the walls, there isn't much cause for more than a handful of them to bother visiting. Still, the organization needs some means of keeping an eye on their traditional foes, and Kornah the Crazy (NG human female ranger 10) serves the role well. Posing as a half-crazed, eyepatch-wearing retired warrior, Kornah pretends to be a city guide, which gives her a good excuse to move about the city unhindered. She will do whatever is necessary to keep her true identity secret, and will draw her steel against anyone—even good-aligned folk who oppose the Zhentarim—if she is in danger of begin exposed. Kornah has other informants throughout the city (almost all of whom are ignorant of her affiliation) to keep her notified of the comings and goings of every person of note. She also has eyes and ears at each gate, and no Harper enters the city without her knowledge. Those who arrive unbidden by her usually get a quick note suggesting they move along; she perceives their presence as a threat to her own safety.

Wizards Guild

Shortly after the destruction of the north bank, a handful of wizards more interested in pursuing the arcane arts than in direct trade set up shop in an abandoned tower that had survived the siege. Christening their new abode as the Tower of the Art, the wizards are led by Thagdal (LE human male wizard 16). Thagdal was a staunch supporter of Lord Orgauth (the initial ruler of Zhentil Keep in the wake of the siege, later discovered to be a pit fiend and slain by Scyllua Darkhope), and he is not keen on Fzoul Chembryl's vision of the Zhentarim's role in the city. Simply put, he and some of his fellow wizards are nervous about Bane's church running things. At the moment, they are not doing anything directly subversive, but they rely on informants all over the city to keep them apprised of the daily doings of the government, and they consider all possibilities for disruption of Zhentarim activity, should the need arise.

crime

Scyllua Darkhope, Castellan of Zhentil Keep, sees the value in maintaining order for the benefits of lucrative trade. As such, she requires that her guards give some effort toward enforcing the peace and not being too overt in their harassment of non-Zhentarim visitors. Thus, the common folk can find some small comfort in knowing that the average street thug will think twice before mugging or murdering them. Still, citizens and visitors are often questioned regularly by patrolling guards concerning where they are coming from, where they are going, how long they intend to stay (if they are visiting from elsewhere), and so forth. The guards make a habit of demanding to see visitation writs.

During the day, arrests for any of a variety of petty crimes are a regular occurrence. At night, press gangs roam the streets, "recruiting" new members into the ranks of the Zhent army or kidnapping the unwary for sale into slavery. Many accused criminals receive the most cursory of trials (if they are lucky enough to face a judge at all) before being sentenced to the forced-labor parties working to clean up and rebuild the north bank of the city. More than a few citizens have vanished in this fashion, becoming unwilling additions to the chain gangs and then disappearing in the mazelike ruins of the city, prey to the occasional beasts still lurking among the piles of rubble.

defenses

The siege that took place during The Year of the Banner (1368 DR) was a sharp wake-up call to anyone who foolishly believed that the walls of Zhentil Keep were impervious to attack. The true might of the city existed in the form of the powerful wizards and clerics of the Zhentarim, and when they were unable to defend their home because of Cyric's meddling, whatever other physical protections sheltered the community paled by comparison and ultimately failed. As a result (and because there simply weren't the

funds for a more massive undertaking), Lord Orgauth convinced the rest of the populace that smaller, more easily constructed walls would suffice for most protection.

When Fzoul Chembryl assumed the role of tyrant of the city, all that changed. In his mind, strong, high protective walls and stoutly defended gates serve a critical purpose in protecting the citizens of the city—and in keeping some of them in. Fzoul ordered the walls to be built just as they had been before, using as much of the original black granite as was salvageable, and paying handsomely to have the rest quarried out of the same Dragonspine Mountains where the original rock came from. The restoration was finished only a few months ago, at great expense and with the loss of numerous lives. Only now is the restoration of the actual city itself occurring.

The city watch consists of nearly seven hundred guards that patrol the streets in squads. Most squads consist of a spellcaster (a human or half-orc cleric 2 [Bane], wizard 2, or sorcerer 2) serving as a patrol leader and four guards (human, half-orc, or occasionally orc warrior 1). Approximately one squad in ten is of veteran status (the spellcaster is 4th level and the guards are all fighter 1), and approximately one veteran squad in five is considered elite (spellcaster is 6th level, guards all fighter 2). During times of trouble, the military housed in Zhentil Keep can supplement the city watch.

The city garrisons approximately twenty-five hundred military troops within its walls. Of these, about two thousand are infantry and the rest a mixture of cavalry and Zhentarim skymages (*Lords of Darkness* 102). The makeup of military squads is similar to those of the city squads, though with the addition of a sergeant (levels of fighter equal to the spellcaster). Both guardsmen and soldiers are well equipped. Fighting troops wear splint mail or better and carry large metal shields, and they are armed with masterwork short swords as well as light crossbows. Each also carries at least one *potion of endurance* and a pair of *potions of cure light wounds.*

Arcane spellcasters carry wands with 25 charges of an appropriate spell (such as *sleep, magic missile,* and *fireball*), and at higher levels they protect themselves with *bracers of armor* and *rings of protection.* (See *Lords of Darkness* 99–101 for more information on sample military encounters.)

Zhentil Keep also maintains a growing navy, currently consisting of twelve ships with two more under construction in dry dock. Eight of the twelve currently in use are smaller cutters, while the other four are larger warships. At any given time, half the navy is in port and the other half is on patrol on the Moonsea.

Trade

Zhentil Keep exists and survives through trade. The Black Network is first and foremost a trading monopoly. Through shrewd and often cutthroat (sometimes literally) business tactics, the Zhentarim dominate trade and expand the business and the city. The organization is so prevalent and so pervasive within the walls of the keep that other trading costers find it nigh impossible to survive, much less thrive—and that's just the way the Zhentarim membership likes it. In the end, both the group and the city are self-sustaining enterprises that will not (and perhaps cannot) brook any competition.

Zhentil Keep's major exports include metal of all sorts (armor, weaponry, and other metal products), gems, coal, furs, and liquor. Of course, it also deals in slaves, trafficking them to other nations throughout Faerûn where such a commodity is in demand. In addition to the traditional markets for human property, Fzoul has his eyes turned toward the Vilhon Reach as a promising new venue (for both buying and selling).

As with the entire Moonsea region, certain other commodities are always in short supply (and thus in demand) in Zhentil Keep. These imports include textiles and all manner of foodstuffs. In addition to the harsh climate of the northern latitudes, growing crops and raising herd animals around the Moonsea is tricky. Farmers and ranchers find it difficult to live—much less make a living—out in the open, beyond the walls of the city, where there is sufficient land for such endeavors.

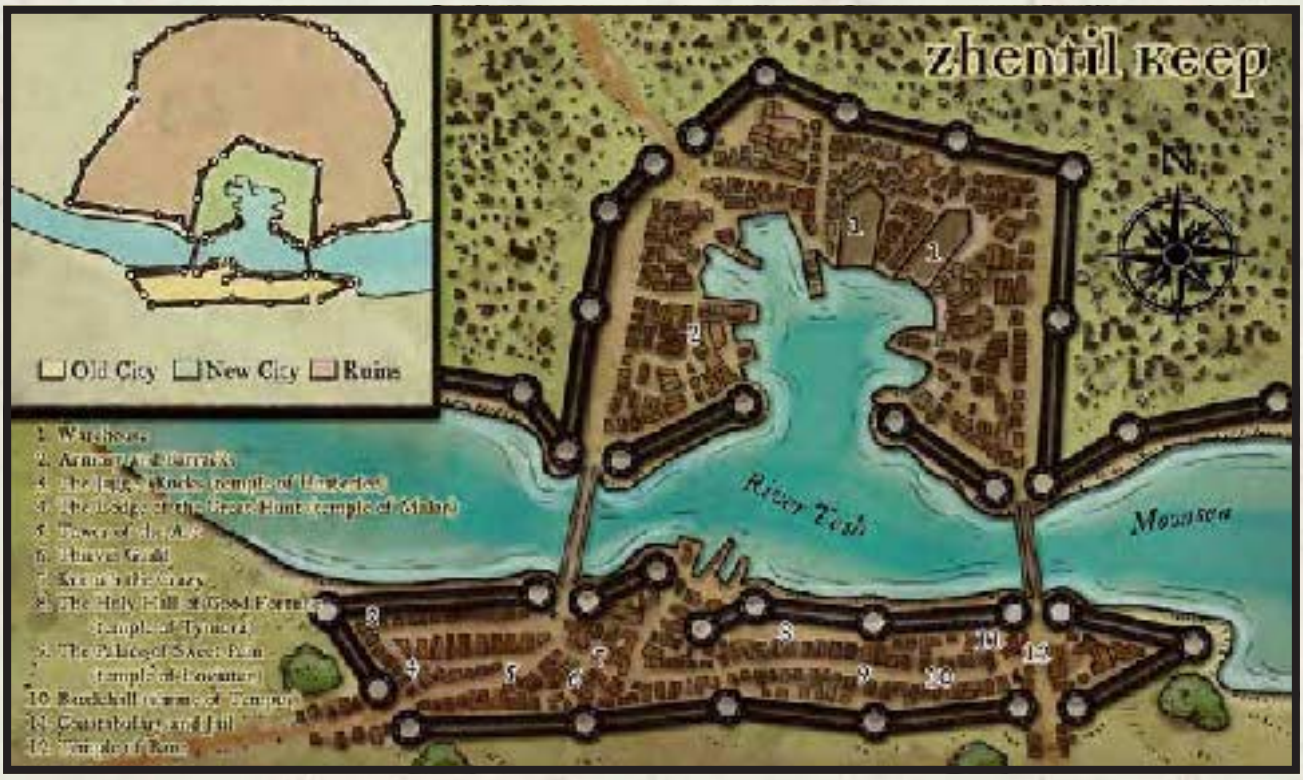
Adventurers

In general, adventurers are viewed with suspicion in and around Zhentil Keep. Most folk who wander into the region looking for a quick way to make some coin are assumed to be planning to do so at the expense of the Black Network, and that doesn't sit well with anyone, from Fzoul and Scyllua on down to the common merchants. The Zhentarim know full well that there are enough brave and foolish sorts in the world just itching to make a name for themselves by trying to right wrongs (real or perceived) committed during the course of conducting business. Whether they attack caravans, infiltrate bases of operations, or just come to the city looking to call out Fzoul himself, they are a nuisance when they get it into their heads that justice must be served. The city would just as soon see those sorts go elsewhere. Adventurers with an obvious "do-gooder" aura about them can expect to be detained, harassed, and discriminated against at every turn while they are visiting Zhentil Keep.

The reality, though, is that the Moonsea is a wild region filled with countless ruins and secret monster lairs, and adventurers are going to seek out these sites, regardless of what the Zhents wish. Given that inevitability, the merchants of the city are happy enough to see adventurers choose to spend their newfound treasure in their shops. So long as adventurers can keep a low profile and avoid causing a ruckus (and at the same time appear formidable enough that locals will think twice before simply mugging them), they can conduct a healthy business with the merchants of the city.

Religion

The worship of Bane is considered, for all practical purposes, the official religion of the community. Certain other deities might be tolerated to some extent, but anyone openly flaunting said deities to the detriment of Bane's worship quickly finds himself on the bad end of the law. Followers of Cyric are not welcome within the city, and anyone inside the walls who is proven to serve the Prince of Lies typically vanishes under mysterious circumstances. Homage to Waukeen and Tymora is acceptable, so long as it is done in a quiet and private way. Worship of other good deities is not strictly forbidden, but as Fzoul further consolidates his power, that situation might very well change in the near future.



City Locations

In some ways, the Zhentil Keep of today looks nothing like the city of 1368 DR. Much of the heart of the city still lies in ruins, piles of rubble left undisturbed in the last seven years. However, Fzoul Chembryl is nothing if not grand of vision, and he has ordered the city restored to its former greatness. Thus, reconstruction follows a familiar path, restoring walls and buildings so that they will someday stand just as they did before the chaos of the siege. Currently, the city exists in three distinct sections—the old city, the new city, and the ruins (see the map inset).

Old City

The old city, what used to be known as the Foreign Quarter, survived the attack from the humanoids, giants, and dragons. The walls around it are the same 40-foot-thick, black granite monstrosities that rise higher than any building within their confines. The buildings, some of which stand six stories tall, still resemble the sheer sides of a deep gorge—especially when they lean toward one another—and still darken the streets and alleys below, as well as the spirits of those who travel upon them. Most of the population of modern-day Zhentil Keep resides here.

New City

The new city has risen from the ashes of the heart of the keep. One of the first orders of business after the enemy army retreated was reclaiming the invaluable harbor along the north bank of the River Tesh. First Lord Orgauth and then Fzoul Chembryl both understood that the entire city could not be reclaimed all at once, so walling off the crucial mercantile district became an intermediate step. Once the docks and warehouses could be adequately protected from the fell creatures still hiding in the rubble beyond, prosperity could begin to return to Zhentil Keep.

All of the construction within this section of the city is new, with no building currently rising more than three stories high. Some of the structures are built of stone (rebuilt on existing foundations and with salvaged stonework), but most are wooden or even temporary tent buildings. In this district, merchants haggle with outsiders seeking their fortunes in the ruins beyond. There are taverns and inns aplenty, to be frequented by visitors, but few businesses catering to the local population.

Ruins

The rest of the city still lies in wreckage, nothing more than piles of crushed and shattered stone, drifting and blowing dust, and the occasional determined weed. Though the surface is a desolate wasteland, many of the cellars, sewers, and subterranean complexes are still intact and serve as the lairs of dangerous beasts, undead victims of the fighting, and crazed former citizens who were left behind and have somehow survived among the carnage and destruction. The whole place is walled off now, thanks to the efforts of the Zhentarim (or rather, those pressed into service on behalf of the Zhentarim). Slowly and tentatively, troops and work gangs have begun to venture into the ruins, preparing to rebuild what was lost. Everyone knows it will be a long, slow, dangerous undertaking.

1. Zhentarim Warehouse

After the north harbor was safely ensconced behind brand new walls, the Black Network wasted no time in constructing stout new warehouses and docks in order to ship and receive goods. These stone structures have been rebuilt on their original foundations,

using as much salvageable stone as can be had. More warehouses are under construction throughout the new portion of the city, in order to accommodate even more business.

2. Zhentarim Armory and Barracks

This newly constructed building houses the entire command structure of the Zhentarim military forces. At the moment, only a small portion of the common soldiers (all the cavalry and their mounts, along with five hundred of the infantry) dwells within the barracks. Many other soldiers are quartered at the Temple of Bane (see area 12, below) or in tent cities scattered throughout the new city area. The building has a massive armory underground and the equivalent of a brig. The cells are for soldiers who violate their military oaths, as well as private citizens who engage in treasonous behavior.

3. Temple of Umberlee

Commonly known as the Jagged Rocks, this building serves as the temple of Umberlee. Craftsmen modified the exterior of the structure to resemble a large rock outcropping found along a rocky shoreline. A shining light at the apex represents a lighthouse. A priestess known simply as Stormmistress (CE human female cleric 12 [Umberlee]) oversees the Jagged Rocks with six priestesses as helpers.

4. Temple of Malar

Now called the Lodge of the Great Hunt, this temple of Malar is a long, low building made of great hewn tree trunks and covered with a thatched roof. It appears rather out of place among the tall stone buildings of the rest of Zhentil Keep. The interior has been decorated to resemble a hunting lodge, with animal skin rugs, a roaring fire in a hearth, and numerous mounted animal trophies. The Lodge is under the control of Huntmaster Baerdeth Malagar (CE human male cleric 16 [Malar]), who is attended by twelve subordinate priests.

5. Tower of the Art

After the near destruction of the city, an independent band of wizards joined together for mutual protection. They moved into a large abandoned tower, rehabilitated it, and renamed it the Tower of the Art. The edifice is ten stories high and dominates the current skyline. The tower contains numerous bedrooms, studies, labs, workrooms, lecture halls, libraries, and storerooms. The top level functions as an observatory. The place has no front door; when a visitor rings the chime at the front portico, the mage on duty in the tower activates a keyed *portal* anchored to the marble slab beneath the visitor's feet, whisking him inside to the tower's ground floor. The return trip operates in the same manner, effectively forcing any visitor to gain permission before being allowed to leave.

Thagdal (LE human male wizard 16), a native Zhent, heads the guild. The guild's first goal is mutual survival, coupled with preservation and promotion of the Art. Hence, the tower is magically shielded and warded so that nothing can use *teleport, gate, plane shift, blink,* or *scrying* to view portions of the structure. These barriers also prevent any astral or ethereal travelers from gaining access. Wizards inside the tower can still summon outsiders.

6. Thieves Guild

This squat, two-story building was once an orphanage, but it now serves as the headquarters of the city's thieves guild. The interior is gutted, with most of its partitioning walls gone. One of the stone hearths contains a hidden trap door leading to an underground complex. Visitors who reach the bottom find themselves in a well-organized underground headquarters. The complex contains sleeping quarters, loot storage rooms, tool-making workshops, a tailor, a leatherworker, and a small shrine to Tymora.

Tyana Softfoot (N human female rogue 15) leads the guild. She organized the guild for mutual survival and propagation of her trade. As the guild leader, Tyana is well organized and a brilliant strategist and tactician, with survival her foremost concern. She is a lifelong resident of Zhentil Keep and knows the lay of the land well. Her guild's recently developed relationship with the Handful of Coins, the non-Zhentarim merchants group, has proven to be lucrative, though she knows that the disparity in crime level against Black Network businesses will eventually draw unwanted attention upon the Coins. At that time, she and her thieves will stay well in the background.

7. Kornah the Crazy

This simple one-story, three-room stone house serves as the home of Kornah the Crazy (NG human female ranger 10), a Harper who poses as a city guide. In keeping with her eccentric guise, the house is a comfortable mess, with various and sundry objects scattered everywhere. Kornah's house is a known refuge to all Harpers who visit the city. She takes extreme measures to ensure that no one becomes suspicious of strangers visiting her at unusual hours.

8. Shrine of Tymora

The Holy Hall of Good Fortune, a huge, three-story palatial mansion with large windows and ornate stonework, is both a place of worship and a gambler's paradise. Lucklady Demetria Fortunato (CG human female cleric 14 [Tymora]) and her twenty-four cleric assistants run the place. Demetria is an outgoing, clever individual with a short attention span.

The casino has but one defender. Graddis, a human male, is actually a werebear. A converted worshiper of Tymora, Graddis wanders the casino in human form, making sure that all is well. At the first sign of trouble, he *shapechanges* in order to deal with troublemakers.

9. Temple of Loviatar

The Palace of Sweet Pain is a temple devoted to Loviatar. The entire building has an air of gloom and menace. The sections below the temple include a collection of torture chambers, cells, and special rooms where unspeakable revels occur. High Torturelord Ulamyth Quantor (LE human male cleric 17 [Loviatar]), who has been in Zhentil Keep since before the Time of Troubles, attends to the place with the aid of fourteen lesser priests.

10. Shrine of Tempus

Battlehall, a temple devoted to Tempus, is run by Battlemaster Bladreth Crackbone (CN human male cleric 15 [Tempus]) with the aid of eight priestly assistants. The edifice looks like a

miniature fortress on the outside, while the interior is decorated with bloodied armor and broken weapons. The smell of blood and oiled metal permeates the room. The chambers beyond the main sanctuary include a weapons forge, several rooms for training fighters, and a meditation room.

11. Constabulary and Jail

The nickname given to this locale is the Crypts, because the building was once a military detention center, with crypts below for the quick burial of prisoners. Currently, it serves as the headquarters of city security. Scyllua Darkhope spends much of her days here, maintaining order and planning further expansion into the ruins.

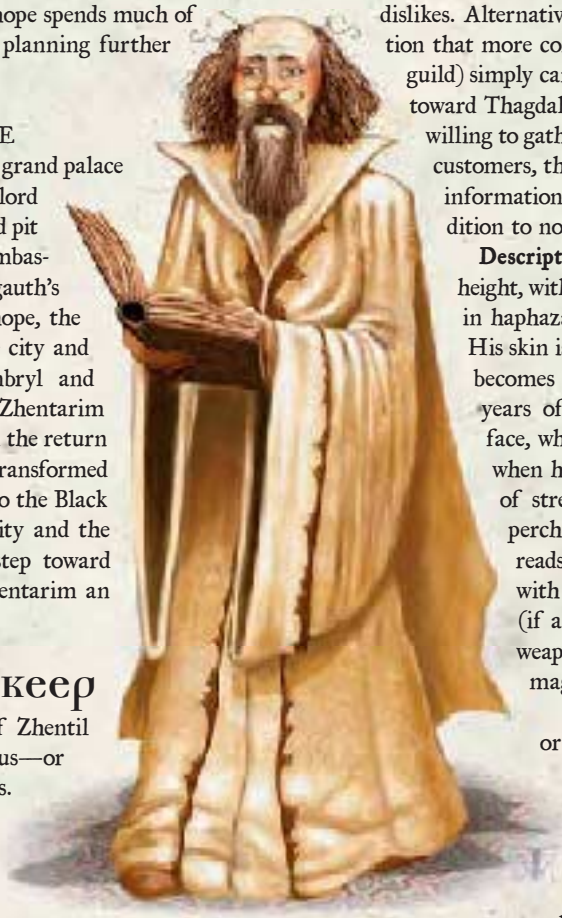
12. Temple of Bane

This temple complex once served as the grand palace of Lord Orgauth, both when the true lord lived in the city and during the disguised pit fiend's reign. Before that, a Thayan ambassador made his home here. After Orgauth's demise at the hands of Scyllua Darkhope, the Zhentarim reasserted control over the city and needed a headquarters. Fzoul Chembryl and Scyllua, as well as other high-ranking Zhentarim officers, occupied these buildings. Upon the return of Bane, Fzoul Chembryl immediately transformed the place into a new temple dedicated to the Black Lord. Chembryl now runs both the city and the clergy from here, taking one more step toward his goal of ultimately making the Zhentarim an instrument of Bane.

Illustration by Franz Vohwinkel

villains of zhentil keep

Countless figures roam the streets of Zhentil Keep who might be considered dangerous—or useful—to strangers asking questions. Below is a sampling of such individuals the characters might meet while visiting the city.



Thagdal

Thagdal

Thagdal heads up the local wizards guild in Zhentil Keep, one of the few organizations that seems to be able to operate outside the influence of the Zhentarim. Thagdal knows that Fzoul Chembryl eyes the Tower of the Art and its members warily, so he encourages (for the moment) his fellow wizards and sorcerers to keep a low profile in the presence of anyone of any import in the Black Network. Thus, on the surface, the wizard seems perfectly keen on getting along with the Zhentarim, even when he spends most of his time in the safety of the tower, contemplating all possibilities for conflict with the organization.

Thagdal craves information of all types, and he maintains a network of informers in the city (both common folk and low-level wizards) who feed him a steady stream of goings-on, including who of interest has come into the city, who is missing, and so forth. Thagdal also utilizes his own magic to further discern unusual events and reconnoiter locales. He probably has as good a handle on the Zhentarim's plans and operations within the city walls as Fzoul and Scyllua do, if not a better one. He is obsessed with knowing the truth of things and is constantly concerned with false reports, inaccurate information, and outright lies.

Campaign Use: Characters might find themselves running afoul of Thagdal (and the entire wizards guild) if they come into the city and stir up trouble of a magical nature. Such actions always mean the Zhentarim turn a frowning face upon the Tower and wonder about its involvement, attention that Thagdal greatly dislikes. Alternatively, if the characters need information that more common methods (such as the thieves guild) simply cannot provide, they might be directed toward Thagdal by the locals. The wizard is usually willing to gather specific information for interested customers, though he always expects some sort of information-gathering service in return—in addition to normal payments, of course.

Description: Thagdal stands about medium height, with mousy brown hair that tends to curl in haphazard fashion about his ears and neck. His skin is fair, and when he exerts himself, he becomes quite flushed. Despite his fifty-plus years of age, he has something of a baby face, which sometimes causes him difficulty when he needs to negotiate from a position of strength. He wears a set of spectacles perched on the end of his nose when he reads. Thagdal prefers cream-colored robes with brown trim and simplistic designs (if any) woven into them. He carries no weapons, preferring instead to rely on his magic to resolve trouble.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Thagdal will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Thagdal heads up the wizards guild and almost never leaves his abode within their tower.

DC 15—Thagdal is a master of information, and he probably knows more about you than you do yourself.

DC 20—Thagdal is obsessed with garnering factual knowledge and has means of determining if anyone is lying to him at any time. He doesn't take kindly to such dishonesty.

Thagdal **CR 16**

Male Damaran human wizard 16
LE Medium humanoid
Init +1; **Senses** Listen +0, Spot +0
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Draconic

AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 18
hp 89 (16 HD)
Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee unarmed +7/+2 (1d3–1 nonlethal)
Base Atk +8; **Grp** +7
Combat Gear *figurine of wondrous power (serpentine owl), pearl of power* (5th)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 16th):
8th—*mind blank, protection from spells*
7th—*greater arcane sight, greater scrying* (DC 24), *finger of death* (2) (DC 24)
6th—*antimagic field, greater dispel magic* (DC 23), quickened *scorching ray* (+7 ranged touch), *true seeing*
5th—*contact other plane* (2), quickened *magic missile, symbol of pain* (2)
4th—*arcane eye, detect scrying* (2), *scrying* (2) (DC 21)
3rd—*arcane sight, clairaudience/clairvoyance* (DC 20), *dispel magic* (2) (DC 20), *nondetection*
2nd—*detect thoughts* (2) (DC 19), *invisibility, resist energy, scorching ray* (2) (+7 ranged touch)
1st—*identify, magic missile* (2), *protection from good, Tenser's floating disk, unseen servant*
0—*detect magic, light, mage hand, read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 9, Con 16, Int 25, Wis 11, Cha 10
SQ familiar (none at present)
Feats Brew Potion, Craft Wand[B], Craft Wondrous Item[B], Empower Spell, Eschew Materials, Extend Spell, Forge Ring[B], Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll[B], Silent Spell, Still Spell
Skills Concentration +22, Decipher Script +25, Gather Information +26, Knowledge (arcana) +26, Knowledge (history) +26, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +26, Knowledge (religion) +26, Spellcraft +28
Possessions combat gear plus *amulet of natural armor +5, ring of protection +4, cloak of resistance +4, ring of mind shielding, boots of teleportation, ioun stone (iridescent), headband of intellect +4*
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*expeditious retreat, mage armor, shield;* 4th—*charm monster;* 5th—*permanency, teleport;* 6th—*contingency;* 8th—*dimensional lock, screen*

Verblen

Illustration by Franz Vohwinkel

Verblen

Verblen, the Slave Lord of Zhentil Keep, oversees every aspect of the slaving business conducted by the Zhentarim, both within the city and beyond. He grew up a street waif who watched a few of his companions caught and hauled away to be sold, and he determined that the best way to avoid a similar fate was to become useful to the slavers. Thus, he developed all the skills necessary to trick and trap others, and then sell them to the Zhent slavers with a promise of more to come—so long as they never turned their ropes and nets on him. He became so adept at his talents that he eventually became a full-time employee of the slavers and rose quickly through their ranks to the position he holds today.

Verblen is a thoroughly depraved and vicious man who truly loves his job. His one regret in life at the moment is that his position requires so much administrative work that he rarely gets the opportunity to personally select and wrangle slaves brought into the city for commerce. He does still make time occasionally to deal with special projects (such as adventurers who have wound up on the wrong side of the Zhentarim's wrath).

Verblen reports directly to Fzoul Chembryl and spends a few hours each week bringing him up to speed on everything from head counts to market speculation. Fzoul trusts the man implicitly to handle the responsibilities, a fact that delights Verblen to no end. Though Verblen does pay lip service to Bane (as much to placate Chembryl as anything), his true devotion is to Loviatar, and he tries to visit her temple within the city at least three times a week, both for regular services and special events.

Campaign Use: Characters have many opportunities to encounter Verblen whenever they are within the walls of Zhentil Keep. They might be his unwilling guests, trapped and caught by Verblen's minions either on one of the many trade roads in the Moonsea area, or as the result of crossing the Zhentarim at large. They might be interested in buying his wares, though unless they represent some interest with a city's worth of coin to pay, they will have to deal with his underlings initially; Verblen doesn't do much personal business these days.

Description: Verblen is quite handsome, standing a few inches over 6 feet in height, with a trim, fit body. His black hair is shiny and straight, hanging in a thick ponytail halfway down his back. He has an equally thick and lustrous moustache that he wears with the ends drooping down beyond his chin.

Verblen prefers to dress in magical studded leather armor dyed a rich black. He wields a special *+2 merciful whip* that was crafted for him by High Torturelord Ulamyth Quantor of the temple of Loviatar (see area 9, above). The whip is especially useful in subduing unruly slaves without permanently harming them, and Verblen finds the "merciful" appellation an amusing misnomer.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Verblen will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Verblen is one of the best in the business of slave trading and deals with just about every slave market in Faerûn to some extent.

DC 15—Some folks believe Verblen actually sold the old Slave Lord to a buyer in Calimshan and supplanted him.

DC 20—Verblen has been busy of late investigating some sort of plot by outside forces to subvert his slaving business.

Verblen — CR 11

Male Damaran human rogue 2/fighter 9
LE Medium humanoid
Init +3; **Senses** Listen –1, Spot –1
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18
hp 70 (11 HD)
Resist evasion
Fort +7, **Ref** +9, **Will** +2

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)
Melee *+2 merciful whip* +14/+9 (1d3+4 plus 1d6 nonlethal) or
Melee unarmed +12/+7 (1d3+2)
Base Atk +10; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Combat Reflexes, sneak attack +1d6
Combat Gear *rope of entanglement*

Abilities Str 15, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 14
SQ trapfinding
Feats Combat Reflexes[B], Deceitful, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (bolas)[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (net)[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (scourge)[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip)[B], Persuasive, Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Intimidate), Street Smart[PG]
Skills Appraise +7, Bluff +18, Diplomacy +11, Disguise +9 (+11 acting), Forgery +7, Gather Information +11, Intimidate +23, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +9, Sense Motive +6
Possessions combat gear plus *+5 studded leather, +2 merciful whip*

Illustration by Franz Vohwinkel

Desmonda/Eshaeris

Desmonda/Eshaeris

When the razing of Zhentil Keep was concluded and "Lord Orgauth" assumed control of the city, one of the first things the disguised pit fiend did was summon a consort to aid him in maintaining his disguise. The erinyes Eshaeris answered that summons and took on the guise of a noble woman of the city known as Desmonda. The real Desmonda was a flirtatious but discreet woman who spent time as the mistress of no fewer than seven different noblemen during the height of Zhentil Keep's power. She perished during the destruction of the city, and it was a simple matter for Eshaeris to assume her identity.

As Desmonda, Eshaeris became Lord Orgauth's mistress, serving as his eyes and ears in locales he could not easily observe on his own. When Scyllua Darkhope fell sway to Orgauth's honeyed words and became corrupted, it was Eshaeris, jealous of her lord's attentions upon the young and misguided paladin, who actually nudged Scyllua over the edge into darkness. The erinyes slowly and skillfully warped Scyllua's mind into believing many things about Lord Orgauth that were not factual, and sprinkled just enough truth into her ploys to convince Scyllua to slay him. When the deed was done, Scyllua had turned completely away from her devotion to Tyr and came under the influence of Fzoul Chembryl and Bane, and Orgauth was destroyed for his (at least in Eshaeris's mind) impertinence and betrayals. At the end of the day, she was quite proud of herself for ruining two lives in the bargain.

To Eshaeris's great dismay, Fzoul did not trust her (though he did not see through her guise as Desmonda) and drove her far from Scyllua to prevent her from further influencing the girl. The erinyes was forced to find other, lesser humans to consort with, suffering great indignity and embarrassment. She currently involves herself with two or three different Zhentarim merchants and low-ranking clergy, biding her time, watching for a chance to avenge herself upon Chembryl and return to her politically lofty position within the city.

Campaign Use: Eshaeris is constantly plotting subtle manipulations of various Zhentarim operations, all designed to bring embarrassment and loss of coin to Fzoul Chembryl. The erinyes has nothing but time to work her schemes, so she keeps them low-key and insidious and does not try to interfere with too much at once. In this way, she avoids drawing undue attention to the fact that anyone is actually behind the various mishaps. Should the characters cross her path, she attempts to manipulate them into performing some machinations to undermine the Zhentarim. Most likely, such a meeting occurs indirectly in the beginning, as the PCs engage in business with a merchant and are introduced to her as his mistress. If the characters are good-aligned and Eshaeris figures that out, she works doubly hard to find ways to get them unwittingly to work on her behalf, while staying well out of their sight to avoid exposure.

Description: To appear as Desmonda, Eshaeris utilizes her *minor image* spell-like ability to change her own appearance. In disguise, the erinyes appears much as Desmonda did, a female human with flowing red hair and wickedly violet eyes who looks

to be in her mid-twenties. She prefers to wear tight-fitting black dresses that show off her curves, which she then demurely covers with a matching black cloak fastened with a gold chain. She carries a *+3 dagger* tucked into her belt.

News: A Gather Information check or a Knowledge (local) check regarding Desmonda will reveal one or more of the following facts, depending on the result of the check.

DC 10—Lady Desmonda was Lord Orgauth's mistress, but upon his death she fell from grace and has been ostracized by the well-to-do.

DC 15—Lady Desmonda still moves within influential circles and has many contacts within the city.

DC 20—Lady Desmonda seems even more lascivious and flirtatious than before she became Lord Orgauth's paramour.

Desmonda/Eshaeris, Erinyes: hp 82; *MM* 54.

Rumors in Zhentil Keep

If the PCs spend time talking to locals to hear the latest rumors, have them make a Gather Information check and consult the following table.

Check	Result
15–19	Roll 1d10 and consult the Rumors list below.
20–24	Roll 1d10+4 and consult the Rumors list below.
25–29	Roll 1d10+8 and consult the Rumors list below.
30–34	Roll 1d10+12 and consult the Rumors list below.
35+	Roll 1d10+15 and consult the Rumors list below.

Some of the items on the following table are false rumors and some are adventure hooks left open for individual DMs to embellish.

Rumors

1 Some merchants in the city work with the thieves guild to actively but secretly oppose the Zhentarim.
2 The wizards of the city don't like the idea of everything being controlled by Bane's servants.
3 Followers of the dead god Moander have been seen in the city recently. (hook)
4 Enemies of the Zhentarim sometimes vanish when they stay the night at the Tesh Inn. (hook)
5 Part of the Zhentarim army, with the help of Scyllua Darkhope, is planning a coup against Fzoul and the rest of the Banite clergy. (false)
6 The altar in the ruins of Bane's ruined temple in the northern part of the city still exists, and has magical effects. (hook)
7 Manshoon derives a good portion of his arcane power from secret fonts of magical energy beneath the Citadel of the Raven.
8 Fzoul Chembryl is secretly negotiating a deal with the Thayans to attack Melvaunt together. (false)
9 Slavers use tunnels under the city of Zhentil Keep to move around.
10 Quon's Collectible Creatures is the best place to get pet monsters.
11 There is a member of the Harpers who has lived in the city since before the razing.
12 The Lady Desmonda isn't who she appears to be.
13 You can buy slaves at Quon's Collectible Creatures. (hook)
14 Dragons in the Dragonspine Mountains have giant slaves who serve them. (hook)
15 Verblen, the slave master of the Zhentarim, knows about the mysterious tattoos and is a part of the plot. (false)
16 There are many beholders working for the Zhentarim at the Citadel of the Raven.
17 Several beholders appear to be living in the sewers beneath the city. (hook)
18 The governments of Zhentil Keep and Mulmaster are actually allied.
19 The Thayans are trying to establish a secret relationship with the beholders of the city. (false)
20 Prospectors from the Dragonspines are giving away gems in Ravenswatch, because the market is glutted there. (false)
21 Some of the sewers connect to the River Tesh.
22 The temple of Moander in Yûlash is still active. (hook)
23 Fzoul Chembryl plans to make the Zhentarim a holy order worshiping Bane.
24 The Harpers have a small but powerful army hidden in the city and are waiting for a special signal to attack the Zhentarim. (false)
25 There is a magic pool beneath the Citadel of the Raven that grants immunity to injury. (hook)

Zhentil Keep Quests

These miniadventures take place in, under, or within the immediate vicinity of Zhentil Keep. They're set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Western Moonsea quests in the next section. The adventures work easily as stand-alone encounters or locations, but you can also tie them together to form a larger adventure that follows a loose plot line. Some of them also function as continuations of plots introduced in previous chapters, should you choose to utilize those features.

See the notes within each section for more information.

Clerics of Bane

Several of the quests in this section make use of clerics of Bane in their encounters. It is impractical to detail out specific and unique characters for each separate encounter in the allotted pages, so provided below is a generic cleric of Bane, detailed at three progressively higher levels, for you to use. Refer to these basic statistics blocks for common information, and to the encounter-specific statistics for additional information. Note that the encounter statistics are in addition to those given below and do not supersede them.

9th-Level Cleric of Bane **CR 9**
Male Damaran human cleric 9 (Bane)
LE Medium humanoid
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +3, Spot +3
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 23, touch 9, flat-footed 23
hp 53 (9 HD)
Fort +7, **Ref** +2, **Will** +9

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +3 *morningstar* +11/+6 (1d8+5)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +8
Special Actions rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+10, 9th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th):
5th—*greater command*[D] (DC 20), *slay living* (DC 18)
4th—*cure critical wounds, divine power, unholy blight*[D] (CL 10th, DC 17)
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 16), *cure serious wounds* (2), *discern lies*[D] (DC 16), *dispel magic* (DC 16)
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *darkness, enthrall*[D] (DC 15), *hold person* (DC 17), *silence* (DC 15)
1st—*bane* (DC 16), *command*[D] (DC 16), *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor, shield of faith*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance* (2), *resistance* (2)
D: Domain spell; Domains: Evil, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 17, Cha 12
SQ strong aura of evil, strong aura of law
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Negotiator, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +13 (+17 casting defensively), Diplomacy +15, Intimidate +3, Sense Motive +5, Spellcraft +12
Possessions +2 *full plate, +2 heavy steel shield, +3 morningstar*, holy symbol

13th-Level Cleric of Bane — CR 13

Male Damaran human cleric 13 (Bane)
LE Medium humanoid
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 25, touch 9, flat-footed 25
hp 75 (13 HD)
Fort +9, **Ref** +3, **Will** +12

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +4 *morningstar* +15/+10 (1d8+6)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +11
Special Actions rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+14, 13th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):
7th—*blasphemy*[D] (CL 14th, DC 21), *destruction* (DC 21)
6th—*blade barrier* (DC 20), *geas/quest*[D], *heal*
5th—*flame strike* (DC 19), *greater command*[D] (DC 21), *slay living* (DC 19), *symbol of pain* (CL 14th, DC 19)
4th—*cure critical wounds* (2), *divine power, restoration, spell immunity, unholy blight*[D] (CL 14th, DC 18)
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds* (2), *discern lies*[D] (DC 17), *dispel magic* (DC 17),
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *darkness, enthrall*[D] (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 16), *zone of truth* (DC 18)
1st—*bane* (DC 17), *command*[D] (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor, doom* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance* (2), *resistance* (2)
D: Domain spell; Domains: Evil, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 18, Cha 12
SQ overwhelming aura of evil, overwhelming aura of law
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Negotiator, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +17 (+21 casting defensively), Diplomacy +19, Intimidate +3, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +16
Possessions +3 *full plate, +3 heavy steel shield, +4 morningstar*, holy symbol

17th-Level Cleric of Bane — CR 17

Male Damaran human cleric 17
LE Medium humanoid
Init –1; **Senses** Listen +4, Spot +4
Languages Common, Damaran

AC 27, touch 9, flat-footed 27
hp 97 (17 HD)
Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +14

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +5 *morningstar* +19/+14/+9 (1d8+7)
Base Atk +12; **Grp** +14
Special Actions rebuke undead 4/day (+1, 2d6+18, 17th)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 17th):
9th—*dominate monster*[D] (DC 25), *gate*
8th—*fire storm* (DC 22), *mass charm monster*[D] (DC 22), *mass cure critical wounds*
7th—*blasphemy*[D] (CL 18th, DC 21), *destruction* (DC 21), *greater scrying* (DC 21), *mass cure serious wounds*
6th—*blade barrier* (DC 20), *geas/quest*[D], *heal, mass bull's strength, word of recall*
5th—*flame strike* (DC 19), *greater command*[D] (DC 21), *slay living* (DC 19), *spell resistance, symbol of pain* (CL 18th, DC 19)
4th—*cure critical wounds* (2), *divine power, poison* (+14 melee touch, DC 22), *restoration, spell immunity, unholy blight*[D] (CL 18th, DC 18)
3rd—*bestow curse* (DC 17), *blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *cure serious wounds* (2), *discern lies*[D] (DC 17), *dispel magic* (DC 17), *prayer*
2nd—*cure moderate wounds* (2), *darkness, enthrall*[D] (DC 16), *hold person* (DC 18), *silence* (DC 16), *zone of truth* (DC 18)
1st—*bane* (DC 17), *command*[D] (DC 17), *cure light wounds* (2), *divine favor, doom* (DC 15), *shield of faith*
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance* (2), *resistance* (2)
D: Domain spell; Domains: Evil, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.

Abilities Str 14, Dex 8, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 19, Cha 12
SQ overwhelming aura of evil, overwhelming aura of law

Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Wand, Craft Wondrous Item, Negotiator, Persuasive
Skills Bluff +3, Concentration +21 (+25 casting defensively), Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +3, Sense Motive +6, Spellcraft +20
Possessions *+4 full plate, +4 heavy steel shield, +5 morningstar*, holy symbol

sinister inn

This quick location-based encounter is a trap set by slavers to capture unsuspecting guests and profit by their sale. You can make it part of any inn you wish, but if you are using the encounter as part of the larger story arc described above, then you should place it within the southern section (old city) of Zhentil Keep.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 12th–14th level.

Background

The Tesh Inn was one of the more upscale establishments in the Foreign Quarter before the city was razed in 1368 DR, but in the lean years following that crisis, it had difficulty maintaining its clientele (primarily because it was difficult to get quality food imported, but also because of the overcrowded conditions immediately following the siege). The old management eventually had to sell the inn at a fraction of its value to a consortium of Zhentarim merchants, who promptly set themselves up as proprietors, once again bringing in the finest foods and beverages available in the region. In addition, they performed a few remodeling modifications as a means to assist the Black Network in keeping its slave business brisk—and to eliminate enemies of the Zhentarim at the same time.

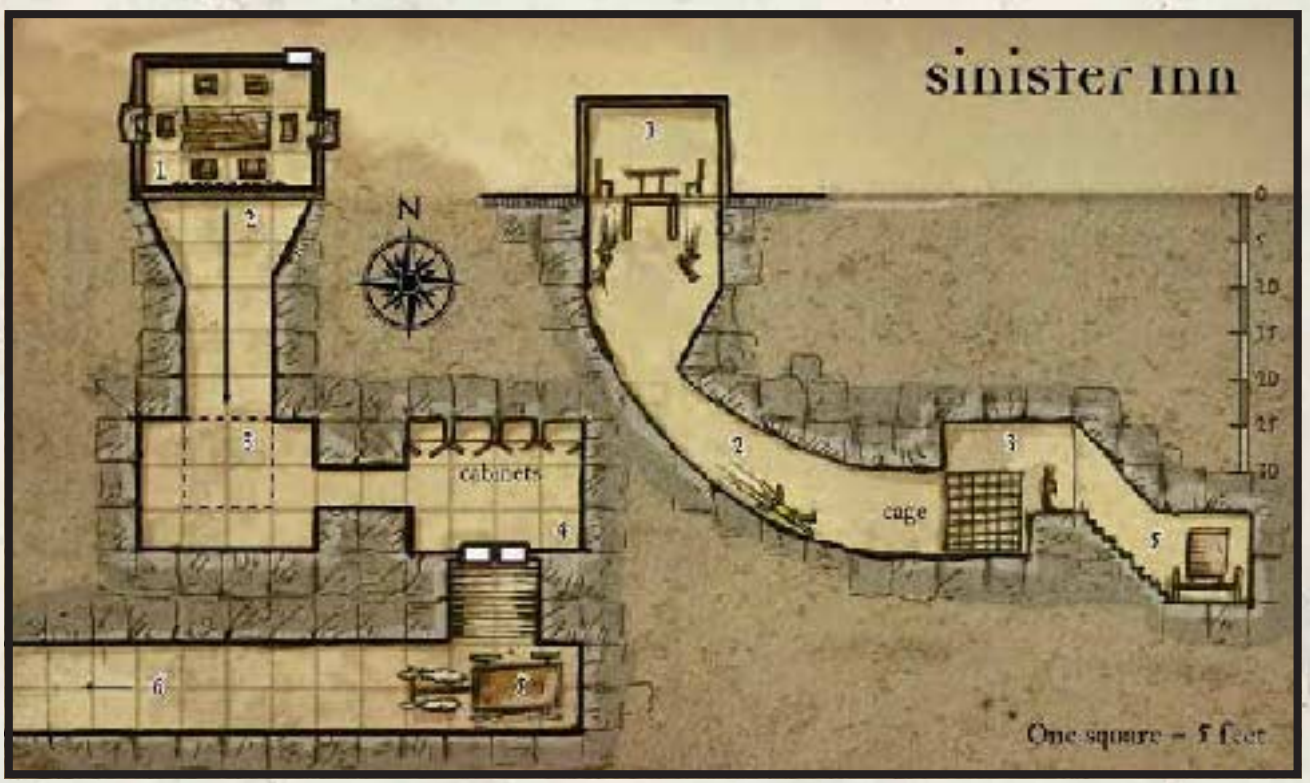
Adventure Synopsis

Characters come to the inn (possibly with the expectation of meeting someone there), and the proprietors escort them to a ground-floor private dining room. While they are waiting (either for food and drink or the person they are meeting) a spy watching them through a secret peep hole triggers a trap, sending them plummeting down into the cellars below to be taken captive for sale as slaves in some far-off land.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If you are using this adventure in conjunction with the events that transpired in the Thayan Enclave in Mulmaster (see that adventure, page 108), then the clues the PCs obtained about Thayan infiltrators posing as Zhentarim slave merchants lead them here.
- Zhentarim agents who need to covertly dispose of dangerous foes (in other words, enemies who are too powerful simply to be kidnapped off the streets) send their opponents here under false pretenses. The potential victims are told to ask to see "the one-eyed man with the emerald sword" when they first arrive on the premises. This phrase is a code to the proprietors on duty signaling them to put the trap and plan in motion. If the PCs have crossed a Zhentarim agent since arriving in the city, he might manipulate them into coming here.
- The characters might just stumble across this particular inn while looking for lodging.



Encounters

1. Private Dining Room (CR 11)

This chamber is cozy and warm, with twin fireplaces at opposite ends of the room. A large wooden table dominates the center of the chamber, with padded chairs positioned at regular intervals around it. A large colorful tapestry hangs on the south wall of the room, opposite the door. It depicts a group of mounted horsemen riding hard across a snowy moor. A successful DC 18 Knowledge (Moonsea local) check identifies the riders as barbarians of Thar.

A peephole positioned in the hearth area of the eastern fireplace permits a spy to observe the gathering from a hidden niche so as to know when to activate the trap. The spy springs the trap by pulling two levers in succession.

Pulling the first lever draws the tapestry up to the ceiling, revealing a very large permanent *symbol of stunning* scribed on the wall behind where it hung. Unless a character specifically avoids looking at the south wall when the tapestry rises, each character sees the symbol and is affected by it (you can either require a DC 25 Will save to resist looking or simply describe the rising tapestry and pause a moment to see how the players respond; unless a player specifically states his or her character is not looking toward the moving tapestry, assume everyone turns to stare).

At this point, any character who is not stunned can act during a surprise round (have those players roll initiative). The spy acts on an initiative result of 20 and pulls the second lever—whereupon the floor of this room falls away to reveal a pit trap opening beneath the visitors' feet. The four floor sections pivot down toward the perimeter of the room (they are hinged along the table sides—see the cross-section view on the map), tipping the chairs backward. The chairs, not being attached to the floor, flip the rest of the way over on their own and tumble, along with their occupants, into the pit below (area 2). The section of the floor holding the table remains in place, so a quick-acting character could conceivably grab onto or climb atop the table (the end result of a successful Reflex save).

Permanent Symbol of Stunning Trap: CR 8; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*symbol of stunning* [viewed]), 13th-level cleric, stun, Will DC 23 negates; multiple targets (all targets viewing); Search DC 10; Disable Device DC 32.

Well-Camouflaged Pit Trap: CR 8; mechanical; manual trigger; manual reset; Reflex DC 30 avoids; 40 ft. deep (gradual decline, no damage); multiple targets (all within room); Search DC 30; Disable Device DC 30.

Development: Any characters who are not stunned and do not fall into the pit trap can attempt to exit the room, though the door is locked from the outside. The proprietor who led them into the room initially is nowhere to be found, and no one else working in the inn is helpful. If the characters get violent in their efforts to recover their companions, members of the Zhentil Keep guard show up to quell the disturbance in 1d4 rounds after combat begins.

If the characters figure out that they are being spied upon or successfully pursue the spy, they catch up to him in the alley behind the inn as he attempts to escape into the sewers. He intends to meet up with the slavers Brunlaph and Kriss (see area 3, below) so that he can drive the wagon. If he is noticed before he can escape, he does not lead his pursuers toward his companions, but on a wild goose chase into other parts of the city instead.

Zhentarim Spy: hp 45; *FRCS* 282.

Note: Brunlaph uses *mending* spells to repair any broken chairs after each use of this elaborate trap.

2. Steep Chute

The area beneath the room becomes a greased chute that drops straight down for 20 feet, then angles steeply to the south, narrowing along the way. All characters, their dropped gear (if stunned), and the chairs slide down this chute, which gradually levels off, depositing everything in area 3.

3. Capture Room (EL 16)

The north central section of this room is a 10-foot-square cage, the bottom of which sits 5 feet lower than the perimeter walkway surrounding it. As a group of victims arrives through the chute (area 2), two Zhentarim slavers and their monstrous minions act quickly to capture them.

Creatures: The two NPCs waiting to capture the characters are Brunlaph and Kriss. Four ogres assist them.

Brunlaph — CR 13

Male Damaran human cleric 13 of Bane

Use generic statistics at the beginning of this section, except as follows:

Combat Gear *wand of blindness/deafness* (21 charges)

Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 13th):

7th—*Bigby's grasping hand*[D] (+26 melee touch or +31 grapple), *blasphemy* (DC 21), *destruction* (DC 21)

6th—*greater dispel magic* (DC 20), *forbiddance* (DC 20), *geas/quest*[D]

4th—*dimensional anchor, discern lies* (DC 18), *divine power, fear*[D] (DC 18), *freedom of movement, spell immunity*

3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 17), *discern lies*[D] (DC 17), *invisibility purge, magic circle against good, meld into stone, protection from energy*

2nd—*aid, bear's endurance, bull's strength, enthrall*[D] (DC 16), *silence* (2) (DC 16), *zone of truth* (DC 18)

1st—*bane* (DC 17), *cause fear* (DC 17), *command*[D] (DC 17), *comprehend languages, doom* (DC 15), *entropic shield, shield of faith*

0—*detect magic, mending* (5)

D: Domain spell; Domains: Law, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.

Possessions combat gear plus *+3 full plate, +3 heavy steel shield of arrow deflection, +4 morningstar, ring of minor energy resistance* (*electricity*), holy symbol, keys to cabinets and restraints (see room 4)

Kriss — CR 13

Male Vaasan human wizard 13

LE Medium humanoid

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +1, Spot +1

Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran, Draconic

AC 17, touch 16, flat-footed 15; Dodge
hp 50 (13 HD)
Resist evasion
Immune *web* spell and webs of any sort
Fort +5 (+7 against spider poison), **Ref** +6, **Will** +9

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares); can move half speed in webs
Melee +2 *dagger* +7/+2 (1d4+1/19–20)
Ranged +2 *dagger* +10 (1d4+1/19–20)
Base Atk +6; **Grp** +5
Combat Gear *boots of levitation, cloak of arachnida, wand of Otiluke's resilient sphere* (34 charges)
Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 13th):
7th—*forcecage*
6th—*globe of invulnerability, mass suggestion* (DC 20)
5th—*dominate person* (3) (DC 19)
4th—*charm monster* (DC 18), *greater invisibility, Otiluke's resilient sphere* (2) (DC 18)
3rd—*dispel magic* (3) (DC 17), *gaseous form, magic circle against good*
2nd—*bull's strength* (3), *darkvision, protection from arrows*
1st—*animate rope, comprehend languages, grease, hold portal, shield*
0—*detect magic, mage hand, open/close, read magic*

Abilities Str 8, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 12, Cha 10
SQ familiar (none at present)
Feats Brew Potion[B], Combat Casting, Craft Rod, Craft Wand[B], Craft Wondrous Item, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Scribe Scroll[B], Toughness
Skills Appraise +16, Concentration +17 (+21 casting defensively), Decipher Script +20, Gather Information +2, Knowledge (arcana) +20, Knowledge (Moonsea local) +20, Spellcraft +22
Possessions combat gear plus *ring of protection +4, amulet of natural armor +1, +2 dagger, bag of holding* (type II), keys to cabinets and restraints (see room 4)
Spellbook spells prepared plus 0—all; 1st—*magic missile, mage armor;* 2nd—*invisibility, knock;* 3rd—*haste;* 5th—*feeblemind, seeming, teleport;* 6th—*geas/quest, greater dispel magic;* 7th—*mass hold person*

Ogres (4): hp 32 each; *MM* 199.

Tactics: On the first round after the characters tumble into the area, one of the ogres lowers the cage door (the side facing the chute) by means of a lever on the wall while Kriss casts *mass suggestion* to immobilize any unstunned characters. At the same time, Brunlaph casts *greater dispel magic* to remove any residual defenses the prisoners might still have active. The other three ogres ready actions to attack any prisoner that somehow manages to evade all of the other safety features. On the next round, assuming the prisoners are secure, the ogres begin pulling the prisoners, one at a time, out of the cage through a small hinged grate on top (marked on the map) and hauling them to area 4 while the spellcasters keep watch and ready additional spells (*greater command* for Brunlaph, *dominate person* and *Otiluke's resilient sphere* for Kriss) to incapacitate unruly prisoners.

Development: If the PCs are overwhelmed in this encounter, the slavers prep them and take them to the Slave Auction (see next section) to be sold. If they manage to evade capture and defeat the slavers, they can explore the rest of the cellars and find the route to the Slave Auction on their own.

4. Restraint Room

Each prisoner brought to this room is stripped of all gear, gagged, and restrained with steel manacles and leg irons. Locked cabinets along the north wall hold the various accoutrements of the slave business, and temporarily store confiscated equipment taken from new slaves. Brunlaph and Kriss each have keys that unlock both the cabinets and the restraints.

The double doors to the south lead down a wide set of stone stairs to room 5.

Treasure: The far right-hand cabinet contains a belt pouch with 300 gp, a small carved box (25 gp) holding 2 moonstones (50 gp each), and a *wand of enlarge person* (CL 5th, 27 charges); all are items taken from previous prisoners.

Development: If you are using the Sinister Inn as a continuation of one of the larger story arcs introduced in previous chapters, some unique item belonging to a slave the characters are trying to track down could be found here. Such items might include a personal locket or brooch, or even a note bearing the missing person's name inside a wallet or purse still holding a few coins.

5. Prison Transport

At the bottom of the stone steps leading from room 4, a 10-foot-wide corridor (part of the sewer system that has been sealed off from the rest of the tunnels and cleaned up) heads to the west. A box wagon adapted to serve as a large mobile cage waits there, hitched to two mules. After prisoners are processed in room 4, the slavers bring them here and lock them inside the cage for transport to the auction house. A solid piece of iron plating shields the driver from the reach of the slaves inside the cage.

The bars are stout iron and spaced closely enough together to prevent even Tiny creatures from squeezing through.

Development: If the slavers are worried that the prisoners might break out of the cage, Kriss augments the whole thing with his *forcecage* spell, reduced to exactly fit the dimensions of the wagon cage.

Cage: 1-in.-thick bars; hardness 10; hp 30; AC 12; bend DC 30; Open Lock DC 30.

6. Slave Route

The tunnel leading from the sinister inn gradually descends as it heads west. The far end of the tunnel arrives at the delivery entrance (area 1) of the Slave Auction adventure, presented below.

slave auction

The following adventure is designed for characters of 13th–15th level.

This location is a typical business venture run by the Zhentarim within Zhentil Keep. You can locate it within any area of the city you wish, but if you are using the encounter as part of the larger story arc described above, then you should place it within the southern section (old city) of Zhentil Keep.

The slavers employ elite guards specially trained and equipped to control prisoners and to resist attempts by outsiders to free them. The statistics for those guards are as follows.

Elite Guard **CR 9**

Male human fighter 9
LE Medium humanoid
Init +5; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2
Languages Chondathan, Common, Damaran

AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17
hp 72 (9 HD)
SR 15
Fort +10, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee +1 short sword +13/+8 (1d6+4/19–20) or
Melee +1 whip +13/+8 (1d3+4) or
Melee unarmed +12/+7 (1d3+3)
Base Atk +9; **Grp** +12
Atk Options Combat Reflexes
Combat Gear 2 *potions of bull's strength*, 2 *potions of cure moderate wounds*

Abilities Str 17, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8
Feats Alertness, Athletic, Combat Reflexes[B], Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip)[B], Improved Initiative[B], Improved Unarmed Strike[B], Iron Will, Power Attack[B], Skill Focus (Bluff), Skill Focus (Intimidate)
Skills Bluff +8, Climb +14, Diplomacy +1, Disguise –1 (+1 acting), Intimidate +16, Jump +6, Listen +2, Spot +2, Swim –1
Possessions combat gear plus *+2 breastplate of spell resistance* (*SR 15*), *+1 short sword*, *+1 whip*, *cloak of resistance +2*

Background

Quon's Collectible Creatures (see Monster Emporium, below) hosts a slave auction once every tenday in an amphitheatre built into the basement. Most people in the city know about the auctions, but you can't get into it without paying a hefty entrance fee—150 gp per visitor. Of course, if you're a slave, you get in for free. Some of the slaves are procured elsewhere and brought here by ship, while others are kidnapped right off the city streets of Zhentil Keep. The slavers bring their merchandise here for storage before the auction.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, the characters arrive here by one of several means and reasons, and how they choose to interact with the slavers in the place is up to them. They might attempt to bid on slaves, free them from captivity, bribe someone for information, or (if they are newly caught slaves themselves) be put up for auction or break loose and fight their way out.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If you are using this adventure in conjunction with the events that transpired in the Thayan Enclave in Mulmaster (see that adventure, page 108), then they have either been captured by the trap at the Tesh Inn, or they defeated the slavers there and followed the underground route to the back door of this location.
- The characters might just be looking for slaves to buy (or are posing as such in order to find and free a friend) and have been told to come to Quon's Monster Emporium.
- The characters found their way into Quon's basement after fighting the freed monsters in the business on the ground floor (see Monster Emporium, below).

Encounters

1. Delivery Entrance (EL 14)

This tunnel is part of the sealed network of sewer tunnels the Zhentarim use for covert travel within the city. It leads to several other business locations (including the Tesh Inn; see Sinister Inn, above) as well as to some warehouses near the docks. Slaves being brought into the city for sale arrive in cage-wagons.

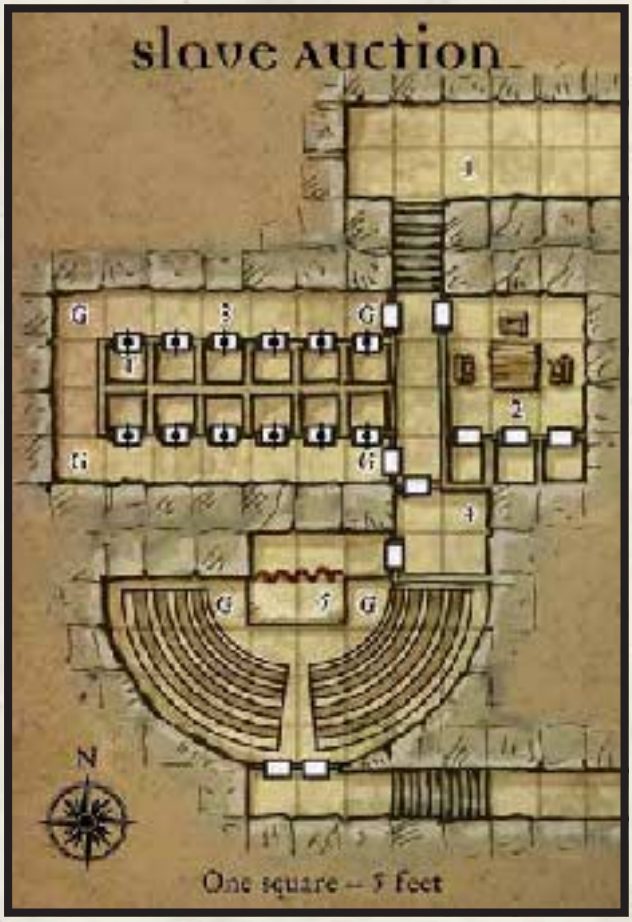
Creatures: From here, the overseer and four of his guards unload the slaves and take them up the staircase to the south and into the processing room (area 2).

Overseer: as 9th-level cleric of Bane, except as follows:

Melee *+3 morningstar* +11/+6 (1d8+5) or
Melee *+1 merciful wounding whip* +9/+4 (1d3+3 plus 1d6 nonlethal plus 1 Con)
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 9th):
5th—*greater command*[D] (DC 20), *slay living* (DC 18)
4th—*cure critical wounds*, *divine power*, *fear*[D] (DC 17)
3rd—*blindness/deafness* (DC 16), *discern lies*[D] (DC 16), *dispel magic* (2) (DC 16), *remove blindness/deafness*
2nd—*bull's strength* (2), *enthrall*[D] (DC 15), *hold person* (3) (DC 17)
1st—*cause fear* (2) (DC 14), *command*[D] (DC 16), *doom* (3) (DC 14)
0—*detect magic* (2), *cure minor wounds* (3)
D: Domain spell; Domains: Law, Tyranny; Deity: Bane.
Feats Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (whip), Negotiator, Persuasive
Possessions *+2 full plate*, *+2 heavy steel shield*, *+1 merciful wounding whip*, *+3 morningstar*, holy symbol

Elite Guards (4): hp 72 each; see above.

Tactics: The overseer is a particularly devious and cruel person who uses his divine magic to intimidate and cow his prisoners. He enjoys using spells such as *doom* and *cause fear* when prisoners first arrive to "put them in the right frame of mind." As a



punishment for unruly slaves, he often uses *blindness* on a prisoner for a few days to make him or her more docile. Of course, he removes the spell a few hours or days later as a reward for good behavior (or right before the slave is to be sold). He casts *inflict critical wounds* against more dangerous and threatening slaves, but he prefers beating them into submission with his unusual whip. If there is a real danger of rioting or escape, he casts *bull's strength* on a couple of guards, casts *divine power* upon himself, and readies *slay living* to put down any slave that is an actual threat to him.

Development: The overseer is a personal favorite of Verblen, the Slave Lord of Zhentil Keep (see page 130). Should the characters kill him, Verblen becomes personally involved in finding out who is responsible.

2. Processing Room (EL 12)

This 15-foot-square room serves multiple purposes. When new slaves arrive through the delivery entrance (area 1), the slavers bring them here first to prepare them for captivity until the next scheduled auction. The overseer, assisted by two guards, personally checks in each slave. Once a slave has been processed, a second pair of guards escorts the slave to one of the holding cells (area 3).

When slaves are not being processed, the chamber serves as a combination break area and kitchen. The guards eat here and also prepare food for the slaves. The three 5-foot-square closets to the south of the processing room contain foodstuffs, spare restraints, and miscellaneous equipment needed to run the business.

Tactics: The overseer uses *detect magic* to make sure a slave has no residual magical effects upon him. Then he utilizes his *discern lies* spell while asking prisoners, "Can you escape your restraints?" and "Are you hiding anything from me?" to see if anyone has managed to pick a lock or tuck away a tool or weapon.

Treasure: One of the guards has tucked a pouch with 5 aquamarines (100 gp each) into a canister of stale biscuits no one wants to eat in the pantry.

3. Holding Cells (EL 13)

A long hallway circumnavigates a series of 5-foot-square holding cells. The cells are constructed of stone, and the doors are made of solid iron with a 6-inch-square window set at about face level. These windows have hinged doors on them that can be shut and latched from the outside, thereby denying light to unruly prisoners. The guards pass the slaves' food to them through these windows (a hunk of bread or cheese and a cup of water being the usual fare). Only the overseer has the keys to unlock the doors. Each cell has a chamber pot and a pile of straw for bedding. Slaves remain manacled (hands in front) and locked in leg irons while in the cells.

A guard is always stationed at each position marked G on the map.

Elite Guards (4): hp 72 each; see page 137.

Trap: The cell at the end of the north row (marked T) is a special punishment chamber that the overseer has rigged up. The overseer scribed a permanent *symbol of pain* onto the ceiling. The symbol's trigger is proximity (inside the cell) by anyone other than the overseer himself.

Development: Some of the prisoners held in these cells might have the strange tattoo mentioned in previous story arcs. Also, one of the other prisoners could be the apprentice of a Thayan infiltrator who tried to betray him but was caught and sold into slavery as punishment.

4. Staging Room

During an auction, the overseer and a pair of guards bring slaves who are about to be sold to this room to prepare them for bidding. This preparation usually consists of a cold soaking with several buckets of water and possibly a quick bit of grooming (to brush straw out of hair, or the like). If a slave resists, the overseer takes the time to use magic to make the slave more docile. Once the slave is the next lot to be bid upon, the two guards escort the slave down the hall and through the curtain to the stage in the amphitheater (area 5).

5. Amphitheater (EL 11)

This semicircular, bowl-shaped chamber is the location of the auctions. Curved rows of tiered seating surround the stage, with plush chairs set on each tier. Ambient lighting gives the whole place a rich, luxurious feeling, while brighter directional lanterns provide greater illumination on the stage along the north wall of the room, which rises 5 feet above the lowest tier of seats. Most customers who attend the auction bring

along their own private security, though they rarely personally transport their new purchases themselves—arrangements for delivery are usually made with either the slavers themselves or a third party.

Creatures: Positions marked G on the map indicate slave guards.

Elite Guards (2): hp 72 each; see page 137.

Development: If the PCs do not escape from the slave auction themselves (either by circumstance or perhaps by choice), they are purchased as a group by a mysterious bidder. This mysterious bidder could represent any of a number of entities mentioned in other adventures. The hallway beyond the double doors leads into the basement of Quon's Collectible Creatures (see Monster Emporium, below).

Monster Emporium

This location is a typical business venture run by the Zhentarim within Zhentil Keep. You can locate it within any area of the city you wish, but if you are using the encounter as part of the larger story arc described above, then you should place it within the southern section (old city) of Zhentil Keep.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 14th–16th level.

Background

Quon's Collectible Creatures caters to a very exclusive clientele, namely high-level wizards seeking components for their magical experiments. The emporium offers all sorts of exotic creatures from every imaginable place on and beyond Faerûn, all prepackaged and ready for pickup or delivery. The prices are steep, but the quality and selection of the merchandise is exceptional. If Quon doesn't have it, he'll get it for you.

Quon is a powerful Zhentarim wizard who imports most of his merchandise through intermediary agents—adventurers who get paid very well to hunt down and capture magical beasts, aberrations, fiends, and everything else in between. Quon himself personally manages the hunts for those few creatures too powerful for lesser groups to tackle, or when he has made a special promise to deliver the freshest, most prime specimens.

When the characters visit Quon's Collectible Creatures, Quon just happens to be away on one of those personal expeditions. He has left his apprentice, Hofu-jal, in charge of the store. Unfortunately, Hofu-jal's curiosity has gotten the better of him, and he has accidentally released one of Quon's most recent acquisitions—right into the middle of the market square where the emporium operates.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, the characters arrive here by one of several means and reasons, and how they choose to deal with the chaotic developments surrounding the place is up to them. They might choose to slay stray creatures, capture them, or sit and watch as the Zhentarim city watch comes to deal with the situation. Whatever course they choose, the creatures set free in the confusion can and do run amok in the city (and might cause trouble for several days afterward, if the DM decides that some slip away from the initial quelling).

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.:

- If the PCs came from the Tesh Inn by means of the slave auction, then they come up from Quon's basement.
- If the PCs are seeking the slave auction, they arrive on the street outside the emporium when everything erupts.
- Quon might contact the PCs to request their services in capturing a particular specimen somewhere in the Moonsea region. Alternatively, another wizard in the city (or in an isolated abode elsewhere in the region) hires the characters to travel to Zhentil Keep to purchase a particular specimen and return it.

Encounters

1. Quon's Shop (EL 10)

This front room serves as the sales and service area for the emporium. Quon keeps shelves lining the wall stocked with all manner of materials useful in spellcasting—animal fur, scales, claws, eyes, wings, and so forth. One of Quon's apprentices always mans this area of the shop, helping customers from behind a counter along the north side of the chamber. A curtain hangs in the doorway leading to the back rooms (areas 2–4).

Every case in the establishment (including those in the back rooms) has a powerful magic trap protecting it from would-be thieves.

Wail of the Banshee Trap: CR 10; magic device, touch trigger; no reset; spell effect (*wail of the banshee,* 17th-level wizard, Fortitude DC 23 negates); multiple targets (up to seventeen creatures); Search DC 34; Disable Device 34.

Treasure: If the PCs spend enough time searching (DC 15), they discover components for any spell requiring animal parts as components among those listed in the *Player's Handbook, Magic of Faerûn,* and the *Forgotten Realms Campaign Setting.*

2. Preparation Room

This room serves as the preparation area for preparing merchandise for display on the shelves out front, or when Quon and his staff have completed special sales and the goods need to be packaged for delivery. The stairs right behind the door next to the curtained opening lead down to the amphitheater where the slave auctions are conducted. Sometimes, Quon combines his shipment service to include newly sold slaves as well as purchased beasts.

At night, a single guard sleeps on a cot in this room, just to keep an eye on things and to further dissuade common thieves from attempting to abscond with the goods.

Elite Guard: hp 72; see page 137.

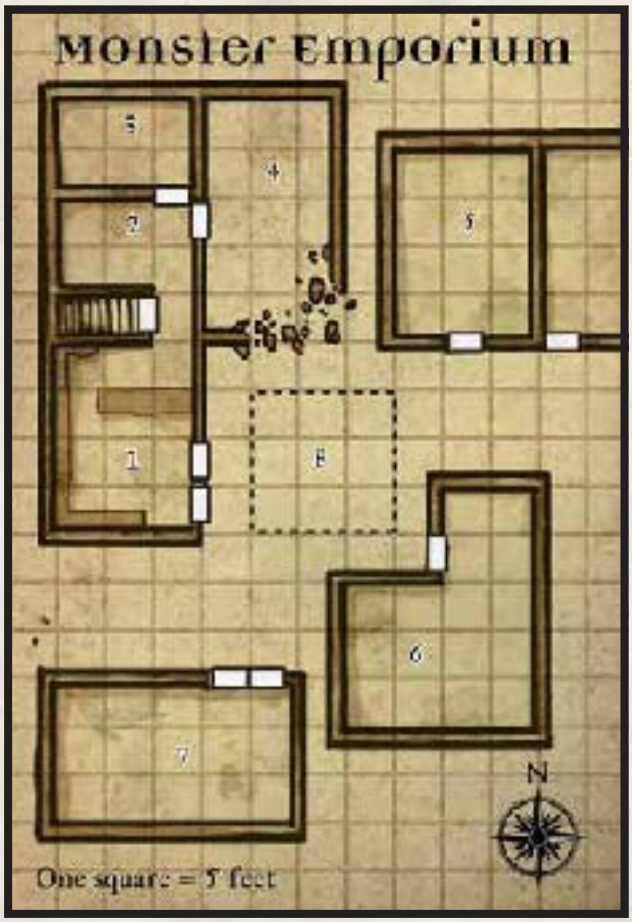
3. Stock Room

Quon and his staff store extra nonliving merchandise here. They also keep shipping supplies and spare containers—boxes, jars, vials, bottles, and so forth—in crates on shelves that line the walls.

Treasure: As with area 1, characters who thoroughly search (DC 20) find spell components consisting of animal body parts.

4. Kennel (EL 12)

This larger room has a combination of storage facilities to house all manner of live merchandise. Most of the chamber, beginning



at the north wall, looks something like a pet store. The place is lined from floor to ceiling with rows of cages where relatively innocuous creatures spend their time before being sold. Quon is very careful to separate natural enemies from one another, but sometimes the howls, snarls, wails, and other bestial sounds raise quite a din.

The southern wall of the room houses the truly rare and wondrous goods. Here, Quon stores the more exotic (and expensive) magical beasts, aberrations, and outer-planar prizes he is noted and famous for. Of course, it would be far too dangerous to keep them in cages, for so many of them have the wherewithal to escape such mundane confinement. Instead, Quon stores his most choice merchandise by means of minimus containers created by the *binding* spell. Each creature gets its own gem, which he stores in a jewelry box, which in turn goes into a small drawer in a large set of filing drawers. Each drawer has magical protections on it, as does each of the boxes.

Currently, the southeast corner of the building is a crumbled ruin. Hofu-jal made the mistake of thinking he could complete an impressive sale to an influential customer while Quon was not around, but the apprentice did not have the abilities to properly deal with the magical protections and ended up inadvertently freeing one of Quon's prizes. Because of Hofu-jal's blunder, a fiendish frost worm burst forth from its imprisoning gem and immediately rampaged right through the wall. The ensuing chaos has damaged numerous other cages, freeing a few more creatures that are now roaming through the kennel. Both these loose beasts and the ones still caged are highly upset.

At the moment, a pair of cockatrices and a trio of digesters run free inside the kennel. On the third round after any character enters the room, a dragonne and a dozen shocker lizards escape from their cages to run amok. The DM can round out the varieties of caged animals to taste.

Cockatrices (2): 27 hp each; *MM* 37.
Digesters (3): 68 hp each; *MM* 59.
Dragonne: 76 hp; *MM* 89.
Shocker Lizards (12): 13 hp each; *MM* 224.

5. Candle Shop

This shop sells all types of candles, from the mundane sort used for lighting purposes to very special ones needed for certain types of casting and magic item creation. Every imaginable combination of color, wax type, flame hue, scented oil, and duration is available.

Development: The shop is unremarkable in most ways, but if any substantial heat (say, from a *fireball* or similar spell) envelops it, the wax inside will melt into untidy globs, ruining the shopkeeper's merchandise.

6. Glassmaker

The glassmaker running this business specializes in potion bottles, alembics, vials, beakers, and other glassware that wizards need to conduct their experiments. The western portion of the building is an outdoor glass furnace and work area, while the shop itself is in the larger eastern section.

Development: If someone slays the fiendish frost worm that escapes from Quon's, the explosion from its death throes shatters most of the glassware in this shop, turning the owner into an enemy of whoever is responsible.

7. Curio Shop

The merchant who runs this shop crafts and sells many different kinds of trinkets and jewelry to the common folk, but he also makes the majority of his profits through the crafting of amulets, brooches, and other adornments that both wizards and clerics in Zhentil Keep can use in crafting magical items. The back half of the shop houses a workroom with areas for sculpting, molds, and a kiln for firing and glazing clay and porcelain.

8. Market Square (EL 14)

This open area sits in the midst of several shops catering to the various needs of wizards and sorcerers. On most days, it would be a rather unremarkable square, just one among countless scattered throughout all of Zhentil Keep.

On the day the PCs arrive, the vicinity is in chaos. A massive creature, a fiendish frost worm, writhes about in the middle of the square (in the area enclosed by the dashed line), confused, furious, and much too hot. It finds the lack of ice and snow very disconcerting and wants nothing more than to burrow into a nice cool tunnel beneath the surface, but the smells, heat, and din of the city are all conspiring to drive it mad, so it is lashing out at anything that moves into range and line of sight.

Fiendish Frost Worm: 156 hp; *MM* 107 and 111.

Tactics: Shortly after the characters arrive, elite guards of the Zhentil Keep city watch (see page 137) begin showing up to assist in subduing this creature. (Bring one guard into the fray every two rounds or so, or more often if the PCs are not faring well against the frost worm.) The guards attempt to deal nonlethal damage to the creature, rather than trying to kill it, so that it can be captured and imprisoned once again.

Development: If the PCs destroy the worm, Quon considers them responsible for replacing it and demands that they do so immediately. If they refuse, he uses his influence with the city's wizards and sorcerers to make life difficult for them. If, however, they assist in recapturing the creature, Quon offers them discounts and promises of future assistance should they need it.

Beholders' Lair

This location depicts a possible layout for the lair of a group of beholders making their home within Zhentil Keep. You can locate it within any area of the city you wish, but if you are using the encounter as part of the larger story arc described above, then you should place it within the southern section (old city) of Zhentil Keep.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 15th–17th level.

Background

The Black Network historically consorts with beholders, finding them useful allies for thwarting their enemies, as well as invaluable spies and information gatherers. One such beholder was Torix, a powerful creature that was also a potent wizard. Torix produced three offspring, a set of beholder triplets that still use Torix's lair as their home. Normally, a beholder's genetic predisposition to xenophobia and hatred of others of its kind would prevent three beholders from ever sharing the same space, but these siblings seem to break that rule.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, the characters arrive here by one of several means and reasons, intending to explore the lair and with hopes of either negotiating with or defeating the beholders living here.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- The characters learn that one customer of the slave auction is a beholder, and that this beholder purchased a slave they need to speak with or rescue. They gather enough information to track down the beholder's lair.
- One or more of the beholders purchases the characters as slaves from the slave auction and brings them to the lair.
- Quon, the owner of the monster emporium (see page 139), asks or demands that the characters track down a creature that fled during the chaos surrounding the release of the frost worm. The characters learn that a beholder petrified the creature and took the prey back to its lair.

Encounters

1. Sewer Tunnel

This section of the sewer tunnel resembles most of those found beneath the surface of Zhentil Keep's streets. Within a 15-foot-wide tunnel, a 5-foot-wide walkway runs parallel to flowing water. In most places, the water reaches a depth of only 10 to 15 feet. However, at this particular spot it is much deeper, due in part to the natural connection to the River Tesh (see area 2, below). Since the water reaches such a depth, it is generally cleaner than most of the sludge that drifts through the sewer system.

2. Submerged Entrance

At a depth of 80 feet (the bottom of the sewer channel), a passage connects with another channel. This passage is 10 feet wide and runs for 40 feet, where it connects to another vertical shaft (see area 3, below).

Tactics: The three beholders pass through the water by means of *necklaces of adaptation* to aid them in breathing (they drape these over some of their eyestalks).

Development: On the opposite side of the bottom of the sewer channel, a natural fissure in the bedrock beneath the city connects to the River Tesh. The fissure runs anywhere from 10 to 20 feet deep and four to five times that wide. The other end of the fissure sits several hundred yards away, too far for any humanoid to swim without some magical breathing aid. However, if the characters choose to come and go from the beholders' lair over and over again, some creature might have wandered through the fissure to lie in wait at the bottom of the channel for unsuspecting passersby.

3. Vertical Shaft (EL 9)

The submerged tunnel (area 2) connects to this vertical shaft, which rises 80 feet to another horizontal section of tunnel. That portion of the route contains breathable air, but the characters must swim a total distance of 200 feet from the sewer tunnel to reach the area.

The small space with air in it sports a deadly magical trap, triggered the moment anyone surfaces.

Incendiary Cloud Trap: CR 9; magic device, proximity trigger (*alarm*); automatic reset; spell effect (*incendiary cloud*, CL 15th, 4d6/round for 15 rounds, Reflex DC 22 half); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

Tactics: The three beholders bypass the trap using the *anti-magic* ray from their main eyes.

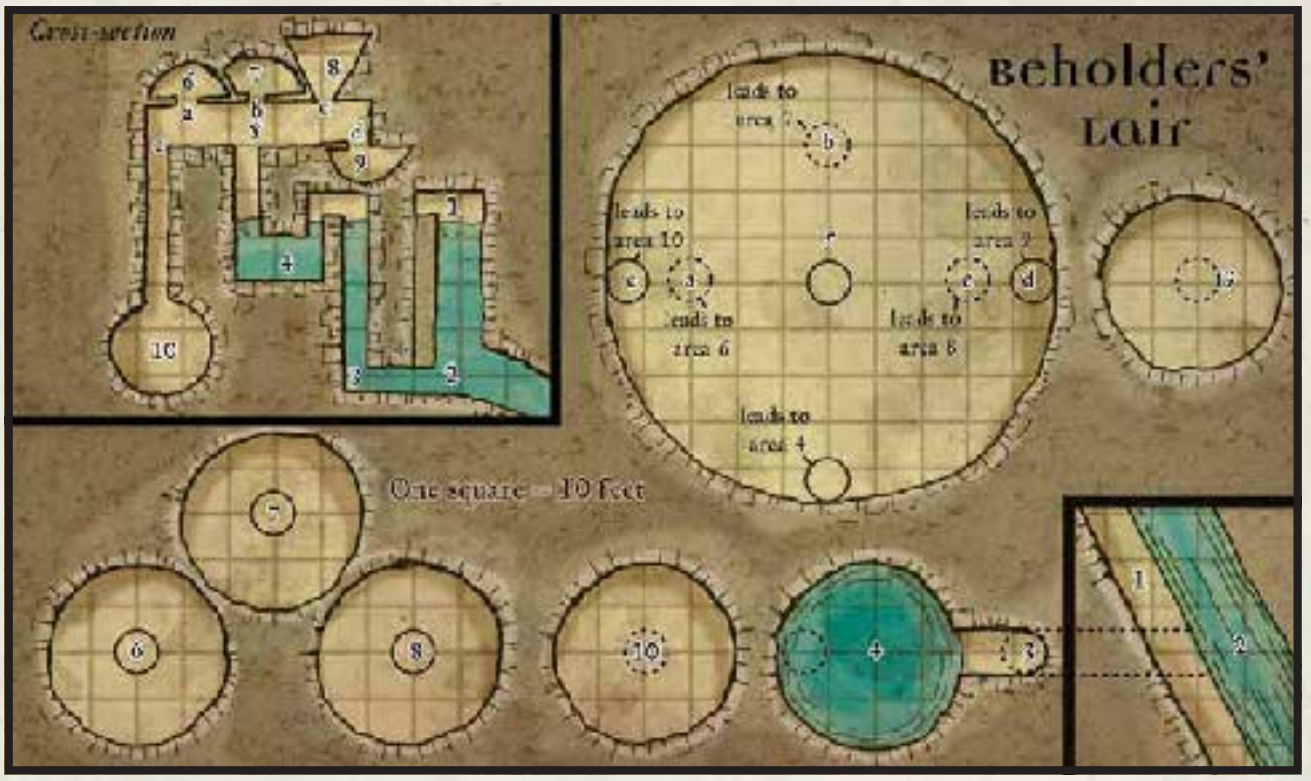
4. Submerged Chamber (EL 11)

This round room is completely submerged. The ceiling 10 feet overhead has a few tiny fissures that allow trapped air to escape upward.

A stone golem (built by the grandfather beholder during its life) guards the chamber and attacks any creatures other than beholders that attempt to pass through.

Stone Golem: hp 107; *MM* 136.

Tactics: The grandfather beholder commanded the golem to remain positioned directly under the opening that leads to area 5, standing so as to prevent creatures from getting past it. When a beholder wishes to pass through, the golem steps aside and permits



the orb to traverse the route, and then it returns to its normal stance. Whenever any other (nonbeholder) creatures approach, the golem does not move, attacking only those creatures that get within range and attempting to prevent them from getting past it.

Because of the difficulty in fighting in water, the grandfather beholder placed a permanent *freedom of movement* spell upon the golem so that it does not suffer any adverse conditions for fighting underwater. Its opponents, however, cannot enjoy that luxury. (See *DMG* 92–93 for the effects of underwater combat.)

5. Trophy Chamber

The vertical shaft rising from the submerged chamber (area 4) breaks the surface of the water after about 15 feet and continues up for another 30 feet or so before entering the trophy chamber. This huge circular room is 100 feet in diameter and very richly decorated. Beautiful rugs, mostly in red, purple, and deep blue hues, cover the majority of the floor. At various intervals, seemingly at random, statuary stand posed in realistic displays. Some of the statues are complete, while others might just be torsos or busts. While most are humanoid, a few wondrous creatures are also included. There are no natural light sources, but several of the statues are imbued with permanent *faerie fire* spells in various hues, giving the whole chamber an eerie glow. Of course, these statues are the victims of the beholders' *flesh to stone* eyestalks. They have brought their prizes here for gloating purposes, using their *disintegrate* eyestalks to "sculpt" away portions of some of the statues.

In the center of the vast room, a large three-sided stone table bears a strange board game. The game pieces are carved from colored stone, and the board is made up of tiles inlaid into the surface of the table. A game seems to be in progress. The three beholders enjoy playing this odd game, something like three-way chess.

There are four visible exits from the chamber. Three are set into the ceiling (marked a, b, and c on the map) and lead to areas 6, 7, and 8. The fourth is set into the floor (marked as d) and leads to the death tyrant's lair (area 9).

There is also a hidden passage, a circular shaft beneath the floor marked as location e on the map, that leads to the beholders' treasure vault (see area 10). The shaft rests beneath a rug, upon which a "statue" of a gray render stands. Since the creature weighed more than two tons in life, it's nigh unto impossible to move it (DC 40 Strength check to tip over). The beholders get around this by using the *wand of stone shape* (see area 6) to "create" a path to the tunnel, then sealing the path up again when they are finished.

If characters entering this area remain quiet, they can poke about without drawing attention to themselves. However, if they make any noise (or if they attract the attention of any prisoners in area 8), then the grandfather death tyrant (see area 9) appears and attacks them.

Development: Any number of statues could be important NPCs or monsters the characters have been searching for. The characters must have the means of reversing the *flesh to stone* effect, and might also need some form of *restoration* (in the cases where the beholders sculpted away major body parts to satisfy their own peculiar tastes).

6. Beholder Sanctuary (EL 15–17)

This hemispherical chamber serves as the private sanctuary of the beholder trio. Three nests, each one a bowl-shaped indentation atop a stone pillar, holds fluffy piles of feathers, fabric, and

other soft materials. The beholders have positioned a series of strange lanterns around the perimeter of the room. Each lantern consists of a stone base with a tall crystal cylinder resting on it, itself capped by another stone. The crystal cylinders are rough-cut and opaque. Inside, a permanent *dancing lights* spell creates the image of faintly glowing orbs that drift about, giving off soothing hues of color.

Each nest has a magic trap placed upon it set to trigger if anyone other than the beholders touches any part of the stone pillar.

Chain Lightning Trap: CR 7; magic device; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*chain lightning,* 11th-level wizard, 11d6 electricity to target nearest center of trigger area plus 5d6 electricity to each of up to eleven secondary targets, Reflex DC 19 half); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Depending on how deadly you wish to make the lair, none, one, two, or all three of the beholders could be nesting here (when combined with the death tyrant, that's EL 15, 16, or 17).

Beholders (3): hp 93 each; *MM* 26.

Tactics: The moment the beholders hear any sort of intrusive noise in the trophy chamber below them, they move to check it out, attacking interlopers on sight. The beholders attempt to flank the group but avoid getting into melee with them by moving to the entrances of areas 6, 7, and 8 and hovering there. They turn themselves so as to aim their antimagic rays at spellcasters (but avoiding canceling each other out) while using their other eyestalks in concert to take out the powerful characters. Should things begin to go badly for them, they attempt to flee through the *portal* in area 7.

Treasure: A *wand of stone shape* (CL 7th, 37 charges) has been hidden in the northern nest under the piles of fluffy lining. The beholders use this to gain access to their treasure vault (area 10). There is the possibility of one or more *necklaces of adaptation* hidden in each nest (one for each beholder present in the lair). The beholders use these to move through the submerged portions of the entrance.

7. Portal Chamber

This chamber, another hemispherical room, contains nothing of any visible interest in it whatsoever. The only feature at all is the 10-foot-circular stone projection that protrudes from the ceiling like a ring. It is, in fact, a *portal* leading to a magical location in Yûlash (see Lost Temple, page 148). It has no key or limitations—any creature moving into the space inside the stone ring instantly teleports to its twin gateway.

8. Prison

The beholders sometimes bring captives or slaves to their lair to serve as menial laborers, hostages, or even as food. The eye tyrants keep their prisoners in this chamber. The entire room has been treated with a permanent *reverse gravity* effect, so the prisoners actually dwell on the ceiling of the room. In addition, the walls are coated with thick grease to prevent anyone from climbing out of the prison. The beholders simply use their *telekinesis* eyestalks to maneuver the prisoners up to the ceiling.

Development: The beholders might have purchased one or more of the slaves marked with the mysterious Thayan tattoo. If so, then they are here; if the characters are not playing through that story arc, feel free to add any of your plot elements to whatever creatures the PCs find in this room.

9. Death Tyrant Lair (EL 13)

This unremarkable room is shaped like many of the other chambers in this complex, a simple bowl-shaped room with a hole at the top. A few scraps of rubbish—odd scales, bones, and other material—litter the bottom of the bowl.

This area serves as the lair of the beholders' grandfather, which has passed into undeath and is now a death tyrant.

Death Tyrant Beholder: hp 71; *FRCS* 309.

Tactics: The death tyrant stays in its lair, resting against the bottom of the bowl, until summoned by one of the beholders or it hears any noise in the main trophy room. If there is a commotion, it rises up and begins attacking anything other than its kin.

Development: If the PCs destroy the grandfather death tyrant, and at least one of the beholders escapes (because it wasn't in the lair when the PCs invaded, or because it fled through the portal chamber), it vows revenge on the characters and attempts to hunt them down some time in the future.

10. Treasure Vault (EL 8)

The bottom of this shaft opens into a spherical room. The beholders store their treasure here, spilled loose on the floor.

Any creature that touches any portion of the spherical wall of this room triggers a trap, which releases insanity mist into the entire room.

Insanity Mist Vapor Trap: CR 8; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; gas; never miss; onset delay (1 round); poison (insanity mist, Fortitude DC 15 resists, 1d4 Wis/2d6 Wis); multiple targets (all targets inside the chamber); Search DC 25; Disable Device DC 20.

Treasure: *+3 full plate armor, rod of the viper, potion of haste,* scroll of *blur,* scroll of *jump,* scroll of *knock,* scroll of *magic circle against law,* scroll of *daze monster,* scroll of *Tenser's floating disk,* scroll of *darkvision, potion of barkskin, staff of life* (28 charges), *ring of evasion,* rich purple corundum (1,200 gp), blue star sapphire (1,000 gp), fire opal (1,000 gp), golden yellow topaz (800 gp), black pearl (600 gp), yellow topaz (600 gp), two alexandrites (500 gp each), black pearl (500 gp), green spinel (110 gp), amber (100 gp),two jets (100 gp each), chrysoprase (80 gp), white pearl (80 gp), iolite (70 gp), smoky quartz (70 gp), carnelian (60 gp), chalcedony (50 gp), onyx (50 gp), star rose quartz (50 gp), iolite (30 gp), rose quartz (30 gp), tiger eye turquoise (13 gp), banded agate (12 gp), golden deep tiger eye turquoise (11 gp), freshwater (irregular) pearl (8 gp), 1,800 pp, 10,000 gp.

The Temple of Bane

This location details both the main Zhentarim headquarters complex and the Temple of Bane within it. You might also choose to use the temple floor plan portion as a temple dedicated to Bane elsewhere within the Zhentarim sphere of influence.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 16th–18th level.

Background

During the height of Zhentil Keep's power, a human merchant lord named Orgauth lived in this building complex. When the real Lord Orgauth perished during the razing of the city, a pit fiend secretly assumed the merchant's identity and became the charismatic leader of what was left of Zhentil Keep. After Scyllua Darkhope slew the false Lord Orgauth, Fzoul Chembryl returned from the Citadel of the Raven and declared Zhentil Keep to be under the sole rulership of the Black Network. He and Scyllua took up residence within Lord Orgauth's complex, making it the headquarters of all things Zhentish. Upon Bane's return to life, Chembryl immediately rededicated the small chapel within the complex to the Black Lord, again serving as its leader. Since that time, Chembryl has commanded both Bane's clergy and his armies from here.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, it is provided as the backdrop for possible meetings or confrontations between the characters and the high clergy of the Zhentarim, including Fzoul Chembryl, should such come to pass.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- During the course of any of their activities within the city, the PCs have come to the attention of high priests within the temple and are summoned for an audience to discuss said activities. This might be either favorable or unfavorable circumstances.
- The characters have sufficient evidence of the Thayan plot to take over Zhentil Keep to present to the leadership of the Zhentarim, and come requesting an audience.
- The characters simply believe they are powerful enough to destroy (or assume control of) the leadership of the Zhentarim and come to the temple with those intentions.

Encounters

A. Temple Branch

This building within the headquarters complex houses the temple proper and many of the offices and living quarters of the clergy of the Black Altar.

B. Military Branch

This building houses the higher-ranking officers of the Zhentil Keep city watch and the Zhentil Keep army. Scyllua Darkhope and all of those who report immediately to her maintain both their offices and their personal quarters within this structure.

C. Administrative Branch

Zhentarim merchants and the trading coster's vast support staff use this building to run their operations. All of the decisions and record-keeping—including caravan bills of lading, trade agreements, price-fixing values, and much more—get developed and recorded within the myriad offices and storage rooms in this building. Any individuals who want anything from the Zhentarim come here, whether they seek documentation permitting them to operate a business, they need to pay fees or fines, or they simply want to hire on as caravan guards. Anything the Black Network has going on can be learned about in great detail here.

D. Courtyard

The central open area between the three main buildings of the headquarters serves a variety of purposes. Sometimes temple services are held here rather than in the temple proper, and they are always well attended. When "Lord Orgauth" was slain, the pit fiend's body was put on display here for days as a reminder to everyone just who held the reins of power within Zhentil Keep. Other criminals—spies, the faithless, traitors, and so forth—wind up here, either on display while they are tortured for their crimes or, after their demise, hoisted atop spiked posts or within gibbets.

1. Grand Entrance

Black marble double doors lead from the outside of the building into this entryway. The walls on either side of the room feature murals depicting Bane in all his glory, defeating his enemies (particularly followers of Cyric). The images of Bane are further embellished by means of green *dancing lights* effects cast directly upon the murals and made permanent.

2. Sanctuary (EL 18)

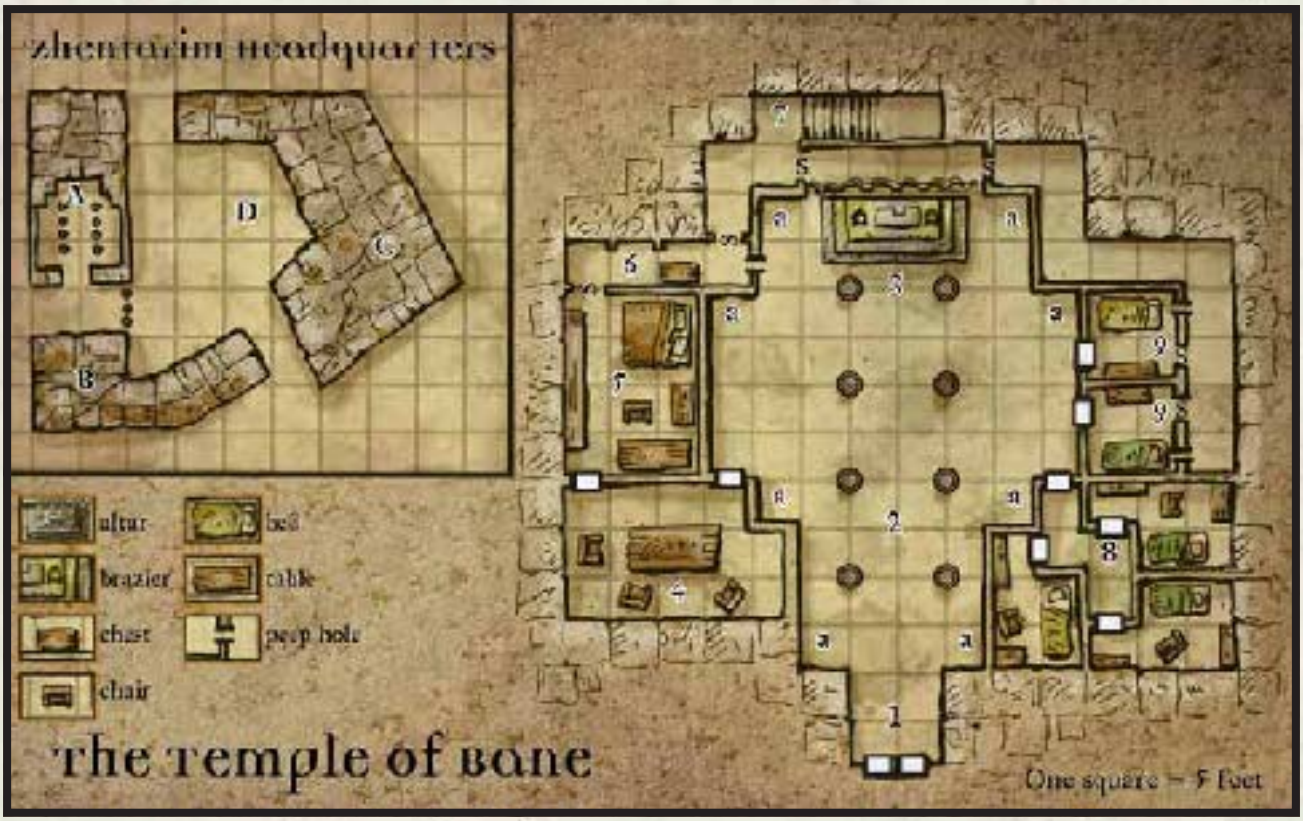
The main worship center of the temple opens from the entryway into a broad chamber lined with a double row of columns that lead toward the dais and altar at the far end. The floor, walls, and columns are all made of black marble striated with green veins. Large candelabra hang down from the ceiling, each set with a multitude of strange candles that burn a green flame, such that the whole chamber has a disquieting pall over it. The only exception to this is an orange glow from the twin braziers flanking the altar (see area 3, below).

Pairs of unusual guards stand watch in the corners of the odd-shaped sanctuary, totally unmoving until something gives them cause to react. At each position marked a on the temple map, a direguard version of a baneguard stands quietly (direguards are found in the *Monsters of Faerûn* supplement; substitute normal skeletons if you do not have this product). The direguards attack any creature entering the sanctuary that is an obvious foe of the servants of Bane, or upon the command of any of the high clergy of the temple. Assuming there are no temple clergy in the sanctuary when any sort of commotion starts, one of the high priests appears from area 8 two rounds after the fighting starts.

Direguards (8): 26 hp each; *Monsters of Faerûn* 17.

3. Altar

This altar dedicated to the Black Lord sits atop a dais three steps high. Constructed of black obsidian, the altar features a black silk cloth draped across it, on top of which sits an onyx chalice filled with unholy water. Two braziers flank the altar, glowing orange and giving off the sickly sweet smell of incense. A black curtain hangs on the back wall of the sanctuary, behind the altar. It conceals an alcove running the length of the dais. At either end of the alcove, secret doors lead to other chambers within the temple complex.



4. High Priest's Study

This chamber serves as a combination office, receiving room, and conference hall for the high priest. Here, Fzoul Chembryl researches and plans his operations, meets with his council of advisors (Scyllua Darkhope, Manxam the beholder, and other clergy of the temple) to discuss Zhentarim and temple interests and business, and holds private audiences with important visitors. Floor-to-ceiling shelves line the walls, and comfortable chairs are arranged about the room. For more information on Fzoul Chembryl, see *FRCS* 163.

5. High Priest's Private Chamber

This is the High Priest's living area, where he is able to enjoy every creature comfort available in the city. Fzoul Chembryl splits his time between this room and his quarters at the Citadel of the Raven (see the next adventure). In addition to a large bed, Fzoul keeps a writing desk and chair, numerous bookcases, a small altar for personal prayer, and a large armoire for his holy vestments. Chembryl has scribed a permanent summoning circle into the floor in one corner of the room, and he keeps all his special material components (candles, incense, small braziers, and so forth) in a cabinet next to the circle.

Treasure: Fzoul has two large paintings hanging on the walls of the room, each one depicting Bane conquering his enemies while other nonbelievers are tortured in the background (1,600 gp and 1,100 gp to the right buyer). A large harp carved from dark wood with ivory and zircon gem inlays stands in one corner (600 gp; see below). On the small altar sits a silver chalice with inset jet gems (140 gp) and a black velvet mask with numerous emeralds (90 gp), while the armoire contains a set of black velvet robes embroidered with onyx and a matching mitre (5,000 gp for the set), an obsidian scepter with a jet set into the hilt (700 gp), and a black opal pendant on a steel chain (1,400 gp).

Development: The harp is more than just a fancy musical instrument to Fzoul. The high priest caught a half-elf Harper named Raenalla Quietsong spying in Zhentil Keep shortly after the Zhentarim returned to rule the city. Rather than simply kill her, Fzoul had her permanently polymorphed into the form of this harp. Raenalla retained all of her mental faculties, and she is aware of her surroundings and the passage of time, but she cannot act (speak, work magic, or the like) in any way. Should the characters somehow discover Raenalla's existence and free her (or perhaps come looking for her at the behest of other Harpers), Fzoul will be furious and retaliate.

Any of the items found in this chamber are recognizable by most merchants as belonging to Fzoul Chembryl, and characters attempting to sell any of them might discover that forces loyal to Bane start actively opposing them. If Fzoul himself is still alive, word gets back to him, and he sends out agents to recover the items and punish those who stole from him.

6. Portal/Treasure Room

This narrow room serves as Fzoul's magical route between the temple here in Zhentil Keep and his quarters at the Citadel of the Raven. Because he needs to spend time in both places and must travel back and forth regularly, he moves between the two places by means of a keyed *portal*. The *portal* at this end is a shallow archway set into the north wall (essentially, it looks like an old doorway that was bricked in). The key to operate the *portal* is a silver ring set with an amethyst that Fzoul wears at all times.

The chamber also functions as the High Priest's hidden treasure vault, where he stores a few items in case of an emergency. A chest set against the south wall contains a few spare magic items. In addition, Fzoul can spy on activities within the sanctuary through a hidden peephole in the east wall.

Fzoul has protected both secret doors and the lid of the chest with a permanent *symbol of death*, set to trigger if anyone other than Chembryl opens them. The chest also has contact poison smeared on the handle of the lid (Fzoul always opens it by grasping the sides with his palms).

Permanent Symbol of Death Trap: CR 10; spell; touch trigger; automatic reset; spell effect (*symbol of death* [touched]), CL 17th, death, Fortitude DC 23 resists; multiple targets (150 hp total); Search DC 33; Disable Device DC 33.

Handle Smeared with Contact Poison: CR 9; mechanical; touch trigger (attached); manual reset; poison (black lotus extract, Fortitude DC 20 resists, 3d6 Con/3d6 Con); Search DC 18; Disable Device DC 26.

Treasure: Fzoul keeps a *+2 heavy mace, bracers of armor +5,* a *cloak of arachnida,* 3 blocks of *incense of meditation,* a *ring of evasion,* and a *wand of cure critical wounds* (CL 7th, 50 charges) in the chest.

7. Sewer Stairs

The hallway leading between Fzoul Chembryl's portal and treasure room and the alcove behind the main dais also has a side passage. This route heads downstairs to another secret door, made of reinforced steel and barred from this side, that allows access to the sewer system beneath the city streets. The opposite side of the door is the only side that is disguised. Fzoul can use this route to get to other parts of the city unnoticed when necessary.

Development: The characters might somehow learn of this entrance into the temple and attempt to infiltrate the compound through this route. The sewer-system passages connect with the tunnels leading between the Tesh Inn and the basement of Quon's Collectible Creatures (see the Sinister Inn and Slave Auction quests earlier in this chapter).

8. Underpriests' Chambers (EL 17+)

This common hallway leads to a set of private chambers for Fzoul's three main assistants within the temple.

Each priest is a 17th-level cleric of Bane (see statistics on page 133) who is responsible for conducting the various services of the temple. At any given time, at least one of the three priests is in his room, while the other two might be out on temple business, conducting a service in the main sanctuary, or attending a meeting with Fzoul in his study. Each chamber contains a bed, a small writing desk and accompanying set of bookshelves, and a small armoire for the priests' holy vestments.

17th-Level Priests of Bane (3): hp 90 each; see page 133.

9. Guest Quarters

When important guests visit the temple, they stay in these quarters. Such visitors usually include high priests from other temples of Bane, although sometimes dignitaries from other governments visit also. The rooms are comfortable, if a bit lacking in decoration. They include a bed, a small writing desk, a small armoire, and a footlocker at the foot of each bed.

The temple clergy keeps an eye on these guests by means of peepholes in the walls. Both peepholes are accessed by the secret tunnel running from the alcove behind the altar. Both guest rooms also feature secret doors, accessed from the same location as the peepholes. The temple clergy wait until their guests are elsewhere (usually engaged in services or in meetings with others) and then sneak into the chambers to go through the guest's belongings in an attempt to determine their true intentions.

Western Moonsea Quests

These adventures take place in the area of the Western Moonsea beyond Zhentil Keep. They're set up so you can use them in order (each is designed for progressively higher-level characters), or you can mix them up with the Zhentil Keep quests in the previous section. The adventures work easily as stand-alone encounters or locations, but you can also tie them together to form a larger adventure that follows a loose plot line. Some of them also function as continuations of plots introduced in previous chapters, should you choose to utilize those features.

The Blemished Altar

This site-based encounter is provided as an example of the kinds of things that can be found among the ruins of Zhentil Keep's old city area.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 12th–14th level.

Background

When Fzoul Chembryl read aloud from *The True Life of Cyric* one morning in 1368 DR, he set into motion a series of events that eventually led to the destruction of most of Zhentil Keep. Among the catastrophes that day was the destruction of the Blemished Altar, the temple once dedicated to Bane that had been reconsecrated to Cyric. The High Priest of Cyric, Xeno Mirrorbane, along with the temple around him, was destroyed in a blazing column of divine fire brought on by Mask, the god of thieves. As throngs of people fled the conflagration, the temple crumbled into rubble. It would soon be just one pile of debris among many in the razed northern part of the city. Xeno Mirrorbane was never seen again.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, it is provided as an example site within the ruined north part of Zhentil Keep for the characters to explore. Once inside the ruins of the temple, they discover the effects the location has upon any who visit—once they get past its undead guardians, of course.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- They have heard rumors of some significant treasure still hidden beneath the debris of the ruins of the temple and come to hunt for it.
- Members of the Zhentarim (particularly Fzoul Chembryl) believe that something of significance to Bane still lies buried there. The characters are either searching for it on behalf of the Black Network, or they are aiding a group opposed to the Zhentarim and wish to keep such valuables out of Zhent hands.
- The characters have ventured into the ruins to search for a kidnapped comrade (grabbed by Zhent press gangs, perhaps), and they stumble upon the ruins during their manhunt.

Encounters

1. Ruined Library

The temple originally stood five stories tall and had one additional level below ground, but when Mask's column of divine fire pierced it to slay Xeno Mirrorbane, the upper levels collapsed, reducing the entire structure to one large pile of smoking debris. The temple's library escaped total collapse, however, and a partially intact wall with a gaping hole in it leads into this chamber. The books and papers upon the tipped and mangled shelves have long since succumbed to the ravages of the elements, so there is nothing of real value here. At the opposite corner, part of the library floor has crumbled away, revealing a treacherous slope leading to area 2.

2. Torture Chamber (EL 9)

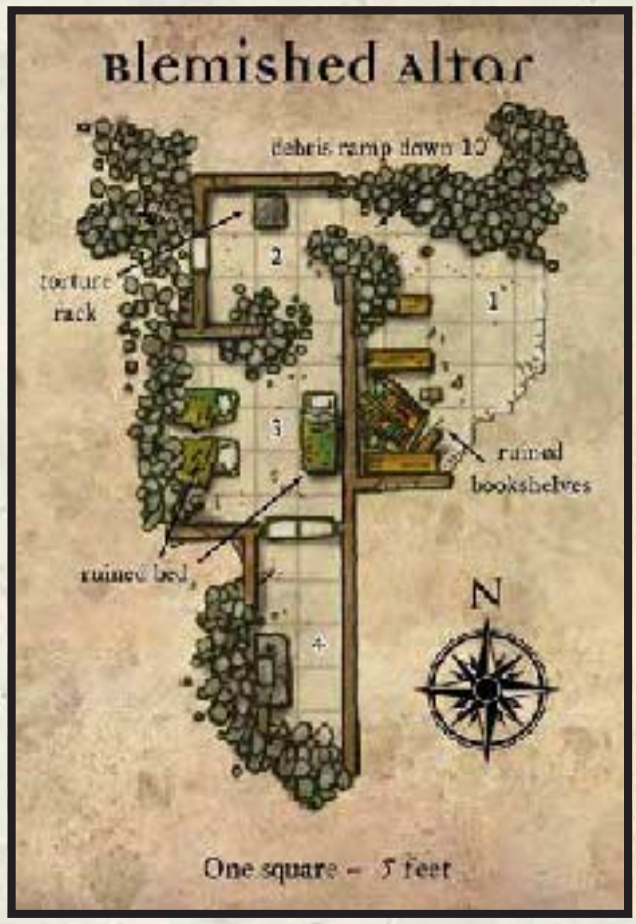
It's likely that the various racks, gibbets, and iron maidens standing in this room are the very reason it did not completely collapse. The ceiling sags downward, resting atop those instruments of torture and forcing anyone more than 5 feet in height to stoop while walking. Portions of the south wall have tumbled down, revealing another intact chamber beyond (area 3).

A door set in the west wall still seems intact, but anyone forcefully disturbing it (trying to wrench it open, for example) causes some rubble to shift with a warning groan. Subsequent efforts might spring the trap. A successful DC 30 Strength check jerks the door completely out of its frame, causing a deadfall of rubble to collapse down upon characters standing nearby. There is nothing beyond the doorway but more rubble.

Collapsing Ceiling Trap: CR 10; mechanical; operation trigger; no reset; ceiling collapses (12d6, crush); multiple targets (all creatures in the westernmost 5 feet of the room); never miss; onset delay 1 round; Search DC 15; Disable Device DC 35.

3. Ruined Quarters

Most of the western portion of this large chamber is crushed beneath the weight of tons of stone, but part of the room remains upright. From the furniture still visible, it appears that this place was some sort of dormitory. Several beds, desks, and chairs sit in what might once have been neat rows, though now the items are scattered haphazardly throughout, many of them splintered and crushed by debris. A double door on the south wall hangs askew, leading to area 4.



4. Altar (EL 12)

As the entire temple structure crumbled and fell, the walls and ceilings of some of the chambers beneath the sanctuary buckled and collapsed, allowing the dais and its altar to settle into their spaces relatively unscathed.

The malevolent spirit of Xeno Mirrorbane still haunts this place in the form of a dread wraith. He hovers near the altar—the symbol of his faith—unable to rest in peace because Cyric did not live up to Xeno's expectations that fateful day. Four regular wraiths, creations of Xeno from others who stumbled into this place and succumbed to the dread wraith's icy touch, accompany him. They lurk in the walls and floor of the room, waiting for whoever enters.

Dread Wraith: 115 hp; *MM* 257.

Wraiths (4): 35 hp each; *MM* 257.

Treasure: The altar remains whole, exuding a primal power that reflects Cyric's propensity for lies, trickery, and betrayal. It is a magical location.

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the Blemished Altar by making Knowledge (Moonsea local) or Knowledge (Zhentil Keep local) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 10: The Blemished Altar was dedicated to the worship of Cyric when it was destroyed.

DC 15: The Blemished Altar was destroyed by divine intervention.

DC 20: Xeno Mirrorbane, the High Priest of Cyric, perished with the destruction of the temple—and no one ever found his remains.

DC 25: Residual effects of Cyric's influence remain in place near the altar itself.

Description: In a broken and partially collapsed hallway, a black obsidian block rests upon a pile of broken stone. Carved with strange sigils and runes, it sits canted at a slight angle and leans against one wall. Its surface and corners are pitted and broken, and a thick coat of dust covers it like a blanket.

Prerequisite: In order to gain the special ability of the Blemished Altar, a character must have 8 ranks in the Bluff skill.

Location Activation: Any character with the prerequisite needed to gain the ability conferred by the Blemished Altar can sense its latent energy. Those characters intuitively understand that touching the altar permits them to absorb the power. A full-round action is necessary to gain the ability, and up to three qualified individuals can absorb the ability before recharge is necessary.

Recharge: Once the Blemished Altar has bestowed its power on three qualified individuals, it cannot grant additional uses of the power for one tenday.

Special Ability (Su): A character with the power of the Blemished Altar gains a +20 bonus on Bluff checks and is immune to the effect of any divination magic of 4th level or lower.

Duration: The bonus on Bluff checks and the magic immunity last for 24 hours.

Aura: Moderate illusion

Ability Value: 8,000 gp per individual (24,000 gp total).

Development: Should you wish to tie into other adventure locations, other items (of both financial and informational value) might be found here. It's even possible that the characters might need to dig deeper into the ruins to recover said items.

Lost Temple

This location is a long-forgotten temple dedicated to a god of corruption decay. You can choose to set it anywhere, but it is ideal as part of a temple to the dead god Moander, placed deep in the catacombs below the destroyed city of Yûlash.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 13th–15th level.

Background

Centuries ago, the reviled god Moander was imprisoned by the elves of Cormanthor in a temple beneath the town of Yûlash, the very temple where the god was worshiped. During events leading up to the Time of Troubles, a group of adventurers entered the catacombs beneath the city and accidentally freed him. Though Moander was eventually destroyed, the temple that served as his prison remains. The city has been reduced to rubble by continued fighting between the Red Plumes of Hillsfar and the Zhentarim forces of Zhentil Keep. Much of the temple is still occupied, but a portion was sealed off and remained undisturbed for several years.

Recently, however, beholders from Zhentil Keep—who regularly navigate a *portal* between their own lair and the bowels of Yûlash—have discovered that their route passes very near the lost temple. Magical effects from a spate of fighting on the surface above shifted the structure of some of the catacombs enough that a crack formed in the passages, revealing the temple beyond. The beholders have not yet explored the new discovery, but they are interested in finding out more.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, it is provided as a connection between locations in Zhentil Keep and the larger area of the Western Moonsea region.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- They invaded and attacked the beholders from the Beholders' Lair quest (see page 141) and followed a surviving eye tyrant through the *portal.*
- The characters come to Yûlash for other reasons (as part of a fighting force for the Zhentarim or the Red Plumes, for example), and they pursue a quarry (such as enemies or even slaves with the mysterious tattoos) down into the catacombs.
- They meet with a follower of Moander who offers to pay them well for finding a valuable artifact in the lost temple.

Encounters

1. Original Entrance

This 30-foot-diameter vertical shaft descends from higher levels of the catacombs, where the active portion of the temple of Moander (possibly) still exists. A set of stairs only 3 feet wide once spiraled down the inside of the shaft, stretching all the way from the top of the shaft to a platform 100 feet or more below. However, during Moander's escape and subsequent rampage, some of the catacombs beneath Yûlash were damaged, and a significant portion of the staircase crumbled away, leaving only a small portion near the platform intact. The shaft continues down past the platform for a substantial distance into darkness.

At the platform itself, a door set into the wall leads into the forgotten portion of the temple.

Development: If you wish to expand the adventuring within the catacombs beyond the scope of this location, this shaft can serve as a primary access point to other areas suitable for exploration. The top of the shaft might connect to more of the temple (if you wish for a cult of Moander to still be in existence), while the bottom might drop into a large open cavern or underground lake. Otherwise, assume the shaft climbs into an abandoned, half-destroyed building on the surface and descends to bedrock—a dead end—at the bottom.

2. Balconied Room

Beyond the door leading from area 1, the smell of filth and decay permeates the air. A set of stone steps leads down from the secret door to a large, open chamber with multiple levels. At this level, a thick brown sludge seems to cover the floor, pouring in from the corners of the room. The sludge cascades over the sides of

a diamond-shaped open hole, splashing into a large pool of the stuff one level below.

A 5-foot-wide walkway sits a foot or so above the surface of the sludge, and it follows the perimeter wall of the room. At the center point of each wall, the walkway widens into a balcony that overlooks a platform one level below. Three of the balconies (marked a, b, and c on the map) feature odd plinths, while the fourth (marked d) does not. None of the four balconies has a railing along its front edge.

The plinths are constructed of a strange brown marbled stone, and each has a quartet of heavy iron rings set into it, one at each corner of the top surface. During the temple's heyday, priests of Moander tied sacrifices to each of the plinths as offerings to the god. Once an offering was positioned atop each of the three plinths, the head priest moved to the fourth balcony, where his weight, coupled with the weight of the sacrifices, triggered the release mechanism for a set of stairs to descend to the main altar (area 3). At the same time, the other three balconies tipped forward so that their respective plinths faced inward and the offering tied to each was within view of the main altar—and within reach of the creature that dwelt in the pool of sludge below, a creature the cultists considered to be an avatar of their dark god.

3. Dread Altar (EL 15)

At the bottom of the multileveled chamber, a 30-foot-diameter platform sits in the middle of a round basin 75 feet in diameter. An awful pool of foul goop fills the basin, something that looks like a combination of raw sewage and composting vegetable matter that steams as it rots. The vile substance comes up to just below the surface of the platform, perhaps a foot below its edge. The sludge from the four corners of area 2 pours over the edges, creating four foul brown curtains that surround the platform and create a somewhat muted splashing sound.

An altar, carved of the same mottled brown stone as the plinths overhead, sits in the middle of the platform. There is nothing other than spatters of putrescent liquid atop the altar, though strange symbols and sigils are carved into every surface.

Years ago, when the temple was still active, Moander's worshipers continually fed decaying matter into the great pool of sludge as a means of sustaining the god's avatar. When Moander was released and wreaked havoc upon the surface, much of the matter was left behind. Since that time, it has been infused with subtle energies and grown sentient on its own, becoming a massive and evil shambling mound, something of a remnant of the god's essence.

Not long after the temple gave "birth" to this monstrous mound of rotting vegetation, a handful of otyughs found their way into the temple, and they developed a kind of symbiotic relationship with the great shambling mound. The otyughs thrived on the sludge that oozes in from elsewhere in the city, and their offspring, birthed in such favorable conditions, are larger and also tainted with the evil that permeates the place.

Fiendish Advanced Otyughs (5) CR 9

NE Huge aberration (extraplanar)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., scent; Listen +10, Spot +10
Languages Common

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18
hp 156 (18 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 23
Fort +12, **Ref** +5, **Will** +12

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee 2 tentacles +17 (1d8+5) and bite +15 (1d6+2 plus disease)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +26
Atk Options constrict 1d8+5, disease, improved grab, smite good 1/day

Abilities Str 20, Dex 8, Con 18, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 6
Feats Alertness, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Multiattack, Toughness, Weapon Focus (bite), Weapon Focus (tentacle)
Skills Hide –2 (+6 in lair), Listen +10, Spot +10

Disease (Ex) Filth fever—bite, Fortitude DC 23, incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 Dex and 1d3 Con.
Smite Good (Su) Once per day this fiendish otyugh can make a normal melee attack to deal an additional 18 points of damage against a good foe.

Fiendish Advanced Shambling Mound CR12

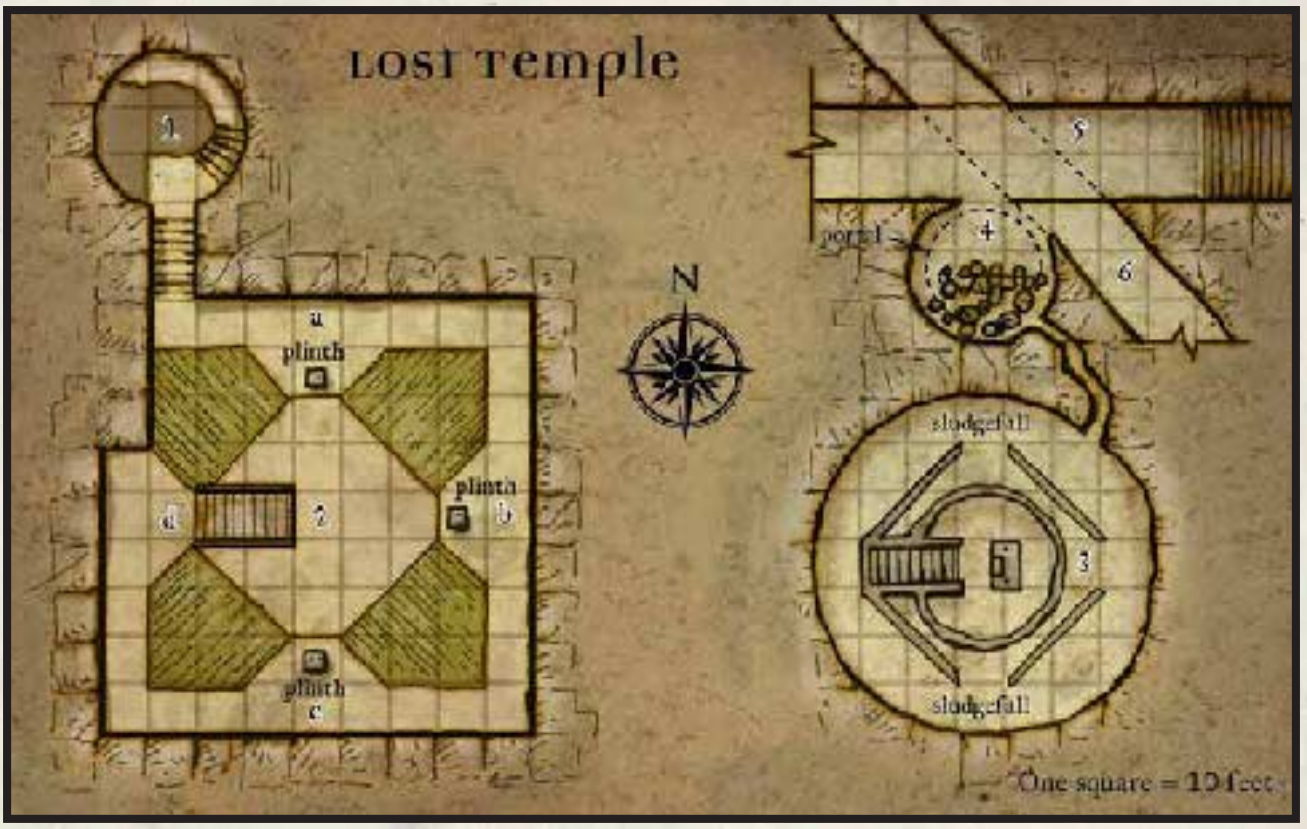
NE Huge plant (extraplanar)
Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; Listen +13, Spot +0
Languages none

AC 21, touch 7, flat-footed 21
hp 252 (24 HD); **DR** 10/magic
Immune plant immunities (*MM* 313)
Resist cold 10, fire 10; **SR** 25
Fort +21, **Ref** +9, **Will** +10

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares)
Melee 2 slams +27 (3d6+10)
Space 15 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft.
Base Atk +18; **Grp** +36
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, improved grab, Power Attack, smite good 1/day

Abilities Str 30, Dex 8, Con 22, Int 8, Wis 10, Cha 10
SQ plant traits
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Great Fortitude, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Lightning Reflexes, Power Attack, Stealthy, Weapon Focus (slam)
Skills Hide +8 (+16 swampy or forested area), Listen +13, Move Silently +13
* Shambling mounds have a +4 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, and Move Silently checks (already accounted for above), and a +12 racial bonus on Hide checks when in a swampy or forested area.

Smite Good (Su) Once per day this fiendish shambling mound can make a normal melee attack to deal an additional 20 points of damage against a good foe.



Tactics: Since both the otyughs and the shambling mound gain racial bonuses on Hide checks while in the filth and muck (the otyughs' modifier is +6, the shambling mound is +18), they all rest quietly until someone comes down to the platform or splashes into the pool. At that point, the otyughs swarm to the attack from the perimeter, and the shambling mound rises up right next to the platform, all of them hoping to catch something in the crossfire.

Treasure: Sprinkled along the bottom of the pool of muck are an *amulet of health +6,* two alexandrites (400 and 200 gp), a piece of jade (120 gp), a chunk of coral (140 gp), a red-brown spinel (110 gp), a malachite (12 gp), an azurite (11 gp), a piece of obsidian (10 gp), an eye agate (8 gp), and 3,000 gp.

Development: You can add additional treasure, particularly unique or historical items, to fit the campaign. If you used one of the character hooks that calls for the PCs to find an item of importance to some NPCs, this is a good place for them to recover it.

4. Old Spiral Staircase

Long ago, when creatures first explored and developed the catacombs beneath Yûlash, this cylindrical shaft was constructed to serve as a staircase between two different levels of passageway (areas 5 and 6). The stairs that wound down the inside of the round chamber have long since collapsed into rubble, which rests at the bottom of the room. Recently, due to physical stress from the constant combat taking place on the surface of the city, the rubble shifted slightly and revealed a small fissure in the back wall. The fissure connects to the ancient temple (area 3) at a spot about 6 feet above the sludge line and behind one of the cascading curtains of sludge pouring down from above. Thus, the fissure is hidden from view to anyone standing at the dread altar. The crack through the natural bedrock is small, so no Large or larger creature can fit through it; even Medium creatures must duck and squeeze through.

The ceiling of the cylindrical chamber features a 10-foot-diameter stone ring protruding from it that is difficult to spot from the floor of the room (DC 30). This ring of stone is a *portal* that connects to the beholders' lair in Zhentil Keep (see Beholders' Lair, page 141). If any characters followed one or more beholders through the other end of the *portal* and wound up here, they immediately fall 40 feet and take 4d6 points of damage unless they have some magical means of preventing this from happening.

There are two normal exits from the stairwell. One entryway sits about halfway up the wall of the round room and leads to area 5, while the other one opens at the bottom of the chamber and leads to area 6 (see the cutaway diagram on the map).

Development: Because the beholders only navigate between the *portal* and area 5, it is possible that they have not found the newly exposed fissure and know nothing about it. Also, if you have chosen for the characters to find and explore the temple from its original entrance (area 1), they might discover the fissure and emerge into the stairwell only to come face to face with a beholder that is either coming or going through the portal.

5. Upper Hallway

This 10-foot-wide passage was obviously carefully and skillfully crafted. The eastern end of the route quickly reaches a wide staircase that ascends as far as the eye can see, while the western direction vanishes into the darkness.

Development: This passage is available for you to use to expand the catacombs into a much larger dungeon, should you and your players wish to. The stairs can lead to higher levels, or they can rise straight into some abandoned valley or building on the surface, a means of egress for the beholders that frequently come this way.

6. Lower Hallway

Like area 5 above, this passage runs straight and true in both directions from the bottom of the stairwell. However, it seems far dustier and less used.

Development: This route can lead to more sections of the catacombs, or you can simply cut off both ends with cave-ins.

Dragons' Lair

This location is the lair of a mated pair of adult red dragons and their three young offspring. They live in a cavern complex beneath a dormant volcano. You can set this lair in any mountainous wilderness location, but it works well placed high in the Dragonspine Mountains, due to the natural occurrence of the frost giants who serve the pair of wyrms.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 14th–16th level.

Background

The Moonsea region is a wild place, filled with fearsome tribes of humanoids and even more fearsome beasts that prey upon them. The rugged mountain ranges that wrap around the great body of water are steep, cold, and filled with dragons. One pair of mated red dragons found the warmth they prefer deep within a dormant volcano. While the frigid winter winds howl outside and icy storms rage against the slopes of their home, the two adult dragons, Malaritheos and his mate Zathrantramix, laze away the time nestled against the warmth of the mountain's heated belly.

A tribe of frost giants pay homage to the pair, bringing them sacrifices in an outer cave to appease the two transplanted dragons and keep them from encroaching on the giants' traditional hunting grounds. The dragons are content with this arrangement for the time being, since they have produced three offspring and devote much of their time to raising the trio of young dragons. Eventually, however, the two adults will feel the call to hunt and gather more treasure. Indeed, the last time they emerged from their volcanic home, they participated in the razing of Zhentil Keep itself.

Adventure Synopsis

You can lure the characters into ranging into the mountains to hunt the dragons through whatever plot hooks you desire. Once they near the dormant volcano, they must first contend with the frost giants that worship the dragons at the cave, then deal with the crafty dragons inside their massive lair.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- Perhaps the dragons made off with a valuable magic item during the razing of the city and someone wants it back. This could be a local wizard, a member of the Zhentarim, or even a merchant from another locale.
- Quon, owner of Quon's Collectible Creatures (see page 139), needs the characters to acquire some red dragon scales and offers to pay them (or expects them to do so to pay a debt).
- Perhaps an important NPC the characters are searching for—such as a slave with one of the mysterious Thayan tattoos upon her skin—wound up in the company of the frost giants. The giants might have raided a caravan and taken captives to offer as sacrifices to the dragons.

Encounters

1. Offering Cavern (EL 15)

The main entrance to the dragons' lair consists of a fissure high up on the side of the mountain, above the permanent snow line. The route to the cave mouth is treacherous due to the howling winds (–4 on Balance checks) and frequent blizzardlike conditions, which not only obscure vision but also coat the path with a rime of ice. Even when the weather is fair, the glare from the sun reflecting off the snow makes it difficult to see (–4 penalty on Spot checks).

The fissure quickly opens to a width of about 20 feet as it ascends a series of slippery, rough-hewn steps. The path wanders about 40 feet before it plunges into the mountain and finally opens into the cavern proper. Eerie blue light dimly illuminates the entire chamber during the day, as the glow of the sun shines through a glacierlike crust of ice capping a hole in the ceiling of the cavern.

The floor of the cavern is relatively flat, though it slopes slightly down toward a crevasse that bisects the chamber in a north-south direction. A large curved bridge seemingly sculpted out of solid ice spans this crevasse. The bridge measures 10 feet wide and some 40 feet long, and it has no rails. The crevasse is deep enough that no one can see its floor (it's over 300 feet deep); anything dropped into it bounces back and forth off the walls for several seconds before falling out of hearing range.

Runoff from the glaciers outside trickles down the cavern's ceiling and back wall in runnels, collecting on the cavern's floor and eventually meandering down a sloping passage that disappears deeper into the mountain. The runoff is due to the warmth radiating from the mountain's volcanic heart.

When the characters arrive in the cavern, four frost giants are praying in front of an altar crafted of clear crystalline ice on the far side of the bridge. They have brought a gnoll prisoner to offer to the dragons as a sacrifice, and the creature is tied to four rusty eyehooks screwed into the altar's top slab.

Frost Giants (3): hp 133 each; *MM* 122.

Frost Giant Leader **CR 14**

Male frost giant cleric 5 (Thrym)
CE Large giant
Init +3; **Senses** low-light vision; Listen +2, Spot +12
Languages Common, Giant

AC 21, touch 8, flat-footed 21
hp 184 (19 HD)
Immune cold

Fort +18, **Ref** +4, **Will** +10
Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)
Melee Large greataxe +21/+16/+11 (3d6+13/×3) or
Melee 2 slams each +21 (1d4+9)
Ranged rock +12 (2d6+9)
Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.
Base Atk +13; **Grp** +26
Atk Options Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack
Special Actions rebuke undead 3/day (+0, 2d6+5, 5th)
Combat Gear *boots of speed,* 3 *potions of cure moderate wounds*
Cleric Spells Prepared (CL 5th):
3rd—*dispel magic* (DC 15), *magic circle against law*[D] (CL 6th), *prayer*
2nd—*aid, bull's strength, cure moderate wounds, shatter*[D] (CL 6th, DC 14)
1st—*bless, divine favor, cure light wounds, magic weapon, protection from good*[D] (CL 6th)
0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, resistance, virtue*
D: Domain spell. Deity: Thrym. Domains: Chaos, Evil.

Abilities Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 10
SQ strong aura of chaos, strong aura of evil
Feats Cleave, Great Cleave, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Scribe Scroll
Skills Climb +15, Concentration +10, Intimidate +8, Jump +19, Spellcraft +5, Spot +12
Possessions combat gear

Rock Throwing (Ex) The range increment is 120 feet for a frost giant's thrown rocks.

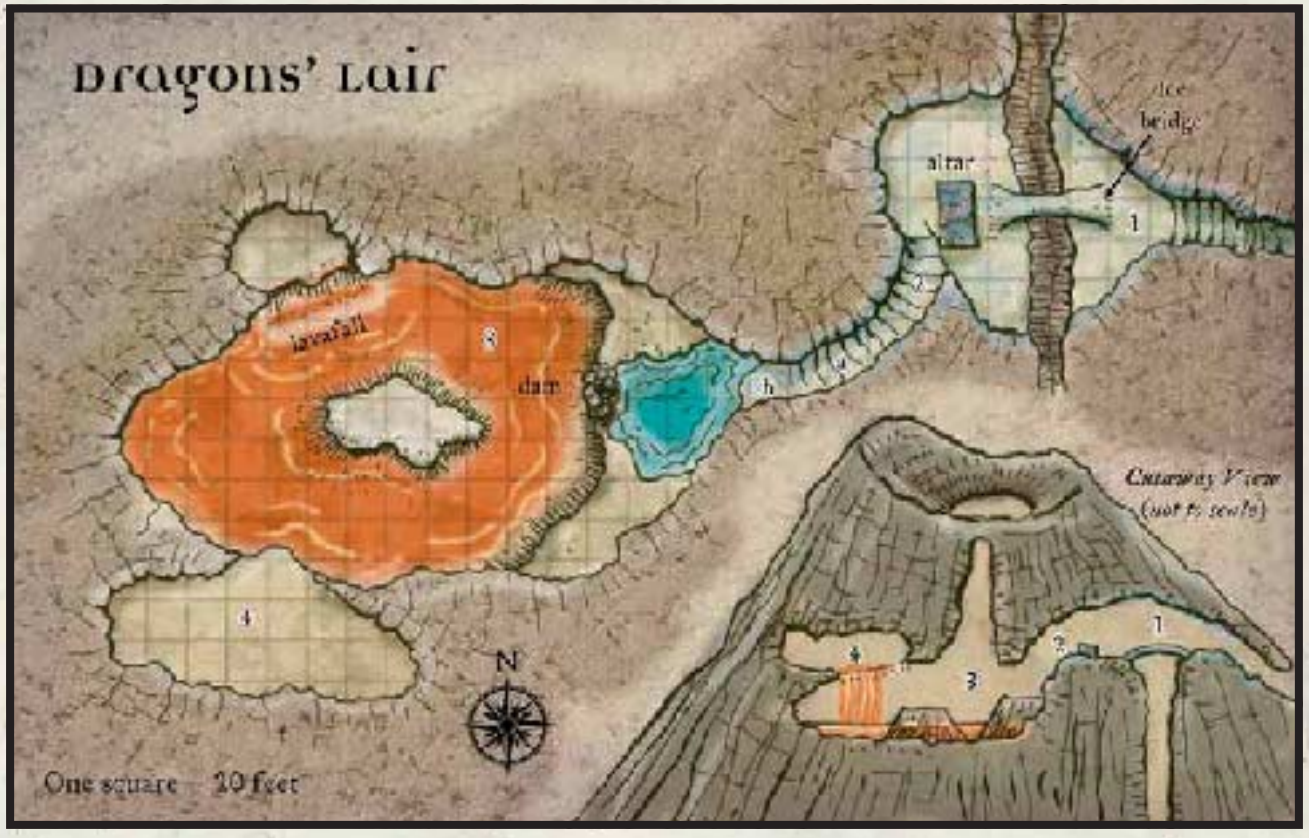
Tactics: As soon as the giants are aware of the PCs' approach, the three giant foot soldiers move to attack while the leader stays behind to cast spells. If the fight seems to be going well for them, they attempt to capture at least one or two of the PCs to use as sacrifices. Otherwise, they attempt to bull rush opponents into the crevasse, particularly if they are fighting on the bridge.

Development: If the characters are on the trail of a missing NPC they believe the giants abducted (see Character Hooks, above), and any of the giants survive the encounter, the PCs learn that the giants brought the NPC to the offering cavern just the day before.

2. Damp Passage

The passageway leading down from behind the altar in area 1 narrows to about 10 feet in several places, but otherwise it is very similar to the entrance tunnel. Rough stone steps allow a trickle of water to flow over the lip of each step in a tiny cascade, creating a soft tinkling sound. As the characters descend, it grows noticeably warmer.

Since the passage is a bit of a tight squeeze for the dragons, they do not come this way in their natural form. In fact, Zathrantramyx sends the *unseen servant* she is capable of conjuring scurrying up the passage to fetch whatever goodies the giants have left for her family. She has also placed an *alarm* spell about halfway down the route (marked a on the map), which



gives her silent notice when something passes that way. She then uses *clairaudience/clairvoyance* to determine if the intruder is a threat, and what should be done to deal with it.

In addition to the magical defenses, the dragons have also cultivated a patch of shriekers at the spot marked b on the map as a nonmagical means of warning.

Shriekers (4): hp 11 each; *MM* 112.

3. Main Cavern (EL 14, 17, or 18)

The damp passage finally emerges into a cavern that glows a warm orange color all over due to the presence of lava along part of its floor. This is the primary residence of Malaritheos, Zathrantramyx, and their brood. The chamber is about 250 feet long and half that wide. At the point where the characters arrive, a large pool of water has collected upon a shelf of rock (the area marked c on the map). It appears that the flow of the water along the western edge of the pool has been carefully dammed to keep it from flowing into the lava pit beyond the edge of the ledge.

By far the most imposing object in the room is the large plateau squarely in the center of the chamber. It rises 15 feet above the level of the lava, which completely surrounds it. A massive red dragon appears to slumber atop a pile of glittering treasure in the middle of the plateau, its snores reverberating throughout the cavern. Almost directly over the plateau, a large hole pierces the ceiling of the cavern, a shaft running up and out of sight that is fully 60 feet in diameter. This is the old lava tube from the last time the volcano erupted; it is plugged at the top by the magma dome in the volcano's cone (see cutaway view).

The dragon in the middle of the chamber is actually a *permanent image,* conjured by a spellcaster who was hired by the dragons to produce the effect. Malaritheos and his mate are hidden away in another chamber (area 4), quite possibly peering down upon the scene if they have been alerted to the presence of the PCs. However, there are three real dragons in the main cavern. On the far side from the entrance, tucked back into a hollow of the chamber that is hidden by a curtain of lava (marked e on the map), three more dragons sleep. They are much smaller than the behemoth atop the plateau, obviously offspring. Though they appear to be alone, they are actually under the careful watch of two elder fire elementals that the adult dragons have befriended and bribed to serve as nannies. The fire elementals currently hide in the lava, ready to jump out should the three young dragons come under attack.

Young Red Dragon #1: hp 125; *MM* 75, plus as follows:

Languages Draconic, Ignan
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st):
1st (4/day)—*color spray* (DC 12), *hypnotism* (DC 12)
0 (5/day)—*acid splash* (+12 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 11), *flare* (DC 11), *resistance*

Young Red Dragon #2: hp 122; *MM* 75, plus as follows:

Languages Draconic, Ignan
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st):
1st (4/day)—*magic missile, obscuring mist*
0 (5/day)—*acid splash* (+12 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 11), *flare* (DC 11), *resistance*

Young Red Dragon #3: hp 118; *MM* 75, plus as follows:

Languages Draconic, Ignan
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 1st):
1st (4/day)—*ray of enfeeblement* (+12 ranged touch), *true strike*
0 (5/day)—*acid splash* (+12 ranged touch), *daze* (DC 11), *flare* (DC 11), *resistance*

Elder Fire Elementals (2): hp 204 each; *MM* 99.

Tactics: If the PCs manage to sneak through the damp passage and into the cavern without setting off any of the alarms there, then Malaritheos and Zathrantramyx are also soundly asleep in area 4. Should they be awakened by the sounds of fighting between their offspring and the characters, they swoop in to the fight immediately, making the battle that much more deadly. If, however, they are aware of intruders, then they put all of their wiles to use to defend the cavern. In this case, the PCs are unlikely to get over to where the three youngsters are before engaging the older pair in combat. In that case, the EL for the combat is that given for area 4 (EL 17).

4. Concealed Lair (EL 17)

High up the southwest side of the main chamber, hidden by a lip of rock, lies an opening to another cavern. Though substantially smaller than the larger cavern below, it is the heart of the dragons' lair.

This is the chamber where the two adult dragons nest.

Malaritheos, Adult Male Red Dragon: hp 257; *MM* 75, plus as follows:

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Ignan
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):
3rd (5/day)—*gaseous form, major image* (DC 16)
2nd (7/day)—*invisibility, protection from arrows, see invisibility*
1st (7/day)—*identify, magic missile, Nystul's magic aura, shield, ventriloquism*
0 (6/day)—*arcane mark, detect magic, ghost sound* (DC 13), *mage hand, mending, prestidigitation, read magic*

Zathantramyx, Adult Female Red Dragon: hp 249; *MM* 75, plus as follows:

Languages Common, Draconic, Giant, Ignan
Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 7th):
3rd (5/day)—*clairaudience/clairvoyance, gaseous form*
2nd (7/day)—*invisibility, locate object, protection from arrows*
1st (7/day)—*alarm, comprehend languages, obscuring mist, true strike, unseen servant*
0 (6/day)—*dancing lights, flare* (DC 13), *mage hand, message, open/close, prestidigitation, read magic*

Tactics: Should the two dragons become aware of intruders and have time to prepare, they have an elaborate plan of attack they are fond of using. Malaritheos casts *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, *see invisibility*, and *shield* upon himself (in that order), if given time. He then watches and waits as the characters burn off some of their magic on the fake dragon on the plateau. He does not attack until the characters recognize the deception.

Zathantramyx first casts *clairaudience/clairvoyance* to spy on the intruders. Then she casts *invisibility*, *protection from arrows*, and readies *true strike* for her first attack. She also waits until it is clear that the PCs have discovered they have been duped.

Should the fight go badly for them, the two dragons put an escape plan into motion. Malaritheos heads toward the dam at location c and rakes it during a flyby. This causes the water to pour over the side of the shelf and hit the lava, erupting in scalding steam. Not only does the steam obscure vision throughout the cavern (it takes 2 rounds to completely fill the cavern with steam, functioning as a massive *obscuring mist* spell), but it also creates an environment of extreme heat (*DMG* 303). In the meantime, Zathantramyx flies into the nursery and instructs her three offspring to escape by means of the main entrance. As the three youngsters fly out (possibly drawing attention to themselves), the two adults each cast *gaseous form* upon themselves and escape through the flow hole in the ceiling, seeping out through the cracks in the lava dome at the top of the mountain. From there, the whole family retreats to a safe abode and begins making plans for revenge (and to recapture their treasure).

Treasure: You should develop the dragons' hoard to suit your campaign. Treat it as an EL 18 hoard.

Citadel of the Raven

This location-based set of encounters provides an overview of one of the main fortresses under the control of the Black Network. The Citadel of the Raven is perched high on the northern slopes of the Dragonspine Mountains, north of Teshwave.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 15th–17th level.

Adventure Background

The Citadel of the Raven, a series of interconnected fortresses carved out of the mountains, features vaulted stone bridges and dozens of low, snaking walls and tunnels linked together to create a complex that stretches over ten miles long. Even the most ancient elves cannot recall when it was constructed, and some scholars suggest that the citadel is irrefutable evidence that a grand human nation existed here long before recorded history. Sages have further theorized that the barbarians of The Ride are the descendants of that once-great civilization.

For many years, human and half-orc bandits used the citadel as a refuge, but civilization wiped these marauders out as it advanced north. In 1276 DR, the Year of the Crumbling Keep, the powers at Zhentil Keep met with representatives of the other Moonsea cities and suggested that a joint force man the citadel. Since barbarians from The Ride regularly harassed caravans, and the ogres and orcs of the north had retaken Thar, the leadership of the other cities eagerly accepted the plan. The cities of Hillsfar, Phlan, Mulmaster, Voonlar, Melvaunt, Thentia, Sulasspryn, Yûlash, and Zhentil Keep sent forces to repair and occupy the citadel. Some of these cities sent criminals, prisoners, and malcontents to man their forces. Zhentil Keep, however, stacked the odds in its favor. Eighty years after the initial occupation, in 1355 DR, the Zhentarim troops slaughtered their allies and took sole control of the keep.

When the followers of Cyric took complete control of Zhentil Keep in 1361 DR, Manshoon quietly made plans to relocate the Network's main base of operations to the citadel, secretively and gradually shifting supplies, personnel, and other resources to new quarters there. By the beginning of the Year of the Staff (1366 DR), the realignment of Zhentarim resources was complete.

When Zhentil Keep was razed during Cyric's downfall, the Black Network suffered minimal loss of power, for the leadership and a significant portion of its infrastructure remained intact in the Citadel of the Raven. Today, though Zhentil Keep serves as a symbolic center of the Zhentarim's power, many argue that the true headquarters is the citadel to the north.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Instead, it is provided as a key power center of the Zhentarim beyond Zhentil Keep itself. The characters might find themselves visiting the miles of walls and towering fortresses of the Citadel of the Raven on multiple occasions.

Character Hooks

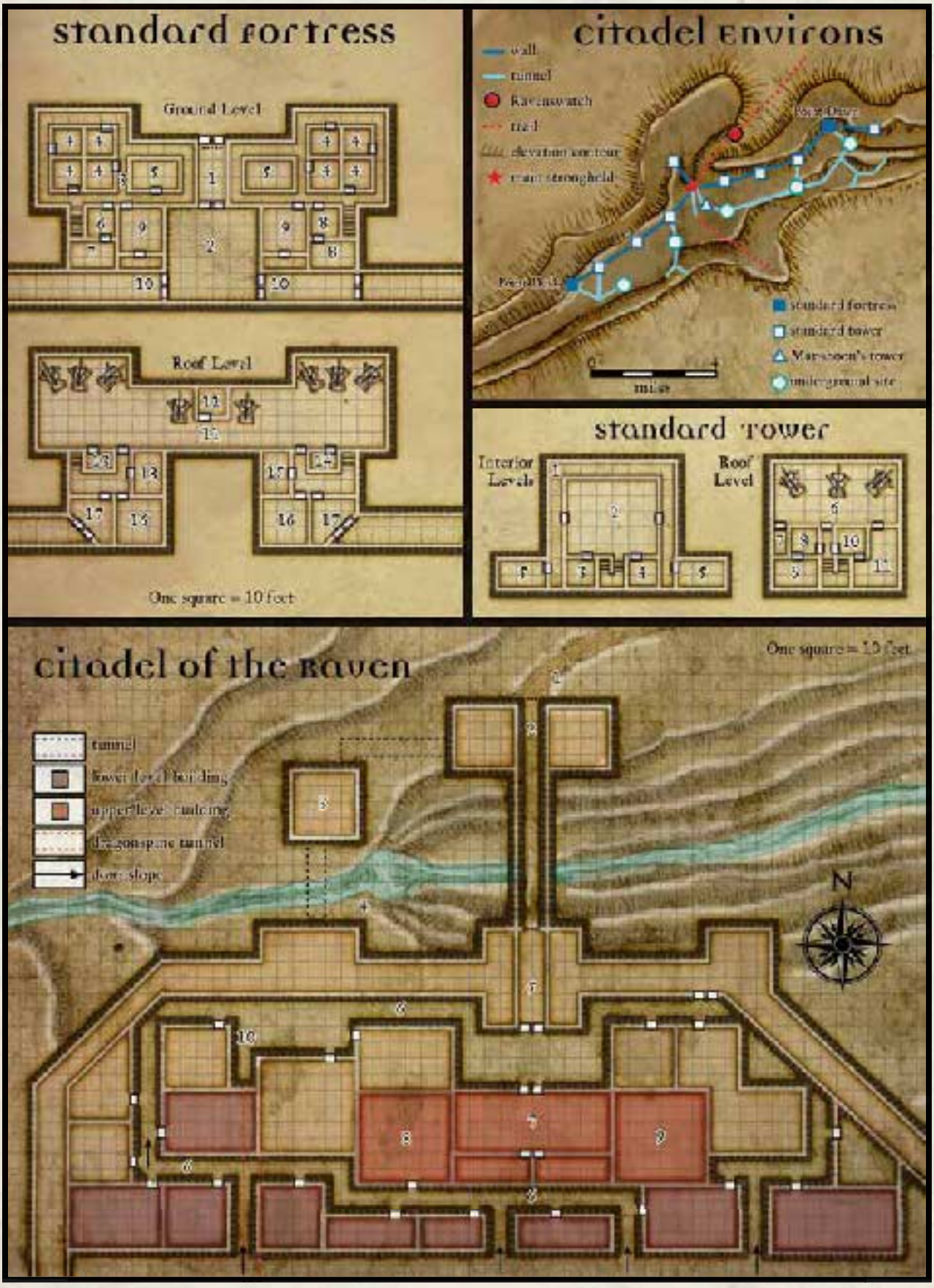
The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of several ways.

- If the PCs have recently invaded the red dragons' lair, the citadel could be the closest and most convenient locale for them to rest and recuperate.
- If the characters confronted Fzoul Chembryl in the temple of Bane in Zhentil Keep, or if they simply broke into his chambers there and snooped around, they might have crossed through the *portal* connecting both of his private quarters.
- Perhaps an important NPC the characters are searching for—such as a slave with one of the mysterious Thayan tattoos upon her skin—was brought to the citadel to serve a high-ranking member of the Black Network there.

Overview of the Citadel

The main feature of the Citadel of the Raven is the citadel itself, which sits roughly in the center of the ten-mile-long chain of structures, connected by great stone walls to smaller fortresses at each end. Towers rise up periodically along the length of the walls, creating a formidable line of defense. In addition to the surface walls—which snake across ridges, span gorges, and hug against steep-sided cliffs—miles of tunnels wind back and forth deep in the rock. Some of these tunnels serve as supplemental routes between fortifications, while others become twisting, maze-like paths to mysterious subterranean sites that could connect to the Underdark.

Citadel of the Raven (large town): Magical; AL LE; gp limit 200 gp (in Ravenswatch) or 100,000 gp (in the citadel proper); Assets 7,120 gp (in Ravenswatch) or 1,350,000 gp (in the citadel


standard fortress
Ground Level
Roof Level
One square = 10 feet
citadel environs
wall
tunnel
Ravenswatch
road
elevation contour
main stronghold
Fort Daggar
Fort Wyvern
standard fortress
standard tower
Marsember's tower
underground site
miles
standard tower
Interior Levels
Roof Level
citadel of the raven
One square = 10 feet
tunnel
tower (roof) building
upper level / catwalk
dragonspine tunnel
down slope
N

proper); Population 712 (in Ravenswatch) or 2,782 (in the citadel proper), 3,494 total; Mixed (human 76%, half-orcs 16%, orcs 5%, others 3%).

Authority Figures: Fzoul Chembryl (LE male human cleric 17 [Chosen of Bane]/hierophant 2), High Priest of the Temple of Bane and High Lord of the Zhentarim; Lord Kandar Milinal (LE male human fighter 12), lord of the Citadel of the Raven and the right arm of Fzoul; Captain Cvaal Daoran (NE male human fighter 5/cleric 3 [Bane]), leader of the Brothers of the Black Fist, an elite force of soldiers.

Important Characters: Manshoon (LE male human wizard 20/archmage 5), founder of and independent operative within the Zhentarim; Zilkatrix (LE beholder sorcerer 7), leader of the beholder allies.

Citadel Army (2,500): cleric 13, wizard 11, cleric 9 (2), wizard 9 (2), cleric 6 (4), fighter 6 (2), sorcerer 6, wizard 6 (3), cleric 5 (2), fighter 5 (5), cleric 4 (17), fighter 4 (8), wizard 4 (20), sorcerer 3 (3), cleric 2 (224), fighter 2 (57), sorcerer 2 (14), wizard 2 (196), fighter 1 (204), cleric 1 (184), sorcerer 1 (9), remainder are warrior 1.

Brothers of the Black Fist (27): fighter 7, cleric 6, fighter 6, fighter 4/cleric 2, sorcerer 4/monk 2, fighter 4 (7), fighter 2/cleric 2 (9), sorcerer 2/monk 2 (6).

The military structure of the soldiers at the citadel are organized similarly to the squads detailed in the Zhentil Keep section, and are made up of roughly the same ratios.

Citadel Structures

The Citadel Environs inset on the map shows where a variety of different fortifications are located along the 10-mile-stretch of mountain slopes. These structures are detailed more thoroughly below.

Main Stronghold

Most of the population of the Citadel of the Raven occupies the main stronghold. Cleverly constructed so that the only means of ground-based access to it is across a heavily defended bridge spanning a deep gorge, the stronghold not only houses a sizeable army of Zhentarim soldiers, it also guards the only route through the mountains to Teshwave and the rest of the Moonsea.

1. Citadel Road: The path leading up from Ravenswatch to the front entrance of the stronghold clings to the north side of a steep gorge with a roaring, tumbling river far below. The road is cut out of the rock and fairly smooth, and is just wide enough in most spots for caravan wagons to pass one another. Troops from the stronghold patrol it daily to clear fallen trees and rocks which might block it.

2. Forward Towers: The road leads to a large gatehouse. The gatehouse's two towers, each three stories high, flank a huge portcullis and are pierced on three sides with dozens of arrow slits. There is no exterior access to these towers; a tunnel running from the Tower Vigilant (see area 3) connects them with the rest of the stronghold. As the route passes between the two towers, it crosses the gorge upon a 120-foot bridge before entering the stronghold.

3. Tower Vigilant: This single stone structure rises up on the north bank of the Raven River, guarding the approach to the stronghold above the falls. A tunnel running underneath the river from the main stronghold connects to it and serves as its only access; there are no other doors into the tower.

4. Raven River: A cold and swift-running river tumbles down from the higher slopes of the Dragonspines here, careening over a waterfall some 75 feet or more before continuing down the gorge and into the valley to Ravenswatch.

5. Main Entrance: The bridge across the gorge enters into a tunnel protected by another portcullis and flanked by more defenses. At the far end of this 60-foot gauntlet, a set of heavy wooden double doors, reinforced with iron, lead into the stronghold proper.

6. Inner Roads: The interior of the stronghold holds a town, with narrow roads running between buildings. Dwellings, offices, stables, blacksmiths, and assorted other businesses and services bunch together to form small city blocks. The steep slope of the mountainside results in a terraced effect, with the roads ascending like ramps between buildings almost stacked atop one another.

7. Customs Office: Any caravans passing through the main entrance in either direction must come here first to be properly processed and pee the prerequisite fees. As a result, the courtyard area just in front of this building is always crowded with wagons, guards, and shouting caravan masters waiting their turn to get through and on their way.

8. Fzoul's Tower: This six-story building in the middle of the city serves as Fzoul Chembryl's offices and residence when he is at the citadel. The lower levels consist of meeting rooms and guest quarters, while the upper floors include his private quarters, library, chapel to Bane, and other chambers few have ever seen. (One such room contains a *portal* that connects to his private quarters at the Temple of Bane in Zhentil Keep; see page 145 for more details.)

9. Beholder Tower: The beholders that ally themselves with the Black Network use this tower as their home and base of operations. There is no ground-level entrance to the place; the beholders come and go as they please through entryways on the roof. Few have seen the inside of the eye tyrants' lair; none have emerged again to describe it.

10. Dragonspine Tunnel: Caravans passing through the stronghold to reach the pass in the Dragonspines actually move through a tunnel that runs beneath most of the city. The other end of the tunnel emerges at the base of a cliff, right beneath Manshoon's Tower (see below). It then proceeds up the slopes of the mountains before crossing the Teshwave Pass and descending the far side of the range. The tunnel has no other side passages, but mounted Zhentarim soldiers patrol it and keep lanterns hung upon the walls lit, so the route is not unduly gloomy or damp.

Ravenswatch

The burgeoning town of Ravenswatch sits in the valley below the main stronghold. In many ways, it looks like many other small communities scattered throughout the Moonsea region; a small collection of businesses huddle near a crossroads, while numerous homes ring the center of town, and a few farms lie scattered about the periphery of the place. What makes Ravenswatch such a distinctive place is that it caters heavily to the troops who come down on leave from the citadel at the head of the valley. The

place is a true frontier town, filled to the brim with boisterous and hard-nosed soldiers who need to let off some steam and don't care what—or who—they break in order to do it.

Ravenswatch sits on the main route connecting the lands north and east of the Moonsea region, including The Ride, Vaasa, and even distant Damara. Thus, caravan masters and guards regularly stop in Ravenswatch to rest the night before heading south through the citadel toward the pass through the Dragonspines. Barbarians and more civilized orcs come to trade with the caravans or to spend an evening or three drinking and fighting with the Zhentarim grunts. All in all, the village is a rough place, but one that is thoroughly necessary.

Manshoon's Tower

The mysterious wizard who founded the Zhentarim occupies this tower and keeps his own counsel, an arrangement that seems to suit Fzoul Chembryl well enough. A subterranean passage connects the tower to the stronghold, separate from the Dragonspine tunnel, and Manshoon has numerous other methods of coming and going. (See *FRCS* 283 for more information on Manshoon.)

Fortresses

Two main fortresses are marked on the Citadel Environs inset map. The one to the east, known as Point Dawn, houses around 300 troops. The western fortress, Point Dusk, shelters about 200 soldiers.

Standard Fortress

The upper left quadrant of the map depicts the layout of a standard fortress such as Poiint Dawn or Point Dusk.

1. Main Entry: Two stout double doors protect this entrance to the fortress, as well as a portcullis and murder holes overhead and arrow slits along either side.

2. Courtyard: This portion of the fortress is open to the sky and also serves as another point of defense.

3. Interior Hallway: There are arrow slits all along this passage where it butts against an outside wall.

4. Officers' Quarters: Officer of equal rank sleep in these chambers. Two to three individuals of middle ranks share a room, while commanders get quarters all to themselves.

5. Weapons and Equipment Storage: These rooms are positioned to be within easy reach of anyone defending the fortress.

6. Mess: The troops get their meals in this room.

7. Pantry/Kitchen: All the meals are prepared here.

8. Commander's Suite: The leader of the fort resides in these two rooms. The front room serves as a study and council chamber, and the second one is the commander's bedchamber.

9. Barracks: The common soldiers sleep in these rooms. Rows of beds with footlockers are the extent of the furniture here. The smaller rooms along the back end are the privies.

10. Wall Access: Passages run from the fortress for about 250 feet through the interior of the large walls before they dead end at a set of stairs leading to the top of the wall. Defenders can fire through arrow slits all along this hallway.

11. Ballista Platform: This open deck on the top of the tower functions as both an artillery station and a landing platform for Zhentarim skymages (see *Lords of Darkness* page 102 for more information) and beholders. Murder holes positioned over the main entrance can be accessed here.

12. Winch House: The mechanism to raise and lower the portcullis is housed in this room. The chamber also serves as an ammunition storage facility.

13. Stables: Skymages keep their mounts housed here.

14. Tack and Harness: All flying mount equipment, including tools for repairs, are kept here.

15. Skymage Mess: Zhentarim skymages eat and strategize together here.

16. Skymage Barracks: Skymages not on duty sleep here.

17. Guard Post: These separate barracks house guards who must keep watch, both on the roof and the wall tops. Three squads follow a rotating schedule: four hours of roof duty, four hours of wall duty, four hours of rest, two days on, one day off (rotated with other units from the main barracks, below).

Standard Tower

The towers shown on the Citadel Environs map, positioned roughly every mile along the chain of fortifications, are the smallest of the structures in the area. Each tower is 80 feet square and three to six stories in height, depending on the lay of the land. Thirty to fifty soldiers man one of these towers on a two-months-on, one-month-off rotating schedule. The Standard Tower map shows both a typical interior level and the roof level.

1. Defense Corridor: This hallway runs along the inside of the perimeter wall on every interior level. Arrow slits pierce the wall at regular intervals, permitting archers to fire upon targets in the open beyond the tower.

2. Barracks: This open room serves as sleeping quarters for the common men. Beds with footlockers are set in columns and rows with little other furniture.

3. Officers' Quarters: This small chamber on each level serves as a semiprivate bunk area for the officers in charge. Three to four officers usually share the space.

4. Mess: Food storage and preparation takes place in this chamber. A fireplace along the back wall vents to the outside.

5. Wall Access/Privy: On the level even with the top of the wall, this area is a walkway with battlements between towers. On lower levels, the door leads to small chambers that serve as either a privy or storage area.

6. Ballista Platform: This open deck on the top of the tower functions as both an artillery station and a landing platform for Zhentarim skymages (*Lords of Darkness* 102).

7. Ammunition Storage: Ballista bolts and extra equipment are kept here.

8. Skymage Mess: Zhentarim skymages use this room for food preparation and study area.

9. Skymage Barracks: Skymages sleep here.

10. Tack and Harness: Skymages keep saddles, other riding implements, and other equipment here.

11. Stables: Skymages keep their mounts housed here.

Other Structures

In addition to the fortifications described above, a variety of other structures dot the landscape along the chain of fortifications. Most of these are not inhabited by Zhentarim forces, and many

of them have never been investigated. Other towers, similar to the one Manshoon occupies, jut upward from prominent points overlooking vast stretches of mountainside. Deep cavern complexes, strange burial crypts, and other mysterious and possibly magic-rich chambers beneath the ground suggest that an entire civilization once occupied the whole stretch of mountains, both above and below ground.

The Enchanted Pool

This location-based encounter is provided as an example of what can be found in the subterranean chambers, passages, and cavern complexes beneath the Citadel of the Raven.

The following adventure is designed for characters of 16th–18th level.

Background

Manshoon the archmage spends his time in mysterious pursuits, investigating fell magical research and claiming forgotten troves of arcane loot. From his tower within the Citadel of the Raven, the wizard has devoted a significant portion of his time exploring the deep levels beneath the citadel. Some of the discoveries Manshoon has made have proven most intriguing indeed. The Enchanted Pool is one such discovery.

Adventure Synopsis

There is no set plot for this location. Rather, it is simply a magical location that Manshoon has discovered and left subservient creatures to guard for him.

Character Hooks

The PCs can become involved in this adventure in one of at least two ways.

- They are simply exploring the subterranean works beneath the citadel and stumble upon it.
- Perhaps an NPC has hired the PCs to find the source of the mysterious power and return with the information.

The Pool Chamber

The Enchanted Pool sits at the bottom of a cavern reached by means of a sloping pathway. The pathway enters from the north (1) and spirals down the eastern side, arriving at a flat spot (2) near the water (3). A hidden grotto (4) sits underneath the pathway.

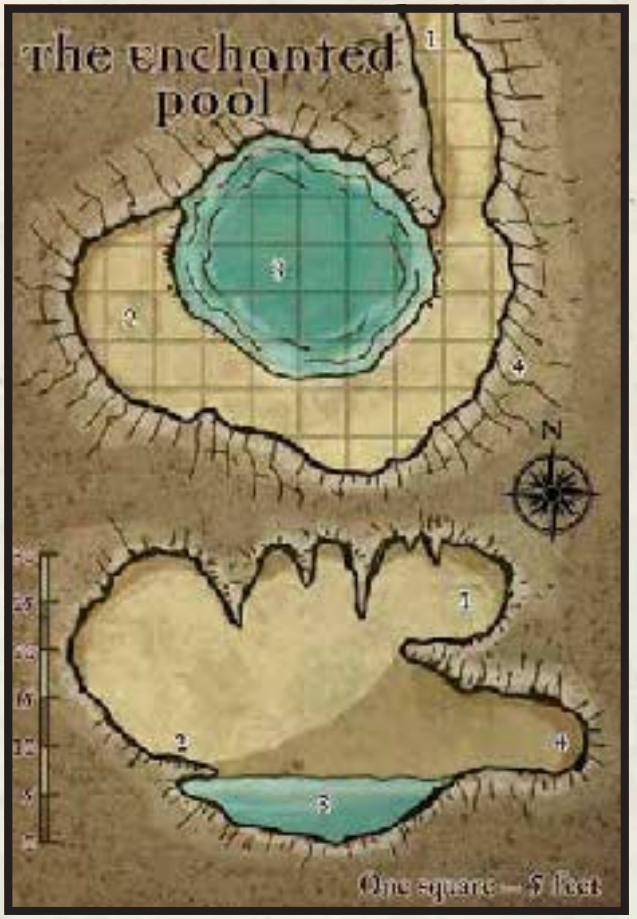
Creatures: A pair of truly horrid umber hulks, enslaved by Manshoon, lurk within the hidden grotto (they have actually burrowed into the rock just enough to remain out of sight), waiting to attack any creatures other than Manshoon that enter the water.

Truly Horrid Umber Hulks (2): hp 270 each; *MM* 249.

Lore: Characters can gain the following pieces of information about the Enchanted Pool by making Knowledge (Citadel of the Raven local) or Knowledge (arcana) checks at the appropriate DCs, as given below.

DC 20: Manshoon the archmage finds many interesting magical features in the tunnels beneath the citadel.

DC 25: Manshoon found a magical pool that makes you resistant to harm.



DC 30: (Gives some bit of direction or explanation about where to find the pool.)

Description: In a natural cavern deep beneath the Citadel of the Raven, a shallow pool rests, cold and dark. The chamber is completely silent except for the occasional drip of water falling from the stalactites overhead.

Prerequisite: In order to gain the special ability of the Enchanted Pool, a character must have a base attack bonus of +10 or higher.

Location Activation: Any character with the prerequisite needed to gain the ability conferred by the Enchanted Pool can sense its latent energy. Those characters intuitively understand that swimming in the pool for one hour permits them to absorb the power. Only one qualified individual can absorb the ability before recharge is necessary.

Recharge: Once the Enchanted Pool has bestowed its power on an individual, it cannot grant additional uses of the power to anyone for one week.

Special Ability (Su): A character with the power of the Enchanted Pool gains damage reduction 15/magic.

Duration: The damage reduction effect lasts for one month.

Aura: Strong abjuration.

Ability Value: 15,000 gp.

A campaign arc for characters of levels 1–18

The Moonsea—a perilous frontier ruled by tyrants and threatened by monsters. Here, cities consumed by decadence and war rise and fall like the sun, and conspiracies abound. Great adventure awaits those who oppose evil, for the Moonsea is rife with it.

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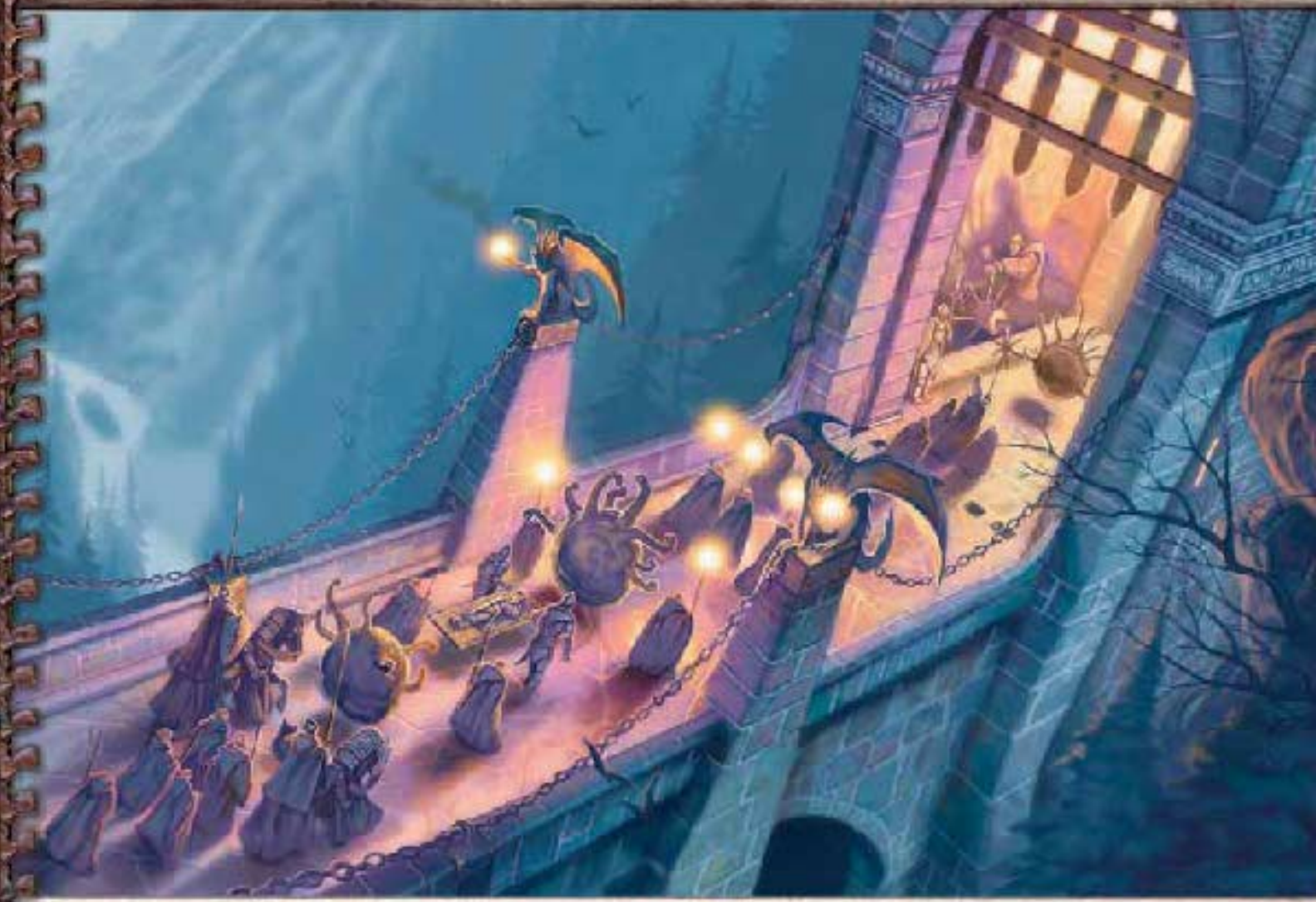

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