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Dungeon

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THE ADVENTURE PATH CONTINUES

RAVENOUS VAMPIRES, ZOMBIE PIGS

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ISSUE #98 • MAY 2003

by glumag

pizza punishing

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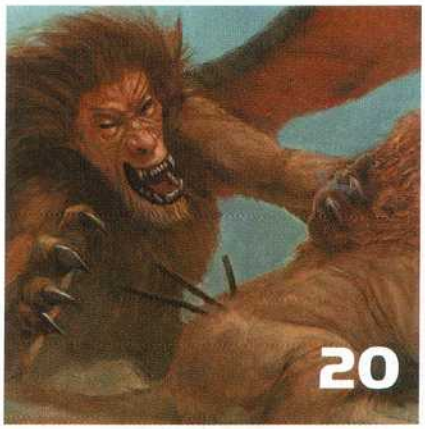
In This Issue

Dungeon

"And, behold, I, even I, do bring a flood of waters upon the earth, to destroy all flesh, wherein is the breath of life, from under heaven; and every thing that is in the earth shall die."

Genesis 6:17







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J. Bradley Schell

Blood-sucking evil-doers have been terrorizing remote farms. The locals claim a vampire infestation, but are the fanged, unholy undead really responsible? A D&D Side Trek for 4th-level characters.

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Brian Marsden

Lions from the mountains have suddenly come to the lowlands and begun attacking travelers. What fell influence has come over the normally reclusive beasts? A D&D Side Trek for 8th-level characters.

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James Jacobs

The second installment in the *Dungeon Magazine* **Adventure Path** has arrived! As winter approaches, the rains begin to fall on Cauldron. In the past, this season has been a cause for alarm, but the last few years, it has become a reason for celebration. Suddenly, a prominent Cauldronite is brutally slain, and the rains start to fall. Some dark power is linked to these recent events, and the acclaimed new heroes of Cauldron are beseeched once more to find a solution. A **D&D Adventure Path: *Shackled City*** adventure for 4th-level characters.



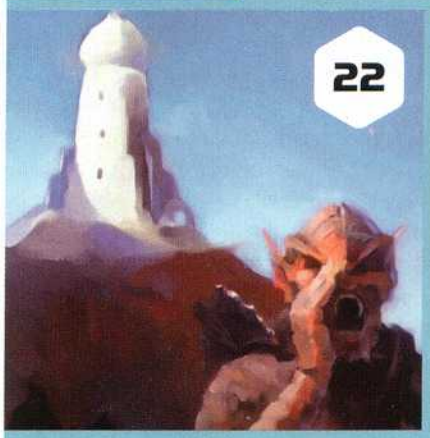
On the Cover: *Stephen Daniele paints a disturbing yet alluring portrait of Triel Eldurast, a warrior-priestess of Hextor preparing for battle. She and her companions have dark plans in store for the unsuspecting populace of Cauldron in "Flood Season."*



POLYHEDRON

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On the Flipside: *Up-and-coming cover artist Jake Parker presents Kunoichi, silent killer of the Kage and star of this month's "Unusual Suspects." Jake's work can be seen in* Mutants & Masterminds *from Green Ronin Publishing and May's* Urban Arcana, *from Wizards of the Coast.*

Death Becomes Them

We've continued with the Adventure Path campaign playtest here at the office, and I wanted to tell you about a recent development in the campaign that has given me something to think about. Remember, these are game industry professionals: do not attempt this at home.

The PCs made it to the final encounter with Kazmojen in "Life's Bazaar" (from issue #97). Four characters were present: Meechee, the goblin rogue (a new addition courtesy of our new Webmaster, Rob Head), Hallan the halfling with riding dog companion Fergus, Dree the gnome illusionist, and Laurethoron the elven ranger. I think the result of the encounter can best be encompassed by the classic movie, *Mad Max: Beyond Thunderdome:* Four adventurers enter, one adventurer leaves.

That's right. Kazmojen and his pet howler accounted for a 75% PK (Party Kill). In fact, the only reason Laurethoron survived was because she fled, leaving Hallan, Fergus, and Dree to face the half-troll's chin music. (Meechee was munched in the second round by Prickles the howler.) But that's not the worst part. The worst part is that the bad guy won—Kazmojen got away clean. Not only that, but he managed to sell the children (see "Life's Bazaar" if you have no clue what I'm talking about) and—although my players don't know it yet—Hallan, Fergus, and Dree into slavery. Sure, he had to give up his stronghold and the kidnappings stopped as a result, but he lived and profited. Rarely have I seen villainous success on this magnitude. But really, should adventurers expect any less? The conclusion to the adventure has led me to an important question: what happens when the campaign falls down and goes boom?

I mean, we're talking about a profession (adventuring) in which people make more money in a week than most commoners make their entire lives, and that's at low levels. The risk has to be high to compensate, right? They're bound to fail on occasion. But outside of a playtest, which is really what this campaign boils down to, they're not likely to experience failure all that often. There's a reason for that, although we'd never let our players know it: We, as DMs, secretly want them to win. We're just as big a fan of the heroic victory as the next fantasy goob. We want to see the guys in the white hats triumph, ride off into the sunset, and get the girl (or boy . . . or both, if that's your bag). And the PCs almost always do.

But what do you do when the PCs still manage to fail? What happens when, despite your best DMing efforts (and fudged dice rolls), the PCs still go down in flames? What happens if, God forbid, you get the TPK (Total Party Kill)? Some DMs I know say it should never happen—that we DMs have the power to prevent such a catastrophe. But should we? Shouldn't we instead just be prepared enough that if the PCs die, the campaign *doesn't* end?

Do you just declare, "Campaign Off" and start over? Maybe you allow a PC's cohort to escape so he or she can reform the adventuring party to avenge the dead characters. Or maybe you end up capturing some of the PCs who don't reach –10, allowing them to plan a daring escape. Or perhaps you allow the PCs to play some prominent NPC adventurers in the campaign who learn of the original characters' misfortune and take it upon themselves to collect and raise the slain characters. I know there are loads of other solutions out there, but just considering these three, you can see right off that you'd need to do a decent amount of planning to pull off one of these scenarios. But how many of you have just such a contingency in place? Maybe if we all had a TPK Plan, we wouldn't have to work so hard at times to make sure the good guys stay on top.

This seems like the ultimate test of a DM's storytelling ability and creative mojo, and I'd sure like to hear from you folks about this topic. Have you ever slain all the PCs or had to "reboot" (or thought you'd have to)? What did you do? Send me a letter at **dungeon@paizo.com** and tell me your tale.

Chris

Dungeon

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PRISON MAIL

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Flame the Turtle

I have been a fan of your magazine since the launch of the new edition, and I love the idea of going monthly in May. That said, I just wanted to say I've been disappointed with your content in the last few issues, and I'm pretty sure my feelings are shared by quite a few other people. I have purchased mostly every issue thus far. I have noticed that adventures are getting less numerous—four as opposed to 5–6 in some of the earlier issues—and frankly more unusable. I particularly disliked the adventure "Hollow Threats" (issue #96), which my players and I thought was rather silly (I'm still boggled as to how it got published). Maybe it's just me and I don't like anything that doesn't go deep. I tend to like (as do many others, in response to some of your previous letters) rich plotlines combined with evil cultists that provide a sense of eeriness without becoming vile. No, I'm not opposed to the *Book of Vile Darkness;* if players and DMs want to be vile then by all means go out and buy the book. I really do love this magazine. It is the blood and soul of my D&D campaigns, and I'm simply too busy to run homebrew anymore. I truly can't wait for the magazine to go monthly, but for heaven's sake leave out the turtles!

Eddie Mufflers
Via Email

"Hollow Threats" was printed because it was a cool adventure and an interesting change of pace, so sayeth we editors. It was well received by many readers, and while you might have found it silly, others thought it quite cool. Our point is that we don't expect every adventure to appeal to every reader. We don't print many light adventures, because they often tend to be overly silly. In this case, we think the adventure skirted the line but never came close to crossing it. And the bait-and-switch trick in the adventure was a move that we think will inspire DMs even if they never actually run the module.

Hubba, Hubba. Who do You Trust?

I began reading issue #97 with your editorial. I immediately stopped when you asked to turn to "Life's Bazaar."

First, it made me realize a few things.

I trust you completely.

I find this unusual since I've never met you.

Whatever.

The fact is that *Dungeon Magazine* has made my life as a DM incredibly easy. I've had a subscription for roughly a year now and have endured the change to the new edition as well as receiving *Polyhedron*. I also have numerous back issues.

In four years, I've had the privilege of DMing three campaigns. They have all included mostly the same PCs. In that time I have used adventures from *Dungeon Magazine* exclusively. At least twenty-five adventures have been used in some regard. Some have been from older issues (#13) and some from more recent (#91). Regardless of the issue, I find that the quality is unbelievably helpful and detailed. I cannot give you enough thanks.

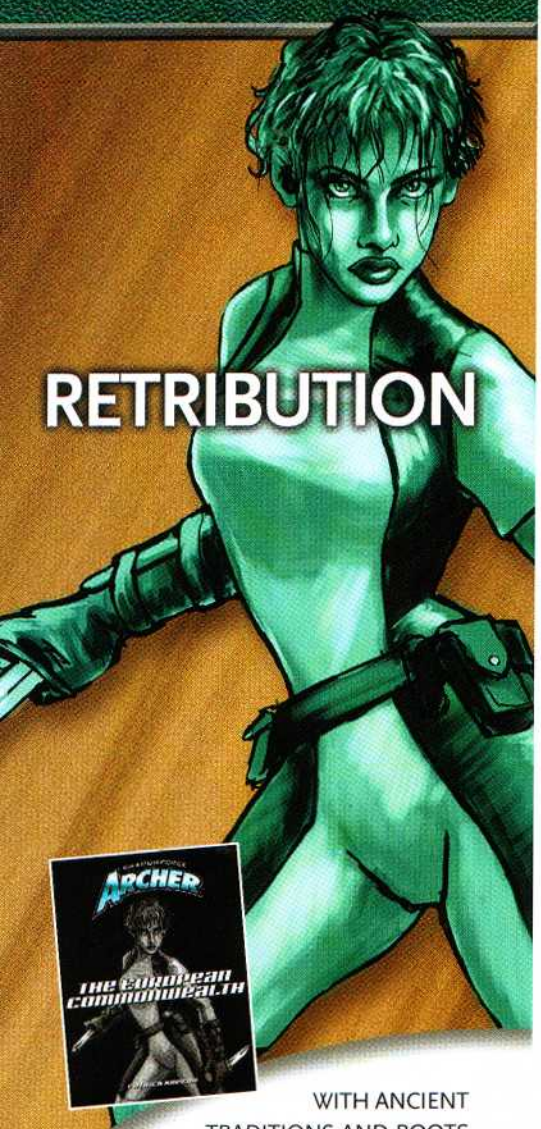
Many others have contributed to the success of the magazine and to them I also offer my thanks.

The second thing I realized was that "Life's Bazaar" must be awesome.

I haven't read it yet (it's 1:00 A.M. in Chicago) but I'm looking forward to adapting it to my campaign.

Finally, thank you from the bottom of my heart for the hard work you have done with this magazine. It is fantastic, bar none. I look forward to the new monthly system and I know

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it will have the same quality that we have seen in the past year. All other issues aside. I could care less about the price or the "non-D&D" *Polyhedron* issues. Anything that is in the magazine is a bonus to DMs everywhere.

Keep up the hard work and know that there are some subscribers out there who think that the work you've done is just plain outstanding.

Paul Rizzo
Chicago, IL

Remember This!

I just read your editorial in *Dungeon* #96, and I agree that it is very hard for the players to remember details from session to session.

This is especially true if there is more than a week between sessions. About six years ago I decided to start each session with the players discussing exactly what had happened the previous session. I would award them XP according to how accurate and detailed their recollections were. I would also be able to interject important details at the right times if I needed to. This led to the players anticipating the summary of the previous session at the beginning of the next game. They began paying closer attention during the games and keeping detailed notes. These notes eventually evolved into detailed character journals. I now begin each session with the players reading their latest journal entry. I award them XP for the entry, and I award 25–50 points every time they hit upon a key point, make a relevant connection, and so on.

Ryan Scott Jones
Via Email

We received a remarkable amount of feedback on that editorial. Here are some suggestions from other readers on helping your players remember important campaign details:

• Keep a list of important NPCs that includes a brief description of the character and why he or she matters. (Brian Brethauer)

• Use cutaway scenes to keep the PCs abreast of other events in the campaign world. (Brian Brethauer)

• Use Divination magic (both NPCs and PCs) to keep them up-to-date. (Joseph Gross)

• Use email to generate off-camera roleplaying between characters. It speeds up game play and keeps players thinking about the game between sessions. (Jenni A. M. Merrifield)

• Present important material more than once. (Edward Reed)

• Identify your storytelling players and tie important plotlines to their characters. (Edward Reed)

Pro Vile

I was disappointed and somewhat angry to read in issue #97 that you will no longer be publishing mature content. I don't believe the majority of D&D players include children in their games, and an adult-themed adventure fits into many DMs' games.

The problem, you see, is that most often the people who are satisfied don't feel a need to write feedback. The old cliché "the squeaky wheel gets the grease" often applies, because the happy wheels don't feel that it is necessary to voice their opinion. Meanwhile, the loud people who have the tiniest thing to complain about run to their keyboards at the first opportunity to shake their fist and shout at

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the slightest thing that angers them.

My suggestion is to look at how many subscribers you have, and how many of them wrote in and complained about the mature content. Then realize that most of the people who did NOT send in complaints and angry threats to end their subscriptions were content with the mature content you presented in issue #95.

Coincidentally, the *Book of Vile Darkness* is my favorite supplement, and I am proud to have it on my bookshelf. It is one of the few D&D books I have sat down and read from cover to cover. I would love to see adventures using the various cults and demon lords as the central focus, or that use spells from the book.

However, if you do choose to avoid mature content in the future, I will not cancel my subscription. I will not write complaint letters, and I will not cease to use your adventures in my campaigns. Your product is excellent, and I know it is impossible to please all the people, all the time. You do a wonderful job trying, though.

Shane A. White
Claremont, NH

We're well aware that a vocal minority often tries to sway the vote, and we do try to please as many of our readers as we can each issue. Until we said that we didn't have plans to feature more mature content, the bulk of responses were anti-vile. Since then, though, we've received overwhelming support in favor of more vile material. The vote has now swung the other way, and we've put the ball back in our publisher's court. This is a complex issue, and we'll continue to chew on it until we come up with a solution. We hear you!

Educational Tool

First off, I'd like to apologize ahead of time for this letter. I am sure by now you are tired of reading letters from people concerning issue #95. After reading the letters section of *Dungeon* #97, I felt I had to respond.

I am tired of hearing people whine and complain about mature content. In a commercial-driven economy, the power belongs to the consumer. If there is an issue of *Dungeon* you do not like, don't buy it! If you don't agree with a sealed section, don't open it. Wizards of the Coast and Paizo Publishing warned everyone in advance of the kind of content the *Book of Vile Darkness* and its supporting literature would contain. There were stickers and warning labels on all the magazines and books.

But the letter I read from Mr. Scott R.C. Smith made me sit down and respond. Mr. Smith was concerned about the mature adventures in the last few issues of *Dungeon*, in particular the adventure "Pandemonium in the Veins" from issue #96, because it dealt with drug abuse. Mr. Smith didn't feel it was appropriate for his gaming group because he had 12–16-year-olds involved. While I respect Mr. Smith's concern, I would like to point out a possible scenario I do not believe he has considered.

I myself am the father of a twelve-year-old boy. I do feel there are some things that he should not see, at least not until he is older. Drug use is not one of them. Many drug dealers today often target young kids in the hopes of creating life-long addicts. Educating children on the dangers they will face in life prepares them for what's to come. Sheltering them only puts them in harm's way.

My idea for Mr. Smith to consider is, with the parents' permission of course, to use "Pandemonium in the Veins" as a tool to teach the kids about the dangers of drug abuse and addiction. The adventure would be an excellent way to show them just what could happen if you mess with drugs. Even though Mr. Smith found the adventure distasteful, here is a way for it to be educational. Hooray for D&D!

I'd like to finish up by simply saying that I do not wish to offend or criticize anyone, and I didn't mean to single out Mr. Smith. I am, like everyone else, simply stating my opinion.

Gary W. Hoff
Charlotte, NC

GREYHAWK
A SIDETREK FOR
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LEVELS 1–5
WILDERNESS

GLUTTONY

BY J. BRADLEY SCHELL

ARTWORK BY SCOTT FISCHER · CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

Magic Items · Monsters · NPCs · Objects · Settlements · Traps

"Gluttony" is a D&D Side Trek adventure suitable for four 4th-level characters, although it can easily be modified to present an appropriate challenge for characters of 3rd or 5th level (see "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar). While set in the Flaeness in the world of Greyhawk, "Gluttony" can be placed in an agricultural area with a temperate climate in any campaign world.

BACKGROUND

Two weeks ago, a great tsunami swept through the Azure Sea. The storm it generated moved across the Amedio Jungle, turned north up the Hellfurnaces, flew across the Sheldomar Valley, and finally dissipated across the northern reaches of the Lortmil Mountains. The ill winds of the fast-moving storm did considerable damage to everything in their path. The storm also swept up two rasts from over the Hellfurnaces and blew them across the great valley, before depositing them in southern Bissel.

The rasts, though somewhat dazed from their rough, windswept journey, saw immediately that they had landed in a place rich with opportunities to slake their thirst for blood. They immediately descended upon a nearby farm and slaughtered the unsuspecting agrarians and their livestock. A fire that had started in the barn during the brief fight spread quickly to the rest of the farm buildings. The rasts, feeling quite welcomed by this fiery display and warmed by their repast, decided to stay and feast until they could eat no more.

Someone else noticed the fire: a cleric of Wee Jas named Knirval Skullstone. Driven from the last small village he stopped at, the dwarven cleric hoped to find more converts—willing or not—in the south of Bissel. On encountering the rasts and watching them gleefully massacre a farms' denizens, Knirval felt he had found a new calling. If the rasts could send a stream of souls to Wee Jas, he could animate the bodies and carve out a small fiefdom to the god of death. Since rasts are nearly insatiable, their continued residence means the eventual death of every living thing in the area, which suits Knirval just fine. He approached the creatures and managed to come to a truce with them, of sorts. He would watch their backs while the fed and lead them to more plentiful feeding grounds in exchange for the bodies of the creatures they killed. Thus far, the rasts have made an excellent start—they have destroyed seven of the farms in the immediate area and slain all witnesses to the attacks.

Those farmers who have not yet been attacked know that something evil is afoot because they have seen the drained and mauled corpses left behind on neighboring farms. Before he was slain himself, one of the farmers—a stocky human named Ruthic—found the bodies of his three pigs slaughtered in their pens, drained of all their blood. As he puzzled over the corpses, one of them stirred and began to rise despite the lack of blood and the horrible bite marks covering its body. Terrified, the farmer fled to his neighbor's land, where he shared the grisly tale.

On returning to the farm a few hours later to investigate (with several cronies in tow), the bodies of the pigs had all vanished. The condition of the bloodless bodies combined with this occurrence has given rise to a wild rumor that a pack of vampires has moved into the area. Holy water, holy symbols, and garlic are now the most popular accouterments of the day among the farmers, but these items offer little protection when the rasts come, as Ruthic discovered only two days later.

The pigs and other missing bodies are rising not as vampires but as zombies. Knirval Skullstone has used the locals' ignorance of undead to encourage the idea of vampires, hoping to drive them off and attract more powerful undead and other worshipers of Wee Jas. The area's farmers, united against the menace under the leadership of Dervin Hornpiper, have offered a 500 gp reward for anyone who can stop the ravening destroyers.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The PCs are asked to stop the "vampires" that menace the southern farmlands of Bissel. But careful investigation of several attack sites reveals a few details that do not mesh with vampire attacks. The PCs must track down the actual perpetrators and defeat them before they completely devastate the area. Finally, the characters must convince the locals that vampires were not responsible and that the problem is solved.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The PCs can enter the scenario in several ways. The starting point you choose determines which encounter area is used first.

- The PCs themselves discover the rast's most recent work—the destruction of a shepherd and his entire flock (area **A**).



and have to defeat the shepherd's zombie, as well as three sheep zombies.

- The characters encounter Dervin Hornpiper (area **B**) while passing through the area and learn of the "vampire" menace.
- While at a local tavern, the PCs hear of the attacks and the undead pigs. If they ask for information, they are directed to Dervin's farm with a firm nod and the following curt statement.

"Over that away lies Dervin Hornpiper's place. He'll tell you about the reward for them vampires. You'll know its his farm 'cause of his symbol on the gate—a ram's horn drilled with finger holes. Stay inside come dark, else they's certain to get ya! Just a little friendly warning—better safe than dead!"

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

If you used the first of the adventure hooks above, go to area A first. If you used either of the other two hooks, use area B first.

A. RAVAGED HERD (EL VARIABLE)

The PCs can get here either by beginning play here (see Adventure Hooks, above) or because Dervin Hornpiper led them here.

A recent storm has rutted and washed out much of the road, making it very difficult to maintain a swift pace throughthis pastoral countryside. The land is sparsely populated, occupied for the most part by cattle ranchers, sheep herders, and farmers.

The day has dawned beautifully, and the weather seems to grow more gorgeous with each passing hour. But there in the dark blue, cloudless sky is the first sign of potential danger—a flight of vultures circling over a nearby hilltop.

If the PCs investigate, read or paraphrase the following.

It seems that this windswept hilltop was the site of a recent massacre. Dozens of sheep and a shepherd lie dead here, their stiff, mauled corpses scattered about the meadow like jacks cast by a giant. Despite the grisly remains, however, there is not one speck or trace of blood anywhere in the area—everything looks as if it had been licked clean.

The sheep and their herder are the latest victims of the insatiable rasts. Knirval then animated the shepherd and six of his sheep with his wand of animate dead. Wolves, drawn by the scent of the kill, arrived on the scene later and muddled any trace of Knirval's activities here. They fled to the foot of the hill when the undead began to stir, however.

Creatures (EL 2): The zombies have been instructed to lie still until a creature approaches within 10 feet, at which point they shamble to their feet and attack.

- **Medium-size Zombie:** hp 16; *Monster Manual* 191.
- **Small Zombies (6):** hp 9 each; *Monster Manual* 191.

Tactics: As mindless undead, the zombies have no real tactics, focusing on one target at a time until it drops or they're reduced to 0 hit points and slain.

Creatures (EL 5): The wolves have stayed away from the hilltop, as they dislike the scent of the undead. Once the zombies



fall, they race 40 feet up the hill and attack any remaining PCs, hoping to drive them away and resume their claim on the bodies.

Wolves (6): hp 13 each; *Monster Manual* 204.

Tactics: In combat, 2–3 wolves work together to incapacitate a single opponent before turning on another. The wolves flee after half of their number are slain or incapacitated.

Development: Because of the damage the wolves have done to the bodies (before the zombies rose), determining their original condition is difficult. A successful Spot check or Heal check (DC 15) while examining the remains reveals that the attacker had 6-inch-long claws. An additional Heal check (DC 18) reveals that numerous bones in every corpse are shattered. (The condition of the bones is the result of the rasts' habit of dropping their victims from a height.) Finally, another successful Spot or Heal check (DC 20) reveals that the fangs that sucked the corpses dry of blood were at least 8 inches long.

If Dervin (see area **B**) is with the PCs, he sighs at the sight and asks them to help him gather and burn all the bodies so that the others cannot rise as vampires.

B. DERVIN HORNPIPER'S FARM

Begin play here if the PCs were drawn into the scenario with the second or third adventure hook (see above). Alternatively, the players can happen upon this farm at any point during the adventure.

Ahead, the road passes by a 9-foot-tall wooden gate. Nailed to the top of it is an enormous ram's horn with finger holes drilled along the top, as if it were an instrument for a bard of gigantic stature. The gate is set in a split-rail wooden fence that encloses a nicely kept stone farmhouse and barn. Attached to every other fencepost is a thick necklace of rotting and fragrant garlic. Three light riding horses graze in the pasture inside the fence, mingling with a dozen head of cattle.

This farm is the home of Dervin Hornpiper, his wife Henrietta, and their two daughters, Willa and Reatha, both of whom are toddlers.

Creature: Dervin Hornpiper is a slender human male with dark brown eyes and hair to match. His once-handsome features are now careworn, and his skin has the leathery texture common to those who work outdoors. Dervin reeks of garlic and openly wears a holy symbol of Pelor. He was the first to discover victims of a rast attack—namely his neighbors, the Cornyards. Based on that horrible evidence, the other bodies he has seen, and the undead livestock, Dervin is convinced that vampires are loose in the area.

Dervin Hornpiper, Male Human Com2: CR 1; Medium-size humanoid (5 ft. 7 in.); HD 2d4; hp 5; Init +1; Spd 30 ft.; AC 12, touch 11, flat-footed 11; Atk +1 melee (1d6, quarterstaff); AL NG; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +0; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 11, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 11.

Skills: Handle Animal +5, Listen +2, Profession (farmer) +7, Ride (horse) +6, Spot +2, Swim +1. *Feats:* Simple Weapon Proficiency (quarterstaff), Skill Focus (Profession—farmer).

Possessions: Padded armor, quarterstaff, garlic necklace, holy symbol of Pelor, light riding horse, 152 gp, 45 cp.

Development: Dervin has been a cattle rancher for more than two decades, and he knows which problems he can cope with and which ones he can't. The recent attacks definitely fall into the latter category, and he's grateful for whatever assistance the PCs can offer. He and the rest of the farmers in the area are offering a 500-gp reward for the capture or death of the killers.

Dervin knows the following facts.

- Seven farms have been attacked and destroyed so far. In every case, the corpses have been drained of blood, and in two cases, livestock or other corpses have been spotted rising from their rest. In each of these situations, the farmers fled, returning only much later to burn the remaining bodies but finding no trace of the bodies that rose as undead.
- When a farm falls victim to the mysterious attacks, every living thing dies—cattle, dogs, cats, farmers, birds—everything.
- The attacks began after the big storm swept through two weeks ago.
- No witnesses to the attacks have survived.

Dervin has some information that could be quite useful to the PCs that he doesn't automatically volunteer. If the PCs ask the right questions or make a successful Gather Information check (DC 15) prompts Dervin to realize that the undead pig sighting happened during the late afternoon, not at night like the second undead encounter. A simple Knowledge (religion) check (DC 5) allows a PC to remember that vampires cannot abide the sun, and in fact can be damaged by it.

Dervin is willing to lead the PCs to the site of the most recent attack (area **A**) or to any of the destroyed farms, but only during daylight. He refuses to be outdoors at night. If the PCs don't seem suitably equipped to handle vampires, he thrusts some wooden stakes and garlic cloves upon them for their own protection.

C1–C7. RUINED FARMS

The names of the farmers who lived at the doomed ranches and farms marked on the map are as follows.

C1) Ruthic Ridgefollow
C2) Davik Cornyard
C3) Red Wingwhip
C4) Dollie Dewdrip
C5) Ossic Goodhallow
C6) Willis Reedlight
C7) Ferrin Brookway

The remains of these farms are all essentially the same. Use the following description if the PCs visit any of the destroyed farms:

> The life has literally been sucked out of this once-thriving farm. Although the evidence suggests that the attack occurred only recently, the farm feels as if it has been abandoned for ages. The only sound is the whistling of the prairie wind across the cultivated land.
>
> In front of the razed farmhouse is a darkened circle of earth at least 20 feet in diameter. The stench of cooked flesh hangs over it like a pall. Nothing remains of the people who formerly inhabited this farm except a few barely recognizable fragments of charred bone and burned debris.

Examination of the remains reveals only that the fires that destroyed these farms occurred within the last two weeks. If Dervin is with the PCs, he explains that he and his fellow farmers burned all the victims and razed their houses so that their spirits would not rise to walk the earth as vampires.

D. THE RASTS' LAIR (EL 8)

The rasts and their new ally have taken shelter in one of the burned-out farmhouses.

> The farmhouse chimney stands like a proud ship's prow against the waves of farmland around it. The horrible odor of burnt wood and flesh still emanates from the cold ashes of this burned-out structure, overlaid by the heavy reek of something fouler. The fire that destroyed this building must have been quite intense, judging from the smoke that still occasionally rises from the ruins. Two 6-foot-diameter mounds of ash and cinder are heaped together inside the burnt remains of a barn next to where the farmhouse stood. A smashed chicken coop appears to be the only unburned structure on the farm. Scattered around the coop are the the sad remains of numerous chickens.

The rasts currently nest here because the smoky ruins remind them of their volcanic home. Knirval has camped 30 feet behind the farmhouse, tolerating the surroundings because of his promise to protect the rasts.

Creatures: The mated pair of rasts originally came to this plane from the Elemental Plane of Fire through an open portal in one of the volcanoes in the Hellfurnaces. They enjoyed their life at the volcano, flying forth with other rasts that visited the area from time to time to devour what prey they could find. Before they came to Bissel, though, they had never fully slaked their ravenous hunger. Thanks to the great storm, they can now gorge themselves to the bursting point, and they fully intend to do so. Knirval notices any sounds of combat, but takes time to prepare before joining the fray (see **Tactics**, below). He has managed to retain control of two pig zombies from Ruthic's farm. The other zombies he created he let wander free to cause more mayhem and further terrorize the area.

Rasts (2): hp 26, 20; *Monster Manual* 154. Unlike typical rasts, both of these creatures are neutral evil in alignment.

Knirval Skullstone, Male Dwarf Clr5 (Wee Jas): CR 5; Medium-size Humanoid (dwarf); HD 5d8+15; hp 42; Init +0;

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Gluttony" is intended for a group of four 4th level characters, but it can be modified for parties of either 3rd or 5th level.

3rd-level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following adjustments:

- Reduce the number of rasts to one.
- Make Knirval a 4th-level cleric.

5th-Level PCs: Run the adventure as written, but with the following adjustments:

- Add the fiendish template to the two rasts.
- Make Knirval a vampire spawn cleric who is using the rasts as cover while he satiates his own gluttony.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult page 170 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (**Tables 7–2, 7–3,** and **7–4**) to determine the treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

Spd 15 ft.; AC 19, touch 10, flat-footed 19; Atk +6 melee (1d8+2, masterwork heavy mace) or +3 ranged (effect varies, ranged touch); AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +4, Will +9; Str 14, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 13.

Skills: Concentration +15*, Knowledge (religion) +9, Spellcraft +9. *Feats:* Combat Casting, Lightning Reflexes.

*Includes +4 bonus from Combat Casting.

Languages: Common, Dwarven, Ignan.

Possessions: cloak of resistance +1, wand of animate dead (8 charges), *potion of cure serious wounds,* masterwork half plate, masterwork heavy mace, large steel shield, five onyx gems (50 gp each).

Spells Prepared (4/5/4/3; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds, detect magic, guidance, mending;* 1st—*cause fear**, *cure light wounds* ×2, *random action, shield of faith;* 2nd—*bull's strength, death knell**, *hold person, spiritual weapon;* 3rd—*animate dead**, *dispel magic, searing light.*

*Domain Spell. *Domains:* Death (death touch 1/day), Law (cast law spells at +1 caster level).

Medium Zombie Pigs (2): hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 191.

Tactics: The rasts typically fly out after dark and attack the first farm they find. After feeding, they return to their lair for about 36 hours to digest the meal. After that, they wait until dark and then fly out and attack again.

In combat, each rast takes advantage of its ability to fly, swooping to within 30 feet of an opponent and using its paralyzing gaze to freeze the intended victim in place. It then grabs the opponent (with a successful melee touch attack) and attempts to fly away with it to a safer location, where it can drain blood in peace. Once the victim has been completely drained of blood (Con 0) or begins to struggle, the rast drops it, then attacks again with its paralyzing gaze.

Unless paralyzed, a PC can attempt to avoid being dropped by grabbing onto the rast with a successful opposed grapple check (see *Player's Handbook*, page 137) that provokes an attack of opportunity.

The rast flies only 30 feet above the ground when attacking, believing itself safe at that height. Neither rast fights to the death; the creatures know they can find easier prey on some other farm. They flee when reduced to half hit points or less.

Knirval takes a few rounds to get into a fight. He casts *bull's strength* and *shield of faith* on himself from behind the rubble of the farmhouse. Once he joins the battle, Knirval hangs back from melee, although he has no fear of battle, and uses his spells effectively (trying to finish off a foe with *searing light* or casting *hold person* on a PC who looks weak-willed). When the rasts flee, Knirval is quite surprised. He intended to keep his end of the bargain and is shocked when the rasts don't. He doesn't fear death, though, and fights until dropped below 0 hit points.

Treasure: While the rasts have no treasure, the life savings of the farmer who once lived here is untouched. Hidden in the remains of the barn is a small unlocked iron box (Search DC 15). Inside it are 35 pp, 150 gp, two gems (100 gp each), and an



old family heirloom—a *pearl of* power (1st-level).

Development: Searching the ruins of the house reveals the burnt corpses of the farmer and his family, which the rasts tossed back into the fire after sucking them dry and Knirval intended to animate shortly. The rasts also destroyed the chicken coop in their attempts to get at the hens inside. The bodies of the chickens are bloodless and shredded.

CONCLUSION

If the PCs let the rasts get away, the creatures destroy another farm in the region a few days later. If the PCs kill the rasts and present the heads to Dervin Hornpiper, they can claim the reward, although it might take a few minutes and a successful opposed Diplomacy check to convince him that the rasts were really the source of the menace. Thereafter, the PCs always find warm and welcome hospitality in this area.

Slaying the rasts doesn't have to be the end of the adventure. The great storm could have flooded out deep caverns in the nearby Lortmil Mountains, forcing evil humanoids or a ravenous hydra that once lived there to seek a new home. Perhaps the great storm that brought the rasts wasn't a natural phenomenon, and the insane druid who caused it plans to send more such magical weather across the Sheldomar Valley to wash away the "taint of civilization." If not stopped, he could threaten all the agriculture in the valley. Finally, Knirval left some uncontrolled zombies wandering the area. Tracking them all down could be quite a chore, and if some other dark-hearted necromancer discovered and controlled them, he or she might pose as great a threat to the region as did Knirval. Ω

Brad Schell's deadly sins adventures have nearly come full circuit. The "series" began with "Rage" in issue #89, followed by "Sloth" in issue #91, "Vanity" in issue #93, "Lust" in #95, and now "Gluttony" in this issue. That leaves only envy and greed to go, coming soon to a DUNGEON *near you.*

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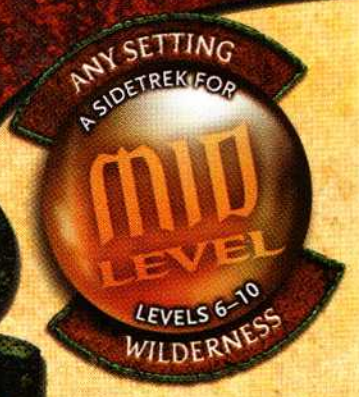
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WINGS, SPIKES, AND TEETH

BY BRIAN MARSDEN

ARTWORK BY RICHARD SARDINHA · CARTOGRAPHY BY PETER WHITLEY

† Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Wings, Spikes, and Teeth" is a D&D Side Trek that can be used in most any non-urban environment. Intended for adventurers of 8th level, it can be adapted for different groups using the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar. The adventure takes place in a mountainous region as the party travels along a trail.

BACKGROUND

An old manticore of the nearby mountains named Hildrar was recently forced out of his position of dominance as leader of a large manticore pride. Hildrar put up a brave fight against the young challenger, but he was forced to abandon his territory after the rival shredded his wings. Wounded and unable to fly, the old manticore limped out of the mountains to the valleys below, beaten but not defeated. After his wounds mostly healed—Hildrar's wings never fully recovered—he encountered a small pride of lions and quickly assumed supremacy of the pride by defeating the lions' powerful dire lion leader.

As leader of the lion pride, Hildrar has led the lions to the fringes of civilization in pursuit of his favorite food: humanoids. The pride has been roaming the mountain passes and trails in search of wayward travelers.

The former pride leader, a dire lion of similar strength, still follows the pride but has become Hildrar's whipping boy. His sides show the scars of the manticore's frequent abuse. Hildrar seeks to keep the dire lion from being a threat to his leadership, but he keeps the cowed lion around for the added muscle.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

Hildrar has set up an ambush point on a seldom-used route into the mountains, along a trail that follows a stream through a slender canyon. The rocky slopes of the valley make it difficult to climb and keeps prey boxed in. The lions and manticore are hidden at the start of the adventure, waiting the former pride leader's roar to warn them of approaching victims.

The dire lion waits a half-mile up the road. He lets the passers-by into the valley and up the trail. He then alerts the others with a roar before following the party into the trap at a non-threatening distance (out of bowshot). The manticore and lions attack when someone advances onto the bridge.

However, the dire lion leader is not happy in his new role. He chases the party forward only half-heartedly; if approached by the PCs in the right manner and with the right spells (such as *speak with animals*), he can be talked into fighting the manticore. In this case, he follows the party to the ambush point and after Hildrar attacks, the dire lion turns on the manticore.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

The adventure set up is simple. If you desire, you could develop it into a more complex encounter. For instance, the PCs might have heard rumors of a fierce creature roaming the trails nearby (Gather Information, DC 10). The locals don't know what is happening beyond that. Hildrar has been diligent in his attacks, careful never to leave survivors. The only forewarning the commoners in the area can provide is that they haven't seen any of the trappers that hunt the mountains in quite some time. A local adds that he has heard faint roars echoing from the canyons late at night. Most people think they're just his imagination.

A Gather Information check (DC 15) reveals that lion tracks were reported by one villager, but the discovery of one or two tracks and even seeing a lion is not that unusual here. They haven't caused trouble for anything but sheep in the past.

BEGINNING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs wander up the trail toward the ambush point. The canyon narrows here, and a small 3-foot-deep pool forms where a streamlet from higher in the mountains joins the main stream. Although both streams are easy enough to walk across, a small bridge made from tree trunks spans the stream so carts can



move more easily. The walls are not steep, and fairly easy for the lions to scale (Climb, DC 15).

1. THE TAIL OF THE ENCOUNTER (ENCOUNTER LEVEL 5+)

You enter a narrow rift between two rocky mountain walls. The trail follows a stream that tumbles along at a moderate pace; it is less then 15 feet wide and no more than a foot deep. The angled canyon walls would be a challenge to climb, but they are not very steep. Both sides of the canyon are covered with scattered trees that gently shake in the canyon's trapped breeze. The babbling of the brook and the gentle rustling of the trees makes for a pleasant journey.

Up the trail, you can see a small makeshift bridge of tree trunks crossing an adjoining streamlet, which tumbles down from a waterfall 20 feet from the trail. A small shallow pond to the right of the bridge has been formed by the fall of several trees on the other side of the stream.

Over the background noise of the tranquil scene you suddenly hear a roar echo off the rocks of the canyon. The hairs on your neck stand up as you spot a lion 300 feet behind you, seated upon a rock 30 feet up the side of the wall.

The lion rises from his perch, giving you a good idea of his size. He appears to be at least 6 feet tall. His ochre hide shows highlights of darker spots, especially on his flanks. As the majesty of this animal sinks in, he lets loose another roar, staring defiantly directly at you.

The dire lion is the former pride leader. If the PCs do not attack, neither does the lion. He does his part to encourage them into the ambush by cutting off their retreat. As the party starts up the trail, the lion stalks them at a distance of 150 feet. If approached (by a ranger or druid, for example), a successful Handle Animal check (DC 20) convinces the lion to deal with the PCs (casting *speak with animals* or a similar spell before trying to engage the lion in this manner provides a +6 circumstance bonus to this check). The dire lion's attitude toward the PCs is unfriendly; toward rangers and druids he is indifferent. PCs who approach within 30 feet see many wounds—old and new—covering the lion's body.

Former Pride Leader, Advanced Dire Lion: CR 5*; Large Animal; HD 16d8+48; hp 118 (currently 38); Init +2; Spd 40 ft.; AC 15, touch 11, flat-footed 13; BAB +12; Grap +23; Atk +18 melee (2 claws, 1d6+7), +13 melee (bite, 1d8+3); Reach 5 ft. by 10 ft./5 ft.; SA pounce, improved grab, rake 1d6+3; SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +13, Ref +12, Will +6; Str 25, Dex 15, Con 17, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +5**, Jump +10, Listen +4, Move Silently +9, Spot +4.

**In areas of tall grass or heavy undergrowth, the dire lion's Hide bonus improves to +8.

Tactics: If the party gives the lion no reason to help them, he waits and either joins the fray later (1d6+2 rounds after the ambush starts—see area 2) or picks off an available mount as the party retreats from the fight. Should the party attack the beast, he fights to the death.

Development: If someone in the party can speak to him, the lion reluctantly tells them to go back but doesn't elaborate. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 25) allows the PC to tell that the lion seems nervous. With effort, the animal's reaction can be swayed. In addition to Diplomacy checks, Animal Empathy or Handle Animal checks can also be used to sway the dire lion's reaction. See **Tables 5–3** and **5–4** in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (page 149) for details. If the lion's attitude moves to friendly, he says that his pride now thinks of humans as food and that the characters should go back the way they came. If the lion becomes helpful, and the characters ask the right questions, he mentions that a new pride leader—a powerful, strange lion—has led the other lions to hunt this pass. The dire lion does not like the taste of humans, and admits that the rest of the pride is unhappy with the new pride leader.

If *charmed* or *dominated*, the lion tells the PCs about his rivalry with the new leader, but not about the ambush. Note that the lion cannot identify or accurately describe a manticore. At best, he can describe it as a flying lion that can bite from afar. He can be persuaded to attack Hildrar, but only if the PCs aid him. He also insists that the party try to spare his fellow lions and allow them to flee back into the mountains.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: Award the PCs 100% more experience for defeating the former pride leader. Additionally, if the characters deal with the lion peacefully, award them experience as if they had defeated him in combat.

2. AFTER THE ROAR (EL 8)

Six lions stalk the party on the other side of the stream, which they can easily leap.

Lion (6): hp 32 each; *Monster Manual* 198.

Until the trap is sprung, the lions hide (Spot, DC 40, to detect them) while trying to remain within striking distance. The lions automatically Spot the characters at a distance of 100 feet (roughly 20 feet after the former pride leader's perch) unless the PCs attempt to be stealthy, in which case the lions need to make Spot checks with a –2 penalty since they keep their heads down to avoid detection.

Tactics: The lions wait for the manticore to spring the trap, joining 1 round later. Like the former pride leader, they are new to hunting humans. If the PCs are accompanied by animals, there is a 30% chance that each lion attacks one of these creatures with its first attack. Because they wait for the manticore to attack first, none of their victims is likely to be flat-footed.

3. THE LEDGE (EL 8)

Hildrar waits on the ledge over the falls (Spot, DC 30, to detect it). The manticore bellows the attack signal when the PCs come within 80 feet of the dire lions' hiding place (placing the characters within charge distance of the lions).

> Another loud roar booms from the rocky mountainside over the trail. Debris fluffs up into the sky as a huge creature springs into the air from a ledge above. It glides in an awkward spiral on tattered wings. The beast's humanlike, bestial face eyes you as it begins to circle down. The beast then whips its long tail. A volley of bone-white spikes fly from its tail and streak toward you.

Hildrar, Advanced Manticore: CR 5*; Huge Magical Beast; HD 15d10+60; hp 120; Init +2; Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft.**; AC 16, touch 10, flat-footed 14; BAB +15; Grap +28; Atk +19 melee (2d4+5, 2 claws), +17 melee (1d8+2, bite), or +16 ranged (1d8+2/crit 19–20, spikes); Face/Reach 10 ft. by 20 ft./10 ft.; SA spikes, rake (1d4+2); SQ scent; AL LE; SV Fort +13, Ref +11, Will +6; Str 20, Dex 15, Con 19, Int 7, Wis 12, Cha 10.

**Hildrar can't fly, per se. Due to his tattered wings, the manticore can only glide for short distances equal to his fly speed (50 feet). Gliding in this manner is a move action. Hildrar can still clear obstacles up to 50 feet in height by jumping and using his wings to aid the elevation gain, and the manticore never takes falling damage (he uses his wings to slow his descent) unless he can't use his wings. Hildrar can still dive (charge from the air), and he can double move through the air in two long hops if he can find some place to land between move actions.

Skills: Listen +9, Spot +9†. *Feats:* Multiattack, Power Attack, Improved Critical (spikes).

†Manticores receive a +4 racial bonus to Spot checks in daylight.

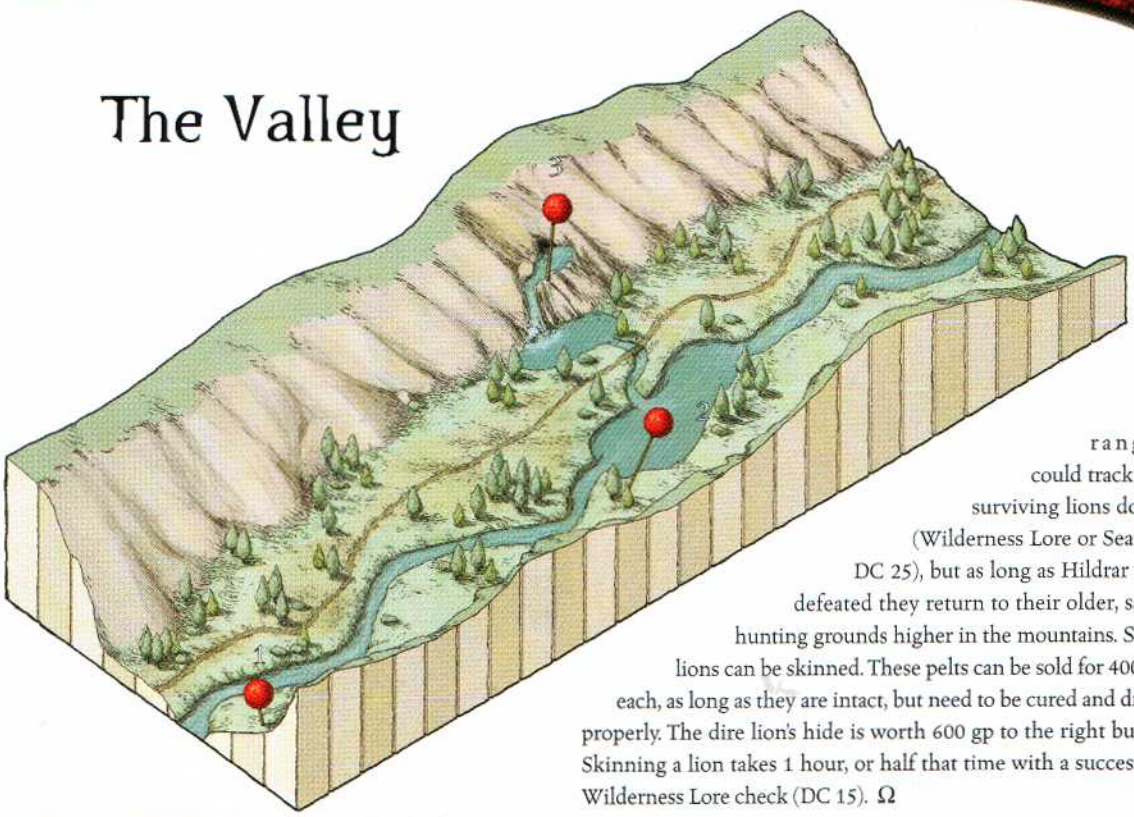
SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Wings, Spikes, and Teeth" is intended for four 8th-level PCs, but it can be easily adapted for parties of different levels or sizes. You can also set the adventure in a different type of terrain. Just retain a high vantage point for Hildrar's perch, an area of underbrush or high grass where the lions wait for prey, and another high point that the former pride leader uses to watch for passers-by.

You can also consider modifying the adventure as follows:

- **5th- to 7th-level PCs:** The former pride leader's HD should be reduced nearer to his default level of 8 HD. A good rule of thumb is to give him twice as many HD as the party's average level (so 10 HD for a 5th-level party). Hildrar's HD should also be reduced for a lower-level or smaller group. Again, his HD should be roughly twice the party's average level.
- **9th- to 12th-level PCs:** Make Hildrar an 18-HD Gargantuan manticore. This increases his Strength, Constitution, attack bonus, saves, hit points, natural armor, and adds a feat; this also reduces his Dexterity and increases the size-based attack and AC modifier. Increase the dire lion's HD to keep him roughly twice the party's average level. Also, either add more lions to the ambush (area **2**), make the lions normal dire lions, or a combination of both.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult page 170 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (**Tables 7–2**, **7–3**, and **7–4**) to determine the treasure appropriate to the new encounters.



Tactics: The manticore fights to the death. The lions retreat after dropping below 20% of their hit points or if Hildrar is killed. If the former pride leader fights for the characters, the lions only fight until reduced to 50% of their hit points or Hildrar is slain, whichever comes first. If present, the dire lion fights Hildrar until slain.

As soon as a party member gets on the bridge, Hildrar glides down in that direction, letting loose a volley of spikes as it goes. Hildrar continues to glide and leap around the area, using tail spikes as long as no PC poses a serious ranged threat. Such characters are always Hildrar's first targets. When it runs out of tail spikes, the manticore dives (a vertical charge) at the PC nearest the bridge.

Ad-hoc Experience Award: The PCs should earn 150% more experience for defeating Hildrar, due to the manticore's advanced statistics.

4. HILDRAR'S LAIR

Hildrar has made a temporary lair in an alcove atop the ledge. It is strewn with the bones of two humans. In a corner, Hildrar hides his **Treasure** in a concealed pit (Search, DC 20) beneath a heavy boulder (Strength check, DC 20, to move).

Treasure: In a foul-smelling leather sack in the hole, the PCs find 15 pp, 167 gp, a *potion of ghoul touch*, and a *+2 lion's shield*. A Search check (DC 25) in the pit reveals 10 red spinels (100 gp each) scattered in a loose layer of dirt at the pit's bottom.

CONCLUSION

If the party defeats Hildrar and the lions (either through combat or by helping the former pride leader take back his place of authority) they can take the manticore's treasure, assuming they find it. A ranger could track the surviving lions down (Wilderness Lore or Search, DC 25), but as long as Hildrar was defeated they return to their older, safer hunting grounds higher in the mountains. Slain lions can be skinned. These pelts can be sold for 400 gp each, as long as they are intact, but need to be cured and dried properly. The dire lion's hide is worth 600 gp to the right buyer. Skinning a lion takes 1 hour, or half that time with a successful Wilderness Lore check (DC 15). Ω

Brian Marsden is a 17-year-veteran gamer and GM. He resides in Colorado where he works on a CIS degree in order to better support his fantasy roleplaying habits and ambitions.

OOPS!

We forgot to include the author bios for the adventures in issue #97. Our apologies to all our authors and those readers hungry for personal tidbits on their favorite D&D module writers.

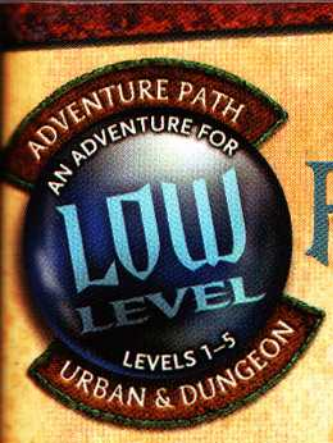
Hank Woon, Jr. lives in Aberdeen, WA and has played Dungeons & Dragons for over a decade now, mostly as the DM. His main inspiration for "Demonblade" are ancient tales of artifact possession. I've always been intrigued by the thought of a disembodied soul trapped for eternity, searching for a host so it can be released from its tomb.

Campbell Pentney is a 4th-level student/0-level lawyer from New Zealand who has been DMing for eleven years. He can usually be found slaving away at the gym (attempting to maintain his hold on his current world record for push-ups) or sitting in the law school library with a confused look on his face.

Rob Manning says, "I would like to dedicate this adventure to Dickinson, Harris, and Dianno; Stanley, Frehley, Simmons, and Criss; Lynott, Gorham, and Robertson; Pinnick, Tabor, and Gaskill; Lennon and McCartney; DeGarmo and Tate; and Ronnie James Dio. He'd also like to thank Moore, Miller, Gaiman, Morrison, Ennis, Ellis, Lapham, Gerber, Busiek, Waid, Robinson, Loeb."

Chris Perkins runs a spectacular Wednesday night D&D game that is deeply immersive, wonderfully rich in detail, and a true inspiration to DMs everywhere. This sentiment is brought to you by an editor who's hoping his brown nosing is good for a few extra XPs this week and the number 9.





FLOOD SEASON

BY JAMES JACOBS

ARTWORK BY STEPHEN DANIELE, PETER BERGTING, AND SCOTT FISCHER • CARTOGRAPHY BY CHRISTOPHER WEST

Magic Items Monsters NPCs Objects Settlements Traps

"Flood Season" is the second module in the *Dungeon Magazine* **Adventure Path: Shackled City** series. This Dungeons & Dragons adventure is designed for four player characters (PCs) of 4th level. PCs who survive the entire adventure should advance to or near 6th level, depending on how many encounters they overcome, and how many they manage to circumvent.

This adventure can easily accommodate larger groups of PCs, and it can handle parties of 1st through 3rd level, or even up to 7th level once a few adjustments are made (see the "Scaling the Adventure" sidebar).

When the PCs obtain sufficient experience points to advance to their next level, allow them to advance during the course of the adventure; some of the challenges that await them toward the end of this adventure are fairly dangerous.

The events in "Flood Season" should take place after those detailed in the previous adventure in this series, "Life's Bazaar," from issue #97. The text of the adventure assumes this, but if you run "Flood Season" as a standalone adventure, it should be relatively simple to alter descriptions to compensate. If your group has played through the previous adventure, they should be of sufficient level to start this one. If they are still mostly 3rd level, you might wish to run a shorter adventure first so that they can stand up to the challenges presented in this module.

PREPARATION

Before you run "Flood Season," you should have a copy of the three core rulebooks (the *Player's Handbook*, the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*). This adventure also features creatures from *Monster Manual II* and the *Fiend Folio*; pertinent statistical information for these monsters is presented in the text where appropriate or included in the "Flood Season" Web enhancement, although it is strongly recommended that you reference the appropriate books for more details on the creatures in question.

Scattered throughout the adventure are Campaign Seed sidebars. These sidebars contain hints and plots about the campaign that might surface in future installments of the series, but which aren't necessarily pertinent to this adventure. These sidebars are meant to introduce future allies and adversaries and help you keep track of the campaign's "movers and shakers."

BACKGROUND

The large town of Cauldron is unlike any other. Built inside the mouth of a dormant volcano, Cauldron is secretly ruled by a beholder named Vhalantru who hides behind the guise of an influential noble named Orbius Vhalantru. Vhalantru controls various members of the town guard, nobility, and merchants with his magic, all while keeping a presence in the various illegal ventures that take place inside the city walls. No one is the wiser, at this point.

Recently, the city was hit by a sudden string of kidnappings. The victims ranged across the board in appearance: men, women, humans, halflings, elves, dwarves, seniors, children, merchants, rogues. Nothing seemed to tie the crimes together, aside from the fact that they all occurred over a relatively short period. The kidnappings were in fact orchestrated by a slave trader from the Underdark. Named Kazmojen, this slaver used his minions to snatch victims from the streets of Cauldron, until his plans were finally thwarted by adventurers working at the behest of the Church of St. Cuthbert. This adventure, "Life's Bazaar," is detailed in *Dungeon Magazine* issue #97.

Since these events transpired, life has returned to normal in the city. As winter draws closer, the citizens of Cauldron are busy shoring up their homes and businesses in preparation for the flood season. Since the city is essentially built inside a large bowl, the rainy seasons of winter are dangerous. The mouth of the dormant volcano catches the falling rain with great efficiency, and the gutters of Cauldron quickly become filled with turbulent rivers that more often than not overflow into the streets as they drain down the inner surface of the volcano and into the central lake. Most years, the rainfall quickly overcomes the lake's natural drainage into the Underdark, and the water level slowly creeps up, flooding the lower buildings and forcing the inhabitants to flee for higher ground. Since the buildings along the lakeshore tend to be poorly constructed and their inhabitants poor, sick, and destitute, the damage done by these yearly floods can be devastating.

After a particularly wet winter several decades ago, when the central lake's waters reached Ash Avenue and completely submerged many of the lower buildings, the city decided to do something about the problem. Representatives of the churches





of Pelor, Wee Jas, and Kord got together under the urging of the then high priestess of the church of St. Cuthbert, pooled their resources, and created several *wands of control water* to combat the next flood season. That winter, priests from these four temples patrolled the lower streets of Cauldron and fought back the flood using their wands. The citizens were grateful for the aid, and assisted with sandbagging and shoring of buildings where they could; even with the magic wands, the flood waters could still do significant damage.

So successful were these measures that, after that flood season ended, the city of Cauldron erupted into a massive festival. In the years to follow, this grew into a tradition. The Flood Festival, as it came to be known, began earlier each year until it started before the first rains fell. Each year, the priests of the city created *wands of control water* to fight the floods, and each year the floods were controlled and blunted. For a few years, they even dabbled with scrolls of *control weather*, but this option was abandoned before long because too many mishaps cropped up when lower-level clerics miscast these powerful spells.

But time breeds contentment, and the Flood Festival ended up too successful for its own good. As the years went by, the churches began to refine their uses of the wands and found that they could build fewer wands and still make it through the season. At the same time, the festivals grew more gaudy and extravagant. Over the past decade, the winters have been fairly mild, and it is doubtful that the lake would have flooded even if its waters weren't held back. As the apparent need for protection faded, so did the city's memories of the floods of decades past, and the need for the *wands of control water* began to slip.

Last year, a drought caused a late and exceptionally mild winter, so no one really noticed or complained that dangerously few *wands of control water* were built. In fact, the wands weren't even used except at the start and end of the flood season as part of festival ceremonies. As a result, the long-standing alliance between the four temples has faded. The church of Kord has long balked at the cost of building the wands, and this year its priesthood has turned its focus to the Flood Festival itself, organizing numerous sporting events to entertain the city. The church of Wee Jas would rather spend their efforts creating "more constructive magic items," and they too have dropped from the wand-creating program (this temple has been the least supportive of the program overall). The church of Pelor, although still supportive of the program, has relatively small presence in Cauldron, and last spring it lost its two most powerful priests to a tragic accident. No current member of the clergy has the expertise to build *wands of control water*.

That leaves the church of St. Cuthbert. Sarcem Delasharn, the current high priest of the temple, grew worried. He couldn't make enough wands himself for the festival, and certainly didn't think that the calm winters Cauldron had witnessed over the past decade would last much longer. He collected what funds he could (mostly from his own church, but some gathered from the other churches) and kept the wand shortage as low key and secret as he could; he didn't want to distress the populace any more than necessary. He then set out from Cauldron on a long trek to the distant capital city (using the approach of important annual St. Cuthbert rituals as a public excuse to make the trip) to purchase or commission as many *wands of control water* as he could afford. It was a long task, requiring him to be absent from Cauldron for many weeks. In his absence he named Jenya Urikas as the acting high priestess of St. Cuthbert in Cauldron.

Unfortunately, something far more sinister and dangerous than floods is brewing in the shadows of Cauldron.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

The party, after spending some time recovering from their latest adventures, is contacted by a distraught Jenya Urikas, the acting high priestess of the Church of St. Cuthbert. She has just received a disturbing *sending* spell from Sarcem Delasharn. He'd been ambushed at the Lucky Monkey, and he and a few survivors had managed to hole up in the tavern's basement. It was apparent that the aggressors would soon get in and finish the job. The Lucky Monkey is an inn just a day's travel outside Cauldron, and Jenya begs the party to ride to the roadhouse to try to save Sarcem and any other survivors.

The party hurries out to the roadhouse at the base of the volcano, only to find the site terribly quiet. After they begin to explore, they quickly learn that the ambushers are still looting the inn. They must drive off the bandits, who are led by a werebaboon named Tongueater. If they're quick, they can rescue the one survivor of the attack on the Lucky Monkey: a female half-drow named Shensen. She is a member of the Striders of Fharlanghn, a neutrally aligned organization with several agents in the area. The Striders are detailed in the Web enhancement for "Life's Bazaar," available at **www.paizo.com/dungeon**.

Unfortunately, they are too late for the inn patrons, including Sarcem Delasharn. They can recover his body and return with Shensen to Cauldron, whereupon they can piece together the events at the inn and find out what might have happened to the *wands of control water*, which are desperately needed as the rains begin to fall in earnest. After a bit of investigation, the group learns that Tongueater was merely the cohort of a more powerful villain named Triel Eldurast, an ex-member of the Cauldron city guard who fled into the catacombs below the city many years ago after she murdered several of her fellow guards. Triel led the attack on the Lucky Monkey and left her cohort Tongueater behind to finish the job as she fled back to Cauldron with the stolen *wands of control water*. After more investigation (set against the backdrop of increasing rain and rapidly rising floodwaters), the group finds clues that her base of operation seems to be in a large hidden cavern below town.

Access to this cavern is possible via a lengthy underwater swim (a lake in the cavern is connected underwater to the central lake of Cauldron), or via a lava tube that connects the cavern with a secret opening on the northern slope of the volcano. Arriving at the hidden cave, the party finds that it contains the crumbling ruins of several stone buildings . . . the last few remnants of an ancient city of a sinister race of creatures known as the kopru. Worse, it seems that Triel Eldurast has become a cleric of Hextor and allied herself with two other religious zealots. One is a halfling Vecna cultist named Skaven Umbermead, and the other is an undead gnoll cultist of Erythnul. They intend to ransom off the stolen wands to the city above, and even intended to use some of them to worsen the flooding as necessary to provoke a more urgent need for them. The party must retrieve the wands and put a stop to the cultists (who work for even more powerful and mysterious masters) before Cauldron suffers extensive flood damage.

SCALING THE ADVENTURE

"Flood Season" is designed for a group of four 4th-level characters, but with a little work it can be adapted for use by 1st–3rd, or even 5th–7th-level characters.

• For lower-level characters, the easiest way to scale the adventure is to simply reduce the number of thugs and Alleybashers the party must encounter. In the Lucky Monkey, several of the bandits might have passed out from too much drink, and in the Kopru Ruins they might be even more inattentive or sleepy than usual. You should reduce the character levels of the major NPCs by one or two levels to compensate as well, and if the PCs still need help, perhaps Shensen or a friendly NPC from "Life's Bazaar" agrees to temporarily join up with the group. Certain creatures should be replaced with less powerful creatures as indicated below:

Skulvyn: Replace with a fiendish crocodile.

Kopru: Eliminate the kopru encounter altogether.

Mud Slaad: Replace it with a few dretches.

Spiders: Reduce the size categories of all monstrous spiders encountered by one.

Ettercaps: Replace with goblins or kobolds.

Harpoon Spider: Replace with a Medium half-dragon monstrous spider.

T-Rex Skeleton: Replace with a Huge T-rex skeleton.

Spawn of Kyuss: Replace with ghouls or ghasts.

Traps: Remove all traps of CR 4 or higher.

• For higher-level characters, the simplest way to increase the challenge level is to add NPC levels to the monsters for each level above 4th that the PCs are when they start the adventure. You can also add creatures to the encounter areas to make things more difficult, or perhaps many of the miscellaneous creatures in the Kopru Ruins are fiendish or half-fiends provided by the cultists' benefactors. Some specific examples might include:

Hill Baboons: Have some or all of these baboons replaced by 1st-level fighters with the werebaboon template.

Skulvyn: Advance the skulvyn's Hit Dice by a few levels.

Kopru: Give the kopru a few levels of rogue, cleric, or sorcerer.

Mud Slaad: Add a second or even a third mud slaad.

Spiders: Apply the half-dragon template to the spiders, ettercaps, and harpoon spider.

T-Rex Skeleton: Replace with an equal-sized zombie.

Spawn of Kyuss: Replace with mummies or mohrgs.

Remember that changing the Encounter Levels should raise or lower the amount of treasure in the adventure. Consult page 170 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide* (**Tables 7–2, 7–3,** and **7–4**) to determine the treasure appropriate to the new encounters.

PLAYER HANDOUT #2: CAULDRON & ENVIRONS



CAULDRON

The city of Cauldron is detailed more fully in "Life's Bazaar" from issue #97. The information presented here should allow you to run "Flood Season."

The town's buildings, tightly packed and built from volcanic rock and wood, line the inner bowl of a nameless, dormant volcano. Cobblestone roads form concentric circles around a small lake of cold water, which fills the volcano's basin. Although the town's sewage seeps into the lake, local clerics provide purified water to citizens in exchange for charitable donations to their temples.

A 50-foot-tall fortified wall of black malachite encircles the city, tracing the outer rim of the volcano. Four roads descend the outer walls of the volcano, becoming major thoroughfares that lead to other towns and distant realms.

Most people get around Cauldron on foot, although the town has its share of wagons and carriages, most of them owned by merchants and nobles.

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE EBON TRIAD

Although it might not become clear to the PCs, the cultists who lurk in the Kopru Ruins belong to a secret cult known as the Ebon Triad. This cult has small cells operating throughout the region and was founded recently by a small group of heretics from the churches of Erythnul, Vecna, and Hextor. They believe that through cooperation, they can merge the power of their three deities into one overdeity of extreme and unimaginable power. The Ebon Triad has allied itself with the Cagewrights, a faction of sinister villains with dire plans for the Cauldron region (detailed further in both "Life's Bazaar" and the "Flood Season" Web enhancement), and many Ebon Triad cells are hard at work building magic devices called *Soulcages* for them.

The official churches of Erythnul, Vecna, and Hextor are less than pleased with the foundation of the Ebon Triad. Tradition and belief have always kept these three churches at odds with one another, and the majority of these faithful have no wish to see the glory and power of their patron deity "diluted" through mixing with "lesser" religions. The fact that their deities continue to grant spells to the cultists of the Ebon Triad is vexing and disturbing to the traditionalists, and before long these three evil churches might launch programs to put down the upstart cultists before their radical ideas gain too many more followers. The PCs might even find themselves working for clerics of Erythnul, Vecna, or Hextor in a quest to eradicate some of the Ebon Triad cults. One thing is certain, though: with the support of the Cagewrights, the Ebon Triad represents a very serious threat to the Cauldron region.

Cauldron Rumors

d12	Rumor
1	The Flood Festival is a front, founded years ago by a cult of Hextor to fund a secret army of bloodthirsty mercenaries hidden in caverns below the city. (False.)
2	More giant snakes have been sighted near the village of Hollowsky to the east. I bet the yuan-ti of Shatterhorn are back! (This rumor could be true or false, but its implications are beyond the scope of this adventure.)
3	A pesky tribe of kobolds used to infest some of the catacombs below the southern section of the city, but they've been taken care of now. (True; the kobolds were wiped out several months ago by an adventuring group called "The Stormblades." More information about this group can be found in the "Flood Season" Web enhancement.)
4	Someone in Cauldron trades in strange currency: coins stamped with a jester instead of the sovereign. The authorities are trying to find the source. (True; The Last Laugh guild in town mints its own coins.)
5	A tentacled beast lurks in the cold depths of the lake (True; a powerful morkoth makes its home there.)
6	Something's been riling up wild animals in the area for the last several months; in particular, the lowland baboons seem to have become particularly hostile lately. (True; a large number of lycanthropes have started to appear in the area, one of which the PCs encounter at the Lucky Monkey.)
7	Alek Tercival, a paladin who serves St. Cuthbert, has been out of town for several days; I hear he traveled to the village of Redgorge to take care of a woman who was possessed by a demon! (False; there are no demonic possessions in Redgorge, but Alek Tercival has indeed been out of town for nearly a week.)
8	Hookface the dragon was spotted flying over the hills to the north by some adventurers—hope they don't go rile him up! (False; Hookface has not emerged from his lair to the north in nearly a hundred years.)
9	A friend saw a mysterious woman down by the lakeshore a few days ago. She had fiery red hair and wore some sort of bulky armor under a black tabard. She was talking to some shady looking individuals and handing them some money and weapons. (True; This was Triel Eldurast hiring more thugs and Alleybashers to help with her plans.)
10	Some sort of evil aquatic druid from the Underdark has taken up residence in the lake, and it's planning on casting a spell to lure people into the water to transform them into its monstrous minions! (False.)
11	Cauldron's not the first city to be built on this site. Adventurers tell stories of a ruined city in the caverns below, a city built by a strange race of aquatic monsters. (True; this was once the site of a kopru city.)
12	The churches have lost the *wands of control water*. There's nothing to hold back the flood waters if the rains don't stop! (True; this rumor can only appear once Chapter Three starts; otherwise substitute a different rumor for this result.)

The map of Cauldron shows the locations of The Church of St. Cuthbert, the Cathedral of Wee Jas, the Tipped Tankard, and all other locations that figure in this adventure. Other modules in this series introduce and describe other locations within the town. Feel free to add new places to the map as dictated by the needs of your campaign. For instance, if one of the PCs worships the goddess Yondalla, feel free to place a small temple or shrine dedicated to Yondalla somewhere within the city limits.

♛ **Cauldron (large town)**: Conventional; AL NG; Population 4,500 adults; 3,000 gp limit; Assets 600,000 gp; Mixed (79% human, 9% halfling, 5% gnome, 3% dwarf, 2% elf, 1% half-elf, 1% half-orc).

Authority Figures: Lord Mayor Severen Navalant, male human Ari10; Terseon Skellerang, male human Ftr8 (Captain of the Town Guard).

Important Characters: Lord Orbius Vhalantru, beholder (true overlord of Cauldron); Jenya Urikas, female human Clr6 (high priestess at the Church of St. Cuthbert); Kristof Jurgensen, male human Clr4 (cleric at the Shrine of Pelor); Omar Tiskinsen, human male Clr7 (high priest of the Church of Kord); Embryl Aloustinai, human female Wiz5/Clr9 (high priest of the Cathedral of Wee Jas); Ike Iverson, human male Clr7 (cleric at the Cathedral of Wee Jas); Artus Shemwick, male human Rog5 (fence and information broker working as a cook at the Tipped Tankard); Meerthan Eliothlorn, male half-elf Wiz12 (merchant staying at The Drowning Morkoth Inn); Skie Aldersun, female gnome Sor6 (owner of Skie's Treasuries; detailed in the Web enhancement); Keygan Ghelve, male gnome Exp3/Ill1 (owner of Ghelve's Locks); Gretchyn Tashykk, female halfling Com1 (Lantern Street Orphanage headmistress); Patch, male half-orc Com1/Rog1 (spy for The Last Laugh guild); Vortimax Weer, male human Wiz10 (alchemist and potion brewer at Weer's Elixirs); Annah Taskerhill, human female Ari1/Brd3 (member of the Stormblades and daughter of local nobles, detailed in the "Flood Season" Web enhancement); Cora Lathenmire, human female Ari1/Ftr3 (member of the Stormblades and daughter of local nobles, detailed in the Web enhancement); Todd Vanderboren, human male Ari1/Rog3 (member of the Stormblades and adopted son of local nobles, detailed in the Web enhancement); Zachary Aslaxin II, human male Ari1/Rgr2/Clr1 (member of the Stormblades and son of local nobles, detailed in the Web enhancement).

Typical Guard Patrol: Members of the town guard are especially vigilant in the wake of the recent abductions. A typical patrol consists of a sergeant (War4) and 1d4+2 privates (War2). Guards typically wear breastplates emblazoned with the town emblem (a watchful eye wreathed in flames) and carry halberds, short swords, and shortbows.

RUMORS IN CAULDRON

As the adventure progresses, the PCs have ample opportunities to overhear rumors or hear news and gossip. These bits of information might be overheard in local taverns and inns, in shops, or even on the streets of the city. A successful Gather Information check yields one rumor (DC 15), two rumors (DC 20), or

three rumors (DC 25). Roll randomly or select appropriate rumors from the **Cauldron Rumors** table.

WEATHER IN CAULDRON

This adventure should be set during a rainy season; the descriptive text assumes that the adventure takes place at the start of winter. During Chapter 1, the weather in the region is somewhat brisk, windy, and overcast. Occasional rare breaks in the cloud cover allow the sun to peer through. As the adventure progresses, the rains begin; the first real storm should start about the time the party reaches the Lucky Monkey. After this, rainstorms should continue to plague the region, so that by the time the adventure is over the city of Cauldron should be in dire need of the *wands of control water* stolen by the cultists.

CHAPTER ONE: THE ONSET OF WINTER

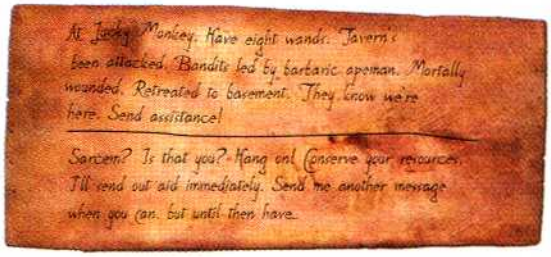
The adventure starts as the PCs recover from their adventures in Jzadirune and the Malachite Fortress below Cauldron. For some time before winter starts, they should have ample time to spend some of the money they made in their previous adventure, explore the city of Cauldron a bit more, and perhaps make some potions, scrolls, or other minor magic items. The "Flood Season" Web enhancement contains two events that can take place during this period; these events have little to do with the plot of the adventure, but serve to add depth to the overall campaign.

THE SENDING

Some time on a morning after the PCs have fully recovered from their recent ordeal in the Malachite Fortress, they receive an urgent summons from Jenya Urikas at the temple of St. Cuthbert. The message says that she's been in contact with high priest Sarcem Delasharn and that he needs immediate assistance.

Assuming the party arrives at the Church of St. Cuthbert quickly, they find Jenya in a state of panic. She quickly ushers the PCs into a side room while worshipers and acolytes look on worriedly. Once the PCs and Jenya are in a private area, she confides in them that she just received a terribly disturbing message from Sarcem Delasharn, the high priest of the church. He sent the message via a *sending* spell to Jenya; she wrote down the message and her reply as soon as she was able and passes the hastily scribbled note to the party for them to examine.

PLAYER HANDOUT #1: THE *SENDING* FROM SARCEM



When the PCs have read the note, Jenya tells them she meant to tell Sarcem to "have faith," but she ran out of room and the response was sent. Since the *sending*, Jenya has grown distraught. Aside from agonizing over the fact that she didn't plan her *sending* response that well, each passing minute puts Sarcem in greater peril. She briefly contemplated riding out to save him herself, but she can't leave the church unattended; if a disaster struck the city and the church was needed, Sarcem would never forgive her. So she turned to the PCs.

She asks them to ride out to the Lucky Monkey immediately to save Sarcem. She's willing to answer a few questions before the PCs leave; likely questions and her answers are given below.

What/where is the Lucky Monkey? The Lucky Monkey is a roadside tavern about a day's ride northwest of Cauldron. It's a popular, convenient rest stop for travelers on the northwest road. Jenya can provide a map of the Cauldron region (**Player Handout #2**) that shows the route to the Lucky Monkey.

Can you come with us to the Lucky Monkey? She cannot accompany the party, even though she desperately wants to. She must remain in Cauldron and tend to the church and any emergencies that might pop up.

Can you send any help with us? Jenya can't afford to send anyone with the PCs to the Lucky Monkey. If the PCs ask about Alek Tercival, the temple's resident paladin, she tells them that he is tending to another urgent matter at this time and is out of town. She refuses to go into any more detail about this matter.

What was Sarcem talking about when he mentioned the wands? Sarcem purchased eight *wands of control water* during this trip to the capital city; the wands are used to help control the waters of the central lake during the rainy season. Traditionally, clerics from the four main churches in Cauldron build the year's wands from scratch, but over the past several years the flood seasons have been minor at worst and the other three churches have lost interest in providing the time and effort to build wands this year. It is vital that the wands get back to Cauldron before the flood season starts.

Who do you think assaulted the Lucky Monkey? Jenya has no idea; she's heard rumors of bandits operating in the area, but an assault on the Lucky Monkey makes no sense. The owners aren't particularly wealthy, and bandits have never attacked any established structures in the region as long as she can remember. Hopefully the PCs can find some clues at the Lucky Monkey.

What's in it for us? Naturally, Jenya hopes that the PCs agree to ride to Sarcem's aid out of a sense of compassion, but she understands if they take a more mercenary angle to her request. She can offer them each a *potion of cure moderate wounds* immediately, and if they can rescue Sarcem or the wands, she'll give the party a reward of 5,000 gp (total, not per PC) as well.

If the party needs mounts, Jenya can arrange for a number of riding horses for them. She urges them to make haste to the Lucky Monkey; Sarcem is a fairly powerful cleric and he wouldn't call for help like this unless he were in dire peril. Jenya tries to arrange for a patrol of city guards to head out to the

Lucky Monkey as well, but wading through the red tape might take some time . . . time Sarcem doesn't have. See the "Flood Season" Web enhancement for Jenya Urikas's updated statistics.

CHAPTER TWO: DEATH AT THE LUCKY MONKEY

In this chapter, the PCs travel to a roadside tavern to save a high priest, only to find that they are too late. Sarcem has been killed by the werebaboon Tongueater and his minions, and the villains are now busy looting the place. While they do expect travelers to continue to stop by, and planned to set up a few of their numbers as fake employees to turn away such visitors as needed, they think that their actions have gone unnoticed and are not expecting retaliation this soon.

If the PCs think ahead, they can secure maps of the Lucky Monkey in Cauldron before they leave. The Lucky Monkey is a fairly popular place to stay for travelers along the northwest road, so securing a map of the roadhouse is fairly easy, requiring a Gather Information check (DC 15) and 10 gp. If the PCs find a map, you can provide them with a copy of the inn's map.

CAULDRON ENVIRONS

Player Handout #2 consists of a rough map of the area surrounding Cauldron; they can obtain a copy of this map from Jenya, or barring that, from any number of merchants in town for a mere 15 gp. A PC who succeeds at a bardic knowledge or Knowledge (local) check (DC 15) knows enough about the region that he can draft his own copy of this map. The map only shows relative positions of areas of interest, and is not to a particular scale. That said, the Lucky Monkey (as well as the three frontier villages of Kingfisher Hollow, Hollowsky, and Redgorge) are all approximately 24 miles away from Cauldron.

Cauldron is located in a sub-tropical climate. The foothills surrounding the taller mountains are rugged and covered with scrub, but are fairly open for several miles before giving way to rolling savannahs. These savannahs then transform into particularly dense sub-tropical jungles a few miles farther out from the mountains. This region is a true frontier land; a few villages sit in the foothills and lowlands (as indicated on the regional map), but aside from these and the roads, the area is still a true wilderness.



As long as the PCs stay to the roads, they shouldn't have any dangerous encounters. The most disturbing thing that happens might even go unnoticed by some parties: at several points during the journey through the lowlands, they pass within a few hundred feet of several large troops of baboons. Allow characters a Spot check (DC 23, or DC 18 if the character has the wild empathy special ability) as they do; success indicates that character notices the baboons become quiet and still as the group passes. Dozens of sinister black eyes follow their progress until the PCs are a bit down the road, at which time the baboons resume their normal behavior. A typical troop of baboons numbers about 30, and they defend themselves and their territory with great ferocity if threatened; if statistics become necessary, you can use those provided in the *Monster Manual*, page 193.

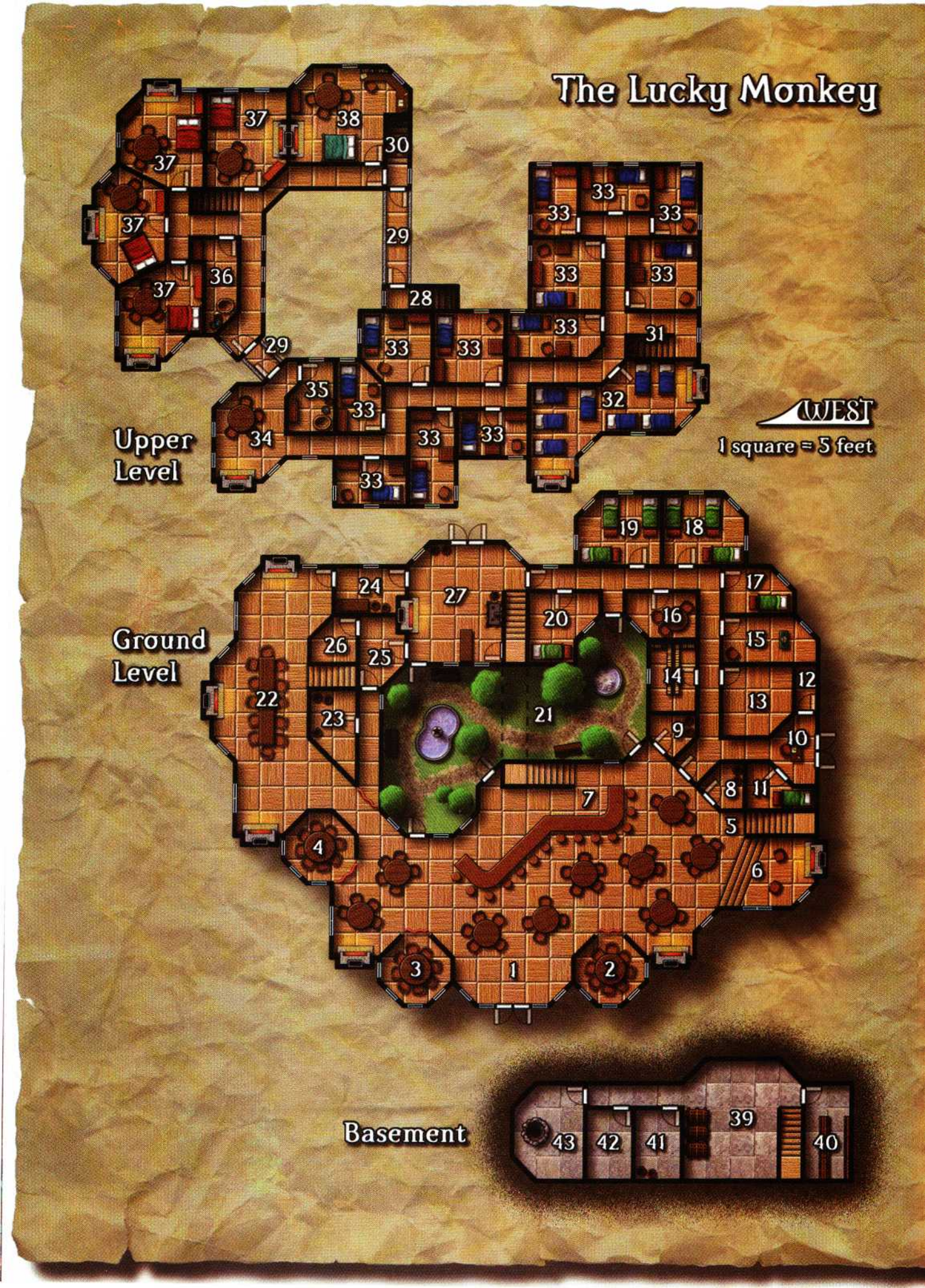
CAMPAIGN SEED: THE CAULDRON REGION

Aside from Cauldron and the Lucky Monkey, several other sites of possible interest are indicated on the player's map of the region. You can use these areas and names as springboards for future adventures in the area; details on these additional locations are beyond the scope of this adventure, although some of them may figure prominently in future adventures in the **Adventure Path: Shackled City** series.

Three of the locations shown on the regional map (Redgorge, Kingfisher Hollow, and Hollowsky) are small villages of no more than 500 inhabitants. Any of these villages could serve as a base of operations for characters who wish to explore some of these other sites.

Some hints as to the nature of the other locations can be found in the text; Hookface, for example, is rumored to be a powerful and ancient dragon, while the ruined city of Shatterhorn is known to be a yuan-ti haunt. Other locations, such as Crazy Jared's Hut or the Demonskar, aren't mentioned at all, and you can develop these locations into adventures of your own.

Finally, some of these locations may be detailed further in upcoming adventures in this series. If you develop one of these regions on your own and it happens to be developed differently in a future adventure, you can always change the adventure to unfold in a region you haven't expanded yet.


The Lucky Monkey
Upper Level
Ground Level
Basement
WEST
1 square = 5 feet

THE LUCKY MONKEY

At first sight, the Lucky Monkey doesn't look all that unusual. The roadhouse itself sits to the east of the road, partially surrounded by the dense jungle. The building is old and well used—the chimneys stained with soot, the roof sagging, the wood siding weathered and stained from last year's mildew. A smaller stable stands to the building's side in a similar condition. The façade of the building sports numerous carved wooden monkeys, many of which are engaged in risky, death-defying stunts. In one, a wooden monkey balances on a narrow tree branch to get a banana hanging over a sleeping tiger; in another, a monkey sits on a boulder completely unaware that a poacher sneaking up behind him was suddenly attacked and eaten by an ankheg.

As you step closer, though, you begin to see signs that something terrible has recently happened here—a broken window, a spray of blood against the wall, crushed plants and churned up earth in the space between the façade and the road. Then there's the harsh sound of construction . . . or more likely, *de*struction, coming from the building's interior.

Although several bandits lurk in the Lucky Monkey when the party first arrives at the roadhouse, they are not in the best condition to defend their ill gotten gains. Triel led the attack on the tavern. Once she made sure that Sarcem was dead and she had the *wands of control water*, she left for her headquarters in the Kopru Ruins. She left Tongueater and the rest of her minions behind to scrounge what wealth they could from the place and finish off the last few survivors. She doesn't expect her cohort to return to the cult headquarters for a few days.

The majority of the villains encountered in this chapter (including all the thugs and Alleybashers) have been at the alcohol stores; as a result they are all rather drunk. As long as they remain drunk (which lasts for approximately 2 hours after they realize they're under attack), the bandits suffer a –2 circumstance penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, and skill checks. Defeating a drunk bandit is much easier than defeating a sober one, and you should reduce the XP award for such defeats by 50%.

Should the bandits discover they're under attack, they try to rally, but their drunken state fills them with false bravado. Rather than forming an organized defense, they tend to hit the party in small groups of three or four. As they search the roadhouse for the PCs, keep in mind that their drunkenness impacts many of their skill checks and attack rolls.

Sturdy wooden shutters cover both ground and second floor windows of the inn. The shutters were closed for the night when the bandits attacked, and the intruders have left them closed and locked. Breaking or forcing the shutters automatically alerts those in the room beyond that someone is attempting a forced entry.

Locked Shutters: 1 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 10; Open Locks DC 15; break DC 13.

Doors: Doors in the Lucky Monkey are of good quality.

Wooden Doors: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; Open Locks varies by room; break DC 18.

OUTSIDE THE LUCKY MONKEY

The encounters in this section refer to the map of the Lucky Monkey and surrounding area.

1. THE LUCKY MONKEY

The bandits have locked the front doors (Open Locks, DC 28) and piled the ruin of a table against it, further blocking the door from outside intruders. Once the door is unlocked, a successful Strength check (DC 23) is still necessary to push open the doors.

2. STABLES

The stables can house up to twenty-four horses with ease, although at the time the bandits struck the building held only fourteen. All of them fled the stables, driven to terror by the lycanthrope's proximity.

3. SIDE ENTRANCE

These exterior doors to the Lucky Monkey have been locked (Open Locks, DC 28) and barricaded with a desk (Strength check, DC 23, to push open the doors from outside).

4. SERVICE ENTRANCE

Tongueater has converted the kitchen into his base of operations in the roadhouse, and he keeps these doors locked (Open Locks, DC 30).

5. HUNGRY WILDLIFE (EL 5)

After the slaughter of the majority of the guests and employees of the Lucky Monkey, Tongueater and his bandits hauled the bodies out to the edge of the jungle behind the roadhouse and stacked them here. The morbid mound of corpses numbers fifteen in all. The bandits looted the bodies thoroughly before stacking them.

Creature: The mound of bodies quickly drew the attention of local scavengers and predators, but they were chased off by the arrival of a pair of hungry deinonychuses. The dinosaurs have claimed the mound of bodies as their own and currently chew away at them contentedly. They attack any creature that attacks them or approaches within 20 feet of their feast.

Deinonychus (2): hp 41, 38; *Monster Manual* 55.

INSIDE THE LUCKY MONKEY

The interior of the Lucky Monkey is comfortable, but most of it has been savaged by the bandits in their search for loot and booze. Most of the rooms have windows for light; after dark, lanterns and candles served to light the place. Throughout the roadhouse, the motif of lucky monkeys can be seen. For example, the mantles of the carved stone fireplaces feature numerous monkeys cavorting through trap-filled passageways.

M1. COMMON ROOM (EL 4)

Ruined tavern tables, bloodstains, torn up floorboards, and general wreckage dominate this once cozy tavern room.

Creatures: Although many of the bandits hired by the cultists are simple thugs, a similar number consist of a one-time gang of rogues that operated in a large city to the south. Known as the Alleybashers, these rogues operated numerous protection rackets and muggings until their leader was captured and they were forced to flee. The Alleybashers hired by Triel tend to think of the other thugs as lower rank and often try to order them around. The thugs detest being told what to do, and minor fights between the two groups are common.

Four thugs and two Alleybashers drink and carouse here.

Nather, Terney, Lence, and Jendy, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (4): CR 2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d10+4; hp 23, 20, 18, 17; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 18, touch 11, flat-footed 17; BAB +2; Grap +5; Atk +7 melee (1d8+2/19–20, masterwork longsword); AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +3, Will +1; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10.

Skills: Climb +1*, Jump +1*, Swim –3**. *Feats*: Great Fortitude, Lightning Reflexes, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword).

*Includes –6 armor check penalty.

**Includes –11 penalty for weight of gear carried.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Chainmail, masterwork large steel shield, masterwork longsword, *potion of cure moderate wounds*, red sash.

Nathilie and Feristin, Alleybasher Male and Female Human Rog2 (2): CR 2; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 2d6+5; hp 18, 14; Init +7; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; BAB +1; Grap +1; Atk +3 melee (1d6+1/18–20, masterwork rapier) or +4 ranged (1d6/×3, shortbow); SA sneak attack +1d6; SQ evasion; AL LE; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will –1; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 14, Wis 8, Cha 13.

Skills: Bluff +6, Climb +6, Disable Device +8, Escape Artist +8, Hide +8, Listen +4, Move Silently +8, Open Lock +8, Search +7, Spot +4, Tumble +8. *Feats*: Improved Initiative, Toughness.

Languages: Common, Gnome, Halfling.

Possessions: Studded leather, masterwork rapier, shortbow with 20 arrows, red sash.

M2–4. PRIVATE BOOTHS (EL 3)

These smaller rooms were rented out to larger parties for private dining or meetings.

Creatures: A thug and an Alleybasher have retreated to area **M3** for a more private place to explore their interests in each other. They are unlikely to immediately notice the sounds of combat in the main room.

Pierto, Male Human Ftr2: hp 20; see area **M1** for details.

Bria, Alleybasher Female Human Rog2: hp 12; see area **M1** for details.

M5. STAIRS

This flight of stairs leads up to area **M31** of the upper floor.

M6. STAGE (EL 2)

This raised platform is arranged like a stage; a couple of large chairs sit against the walls before an extraordinarily large fireplace. Ashes have been scattered across the floor, and the fireplace itself is in ruins—large holes are smashed in the sides and back of it and crumbled bricks lie stacked haphazardly to the side.

Creature: A semiconscious thug lies in one of the chairs here. She rouses in 1d4 rounds if combat erupts in area **M1**.

Corene, Female Human Ftr2: hp 18; see area **M1** for details.

M7. BAR

The flight of stairs behind the bar leads up to area **M28**.

M8–9. RESTROOMS

The doors to each of these restrooms can be locked from the inside. Tongueater currently holds the keys to open these locks. Either of these locked doors can otherwise be opened with a successful Open Locks check (DC 20).

M10. TRAVELER'S ENTRANCE

Most travelers, after leaving their horses in the nearby stable, entered the Lucky Monkey by this door and arranged for rooms with a receptionist here.

M11. NIGHTCLERK'S QUARTERS

This room served as the personal quarters of the Lucky Monkey's nightclerk.

M12. ROOM KEY STORAGE

This room contains a large ruined chest of drawers that once contained copies of keys for all the rooms on the upper floor. The bandits smashed the drawers apart and took the keys to aid in their search.

M13. STOREROOM

This large room is a complete mess; it was used to store everything from firewood to bed linens to lamp oil to lumber.

M14. RECORDS ROOM/LIBRARY

Cabinets and shelves line the walls of this room; additional free-standing shelves clutter the central portion of the room. Most of them have been knocked over, and scrolls, papers, and books are scattered across the floor.

This room contained reading material for use by the Lucky Monkey's guests. It also held old guestbooks and other records kept by the roadhouse.

M15. CHAPEL TO FHARLANGHN

Once a comfortable, well-tended, and cozy chapel, this chamber now lies in ruins. Shattered chairs and torn up swaths of



carpet clutter the floor, and holes have been knocked in the walls. Even the altar has been smashed to splinters.

Funding for the Lucky Monkey's construction was partially provided by the church of Fharlanghn, on the condition that a small chapel dedicated to the Dweller on the Horizon be maintained on site. The caretaker of the shrine was a half-elf named Shensen (see area **M43**).

M16. PRIVATE LOUNGE

This lounge was used by the employees of the Lucky Monkey to relax, game, and eat.

M17. SHENSEN'S ROOM

This room looks like it once served as a combination lounge, library, conservatory, and bedroom. Unfortunately, it's now in the same condition as the rest of this place—in ruins. The bed's mattress is torn into tatters, an upright piano lies in fragments against the nearby wall, and pieces of furniture lie in heaps on the floor.

This is where Shensen Tesserill, the Lucky Monkey's current keeper of the Chapel of Fharlanghn, lived. She preferred to spend most of her time outside and was just returning from a walk when the bandits attacked. She is the only survivor of the bandit attack and has barricaded herself in the well room (area **M43**).

M18–19. EMPLOYEE QUARTERS

The waitresses, cooks, bartenders, and chambermaids employed by the Lucky Monkey lived in these rooms.

M20. GARDENING SUPPLIES

This room contains numerous gardening tools, along with a tiny bunk used by the Lucky Monkey's groundskeeper.

M21. COURTYARD (EL 5)

This central courtyard looks like it escaped the devastation that has been visited upon the rest of the roadhouse. Trees and flowerbeds accent the area, and a white gravel path winds past a pair of marble fountains that bear intricate carvings of monkeys taunting all manner of strange monsters.

While the bandits have left this area untouched, most of Tongueater's baboon minions have settled into the courtyard.

Creatures: Five hill baboons lurk in the courtyard. The baboons are loyal to Tongueater and won't attack Tongueater or anyone wearing a red sash on their wrist. The thugs and Alleybashers (all human men and women) are careful to always wear these sashes when they're around the savage creatures

Hill Baboons (advanced baboon) (5): CR 1; Medium Animal; HD 3d8+3; hp 19, 18, 15 ×2, 13; Init +2; Spd 40 ft., climb 30 ft.; AC 13, touch 12, flat-footed 11; BAB +2; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d6+3, bite); SQ scent; AL N; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +2; Str 15, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 2, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +10, Listen +5, Spot +5. *Feats:* Alertness.

Tactics: The baboons attack anyone in the room who doesn't wear a red sash. They fight fiercely until slain.

Development: If a PC manages to *charm*, calm, or *dominate* one of the baboons, it can provide some information. A captive baboon "speaks" glowingly about the great ape leader (a reference to Tongueater), and that he currently resides in the man-food room (a reference to the kitchen—area **M27**). A baboon can describe Tongueater in vague terms, but it always describes his ape form. A friendly baboon also mentions the leader's metal tooth (a reference to the lycanthrope's falchion). The baboons don't remember Triel much beyond her armor and don't volunteer information about her. Non-*dominated* baboons won't willingly attack troop-mates.

M22. BANQUET HALL

This room could be rented to host banquets for large groups of important visitors. The stairs ascend to the second floor.

M23. STOREROOM

Cleaning supplies were kept here.

M24. PREPARATION ROOM

This room was used to prepare dinners for the banquet hall.

M25. MEETING ROOM

This small office was used by the employees for meetings.

M26. TREASURY

Five large iron safes sit against the opposite wall; each of them hanging open and empty. A desk against the wall to the south lies on its side, its front smashed in and its mundane contents strewn about the place.

The door to this room is completely battered down. Several large safes held the monetary holdings of the Lucky Monkey; the Alleybashers have already cracked these safes and consolidated the money in the kitchen (area **M27**).

M27. KITCHEN (EL 6)

This large room was obviously the roadhouse's kitchen. The large metal tables for food preparation have all been pushed against the walls, leaving the firepit in the center of the room isolated. An impressive stack of coins, paintings, silverware, bottles of wine, and other costly looking treasures lie stacked near the firepit in organized piles.

The bandits decided to make this room their base of operations. The stairs lead up to area **M30**, and a broken-down door below them leads to a flight of stairs heading to the basement.

Creatures: Tongueater is here, busily counting the loot his minions have gathered together so far, or cursing and mocking Sarcem's severed head. Three hill baboons lurk in the room as well; they fight to the death to defend their beloved master.

Tongueater, Male Half-orc Werebaboon (afflicted lycanthrope) Bbn3, Hybrid Form: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (Half-Orc, Shapechanger); HD 3d12+6 plus 1d8+3; hp 40; Init +7; Spd 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 13, flat-footed 18; BAB +3; Grap +8; Atk +9 melee (2d4+7/18–20, masterwork falchion) and +6 melee (1d6+2, bite); SA lycanthropic empathy, rage 1/day; SQ alternate form, damage reduction 10/silver, fast movement, scent, trap sense (+1), uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; Str 20, Dex 17, Con 17, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Climb +10, Control Shape +7, Intimidate +5, Listen +5. *Feats:* Alertness, Improved Initiative, Iron Will, Multiattack.

Languages: Common.

Possessions: Heward's handy haversack, four *potions of cure light wounds*, *potion of jump*, *potion of blur*, *potion of magic fang*, *potion of enlarge* (at 5th level), masterwork studded leather, masterwork falchion, key ring (opens all locked doors in the Lucky Monkey).

Half-orc Form: As hybrid form but with the following changes: hp 36; Init +5; AC 14, touch 11, flat-footed 13; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (2d4+4/18–20, masterwork falchion); SV Fort +7, Ref +4; Str 16, Dex 13, Con 15.

CAMPAIGN SEED: SHENSEN TESSERIL AND OTHER RECURRING NPCS

Shensen can become one of the party's most supportive allies throughout the course of this adventure. Her good word goes a long way with Meerthan, should the party wish to join the Striders of Fharlanghn at a later date. She is more than willing to donate her skills, spells, and knowledge to the party for their use, and may even fall in love with a male PC of similar interests or skills to her own. Developing Shensen into a key NPC over the course of this series of adventures is an excellent way to provide yet another layer of continuity to the overall campaign, and she might have an important role to play later. As the PCs continue to adventure and level up, you should level Shensen up as well (although you might want to wait until the PCs are equal to her level before starting this); she most likely continues to take druid levels, although her exact path of development is up to you.

Baboon Form: As hybrid form but with the following changes: AC 16, touch 13, flat-footed 13; Atk +8 melee (1d6+7, bite).

Tongueater is a feral half-orc who prefers to spend most of his time in hybrid form. In this form, his face and snout are baboonish, complete with large, razor-sharp fangs. A large mane of black hair sprouts from his head, and he is quite fond of facial warpaint, body piercings (mostly of bone or metal jewelry), and decorative, self-inflicted scar patterns. His studded leather armor is tailored to fit him in half-orc or hybrid form, but if he assumes baboon form the armor falls off.

Hill Baboons (3): hp 15, 14, 12; see area **M21**.

Development: The bandits in area **M38** arrive in 3 rounds to aid Tongueater if they hear the sounds of battle in the kitchen.

Treasure: Tongueater has spread the collected loot of the Lucky Monkey out on a large table and is sorting through it, piling it into large leather sacks for transport back to the Kopru Ruins. The loot consists of 2,680 cp, 1,953 sp, 742 gp, 18 pp, and 4,500 gp worth of various art objects (paintings, sculptures, silverware, wine, and so forth) weighing a total of 120 pounds. This loot belongs to the murdered guests and employees of the Lucky Monkey. Tracking down the families of the victims is a daunting task, and few fault the PCs if they keep the loot.

One final item of note to be found here is Sarcem's severed head (the rest of his body can be found in the basement). Tongueater has mounted this grisly trophy on the wall and has eaten its tongue. If the high priest's head is returned to Cauldron, a *speak with dead* spell could provide valuable clues.

M28. STAIRS

These stairs descend to area **M7**.

M29. BRIDGE

This bridge leads over the courtyard below and allows the cooks to move between the bar and kitchen without disrupting the guests in the courtyard. It arcs 10 feet over the ground below.

M30. STAIRS

These stairs descend to area **M27**.

M31. STAIRS

These stairs descend to area **M5**.

M32. FLOPROOM

This large room contains several bunks for travelers who had a tight budget.

M33. GUEST ROOMS (EL 4 OR 6)

Several bandits are in the process of looting and destructively searching these rooms.

Creatures: Two of these rooms (determined randomly when the PCs arrive) contain a group of two thugs and two Alleybashers busy dismantling the place looking for loot. If one group of four bandits is attacked and they call for help, the second group of four comes to their aid if they hear the cries.

Shanni, Rollin, Wart, and Daniki, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (2 per group): hp 21, 20 ×2, 18; see area **M1** for details.

Chana, Dantiano, Chupo, and Lystiviny, Alleybasher Male and Female Human Rog2 (2 per group): hp 16, 15, 14 ×2; see area **M1** for details.

M34. GUEST LOUNGE

This room gave guests a quiet place to relax or play cards away from the hustle and bustle of the common room downstairs.

M35–36. BATHS

Each of these rooms contains a large round tub and a cabinet containing towels, scented oils, and soaps.

M37. HIGH CLASS GUEST ROOMS

These four guest rooms were fairly extravagant before the bandits took them apart.

M38. ORIN'S BEDROOM (EL 3)

This large room looks like a combination office, lounge, and bedroom. At one point, several wooden panels could be moved to separate the room into smaller areas, but they, like most of the other furniture in this room, have been smashed.

The one time owner of the Lucky Monkey, a human expert named Orin Marsh, lived in and ran his business from this large combination bedroom and office.

Creatures: A group of two thugs and an Alleybasher are still busy tearing this room apart.

Teruch and Ilsawyn, Female Human Ftr2 (2): hp 21, 18; see area **M1** for details.

Paldi, Alleybasher Male Human Rog2 (1): hp 16; see area **M1** for details.

Development: These bandits rush down the stairs to aid Tongueater if they hear sounds of battle or cries for help coming from the kitchen.

M39. BATTLEFIELD (EL 5)

This room is dominated by several large tanks, kegs, and other brewing equipment. The tanks are now empty and hacked to pieces, and the floor is a stinking morass of muddy earth soaked with a mixture of beer, mead, and blood. A terrible battle must have taken place here.

Sarcem and the other last survivors made their final stand in this chamber. Most of the bodies (including fallen bandits) were taken away to be piled at the edge of the jungle behind the roadhouse, but Tongueater was particularly disgusted with Sarcem, who put up quite a fight. The high priest's mutilated body lies slumped against the base of a battered keg, the head missing completely. After being burned by Sarcem's magic mace, Tongueater decided to leave the body's gear intact until he was ready to return to Cauldron.

Creatures: Three thugs and two Alleybashers have gathered near the passageway opposite the stairs, trying to come up with a safe way to batter down the door at the far end without getting too close to the deadly barricade (see area **M42**). An earlier attempt to burn the door down resulted in disaster.

Nisty, Moruka, and Lakus, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (3): hp 24, 20, 17; see area **M1** for details.

Arn and Ildawyn, Alleybasher Male and Female Human Rog2 (2): hp 16, 14; see area **M1** for details.

Treasure: Sarcem's bloody hand still grips his *+1 holy light mace*. His other gear consists of a suit of *+1 banded mail*, three empty potion bottles, a *ring of protection +1*, and a *periapt of wisdom +2*.

Development: These bandits rush up the stairs to aid Tongueater if they hear sounds of battle or cries for help coming from the kitchen.

M40. WINE CELLAR

This room contains several (now empty) wine racks.

M41. FRUIT CELLAR

This room contains fruit and vegetables, although most have been cast carelessly to the dirt floor by bandits searching for treasure.

M42. COLD STORAGE

This room feels moist and humid. Several sides of meat hang from hooks set into the ceiling, and a number of storage bins line the west wall. The far end of the room is empty except for an open metal box lying on its side; the box is lined with slowly melting frost.

The door of this chamber bears a sign, "NO FIRE BEYOND THIS POINT." This room was used to store meat and other perishables; the room itself was kept cold by a small container of brown mold (see page 117 of the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*) kept in a sealed metal box at the far end of the room. Shensen used the box of mold to create her barricade; the room is still cool, but not quite as cold as area **M43**.

M43. WELL ROOM (EL VARIABLE)

The temperature in this room is near freezing. A thin layer of frost coats the floor and walls of the northern portion of the room. A low, circular well sits in the center of the room, its mouth partially covered by a few planks of wood.

The door to this room is a solid, iron-reinforced wooden door that bulges at the seams, almost as if the wood had melted and expanded to clog the doorway. This is a result of Shensen's *wood shape* spell. Three dead Alleybashers lie on the ground before the door, killed by the **Trap**. Assuming the party can get by this door and the **Trap**, they find the room beyond to be near freezing. The well is 30 feet deep; huddled to the south of it is Shensen Tesseril.

Warped Wooden Door: 2 in. thick; Hardness 5; hp 15; break DC 18.

Trap (EL 2): The 5-foot squares to either side of the door to this room are thick with brown mold. Opening the door instantly exposes the character before it to the mold.

Brown Mold: CR 2; 3d6 cold subdual damage within 5 feet; fire brought within 5 feet doubles its size; can be destroyed by cold damage (see the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide*, page 117).

Creature (EL 5): When Sarcem was killed by Tongueater, Shensen knew that she only had a few seconds to live if she didn't think fast. She ran to the cold storage room, grabbed the metal box of brown mold, then fled to this room. As she passed through the door, she opened the box and scattered the mold all over it, then managed to *wood shape* the door, causing it to become ferociously stuck. Already wounded by the battle, the additional cold damage dealt by the mold nearly finished her. She barely managed to erect the barricade before collapsing.

Shensen Tesseril, Female Half-drow Brd1/Drd3/Mnk1: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (half-elf); HD 1d6–1 plus 4d8–4; hp 16 (currently 0 including 5 points of subdual damage); Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 16, flat-footed 14; BAB +2; Grap +2; Atk +5 melee (1d6+1, unarmed strike); SA spells, countersong, fascinate, inspire courage (+1) (already used), unarmed strike, stunning attack 1/day (already used); SQ bardic knowledge, half-elf traits, evasion; AL LN; SV Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +10; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 14.

Skills: Animal Empathy +8, Concentration +6, Disguise +4, Diplomacy +5, Jump +35, Knowledge (nature) +7, Listen +8, Perform +7, Tumble +7. *Feats*: Run, Weapon Finesse (unarmed strike).

Druid Spells Prepared (4/3/2; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*create water*, flare (cast), *know direction*, *light* (cast); 1st—*calm animals* (cast), *cure light wounds* (cast), *summon nature's ally I* (cast); 2nd—*resist energy* (cast), *wood shape* (cast).

Bard Spells Known (3; base save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*daze*, *detect magic*, *mage hand*. (Shensen has cast two bard spells already today.)

Languages: Common, Druidic, Elven, Halfling.

Possessions: *Ring of protection +1*, *ring of jumping*, *wand of magic fang* (13 charges left), *wand of entangle* (7 charges left).

Shensen has long silver hair, dusky skin, and is nimble and athletic, although she is currently in poor shape from her fight with Tongueater and his goons. As a child, she was raised in a monastery and trained as a monk. But when her elders turned away a wounded druid who sought protection from wrongful punishment at the hands of an angry mob, she went against the wishes of her elders and let the druid into the monastery through a secret door. When her actions were discovered, the monks turned the druid over to the mob (which quickly executed him) and exiled Shensen. The experience left her embittered to the overly ordered and detached lifestyle of the monk, and although she retains some of the training she gained at the monastery, she never returned to that lifestyle. Instead, she became an explorer and wandering storyteller, combining the social graces of the bard with the reverence of nature of a druid. Eventually, she encountered the Striders of Fharlanghn and joined their ranks, and for the past year she's been the attendant



caretaker of the chapel of Fharlanghn at the Lucky Monkey.

Development: If rescued, Shensen is grateful, but her first order of business is to contact her mentor in the Striders of Fharlanghn (Meerthan Eliothlorn) and inform him of the attack on the Lucky Monkey (a holy place to Fharlanghn's followers). She must go meet him in Cauldron at the Drowning Morkoth Inn, and asks to travel with the party back to town (see "Life's Bazaar" and the accompanying Web enhancement for more information on Meerthan Eliothlorn). She promises not to forget the aid the PCs gave her, and she is true to her word. After she reports to Meerthan, she returns to the group and rewards them with a pair of *boots of striding and springing*, given to her by Meerthan as thanks for her rescue and the rescue of the Lucky Monkey building before it was completely destroyed.

Shensen doesn't have much information to impart about the attack. She was returning from a walk when she heard the

CAMPAIGN SEED: THE CHURCH OF WEE JAS

Whereas the Church of St. Cuthbert can be an ally and supporter for the PCs, the Church of Wee Jas should be a recurring foil to their efforts. As the PCs become more powerful, they catch the eye of Ike and eventually that of Embryl herself. In public situations where the PCs might be trying to accomplish some social goal, the church of Wee Jas takes up a contrary position to the PCs' goals and desires, more often than not simply to oppose them.

The exact reasons for the church's adversarial nature are quite hidden, and should not come to light any time in the near future, for Embryl Aloustinai is in fact a close ally of the Cagewrights, the sinister faction working to transform Cauldron into a gate town to Carceri. She may be nothing more than a supporter, she may be one of the Shackleborn (key individuals fated to play important parts in the plans of the Cagewrights), or she may even be one of the Cagewrights herself. Whatever her true allegiances, she notices the PCs and realizes that they have the stuff of greatness in them. She believes that should they be left to explore, develop, and learn on their own, chances are that they will eventually become powerful enough to pose a serious threat to the Cagewrights' plans for Cauldron.

If one of the PCs is a worshiper of Wee Jas, this can make for some entertaining roleplaying. The Wee Jas worshiper might soon find his loyalties divided between the church and his adventuring companions. One thing to note is that Wee Jas herself doesn't necessarily approve of Embryl's actions, and as she becomes more and more involved with the Cagewrights, it's more likely that splinter faiths of Wee Jas break off from the main church and form underground resistances to the growing corruption in the upper ranks of the religion. Perhaps the PC worshiper can join, or even found, such a group.

sound of combat. She ran to investigate and found the bandits had already slain most of the guests and employees. Only a few remained standing, including a human cleric who seemed to be the focus of the bandits' attention. She knows that the bandits were led by a horrible man-beast, and that this creature followed the orders of a beautiful woman with red hair wearing a suit of full plate emblazoned with a strange symbol: a mailed fist clutching six barbed arrows (a Knowledge—religion check, DC 20, identifies this as the holy symbol of Hextor). She lent what aid she could, but they were eventually forced to retreat to the basement, where the beast-man killed the cleric. This left Shensen alone and outnumbered. She fled to the far end of the basement, using a *resist elements* spell to protect her as she set up the brown mold barricade before staggering into the corner.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the party rescues Shensen, award them experience points as if they had defeated her in combat.

CHAPTER THREE: FIND THE MISSING WANDS

In this chapter, the PCs return to Cauldron as the rain begins to fall. The mood in the city is festive as the Flood Festival begins, but there is an undercurrent of tension. Rumors abound that the *wands of control water* used to hold the floodwaters at bay are lost, and the churches of Cauldron have done little to refute this gossip. The party must determine what happened to the wands quickly so an attempt to retrieve them can be made before the city begins to flood.

EVENT 1: THE FLOOD SEASON BEGINS

At some time during the climax of Chapter Two, the overcast skies darken and turn an angry shade of purple-grey, and within minutes, the first of many downpours begins to blanket the region with sheets of rain. The rainstorms aren't unending, but they are quite common. As the days pass, it quickly becomes apparent that the area is in for the wettest winter in more than a decade.

During these storms, the region is buffeted by strong winds, with a 5% chance per hour of a gust of severe winds that lasts for 1d6 rounds. The effects of strong and severe winds are given on **Table 3–17** in the DUNGEON MASTER'S *Guide* (page 87). The driving rain and wind impose a –8 penalty on all Spot, Search, and Listen checks.

The only good thing to arise from the bad weather is the fact that it seems to have driven off all of the dangerous animals and beasts of the region; the party should not have any encounters on the way back, provided they stick to the road.

EVENT 2: RETURN TO CAULDRON

The storm lets up a little bit and even allows for a few sunny breaks by the time the group returns to the city. They find Cauldron to be unexpectedly busy in the wake of the sudden storm, for the city is rushing to prepare for the first of many expected Flood Festivals. Decorations are going up on building façades and over streets, merchant and game booths pop up along streets and in vacant lots, bards and other entertainers come out in force to ply their trades, and overall, a carnival-like atmosphere seems to be settling over the city. Sarcem's death might make it difficult to enjoy the festivities; the Church of St. Cuthbert, in particular, feels anything but celebratory (see **Event 3**).

As the days go by, the festivities lose steam. The relentless rainstorms begin to depress the public, and the inexorable rise of the water level begins to worry them. If the *wands of control water* are not recovered quickly, flooding and riots are real dangers to the people of Cauldron. You should time the rise of the waters so that it provides a constant growing threat in the background. Use it to keep the PCs focused on their task. The lake has several natural drains into the Underdark and also out the side of the volcano into a number of surrounding rivers, so it won't overflow overnight. Most of the buildings around the lakeshore are built on stilts to avoid minor floods, but if the party takes too long to recover the wands, not even these measures can save the lower quarters of the city from flooding.

EVENT 3: THE HUNT BEGINS

The PCs should return to the Church of St. Cuthbert and report their findings to Jenya. She takes the news of Sarcem's death stoically. After a brief moment of despair her tearing eyes fill with a steely resolve. She's just become the high priestess of the church, and full authority to act on the situation is hers and hers alone. If she promised to reward the PCs with money for their rescue attempt, she points out that the group has yet to retrieve the *wands*; until they do so, the reward stays in the temple treasury. She hopes that she won't have to resort to such tactics to enlist the party's aid in recovering the wands, of course. If the PCs have it, she requests the return of Sarcem's holy mace, which is actually the property of the church and the badge of office of the new high priest or priestess. She does allow them to keep his other possessions if they brought his body back for proper interment in the church's burial catacombs. If they PCs left the body behind, Jenya sends some of her acolytes to retrieve it from the Lucky Monkey.

At this point, the recovery of the *wands of control water* should become the party's primary goal. They have no idea where the wands have been taken, but the group can pursue several leads. Searching for these clues is difficult and time consuming; researching a specific lead should take, on average, 4 hours of work. Jenya encourages the PCs to seek out the wands, but she is just as adamant that someone seek justice for Sarcem. If the PCs don't suggest casting *speak with dead* on his body, Jenya brings it up the following day, tracking the PCs down, if necessary, so they can benefit from the spell (see **Divination Magic**, below).

The Red-Haired Woman: If they managed to rescue and befriend her, Shensen can provide the best lead. If the PCs get a detailed description of the woman with red hair in plate mail from her, allow them a Knowledge (local) check or a bardic knowledge check (DC 25). If the group fails this check, they can (once they return to Cauldron) find out this information by

interviewing locals in town and making a successful Gather Information check (DC 21); each attempt takes 4 hours and costs 2d6 gp in bribes. Successfully identifying the woman in armor from Shensen's description reveals her to be none other than the notorious Triel Eldurast, a one-time town guard of Cauldron who escaped punishment after murdering several of her fellow guards while on duty. This event took place nearly a decade ago, so the specifics have grown hazy in the memories of the people of Cauldron. Nothing has been heard of Triel since her escape, so the guard and citizens eventually assumed she succumbed to her wounds and died in the wilderness. She orchestrated the attack on the Lucky Monkey.

Interrogating Prisoners: The PCs might have managed to capture one or more bandits at the Lucky Monkey. Unfortunately, interrogating them yields little useful information. They were all hired by Triel from the alleys of Cauldron or the surrounding environs, but none of them have been to (or even suspect the existence of) the Kopru Ruins under Cauldron. They can provide a detailed description of Triel, though, and know that their mission was to provide support for Tongueater, who had been charged with Sarcem's assassination and the theft of some magic items he was carrying. They are not too loyal, and a successful Intimidate check (DC 11) gets them talking; they're quite afraid that their roles in the assassination of a prominent local figure might get them executed.

Tongueater knows quite a bit more; he's actually been to the Kopru Ruins several times and knows about the secret entrance to the lava tube that leads to the ruins. It is unlikely he can be captured alive, though, since he is fanatic and fights to the death. Nonetheless, if captured, a successful Intimidate check (DC 20) impresses him enough that he admits working for Triel. If further pressed, he tries to Bluff his captors by feeding them false information (perhaps by telling them that Triel has a base of operations in a nearby city like Redgorge or dangerous region like the Demonskar). Getting the actual location of the Kopru Ruins out of him should be difficult without magic (such as *charm monster* or *suggestion*) or torture.

If the PCs take Tongueater prisoner, Triel sends groups of Alleybashers to save him. The first consists of four Alleybashers, and if they fail she personally leads a second group of six Alleybashers in an attempt to save her cohort.

Divination Magic: If a PC wishes to use a spell that the party doesn't have access to but that Jenya can cast, she gladly casts the spell for them for free if the request is brought to her attention.

Divination: Although it's unlikely that any of the PCs can cast this spell, Jenya can cast it using the *Star of Justice*, a magic *+1 holy heavy mace* that can cast *divination* once per week. If the PCs ask her to perform a *divination* about the current situation, she gladly does so. You should allow the PCs to come up with the question, and frame the answer such that it steers them towards a local fence named Artus (see **Event 4**); this way the party can approach Artus for information rather than waiting for him to come to them. Doing so catches Artus off guard. As a result, he hasn't had time to properly work up a price for his services and only charges the PCs 300 gp for the information.

Locate Object: The *wands of control water* are kept in various rooms in the Kopru Ruins, deep below Cauldron. Success shows that the wands are deep underground, approximately 550 feet beneath the western gate. Unfortunately, this spell doesn't provide directions on how to reach this apparently inaccessible location, and keep in mind that lower-level casters might be out of range of the wands' location when they cast the spell, depending on where the spell is used.

Speak with Animals/Speak with Plants: If the PCs use this spell to interrogate the local flora and fauna near the Lucky Monkey, there's a 5% chance that the animal or plant can provide a description of Triel. Any of the hill baboons located in the Lucky Monkey can provide this description automatically, assuming their savage, hungry natures can be quelled long enough for a decent conversation.

Speak with Dead: The party can use this spell to interrogate fallen bandits or Tongueater without having to resort to Intimidate checks. Of course, the body does gain a saving throw to avoid the spell, and the answers are often cryptic, unclear, or repetitive. More importantly, the party can use this spell to speak with Sarcem's head. Sarcem can provide a description of Triel, and even verify that Triel took the wands from his body just before Tongueater cut off his head.

Visiting Other Churches: If the PCs ask about the Flood Festival tradition, Jenya (or pretty much anyone else in the city) can tell them about the festival's history as outlined in the "Adventure Background." Cunning (or paranoid) PCs no doubt become suspicious of the other three churches in Cauldron who used to help with flood control but have lately lost interest in the ritual. If this is brought to Jenya's attention, she too becomes concerned and agrees that it might be helpful to speak with representatives of the other three major churches in town.

The Shrine of Pelor: This small yellow tower is tended by a single 4th-level male human cleric of Pelor named Kristof Jurgensen. If he learns of the missing wands, he becomes quite concerned and makes a visit to Jenya to pledge his aid in any way that he can, but unfortunately his resources are limited. The shrine to Pelor has always been fairly small and minor in Cauldron, especially since Kristof's two superiors recently died, leaving him in charge of the entire shrine. Kristof is genuinely concerned about the situation, but he has no idea what happened to the wands.

The Church of Kord: The church of Kord is nearly as powerful and popular in Cauldron as the church of St. Cuthburt, if only because they sponsor numerous sporting events and demonstrations for the people of Cauldron throughout the year. This church is currently headed by a 6th-level male half-orc cleric of Kord named Asfelkir Hranleurt. He is attended by a 5th-level cleric, two 2nd-level clerics, four 1st-level clerics, and a dozen acolytes in training (1st-level commoners). These clerics are preparing for several mock combats and competitions to be held during the Flood Festival, and have little time to talk to

Kopru Ruins

1 Overlook
2 Transport Cage
3 Upper Winch
4 Winch Operator's Barracks
5 Storage
6 The Phantom Lake
7 Nightmare Beach
8 Kopru Lair
9 Beach of Ruin
10 Trapped Foyer
11 Lower Watch
12 Main Entrance
13 The Gauntlet
14 Northern Guardroom
15 Southern Guardroom
16 Workroom
17 Welcome Trap
18 Guardroom
19 Storeroom
20 Southern Armory
21 Mess Hall
22 Barracks
23 Southern Entrance
24 Skaven's Parlor
25 Skaven's Bedchambers
26 Workroom Storage
27 Spider Nest
28 Abandoned Webs
29 Secret Passage
30 Webbed Cavern
31 Ettercap Lair
32 Harpoon Spider Lair
33 Trapped Chamber
34 Storeroom
35 Northern Armory
36 Triel's Chambers
37 Mess Hall
38 Meeting Room
39 Thug Barracks
40 Alleybasher Barracks
41 Bloodbath
42 Northern Entrance
43 Prison
44 Interrogation Chamber
45 Unfinished Trap
46 Guardroom
47 Entrance to Tarkilar's Caverns
48 Bone Guardian
49 Safe Cavern
50 Undead Spiders
51 Glyphs of Warding
52 Cult Treasury
53 Rubble-filled Room
54 Glyph Trap
55 Undead Minions
56 Tarkilar's Cavern



anyone about missing wands. Asfelkir himself is convinced that the lake won't flood anyway, since it hasn't flooded in over a decade. All the buildings down by the lake have been rebuilt on stilts and behind breakwaters, so there shouldn't be a problem. He doesn't know what happened to the wands, but if pressed, he drops hints that the clerics of Wee Jas might have had something to do with it. This is more because Asfelkir is trying to get the PCs off his back and has a natural dislike for the Wee Jas clerics than from any actual suspicions. In truth, the church of Wee Jas does have something to hide (see the "Campaign Seed: The Church of Wee Jas" sidebar).

The Cathedral of Wee Jas: This towering structure is one of the most impressive and beautiful in Cauldron. The church of Wee Jas has always been powerful in Cauldron, but not as well liked as the churches of Kord or St. Cuthbert, since the clerics of this church tend to be standoffish, curt, and even creepy. The clerics of Wee Jas are responsible for dealing with the unclaimed dead of Cauldron, and also maintain vast catacombs below their temple for anyone who's rich enough to afford the burial but doesn't have a personal crypt. Most of the dead of Cauldron are cremated.

The cathedral is run by a female human 5th-level wizard/9th-level cleric of Wee Jas named Embryl Aloustinai, although she rarely sees visitors and leaves the day-to-day operations to a male human 7th-level cleric of Wee Jas named Ike Iverson. The PCs aren't allowed to speak to Embryl, and even Ike remains aloof and uninterested in their worries. He's always viewed the Flood Festival as a waste of resources and time, and has no problems stating as such to the PCs. He's a haughty, disdainful character who doesn't think the PCs are important enough to spend more than 5 minutes talking to. He doesn't know what became of the wands, but if the PCs confront him with a description of Triel, he denies recognizing her. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 20) reveals that he's hiding something.

The cathedral is also staffed by two 5th-level clerics, three 2nd-level clerics, seven 1st-level clerics, and ten acolytes in training (1st-level commoners).

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the party manages to learn about Triel's involvement in the conspiracy, award them XPs for a CR 3 encounter. If they manage to get the location of the Kopru Ruins out of Tongueater, award them experience points for a CR 5 encounter (which helps offset the fact that they no longer need to go through **Event 4** below to find the ruins).

EVENT 4: SINISTER INFORMANT (EL 5)

Eventually, the party's questions and investigations attract the attention of Artus Shemwick, a fence and information broker extraordinaire. Artus works part time at the Tipped Tankard tavern on the lakeshore as a cook, but his real source of income is from buying gems, art objects, and minor magic items, most of which are stolen. He also brokers in rumors and information. He has numerous contacts among the low-lives of Cauldron, and it isn't long before the party's investigation comes to his attention, possibly even via first-hand observation if they ever visit the Tipped Tankard and make a point of discussing their problems aloud.

Artus makes contact with the party by having an urchin deliver a note to one of the PCs. The note is brief, and is reproduced as **Player Handout #3**.

Player Handout #3



The Lakeside Pavilion is a large open building on the east shore of the lake; many public ceremonies take place here, but at night the place is deserted and sinister. If the PC who received the note goes there at midnight, Artus steps from the shadows to deal with him. If the PC brought backup that Artus can see, he calls off the meeting and does not make contact that night. Each night, he repeats his offer, doubling his fee each time until the PCs simply don't show up or the contacted PC finally shows up alone.

Creature: Artus has no intention of robbing the PC, although his methods of communication might not make that clear. If the PC honors the terms of the deal, Artus accepts the 500 gp payment and tells the character that Triel has joined forces with two other cultists (of which Artus has not been able to find out much at all) and that they plan to ransom the wands back to Cauldron after the town becomes desperate from the flooding. He also tells them that Triel and her minions have set up a base of operations in a subterranean ruin below Cauldron that can be reached by a hidden lava tube. He gives the PC a crude map of Cauldron with an "X" marked on the outer northeastern slope, about 200 feet down from the wall; this "X" marks the hidden entrance to the lava tube.

Artus Shemwick, Male Human Rog5: CR 5; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 5d6; hp 17; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14, touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB +3; Grap +2; Atk +6 melee (1d4–1, masterwork punching dagger); SA sneak attack +3d6; SQ evasion, uncanny dodge (Dex bonus to AC); AL CN; SV Fort +1, Ref +6, Will +2; Str 8, Dex 14, Con 10, Int 17, Wis 13, Cha 14.

Skills: Appraise +13, Bluff +10, Diplomacy +10, Forgery +11, Gather Information +10, Knowledge (local) +11, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) +7, Listen +5, Profession (cook) +9, Sense Motive +9, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +5, Use Magic Device +10.
Feats: Skill Focus (Appraise), Skill Focus (Sleight of Hand), Weapon Finesse (punching dagger).

Languages: Human, Elven, Gnome, Halfling

Possessions: *Heward's handy haversack*, leather armor, masterwork punching dagger, 4 doses of giant wasp poison, 1 dose of striped toadstool, merchant's scale, masterwork thieves' tools, 100 cp, 290 sp, 536 gp, and 10 pp. Artus has numerous stashes of additional gold, gems, and art objects throughout the city totaling 4,300 gp to help him purchase more expensive objects, but he'll need 1d6 hours to access these additional funds if he needs them.

Artus is a fairly nondescript man in his early twenties, but this is mostly an act. He can turn on the charm with ease, and cleans up real nice when he wants to make an impression on an important client.

Development: Artus is loosely affiliated with the Last Laugh, and has numerous friends in Cauldron. In the weeks to come, he tries to get revenge on the PCs if they attack him and he manages to flee. He might do this is by secretly poisoning food or drink they order at the Tipped Tankard. He might also have other members of the thieves' guild harass the PCs.

If the transaction goes well, Artus can become a valuable resource for the PCs throughout the campaign. His prices for information rise as his clients become more rich and powerful, and he tries to keep close tabs on his best customers so that if the need arises, he can blackmail them for additional funds or to keep them quiet about his actual source of income.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the PCs manage to learn what Artus knows without resorting to combat, grant them experience points as if they had defeated him in combat.

CHAPTER FOUR: INTO THE KOPRU RUINS

The PCs can find out about Triel's hideout in the caverns below Cauldron in a number of ways: they can learn of its existence from Artus, by successfully interrogating Tongueater, or through sheer luck and persistence. Characters who watch the northeastern slopes of Cauldron after dark have a chance of seeing Triel enter or exit the secret lava tube; there's a cumulative 5% chance she exits or enters the tube during any watch of at least 4 hours in length. She isn't particularly sneaky but usually operates under a *silence* spell when she exits the tunnel. The cover afforded by the terrain grants her a +2 circumstance bonus to her Hide check, bringing her total Hide check modifier to –2 (counting her armor check penalty of –5). Remember that Spot checks to notice her suffer a –1 penalty per 10 feet of distance, and stormy conditions further impact Spot checks by imposing a –8 penalty.

THE KOPRU RUINS

Two entrances grant access to these ruins. The secret lava tube entrance connects a hidden entrance on the northeast slope of Cauldron (area **12** on the map of Cauldron) to area **K1** of the ruins. It consists of a long, circular, winding, downhill passage that maintains a universal diameter of about 6 feet. The second entrance is an underwater passage that connects the Phantom Lake (area **K6**) to the central lake of Cauldron. This passageway also connects to several other underground lakes in the area, and is horribly complex to navigate. The most direct route between the Phantom Lake and the central lake is about 2,400 feet long and emerges into the central watery shaft at a depth of about 1,300 feet below its surface.

Dungeon Features: The ruins themselves are gloomy and dark, periodically lit by patches of phosphorescent fungus and *continual flame* spells placed at key positions by the three cultists. The architecture is smooth and somewhat unsettling, looking almost like a more stable structure of dwarven design that was allowed to partially melt; all angles on the interior and exterior are smooth and curved. In many places, badly eroded carvings on the walls depict the ancient kopru enslaving other races and partaking in all forms of vile practices.

Numerous small fissures in the rock walls provide ventilation in this area. Nonetheless, the air in this entire complex is warm, humid, stale, and nasty smelling. The air won't hurt anyone who breathes it for extended periods, but it's unpleasant to smell and taste.

Unless stated otherwise, the ceilings in most artificial areas are 10 feet high. In caverns, the height increases to 20 feet, and in the outer cavern it reaches 120 feet at the highest point.

Doors: All the doors in the ruins are constructed of heavy stone that pivot on a central bar, allowing the door to rotate along the center and providing an opening to either side a little less than 3 feet wide. The cultists have fitted several of the more important doors with locks, but if the text doesn't say that a door is locked (or can be locked), it cannot be locked at all.

Stone Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 28.

The following encounters are keyed to the map of the Kopru Ruins:

K1. OVERLOOK

The lava tube suddenly ends at a small ledge overlooking a vast cavern. A small pile of wooden planks is stacked on the edge of the ledge. Nearly a hundred feet below, the waters of a lake filled with dimly glowing green algae lap against cave walls encrusted with pallid fungi. A small stone building is built into the side of the ledge wall, and a pair of heavy ropes descends from a winch on the side of the building across the lake to a similar winch attached to a wooden structure on the other side of the lake. Suspended on these ropes is a rickety looking wood and iron cage mounted on a system of pulleys. The phosphorescence of the lake just barely illuminates the vast cavern, and you can see what appear to be the partially melted ruins of several buildings protruding from a sparkling wall of volcanic rock along the far wall of the cave. Several of these buildings have small doorways at ground level, but you see no windows in the ominous dark façades. The air here is thick, warm, and excessively humid.

The planks can be used to form a makeshift bridge between the hanging cage and the ledge, allowing people to cross into the cage with ease when it is retracted up to this location. Anyone who falls off the ledge drops 90 feet into the nasty green water below and takes 2d3 points of subdual damage plus 5d6 points of normal damage; a successful Swim or Tumble check (DC 20) allows the character to hit the water gracefully and negate the normal damage.

K2. TRANSPORT CAGE

This cage can be raised or lowered between areas **K1** and **K9**. The winches in areas **K3** and **K11** control the cage operation.

The cage itself looks rickety, but it can support up to three Medium creatures with no problem. Up to six Medium creatures can cram into the cage, but this runs a chance of snapping the ropes that hold the cage. Each round the cage is overloaded, it must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + 2 per additional Medium creature in the cage over the normal limit of three) to avoid crashing into the lake below. The cage has a Fortitude save bonus of +2. The cage descends 15 feet per round (90-foot total descent), so creatures in a falling cage take less damage the closer to area **K11** they are. Anyone who inspects the cage and makes a Knowledge (architecture and engineering) check (DC 20) can determine the cage's safety threshold.

A character can descend the ropes without the cage with a successful Balance check (DC 18) or Climb check (DC 15).

K3. UPPER WINCH

This room is dominated by a large winch. Operating the winch requires a successful Strength check (DC 10). Each round, the winch moves the cage at a speed of 10 feet. Since the distance between the two areas is about 60 feet, it takes 6 rounds for someone to move the cage from one location to the next. Safety features on the winch halt the progress of the cage if the operator ceases to use it before the cage reaches the other side. A successful Disable Device check (DC 20) removes this safety feature; with a result of 30 on the check, the missing safety isn't obvious. The winch also has a locking mechanism that prevents it from functioning; releasing this lock requires an Open Locks check (DC 25).

A tiny 1-foot-square circular window is set into the southern wall. Affixed to the wall next to this window is a *stone of alarm*; it can be activated by touch and removed from its mount with a successful Strength check (DC 15).

K4. WINCH OPERATOR'S BARRACKS (EL 3)

This room contains two bunks, a table, and two chairs; the thugs prefer to pass the time playing cards or taking shifts sleeping, for the most part.

Creatures: Two of Triel's thugs are always stationed here; they make sure no one uses the winch to lower the cage unless they're attended by Triel or one of the other cultists. Guard duty here is considered fairly relaxing, and is usually awarded to minions who have pleased Triel in some way. Each of the thugs carries a key to lock and unlock the winch in area **K3**.

Narthus and Kildivy, Male Human Ftr2 (2): hp 22, 20; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Tactics: If the thugs realize that someone is trying to invade the cavern, one of them quickly makes sure that the winch in area **K3** is locked down, while the other activates the *stone of alarm*, filling the main cavern with a cacophonous din and alerting the denizens of the cavern.

K5. STORAGE

This small room contains two weeks rations and drinkable water, along with a sizable stack of replacement planks for the pile in area **K1**.

K6. THE PHANTOM LAKE

The waters of this large lake glow softly with thick, ropy, glowing algae. Now and then tiny curls of steam rise from the lake, filling the area with a cloying stink of soggy plant matter. The surface of the water ripples now and again, but it's impossible to tell if these ripples come from underwater currents welling up from below, or from something more sinister. . . .

The water below the layer of algae—which grows to a depth of roughly 5 feet—is warm (around 80°F) thanks to the presence of several volcanic vents located in its bed. The phosphorescent algae provides illumination equal to that emitted by a torch, but dies quickly when removed from water or exposed to sunlight.

The lake itself is about 200 feet deep, but it has no true bottom. Rather, its bed branches into numerous aquatic waterways that wind through the rock; most of them eventually empty into the watery central shaft, but a few emerge from the sides of Cauldron to form rivers or streams.

Development: The lake itself is strangely free of animal life. This is due to the presence of the ravenous demon that has taken up a lair on the eastern beach (see area **K7**). The demon is watchful, and if it sees anyone enter the waters of the lake it quickly slithers into the water and swims out to feed.

K7. NIGHTMARE BEACH (EL 4)

This beach is horrifying. Thick carpets of pale fungus intermingle with sheets of clotted blood and partially eaten entrails and body parts. The entire place reeks of decay.

The cultists were given a single skulvyn demon to help guard their lair by their mysterious benefactors. None of the cultists can control the demon, but they periodically throw tributes to it in the form of homeless people or criminals snatched from the alleys of Cauldron. So as long as they let it keep its territory, the skulvyn is content to leave them alone.

Creature: If the PCs manage to reach this beach without entering the waters of the lake, they can find the skulvyn lurking here. A skulvyn is an aquatic demon that looks like a streamlined lizard with flippers instead of feet and four long tails that end in razor sharp spines. The demon slithers out into the lake to attack anything it hears or spots in or near the water. It is savage and cruel to the core, and defends its beach with fearless rage.

Skulvyn: CR 4; Large Outsider (Aquatic, Chaotic, Evil, Extraplanar); HD 4d8+8; hp 31; Init +3; Spd 10 ft., swim 50 ft.; AC 18, touch 12, flat-footed 15; BAB +4; Grap +12; Atk +7 melee (1d8+4, bite) and +5 melee (1d6+2, 2 claws), or +7 melee (1d4+4 and wounding, 4 tail claws); SA slow aura, wounding; SQ DR 10/+1, outsider traits, SR 12, scent; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +7,



Will +3; Str 18, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 5, Wis 8, Cha 11.

Skills: Hide –1*, Listen +6, Move Silently +10, Spot +6, Swim +19. *Feats*: Combat Reflexes, Multiattack.

Slow Aura (Su): Living creatures that come within 30 feet of a skulvyn must succeed at Will save (DC 12) or become *slowed* for 4 rounds; a creature that makes this save is immune to the skulvyn's aura for 24 hours.

Wounding (Ex): Wounds resulting form a skulvyn's tail lash attacks bleed for an additional 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple wounds from such attacks result in cumulative bleeding loss; the bleeding can only be stopped by a successful Heal check (DC 15) or the application of any healing spell.

Skills: Skulvyns gain a +8 racial bonus on Hide checks in water.

Tactics: Once the skulvyn senses prey nearby, it quickly slithers into the lake since it gains a substantial bonus to its Hide check in the water. The demon swims beneath anyone near the shore or in the water to catch them in its slow aura, then surges forth to grab one victim with a grapple before retreating underwater.

K8. KOPRU LAIR (EL 6)

This low cavern is filled with steam and thick sheets of ropy fungus. The place reeks of something rotten.

The fungus that coats the floor and walls here is thick and slippery; any bipedal creature attempting to walk on the ground here must succeed at a Balance check (DC 12) each round to avoid slipping and falling prone. The creature that lives here can slither around on the fungus sheets with ease.

Creature: A lone and insane kopru has moved into this chamber, having traveled up through the lightless underwater tunnels of the Underdark, seeking the fabled ruins of its ancestors. The monster was enraged to learn that the ruins had been taken over by air-breathers, but it was wise enough to know that a frontal attack on the ruins would quickly turn sour since it was so outnumbered. Compounding its problems is the skulvyn in area **K7**; when the kopru first arrived here, it and the demon got into a terrible battle. The result of the fight was a draw, but only because the kopru managed to hold and constrict the demon for a couple rounds before the skulvyn broke free and retreated.

Kopru: hp 41 (currently 38); *Monster Manual II* 134, or see the "Flood Season" Web enhancement.

Development: The kopru knows that it only survived its tangle with the skulvyn through luck—its normal attacks couldn't penetrate the demon's damage reduction easily. For the past few days, the monster has subsisted on the fungus in this cave while recuperating and trying to decide how to proceed.

It sees the arrival of the PCs as its greatest hope; it attempts to *dominate* one of them and uses its new minion to convince the other PCs to help it, first by slaying the skulvyn and then by systematically wiping out the intruders in the ruins. While the

goals of the kopru and the PCs might seem similar, the kopru has no intention of letting the PCs go once they have outlived their usefulness. Those it can't *dominate* it kills and eats.

K9. BEACH OF RUIN

This large beach is covered with rocks and patches of fitfully glowing phosphorescent fungus and algae. More impressive are the stony ruins that protrude from the sheer rock wall along the beach's western edge. The architecture of these ruins seems melted and somehow intimidating—whatever creatures built these dwellings were obviously inhuman and alien in nature.

A small building made of wood sits apart from these structures; the ropes descending from the ledge on the opposite side of the lake attach to a second winch on the side of this building.

If the characters manage to reach this area without alerting the cavern, chances are that they can infiltrate any of the buildings with ease. The denizens of the ruins are confident that no one knows about their hideout and as a result don't keep a watchful eye on this beach.

K10. TRAPPED FOYER (EL 4)

Trap: A low tripwire just past the arc of the northern door is triggered when a creature walks through this area. When triggered, the tripwire snaps and releases several key bits of webbing that hold the eastern wall in place, causing the entire mass of timber and wood to come crashing down in the corridor.

Falling Wall Trap: CR 4; mechanical; location trigger; repair reset; Atk +14 melee (6d6, falling timbers); Search (DC 27); Disable Device (DC 23).

K11. LOWER WINCH

This winch operates in the same way as the one in area **K3**. The cultists don't normally post guards here, since they figure that the trap in area **K10** is protection enough.

K12. MAIN ENTRANCE

The ceiling of this large room rises in a 40-foot-high dome above; the floor is polished smooth. Water from condensation runs down the walls, and a pair of large braziers to the northeast and southeast provide smoky light. A long table with a dozen chairs dominate the center of the room.

Currently empty, the cultists use this chamber to meet with their mysterious benefactors; they recently delivered on their promise to construct a *Soulcage* for them and don't expect a new assignment for a while. Until then, this room sees little use.

K13. THE GAUNTLET (EL 7)

This long vaulted hallway seems empty and harmless; in truth, it is anything but. The eastern and western ends of the corridor hide two **Traps**, and anyone standing in the "safe" central section of the corridor is subject to attack from the guards to the north and south.

Trap: A pair of pit traps are located at either end of the corridor. The levers in area **K16** can deactivate them, but they are currently active. Each pit trap is identical and fills a 10-foot-square region. If you're feeling particularly nasty, consider using the tilt-a-pit traps from the "Life's Bazaar" Web enhancement in place of these normal pits. In such a case, assume a gnome slave of the ancient kopru enclave built the tilt-a-pits, modeling them after those from his home in Jzadirune.

20-Foot-Deep Pit Traps (2): CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; switch bypass; Reflex saving throw (DC 15) avoids; 20-ft.-deep (2d6, fall); multiple targets (first target in each of two adjacent 5-foot squares); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 23).

Tactics: As long as the complex is on alert, the Alleybashers in areas **K14** and **K15** keep an eye on this corridor through the arrowslits in the northern and southern walls. They fire upon any intruders they can see in the corridor.

K14. NORTHERN GUARDROOM (EL 3)

The three Alleybashers from area **K40** wait here if the complex is on alert. The northern secret door leads to area **K34**.

Secret Door: 4 in. thick; Hardness 8; hp 60; break DC 28; Search DC 20.

Creatures: The three Alleybashers can make attacks with their arrows at any target in area **K13** by utilizing the arrowslits in the wall.

Tilavast, Oarus, and Ristikus, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (3): hp 17, 15 ×2; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

K15. SOUTHERN GUARDROOM (EL 3)

If the complex is on alert status, the three Alleybashers from area **K22** are located here. The southern secret door leads to area **K26**.

Creatures: The three Alleybashers can make attacks with their arrows at any target in area **K13** by utilizing the arrowslits in the wall.

Samus, Iteyl, and Abernath, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (3): hp 19, 16, 12; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

K16. WORKROOM (EL 6)

This huge room fades into darkness. What you can see in here are several large worktables covered with bits and pieces of scrap metal. Somewhere from the depths of the room, strange skittering sounds echo off the unseen walls, but as quickly as you notice them they fade into silence.

This large room was once a kopru spawning chamber, but after the cultists moved in they cleared out the room and transformed it into a huge workroom for the construction of a *Soulcage*. They intend to keep using the room in the future for additional projects, but for now the room lies unused and mostly empty . . . except for the **Creature** that the group's benefactors left here to serve as an additional guardian.

A pair of levers located next to the doors leading into this

room can be switched to activate or deactivate the pit traps in area **K13**.

Creatures: A mud slaad lurks in the far reaches of the room.

Mud Slaad: CR 6; Medium Outsider (Chaotic, Extraplanar); HD 6d8+12; hp 46; Init +6; Spd 30 ft.; AC 16, touch 12, flat-footed 14; BAB +6; Grap +9; Atk +9 melee (2d6+3, bite) and +7 melee (1d4+1, 2 claws); SA cringe, disease, sonic screech, *summon slaad*; SQ fast healing 3, feign death, outsider traits, resistances, sonic immunity; AL CN; SV Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +3; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 15, Int 6, Wis 6, Cha 8.

Skills: Climb +12, Jump +12, Hide +11, Listen +7, Move Silently +11, Spot +7. *Feats*: Dodge, Improved Initiative, Multiattack.

Cringe (Su): As a standard action, a mud slaad can cower in fear. This is a mind-affecting effect. Any opponent attempting to strike or otherwise directly attack the cringing mud slaad, even with a targeted spell, must attempt a Will save (DC 12). If the save succeeds, the opponent can attack normally and is immune to the effect of that mud slaad's cringe for 24 hours. If the save fails, the opponent can't follow through with the attack, that part of the attacker's action is lost, and the attacker can't directly attack that mud slaad for as long as it continues to cringe. If the mud slaad stops cringing and then cringes again, the opponent may attempt a new Will save to attack it.

Disease (Ex): Any creature hit by a mud slaad's bite attack must succeed at a Fortitude Save (DC 15) or be infected with a disease that transforms the victim over the next week into a mud slaad. The infected creature can attempt a new save each day to throw off the infection.

Feign Death (Ex): If an opponent strikes a mud slaad and reduces it to 10 or fewer hit points, it can immediately attempt to feign death. This ability happens on the opponent's turn. Any creature that witnesses a mud slaad that is feigning death, including those creatures that watch it fall, can make a Sense Motive check (DC 22) to determine if the slaad's death is genuine. A cursory check will not reveal that the slaad's death is feigned, and even a Heal or Search check isn't guaranteed to discover the deception, so adroit is the mud slaad at stilling its breathing and reducing its heart rate. A successful check with either skill (DC 22) is required to reveal that the mud slaad still lives.

Resistances (Ex): All slaadi have acid, cold, electricity, and fire resistance 5.

Sonic Screech (Su): Once per day a mud slaad can emit a tremendous screech. Every creature within 30 feet must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or take 5d6 points of sonic damage.

Summon Slaad (Sp): Once per day, a mud slaad can attempt to summon one mud slaad with a 40% chance of success, or one red slaad with a 20% chance of success.

Tactics: The mud slaad, despite its appearance, harbors deep feelings of inferiority and shame after eons spent being tormented and mocked by more powerful slaadi. It lives in constant fear that more slaadi could appear at any moment to torture it, so it will not summon a red slaad, and it only attempts to call another mud slaad if it is in dire peril (it drops to fewer than 10 hit points and its cringe ability is ineffective). It prefers to open combat with its screech and then flail away with its bite and claws. If hard pressed, it feigns death and hopes its tormentors wander away.

Development: A character who examines the bits of metal and tools lying about this room and makes a successful Knowledge (arcana) check (DC 25) can tell that this room was used to build some sort of magic device, most likely something connected to the schools of Conjuration, Abjuration, and Necromancy. Beyond this, though, nothing can be learned from investigating the remains.

Treasure: The slaad keeps its treasures wrapped in a ragged cloak in the far end of the room under a table; a Search check (DC 15) reveals it. This trove consists of 150 pp, three gems (600 gp, 100 gp, and 6 gp), and a masterwork lute (100 gp). Unknown to the mud slaad, the rag it wraps its treasure in is its greatest possession: a *cloak of arachnida*.



Tarkilar and Skaven

K17. WELCOME TRAP (EL 1)

Hundreds of thin white cords stretch from wall to wall in this chamber, all about 6 inches off the ground. The cords make a tangled sheet, and it looks nearly impossible to pass through the room without stumbling.

This room seems unused, but it actually contains a **Trap**.

Trap: The floor of this room is criss-crossed with tightly strung ettercap webs. The cultists and their minions know which parts of the floor are safe to tread upon, but anyone who walks carelessly into the room triggers the **Trap**. This causes a large ettercap web to drop from the ceiling, covering a 10-foot square area. The web has tiny bells attached to it, so the triggering of the trap alert the guards on duty in area **K18**.

Falling Web Trap: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; manual reset; Reflex saving throw (DC 15); entangles (Escape Artist, DC 20, or Strength check, DC 26, to escape); Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 21).

K18. GUARDROOM (EL 6)

This room contains a table and several chairs, along with the **Creatures**.

Creatures: Four thugs lurk here, playing a complicated dice game, arguing loudly, and waiting for their shift to end.

Kristoff, Mathus, Stysai, and Jestie, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (4): hp 25, 23, 20 ×2; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details. Each of these thugs carries one flask of alchemist's fire.

Tactics: If the guards hear the trap triggered in area **K17**, one of their number heads south to alert the other cultists while the remaining three open the door to area **K17** and begin to throw vials of alchemist's fire into the room on trapped PCs. Once each has thrown a vial, they close and block the door by pushing the table up against it. Once the door between rooms **K17** and **K18** is blocked, its Break DC increases to 30.

K19. STOREROOM

This room contains two weeks of dried food rations and drinking water kept in large barrels.

K20. SOUTHERN ARMORY

The walls of this room are loaded with weapon and armor racks. Swords and bows hang from pegs, and a dozen suits of armor hang on the far wall. A barrel of arrows and two small wooden kegs sit behind the armor stands.

The door to this room is locked (Open Locks, DC 30); Skaven has the key. The small kegs hold cheap ale.

Treasure: The weapon racks contain 12 longswords, 6 rapiers, and 8 longbows. A barrel in the corner holds 120 arrows. The armor stands hold nine suits of studded leather armor and four suits of chainmail. The ale is particularly cheap (5 gp per barrel) and hardly worth the cost of transport. Skaven uses the ale to reward the mercenaries who work for him.

K21. MESS HALL

This room contains a table and several chairs. A cabinet against one wall contains wooden eating utensils, plates, and the like.

Off-duty bandits use this room to eat, relax, and gamble, unlike their guard posts, which they use just to gamble. No one occupies this room right now.

K22. BARRACKS (EL 4)

This room contains several bunks. It looks like about a dozen people could sleep here.

Creatures: The bandits who work directly for Skaven sleep in these bunks. A Search check (DC 15) reveals that eleven human-sized individuals quarter here.

Samus, Iteyl, and Abernath, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (3): hp 19, 16, 12; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Development: If the complex has been alerted, these Alleybashers have relocated to area **K15**. Otherwise, they are asleep here when the party enters the room.

K23. SOUTHERN ENTRANCE (EL 5)

This chamber seems to be some sort of meeting room; a large table with a dozen chairs sit in the center of the room.

Creatures: A pair of thugs and a pair of Alleybashers can be found in this room.

Makrity and Chyles, Male Human Ftr2 (2): hp 20, 19; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Klarkus and Blare, Alleybasher Male and Female Human Rog2 (2): hp 18, 13; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Tactics: If the alarm has been raised, the mercenaries have upended the table to give them partial cover; the Alleybashers have readied actions to fire upon anyone who comes through the northeast door, and the thugs aid their Armor Classes with the aid another action by blocking attacks with their shields. The hired swords spring into melee should intruders get close enough to attack.

K24. SKAVEN'S PARLOR (EL 3 OR 8)

The door to this room is kept locked with an *arcane lock* cast by Skaven; a successful Open Locks check (DC 40) can unlock it. Without the *arcane lock*, the door still requires an Open Locks check (DC 30) or one of Skaven's keys to open it.

This room is like a breath of fresh air. While still a little warm, the air is dry and nowhere near as foul in here. A well-made desk sits against the opposite wall, which looks like it has been partially melted by an ancient lava flow. A bookshelf sits against the northern wall, and the room is well lit by a softly glowing *continual flame* that hangs from a chain set into the ceiling.

This room and the room directly to the north are the personal quarters of one of the three cultists responsible for the theft of the *wands of control water*.

Creatures: Skaven Umbermead is actually not a cleric like his two fellow cultists. Although he's trained as a wizard (specifically, as a diviner), his faith in his deity is as strong and devout as that of his fellow cultists. What his fellow conspirators don't know is that Skaven worships Vecna. Triel has always assumed he worships Olidammara, and although Tarkilar no longer cares, he used to think Skaven worshiped Nerull.

Skaven can be found in this room if the complex isn't on alert; otherwise, he is in area **K32**. If he is encountered here, he is sitting at his desk poring over some ancient scrolls.

The air quality in this room and in area **K25** is the result of the work of a Medium air elemental that Skaven bound to these rooms using a scroll of *lesser planar binding* several months ago. The elemental is ordered to maintain air quality in here and to defend it from anyone but Skaven who tries to touch any of the books or scrolls on the shelves in here or in area **K25**.

Skaven Umbermead, Male Halfling Div7: CR 7; Medium Humanoid (halfling); HD 7d4+7; hp 30; Init +2; Spd 20 ft.; AC 14, touch 13, flat-footed 12; BAB +3; Grap –3; Atk +3 melee (1d4–2, masterwork dagger) or +6 ranged (damage varies, ranged touch); SA spells; SQ familiar, halfling traits; AL NE; SV Fort +4, Ref +5, Will +7; Str 6, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 18, Wis 14, Cha 10.

Skills: Concentration +11, Craft (metalworking) +14, Hide +8, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Knowledge (religion) +14, Listen +4*, Move Silently +5, Spellcraft +14, Spot +4*. *Feats*: Alertness (as long as Pywakit is within arm's reach), Combat Expertise, Craft Wondrous Item, Scribe Scroll, Skill Focus (Knowledge—arcana), Spell Focus (Evocation).

*Includes +2 bonus from Alertness (granted by familiar).

Spells Prepared (4/6/5/4/3, base save DC = 14 + spell level): 0—*detect poison**, *ghost sound*, *mage hand*, *prestidigitation*; 1st—*chill touch*, *comprehend languages**, *hold portal*, *magic missile*** ×2, *true strike**; 2nd—*detect thoughts**, *ghoul touch*, *invisibility*, *scorching ray***, *see invisibility**; 3rd—*clairaudience/clairvoyance**, *displacement*, *lightning bolt***, *vampiric touch*; 4th—*arcane eye**, *enervation*, *phantasmal killer*.

Spellbook: Skaven's spellbook contains all the spells he has prepared, plus the following: 0—all cantrips (except *daze*); 1st—*alarm*, *arcane lock*, *burning hands***, *detect secret doors**, *detect undead**, *identify**, *mage armor*, *silent image*, *unseen servant*; 2nd—*arcane lock*, *blindness/deafness*, *blur*, *locate object**, *scare*, *spider climb*, *summon monster II*, *whispering wind*; 3rd—*dispel magic*, *gentle repose*, *sepia snake sigil*, *tongues**, *water breathing*; 4th—*locate creature**, *shout***, *fear*.

*Divination spell. Skaven's prohibited school is Enchantment.

**Evocation spell. The base save DC for these spells, where applicable, is 16 + spell level.

Languages: Common, Draconic, Elven, Gnoll, Halfling.

Possessions: *Bracers of armor +1*, *goggles of minute seeing*, *slippers of spider climbing*, *pearl of power* (1st level), *wand of mage armor* (40 charges), *potion of cure moderate wounds*, *potion of gaseous form*, six *potions of hiding*, masterwork dagger, leather pouch containing 58 gp and 4 pp, key ring (contains keys to the winches at areas **K3** and **K11**, the key to area **K20**, and keys to areas **K24** and **K25**). He also carries one of the eight *wands of control water*.

Pywakit, Cat Familiar: Tiny Magical Beast; HD special; hp 15; Init +2; Spd 30 ft.; AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 16; BAB +3; Grap –9; Atk +5 melee (1d2–4, 2 claws) and +0 melee (1d3–4, bite); SA channel touch spells; SQ improved evasion, share spells, empathic link, speak with master, speak with cats; AL NE; SV Fort +2, Ref +4, Will +6; Str 3, Dex 15, Con 10, Int 9, Wis 12, Cha 7.

Skaven is mysterious and introverted. He's bald, keeps his beard trimmed neatly, and has a dark complexion. Still, while handsome, he has little concept of social graces and would rather avoid contact with others. He tends to let the Alleybashers and thugs that work for him do as they please, as long as they don't disturb his studies. He eschews weaponplay and combat, and he doesn't openly wear a symbol of Vecna, keeping his faith a secret. Much of the design of the *Soulcage* was Skaven's work. Aside from his cat familiar, Pywakit, Skaven prefers the company of the ettercaps and spiders.

Tactics: Skaven prefers to avoid combat. If attacked, he attempts to escape the room by turning invisible or using one of his *potions of hiding*. If he manages to escape, he heads to area **K32** to enlist the aid of the harpoon spider against the PCs. If unable to escape, Skaven uses his combat spells in an attempt to scatter the PCs and enable his flight to the harpoon spider.

Medium Air Elemental: hp 23; *Monster Manual* 81.

Treasure: The numerous books and scrolls found here cover a range of topics and are written in a variety of languages. One common theme binds them together: mystery. Skaven is obsessed with mysteries and spends long hours poring over ancient texts of unexplained events. The scrolls currently on his desk are partial histories of the kopru that built this ruined city. This collection of books and scrolls is worth 1,200 gp to the right buyer, but if the PCs decide to keep them, they could possibly use them to research mysteries encountered later in the campaign.

K25. SKAVEN'S BEDCHAMBERS (EL 6)

The door to this room has been *arcane locked* by Skaven; an Open Locks check (DC 40) can unlock it. Without the *arcane lock*, the door lock still requires an Open Lock check (DC 30) or one of Skaven's keys to open. The door also bears a **Trap**.

This room, like the last one, is fairly cool and dry—and comfortable. A bed sits against the north wall, and a thick carpet covers most of the floor. More bookshelves line the walls here, their shelves sagging with books, tomes, and scrolls of all shapes and sizes.

Traps: Skaven has used his magic to ward this room. Aside from the *arcane lock* on the door, he has placed a *sepia snake sigil* on the door. The false back to the eastern bookshelf (see **Treasure**, below) is also warded by a *sepia snake sigil*.

***Sepia Snake Sigils* (2)**: CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*sepia snake sigil*, 7th-level wizard, Reflex save, DC 16, negates); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

Treasure: The back of the top shelf of the eastern bookcase can be pulled out, as revealed by a successful Search check (DC 25). The removable back is warded with a *sepia snake sigil*. In the hollow beyond the false back are two valuable objects: Skaven's spellbook and one of the *wands of control water*.

K26. WORKROOM STORAGE

This large room was used to store extra supplies for the workroom (area **K16**); it's currently empty. The secret door to the north can be discovered with a successful Search check (DC 20).

K27. SPIDER NEST (EL 3)

The door to this room is more difficult to open than most others; it's Break DC is 30 due to the webs on the other side.

This room is clogged with webs; it is impossible to see the full extent of the chamber. Peering through the strands of sticky webbing, you spot a dark, bulbous shape scuttling across the filaments in your direction.

Creatures: Six small monstrous spiders lurk at various points in this room; they quickly skitter forth to attack anyone foolish enough to open the door to this room.

Small Monstrous Spiders (6): hp 8, 6, 5, 5, 4, 3; *Monster Manual* 210.

K28. ABANDONED WEBS

The corners of this room are clogged with webbing, but a 5-foot-wide, 8-foot-tall tunnel leads south into a web-lined tunnel.

The webs here and in the caves beyond coat every inch of floor, wall, and ceiling. Although most of the webbing is no longer sticky, it is quite soft. All creatures in this room and areas **K30–K32** gain a +4 circumstance bonus on Move Silently checks.

K29. SECRET PASSAGE

Both of the secret doors that allow access to this passageway are masterfully hidden and require Search checks (DC 25) to discover.

K30. WEBBED CAVERN (EL 6)

The air in this cavern is thick, stuffy, and humid, and stinks of rotting fungus. Sheets of thick white webs choke every surface, and coils of the sticky stuff hang from above in thick ropy sheets. The webbing muffles sound, making the cavern seem much smaller than it actually is. In fact, the thick webs make it quite difficult to accurately judge the size of the chamber, or what might be lurking in its depths.

Creatures: Five monstrous spiders nest in this cavern. If combat here lasts more than 4 rounds, the two ettercaps from area **K31** arrive on the fifth round to aid their spider allies.

Medium-Size Monstrous Spiders (4): hp 14, 12, 11, 10; *Monster Manual* 210.

Large Monstrous Spiders (2): hp 28, 22; *Monster Manual* 210.

Trap: Several portions of the floor in this room consist of fresh, sticky webbing. Each round a character who doesn't know the safe routes in the chamber moves more than 5 feet, the character must make a Reflex saving throw to avoid becoming stuck

Sticky Webs: CR 1; mechanical; location trigger; no reset; Reflex saving throw (DC 15) to avoid; entangles (Escape Artist, DC 26, or Strength check, DC 32, to break, 12 hit points per 5-foot section); Search (DC 22); Disable Device (DC 22).

Treasure: The spiders have collected a fair amount of treasure. It's shrouded in a ball of webbing, and a successful Search check (DC 24) is necessary to locate it. The treasure consists of 620 gp, 4 pearls (100 gp each), an arcane scroll of *summon monster I* (1st-level caster), a *potion of clairaudience/clairvoyance*, and a *wand of burning hands* (1st-level caster, 23 charges).

K31. ETTERCAP LAIR (EL 6)

The floor of this cavern is trapped with masses of sticky webs, as detailed in area **K30**.

Creatures: A sizable nest of ettercaps lurks in this room, although only two of them can be encountered here at this time. They rush to the aid of the spiders in area **K30** when they hear sounds of battle.

Ettercaps (2): hp 28, 27; *Monster Manual* 88.

Tactics: The ettercaps use the sticky webs in this cave to their advantage, luring intruders into sticky sections of floor or bull rushing them into sticky walls as the opportunity presents itself. If they begin to lose the battle, they quickly flee to the east to area **K32** and alert the harpoon spider there.

K32. HARPOON SPIDER LAIR (EL 7 OR HIGHER)

The spiderwebs in this cave are thick and tangled, hanging from the unseen roof above in coiling sheets. Large mounds of webs lie heaped on the floor, almost like sand dunes. The air in this cave is stale, hot, and stinks of decaying fungus.

Like areas **K30** and **K31**, the floor of this cave is dotted with sticky spider webs.

Creatures: A dangerous predator from the Underdark known as a harpoon spider has lived in this cavern for some time, trapped here when a lava tube that led into this cave collapsed. The harpoon spider lived for some time on the indigenous bats and fish in the main cave, but eventually a tiny group of ettercaps and their spider allies found a way here. The ettercaps, amazed by the harpoon spider, worship it as a god, tending to its every need. One of the three ettercaps in the group can always be found by the harpoon spider's side.

If the complex is on alert, Skaven retreats to this cave. Skaven and the harpoon spider have become friends over the past several months; the spider is intrigued by Skaven's tales of Vecna, while Skaven finds the harpoon spider an amazing creature and wants to know all he can about the subterranean predator.

Harpoon Spider: hp 36; see Appendix I for details.

Ettercap: hp 26; *Monster Manual* 88.

Treasure: The spider keeps its valuables encased in a niche near the ceiling in the easternmost cul-de-sac in this cave; characters searching this area specifically can discover it with a successful Search check (DC 25). The treasure consists of 500 sp, 450 gp, a darkwood and silver masterwork lap harp (800 gp), a diamond ring (5,000 gp), a jade idol of Yondalla (700 gp), a *+1 small steel shield*, a *potion of hiding*, and *bracers of armor +2*. Skaven has also entrusted one of the *wands of control water* to the harpoon spider's treasure for safe keeping.

K33. TRAPPED CHAMBER (EL 5)

This chamber looks empty, except for a thick layer of dust on the floor.

Trap: This trap is triggered whenever the door in the northwest corner of the room is opened. Dozens of holes then open in the ceiling and floor, and a forest of rapier-thin poison spikes lance out of these holes to impale anything in the room. The spikes retract into the wall and the door closes itself after 1 round, at which point the trap automatically resets.

Poison Spike Trap: CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +16 melee (1d8+4 plus poison, spike); multiple targets (all creatures in area **K33**); poison (Medium spider venom, Fortitude save, DC 14, resists, 1d4 Str/1d6 Str); Search (DC 17); Disable Device (DC 21).

K34. STOREROOM

This room contains two weeks of dried food rations and drinking water kept in large barrels. The secret door to the south can be discovered with a successful Search check (DC 20).

K35. NORTHERN ARMORY

The door to this room is locked (Open Locks, DC 30); Triel has the key. The east and west walls of this room are dominated by weapon racks and armor stands. A wine rack with several unopened bottles sits against the southern wall.

Treasure: The weapon racks contain 7 longswords, 5 rapiers, and 11 longbows. The armor stands hold three suits of studded leather armor and six suits of chainmail. Each of the seventeen bottles of wine on the rack is worth 50 gp.

K36. TRIEL'S CHAMBERS (EL 7 OR HIGHER)

This large room is elegantly appointed and, if anything, even more humid and cloying than the other chambers. The reason is probably due to the large pool of bubbling water in the southern end of the room. A hammock swings to the west of the pool above a large chest, and the northern portion of the room seems to have been converted into a small combat training ground, complete with thick mats and combat dummies.

The door to this room is locked (Open Locks, DC 30); Triel has the key. The door also contains a **Trap**.

This room is the personal quarters to Triel Eldurast, the cultist most directly responsible for the death of Sarcem and the theft of the *wands of control water*.

Creature: Triel can be found in this room whether or not the alarm has been raised; she prefers to spend most of her time here when she isn't working. If the complex is on alert, she is attended by four Alleybashers.

Triel Eldurast, Female Human Ftr4/Clr3: CR 7; Medium Humanoid (human); HD 4d10+4 plus 3d8+3; hp 55; Init +1; Spd 20 ft.; AC 20, touch 11, flat-footed 19; BAB +6/+1; Grap +10; Atk +12/+7 (1d10+9, *+1 silver heavy flail*); SA spells, rebuke/command undead; AL LE; SV Fort +8, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 12, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 17.

Skills: Bluff +4, Concentration +11*, Craft (metalworking) +6, Diplomacy +4, Knowledge (arcana) +6, Spellcraft +6. *Feats*: Cleave, Combat Casting, Craft Wondrous Item, Leadership, Power Attack, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (heavy flail), Weapon Specialization (heavy flail).

*Includes +4 bonus from Combat Casting.

Spells Prepared (4/4/3; base save DC = 12 + spell level): 0—*cure minor wounds* ×2, *guidance*, *mending*; 1st—*cure light wounds*, *divine favor*, *magic weapon**, *shield of faith*; 2nd—*bull's strength*, *silence*, *shatter**.

*Domain Spell. *Domains*: Destruction (smite 1/day, +4 to attack, +3 to damage), War (free Weapon Focus—heavy flail feat).

Languages: Common, Gnoll.

Possessions: Spiked+1 *full plate*, *+1 silver heavy flail*, 3 *wands of control water*, *wand of cure serious wounds* (7 charges, 5th-level caster), 2 *potions of cure light wounds*, divine scroll (*cure moderate wounds*, *hold person*, 3rd-level caster), *everburning torch*, silver holy symbol of Hextor, leather pouch containing 30 gp and 4 pp, key ring.

Triel is quite fond of the martial aspects of Hextor's teachings, and often wears facial warpaint similar to that worn by her cohort Tongueater. She has short but wild red hair, and she wears a suit of full plate festooned with spikes and the symbol of Hextor. Of the three cultists, she is easily the most beautiful and charismatic, and as a result she's the one they rely on to take care of things outside of the Kopru Ruins. She was once a city guard in Cauldron, but her growing bloodlust eventually got her into trouble. She fled the city for several years and eventually became a cleric of Hextor before joining the Ebon Triad.

Meryin, Sorkalath, Durkal, and Pindinson, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (4): hp 19, 16, 15, 12; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Tactics: If the PCs have managed to invade this far without triggering an alert, they find Triel naked and enjoying a soak in her hot spring; she responds to unwelcome intrusions with great anger and attacks at once, despite her lack of armor. If only one PC enters, she might try to seduce the character into joining her in the pool, at which point she'll try to drown the gullible fool before suiting up and stalking through the complex looking for other intruders.

If the complex is on alert, Triel is ready to unleash pain on

anyone foolish enough to invade this room; she has also called the four Alleybashers from area **K42** to her room for assistance. She casts *bull's strength* and *shield of faith* on herself, given time, then wades into combat, flail swinging, targeting opposing clerics before others. She pauses to heal herself if reduced to 20 hit points or less.

Trap: Anyone who tries to pass through the door without depressing a cleverly hidden switch on the exposed upper rim of the door (Search check, DC 30) suddenly finds the revolving door swinging shut while numerous razors extend from both its edges. If the door trap hits the character, he becomes pinned in place until the door is forced open (Strength check, DC 28) or he makes an Escape Artist check (DC 26).

Razordoor Trap: CR 3; mechanical; touch trigger; automatic reset; Atk +15 melee (1d12+8/×3 plus pinning); Search (DC 15); Disable Device (DC 27).

Treasure: Triel prefers to carry her treasure with her, but when she sleeps or is bathing she keeps it stacked in the large chest under her hammock. This chest can be locked (Open Locks, DC 30) with a key she carries.

Ad-Hoc Experience Award: If the party defeats an unarmored Triel, award them 80% the normal experience point total due to her reduced Armor Class.

K37. MESS HALL (EL 6)

This room is a combination mess hall and lounge used by Triel's minions to relax and unwind when they get the chance.

Creatures: Six thugs can be found here; if the alarm has been raised they are alert and ready for action.

Thistle, Adjar, Pyrus, Sukoro, Zoth, and Lonjiku, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (6): hp 22, 20×2, 19, 18×2; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

K38. MEETING ROOM

This unremarkable room is used by Triel to meet with her minions and hand out daily orders. A plain looking table and some uncomfortable chairs sit in the center; and several broken chairs are stacked in the corners of the room.

K39. THUG BARRACKS (EL 5)

This room contains several bunks; A dozen people could sleep here, although not all the beds look lived in.

Creatures: The thugs who work directly for Triel sleep in these bunks. A successful Search check (DC 15) determines that ten human-sized people sleep here.

Milo, Hamfist, Mari, and Eirlinaki, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (4): hp 25, 22, 18, 17; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Development: If the complex has been alerted to the PCs, this room is empty and these thugs wait in area **K46**. Otherwise, the four thugs are asleep when the party enters the room.

K40. ALLEYBASHER BARRACKS (EL 4)

More bunks fill this chamber. A quick glance reveals that while several people probably live here, the room could accommodate more people than currently use the chamber.

Creatures: The Alleybashers working directly for Triel sleep in these bunks. A successful Search check (DC 15) determines that seven Alleybashers sleep here.

Tilavast, Oarus, and Ristikus, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (3): hp 17, 15×2; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Development: If the complex has been alerted to the PCs, this room is empty, its denizens stationed at area **K14**. Otherwise, three Alleybashers sleep here when the party enters the room.

K41. BLOODBATH (EL 5)

This room seems to be empty of anything of interest, but in truth, it holds a dangerous **Trap**—an illusory floor covers a large pit in the center of the room. A 3-foot-wide ledge winds around the edges of the room, providing the only safe place to walk. The pit is filled with water and a swarm of creatures.

Trap: The center of this room is actually a 20-foot-deep pit filled with 10 feet of water. Falling in the pit won't hurt unless the victim is encumbered or can't swim. Of course, the monsters that lurk in the water are much more dangerous.

20-Foot-Deep Water filled pit: CR 1; magical; constant effect; illusory floor covering pit; Reflex save (DC 20) avoids; 20 feet deep with 10 ft. water; Search (DC 24).

Creature: The water is filled with a hungry swarm of bloodbloater oozes. Bloodbloaters are Diminutive aquatic oozes that feed on blood. Individually they pose little threat, but they have a propensity to swarm in huge clouds of hungry protoplasm.

Bloodbloater Ooze Swarm: CR 1; Medium Ooze (Aquatic, Swarm of Diminutive Oozes); HD 2d10+12; hp 22; Init +1; Spd 5 ft., swim 30 ft.; AC 11, touch 11, flat-footed 10; BAB +1; Grap +1; Atk swarm (1d6 plus 1 Str damage/0); SA blood drain, distraction; SQ amphibious, blindsight 60 ft., fire vulnerability, ooze traits, swarm traits; AL N; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will −5; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 22, Int —, Wis 1, Cha 1.

Skills: Swim +8.

Blood Drain (Ex): On each round a bloodbloater swarm does at least 1 point of damage to a victim, it also drains blood and causes 1 point of temporary Strength damage.

Distraction (Ex): Any nonmindless creature vulnerable to the swarm's damage that begins its turn with the swarm in its square is nauseated for 1 round; a successful Fortitude save negates the effect (DC 10). Spellcasting or concentrating on spells in a swarm requires a successful Concentration check (DC 20 + spell level). Using skills requiring patience and concentration in the swarm also requires a successful Concentration check (DC 20).

Swarm Traits: The bloodbloater swarm is not subject to critical hits or flanking. It is immune to mind-affecting spells, damage from all weapons, and to single target spells. It is vulnerable to area effects like alchemist's fire or spells like *burning hands*.

Although the swarm is Medium, it does not threaten nearby squares; it must enter a creature's square to attack (this provokes an attack of opportunity from the target). If the attacked creature does nothing but defend itself, the swarm does no damage; otherwise it automatically deals its listed swarm damage.

Treasure: Triel tossed one of the *wands of control water* into this pit for safe keeping. When she wants to retrieve it, she can simply use another wand to lower the water to an inch or two deep and snatch the wand from the relatively helpless landlocked bloodbloaters with a quick and well-gauntleted hand.

K42. NORTHERN ENTRANCE (EL 6)

This room seems fairly empty and clean, but like many other rooms in the ruins, it contains a dangerous trap. The ceiling in this room is 40 feet up, and a 5-foot-wide balcony runs around the rim of the room 20 feet above ground. A knotted rope that can be lowered to provide access to the balcony has been pulled up by the **Creatures** hiding above.

Creatures: Four Alleybashers lurk on the balcony surrounding this room. PCs can make Spot checks (DC 33) to detect the waiting rogues.

Meryin, Sorkalath, Durkal, and Pindinson, Alleybasher Human Rog2 (4): hp 19, 16, 15, 12; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

Tactics: The mercenaries fire arrows at any intruders that enter the room, although they wait and see if opponents first set off the trap. Characters who bypass the footshredder aren't attacked until the last PC has entered the room.

Development: If the caves are on alert, these rogues have joined Triel in area **K36**.

Trap: Anyone who opens the western door triggers this room's trap. Doing so causes the floor of the room to retract 6 inches down, revealing a forest of tiny spikes designed to shred the sole of the foot.

Footshredder Floor: CR 1; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; multiple targets (all in contact with the floor of area **K42**); Atk +14 melee; any creature struck suffers 1d4 points of damage and is wounded as if by caltrops; Search (DC 20); Disable Device (DC 23).

K43. PRISON

This room contains four small cages. Each can be locked with keys carried by Triel or with a successful Open Locks check (DC 30). These cages are used to hold prisoners of the cult, but the are all currently empty. PCs captured by the cult probably end up in one of these cages.

K44. INTERROGATION CHAMBER

This room contains a desk, a chair, and a strange apparatus that looks like a wooden bed covered with various iron straps and spikes. The device looks . . . uncomfortable.

The device is a torture rack designed to painfully stretch the person strapped into it. Triel uses this room to interrogate prisoners. Although no one is currently held here, PCs who are unlucky enough to be captured might end up in this device. If you have access to the *Book of Vile Darkness*, treat this device as a masterwork rack, otherwise assume that each round a character spends on the rack, he suffers 1 point of damage. A successful Escape Artist check (DC 22) is required to escape.

K45. UNFINISHED TRAP

The floor of this room is rough and unfinished, and seems to be pockmarked with hundreds of tiny holes drilled into the floor. There is no indication as to the purpose of these holes, but it must have taken someone months of mind-numbing work to drill them all.

Triel is in the process of building a second footshredder trap (see area **K42**) here, but she can't quite get the logistics of the project down and has given up on it for now. PCs in a hurry might waste valuable time trying to figure out what kind of weird trap awaits them in this chamber.

K46. GUARDROOM (EL 5)

Creatures: If the complex is on alert, Triel has posted the four thugs from area **K39** to guard this route toward the treasury. The thugs do their best to prevent intruders from penetrating any further into the complex via this route.

Milo, Hamfist, Mari, and Eirlinaki, Male and Female Human Ftr2 (4): hp 25, 22, 18, 17; see area **M1** of the Lucky Monkey for details.

K47. ENTRANCE TO TARKILAR'S CAVERNS

This long room is partially collapsed. The northwestern portion has been destroyed by an ancient lava flow, but two circular lava tubes seem to provide access to the caves beyond.

The network of caves here (areas **K48–K56**) are the domain of the third cultist, Tarkilar. Since Tarkilar became a huecuva, he has become less interested in aiding his one-time companions, and more interested in fostering his hatred of the living. Someday soon he might finally forget his old alliances and seek out his old allies to satiate his growing hatred of the living.

K48. BONE GUARDIAN (EL 7)

Creature: Before Tarkilar was transformed into a huecuva several months ago, he managed to get his hands on a high-level *animate dead* scroll. He found the remains of a dead gargantuan tyrannosaurus in the foothills to the east of Cauldron, and over the course of several weeks smuggled the skeleton into this chamber, bone by bone. He then reassembled the skeleton and used the *animate dead* scroll to create a gargantuan skeleton.

Gargantuan Tyrannosaurus Skeleton: hp 123; *Monster Manual* 165.

Tactics: The undead tyrannosaur can't move well, and it pretty much takes up the entire room with its bulk. It cannot

pursue creatures out of this room, but it has enough reach that it doesn't have to move far to be an effective guardian.

K49. SAFE CAVERN

The fairly narrow passage leading to this chamber is too small for the tyrannosaur skeleton to reach into. A PC who makes it to this cave might be able to do significant damage to the skeleton from the safety of this room.

K50. UNDEAD SPIDERS (EL 5)

The stink in this cavern is overwhelming. Sticky pools of congealed fluid lie in depressions in the floor, having drained from several rotting giant spider carcasses that have been pushed up against the northwest wall.

Creatures: Once in a while, some of the spiders in the southern caves curl up and die. Every time this happened, Tarkilar used his *wand of animate dead* (which has long since run out of charges) to animate the dead spider as a zombie before leading it back to this room and releasing it from his control. Currently, six Large monstrous spider zombies lurk in this room.

Large Monstrous Spider Zombies (6): hp 35, 33, 31, 30, 27, 22; *Monster Manual* 192.

K51. GLYPHS OF WARDING (EL 6)

Trap: Triel recently purchased two scrolls of *glyph of warding* and used them to ward the exits to this cavern. Each *glyph* is identical, and triggers when an intruder passes over it.

Glyphs of Warding: CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [blast], 5th level cleric, Reflex save, DC 14, half damage, 2d8 sonic); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

K52. CULT TREASURY (EL 8)

This cave glitters and glows; the volcanic rock here has formed millions of tiny black and red crystals that catch the light from a *continual flame* near the door and reflect it back a millionfold. The one thing that doesn't glitter is a large slab of dull black stone in the center of the room.

The slab of hardened lava in the middle of the chamber was originally naturally formed, but the cultists found its remote location and size intriguing enough that they hired a pair of dwarves (who were later used to create the **Creatures** that guard this place) to transform the block of stone into a clever chest. A successful Search check (DC 25) determines that the top of the stone slab is hinged and can be opened. Doing so triggers the **Trap** and reveals the cult's **Treasure**.

Creatures: The two dwarves the cultists hired to build the chest were rewarded with two rare gifts Tarkilar procured at great expense: a pair of worms harvested from a spawn of Kyuss. Tarkilar implanted the worms into the two dwarves after chaining them to the chest, and then watched in glee as the worms transformed the dwarves into undead mockeries of their former selves. Tarkilar then used his ability to command undead to force the new spawn to serve as guardians.

Unfortunately, when Tarkilar accidentally transformed himself into a huecuva, he lost control of the spawn. Neither Skaven nor Triel could command them, and since that fateful day three months ago, none of them has been able to approach the treasury. Triel eventually planned to steal the *wands of control water* and then ransom them back to earn enough money to buy some items capable of controlling the spawn as well as Tarkilar. In the meantime, Triel had a *+1 silver heavy flail* constructed (she currently wields it) in case the huecuva went berserk.

In the meantime, the two spawn of Kyuss are content to lurk here, attacking anything that has the misfortune of entering.

Spawn of Kyuss (2): hp 33, 29; *Monster Manual II* 186, or see the "Flood Season" Web enhancement.

Trap: The chest is coated with a thin layer of nitharit poison.

Poisoned Chest: CR 5; mechanical; touch trigger; manual reset; poison (nitharit, Fortitude save, DC 13, resists, 0/3d6 Con); Search (DC 25); Disable Device (DC 19).

Treasure: The chest contains several leather sacks filled with coins: 15,500 cp, 8,000 sp, 4,500 gp, and 200 pp. Most of this consists of payment for the successful creation of the *Soulcage*.

K53. RUBBLE-FILLED ROOM

The floor of this large cavern is nearly completely covered by a partial cave-in that created a huge mound of loose debris in the center of the room. You can see a few hands and legs protruding from the rubble.

This cave-in happened about the time Tarkilar was transformed into a huecuva. The resulting shockwave of energy triggered a collapse in the already weak ceiling of this cavern, destroying several zombies and skeletons Tarkilar had stationed here to prevent interruptions to his ritual.

Clambering over the rubble is possible with a successful Climb or Balance check (DC 15); the rubble prevents a PC in this room from safely using ranged weapons to attack the tyrannosaur skeleton in area **K48** without being in range of the skeleton's 20-foot reach.

K54. GLYPH TRAP (EL 4)

Trap: Tarkilar warded the narrow passageway between areas **K54** and **K55** with a single *glyph of warding* before he was transformed.

Glyph of Warding: CR 4; spell; spell trigger; no reset; spell effect (*glyph of warding* [*blindness*], Fortitude save, DC 16, negates); Search (DC 28); Disable Device (DC 28).

K55. UNDEAD MINIONS (EL 4)

Once Tarkilar became a huecuva, he lost control of many of his undead. He quickly relocated these former minions to this chamber, where they await intruders.

Creatures: The eight humanoid zombies in here lurch into life when intruders enter this room.

Medium Zombies (8): hp 16 each; *Monster Manual* 191.

K56. TARKILAR'S CAVERN (EL 9)

This cavern has seen better days. It was probably once a fairly well-appointed room, complete with carpets, a laboratory, a small altar, and a bed, but some recent terrific explosion has scattered the furnishings of the room into piles of twisted rubble along the edges of the cave.

This room is the lair of the third cultist, Tarkilar.

Creatures: Tarkilar spends most of his time worrying at the wires that bind his chainmail to his bones and arguing with what he thinks are the voices in his head. In truth, these voices are real and come from an invisible quasit named Gutterrut who once served Tarkilar as a minion but is now only a tormentor.

Tarkilar, Male Gnoll Huecuva Clr4/Rgr1/Ftr1: CR 9; Medium Undead; HD 8d12+3; hp 62; Init +0; Spd 20 ft.; AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21; BAB +6/+1; Grap +11; Atk +12/+7 melee (2d4+8, *+1 spiked chain*) or +9 melee (1d6+5, slam); SA spells, favored enemy (elves +2), rebuke/command undead, huecuva blight; SQ darkvision 60 ft., turn resistance +2, damage reduction 15/silver, divine conversion, wild empathy; AL CE; SV Fort +6, Ref +1, Will +7; Str 20, Dex 10, Con —, Int 7, Wis 17, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +8*, Concentration +7, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +6, Search +2, Spot +9. *Feats*: Craft Wondrous Item, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (spiked chain), Power Attack, Toughness, Track.

Divine Conversion: A cleric who becomes a huecuva loses access to the domains he had in life and replaces them with the Death and Evil domains.

Huecuva Blight (Su): Victims hit with a successful attack must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 14) or fall prey to the huecuva blight. The incubation period is one day, and it immediately causes 1d2 points of temporary Strength and temporary Constitution damage after the incubation period. An infected victim must make a saving throw each day or take another 1d2 points of temporary Strength and temporary Constitution damage. The effects of huecuva blight are cumulative each day until the victim reaches 0 Constitution (and dies), makes two consecutive successful saves, or receives magical treatment (such as a *remove disease* spell).

Spells Prepared (5/5/4; base save DC = 13 + spell level): 0—*detect magic* ×2, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*; 1st—*cause fear**, *doom*, *divine favor*, *entropic shield*, *obscuring mist*; 2nd—*desecrate**, *bull's strength*, *hold person*, *silence*.

*Domain Spell. *Domains*: Death (death touch 1/day), Evil (evil spells cast at +1 caster level).

Languages: Gnoll

Possessions: *+1 chainmail* (wired directly to his flesh and bones—removing it takes 1 hour of work), *+1 spiked chain* (wired directly to his arms—removal takes 10 minutes and Tarkilar cannot be disarmed), *wand of inflict moderate wounds* (35 charges), garnet-studded gold holy symbol of Erythnul (425 gp).

Until recently, Tarkilar was the most powerful of the three cultists. As a 7th-level cleric/1st-level ranger/1st-level fighter, he commanded the most defensible lair in the complex and served as the main point of contact between this group and their mysterious superiors. This all ended a few months ago. Flush with money from the completion of the *Soulcage*, Tarkilar was finally able to afford a costly component to a ritual he believed would transform him into a lich. Unfortunately, the ritual was botched and caused a great explosion in this room (which also collapsed the ceiling of area **K53**); Tarkilar was slain by the explosion, but at the same time, the necromantic ritual partially worked. He rose from the ashes of his failure as a huecuva. Unfortunately, the ritual drained him of several levels of experience and left him a raving lunatic. Since the failure, he has lurked in his cavern with only Gutterrut, a quasit he befriended with the aid of a *lesser planar ally* spell, as company.

Tarkilar is an intimidating sight: an undead gnoll with a suit of chainmail and a spiked chain wired directly onto his rotting flesh. He's nearly skeletal, and his dry skin is stretched tight over his bones. Clumps of his fur have torn free, leaving several bald patches in his once-thick pelt. His eyes glow with a nasty yellow light, as does his saliva. His fangs are jagged, sharp, and broken.

Gutterrut, Quasit: hp 16; *Monster Manual* 41.

Gutterrut takes great glee in watching his one-time pal slowly grow insane. A few weeks ago, Tarkilar's friendship with the quasit finally faded and he attacked Gutterrut, who escaped by turning invisible and flying away. Since then, Gutterrut has entertained himself by tormenting the huecuva by pretending to be a set of different personalities arguing in its head.

Tactics: Upon seeing living creatures enter his lair, Tarkilar flies into a kill-crazy rampage, casting spells until an enemy comes within range of his spiked chain, then resorting to melee attacks. The undead gnoll is a cunning combatant and uses Power Attack wisely. If an alarm has been raised in the complex, Tarkilar has already cast his long-duration defensive spells. Gutterrut watches quietly from a vantage point on the northern wall, waiting to see who wins the battle. If the PCs win, the quasit follows them around invisibly and waits for a good chance to cause some mischief.

Treasure: Gutterrut recently stole the eighth *wand of control water* from Triel, who has yet to notice the theft. Gutterrut isn't quite sure what to do with the *wand*, but he knows Triel wants it. Eventually, he plans to use it as a bargaining chip with the beautiful cleric to gain her as an ally.

CONCLUSION: FIGHTING THE FLOOD

Once the party manages to recover all eight *wands of control water*, they should return to the surface and report the good news to Jenya. Their return couldn't happen at a better time. The rains have been hitting Cauldron hard, and the central lake has just started to seep into the closest buildings. If the waters aren't controlled soon, the flood damage could be extensive. Jenya takes one of the wands and calls upon the aid of the fellow clerics in her church, as well as those of Kord, Pelor, and Wee Jas—no clerics of Wee Jas respond. She might also call upon any PCs who can use the wands to help. Over the next few

miserable hours, Jenya, any divine spellcasting PCs, and the other clerics can force back the waters until the rains falter. The whole ordeal takes 1d4+4 hours, –1 hour for each two *wands of control water* recovered; the night drains a total of 80 charges from the wands (split evenly among all the wands recovered). After the night is over, though, the PCs have saved several businesses from suffering great damage, and they find their popularity in the city rising once again.

The rains continue on and off throughout the rest of the winter, but it's nothing that the newly recovered wands can't handle. Eventually, the winter passes, and the churches of Cauldron prepare for the year with a newfound respect for the Flood Festival. Jenya gladly pays the PCs their reward (5,000 gp), even if the were good-hearted enough not to ask for one in the first place. All is well again in Cauldron . . . for the time being. . . .

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

Although Flood Season is over, and the PCs have earned a much deserved break, the campaign is just beginning. The PCs should have reached 6th level by the end of this adventure. This should put them in prime condition to begin the third installment of the **Adventure Path: Shackled City** series, which will appear in DUNGEON #102. The PCs have probably forged some lasting friendships with some of the local citizens, such as Jenya, Shensen, and even Artus; they have likely made some powerful enemies whether any of the villains survived or not. Perhaps most important of all, their fame is growing by leaps and bounds. Only time will tell how some of the less-well-intentioned factions in and around Cauldron respond to the PCs growing power and fame.

APPENDIX I: NEW MONSTER

Harpoon Spider
Large Aberration
Hit Dice: 4d8+8 (26 hp)
Initiative: +4
Speed: 40 ft., climb 20 ft.
Armor Class: 16 (–1 size, +4 Dex, +3 natural), touch 13, flat-footed 12
Base Attack/Grapple: +3/+10
Attack: Bite +5 melee, or two fangs +6 ranged
Full Attack: Bite +5 melee and two fangs +6 ranged
Damage: Bite 2d4+4 and poison, or fangs 1d4 plus harpooning
Space/Reach: 10 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks: Harpooning, poison
Special Qualities: Darkvision 120 ft., evasion, spines, web movement
Saves: Fort +3, Ref +7, Will +5
Abilities: Str 16, Dex 18, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 12, Cha 9
Skills: Balance +6, Climb +16*, Hide +8, Jump +16*, Spot +6, Tumble +10
Feats: Combat Reflexes, Improved Trip (B), Lightning Reflexes
Environment: Any underground
Organization: Solitary, pair, or nest (3–12)
Challenge Rating: 5
Treasure: Standard
Alignment: Usually chaotic evil
Advancement: 5–8 HD (Large), 9–12 HD (Huge)

A denizen of the Underdark, the harpoon spider is a lightning fast predator much feared by other denizens of the "night below."

Close examination reveals that the harpoon spider isn't a true spider at all, but something far more sinister. It superficially resembles a horse-sized black widow, save that it has ten legs and a body covered with hundreds of razor sharp spines. Each of its legs terminates in a tiny clawed hand, and its eight eyes are horribly humanlike. It can extend either of its large mandibles on a long leathery tendril with surprising force.

Harpoon spiders are quite intelligent and can often be found nesting with ettercaps and monstrous spiders. The harpoon spiders use these creatures to bolster the defenses of their lair. They have particularly morbid senses of humor and enjoy "playing" with their food while it ripens on their spines.

Harpoon spiders speak Undercommon.



COMBAT

A harpoon spider is a hunter, often stalking victims in a large territory around its lair. In combat, it uses its harpoon fangs to reel in prey, using its Improved Trip feat to administer a bite once its opponent has been reeled in. If the terrain permits, the spider prefers to attack victims from high vantage points (such as ledges).

Harpooning (Ex): As a full attack action, a harpoon spider can make two attacks with its fangs, firing them up to a range of 30 feet. The spider can fire at two different targets if it chooses, and can fire at targets at range while biting a close opponent without provoking an attack of opportunity. A successful hit deals 1d4 points of damage as the harpoon hooks the flesh of the target and immediately exudes a thick, sticky glue. The spider can reel in a harpoon as a free action; treat this as a trip attack against any creature attached to the fang. Failure indicates that the harpoon rips free (and deals another 1d4 points of damage to the victim). Success indicates that the victim is pulled off its feet and dragged back to the spider, who can immediately make a free bite attack against the victim. The harpoon spider can only pull a creature smaller than itself in this manner. Attempts to retract a creature of its size or larger automatically cause the fang to rip free as if the trip attack failed. The glue exuded by the spider's fangs quickly decomposes, and at the end of the spider's action the fang automatically detaches.

Poison (Ex): Bite, Fortitude save (DC 14); initial damage 1d6 temporary Dexterity, secondary damage 2d6 temporary Dexterity.

Spines (Ex): Any creature that attacks a harpoon spider with a Small or smaller weapon (including unarmed and natural attacks) must make a Reflex saving throw (DC 16) or suffer 1d6 points of piercing damage from the spider's spines. As a full-round action, a harpoon spider can pick up a smaller helpless creature with its legs and impale the body on the spines; causing 2d6 points of piercing damage. The spider can carry up to three Medium creatures in this manner (although if it carries two, it has a medium load, and if it carries three it has a heavy load). Harpoon spiders often carry their next meals in this manner.

Web Movement (Ex): Although they cannot spin webs themselves, harpoon spiders can climb around and through webs with ease using their climb speed. They are immune to the effects of the *web* spell.

Skills: *A harpoon spider gains a +8 racial bonus on Climb and Jump checks.

Feats: The harpoon spider gains the Improved Trip feat as a bonus feat, even though it does not have Combat Expertise.

APPENDIX II: CREATING A WEREBABOON

"Werebaboon" is a lycanthrope template that can be added to any humanoid or giant (referred to hereafter as the "character").

Size and Type: The character's type does not change, but the character gains the shapechanger subtype. The werebaboon can assume the shape and characteristics of a baboon. It may also adopt a hybrid shape that combines features of the character and the baboon. A werebaboon's hybrid form is the same size as the baboon or base form, whichever is larger.

A werebaboon uses either the character's or the baboon's statistics and special abilities in addition to those set out below.

Hit Dice and Hit Points: Same as the character plus 1d8 from the baboon form. To calculate total hit points, apply Constitution modifiers according to the score the lycanthrope has in each form. For example a human commoner with a Constitution score of 11 as a human and a Constitution score of 13 as a baboon has 1d4 plus 1d8+1 hit points.

Speed: Same as the character or baboon, depending on which form the lycanthrope is using.

Armor Class: The character's natural armor increases by +2 in all forms. In hybrid form, the lycanthrope's natural armor bonus is equal to the natural armor bonus of its animal form or its base form, whichever is better.

Base Attack/Grapple: Add the base attack for the baboon (+0) to the base attack for the character. The werebaboon's grapple bonus uses its attack and modifiers for Strength and size depending on the werebaboon's form.

Attacks: Same as the character or baboon, depending on which form the werebaboon is using. A werebaboon in hybrid form gains a bite for natural attacks. This inflicts damage based on the hybrid form's size:

Hybrid Size	Bite
Small	1d4
Medium	1d6
Large	1d8
Huge	2d6

A hybrid may attack with a weapon and a bite, or may attack with its natural attacks. The bite attack of a hybrid is a secondary attack, but does not penalize the character's attacks with any weapons it wields or its claws. A werebaboon in hybrid form may attack with weapons and use its bite attack as a secondary weapon in place of a weapon wielded in its off hand.

Damage: Same as the character or baboon, depending on which form the lycanthrope is using.

Special Attacks: A werebaboon retains all of the special attacks of the character or animal, depending on which form it is using, and gains those listed below. A werebaboon spellcaster cannot cast spells with V, S, or M components in animal form, or spells with V components in hybrid form.

Curse of Lycanthropy (Su): Any humanoid or giant hit by a natural werebaboon's bite attack in animal or hybrid form must succeed at a Fortitude save (DC 15) or contract lycanthropy. If the victim is not within one size category of the werebaboon (for example, a hill giant bitten by a wererat), the victim cannot contract lycanthropy from that lycanthrope. Afflicted lycanthropes cannot pass on the curse of lycanthropy.

Special Qualities: A werebaboon retains all the special qualities of the character and the baboon, and also gains the following:

Alternate Form (Su): A werebaboon can shift into baboon or

hybrid form as though using the *polymorph* spell on itself, though its gear is not affected and it does not regain hit points for changing form. It does not assume the ability scores of the animal, but instead adds the baboon's physical ability score modifiers to its own ability scores, as detailed below. A werebaboon can also assume a bipedal hybrid form with opposable thumbs and animalistic features. Changing to or from baboon or hybrid form is a standard action. A slain werebaboon reverts to its humanoid form, although it remains dead. Separated body parts retain their baboon form, however. Afflicted werebaboons find this ability difficult to control, but natural lycanthropes have full control over this power.

Damage Reduction (Ex): A werebaboon in animal or hybrid form gains DR 10/silver.

Lycanthropic Empathy (Ex): In any form, werebaboons can communicate and empathize with baboons. This gives them a +4 racial bonus to checks when influencing the baboon's attitude and allows the communication of simple concepts and (if the baboon is friendly) commands, such as "friend," "foe," "flee," and "attack."

Low-light Vision (Ex): The werebaboon gains low-light vision in any form.

Scent (Ex): The werebaboon gains scent in any form.

Base Saves: The werebaboon adds its base saves as a baboon (Fort +2 and Ref +2) to its total saves.

Abilities: All werebaboons gain +2 to Wisdom. In addition, when in baboon or hybrid form, a werebaboon's physical ability scores improve as follows: Strength +4, Dexterity +4, Constitution +2.

Skills: The lycanthrope gains skill points equal to (2 + Int modifier, minimum 1), as if it had multiclassed into the animal type. (Animal is never its first Hit Die, though, and it does not gain quadruple skill points for any animal Hit Dice.) Climb, Listen, and Spot are the baboon's class skills.

Feats: Werebaboons receive Alertness and Iron Will as a bonus feat.

Environment: Same as either the character or baboon.

Organization: Solitary or pair, sometimes family (2–4), or troop (6–10)

Challenge Rating: By class level +2

Treasure: Standard

Alignment: Usually lawful evil. This is a reflection of how the baboon is perceived, not any innate quality of the baboon itself, so the Dungeon Master can arbitrarily assign the alignment of the animal form.

Advancement: By character class

Level Adjustment: Same as the character, +2 (afflicted) or +3 (natural). In addition, the character's effective character level is increased by +1 (the racial hit dice of a baboon). Ω

James Jacobs writes, "When I was a kid, I saw a picture of a baboon. The baboon had a huge bloody gash on its face (I assumed from the gape-mouthed, fanged baboon in the picture on the facing page), and was staring directly into the camera with a look of pure evil. Ever since, baboons have freaked me out. When I heard that the werebaboon laid waste to the PCs when this adventure was playtested, I knew my terror had not been misdirected. Beware the baboons!"

DUNGEON #99 PREVIEWS

"Quadripartite"

By Peter Aperlo

When a mortal exposes himself to the secrets beyond time and space, he risks unlocking more than power. Such is the case when a mad wizard contacts these forces of chaos and summons them to the Prime Material plane. Only the assembled pieces of the Quadripartite can enable the PCs to defeat the minion of chaos and save the countryside from utter devastation. A D&D adventure for 14th-level PCs.



And a bonus for our subscribers...

"Fish Story"

By Adam Jortner

An elemental force threatens to break free from its ancient prison and overwhelm the village of Waterford. If the heroes act quickly, they can find a way to either negotiate with this great power or defeat it, but the repercussions of their actions might have more far-reaching consequences than they could foresee. A D&D adventure for 7th-level PCs.

Plus, "Maps of Mystery," "Critical Threats," and a new *Polyhedron* Mini-Game!



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POLY POLY

Living GREYHAWK Journal
The Blinding Sands of the Bright Lands

Down with the Drow!
Introducing Downer



Polyhedron 157

RPGA NETWORK

d20 system

Gun-Fu Fighting

Kunoichi of **The Kage**

What's All This, Then?



You're holding the first monthly issue of *Dungeon/Polyhedron Magazine*. When we merged with *Dungeon* more than a year ago, we were excited about sharing the latest d20 System and RPGA news with a wider variety of readers. We invented the concept of the d20 Mini-Game to test out new spins on the familiar d20 game engine, prettied up and modified to run with a variety of nonstandard genres. We got RPGA bigwig Ian Richards to write a regular column for us, updating readers on the newest developments with the largest organization of tabletop roleplayers in the world. We grabbed our buddy Stan! and had him create *Bolt & Quiver*, a cartoon we hoped would strike a fire with readers.

Then, we stood back and waited.

For the most part, your reactions were very encouraging. Response to the Mini-Games in particular has been phenomenal. Readers sent letters every month asking for more Mini-Games, more support for the Mini-Games we've already published, and more coverage and support of other d20 System and Open Game License games already on the market.

That caused a bit of a problem. The average *Polyhedron* Mini-Game runs about 40–60 pages. The games themselves take up most of the issues in which they appear, leaving little room for industry news, coverage of games like the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*, *d20 Modern*, or games by other publishers.

We at the magazine wanted to provide that extra content. The readers definitely wanted (even demanded, in some cases) that content. But we didn't have the pages.

Enter maverick publisher Johnny Wilson. Johnny, you see, had a plan.

Johnny's idea, totally unrelated to our page paucity plight, was to transform *Dungeon/Polyhedron* into a monthly magazine. 100 pages. The first month, 60 pages would go to the *Dungeon* side and 40 would be dedicated to *Polyhedron*. The next month, that ratio would be flipped, with *Polyhedron* moving into pole position.

After *Dungeon* Editor Chris Thomasson and I stopped desperately shrieking and flailing around Johnny's office for a week or two, we came to see his cunning plan as brilliance in the disguise of lunacy. Increasing the magazine's frequency would get *Dungeon* adventures into the hands of DMs more frequently, and would allow us to stay on top of the always-developing d20 industry.

It also solved the problem of how to support our existing Mini-Games and how to incorporate a wider array of topics and articles in *Polyhedron*.

So there you have it. When *Poly's* in the 60-page pole position you'll receive a complete Mini-Game augmented by the usual news and support features you've come to expect (and we hope appreciate) from *Polyhedron*. In the shorter months (like this one, for example), we'll include support for games like *d20 Modern* and *Star Wars*, and we'll also revisit old Mini-Games like *Pulp Heroes* and *V for Victory*, adding or expanding upon those games with additional material you can drop instantly into your campaigns.

We've also come up with a few more interesting surprises. Our RPGA readers will want to keep an eye out for the *Living Greyhawk Journal*, previously found in *Dragon Magazine*. The *Journal* provides all the rules and news you need to play the world's biggest D&D campaign, and often comes with an article or articles expanding the legendary World of Greyhawk.

Lastly, this issue sees the birth of a new *Polyhedron* cartoon, *Downer*, by Art Director Kyle Hunter. *Downer* has a lot to say about the type of worlds we gamers know, love, and occasionally groan at, so we've given him a monthly outlet for his observations and misadventures.

Trust me, there will be hijinx aplenty.

Which is nice, because *Hijinx* is the name of our next Mini-Game, a rock-and-roll cartoon crime-solving extravaganza in the spirit of *Jabberjaw*, *Josie and the Pussycats*, and the *Gorillaz*. No kidding.

See you in 30!

ERIK

Bolt and Quiver by Stan!





The Polyhedron Interview

The Game Mechanics

A few months ago, Wizards of the Coast laid off several members of its RPG R&D department as part of across-the-board cost-saving measures that touched most divisions of the company. Rather than look at the development as a defeat, however, a handful of displaced staffers banded together to form a new d20 design studio, The Game Mechanics.

We recently sat down with The Game Mechanics President JD Wiker (*Star Wars Roleplaying Game*), Vice President and General Manager Rich Redman (*GeneTech*, *d20 Modern*, *Savage Species*), Creative Director Stan! (*Bolt & Quiver*, *d20 Modern*), and Secretary/"Web Guy" Marc Schmalz to discuss the company's origins and where it's headed.

POLY: How'd you come together?
Redman: Stan! and I and JD got laid off in that order on the same morning. The three of us ended up in exactly the same outplacement seminar, which was supposed to teach you how to write your resumé and how to do interviews and goal assessment and all this other stuff. We were in there for two days, with Jeff Grubb and Peter Kim and a bunch of really good people from Wizards. JD looked around and looked at all the talent that was in the room and said "we should start our own game company." Stan! and I immediately agreed that that was a good idea.

POLY: What makes your company stand out in an overcrowded marketplace?
Schmalz: What it boils down to is that if someone buys a Game Mechanics product, they are buying a game from the people who wrote the base game. Rich has a [3.5] *Dungeon Master's Guide* credit. Stan! co-designed *d20 Modern* and *Urban Arcana*. If you buy a product from us, you already own products by these guys.

POLY: What's the Game Mechanics approach to game design?
Wiker: I hunt for ideas I think players would like to see, and then I translate those ideas to rules. *Swords of Our Fathers*, our first product, is really a good example. The idea came about because we realized that swords in fantasy literature are like "oh, this is my sword, I've carried it since I was four." In D&D, you just don't see that. Swords are a tradable commodity. You get it, you use it for a while, you find a better one and then you sell the old one. *Huh?* That's not the fantasy literature I read. Where's *Stormbringer?* Where's *Excalibur?* Where's *Glamdring?* They're not there, right? And so I said "let's do something to make it so that people can do that sort of story, so they have that sword that their father gave them." "*Swords of Our Fathers*." That's the whole idea behind it.

POLY: What else is in the hopper?
Redman: *Staves of Ascendance* is the second book in the *Scion Series*, which started with *Swords of Our Fathers*. It follows a lot of the same reasoning as that book in that magic staves are disposable items in D&D. You get 'em, you use 'em 'til your 50 charges are gone. In some ways they're less efficient than wands.

Stan!: I'm working on a product called the *Modern Player's Companion*. It's basically character stuff for players of *d20 Modern*. New occupations, new feats, new advanced classes. We're going to have occupations like bohemian, educator, and tribal. There's going to be an advanced class that deals with long range, more along the lines of sniper, sharpshooter material.

Wiker: We're going to [publish] pdfs for the foreseeable future, partly because printing is something we just don't have any experience with. It's going to be expensive, and we don't want to have a huge outlay of cash to put another product on the shelves when the shelves are very, very crowded. That being the case, we're hoping to someday share that space, possibly in a position of prominence.

Visit The Game Mechanics at www.thegamemechanics.com

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d20 system

RPG OBJECTS

News from the Top

Winter Fantasy 2003

RPGA NETWORK

Experienced national convention-goers know to plan wisely for an RPG con, since there's usually so many interesting seminars or cool booths in the dealer hall that it's pretty easy to forget that the whole point of the convention is playing games. At WINTER FANTASY, the focus is squarely on RPGA gaming, with numerous special LIVING campaign events, "classic" characters-provided tournaments, live-action interactives, and activity centers where players can update their LIVING campaign characters.

This year's WINTER FANTASY, which took place January 23–26 at the Ft. Wayne Convention Center in Ft. Wayne, Indiana, offered a chance for RPGA friends from around the country and the world to gather for four days of slaying dragons, killing dark elves, and sharing good times and great memories.

Before the show, players had a chance to play some regional LIVING GREYHAWK scenarios at a "Verbobonc Madness" pre-convention event hosted by the local LIVING GREYHAWK Triad. A special Thursday-morning seminar gave judges the first-ever sneak peek at the new "3.5" DUNGEONS & DRAGONS rules revision, set for a July release. Guest of Honor Andy Collins and a host of Wizards of the Coast business folk gave gamers the skinny on the new rules and revealed never-before-seen art of the mummy lord (from the new *Monster Manual*) and the arcane theurge (from the new *Dungeon Master's Guide*).

The network kicked things up a notch in the appearance department this year. Attendees entered the main convention hall to the sight of dozens of huge banners featuring D&D art and familiar LIVING campaign logos hanging from the walls and ceiling. One special event, the LIVING GREYHAWK *Assault on the Vault*, involved huge miniature-scale dioramas of Dwarven Forge Master Maze resin dungeon walls and floors. During every slot of the convention, nervous gamers sat (or stood) around these tables, hoping beyond hope that their characters would make it out of the infamous Vault of the Drow alive (most of them did).

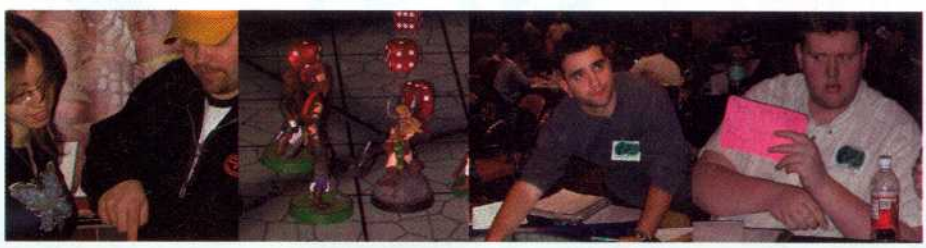
The Network's LIVING FORCE campaign drew high numbers, with many gamers flocking to the interactive, where players celebrated the life of a beloved inhabitant of the Cularin system. Those who missed the show can keep up with the progressing storyline by ordering the *Forces of Cularin* trilogy from RPGA HQ.

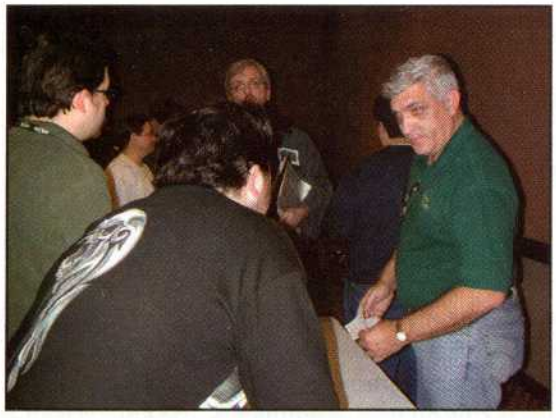
The venerable LIVING CITY campaign entered a new era with the debut of *Ruins of Ravens Bluff*, a new campaign with all new characters. The LC campaign has seen numerous huge-scale changes over the last year, some of which we'll cover here in the near future.

The biggest surprise of the show might have been the overwhelming popularity of the LIVING ARCANIS campaign. Set in the homeworld of d20 System publisher Paradigm Concepts, LIVING ARCANIS has been growing steadily over the last year, and is starting to look like one of the major LIVING campaigns. The campaign's Friday night "battle interactive" (see next page) hosted more than 100 gamers over six hours.

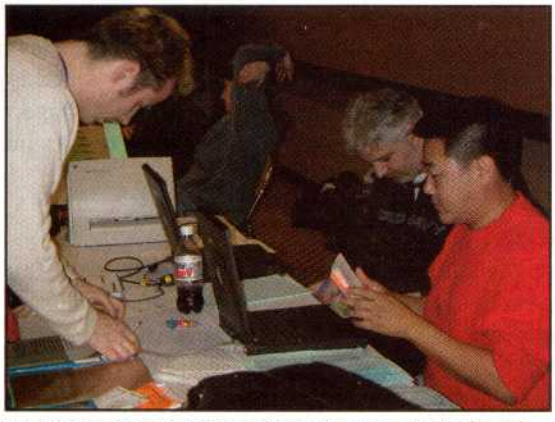
All in all, WINTER FANTASY was a huge success, with hundreds of gamers sharing good times and great combats. We hope to see you there next year!

—ERIK MONA

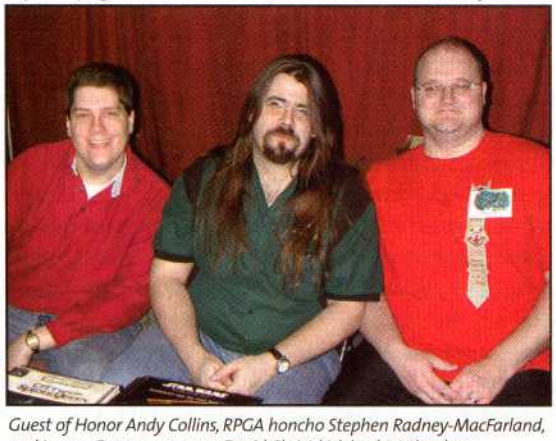




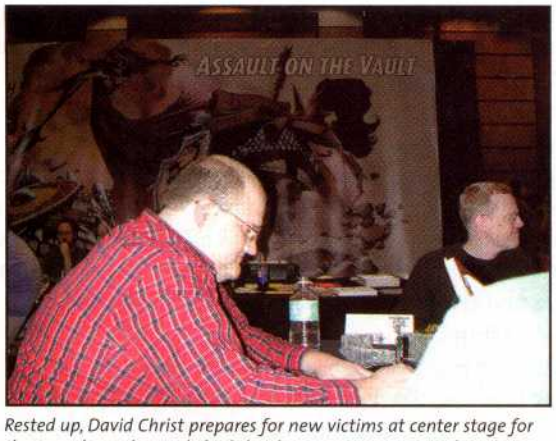
Paradigm Concepts president Henry Lopez leads the troops in the Living Arcanis Battle Interactive.



Living City president and game industry swami Ryan Dancey (center) helps campaign coordinator Hohn Cho at the Living City activity center.



Guest of Honor Andy Collins, RPGA honcho Stephen Radney-MacFarland, and Living Greyhawk muse David Christ kick back at the show.



Rested up, David Christ prepares for new victims at center stage for the Assault on the Vault *high-level Living Greyhawk Delve.*

Living Arcanis
THE WORLD OF SHATTERED EMPIRES™

The Battle Interactive

The Battle of Semar was an exclusive event run by the Living Arcanis campaign for Winter Fantasy 2003. The battle interactive gave Living Arcanis players a chance to determine the outcome of the battle depicted in the cover art of the *Codex Arcanis* campaign guide. The players fought together as part of a multinational force known as "The Shining Patrol." The evil Ssethregoran Empire provided their opposition.

The interactive was a 6-hour event divided into several elements including combat, roleplaying, and decision-making. The combat elements were challenging, with player decisions affecting the outcomes more often than brute force. Some missions included rescuing helpless townfolk, finding lost supplies, and capturing key terrain for future use. The results of each combat element were tallied during roleplaying interludes where the players could mingle, "in character," with other players and pick up useful information, healing, or equipment. Depending on mission outcomes, some players also used this time to find new adventuring parties or to form new tables. After each interlude, the players returned to their standard-sized tables and began a new series of challenges. The challenge difficulties were heavily influenced by the results of previous missions. This interactive was unique in that individual players could have a completely different experience based on their decisions and mission outcomes.

The turnout for the event was nearly overwhelming. Despite setting a limit on ticket sales to 120, the event was over-sold, requiring more tables, more room, and more staff. Thanks to the helpful, hard-working people manning RPGA HQ, things were fixed in short order and the interactive grew to accommodate everyone. The interactive began with more than 21 full-sized RPGA-sanctioned tables, and despite some attrition, finished with more than 20.

Some of the highlights of the interactive included having more than 20 players volunteer for a suicide mission designed for 6 and raising more than $2,200 for the Muscular Dystrophy Foundation.

At the end of the battle, the players carried the day by a total of 12 to 8. Evil was narrowly thwarted...until next time.—Derrel Weaver

The Kage

By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Atilla Adorjany

Few would argue that the proud warrior traditions of Japan have ever fully left the blood of its people. Although Western culture has been fascinated at times with tales of the Land of the Rising Sun's feudal warriors, few know that such warriors exist even today. One such group, the Kage, remain as talented and dangerous as their ancestors, reminding the modern world that Eastern warriors are among the most deadly.

The Kage (pronounced kog-A) began as a group of assassins working for the Yakuza, Japan's brutal mafia. The group's membership has changed repeatedly over the years, both as a result of casualties and advancement of its members into other areas of the crime syndicate. The strikeforce currently consists of six members who have expanded their operations beyond the missions they perform for the Yakuza. Although still technically a branch of the Yakuza syndicate, the Kage have worked for a variety of fringe organizations as mercenaries, and their current roster brings with it a variety of skills and talents that make the group far more than merely paid killers. In recent years, the Kage have been linked to the American and Russian mafias, South American rebels, ex-Soviet warlords, and even a few powerful "legitimate" businessmen in the United States. Their operations have been tracked everywhere from Africa to Afghanistan, though never in time for the authorities to capture them.

The Kage embody the concept of a self-contained fighting force. Although several members have their specialties, each one is a deadly combatant and able to function completely independently of their fellows. Notoriously paranoid about dealing with *gaijin* (foreigners), members typically arrange their contracts through the Yakuza in order to assure reliability.

When not on assignment for the Yakuza, to whom they hold their highest allegiance, they work to hone their skills and spread their parent organization's influence across the globe. With the nearly limitless resources of the Yakuza and all the advanced technology that the Japanese tech industry has to offer at their disposal, the Kage are almost always one step ahead of their targets. When not on assignment, each agent attends to personal matters around the globe. With no distinctive uniform or identifying marks unique to the group, any single member of the Kage would not be immediately linked to the group as a whole, though most government agencies would likely suspect Yakuza involvement given the members' numerous tattoos.

The Kage admits members by invitation only, which they occasionally grant to promising young Yakuza. After one to two years of intensive training, the recruit becomes an active member of the organization and begins taking on field assignments. The Kage screen each recruit for loyalty, dedication, physical and mental prowess, and inherent talent that makes a candidate a unique addition to the team. Each member of the team is given a codename of their choosing, usually something that describes their particular specialties or heritage, and then becomes a member of an elite combat unit trained in deadly Japanese combat traditions.

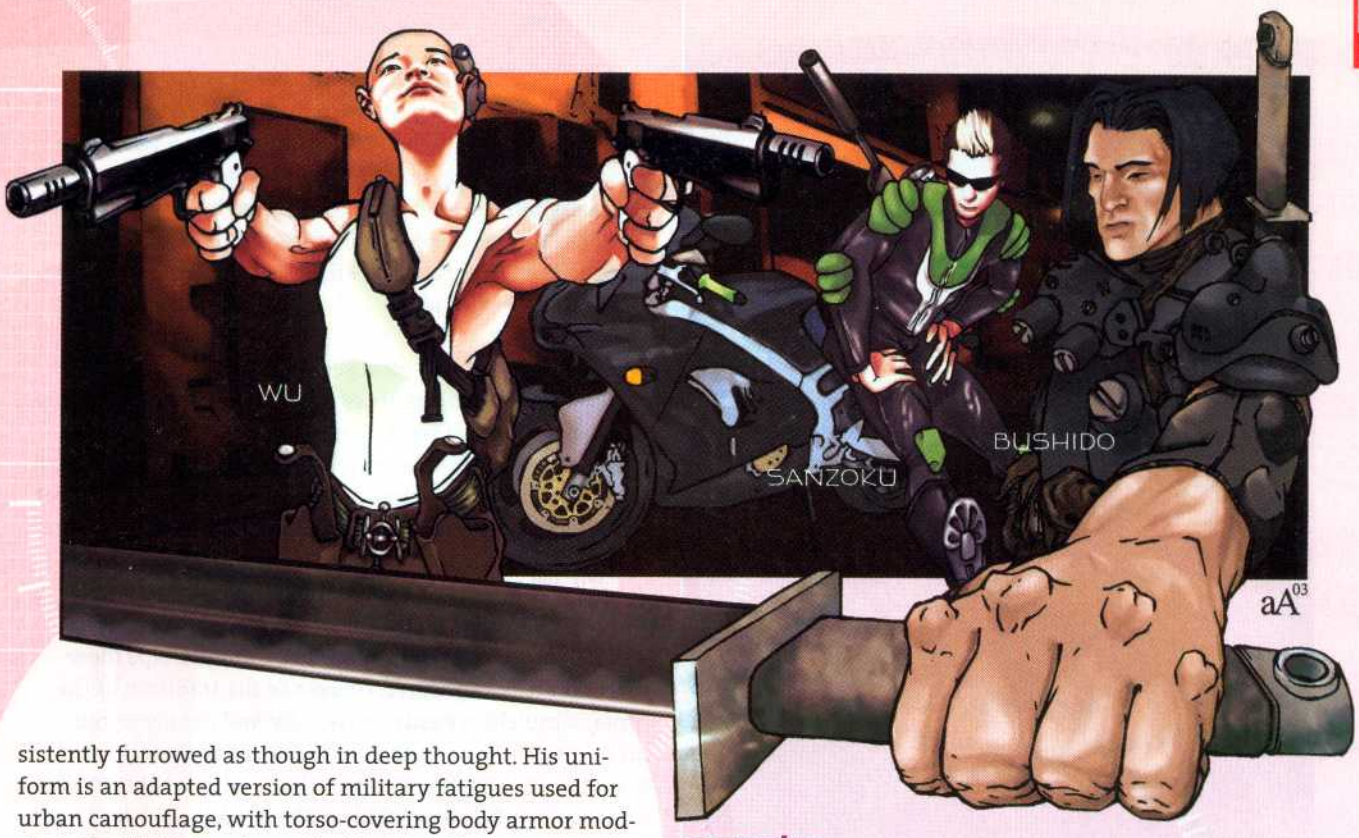
Bushido

Likely the most recognizable member of the Kage, the agent known as Bushido serves as the group's field commander and tactician. A formidable warrior trained in a variety of martial arts styles and sword fighting techniques, Bushido often is the first into battle and is known for an uncharacteristic savagery that seems out of place for the usually frosty mercenary. Cold and calculating when not engaged in combat, Bushido is a no-nonsense leader with an eye for the weaknesses of others. Certain leaders in the Yakuza, and even a former member of the Kage, have admitted that when Bushido's ash-gray eyes lingered on them too long it felt as though they were being weighed, measured, and judged.

Bushido was the orphaned son of a Japanese businessman and his wife who were murdered by Yakuza agents for refusal to pay a tithe to the crime syndicate. Raised as a foster son by one of the top Yakuza crime lords, Bushido quickly found his calling as a student of martial arts. A black belt by age 13 and a sensei at 18, Bushido remained an outcast due to what some saw as brutal training methods and unattainable expectations for his students. Already working for his adopted father from time to time, he was tapped by the then-leader of the Kage for training.

After serving with the group for six years, Bushido assumed leadership of the team and began a streak of victories that impressed his leaders as much as they frightened his enemies. Bushido is one of the most successful team leaders the Kage have ever had, which some chalk up to his absolutely ruthless efficiency; driven by some icy motivation, Bushido focuses on the mission at hand and lets neither mercy nor indecision slow his team's efforts.

Bushido is a young man in his late twenties with jet black hair and flawless dark skin. Though handsome, he seems more brooding than dashing, and his brow is con-



sistently furrowed as though in deep thought. His uniform is an adapted version of military fatigues used for urban camouflage, with torso-covering body armor modeled after that worn by ancient samurai but manufactured of a tough, lightweight material that keeps it from impeding his movement. At his hip he wears a modern katana; the weapon was forged using a light but strong steel alloy mounted on an ergonomically designed hilt, and was honed to incredible sharpness by high-intensity lasers that sharpened the blade down to the molecular level. Additionally, a single Colt M1911 is strapped to the outside of his right thigh, opposite the katana so that either may be drawn with the right hand when needed.

Bushido: (Strong 3/Martial Artist 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8+2 plus 5d8+2; hp 56; Mas 14; Init +2; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 19, flat-footed 19 (+2 Dex, +7 Class, +2 armor); BAB +8/+3; Grap +11; Atk +13/+8 melee (2d6+6, katana), +12/+7 melee (1d8+3, unarmed strike), or +10/+5 ranged (2d6, Colt M1911); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ: Flying kick, iron fist (one attack), improved melee smash, living weapon 1d8, melee smash; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +5, Ref +7, Will +3; AP 9; Rep +1; Wealth +9; Str 16, Dex 14, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 13, Cha 9.

Occupation: Athlete (bonus class skills: Balance, Jump, Tumble).

Skills: Balance +4, Hide +4, Jump +6, Knowledge (tactics) +3, Move Silently +6, Profession (sensei) +4, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Spot +5, Tumble +7.

Feats: Brawl, Combat Martial Arts, Defensive Martial Arts, Elusive Target, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (katana), Personal Firearms Proficiency, Weapon Focus (katana).

Possessions: Colt M1911, GPS receiver, mastercraft katana +1, samurai armor, urban camouflage, walkie-talkie (professional).

Ronin

Much mystery surrounds Ronin. A reliable agent and a dangerous man, Ronin treads near the border of insanity at times. Although reckless with his own life, Ronin has yet to give his teammates reason to consider him a threat to their continued survival. Ronin is an outcast from the group who seems to chafe under Bushido's leadership but has never wavered in his devotion to the Yakuza or to the Kage. In the field, Ronin seems to care little for weighing danger and flings himself headlong into the face of death, miraculously coming out alive each time but counting down the number of times he can do so before his luck runs out. Ronin has no fear of death, or so it seems, and fights with a zeal and borderline madness that makes him impossible to predict and fatal to second guess.

Unlike most of the other members of the Kage, Ronin was not a long-standing member of the Yakuza before joining the team. In fact, he simply appeared in a night-club owned by the syndicate and demanded to speak to Bushido, calling for the leader of the Kage by a codename that was supposed to be unknown to anyone outside the Yakuza. When denied an audience, Ronin simply vanished only to return two weeks later with the heads of the leaders of rival organizations, offering them in good faith in order to gain access to the Kage. Intrigued, Yakuza leaders granted him an audience with Bushido, which he demanded be between he and Bushido alone. After hours in the interrogation room where the conference took place (where, mysteriously, all the Yakuza bugs and listening devices simply ceased to work during the meeting), the two emerged. Bushido announced to a stunned group that Ronin would be joining his team, effective immediately. To this day, none but Ronin and Bushido

New Equipment

The Kage has extensive contacts in Japan's high-tech industry, giving them access to an impressive array of technological wonders.

Kunoichi's Mask

A featureless mask of lacquered crimson, this item was specially made by technicians under orders from the Yakuza for the ninja Kunoichi (though other prototypes may exist). This mask is a marvel of modern Japanese technology and one of the reasons she is so successful in the field: the lenses contain automatic glare dampeners for rapid changes from darkness to light, an infrared filter, a night-vision filter, a three dimensional heads-up display (HUD), and a one-way communications link allowing data to be transferred to her on the fly. The weapon grants the following abilities: Darkvision (200 feet), +2 equipment bonus to Spot checks, and a +2 equipment bonus to Knowledge (tactics) checks when using the HUD.

Wealth DC: 32

Surveillance Disruptor

One of the most useful items in Ronin's varied stock, the surveillance disruptor can confuse electronic surveillance circuits, both audio and visual, within a 30-foot radius. Any attempt to use monitoring equipment, from video cameras to bugs, fails, resulting only in static or highly distorted images, making Ronin something of a ghost to electronic equipment.

Wealth DC: 21

know what was said, but from then forward Bushido seemed to believe that the strange man was as trustworthy as any other member of the organization.

Ronin has a vagabond look about him. A tattered brown leather trench coat covers what appears to be the well-worn remnants of a U.S. Air Force pilot's uniform. His distinctly Asian face, constantly sporting a darkening patch of rough stubble, is shaded by the brim of his equally ragged leather hat; just below the edge of the hat, a wicked vertical scar slashes over his empty left eye socket. The grip of a custom Desert Eagle that Ronin keeps with him at all times peeks from a shoulder holster at the edge of his coat. He always keeps a variety of gadgets and other technological curiosities hidden throughout the pockets of his coat, including a combination earpiece/microphone that he uses to communicate directly with other members of the Kage.

Ronin: (Fast 4/Tough 4); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 4d8+2 plus 4d10+3; hp 64; Mas 17; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 21 (+3 Dex, +8 Class); BAB +6/+1; Grap +8; Atk +8/+3 melee (1d6+1, unarmed strike), or +9/+4 ranged (2d8, Desert Eagle); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Evasion, remain conscious, robust, uncanny dodge 1; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AP 5; Rep +2; Wealth +7; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 14, Wis 15, Cha 13.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Hide, Sleight of Hand).

Skills: Balance +6, Bluff +6, Concentration +7, Drive +5, Escape Artist +6, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (streetwise) +8, Move Silently +7, Read/Write Japanese, Sleight of Hand +7, Speak Japanese, Tumble +8.

Feats: Brawl, Combat Reflexes, Double Tap, Improved Bull Rush, Improved Damage Threshold, Knockout Punch, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Power Attack.

Possessions: GPS receiver, lockpick set, mastercraft Desert Eagle +1, multipurpose tool, penlight, surveillance disruptor, trench coat, uniform, walkie-talkie (professional), plus a variety of unknown technical gadgets.

Kunoichi

Kunoichi's background and identity are perhaps more secret than even Ronin's. Heiress to the tradition of the ninja, Kunoichi is easily as stealthy and deadly as her predecessors. The Yakuza use Kunoichi as their primary assassin and spy; her unique talents with weaponry and impressive infiltration skills make her an asset worth protecting. Superstitious Yakuza whisper that Kunoichi can move without making any more noise than a moth's breath, and that she has never been seen by one of her victims before dying. As the Kage's only female member, Kunoichi stands out in the company of her teammates, but in the field even they see her rarely, if at all.

Authorities know little about Kunoichi beyond the obvious: she has trained for many years in the arts of the ninja and must be of considerable skill to have been chosen by the Kage. Even her teammates know little more than that, but few care to press the issue with a woman who could slit a person's throat and have her weapon re-sheathed before anyone else could reach for their sidearm.

The mystery surrounding Kunoichi, and many of the superstitious whisperings as well, stem from the great lengths to which she has gone to prevent her identity from being known. Kunoichi is completely mute, and utters not a sound even under intense pain or stress. She wears a blood-red lacquered mask at all times, even when training or meeting with other members of the Kage during downtime. The featureless mask covers her whole head, revealing crimson eyes behind a pair of thin slits. Some suspect that the mask conceals the fact that she is the daughter of a powerful Yakuza leader. Other rumors insist that Kunoichi is not one, but two women, identical twins that trade off from mission to mission.

In the field, Kunoichi wears a form-fitting black bodysuit that hugs her slender curves perfectly. While on covert missions, her crimson mask is replaced by a more high-tech metallicversion with form-fitting lenses over the eye slits. She wears an antique ninja-to sword across her back with the hilt protruding over her shoulder, a second smaller companion blade on her back parallel to

her hips, and has a suppressed Walther PPK with laser sight strapped to the outside of her thigh.

Kunoichi: (Fast 3/Infiltrator 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8 plus 5d8; hp 40; Mas 11; Init +8; Spd 30 ft; Defense 22, touch 22, flat-footed 18 (+4 Dex, +8 Class); BAB +4; Grap +5; Atk +8 melee (2d6, crit 19-20, ninja-to), +0 melee (1d6, wakizashi), +5 melee (1d6, unarmed strike), or +8 ranged (Walther PPK); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ evasion, improved evasion, improvised implements, skill mastery (Hide, Move Silently, Tumble), sweep, uncanny dodge 1; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +2, Ref +10, Will +4; AP 9; Rep +2; Wealth +10; Str 14, Dex 19, Con 11, Int 10, Wis 15, Cha 9.

Occupation: Criminal (bonus class skills: Hide, Move Silently).

Skills: Balance +8, Climb +8, Escape Artist +6, Hide +15, Jump +10, Listen +7, Move Silently +17, Read/Write Japanese, Search +3, Speak Japanese (understand only), Tumble +13.

Feats: Brawl, Exotic Melee Weapon Proficiency (ninja-to), Improved Initiative, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Stealthy, Quick Draw, Weapon Finesse (ninja-to).

Possessions: Bodysuit, crimson mask, GPS receiver, ninja-to, wakizashi, Walther PPK with laser sight.

sanzoku

Unlike other members of his team, Sanzoku seldom engages in person-to-person combat. As the team's vehicles expert, Sanzoku prefers the high-speed world of motorcycles and sports cars to the up close and personal experience of combat. More than just the driver of the getaway vehicle, Sanzoku is also a scout and an expert marksman, earning him the role of sniper when the mission calls for it. Sanzoku is something of a paradox; on the one hand, he has the desire for speed running through his veins, while on the other hand he sometimes stays still for hours or days at a time when in position to take down a target with his sniper rifle.

Sanzoku was originally a professional motorcycle racer who toured the world participating in dangerous and glory-filled chases. Soon, the legitimate racing circuit began to lose its thrill as officials imposed more and more safety regulations, and Sanzoku soon became bored. He turned to street racing, an even more high-stakes game where the wrong turn meant death and victory meant the greatest exhilaration of his life. Unfortunately, the gambling that came with the street races soon landed Sanzoku into heavy debt to a Yakuza boss, and he was forced to work off that debt by delivering contraband to other criminals all over Tokyo. Sanzoku soon came to realize that the only thing more exhilarating than street racing was outmaneuvering the police, and so began a downward spiral leading him deeper into the criminal underworld. His steady hand and nerves of steel led him to sniper training, and soon he became a multipurpose agent with Kage material written all over him.

Sanzoku is one of the youngest members of the organization, barely 25 years old. He has a motorcycle racer's build and wild hair dyed with streaks of blond. He wears narrow black sunglasses that wrap around the sides of his eyes. A well-trimmed goatee tempers his otherwise boyish face, and he has the phrase "Drop the Hammer" tattooed on the back of his neck in Japanese. Clad in a dark green padded, flame-retardant motorcyclist's suit, Sanzoku rarely goes far from his motorcycle—what else, but a Kawasaki Ninja.

Sanzoku: (Tough 3/Daredevil 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d10+2 plus 5d10+3; hp 69; Mas 16; Init +3; Spd 30 ft; Defense 19, touch 19, flat-footed 16 (+3 Dex, +6 Class); BAB +4; Grap +4; Atk +4 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +7 ranged (2d10, PSG-1); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ action boost, adrenaline rush (one ability score), fearless, nip-up, remain conscious, sonic/concussion resistance; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +2; AP 4; Rep +2; Wealth +4; Str 11, Dex 17, Con 16, Int 10, Wis 13, Cha 11.

Occupation: Athlete (bonus class skills: Balance, Drive, Tumble).

Skills: Balance +8, Concentration +13, Drive +15, Spot +9, Pilot +5, Profession (motorcycle racer) +4, Read/Write Japanese, Speak Japanese, Tumble +7.

Feats: Brawl, Dead Aim, Drive-by Attack, Far Shot, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Vehicle Dodge, Vehicle Expert.

Possessions: GPS receiver, Kawasaki Ninja motorcycle, PSG-1 sniper rifle, racing uniform, walkie-talkie (professional).

wu

The only Kage member not to be a native of the island of Japan, Wu is a Chinese emigrant who escaped his home country as a young man to avoid the communist regime. The team's foremost firearms expert, Wu has honed his sharpshooting skill, combining it with martial arts to create a fighting style many have nicknamed "gun fu." Graceful, quick, and precise, Wu can perform amazing feats of gun slinging with the discipline and speed of a martial arts expert. Seeming to be something out of a Chinese action movie, Wu defies both logic and gravity with sideways leaps and incredible flips, all the while keeping his guns blazing and whipping his firearms around his body at almost unbelievable speeds.

As a young man, Wu was a member of a police force in Beijing. After striking a superior officer (who also happened to be a nephew of a high-ranking government official), Wu was forced into exile and came to Japan. After failed attempts to offer his services to police in Tokyo and to the Japanese government, he turned out of frustration to the Yakuza in order to feed himself and scratch out a living. After long enough, the Yakuza wiped out the cop that he once was, replacing it with a mafia hitman. His unique fighting style saved him many times over in the dangerous world of the Yakuza, but eventually his superiors realized what an asset he would be on their special task force. Despite his Chinese heritage, he was selected for service in the Kage and accepted with-



out hesitation. Now numb to the violence around him, he has little remorse if it means a higher paycheck and a chance for action.

At 37, Wu is the second-oldest member of the Kage team. Still in top physical condition and hardened after years of work on the mean streets of Tokyo, he reveals little emotion, often seeming cold and distant. His inky black eyes constantly track everything he sees as if it were a moving target. His somewhat rounded face reveals his Chinese heritage, and only barely noticeable gray hair marks his temples. He wears a tight black tank top and green military fatigue pants, with black army boots laced up to the middle of his shins. Slung across his hips are a pair of holsters in which sit his prized possessions: a pair of custom-crafted Beretta 93R pistols whose grips were made specifically for his hands, each with the entire text of Sun Tzu's *The Art of War* laser-engraved microscopically along the weapon's barrel.

Wu: (Fast 3/Gunslinger 5); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 3d8+2 plus 5d10+2; hp 61; Mas 15; Init +4; Spd 35 ft; Defense 21, touch 21, flat-footed 17 (+4 Dex, +7 Class); BAB +5; Grap +6; Atk +7 melee (1d6, unarmed strike), or +12 ranged (2d6, Beretta 93R); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ Close combat shot, defensive position, evasion, increase speed, lightning shot; AL Yakuza; SV Fort +4, Ref +9, Will +7; AP 8; Rep +2; Wealth +7; Str 12, Dex 18, Con 15, Int 10, Wis 16, Cha 8.

Occupation: Law Enforcement (bonus class skills: Gather Information, Intimidate).

Skills: Balance +7, Concentration +4, Bluff +3, Gather Information +3, Intimidate +5, Jump +7, Move Silently +6, Read/Write Mandarin, Speak Japanese, Speak Mandarin, Sleight of Hand +10, Spot +9, Tumble +12.

Feats: Combat Martial Arts, Double Tap, Gun Fu, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Point Blank Shot, Quick Draw, Two-weapon Fighting, Weapon Focus (custom Beretta 93M).

Possessions: (2) Mastercraft Beretta 93R +2, GPS receiver, walkie-talkie (professional).

shogun

The man known as Shogun is the only member of the Kage to stay away from field missions. Although reputed to have been a formidable warrior in his youth, Shogun now acts as the Kage's overall leader and mission planner. While other members of the team are placed on field assignments, Shogun remains in a safe location to coordinate the other team members via global positioning systems, surveillance satellites, and provide other support such as supply requisitioning, remote computer assistance, and overall strategy. While Bushido is the team's field leader, Shogun makes sure the team has all the data they need to function efficiently. Additionally, Shogun controls the information sent to Kunoichi's mask computer.

Shogun has been with the team for many years, and some rumors claim that he was a member of the very first Kage team to be formed during the Cold War years. Regardless of when exactly he joined, Shogun was a well-respected member of the Yakuza crime syndicate well before joining the mercenary squad. A capable planner and leader, Shogun found himself on the Kage team in order to coordinate what seemed to be a collection of dangerous loose cannons. During Shogun's time

as the team's mission planner, not a single member of the Kage has gone rogue or betrayed the team. That is to say that none of the Yakuza have heard of any betrayal; it may be that some of the team's casualties over the years have been the result of Shogun's elimination of a dangerous loose end.

Shogun is an immaculately dressed man in his mid-fifties, still full of vigor and life. The only member of the team to show any signs of being personable, Shogun would make an excellent businessman or politician in the Western world. He always wears tailored designer suits that accent his sparkling blue eyes and metallic gray hair. The embroidered head of a horse facing away from his body features prominently in the breast of all his suits; some suggest the emblem marks Shogun as a member of a secret organization even more influential than the Yakuza, although it could simply be a familial mark in memory of his heritage.

Shogun (Smart 4/Charismatic 4); CR 9; Medium-sized human; HD 4d6 plus 4d6; hp 68; Mas 10; Init +5; Spd 30 ft; Defense 13, touch 13, flat-footed 12 (+1 Dex, +2 Class); BAB +4; Grap +3; Atk +3 melee (1d3, unarmed strike), or +5 ranged (2d8, S&W M29); FS 5 ft. by 5 ft.; Reach 5 ft.; SQ coordinate, exploit weakness, inspiration, savant (Research); AL Yakuza; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +7; AP 12; Rep +8; Wealth +16; Str 8, Dex 12, Con 10, Int 15, Wis 18, Cha 14.

Occupation: Investigative (bonus class skills: Gather Information, Research).

Skills: Bluff +10, Computer Use +10, Concentration +3, Decipher Script +4, Diplomacy +8, Forgery +9, Gather Information +9, Intimidate +10, Investigate +9, Knowledge (tactics) +11, Knowledge (streetwise) +9, Listen +7, Read/Write Arabic, Read/Write English, Read/Write Japanese, Read/Write Mandarin, Read/Write Spanish, Research +12, Search +9, Speak Arabic, Speak English, Speak Japanese, Speak Mandarin, Speak Spanish, Spot +10.

Feats: Dodge, Educated, Improved Initiative, Meticulous, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Quick Reload, Renown, Studious, Windfall.

Possessions: Armani suit, laptop computer, S&W M29, walkie-talkie (professional).

Using the Kage

For Gamemasters looking to add a unique group of antagonists to a campaign, the Kage make an excellent choice for physical villains. Their ties to the powerful Japanese underworld make them both dangerous and exotic, and definitely a stretch from the type of villains players might expect to encounter.

In a realistic *d20 Modern* campaign, the group works well as it stands with little need for modification. The party could cross paths with them while unknowingly thwarting a Yakuza plot, setting the stage for future confrontations and chances for retribution. An adventuring party that has garnered a significant reputation might find the bounties on their heads being collected by the deadly Kage, or similarly they might find that an influential enemy of theirs has paid the Yakuza to send their assassins after the party. If the GM wishes to use the Kage more prominently, they may be acting as the main implements of an ongoing conspiracy and defeating each member reveals further clues about the nature of the plot.

If you're using the *Shadow Chasers* campaign option, perhaps the Kage are in the employ of a darker power than the Yakuza who uses the agents to eliminate would-be heroes rather than dirtying its own hands. For a greater challenge, each member of the team might have access to some darker powers, or each team member could be a vampire or some other ghoul. Similarly, they might function as a rival team of adventurers who are out to eliminate the threats of the dark power to the world, and having the heroes in their way makes their job all the more difficult.

In the *Urban Arcana* campaign setting, the Kage might be the agents of a powerful wizard who have been granted their exceptional talents by his magic. Transforming any given member of the team into another species also twists the concept to a new level of uniqueness; rather than being Japanese, perhaps that person is an elf who has slipped through the veil and gone to work for the Yakuza. Their unique weapons and armor could certainly benefit from magical enhancement, and as Bushido's sword bursts into flames or Sanzoku's motorcycle suddenly becomes invisible their power increases significantly.

For the *Agents of PSI* campaign option, a simple solution is to give the team access to certain psionic powers and make them a formidable counter-balance to the heroes. Nothing says conspiracy theory more than highly unique villains infiltrating top-secret facilities and protecting powerful crime lords with seemingly infinite wealth. Likewise, it may be that the Kage are on the trail of a mystery whose secrets they wish to gain for their Yakuza masters, forcing the players to stop the mercenaries from reaching their goals and keeping whatever powers they were seeking out of the hands of the crime syndicate. With a few minor tweaks to abilities and histories, the Kage can blend into any campaign with relative ease. ●

New Feat
Gun Fu

You have meshed martial arts with gunplay and can perform amazing stunts of dueling with firearms.

Prerequisites: Combat Martial Arts, Personal Firearms Proficiency, Tumble 4+.

Benefits: When making an attack using only handguns, you may make a single Tumble check as a free action.

Special: This feat may be taken by the Gunslinger advanced class as a bonus feat.

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

I, JENSAARAI

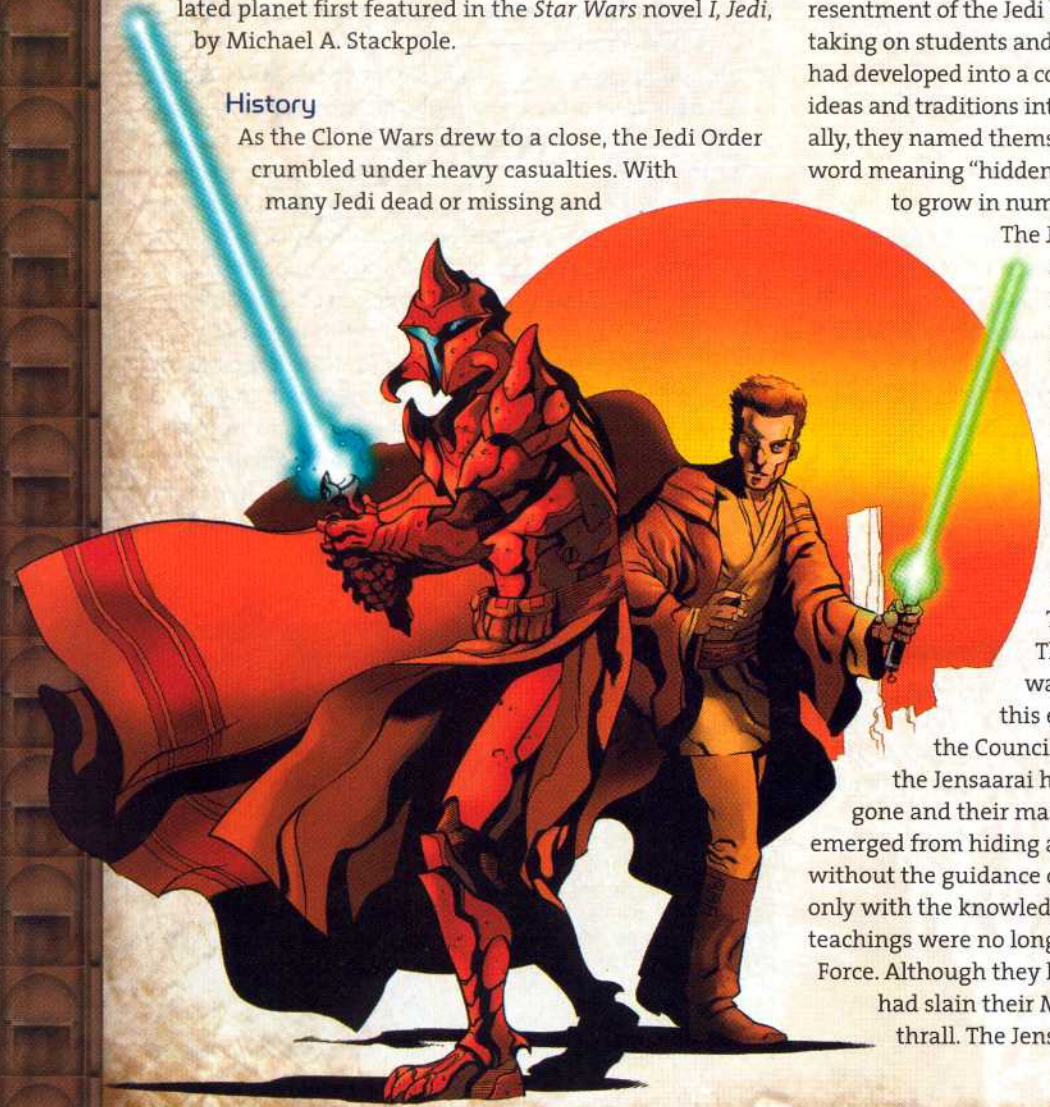
By Rodney Thompson
Illustrations by Ramón Pérez

Think, for a moment, of the most interesting and exciting aspects of the Jedi: the flashing lightsabers, mystic powers, dedication to the Republic, deep philosophy, and an awe-inspiring presence unseen in the rest of the galaxy. Picture the Sith, their mortal enemies: aggressive, lurking in the shadows, and ruthless beyond all measure. Now imagine that some of those same Jedi were trained by teachers who used aspects of Sith philosophy in their instruction, integrating them into a training regimen while isolated from the rest of the galaxy. The result of this combination is an organization of Force users known as the Jensaarai, the armor-wearing, lightsaber-toting vigilante guardians of an isolated planet first featured in the *Star Wars* novel *I, Jedi*, by Michael A. Stackpole.

History

As the Clone Wars drew to a close, the Jedi Order crumbled under heavy casualties. With many Jedi dead or missing and the future of the order in question, some Jedi began deserting the Order and heading off to survive on their own. One such deserter was a mysterious Jedi known as Nikkos Tyris, an Anzati who was one of the oldest living Jedi at the time.

Tyris and at least two other Jedi Knights had discovered ancient Sith documents dating back thousands of years. Upon deciphering the cryptic Sith language, they began to absorb the knowledge within. This new information drastically altered their view of the Jedi, inspiring them to splinter off to form their own organization. Digging deeper into the mysterious documents, they learned new and forbidden techniques that the Jedi had deemed highly dangerous or maliciously evil. Their power grew quickly and their resentment of the Jedi began to consume them. They began taking on students and forming families; eventually they had developed into a community that incorporated Sith ideas and traditions into traditional Jedi teachings. Eventually, they named themselves the Jensaarai, an ancient Sith word meaning "hidden followers of truth," and continued to grow in numbers.



The Jedi Order dispatched a trio of Jedi, among them Corellian Jedi Master Nejaa Halcyon and Caamasi Jedi Knight Ylenic It'kla, to either bring Tyris and his band back into the Order or keep them from spreading their heresy any further. Unsurprisingly, the tainted leaders of the Jensaarai resisted. On the plains of the moon Susevfi, there was a great lightsaber duel between the three Jedi against Tyris and the other two fallen Jedi. The three Jensaarai were slain, as was Master Halcyon. Sole-survivor of this encounter, Ylenic It'kla returned to the Council with the belief that the threat of the Jensaarai had been eliminated. With the Jedi gone and their masters slain, the remaining Jensaarai emerged from hiding and continued to train, though without the guidance of true Masters. Forced to continue only with the knowledge they had been given, Jensaarai teachings were no longer tainted by the dark side of the Force. Although they harbored hatred for the Jedi who had slain their Masters, they escaped the dark side's thrall. The Jensaarai teachings became more prac-

tical, focusing less on the inherent existentialism of the Jedi, but with a respect for life not found in Sith lore.

Like the Jedi, the Jensaarai were hunted by the Empire, forcing them to remain in hiding until the Emperor's death. Years after the Battle of Endor, the Jensaarai resurfaced when former Moff Leonia Tavira convinced the Saarai-kaar, leader of the Jensaarai, that they were still in danger. Her manipulation turned the Jensaarai into Force-powered pawns. Tavira ordered the capture of smuggling heiress Mirax Terrik in a revenge plot to lure her husband, Rogue Squadron pilot and Jedi apprentice Corran Horn, to Susevfi. The plot was foiled with the help Jedi Master Luke Skywalker and Caamasi Elegos A'kla. The Caamasi species' unique *memnii*—shared memories—revealed the true events of the long-ago battle between the Jensaarai and the Jedi. Having witnessed the truth about their founders, the Jensaarai entered an uneasy alliance with the Jedi and sent a delegation to Master Skywalker's Jedi academy on Yavin 4.

Organization

Founded on training perfected by the Jedi Order for thousands of years, the Jensaarai tradition contains many similarities to that of the Jedi. Special Jensaarai roam Susevfi, discreetly testing youths for inborn ability and secretly recruiting them as apprentices. With no code of abstinence, the Jensaarai ranks are further swollen by their own Force-sensitive offspring. The young first sharpen their martial skills in large groups before graduating to a series of one-on-one training regimens. Jensaarai apprentices train with a new mentor each year until attaining the rank of defender.

A Jensaarai apprentice is taught the art of the lightsaber from a very young age. Whereas for Jedi the construction of a lightsaber is a major step, for the Jensaarai it is only half the equation. Their training focuses on defending others and protecting the Jensaarai from being discovered by enemies such as the Jedi. In this time, lessons combine defensive aspects of Jedi training with more aggressive Sith tactics. Jensaarai lore is rife with tales of Jedi betrayal. Once the Empire sought to destroy all Force-users, apprentices were similarly taught of Imperial injustices. Jensaarai apprentices focus more on martial skills for the better part of their education when compared to Jedi Padawan apprentices, who are expected to seek balance in their studies.

Typical Jensaarai Apprentice: Male or Female Human Jedi Guardian 4; Init +1 (Dex); Def 15 (+1 Dex, +4 class bonus); Spd 10 m; VP/WP 35/14; Atk +8 melee* (2d8+2, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +5 ranged; SQ Deflect (+1 dodge bonus to Defense, –4 penalty to redirect); SV Fort +6, Ref +5, Will +3; SZ M; FP 1; DSP 0; Rep 1; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code: B.

Equipment: Lightsaber, comlink, standard clothing.

**A typical Jensaarai apprentice has constructed his or her own lightsaber.*

Skills: Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +4, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Speak Basic.

Force Skills: Battlemind +6, Enhance Ability +6, Force Defense +4, Force Stealth +4, Force Strike +4, Heal Self +4, Move Object +2.

Feats: Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Control, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

The final test of a Jensaarai student's training is the construction of ceremonial armor. Once complete, the apprentice is then a Jensaarai defender, charged with protecting the people of Susevfi. Similar to the Jedi Knights, defenders maintain truth and justice. Unlike the meditative Jedi, Jensaarai are quick to resort to martial solutions and overt use of the Force to maintain the peace.

Defenders carry on the prejudices and grudges born of their formative years in everything they do. During the reign of the Empire, some defenders roamed Susevfi, harassing Imperial forces. Others relentlessly prepare for the imminent confrontation with the remnants of the Jedi Order. Many defenders master a variant lightsaber combat style known as Shien as well as their own martial arts style, called Rek'dul. Through the application of these fighting techniques, the aggressive Jensaarai defender is a formidable foe in combat.

Typical Jensaarai Defender: Male or Female Human Jedi Guardian 6/Jensaarai Defender 4; Init +1 (Dex); Def 19 (+1 Dex, +8 class bonus); DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 76/15; Atk +14/+9 melee* (4d8+2, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +11/+6 ranged; SQ Deflect (+2 dodge bonus to Defense, –4 penalty to redirect, 2m area), Force barrier, resist dark side; SV Fort +9, Ref +10, Will +6; SZ M; FP 2; DSP 2; Rep 3; Str 15, Dex 13, Con 15, Int 11, Wis 12, Cha 10. Challenge Code: D.

Equipment: Lightsaber, Jensaarai armor, comlink.

**A typical Jensaarai Defender has constructed his or her own lightsaber.*

Skills: Craft (armor) +6, Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +7, Move Silently +2, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Speak Basic, Spot +4.

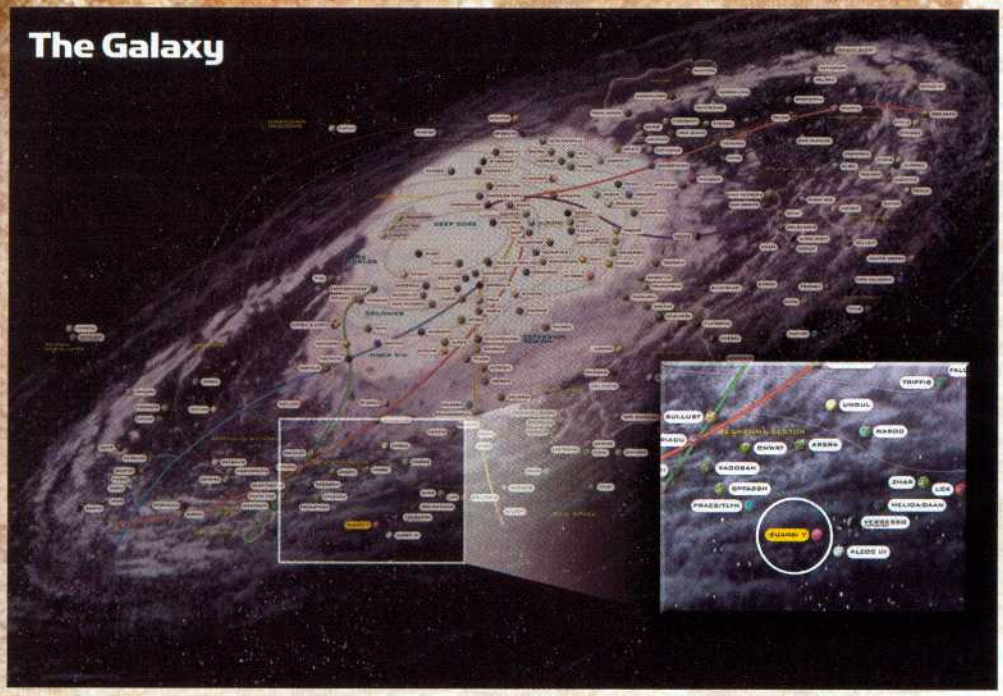
Force Skills: Battlemind +9, Enhance Ability +9, Farseeing +3, Force Defense +6, Force Stealth +9, Force Strike +4, Heal Self +6, Illusion +4, Move Object +4, See Force +3, Telepathy +5.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Attuned, Burst of Speed, Control, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

The Saarai-kaar

From the founding of the Jensaarai until their discovery (and beyond) there has always been a single leader known as the Saarai-kaar. The fallen Jedi Tyris was the



Suarbi 7/5

Suarbi 7/5 is the fifth moon of the seventh planet of the Suarbi system, located in the Quence sector. Suarbi 7 is a massive gas giant which generates enough gravity to sustain an asteroid belt and more than a dozen moons. Susevfi, as Suarbi 7/5 is commonly known, is covered in vast, sprawling savannahs and grasslands, and boasts a large civilized population. The planet was originally colonized by humans about 400 years before the Battle of Yavin; Corporate Sector expatriates decided to tame the habitable moon. Several major settlements developed from that original expedition. The planet has a Stellar-class spaceport in the seaside city of Yumfla that is the center for commerce on the moon. It is the planet's largest settlement and central location from which the Jensaarai operate.

Though relatively young as a colony world, the planet boasts a moderate-sized population composed predominantly of humans. Susevfi is as technologically advanced as most Mid Rim worlds, and sees a fair amount of space traffic on a daily basis. For the most part, the moon has enough natural resources to be self-sufficient. Still, there is a healthy amount of imported goods available in the moon's major ports.

The Jensaarai are headquartered out of a guild house constructed for them by a wealthy benefactor. The Saarai-kaar issues all assignments and orders from this building, and young apprentices are trained within. Beneath the building, ominously dark catacombs lead to a mausoleum. It is the final resting place of fallen Jensaarai Masters and heavily inscribed with Sith writings.

first Saarai-kaar. He was succeeded by a human woman in her mid-forties with fiery blue eyes and a fierce and disciplined personality. Originally the wife of one of the Jedi that rebelled with Tyris during the Clone Wars, she has done incredible things for the group and suffered some terrible tragedies. Her husband was slain by the Jedi, her son murdered by Darth Vader, and she's endured a lifetime of being hunted, feared, and accused of heinous acts to maintain the secret of the Jensaarai. Though beleaguered, she has managed to keep the organization growing over the years, despite the bitterness in her heart and a thirst for vengeance. With the arrival of Corran Horn and Luke Skywalker on Susevfi, the Saarai-kaar's world turned upside down. Confronted with the truth about her husband, she reconsidered her long hatred of the Jedi. Hoping to strengthen both traditions, the Saarai-kaar accepted Master Skywalker's offer to trade information and training techniques.

Saarai-kaar: Female Human Jedi Guardian 6/Jensaarai Defender 9; Init +6 (Dex, Improved Initiative); Def 22 (+2 Dex, +10 class bonus); DR 3; Spd 10 m; VP/WP 93/13; Atk +18/+13/+8 melee* (6d8+1, crit 19–20, lightsaber) or +17/+12/+7 ranged; SQ Deflect (+3 dodge bonus to Defense, –3 penalty to redirect, 2m area), Force barrier, resist dark side, Force cloak, ballistakinesis; SV Fort +10, Ref +13, Will +9; SZ M; FP 3; DSP 7; Rep 5; Str 13, Dex 14, Con 13, Int 11, Wis 15, Cha 13. Challenge Code: E.

Equipment: Lightsaber, Jensaarai armor, comlink.

*The Saarai-kaar has constructed her own lightsaber.

Skills: Bluff +3, Craft (armor) +6, Craft (lightsaber) +4, Hide +6, Intimidate +7, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) +11, Move Silently +4, Read/Write Basic, Read/Write Sith, Sense Motive +3, Speak Basic, Spot +6.

Force Skills: Battlemind +9, Enhance Ability +10, Farseeing +4, Force Defense +7, Force Stealth +9, Force Strike +7, Heal Self +7, Illusion +7, Move Object +6, See Force +6, Telepathy +8.

Feats: Armor Proficiency (light), Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-Sensitive, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Sunder, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Weapon Group Proficiency (blaster pistols, simple weapons).

Force Feats: Alter, Attuned, Burst of Speed, Control, Force Mind, Lightsaber Defense, Sense.

Jensaarai in the Star Wars RPG

Jensaarai heroes and Gamemaster characters make an interesting and unique alternative to Jedi in the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game*. For players, the Jensaarai are an alternative to the Jedi that retain the use of a lightsaber without the restrictions of the Jedi Order. An adventuring Jensaarai hero might find herself scouting the galaxy for interesting news to report to the Saarai-kaar, for instance. The isolation of the Jensaarai presents a challenge for GMs, as well. Luckily, Susevfi can be developed as a campaign setting. Possible adventures include defending the system from pirate raids, repelling Imperial agents, eliminating Black Sun activity, and even dealing with Jensaarai that have been lost to the dark side.

In the Rise of the Empire era, the Jensaarai often will find themselves coming to terms with who they are in the wake of the devastation of the Clone Wars and the "betrayal" of the Jedi. During these years, their travels in the galaxy must proceed with caution, as the Empire's Jedi hunters are everywhere. Like much of the galaxy, the *Jensaarai's* loathing for the Empire can result in lashing out, rebellion, or other conflict. Similarly despised are the Jedi themselves, few of whom survived the Empire's ascent but are still to be fought against nonetheless. When encountering any of these antagonists, all Jensaarai, fueled by the strength of their conviction and aggressive philosophies, react with vehemence or outright violence in many cases. Some Force users that have not been trained by the Jedi might find themselves the target of Jensaarai conversion; some Jedi might even find themselves being preached to by a zealous defender in the hopes of bringing them back to the true way. But with Inquisitors on their tail and an unfamiliar galaxy before them, few players will have much time to debate philosophy with their rivals.

Once the Jensaarai come out of hiding (an event that occurs 11 years after the battle of Yavin), their perspective changes drastically. Following the destruction of the Empire, the Jensaarai ally with Master Skywalker's Jedi and trade techniques. Jensaarai defenders are not a common sight, but have few compunctions about exploring the galaxy. When the Yuuzhan Vong invade and demand the unconditional surrender of all Jedi, the Jensaarai will find themselves hunted too. The extra-galactic, Force-absent invaders fail to see the difference between the two.

Introducing a Jensaarai GM character into an adventure or campaign can be a refreshing change from the stark moral strongholds of the light and dark sides of the Force. Because the Jensaarai walk a fine line between darkness and light, it might be unclear to Jedi heroes whether an angry, violent defender is mostly good or mostly evil. A Jensaarai-in-hiding might work with the heroes, helping or hindering them, without revealing her true motives.

Jensaarai Armor

Years after the death of Nikkos Tyris, the Saarai-kaar discovered Sith records that told of weaving cortosis armor. Since neither Tyris nor any of her students could understand many of the ancient Sith writings, the armor constructed by the Jensaarai is significantly weaker than the powerful suits of dark armor constructed by Sith craftsmen.

A *Jensaarai's* armor is to the defender what the lightsaber is to the Jedi Knight. Its construction is a rite of passage that marks the apprentice's dedication to defense and protection. When the apprentice is deemed ready, he chooses a creature that best exemplifies his personality traits. He constructs his armor, in the image of that creature, fashioning a suit that covers head, torso, arms, abdomen, and thighs. The armor of the Saarai-kaar differs slightly; it's in the image of a beautiful woman. The armor is made of woven cortosis, a craft perfected by the Jensaarai over the years. The end result is an intimidating suit of custom-built armor that fits like a glove.

Jensaarai armor is the equivalent of a combat jumpsuit as described in Chapter 7: Equipment of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rulebook* with two added benefits. Like the Yuuzhan Vong's Vonduun crab armor, cortosis weave armor retains its DR value against lightsaber attacks. Plus, any lightsaber that damages the wearer is deactivated, requiring the attacker to spend a free action to reactivate it using the switch weapon mode free action. If the character has any remaining lightsaber attacks, he loses his next single lightsaber attack that round while reactivating his weapon.

Creating a basic suit of Jensaarai armor requires 5500 credits worth of materials. Some Jensaarai choose to functionally enhance the creature motif of the armor's design. For example, a suit of armor intended to resemble a predatory bird might have integral macrobinoculars or clawed fingers. See the table below for more options not available in Chapter 7: Equipment. Improving upon the basic design increases the material cost by 1/3 the added item's purchase cost. Only low, medium, or high complexity items can be added in this way. Regardless of how many additions are made to the armor, it is a high complexity item when determining cost of tools and Craft DC. Five or more ranks of Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) are required to begin work on a suit of armor. See the Craft skill in Chapter 4: Skills of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Core Rulebook* for more information.

Table 1: Jensaarai Armor Options

Option	Material Cost	Weight
Claws (+1 punch damage per damage die, changes damage type to Slashing)	50	2 kg
Camouflage (+4 equipment bonus to Hide checks in one chosen environment: arctic, desert, forest, jungle, mountain, swamp, or urban)	100	0.5 kg

Jensaarai Defender

Prestige Class Requirements

To qualify to become a Jensaarai defender, a character must fulfill the following criteria.

Base Attack Bonus: +4 or more.

Skills: Battlemind 6 ranks, Force Stealth 6 ranks, Knowledge (Jensaarai lore) 5 ranks, Read/Write Sith.

Feats: Alter, Armor Proficiency (light), Control, Exotic Weapon Proficiency (lightsaber), Force-sensitive, Sense.

Force Level: 6+

Special: Jensaarai defenders must have constructed their own lightsaber and suit of Jensaarai armor.

Game Rule Information

Vitality: Jensaarai defenders gain 1d8 vitality points per level. The character's Constitution modifier applies.

Class Skills

The Jensaarai defender's class skills, and the key ability for each skill, are as follows: Bluff (Cha), Craft (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Int), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (Int), Move Silently (Dex), Profession (Wis), Read/Write Language (None), Speak Language (None), Spot (Wis), and Survival (Wis). All Force skills for which the Jensaarai defender meets the prerequisites are considered class skills.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6+ Int Modifier

Class Features

The following are features of the Jensaarai defender prestige class.

Starting Feats

The Jensaarai defender has the Weapon Proficiency feats for simple weapons and blaster pistols.

Deflect (Defense)

The Jensaarai defender gains deflect (defense), which provides a +1 dodge bonus to Defense when he uses his lightsaber to block ranged attacks. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Defender

At 1st level, the Jensaarai defender gets a bonus feat. This feat must be drawn from the following list and the Jensaarai defender must meet any prerequisites.

Burst of Speed, Dissipate Energy, Lightsaber Defense, Force Mastery, Force Mind, Weapon Focus (lightsaber), Skill Emphasis (choose one Force skill that requires Control).

Increase Lightsaber Damage

A Jensaarai defender's ability to deal damage with the lightsaber improves as he gains levels. At 2nd, 5th, and 9th level, the Jensaarai defender's lightsaber damage increases by +1d8. This added damage is cumulative with increased lightsaber damage from other classes.

Force Barrier

At 3rd level, Jensaarai defenders gain the ability to create an impenetrable Force barrier to Sense-based Force skills, feats, and abilities. By spending 4 vitality points per round, the character can create a spherical barrier with a diameter equal to the character's Constitution score + 10 meters. This sphere is centered on the user and moves with him. Force users can detect this anomaly without a check of any kind.

Resist Dark Side

Also at 3rd level, Jensaarai defenders get a bonus to resist the dark side of the Force. Add one-half the character's Jensaarai defender class level (round down) to his Wisdom ability score when determining the effects of Dark Side Points.

Deflect (Extend Defense and Attack)

At 4th level, the Jensaarai defender learns to extend his defensive and offensive deflection skills to others within 2 meters of his position. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Table 2: The Jensaarai Defender

Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Defense Bonus	Reputation Bonus
1st	+1	+1	+2	+1	Deflect (defense), Defender	+1	+0
2nd	+2	+2	+3	+2	Increase lightsaber damage	+2	+0
3rd	+3	+2	+3	+2	Force barrier, resist dark side	+2	+1
4th	+4	+2	+4	+2	Deflect (extend defense and attack)	+3	+1
5th	+5	+3	+4	+3	Force cloak, increase lightsaber damage	+3	+1
6th	+6	+3	+5	+3	Deflect (attack), bonus feat	+4	+2
7th	+7	+4	+5	+4	Ballistakinesis	+4	+2
8th	+8	+4	+6	+4	Deflect (defense)	+5	+2
9th	+9	+4	+6	+4	Saarai-kaar, increase lightsaber damage	+5	+3
10th	+10	+5	+7	+5	Sith secrets	+6	+3

Force Cloak
At 5th level, the Jensaarai defender gains the ability to create a Force barrier that muddles electronic sensing devices. By spending 4 VP per round, the Jensaarai defender can create a sphere equal in diameter to the character's Constitution score + 10 meters that acts as a cloaking field affecting electronic sensors. This sphere is centered on the user, and moves with him. When electronic sensors are used on anything within that sphere, add +15 to the DC of anything completely encompassed by the sphere generated by this power.

Deflect (Attack)
At 6th level, a Jensaarai defender can deflect and redirect a number of attacks equal to one-half his total Force levels, rounded up. The redirected attack must miss the Jensaarai defender by 5 or less; any attack that hits the Jensaarai defender or misses by 5 or more points can't be redirected. (The Jensaarai defender must be carrying an activated lightsaber to use this ability.) See the Jedi guardian class features in Chapter 3: Classes of the *Star Wars Roleplaying Game Revised Rulebook* for more information on this ability.

Ballistakinesis
At 7th level, the Jensaarai defender gains the ability to turn small objects into potentially deadly ballistae. By expending 3 VP, a character can cause a handful of objects (no larger than 5 kg in total weight) to be propelled at high velocity toward a target as though it were a missile weapon with a range increment of 6 meters. The Jensaarai defender makes a Move Object skill check (DC = target's Defense rating); if successful, the target suffers 2d6 damage. Using this ability requires an attack action.

Saarai-kaar
Upon reaching 9th level, the Jensaarai defender has achieved a skill level equal to that of the Saarai-kaar. While there can be only one such leader at a time, it is at this level that the rank of Saarai-kaar is achieved and the Jensaarai defender gets a bonus feat. This feat must be drawn from the following list and the Jensaarai defender must meet any prerequisites.

Burst of Speed, Dissipate Energy, Force Mastery, Force Mind, High Force Mastery, Improved Force Mind, Lightsaber Defense, Skill Emphasis (choose one Force skill that requires Control), Weapon Focus (lightsaber).

Sith Secrets
At 10th level, the secrets and mysteries of the Sith become more comprehensible to the Jensaarai defender, who has unlocked their meaning by studying the ancient Sith tomes. While none but Nikkos Tyris and his rogue Jedi have achieved this level, it is feasible that one day a member of the Jensaarai might accomplish the same. The character discovers a Sith secret, and select one of the secrets below.

Improved Battlemind: Increase the bonus on attack rolls provided by the skill by +1.

Improved Force Defense: Increase the bonus on saving throws provided by the skill by +1.

Improved Force Grip/Force Lightning/Force Strike: Increase the amount of damage dealt by this skill by +1.

Improved Force Skill: Add a +1 Force bonus to any one Force skill in which the Jensaarai defender has ranks.



Starships of the Galaxy

Wayfarer-class Medium Transport

By Christopher West with J.D. Wiker
Illustration by Jeff Carlisle

STAR WARS
ROLEPLAYING GAME

The *Wayfarer*-class medium transport is constructed with a detachable portside section originally intended for modular reconfiguration. Kuat Systems Engineering (a now-folded subsidiary of Kuat Drive Yards) designed the Wayfarer so that it could load a passenger section, a hangar bay, or cargo module. Production costs forced KSE to scale back their plans and create only the hangar bay module, which, for most owners (who generally didn't store fighter craft, anyway), serves as cargo space. A few prototypes and custom builds of other modules exist, but are hard to find, limited primarily to bulk commerce corporate shipping operations centered on well-developed metropolitan planets like Coruscant.

The ship's detachable portside half (areas 1–6) fits into an armature extending from the other half (area 7 is connected to areas 8–16 by this armature). The versatility offered by the detachable section was initially exciting, until it was revealed that the design could not accept standard cargo containers. This, combined with a high price tag, ensured the demise of the ship's production and ultimately the entire company. Despite the flaws that kept the *Wayfarer* from becoming a huge commercial success, the ship's versatility makes it a well-rounded vessel for any buyer. Though it is outdated by the rise of the New Republic, many *Wayfarers* can still be found in widespread service.

Kuat Systems Engineering *Wayfarer*-class Medium Transport

Class: Space Transport
Size: Medium-sized (82 meters)
Hyperdrive: ×2, ×14 backup
Passengers: 6
Cargo Capacity: 220 metric tons
Consumables: 3 months
Cost: 202,500 (new), 130,000 (used)
Crew: 10 (Normal +2)
Initiative: +2 (+2 crew)
Maneuver: +2 (+2 crew)
Defense: 20 (+10 armor)
Shield Points: 60 (DR 15)
Hull Points: 160 (DR 15)
Maximum Speed in Space: Attack (6 squares/action)
Atmospheric Speed: 830 (14 squares/action)
Weapon: Laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Front; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (+2 fire control, +2 crew); **Damage:** 4d10×2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +4, S +2, M/L n/a.
Weapon: Quad laser cannon; **Fire Arc:** Left; **Attack Bonus:** +4 (+2 fire control, +2 crew); **Damage:** 6d10×2; **Range Modifiers:** PB +4, S +2, M/L n/a.

But Who's Gonna Fly It, Kid?

Star Wars RPG heroes on a covert mission (or simply on the run from planetary authorities) might need to stow away aboard a cargo vessel to get to their destination. The modular cargo pod system of the *Wayfarer*-class medium transport makes it an ideal candidate for such activities. The heroes could easily hide inside storage crates already loaded within a detached cargo section awaiting pickup.

Compartment Key

1. **Forward Cargo Hold.** The forward cargo hold serves as a staging area for loading and unloading. It holds 25 tons of the ship's cargo capacity when full, but any more than about 10 tons means that fighter craft in the hangar bay cannot pass.
2. **Hangar Bay.** Though most owners use this compartment as a cargo hold, it is outfitted as a miniature hangar bay capable of carrying two Tiny ships comfortably. When not used as hangar space, it holds 160 tons of cargo. Each Tiny ship kept here reduces that total by 40 tons.
3. **Speeder Pool.** This is another case of a compartment generally used for something other than the intended design. The speeder pool can comfortably store two Large vehicles (or five speeder bikes) and one other Large vehicle if the ceiling clamps are employed. Otherwise, this area accounts for 15 tons of storage space.
4. **Secret Cargo Hold.** This 5-ton storage hold wasn't originally designed as a secret compartment, but the hatches are so easily disguised as blank bulkhead that it seems like the designers had that purpose in mind all along.
5. **Aft Cargo Hold.** The aft cargo hold can stow up to 25 tons, but that leaves precious little room for anyone to move through the compartment without crawling (Escape Artist check, DC 10).
6. **Portside Corridor.** The portside corridor is mean to provide easy access to the hangar bay when the aft cargo hold is completely full. It is jokingly referred to as "Lover's Lane," because it is so isolated.
7. **Gunnery Station.** When the hangar bay is detached, a crewman inside the gunnery station can also detach the station, allowing it to be maneuvered by small directional jets into position on the main hull on the module docking clamps. It also serves as a three-person escape pod (one seated, two in crash webbing), and has enough power to keep passengers alive for up to 12 hours—or about enough power to fire the attached quad laser once.
8. **Bridge.** The six-station bridge can be crewed by one person for short periods. It also controls the main gun, a laser cannon fixed in position atop the hull.
9. **Crew Cabins.** Each crew cabin has sleeping space for two crewmembers, with separate lockers for up to three crewmembers.
10. **First Mate's Cabin.** Can serve as a temporary passenger cabin.
11. **Offices.** Includes a desk and two chairs.
12. **Captain's Cabin.** Can serve as a temporary passenger cabin.
13. **Crew Lounge.** The spacious crew lounge includes the galley and a conference table, along with a nominal entertainment center.
14. **Refresher.** Cabinets here hold first aid supplies.
15. **Airlock.** The starboard airlock includes a small storage compartment containing three environmental suits.
16. **Drive Chamber.** The drive chamber includes a small closet for storing two environmental suits and a tool chest.

Wayfarer-class Medium Transport





Bunk

Cargo Crates

Chairs

Computer

Dejarik Table

Fuel Cells

Hatch, Airlock

Hatch, Floor

Hatch, Secret

Hatch, Standard

Hyperdrive

Life Support

Power Core

Power Loader

Refresher

Shield Generator

Sublight Engine

Table, Desk

1 square = 2 meters

INTO THE BRIGHT DESERT

By Creighton Broadhurst
with special thanks to Stuart Kerrigan and Paul Looby
Illustrations by David Hendee and Phil Hilliker
Cartography by Craig Zipse

Living Greyhawk™

Two millennia ago, Flan civilization reached its zenith on the arid grasslands of Sulm. Here, the Flan learned the secrets of agriculture, ironwork, and engineering, founded great cities, and raised majestic temples to their gods. In a series of swift, hard-fought campaigns, Sulm's neighbor states (Ronhas, Durha, Rhugha, and Truun) fell before the might of her iron-shod hosts. Continued aggression brought open warfare with an implacable enemy—Itar.

Situated in a rich coastal region southeast of Sulm, the valorous Sun Kingdom of Itar honored gods of light and progress and posed a serious military, financial, and ideological threat to Sulm. It wasn't enough. After three decades of open warfare, Sulm obliterated Itar's armies, mingling the blood of its soldiers with the ebbing lifeforce of Vathris, an Itarran god of ingenuity who had manifested to aid his people on the field of battle only to be stricken down by dark Sulmish magics.

With Itar's destruction, the entire region fell under Sulmish hegemony. Her people grew proud and her leaders corrupt and arrogant as wealth and tribute poured into the great temple-city capital, Utaa, seat of Sulmish rule. Sulmish society stagnated for centuries as decadence and evil grew into the hearts of her people; simultaneously tendrils of insurrection crept among the subjugated folk of the hinterlands.

For all its might and wisdom, doom came suddenly to Sulm. The nation's rulers, desperate to stem the rising tide of civil unrest and rebellion, delved too deeply into the poisonous wellspring from which their civilization had sprung. The last of Sulm's rulers, an ambitious an undoubtedly mad sorcerer named Shattados, cried out to the Lords of Evil for aid and received a whispered promise in exchange. His divine patron, Tharizdun, granted Shattados a powerful magic artifact, the *Scorpion Crown*, that would allow him total control over his subjects. The greedy overlord thrust the crown upon his head and brought doom to the entire region.

The *Crown's* fell curse initiated an agonizing transformation in Sulm's citizens, who found themselves transformed into hideous "manscorpions," half-breed wretches magically bound to the wearer of the Scorpion Crown.

Within a decade the grasslands were dead, withered into nothingness by an unnatural heat that yet plagues the region or scoured from the face of Oerth by violent and prolonged storms sweeping in from the Gearnat. The small pockets of vegetation surviving these twin perils were finally buried beneath an insidious, unstoppable tide of sand issuing like a cancer from the cities and holy places of the fallen Sulmites. Soon the curse took hold throughout the area, and what had once been called Sulm became the Bright Desert.

And somewhere, deep within the darkest recesses of the Lower Planes, Tharizdun chuckled softly to himself.

Thus Sulm passed into history, languishing all but forgotten until events transpiring in the city of Greyhawk in the year 584 CY thrust the accursed lands of the Bright Desert into the minds of the great and the good. In Harvester of that year, delegates from several nations gathered in the free city to sign a pact of non-aggression, hoping to bring an end to the so-called "Greyhawk Wars." On the Day of Great Signing, the archmage Rary of the Circle of Eight betrayed the city and his allies by attempting to destroy the entire delegation in a fiery conflagration. Rary's companions Tenser and Otiluke discovered their friend preparing to sabotage the treaty and were killed for their trouble. The archmage Bigby, also present, was wounded to within an inch of his life. But their sacrifice saved the treaty and revealed Rary as a traitor to his friends, to Greyhawk, and to the whole of the Flanaess.

But Rary hadn't acted alone. On the day of his treachery, cohorts and apprentices under the direction of the wily Lord Robilar (late of the Citadel of Eight) ransacked the lairs of Tenser and Otiluke, destroying potential clones and ensuring that the wizards would not return to avenge their deaths. Rary gathered his forces late in the day, teleporting en masse to his tower in Lopolla. Calling upon unrivaled magical powers, he wrenched his tower whole from the very foundation-rock of Ket's capital and transported it, along with Lord Robilar and his fanatical followers, thousands of leagues eastward to the Brass Hills, at the center of the Bright Desert. In short order Robilar's forces pacified the indigenous desertfolk, forcing them to pay homage to a burgeoning "Empire of the Bright Lands." A new power was born.

To this day, rumors abound about what drove the previously calm and peerlessly intelligent Rary to betray his former friends. Mordenkainen and wizards of Greyhawk's Society of Magi believe that Rary knew of the ancient histories that cluster thick about the Bright Lands, and that he likely seeks the catalyst of Sulm's unnatural fall. The Ketite archmage was always obsessed with *ioun stones*,


Hardby Pass
Knife Edge Pass
Abbor Alz
Ghost Tower of Inverness
N
Dagger Rock
Old Truun Northlands
Necropolis of Unjagh
Ul Bakak
Tulwar Oasis
Ruins of Darkbridge Temple
Shembai Oasis
Gai Hur
Abbor Alz
Woolly Bay
Fort Whiterock
Old Durha
Kalundi
Kary's Tower
Uplands of Unath
Brass Hills
Old Sulm
Old Rhugha
Kolum Oasis
Ruins of Utaa
Old Truun Wanderlands
The Zochal
Plain of Spears
Tower of the Sands
Var Oasis
The Twisted Canyon
Old Ronhass
Histak
Bright Desert
Empire of the Bright Lands
50 miles
Old Itar
Sea of Gearnat
Sennerae

and scholarly adventurers recently turned up a 574 CY paper he'd logged with the Great Library of Lopolla that suggests the Bright Desert might contain the highest concentration of these magical rocks in the Flanaess. Control over such a resource would make Rary mighty (and rich) beyond belief.

But in the Bright Desert, all is not yet lost. Although warriors of many native tribes have joined Rary's massive army in the years since his arrival, a few tribes still resist. None stand so bitterly opposed to the Traitor's machinations as the hueleneaer (a race of desert dwelling centaurs). A fierce and proud people, they yet war with the outlanders, for in Rary they recognize the countenance of evil and ambition personified. Their guerrilla tactics have stained the shifting sands with the lifeblood of hundreds of Robilar's soldiers and their constant raiding continues to tie down and harass the empire's forces. A steady stream of adventurers also now trickles into the region, beguiled by tales of high adventure and the near-limitless wealth said to lie discarded in ancient Sulm's abandoned cities.

Flora, Fauna, and Climate

Squatting at the near-center of the Flanaess and bounded on all sides by arid, windswept hills or tumultuous, treacherous waters, the Bright Lands are all but isolated from the surrounding civilized nations.

Two passes cut through the torturous ridges of the Abbor-Alz, allowing a trickle of travelers and trade to pass into the desert fastness. Flan tribes existing in a state little better than barbarism have dwelt amongst the ravines for millennia, jealously guarding their high villages and sacred places. Manticores, wyverns, leucrotta, lamia, mountain tigers, ogres, hill giants, and trolls all infest the broken landscape of the inner hills. Bandits, criminals, and deserters have also found sanctuary within the uplands and, like the more monstrous inhabitants, prey upon any who enter their domain.

Travelers approaching by sea must contend with fierce seasonal storms, Pomarji pirates, and sea monsters lurking beneath the warm, turbulent waters of the Gearnat. No known safe, sheltered anchorages exist upon the treacherous Bright Coast and no sane sailor willingly anchors here. The last two years have witnessed an increase in the number of vessels attacked along the coast by an as-yet-unidentified agency that appears not to care under what flag a vessel sails. Merchantmen, warships, and pirates have all fallen to this malign entity. Attempts by several individuals and states to uncover the perpetrator of these attacks have so far met with failure.

The bulk of the Bright Desert is a desolate, waterless wasteland seemingly composed of endless ranks of wide, ever-shifting crescent-shaped dunes. Rainfall here is rare; sandstorms frequently scour the interior, sometimes lasting for days at a time. A handful of oases, most jealously guarded by Rary's forces, are scattered throughout the region. During the summer, temperatures soar far above 100 degrees Fahrenheit during the day and plunge at night to near freezing.

Few creatures have the abilities to survive deep in the desert and those that do are uniformly deadly. Giant ant lions, poisonous snakes, fire toads, giant scorpions, the fearsome dune stalkers, and feral manscorpions all dwell in the deep desert. The more benign brightly colored insect-like pernicons, prized by nomads, hueleneaer, and travellers alike for their water-divining abilities, also haunt the inner reaches of this land. What little plant life exists here is limited to a few date palms, attendant shrubbery found around oases, and the occasional lone cacti, a few of which are thought to be able to drain moisture from living creatures straying too close.

The desert's coastal reaches are more temperate in nature, cooled by sea breezes and watered by spring and autumnal storms that batter the coast. The dusty, sandy soil acts as a boon to the vegetation that is more predominant here than in the interior. After heavy rainfall the desert explodes with color. Wildflowers, grasses, and shrubs bloom prodigiously for several weeks before returning to dormancy. Nomads have found many uses for these plants. They weave the fibrous deep-questing roots of the yellowthorn into hemp-like rope, whilst the carefully harvested pollen of many other flowers is crushed and mixed to produce their sacred ochre. Amongst the nomads the small shrunken melons found growing near oases and along the few rivulets crossing this harsh landscape are a great delicacy; crushed and boiled they made a thick, bitter and pungent jam.

Stands of withered thorn-laden bushes also grow here along with the occasional desiccated, forlorn pine tree. Undeniably ancient, some struggle to sixty feet in height and boast a high-set spherical crown of pale green needles. Their trunks are often S-shaped as if bowed by savage winds and are wreathed in thick, deeply furrowed greyish-silvery bark reputed to have healing properties. The druids of the Flan tribes ascribe great spiritual power and significance to these trees, believing them to be Oerthly manifestations of the Shalm's powers. Harming such a tree is a mortal sin amongst them.

In similar fashion the desert's northern regions are more temperate in nature than its inner reaches. Sheltered somewhat by the uplands of the Abbor-Alz and watered by periodic cloudbursts falling over the range's dusty peaks, this narrow tract of arid land supports flora and fauna similar to that along the coast. The shadowy canyons and ravines of this rocky land offer respite from the murderous sun but weave a torturous course across the blasted landscape. Caves abound here, although few are occupied. This swath of land quickly gives way to dunes unlike any found elsewhere within the Bright. The complex underlying local topography and convoluted wind patterns combine to form a deep zone of lofty steep-sided star-shaped dunes. Higher than the squat dunes of the interior and in places prone to collapse, these three-legged dunes reach heights of over two hundred feet.



In the north and west of the desert, the sand is white. It is from these sands, composed of pulverized granules of glassy quartz, that the desert derives its name, for the sun's light transforms the dunes into a shimmering sea of dazzling white. Prolonged exposure to the glare of the sands produces a condition known as "bright blindness," which though normally temporary, can in severe cases lead to permanent blindness (see sidebar). Nomads and centaurs that travel these regions generally do so by night, protecting their eyes with veils of fine cloths if they must travel by day.

Trade and Travel

Trade in the Bright is limited. A complete absence of highways through the region coupled with the small number of settlements and the ever-present dangers of desert predators dissuade many merchants from journeying here. The market of Ul Bakak is one of the few commerce centers of note. Trade flows sporadically from two main sources—the Duchy of Urnst and Hardby. Weapons are in great demand now as is wood required for the construction of the nomads' bows. In return, the nomads trade stone statuettes carved by skilled craftsmen and polished by the desert winds. Sturdy ponies can be had for trade in the market of Ul Bakak, as can nearly worthless artifacts of long-fallen Sulm or Itar, mere hints at the treasure to be found in the desert's interior. Some less moralistic nomads hire themselves out as guides to explorers intent on locating the countless treasures of the Bright.

Travel through the Bright Desert is fraught with peril. One of the chief dangers is the climate. Desert travellers are exposed to Heat Dangers (described in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 86), having to make a Heat Danger check every hour. Travel during the summer months, or through the deep desert, is particularly hazardous, necessitating a Heat Danger check every ten minutes.

Peoples of the Great Sand-Sea

Unaffected by the deviltry that wrought Sulm's end, her subjugated peoples, enemies, and the hueleneaer returned to their itinerant ways.

The most numerous of the desert peoples are the nomads. Predominately of unblemished Flan lineage, the warrior-nomads who dwell in the Bright Lands are a surly, violent, honor-driven folk famed for their incessant inter-tribal warfare, superstitious beliefs, and disdain of outsiders. A strongly patriarchal society, among them strength—be it spiritual or temporal—is the only source of power. Speakers of Ancient Flan, few know any of the Common tongue, deeming it beneath them.

The stocky, bandy-legged Bright Desert Flan exhibit uniformly tanned skin, lanky straight hair ranging from brown to black, and dark eyes. Their dress typically consists of dark-colored lightweight flowing robes worn over simple

Bright Blindness

Those who travel the white sands of the Bright Desert at day without adequate eye protection risk bright blindness, a condition unique to the region. At first, an afflicted individual's vision becomes indistinct, muddled by colored flashes and indistinct shapes. Later, the eyes begin to ache, becoming inflamed before the victim loses his vision for a number of days. Prolonged exposure can lead to permanent blindness.

Anyone travelling the white sands without protection must make a Constitution check (DC 15) every four hours of travel. The DC of subsequent checks throughout the day increases cumulatively by one with each check. Failure means the character is temporarily blinded for 1d4 days.

Characters suffering from bright blindness should also make these additional checks unless they have been completely blindfolded. If a character suffering from bright blindness fails a subsequent Constitution check, his eyes are damaged beyond repair, rendering him permanently blind.

A successful Heal check (DC 15) and the complete blindfolding of the afflicted character's eyes halves the duration of the temporary blindness. *Remove blindness* removes both temporary and permanent bright blindness instantly.

buckskin garments. When going into battle or mourning, the desert folk daub sacred symbols on their faces with sacred ochre, which they believe imparts strength to the wearer. They prize ornamentation; bone or brass headbands decorated with brightly colored beads attract especial attention from them and are highly valued.

A simple folk who eschew most forms of magic, the desert folk worship the spirits of earth, air, and water. Chief amongst their pantheon are Beory, the Oerth Mother, and her lord, Obad-Hai (the Shalm), known also to them as Lord of Wild Places. Above all they fear Nerull, for to them he is death incarnate; some even denounce Rary as the Reaper's emissary. Some few venerate Pelor, invoking him as a protective power against the pervasive evil of Nerull, or seek to improve their lot through the worship of Vathris in his original guise as patron of ingenuity and progress.

Arcane ability among them is largely unknown and brutally suppressed when discovered. The larger tribes, however, maintain a handful of druids (or *brajal*, as they are known) who derive their powers from the Lord of the Wild. Almost exclusively female, *brajals* act as seers, healers, and advisors. It is a measure of status amongst the chieftains to maintain a large group of such women. They live apart from the rest of the tribe and their lives are sacrosanct. These women are the tribe's spiritual link to the past and are believed to be able to commune with tribal ancestors.

Warriors garbed in sand-scarred leather armor bearing lance, scimitar, and short bow, frequently harass outlanders traveling through the desert. The Bright, unlike other deserts in the Far West, boasts no camels, so natives have domesticated a hardy breed of horse for locomotion (and, occasionally, milk and meat). Some of the greatest horsemen of the central Flanaess come from the Bright, where many children are literally born on the back of a sturdy pony.

A few tribes are of Suel descent and speak only the ancient language of the Imperium. A thousand years ago, several large bands of Suel, fleeing the destruction of their empire, forced a passage through the Abbor-Alz in a fruitless search for a bountiful land spoken of in Flan legends. By the time their folly was revealed they had not the strength to win free and were trapped by vengeful native tribes. Now dangerously inbred, they are reviled and distrusted by their Flan brethren and are slowly being hunted into extinction. Foremost amongst them are the Tareg who, from the ancient Suel fortress of Ghazal, control Hardby Pass, exacting a heavy toll on all who pass through. Led by the sorcerer **Kekravil** [LE Suel male Sor11/Clr5—Llerg] a swarthy, bald-headed, obnoxious man, these folk cling to fragments of their ancient heritage, worshipping Llerg above all others. In this harsh (but starkly beautiful) environment they have forgotten most other deities of note, although some few still revere Phyton.

Bright Desert Suel possess deeply tanned (sometimes burned) skin, which they protect with light cloth robes and hoods. Most have red or blond hair, which they wear closely cropped beneath leather coifs. Warriors proclaim their tribal allegiance by wearing cleverly crafted brass armbands inlaid with mottled blue or black ornamental stones. A Bright Desert Suel's broach is his honor, and will never willingly be surrendered.

The Hueleneaer

A dwindling people, the centaurs yet lingering in the Bright Lands are the final inheritors of a long and glorious past. The progeny of mercenary warriors who once guarded the sorcerer-kings of Sulm, they are a proud and noble race that still sings the songs of their past, recalling the folly of those who venerate fell powers. Strongly good-aligned in nature, they had all but abandoned their former allies by the time Shattados donned Tharizdun's "gift." The intelligent, cultured hueleneaer, rich in the lore of elder days, still remember where many of Sulm's ruins lie hidden.

Despite their culture, hueleneaer can be savage and merciless when aroused. Although smaller than their plains-dwelling cousins, the desert centaurs are more muscular and hardy than their kin, making them expert warriors and scouts. They hate manscorpions above all the menaces of the Bright; tribes occasionally unite to speed through the desert, slaying all such creatures they find.

Although in their historical twilight, strength and might still lurks within the hueleneaer. Since 589 CY, when a prominent chief was slain by unknown assailants, they have waged a bitter guerrilla war against Rary's forces. Champions amongst them still bear carefully preserved Sulmish blades and armor, gifted to their ancestors when they served as honored mercenaries in the Sulmish hosts. Today, these ancient treasures have been brought forth once more and are wielded to terrible effect against the followers of Rary and Robilar.

After last year's pitched battle at Gai Hur, centaur chiefs beat the sacred drum and passed the blood-red battle lance, summoning the tribes to war. The centaurs now prepare as a unified people for what could be their final crusade against the legacy of the evil that sundered their homeland centuries ago.

Angeanali [NG desert centaur male Bar4/Rgr8], a hot-blooded young chief, is one of the most fervent proponents of war. He seeks to carry the battle to Robilar at every opportunity and dreams of defeating the infamous Lord of Greyhawk in single combat. A small faction primarily composed of older centaurs stands against him, led by the astute and cautious **Kethharon** [NG desert centaur male Clr9—Skerrit], counsels patience in their struggle. Many young warriors accuse Kethharon and his followers of cowardice, not understanding that their stance almost certainly spells the complete destruction of their culture. Only the intercession of **Mailannaaethus** [N desert centaur male Brd11], a brave warrior renown for his mastery of the hueleneaer legends, has thus far averted bloodshed.

The Empire of the Bright Lands

As the Greyhawk Wars drew to a close, the arrival of Rary and his army irrevocably altered the Bright Desert's balance of power. None could stand before their might and the factious politics of the region ensured that no alliance would arise to threaten the fledgling empire. Within months, Rary's forces had swelled to include a clan of norkers and several tribes of desert nomads defeated in battle and offered mercy in exchange for service. Initially Rary claimed only the land surrounding the Brass Hills but in subsequent years his domain has swelled to include most of the region. As the first days of 593 unfold, dissent has been all but crushed amongst the desert tribes. Of the nomads, only a few insignificant clans of Suel still defiantly cling to their independence.

One of the most fervent opponents of the empire was the handsome, well-liked **Tolan Kai** [NG human male Rgr12]. His capture in 591 was a great blow to the free nomads and led to the capitulation of several tribes. Tolan's ultimate fate remains a mystery.

Rary's Tower

Rary's onion-domed tower dominates the northern reaches of the Brass Hills. Since the tower's arrival, Rary's agents (both humans and contract-bound yugoloths) have constructed a sprawling fortress around the structure. The fortress houses the archmage's fanatical Paynim riders, loyal nomads, and obsequious norker infantry. A few adventurers and apprentices of doubtful character also attend Rary here, either assisting in his research or ranging throughout the region locating rare or arcane items for their master.

Rary's fortress is surround by an as-yet-unnamed settlement. No doubt destined to become the capital of the Bright Lands, the town is composed of little more than semi-permanent pavilions and mud-bricked buildings. A few canny individuals have staked their claim to some of the high ground falling within the precincts of the new settlement and some permanent structures are being raised here according to visiting merchants. A vast curtain wall, finally completed in early 593 CY, protects the whole settlement from attack.

Merchant trains arrive here almost daily, bringing food, water, and other trade goods. The caravans also bring news of the outside world, making their arrival very popular with both the rank-and-file and with Rary's more powerful lieutenants.

Rary's Paynim riders, led by the well-travelled and fiendishly handsome **Kanir Chafr** [LE Baklunish male



Destroying the Scorpion Crown

Rulers and advisors across the central Flanaess debate the meaning of Rary's turn to evil and the reason for his flight to the Bright Desert. A discovery in 592 CY of a pair of torn and burned bodies in the norther Abbor-Alz may shed some light on the Traitor's plotting. One of the unfortunates carried a collection of writings purporting to be the spellbook and journal of one He Chak, a paynim apprentice who had served Rary for more than 20 years prior to his disappearance during the Greyhawk Wars.

The treatise relates how He Chak, while serving Rary in Lopolla, fell in love with Kaya, an enslaved Wolf Nomad woman. According to the journal, Kaya persuaded her lover to flee after he overheard a conversation between Rary and Robilar, the substance of which dealt with Rary's desire to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. Rary also revealed that such an act would shatter the curse's grasp on the region, allowing the land to gradually revert to its original state. The veracity of He Chak's writings cannot be ascertained, however, as attempts to return him to life have failed. Perhaps even in death he fears the Traitor's wrath.

Bar6/Rgr3], enforce their lord's will within the settlement. One of Rary's chief apprentices, **Eliazir Razeem Aza'mut of the Muddled Tongue** [N Baklunish male Wiz14], has a small tower here, but is frequently away on diplomatic missions. The half-Paynim bastard son of a Lopollan spice merchant learned at Rary's feet as an apprentice and is believed to have spent time on other planes, where he was somehow changed, his mind addled by the experience. Aza'mut earned his epithet thanks to his richly accented Baklunish voice and his role as emissary of the Bright Lands to the courts of the Flanaess. In recent years, Aza'mut has visited Hardby, Safeton (where he was well received by Turin Deathstalker), Narwell, Onnwal, and Ahlissa.

Military Forces of the Empire

The bulk of Rary's military strength wanders the Brass Hills region or garrisons at Kalki's Leap or Fort Whiterock. Patrols of nomadic horsemen or norkers range far across the sands, seeking out and destroying desert marauders. Rary's forces, under the iron leadership of Robilar, have been forged into a cohesive force capable of meeting and destroying any remaining threats to the archmage's position. The core of these forces, Robilar's personal guardsmen and Rary's fanatically loyal Paynim horsemen, possess excellent training, equipment, and morale. The Tukim tribe, under the command of the canny **Geratyr** [NE Flan male Bar2/Ftr4], number more than 1,500 lances. Pre-eminent amongst the Tukim is **Halan Jeteri** [CN Flan male Bar7/Ftr2], a charismatic hero famed for slaying a dune stalker single-handedly with naught but a broken lance. Other nomad contingents muster another thousand or so troops.

Innumerable norkers and a few contingents of specialist mercenary troops further swell Rary's forces. One of the most infamous of Rary's servants is **Teraeanali** [LE desert centaur male Rgr9], a black-hearted exile from his people. An implacable foe and skilled archer, Teraeanali delights in hunting down those in the archmage's disfavor.

Fort Whiterock

Fort Whiterock wards the eastern portions of the Bright Lands. It was from here that Robilar campaigned against the hueleneaer at Gai Hur. Centaurs frequently siege this isolated outpost, which was built over the ruins of an ancient white-walled Sulmish citadel. The seneschal, **Zhora** [NE human female Ftr9], formerly served in Greyhawk City's guard and is a wily tactician. Under her leadership these sporadic attacks have been defeated with little loss. Many pits and ditches litter the surrounding dunes, bearing mute testimony to the near-constant warfare swirling about the fortress.

Whiterock's importance has grown with the expansion of Rary's hegemony into surrounding lands. More than 400 nomads and mercenary crossbowmen garrison the fort, which has been enlarged several times in the past few years. Deep artesian wells provide fresh water and newly hewn subterranean storage vaults render the fortress nearly invulnerable to the centaurs' lackluster sieges.

Kalki's Leap

Rary's main fortress in the southern desert region, Kalki's Leap has been extensively extended and reinforced by Robilar, who uses it as his personal command center. Surrounded on all sides by narrow, steeply walled winding canyons, the inner donjon is further warded by stout granite walls, making the citadel all but impregnable. Many norkers dwell in caves carved high into the surrounding canyon walls, making a surprise assault virtually impossible.

Skilled in the art of ambush and unswervingly loyal to Robilar, a truly exceptional unkempt norker named **Grish** [CE norker female Rog4/Bar2] organizes Robilar's outer defenses. Grish's loyalty to Robilar is the subject of much jesting amongst the Paynims, who coarsely suggest (with no proof whatsoever) that the two may be in love. The matter is the source of some considerable friction between the Paynims and Robilar's highly trained personal retinue; blood has been shed twice over the matter.

From here Robilar launched his southern campaigns, which he successfully completed by the close of 589. When the former Lord of Greyhawk is not in residence, the ill-tempered **Chukai** [N Baklunish human male Ftr10] and **Morik** [NE Oeridian/Suel male Ftr5] command the fortress. One of Rary's most trusted Paynims, Chukai was the fort's original commander. He now spends much of his time reporting Robilar's moods and actions to his secret master, Rary. Morik is an exceptional administrator and the garrison quartermaster. Severely injured in the initial campaigns, his left leg is gone below the knee. Robilar trusts Morik implicitly, and the two work continuously to soften Chukai's influence over the rest of the garrison.

Places of Interest

Nomadic villages, a scattered handful of oases, several landmarks, and the few remaining sand-shrouded ruins of once mighty Sulm all lie within the Bright Lands. Primitive villages such as Ul Bakak, Histak, and Kalundi act as focal points for the civilization that maintains a precarious toehold here, while other less permanent settlements can be found huddled around oases and along the few seasonal rivulets. Of the permanent settlements located in the Bright, only Ul Bakak yet maintains a precarious neutrality.

Oases

The Bright Lands boast four well-known oases.

Var is the southernmost and largest of the oases; the waters here have never failed. Hundreds of nomads gather water here each day and a small garrison of Rary's troops linger here, maintaining discipline between the normally factious nomads.

Kolum was oft beset by manscorpions until Rary's forces annihilated a nest of these creatures lurking in nearby ruins. This skirmish cemented the willing loyalty of several important Flan tribal leaders, who now place their warriors at Rary's disposal. A mixture of nomads and norkers make up the Kolum garrison.

Tulwar oasis is the final link in the trade route between Ul Bakak and the desert interior. After a whirlwind assault by a joint force of nomads and hueleneaer decimated the garrison in 588, Rary ordered his yugoloth allies to construct a small fort here. The garrison, members of the fanatically loyal Tukim tribe, send out strong patrols of horsemen to scour the surrounding dunes.

Shembai is the only major waterhole not totally dominated by Rary. Experiments carried out by a puissant Sulmish wizard centuries ago caused a small rift between Oerth and the Abyss to form here. At nightfall the rift opens, expelling several demons that despoil the area, attacking any travelers they find. The lucky are slain; others are carried off to the Abyss. Rary lost several patrols here before deeming control of the oasis unnecessary, placing semi-permanent pickets about Shembai to observe and control access to the waterhole.

Ul Bakak

For the last decade or so, Ul Bakak has repeatedly professed its neutrality in the conflicts wracking the region. Rary's domination of the Bright now all but invalidates this neutrality, but the archmage allows Ul Bakak its fantasy because of the trade it attracts. Nomads from throughout the desert come to Ul Bakak to trade with unscrupulous caravan masters from Hardby. Since the village stands on sacred ground, no nomads will fight here—even Abbor-Alz barbarians and the reviled Suel can walk the market of Ul Bakak without fear.

Little more than a permanent collection of tents and mud-bricked dwellings, Ul Bakak stands between the folds of three hills. A well-guarded stream bubbles to the surface at the base of these hills, allowing the inhabitants to cultivate a small parcel of land and to maintain several herds of goats. Assisted by a ragtag band of desert warriors, the dour-faced and single-minded **Kumhaik** [N Flan male Ftr12] maintains order here. A veteran of over thirty years of skirmishing and survival in the deep-desert, Kumhaik is forthright and honest. The grizzled warrior will not risk the neutrality of Ul Bakak for any cause, no matter how just, and does not suffer fools lightly. He is famed for his equestrian skills and for his patience; desert tales relate how he once tracked a renegade merchant guilty of striking a rival in the marketplace for over two weeks before capturing and punishing him.

The Brass Hills

The jagged peaks of the Brass Hills, situated at the very center of the Bright Desert, afford superlative views of the surrounding landscape. Now wholly pacified by Rary's forces, the hills swarm with his minions. Some of the region's most interesting locales include:

Tower of the Sands. A small low-lying spur of these hills runs southward toward the Bright Coast, disappearing under the sands within miles of the coastline. At the very tip of this spur, hidden in a sand-choked valley, stands a single tower, the upper portions of which have recently been uncovered. A few travellers, who bestowed upon the tower its rather evocative and romantic name, have glimpsed this place from a distance, but harassment by norkers and other desert denizens precluded their investigations of the place.

The tower's origins remain a mystery, although the hueleneaer remember tales, older even than Sulm, imbuing the tower with an aura of preternatural menace. They hold the Brass Hills sacred and will not travel here. Despite this, groups of travelers who recently visited the region report encountering a lone centaur who professed to be on some kind of holy quest. The centaur, **Argaveno** [LN desert centaur male], offered several of these groups succor, leading them without incident past several large bands of patrolling norkers. Rumors report the destruction of several norker patrols by Argaveno and his charges, and Lord Robilar himself is said to be taking an interest in the situation.

The Zochal. In the southern fringes of the hills, in the midst of a dense network of jagged hills and deep crevasses, stand the scorched and blackened remains of a shattered plateau. A yawning crater now stands in the center of the plateau, where once stood a rectangular building of obviously arcane origin known as the Zochal by scholars of the Ur-Flan. What caused the explosion is unknown, although many observers blame Rary and his yugoloth allies. The plateau stands north of Kalki's Leap, which has seen increased activity of late.

The Shrouded Citadel. Adventurers from Ul Bakak to the Wild Coast whisper of a newly discovered fortification deep in the hills constructed by Rary to incarcerate a prisoner of great value. No one knows the prisoner's identity, but the swarms of norkers, Paynims, and hired adventurer-mercenaries keeping away the inquisitive illustrate the prisoner's import. Rary himself visited the citadel several times in the closing days of 592 CY, leading many to assume the place plays some central role in his schemes.

Dagger Rock

Thrusting skyward, the deformed pinnacle of cracked granite known as Dagger Rock dominates the land for miles around. Travelers have used the landmark as a way marker for centuries. The pinnacle itself stands at the center of a shattered landscape. A great expanse of broken and shattered rocks litters the structure's base, making footing treacherous and travel by mount impossible. Thus, while travelers and explorers alike know of and have seen Dagger Rock from a distance, relatively few have actually approached the formation.

The ancient Suel, although they did not linger here long, used this place for a time as a refuge from their Flan

assailants, calling it Kuranot. The few brave individuals who have since approached report the crumbling remains of a cliff-top fortress carved into the outcrop's zenith. Most assume that the Suel cut or discovered passages within the rock that ultimately lead to its summit, but the secret entrances to such thoroughfares are now long forgotten.

A blue dragon named Voltarmarun laired here in recent decades until slain by an incensed Robilar in 590 CY. The fate of Voltarmarun's hoard remains mysterious; since word of the warrior's brave exploits reached civilized lands, several small groups of adventurers have slipped into the desert via the Knife Edge Pass, seeking the treasure. Their ultimate fates likewise remain unknown.

The Uplands of Unath

This small range of hills, located to the north of Utaa, was once home to a small colony of dwur allied to their brethren dwelling in the Abbor-Alz. Natural and dwur-constructed passages burrowed deep under the desert, linking the two groups in a complex web of corridors, galleries, and chambers. No one knows the ultimate fate of the Unath dwur, though they most assuredly warred with the expansionist Sulmites. Either they fell here defending their clanholds, made a final stand with their eastern cousins, or migrated elsewhere. The remains of their ill-fated civilization still dot the sharp, jagged peaks of this range. In many places their way markers are still visible, some still bearing the kingdom's device—two crossed battleaxes surmounted by a blazing sun.

To the south, near the ruins of Utaa, their strongholds stand empty but in the north many teem with clans of norkers or jermaline. The jermaline are fiercely independent creatures that resist the encroachment of the norkers, who for the most part ally themselves to the Empire of the Bright Lands. Preying on both groups, small bands of trolls dwell in and around some of these dwur settlements. Able to change their skin color to surprise foes, the depredations of this subspecies of common troll effectively culls the numbers of other humanoids.

The deep tunnels and passages connect to the Underdark in several places. Powerful adventurers traversing this shadowy world report witnessing the aftermath of several fierce engagements between groups of beholders and duergar. A few explorers also speak of a great underground river flowing swiftly southward toward the Gearnat, perhaps acting as a natural drain to the Gnatmarsh.

Much of the warfare that rages here is subterranean in nature and thus the few hardy nomadic tribes who graze their livestock in the hills are mainly untroubled by the goblinoids of the interior. A small pride of dragonnes led by a huge male, however, dwells in the range's central massif, occasionally issuing forth to prey on the nomad's herds.

Gai Hur

Named "Sky-Peak" in ancient Flan, this roughly hewn monstrous stone pinnacle is a vital landmark for those travelling the Bright's eastern reaches. The hueleneaer once gathered here in moot twice annually, until one such meeting ended in tragedy in 592. Surprised and encircled by a strong force of nomads and norkers, the gathered centaurs were convinced to parley with their enemies. After the failure of several hours of negotiation with Lord Robilar (who hoped to bring them peaceably into the empire) ended in stalemate, the two sides set to fighting. Several hundred centaurs died attempting to break free of Robilar's army. Those deaths and the reported presence of several unnatural yugoloths on the battlefield strengthened the centaurs' resolve to resist Rary and his machinations.

Shards of Forgotten Kingdoms

The roots of Sulm's civilization are lost in pre-history; of them little is known. Rexidos, however, in his *A Chronicle of the Flan People*, hypothesizes that Sulm's original founders were survivors of an even older Flan kingdom destroyed in a series of conflicts of which the histories are ignorant.

The doom that engulfed Sulm annihilated the population and poisoned the land but failed to completely obliterate the fallen kingdom. In many places ancient ruins still thrust forlornly above the dune sea. Much of Sulm's riches and lore yet lie in the sand-drowned ruins of this once great land, their inaccessibility and many and potent guardians thwarting most attempts to retrieve them. Chief amongst these are the degenerate manscorpions. Far more rarely encountered are the dune stalkers. Tall, naked, hard-skinned humanoids feared for their ability to slay opponents with a single kiss, wild theories abound regarding their origins. Some believe they are native to the Elemental Plane of Earth while others assert they are the twisted personification of Sulm's most evil peoples. A few nomadic sorcerers and wizards have learned to bind dune stalkers to their service, using them to slay rivals or to retrieve lost items of power.

In other places hitherto unknown ruins are exposed and then reburied at the whim of fierce storms sweeping across the desolate landscape. Finally, dust storms can strike with barely a moment's notice, interring would-be explorers beneath the desert's shifting sands.

Utaa

The former capital of Sulm lies in the very shadow of the hills that ward its northern approaches. The city was founded on and about a great plateau thrusting up from the desert floor. Today, only the center of Utaa yet stands above the encroaching sands. Bare, sun-cracked rock surrounds the city for miles, as if the gods themselves have striven to bury Utaa in an attempt to contain the evil that lurks within. The outer precincts of the city are almost completely hidden beneath the encroaching sands; only the remains of occasional watch towers, normally swarming with scorpions and many-tentacled tentamorts, yet breach the surface. The dunes here are star-shaped and very high, some soaring over one hundred



feet in height. Strong, unpredictable winds complicate matters for explorers, although windstorms occasionally uncover a long-submerged portion of the city, allowing further exploration.

No known oases or rivulets exist within fifty miles of these forsaken ruins, making exploration particularly arduous. Nothing grows within the city's boundaries and rain never falls here.

The plateau itself is immense, towering above the surrounding lands. Many watchtowers, noble residences, and minor temples have been carved into its sides. Persistent rumors amongst the nomads speak of a convoluted network of steep, narrow, and lightless tunnels piercing the plateau itself, reaching downward to the communal burial sites of Utaa's common folk. Below even the burial chambers run the city's sewers, which still resist the sand's onslaught. It is through these that pockets of the lower city can be explored.

The center of Utaa can be reached by climbing one of three paved highways warded by a series of strongpoints that snake up the plateau's steep sides. Atop the plateau stands the administrative and spiritual center of Sulm. Here, once-sumptuous palaces, lofty castles, ostentatious temples, and soaring monuments still stand. Weathered by the near-constant winds that plague the plateau, surviving monuments depict a race of heroically posed cruel-faced Flan. The inner city is infested with all manner of incorporeal undead that effectively deal with most interlopers.

Unaagh

Once Sulm's most sacred site, the location of this vast necropolis is well known to the desert's inhabitants. Originally a place of great beauty and tranquillity, Unaagh is now a travesty of its former self. Laid out in a great grid, Unaagh was composed of many rows of mausoleums interspaced with gardens, tranquil lakes, and shrines dedicated to the memory of the departed. In the very center of the necropolis arose a black-stoned ziggurat from which the whole necropolis was visible. Now all lies in ruins, and what beauty once existed here has been eradicated by the harsh elements that constantly work to reduce Unaagh to naught but a memory.

Here, interred in many-tiered mausoleums, lay Sulm's elite. Now the ruins teem with a vast legion of undead commanded by **Drokkas** [LE lich male Wiz18] a one-time rival of Shattados. Mercifully, these undead seem bound here by some unknown agency and are unable to leave this place, crumbling to dust if they attempt to do so.

Rary's forces have made several attempts to explore these ruins, most ending in disaster. In 591 CY, Rary himself came here and bested the dark lord of Unaagh in a magical duel of epic proportions. Much of the black ziggurat was destroyed in the magical conflagration that also consumed many lesser undead. Since Rary's exploration of the ruins, observers have reported a great pall of black smoke hanging motionless over the necropolis, resting the attempts of even the strongest winds to dissipate it.

Darkbridge Temple

Shunned by all, this accursed place is at the center of a growing number of disappearances over the last decade. No sane traveler comes within sight of this squat, festering ruin. Once a Sulmish site dedicated to the reverence of forbidden gods, **Othimvoar** [CE young adult shadow dragon male] now lairs here. Corrupted by dark dreams of ancient glories and glittering treasures Othimvoar, nicknamed "Smoke" by those few who have glimpsed him, was lured here a decade ago from his lair in the Abbor-Alz.

Originally built atop a high hill at the intersection of two valleys and ringed by three great walls that hold the advancing sand somewhat at bay, the central temple still stands. Four great gates, ceremonially set at the cardinal points of the compass, pierce the outer wall, which has in places been overwhelmed by the ever-present wind and sand. The inner walls protect many lesser shrines arrayed around the main edifice and are studded with protective towers. Beneath the temple lie mile-deep catacombs containing some of the most sacred and forbidden places of old Sulm. Undead remnants of Sulm's priesthood guard

these sacred places, incessantly warring with a ferocious tribe of jermaline infesting the sepulchers and vaults of this forsaken netherworld.

Plain of Spears

Itar, Sulm's ancient enemy, was crushed on the Plain of Spears in a battle that some say is still fought to this day by the ghosts of those slain long ago. Nothing grows in this bleak and wretched plain, named after the countless man-tall outcroppings of rock in the area. Incessant winds that seem laden with the sorrows of all who fell here gust across the desolate landscape. Determined explorers often return depleted in numbers but bearing ancient weapons imbued with great power. Often they tell of attacks in the dead of night by spirits clad in the trappings of fallen kingdoms and of their companions driven mad by the ceaseless wind.

The Twisted Canyon

Found to the south of the Plain of Spears, where the eastern Abbor-Alz run down into the desert, the Twisted Canyon is barely more than a score of yards wide at any point but reaches depths of up to two hundred feet. Legends of the nomads mark this as the spot that Vathris crawled to after being mortally wounded on the Plain of Spears. They relate how he died here in the very deepest depths of the canyon, cursing the wickedness of the kingdom that had laid him low.

After Sulm's fall, worshippers of Vathris carved an elaborate secret temple complex into the canyon walls. Laid out over five main levels and numerous sub-levels that radiate outward from the central chamber, the temple also includes numerous deep cisterns, allowing its inhabitants, the Qolat Sisterhood, to remain within most of their lives.

The central chamber, known as the Vault of the Faithful, has certain acoustic qualities that allow the barest whisper to be heard at a great distance. The sound of prayer constantly reverberates here, as it has for more than a thousand years. The sisters believe their prayers have the power to revive Vathris, a god whose physical form still bears the seeping wounds of his original destruction. The hero god manifests once or twice a year, wandering the desert in a state of wounded delir-

Adventuring in the Bright

The following LIVING GREYHAWK scenarios take place in the Bright Lands.

URD1-02 *To Save the Scouring Wind*
by Chris Lindsay
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
Whilst in the Abbor-Alz the adventurers encounter a lone centaur seeking aid for his tribe. Traveling to the Bright, the PCs manage to rescue a tribe of desert centaurs from the forces of Rary, but fail to save their shaman, who is slain whilst questing in the spirit world.

URD1-07 *Fools Gold*
by Jonathan Ingram
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
While resting near the Urnst fortress of Seh, the party discovers a treasure map. The map reveals the location of a Bright Desert dervish raiding camp, allowing the adventurers the opportunity to take matters into their own hands.

COR1-08 *The Future's Bright*
by Creighton Broadhurst
Level Range: 1–8 **Status:** Retired
Part One of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Forced to anchor off the Bright Coast to repair their vessel, the adventurers must negotiate with the ghost of Varn Amandis, who allows them to cannibalize the wreck of the *Azure Warden*. But first, they must rescue the *Warden's* only survivor, lost somewhere in the Bright Desert.

URD1-11 *Incident at Kiddeky Crossing*
by Richard Hubbard
Level Range: 1–6 **Status:** Retired
Working as agents of the Church of St. Cuthbert, the adventurers find themselves in a race against time when they must beat Lord Robilar and his men to the location of the *Chalice of Relief*, a magical cup reputed to cure those who drink from it.

URD2-04 *Bright Prospects*
by Jonathan Ingram
Level Range: 1–10 **Status:** Retired
Adventurers act as bodyguards for Lord Brondar Pontirun when he embarks on a diplomatic mission to woo the Tal'Shaki tribe into an alliance against Rary the Traitor.

COR2-08 *Echo*
by Stephen Radney-MacFarland
Level Range: 1–12 **Status:** Available
Concerned by stories of the resurfacing Isles of Woe, Warnes Starcoat sponsors an expedition into the Brass Hills to explore a site called the Zochal. According to the *Nesser Opuscule*, only surviving fragment of a greater work attributed to Tzunk, the Zochal is an echo point for the planar confluence that infuses the once-lost sunken isles. What does this mean? That is exactly what the Circle of Eight wants you to find out.

COR3-01 *The Hidden Fortress*
by Creighton Broadhurst
Level Range: 4–10 **Status:** Available
Part Two of the *Sins of Ages Past* series. Fragments of a doom-laden prophesy, a millennia old map, and the sanity of a man long-rescued compel you to return to the Bright Lands.

ium, violently destroying monsters and ignoble men and stoking the desire for revenge among all he meets. Constantly bleeding from the wound that killed him, Vathris always dies again within days of his resurrection, and the cycle continues anew.

Vathris' faithful dwelled here for almost a thousand years until a great schism split their ranks, polarizing them into two factions. The Qolat Sisterhood (a group of militant warrior-priestesses) now holds the temple and from it fights the defilers of the desert. They are few in number now, barely two score strong, but all are skilled in the arts of war and prayer. **Jerianek Firaen** [LN Flan female Clr9–Vathris/Ftr3], a strongly muscled, righteous woman intent on vanquishing all invaders, leads them. She distrusts anyone not desert born, taking a particularly guarded stance toward westerners. The other faction consists largely of male clerics and dervishes who cling to the Vathris of progress and ingenuity and seek to heal the god's wounds, rather than simply use him as a pawn. They declared the Sisterhood anathema hundreds of years ago and still keep a watch for Qolat sisters outside the protection of their fortress home.

Sennerae

The shattered ruins of Sennerae have lain almost undisturbed since Sulm's forces destroyed the city days after annihilating Itar's forces on the Plain of Spears. Once the capital of Itar, the city was wracked by powerful earthquakes conjured by Ur-Flan mystics in the service of Sulm. Almost the entire city was destroyed. A handful of structures came to rest on the treacherous cliffs created by the earthquakes while the crumbling remains of a few battered walls and watchtowers still precariously cling to the clifftop. The easily accessible parts of the city have long ago been plundered, however much of the wealth of Itar was cast into the warm waters of the Gearnat along with the bulk of the city. Travelers sometimes take shelter in the clifftop ruins, although few possess the resources or bravery to investigate the rest of the city.

Over the years, the relentless action of the sea has eroded and smoothed much of what survived Itar's deathroes until nothing now juts above the waves, even at low tide. Below the waves, much of Sennerae still stands. Cracked temples dedicated to Pelor, Vathris, and Rao have resisted the onslaught of the tides well, as have other lesser structures. Some streets and other buildings also remain, including portions of the royal palace.

Despite the large concentration of sahuagin and other undersea predators in the Sea of Gearnat, the region surrounding Sennerae is lightly inhabited. No doubt the presence of a gargantuan dragon turtle, which has laired here for centuries, is somewhat to thank for this. Few who witness this monster's depredations survive the encounter, although some mariner's tales speak of him. Named Lhamzygax in the journals of Kelsannd, an Ahlissian mage given to undersea exploration, mariners have not encountered the dragon turtle for decades, bringing some to the conclusion that he has finally perished.

The waters off this portion of the coast are uncommonly deep, shrouding Sennerae's ruins in a gloomy half-light. Deep caves pierce the base of the cliff against which the sunken city rests. How far these extend under the desert, and what they contain, is a matter of some conjecture.

What the Heck is a Norker?

Norkers are short, gruff goblinoids who possess a thick segmented hide and long canine teeth. Their hairless skin ranges from reddish brown to dark gray. Most wear only loincloths held up by a belt to which other belonging are tied. Norkers speak a dialect of Goblin. Those with Intelligence scores of 12 or above also speak Orc.

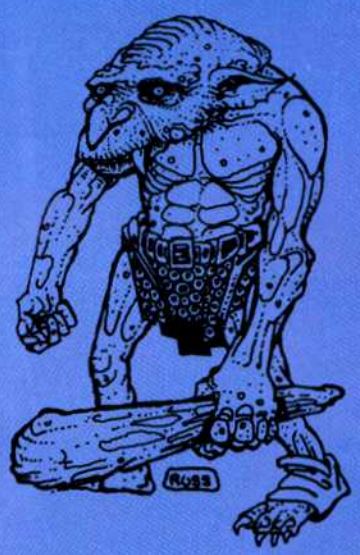
Norkers are tribal, although the leader's influence extends only so far as his reach. They raid and steal from other humanoids, being too lazy to do their own hunting. Norkers generally lair in caves, ruins, or villages taken by conquest. Rare occasions in which two norker tribes meet usually end in bloodshed, with victors claiming the fangs of their slain enemies as battle trophies. Most conflicts end once one side takes the advantage; norkers war with each other to establish dominance, not to wipe each other out.

Norkers sometimes work with hobgoblins, who do their best to curb the creatures' natural chaotic tendencies. Most worship Maglubiyet, god of goblins and hobgoblins. A norker's favorite class is rogue, but norker leaders tend to be fighters. The following stat block represents an average norker.

Norker: CR 1/2; Small humanoid (goblinoid); HD 1d8+2; hp 6; Init: +1 (Dex); Spd 20 ft.; AC 19 (touch 12, flat-footed 18); Atk +2 melee (1d6, club) or -3 melee (1d4, bite) or +3 ranged (1d6, javelin); SQ Darkvision 60 ft.; AL CE; SV Fort +4, Ref +1, Will -1; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 14, Int 9, Wis 9, Cha 8.

Skills and Feats: Listen +3, Move Silently +5, Spot +3; Alertness.

Possessions: Club, 2 javelins.



Russ Nicholson

Living Greyhawk™

Enlightenment can penetrate even the helm of iron—Cuthbertine proverb

Campaign Director: Stephan Radney-MacFarland • Contributing Reporters: Jason Bulmahn and David Christ

3.5 Edition and Living Greyhawk

Recent months have brought a lot of discussion and speculation regarding the new "3.5" edition of the D&D core rules, set to hit store shelves in July. Many LIVING GREYHAWK players have wondered when and how the campaign will support these new rules. While the campaign administrators have not yet finalized all the details of how to implement the changes, we have been working very hard with the new rules to make any changes as smooth as possible.

We do know that LIVING GREYHAWK will support the new rules. Those rules will not "go live" for the campaign in July, but will be implemented by the end of 2003. We wish to give our players and especially our judges enough time to become familiar with the new rules before we make them official.

Shortly after the new books hit the shelves, we will place a conversion document in the "Files" section of the campaign website (www.living-greyhawk.com). The document will detail what changes must be made to your character, with a deadline for when all changes must go into effect. We realize that not knowing what changes await your characters can be frustrating, but we plan to incorporate the new rules in a manner that causes as little strife to the players as possible. With a positive attitude and a litte understanding from all involved we can make this change as quickly as possible and get back to the fun of playing the game we all love.

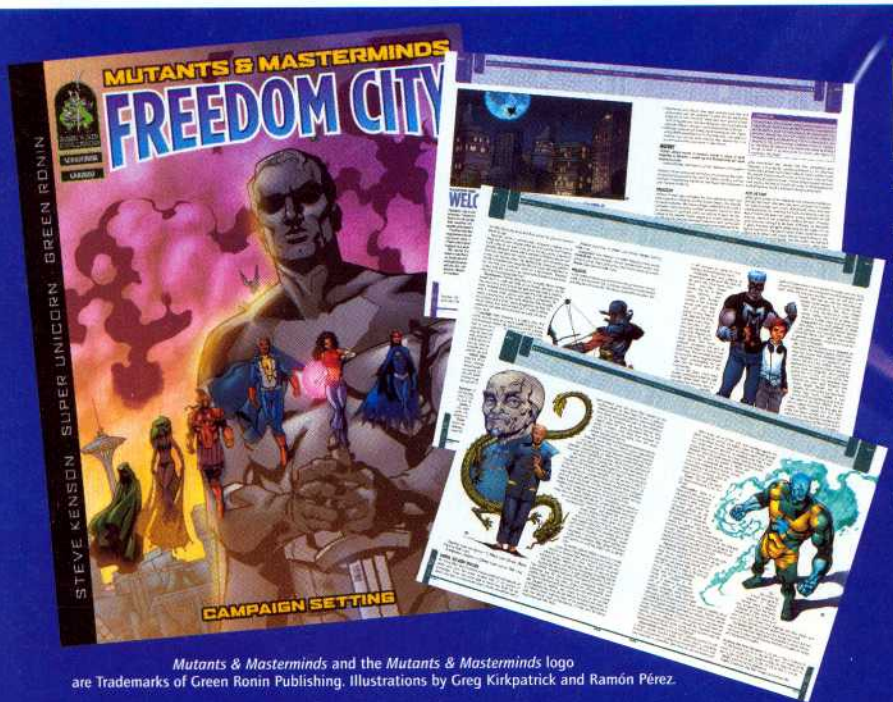
Campaign Policy: Regionals at the "Big" Shows

The RPGA Network designates certain conventions as "spotlight" shows. These shows receive Core Premieres, special events, and other special considerations unavailable to regional shows. As a balancing factor, "spotlight" shows cannot run regional or meta-regional events, which are reserved for smaller local shows. The current "spotlight" shows are: WINTER FANTASY, Origins, Gen Con Midwest, Gen Con West.

New Books, New Spells, New Ways to Die

Got a feat or prestige class from a new Wizards of the Coast product that's just perfect for your character? The list of allowable rules expansions changes twice annually, and is noted in two important campaign documents. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Campaign Sourcebook* (LGCS) contains everything a player needs to create and play a character in the campaign. The *LIVING GREYHAWK Administrators Handbook* (LGAH) provides guidelines regarding what rules can and cannot be used in the campaign, and is a resource for the Regional Triads who manage the campaign regionally.

Campaign administrators update both documents every six months (in January and July), adding character options that have come out since the last update once they have been reviewed for campaign compatibility. As always, the current version of the LGCS can be found at www.livinggreyhawk.com. ●



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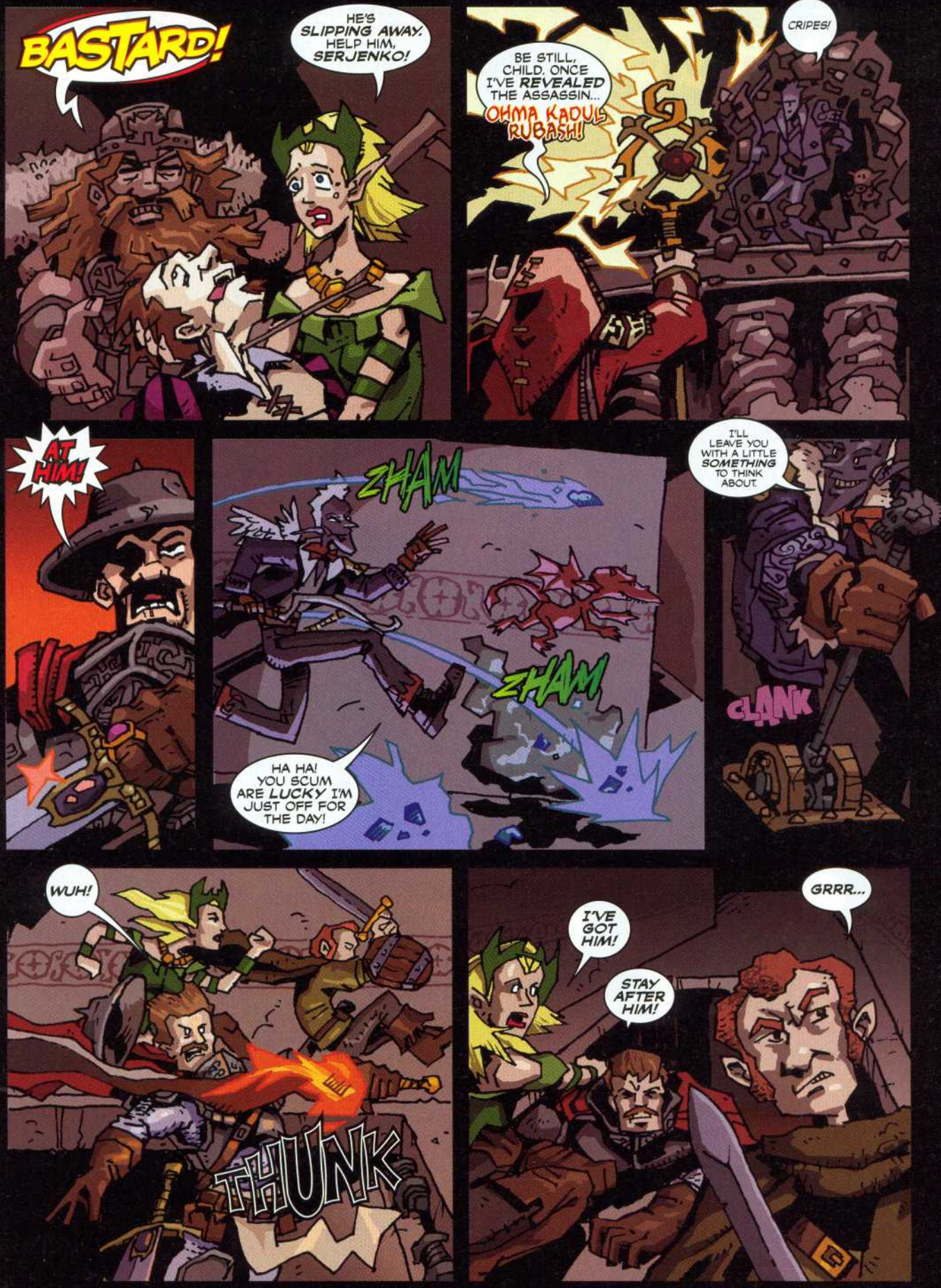
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Municipal Police Station
1 square = 5 feet
WEST
Authorized Vehicles Only Beyond This Point
KEY
1) Lobby
2) Front Desk
3) Officer Desks
4) Lieutenant's Office
5) Precinct Captain's Office
6) Firing Range
7) Armory
8) Weapon & Gear Lockers
9) Jail Guard Desk
10) Drunk Tank
11) Group Cell
12) Solitary Cells
13) Dispatch Desk
14) Conference Room
15) Waiting Area
16) Janitor's Closet
17) Computer Mainframe
18) Break Room
19) Lavatories
20) Evidence Archive
21) Storage Room
22) Lineup Waiting Area
23) Lineup Viewing Room
24) Detective Offices
25) Security Desk
26) Interrogation Room
27) Observation Room
28) Motor Pool
29) Fuel Pumps
30) Bus Stop


DOWNER
BY KYLE HUNTER ©02
CRAWL BABY, CRAWL!
STAY TOGETHER AND BE QUIET. SURPRISE IS THE BEST WEAPON WE HAVE AGAINST THE EYE TYRANT!
THERE'S SOMETHING UP AHEAD!
WE'VE BEEN DETECTED!
BUGGER OFF, YOU CRIMINALS!
CAN'T WE GET ANY PEACE DOWN HERE?
THERE'S NO REST FOR THE WICKED, DEMON! I'LL SING YOU A TALE YOU'LL NOT SOON FORGET--
LOOPS, NO!
OOT
TCHEK
HA HA! CRITICAL HIT MUTHA@#$%!! THAT'S WHAT YOU GET FOR BRINGING A GEE-TAR ON A DUNGEON CRAWL!
NICE ONE, DOWNER!


BASTARD!
HE'S SLIPPING AWAY. HELP HIM, SERJENKO!
BE STILL, CHILD. ONCE I'VE REVEALED THE ASSASSIN...
OHMA KADUL RUBASH!
CRIPES!
AT HIM!
ZHAM
ZHAM
HA HA! YOU SCUM ARE LUCKY I'M JUST OFF FOR THE DAY!
I'LL LEAVE YOU WITH A LITTLE SOMETHING TO THINK ABOUT.
CLANK
WUH!
THUNK
I'VE GOT HIM!
STAY AFTER HIM!
GRRR...


UH. WHAT A DAY.
CREEAK
BLOODY OVER-BRIGHTERS...
PASSWORD!
GAH!
PASSWORD!
AAAAAAAAHH!
TCHWAP
TCHWAP
TAKE THAT, YA GIT!
:KA...GAFF:
PLINK
MMM-MMMM...
RIDICULOUS! I'VE WORKED HERE OVER 23 YEARS...
AND IT ALL ENDS RIGHT HERE!



Story and art by **Kyle Stanley Hunter**. Lettering by **Sean Glenn**. Thanks to **Wendy Johnson**. A **Super Unicorn** production. **www.superunicorn.com**