

A HEROIC TIER ADVENTURE

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®]

SEEKERS OF THE ASHEN CROWN[™]



AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 2ND-5TH LEVEL

Chris Sims • Scott Fitzgerald Gray

SEEKERS OF THE ASHEN CROWN™



ADVENTURE BOOK ONE

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INTRODUCTION

In Darguun, the Kech Volaar (Wordbearer) goblins have recovered a part of the fabled *Ashen Crown*. If they can restore the entire artifact, they would significantly enhance their claim as the rightful inheritors of the long-lost Dhakaani Empire.

Unfortunately for the Wordbearers, word of the *Crown's* reemergence has leaked. Others—rival goblins, elf historians, and human spies—seek the artifact. The characters are caught in the middle of these competing forces.

Seekers of the Ashen Crown takes place in the EBERRON® campaign setting and accentuates the unique features of that world. Still, only a few locations are loosely connected to Eberron; this adventure can be tailored to any setting with minimal work.

This DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® adventure is intended for 2nd-level characters. *Dungeon Masters* need the *Player's Handbook*®, *Monster Manual*®, and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*® to use this adventure. *D&D™ Dungeon Tiles* and *D&D® Miniatures* can enhance your play experience. The *EBERRON Campaign Guide* and *EBERRON Player's Guide* are recommended, but aren't essential.

If you're planning to play a hero in this adventure, reading further will spoil the surprises in store for you.

BACKGROUND

Thousands of years ago, the Valaes Tairn elves came to Khorvaire. By combining four elven magic items into one, their priests created a potent headpiece with power over ancestral spirits and death. As its use continued, the item awakened to its own purposes, which coincided with those of its creators. The Valaes Tairn named this treasure the *Crown of Remembrance*, or *Liryna'tani* in Elven.

Soon after establishing a foothold on Khorvaire, the elves came into conflict with the goblins of the Dhakaani Empire. The warlike nature of both peoples led

USING THIS ADVENTURE

This DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure is designed to take a party of five PCs from 2nd to 5th level. In it, you will find:

1. *Adventure Book One* (this book), holding the story's background and synopsis, hooks to entice the PCs, an overview of the main sections of *Adventure Book Two*, handouts and illustrations to show players, new monsters, a new artifact, new magic items, and other game elements.

2. *Adventure Book Two*, containing combat encounters and skill challenges, as well as some connecting material. The encounters are divided into five major sections: Bug Hunt, Road to Six Kings, Six Kings, Graywall, and Sharn.

3. A poster map, for use with miniatures, depicting three important encounter areas.

4. A folder holding the booklets and poster map, along with whatever else you want to put inside.

to intermittent war. During this time, the goblins captured the *Crown of Remembrance*. They claim that the artifact willed itself to move in the world and be a part of great deeds.

The Dhakaani began to shape the *Crown's* power. They valued its control over mortality and history as much as its elven creators had. Honoring the *Crown's* sway over death, they named it the *Ashen Crown*, or *Arkantaash* in Goblin.

The Dhakaani favored keeping the *Crown* in separate parts. Doing so spread its power among heroes of the empire and prevented the elves from easily reclaiming it. By carrying parts of *Arkantaash*, mighty Dhakaani leaders stayed united in common cause. They assembled the sundered parts only when the whole artifact was needed.

Then the daelkyr came to Khorvaire.

As the conflict with otherworldly forces shook the Dhakaani Empire, *Arkantaash* endured. To it, the goblins added a spire of byeshk, a rare metal mined from the Byeshk Mountains that is anathema to the aberrant creatures of Xoriat.

Although the goblins and orcs of Khorvaire eventually drove out the forces of Xoriat, the empire never recovered. Named for their final carriers, the pieces of *Arkantaash* were secreted away in tombs, underground refuges, and shrines erected by the shattered Dhakaani people. In such places, the *Crown's* parts passed into legend.

Very recently, the Kech Volaar discovered the central component, *Karruuk's circlet*, in the Seawall Mountains. Seeking to become part of history once again, the *circlet* began directing the goblins to the *Crown's* sundered pieces.

The Kech Volaar thought they had moved in secret, but it was not so. Breland's King's Citadel (concerned over goblin succession), the Kech Shaarat (goblin rivals to the Wordbearers), and the insidious Emerald Claw (Karrnathi religious fanatics) decide to investigate the rumors.

Directed by the *circlet*, a group of Kech Volaar breached an ancient tomb from the days of the Dhakaani Empire. They encountered a hive of kruthiks, and most of the goblin team perished. Although the *circlet's* carrier escaped with his life, he could not secure the *Crown* fragment they sought.

Although unintentionally, the PCs succeed where the Kech Volaar failed.

ADVENTURE SYNOPSIS

When the Wordbearers breached the tomb, they allowed the kruthik hive to expand its hunting grounds into Sharn's Cogs. A hobgoblin priest of the Sovereign Host joins forces with a dwarf foundry foreman to hire the PCs for a bug hunt. In doing the job, the PCs discover an ancient tomb and *Ashurta's blade*, a piece of the *Ashen Crown*.

With the priest's encouragement, the PCs investigate further. At Morgrave University, they meet Gydd Nephret, a half-elf professor and an expert on Dhakaani-era relics. Through her, the heroes are introduced to the

necromancer Demise posing as a wealthy elf with an interest in elven history. The elf covets the *Crown's* power over death. Unable to purchase the item from the PCs, she enlists the aid of her followers in the Emerald Claw.

As they do their legwork, the PCs come to the attention of the King's Citadel. In a bid to influence goblin affairs, Captain Kalaes arranges for the characters to help the Wordbearers. He informs them that he has placed a dopelganger agent named Tikulti among the second team of Kech Volaar now in Sharn.

Demise slays Professor Nephret, then reanimates the professor as a walking repository of knowledge. The necromancer arranges a rude welcome for the heroes at the professor's apartment. When the PCs overcome this obstacle, Demise changes tactics. She leaves the heroes and the Wordbearers to do the dirty work of acquiring the parts of the *Ashen Crown*. Then, through Tikulti's machinations as a double agent for the Claw, she can gain the pieces without expending her resources.

Following the Kech Volaar team, the characters head north along a perilous trade road. The troubles of the highway, including an Emerald Claw ambush and frontier raiders, stand in the way, but the PCs finally arrive at the goblin monument Six Kings in the northern Graywall Mountains. There, they try to ally with the Wordbearers.

Regardless of their success, the PCs venture beneath Six Kings to retrieve another fragment of the *Ashen Crown*. They overcome those challenges and cement the alliance with the Wordbearers. The mission now proceeds to the town of Graywall in Droaam.

In Graywall, the Wordbearers must dig in a very public space to recover the next fragment. Only with the PCs' help can they cover their activities long enough to succeed.

Belowground, the Kech Volaar succeed, only to suffer betrayal and reanimation at the hands of Tikulti. After slaying their former allies, the PCs receive a message from their foe. Demise wishes to tie up loose ends in Sharn.

In the end, the heroes return to Ashurta's Tomb. Within, Demise is preparing the ritual that will reunite the sundered pieces of the *Ashen Crown*. The PCs either defeat her now or let mighty items of a bygone age fall into the hands of the Emerald Claw.

GETTING STARTED

Whether you are running this adventure after the PCs have defeated Aric Blacktree in the *EBERRON Campaign Guide*, or as a stand-alone story, ensure that the player characters have all reached 2nd level by running side quests or extra encounters as they travel to the Cogs (see the "Still 1st Level?" sidebar on page 5). Also, check that the PCs have been awarded sufficient magic items and treasure for their level (see *Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 125). Finally, they should be gathered in Sharn, the largest city on the continent of Khorvaire, or another suitable, non-Eberron city.

With this done, you are ready to begin. Start with the events outlined in the next section—Bug Hunt.

BUG HUNT

Kruthiks have been a recurring problem in Sharn for ages. The predators find sufficient prey in the Sewers, the Cogs, and the Depths to remain alive. The endless warrens make any attempt to exterminate them impossible, particularly given the lack of will on the part of the city's powers to do so. When the monsters hunt sentient creatures, they usually trouble only those who live in the Lower City or deeper. As a result, most Sharn citizens remain unaware of, and unconcerned about, the intermittent infestations.

The PCs find out about the problem in the Cogs through one of several possible means. The small sections that follow provide several adventure hooks. Select one of them or concoct a hook of your own based on the needs of your campaign.

Legwork: If the characters do a little digging before starting the job, they might uncover more than one hook. Reward those who make easy to moderate Streetwise checks, along with other checks you deem appropriate, with several reasons to pursue this task. In this way, they might gain both of the minor quests described below and double pay—a fine reward for their extra efforts. Just don't delay the action too long.

Common Thread: All the hooks lead interested parties to the Tain Foundry in the Cogs industrial district of Blackbones, not far from the more residential area of Khyber's Gate. Once there, the PCs should ask for Foreman Molric Torranol.

Streetwise DC 5: The Tain Foundry is the largest in Blackbones. This isn't surprising, since the ir'Tain noble house is one of the wealthiest in Sharn.

Streetwise DC 10: The foundry has a history of mistreating warforged. Its supervisor, Molric, has an unsavory reputation for strict discipline and excessive violence against his workers.

Modifying the Hooks: If another hook or employer fits your campaign better, or one of the hooks gives you an idea for another patron, go with it. Just make sure the players receive all the information they need before starting the mission. Don't worry about whether the PCs receive pay—the suggested wage is extra money outside the normal treasure parcel structure.

ADVENTURERS GUILD

In one of the city's many adventurers guilds, the PCs find a posting for brave warriors willing to face and eliminate a kruthik infestation in the Cogs. The post directs them to Foreman Molric Torranol at the Tain Foundry.

EDUCATIONAL EXPERIENCE

A Morgrave University professor gets in touch with PCs who have interests or contacts in educational circles. This individual has heard of a kruthik infestation in the Cogs. The Tain Foundry needs the kruthiks controlled, but the

professor is more interested in tales of flying kruthiks. If the rumor is true, kruthiks could be evolving in such a way as to be more of a threat in the city at large. The professor wants a sample of a flying kruthik and kruthik eggs.

Quest XP: 125 XP (minor quest) if the characters bring a flying kruthik sample or eggs to the professor.

FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

One or more of the PCs might have grown up in the rough tunnels beneath Sharn, or might have contacts among the people in the city's underbelly. Maybe one or more of the victims are known to the PCs, or known to somebody the characters know in turn. The contact or a quick investigation leads to the PCs to the needs of the Tain Foundry.

HOUSE WORK

If one or more of the PCs are loyal to a dragonmarked house, a superior calls on them to perform a mission. The representative tells the PCs of the house's desire to solve the kruthik problem for the good of the house's interests in the Cogs. He or she sends the characters to help the Tain Foundry with its kruthiks. (This hook could just as easily come from a noble, rather than a dragonmarked house leader.)

RELIGIOUS INFLUENCE

The hobgoblin priest Olaakki contacts a religious figure in a temple of the Sovereign Host in the upper regions of the city. He asks for help with the kruthiks, which have killed a number of the hobgoblin priest's followers. This religious figure, in turn, calls on a devout PC or PCs to help a fellow member of the clergy preserve the defenseless faithful. Making the temple look good to the downtrodden of the Cogs could be of great benefit, especially against the encroachment of evil cults. The PCs can meet Olaakki at the Tain Foundry (see the next page), along with the foundry's foreman.

BREAKING NEWS

Haftak ir'Clarn, publisher of the *Sharn Inquisitive*, calls on the PCs to bring him the story of the kruthik slayings in the Cogs—an up-close and personal account. He points the PCs to the Tain Foundry, and offers to pay 100 gp for the chronicle.

Quest XP: 125 XP (minor quest) if the adventurers deliver a satisfying story to Haftak.

TAIN FOUNDRY

After a trip through the Lower City, along a series of tunnels and shafts bypassing Sharn's Depths, and a short way into the Cogs, the PCs arrive at Tain Foundry. The trip is an opportunity for you to throw an encounter at the party—especially if the PCs aren't yet 2nd level (see the sidebar for suggestions). The temperature rises as the PCs descend toward Sharn's industrial lower reaches.

Directions to the foundry are easy to follow, and they're readily available in Blackbones.

When the PCs arrive at the foundry, read:

Enveloped in the orange glow of molten metal, and the sharp smell of burning ore, a main gate pierces the soot-covered walls of Tain Foundry. Several beefy and surly-looking guards—humans, dwarves, and a bugbear—laze around the gate. Beyond, workers toil in the heat and foul air. Most of them are warforged.

The guards are gruff, but they have no reason to trouble mercenaries seeking an audience with Molric. After a brief interaction, the guards send the PCs to the Slag Pit, the company watering hole. The place is a dark and roughly built room with tables and a bar where workers of various races drink their wages back into ir'Tain pockets. After a short wait, the PCs meet their potential patrons.

When Molric arrives, read:

A burly and sour-looking dwarf, dressed in practical clothes, with a clean shaved head and chin, enters. Following him is a willowy hobgoblin with long braided hair and beard, garbed in simple white robes. The dwarf looks around and frowns in puzzlement; the hobgoblin's even gaze quickly picks you out of the crowd. He taps his companion and points his staff in your direction.

The two walk up to the PCs' table. Molric gruffly identifies himself, and Olaakki pleasantly greets the PCs.

Roleplaying: Molric, a tough ex-soldier of the Brelish army, is a bad-tempered bigot who doesn't see warforged as worthy of respect. (He doesn't have much use for goblins either.) He's rude, but not enough to deter the PCs from taking the job. His cushy post keeps any thought of personal action against kruthiks far from his mind.

Olaakki is a capable warrior by mundane standards—lower-city goblins have to be. He's rough around the edges, much like any other humble priest who works among the downtrodden. Olaakki's beliefs focus on the Sovereign Host deities popular among goblins—Arawai, Dol Dorn, Kol Korran, Olladra, and Onatar—as well as the Traveler. His only magical talents are a few level 1 and level 2 rituals.

Situation: Kruthiks have begun hunting the nearby regions of Blackbones and Khyber's Gate. Unlike with prior infestations, survivors of the attacks say that some of the monsters can fly. Molric has lost a number of workers, and his supervisors want the problem corrected immediately. Also, several members of Olaakki's flock have gone missing. The two want the hive destroyed, including any eggs that can be found.

Developments: After hearing word of losses among the foundry workers, Olaakki approached Molric and offered to combine efforts. Molric doesn't like goblins, but he accepted because Olaakki offered to help pay for mercenaries. The hobgoblin also had knowledge of the general area where the kruthiks are originating. The priest gives the PCs a map through the Depths to the location,

indicating that the unused area is filled with crumbling goblin ruins. Neither he nor Molric knows of the tomb that the PCs are about to discover.

Pay: The job pays 100 gp, unless for some reason the PCs are expected, by another patron or superior, to help without pay. Molric can be influenced to give up to 50 gp more, but he refuses to provide any advance payment.

Research: The PCs might know or learn something about kruthiks (see *Monster Manual*, page 171). A DC 10 Nature check reminds a PC that kruthik blood smells like strong vinegar, and that flying kruthiks have not been reported previously. A DC 15 Arcana check suggests that the flying kruthik is probably an adaptation caused by the Syrania manifest zone on which Sharn is situated.

Quest XP: 125 XP (minor quest) if the adventurers eliminate the kruthik threat.

STILL 1ST LEVEL?

Even if you played the adventure in the *EBERRON Campaign Guide*, it's possible the PCs aren't 2nd level when you start this story line. If that's the case, the underbelly of Sharn offers plenty of danger to give the characters the extra XP they need to reach the proper level. Here are a couple of suggestions.

COGS ROBBERS

Level 2 Encounter (XP 725)

- ◆ 1 bugbear strangler (level 6 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 136)
- ◆ 2 goblin blackblades (level 1 lurker; *Monster Manual*, page 136)
- ◆ 2 goblin warriors (level 2 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 137)
- ◆ 3 goblin cutters (level 1 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 136)

While traveling down a rubble-strewn, dimly lit tunnel, the PCs are ambushed by hiding goblin toughs. After the goblins attack, and the bugbear uses *strangle* in preparation for *body shield*, the attackers pause so the bugbear can demand the PCs' money and jewelry. The PCs must comply or fight. If the bugbear falls, the goblins scatter.

SCOUTING KRUTHIKS

Level 2 Encounter (XP 655)

- ◆ 1 Sharn kruthik (level 2 lurker; *Adventure Book Two*, page 2)
- ◆ 3 kruthik young (level 2 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 170)
- ◆ 5 kruthik hatchlings (level 2 minion; *Monster Manual*, page 170)

These kruthiks are away from the hive, searching for new sources of food. The PCs fit that description well. None of the kruthiks flees.

ASHURTA'S TOMB

The kruthik hive is in and around the tomb of an ancient Dhakaani warlord. The PCs discover the excavated tunnel to the tomb after a short time searching the area noted on Olaakki's map.

KRUTHIK SWARM

Kruthiks smell like vinegar when they bleed or die—this sharp smell warns other kruthiks of the death. For a while, kruthiks avoid areas where numerous of their kind have died.

You can spice up the brooding presence of the kruthik swarm by occasionally throwing one or more hatchlings at the PCs. These vicious predators attack fearlessly. Use them sparingly, so as not to weaken the characters too much.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Ashurta's tomb has a few features common throughout the complex, except where otherwise noted in an encounter description.

Carved Walls: The makers of this place carved the walls with geometric patters and stylized scenes common to Dhakaani tombs (History DC 10). As you like, embellish descriptions by mentioning carvings.

Dread: A nameless fear hangs over the tomb, and its shadows reach in unnatural ways. It has a minor connection to the Shadowfell (Arcana DC 15).

Heat: Many of the rooms in this place are either hot, or show signs of otherwise pervading heat. Geothermal energy from the lake of fire under Sharn powers some of the tomb's functions, making what should be a cool underground area much warmer (Dungeoneering DC 10).

Iron Doors: Rusty iron doors placed throughout the tomb are unlocked unless otherwise noted.

Kruthik Tunnels: Except where they widen as shown on the map, the hive tunnels throughout the tomb are narrow. A Medium creature must squeeze, and a Small creature must move through them at half speed. Kruthiks ignore these restrictions.

Magic Lights: White motes of magic light illuminate some of the tomb's rooms and passages. These lights are remnants of more elaborate magical effects that enchanted the tomb ages ago. They are not corporeal and cannot be attacked or otherwise affected.

Stairs: Stairs in the passages are difficult terrain.

1. BUGGY WELCOME

Hewn stone and excavated earth open up into the entry chamber of Ashurta's tomb. Here, the hunt for kruthiks becomes a broader mystery and a quest for wealth.

See **Encounter 1: Tomb Entry** on page 2 of *Adventure Book Two*.

2. FIRE DANCING

Plates on the floor of this room unlock a secret way to the inner tomb . . . or to a fiery confrontation. A clue found in encounter 1 could help, but greed or haste might make the danger greater and safer passage impossible.

The secret passage south ends in an obscured pressure plate (Perception DC 8 to find, but only if a search is conducted in the vicinity) and two iron doors. See encounter 6, below.

See **Encounter 2: Fiendish Passage** on page 4 of *Adventure Book Two*.

3. INTO THE GULLET

Knowing that only tomb robbers would come this way, the hobgoblin builders created a death trap, complete with a rotating stone ball to grind up the victims. Even so, from the entry steps to the floor and ceiling, almost every part of the room offers clues about the danger.

See **Encounter 3: Dragon's Maw** on page 6 of *Adventure Book Two*.

4. CORPSE CASCADE

A hobgoblin that betrayed Ashurta was made into the corruption corpse that forever guards this wet chamber of horrors. It sheds its awful flesh into a grate in the floor, which leads to another grinding stone ball.

See **Encounter 4: Rotten Rain** on page 8 of *Adventure Book Two*.

5. BLOOD MIST

Another obstacle to the ignorant who fail to go straight to the inner tomb, this chamber houses guardians bound to protect Ashurta and the *Ashen Crown*.

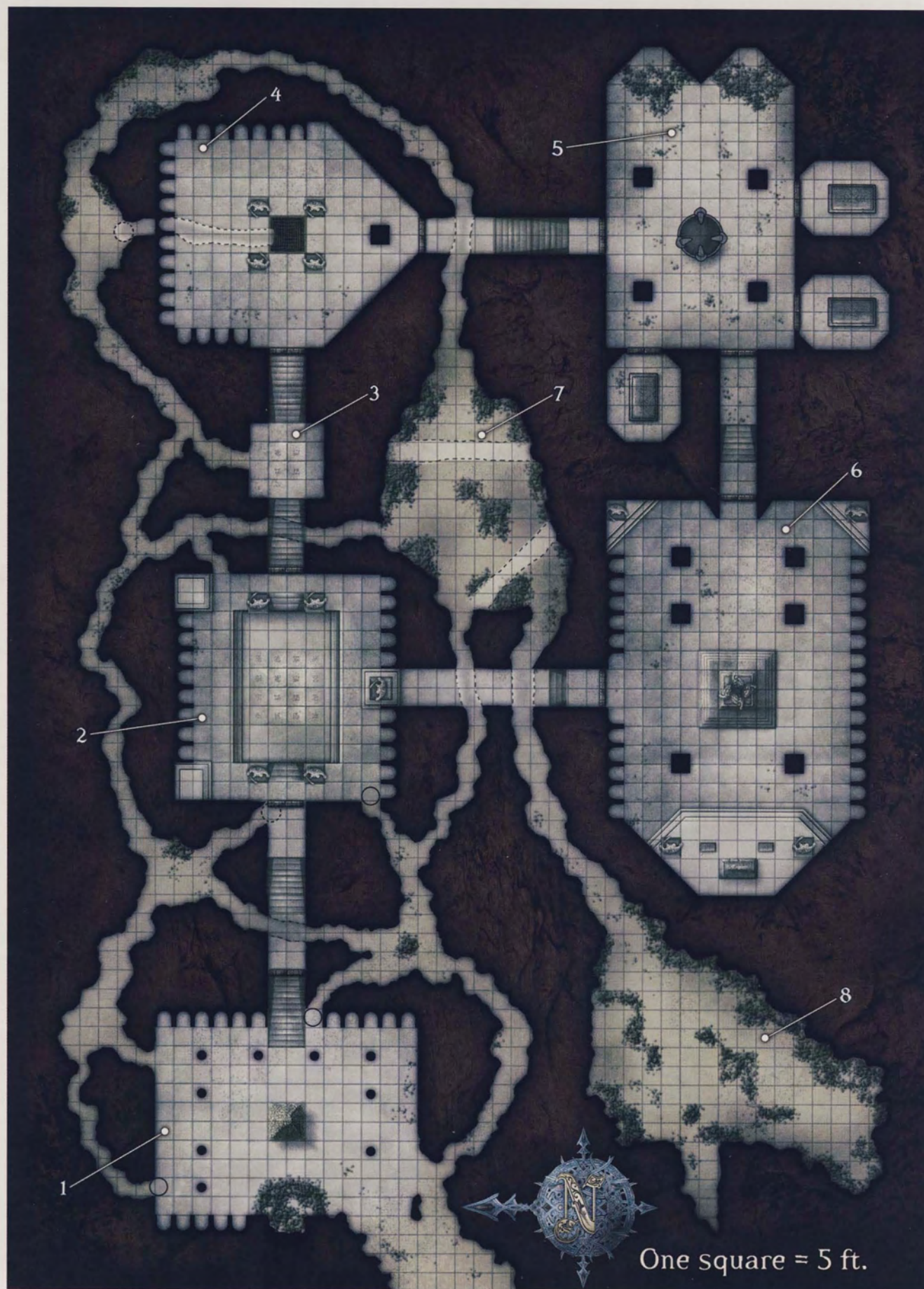
See **Encounter 5: Honor Guard** on page 10 of *Adventure Book Two*.

6. HONOR AND JUDGMENT

Here waits the body of the great warrior Ashurta. Alongside his loyal followers, he guards the treasures of this inner tomb still, despite the passage of millennia. When they disturb this place, the characters' respect (or lack thereof) for hobgoblin traditions might determine their fate.

If the PCs come from or leave through the northern passage, and they search the area to the northern side of the iron doors, a DC 8 Perception check spots a pressure plate.

Pressure Plate: This plate is harmless unless the PCs pass over it after fighting in encounter 6 without saluting the honor statue, and while the devil servant statue passage from encounter 2 is open. If these conditions are met, triggering the plate seals the passage from the area of encounter 2. A character who succeeds on a DC 8 Thievery check and spends 5 minutes working can modify the plate so that it won't activate.



One square = 5 ft.

Dead End: If the devil servant statue is sealed, the PCs can find a hidden lever in the wall of the northern passage with a DC 10 Perception check. Breaking through the seal at a seam takes 1d6 + 2 hours of work to make an opening big enough for Medium creatures to squeeze through. Otherwise, the party must backtrack through the tomb (and the Dragon's Maw).

See **Encounter 6: Ashurta's Rest** on page 12 of *Adventure Book Two*.

Quest XP: 125 XP (minor quest) if, by the end of their encounter with Ashurta, the PCs learn of the existence of the *Ashen Crown* (even if they missed the writing on the iron barrier in the tomb entry).

7. CHITTERING RECEPTION

This ancient tower foundation is an antechamber to the center of the kruthik hive. The kruthiks are alerted as soon as the PCs approach within the range of the creatures' tremorsense or bring a light into view. They hide instead of attacking, all but the hatchlings climbing onto the overhead beams.

As the PCs approach the area, read:

The tight tunnel opens up into a larger hollow. Strange, wet-looking material coats a small part of the wall ahead. That wall is made of cracked stone.

Nature DC 8: *The wet material is kruthik mucus.*

Nature DC 10: *This material occurs in larger quantities the closer one is to a kruthik egg chamber.*

Perception DC 8: *You hear a soft chittering and hissing. No doubt, kruthiks lair ahead.*

Perception DC 12: A character spots a few of the kruthiks and can warn the party. PCs who fail this check and receive no warning are surprised. If all the PCs fail, the kruthiks attack with surprise.

See **Encounter 7: Hive Hollow** on page 15 of *Adventure Book Two*.

8. LORD AND BROOD

The PCs arrive in the egg chamber that a young kruthik hive lord has established. During or after the combat, the PCs can destroy the eggs. By doing so, the characters end any chance of this hive's continuing to be a threat and succeed on the minor quest to eliminate the kruthiks.

See **Encounter 8: Hive Foundation** on page 16 of *Adventure Book Two*.

Nature DC 10: After 10 minutes of examination, a PC can attempt this check. Success reveals that about one in five kruthik newborns is a potential flyer. If the PCs take samples to the Educational Experience contact or spend a few days examining the eggs, this finding is confirmed. The flying capability isn't fully realized until the creature is an adult.

CONCLUSION

After destroying the kruthik hive, the PCs can return to the Tain Foundry and meet again with Molric and Olaakki. They receive their pay. Molric then tells them to get lost, and to take Olaakki with them. Olaakki is more gracious, assuring the PCs that they're welcome in his temple any time. The PCs have some investigating to do, and are entitled to an interlude to engage in training and personal goals.

WHAT IS THE ASHEN CROWN?

If the PCs mention Ashurta's Tomb or the *Ashen Crown* while Molric is present, Olaakki demurs. He rambles about incoherent Dhakaani legends while subtly hinting with body language that the PCs should avoid the topic of relics and treasure in front of the dwarf. For instance, he might cock his head and glance at Molric with a subtle negative headshake. Allow a DC 8 Insight check to provide this information if the players don't take the hint. Persistent PCs earn the greedy Molric's interest, which you are left to roleplay.

Once away from Molric, Olaakki reveals that the *Ashen Crown* is a Dhakaani artifact from before the goblin empire's fall. It is said that the Crown could be split into sections, each part a magic item. It's possible that the blade the PCs recovered is part of the *Ashen Crown*.

The priest recommends that the PCs contact Professor Gydd Nephret of Morgrave University, who is an expert on Sharn antiquities and a specialist in Dhakaani-era relics. Olaakki and his flock have worked with her before, exchanging finds in the Depths for money and aid. Olaakki characterizes her as honest and knowledgeable.

On that note, Olaakki asks if Ashura's tomb is safe enough now that he can send some of his followers there to take samples from the place and map the tomb for Nephret. He complies with the PCs' wishes on the matter.

WORDBEARERS?

The PCs also have the mystery of the obviously recent and ill-fated Kech Volaar expedition to the tomb to act upon. Olaakki knows of the Wordbearers in general (see Wordbearer Lore, on the next page), but he doesn't know about explorers from this clan rooting around in Sharn's Depths. He recommends checking in the Khyber's Gate district of the Upper Cogs, or in the Malleon's Gate district of Lower Dura.

If the PCs are reluctant to undertake this task and ask Olaakki to do this legwork, the priest agrees after some urging. A DC 8 Diplomacy check and 10 gp should do the trick.

The PCs can investigate the *Ashen Crown* themselves, they can learn more from Gydd Nephret or Olaakki, or they can do both. (Because the lore DCs in the following sections are difficult for low-level characters, you could arrange for the professor or the priest to simply impart as much information as you want the characters to have.)

ASHEN CROWN LORE

Arcana or History DC 10: The *Ashen Crown*—*Arkan-taash* in Goblin—is an artifact of the Dhakaani Empire that could be separated into five pieces. Numerous Dhakaani heroes were known to carry a fragment. All were lost when the empire fell. Among other powers, the *Crown* could influence death itself.

Arcana or History DC 15: The five pieces of the *Ashen Crown* came to be named for their last owners. *Karruuk's circlet*, a headband made of gold and mithral (a lightweight, silvery metal), serves as the base. *Ashurta's blade* is a frontal ornament. *Zaarani's solitaire* and *Mukoorak's orb* decorate the *Crown* like gems. *Lurtaan's cord*, a braided mithral chain, wraps around the *circlet*. The full *Crown* grants powers similar to the *Gentle Repose*, *Raise Dead*, and *Speak with Dead* rituals.

Arcana or History DC 17: The *Crown* once belonged to Valaes Tairn elves who came to Khorvaire in ages past. They made it from four elven magic items, calling it the *Crown of Remembrance*, or *Liryna'tani* in Elven. After the goblins captured the *Crown*, they added a fifth section—*Ashurta's blade*. A character who achieves this level of success knows all of the *Crown's* powers.

WARLORD LORE

History DC 15: The last heroes to bear the portions of the *Ashen Crown* were great Dhakaani warlords—*Ashurta*, *Karruuk*, *Lurtaan*, *Mukoorak* and *Zaarani*. *Ashurta* wielded a blade, *Karruuk* a headband, and *Lurtaan* a mithral chain, and the others possessed potent magic gems. Further information on these commanders has been lost to time.

WORDBEARER LORE

History DC 10: The *Kech Volaar*, also known as the *Wordbearers*, are one of the two largest goblin clans in Khorvaire. They have gone to great lengths to preserve the lore of the Dhakaani Empire.

WORD ON THE STREET

Streetwise DC 10: A group of outsider (not local) goblin explorers delved the Depths about a week before the PCs eradicated the *kruthiks*. They never came back.

Streetwise DC 12: A new group of foreign goblins arrived in Sharn just after the PCs went into *Ashurta's Tomb*. In the intervening time, they've clashed with other goblins bearing different markings in the lower city. They've also started looking into the looting of a tomb in the Depths.

INFORMATION LEAKS

Whether the PCs investigate the *Crown* or not, they can do little to contain news about their discovery. Over several days, word gets out to people who might care, including *Demise* and the *King's Citadel*. The *Kech Volaar* seekers eventually discover the looted tomb and, through *Olaakki*, learn who did the looting. Their investigation into the situation causes a buzz the PCs might have wanted to avoid. This event facilitates further developments in the adventure.

PROFESSOR NEPHRET

Whether the PCs are directed to her by *Olaakki* or another contact, they should easily find Professor Gydd Nephret. All it takes is a little time on *Morgrave University's* campus, asking the right people. The best place to start is *Lareth Hall*, which houses the university's administration and faculty offices. The PCs learn the professor is on a sabbatical, but she lives in an academic community, called *Shava House*, on campus. Use the illustration "Professor Gydd Nephret" (see page 27) when describing her.

Roleplaying: Gydd is exceptionally outgoing and animated, and has a way of making everyone feel as though he or she is interesting. She tends to use big words and to ramble on about topics in which she is interested.

When the PCs first meet her, though, Gydd is a little nervous—adventurers are imposing folk. Rather than inviting the characters into *Shave House*, she meets with them in a nearby outdoor plaza. In a public place, she reasons, the characters are less likely to make a scene by trying to force her to cooperate.

After a few successful interactions (easy *Diplomacy* and *Insight* checks), Gydd warms to the characters and is willing to help them learn more. She needs to know what the characters already know, and she needs to see *Ashurta's blade*. She gently suggests that she keep the item during her research. Whatever arrangement the PCs come to with Gydd, she sets a meeting for two days later at *Shave House* to discuss her findings.

FINDING THE PCs

If the characters don't contact Professor Nephret, she eventually contacts them. She hears of their find and wants to learn more. By a courier or through one of *Olaakki's* followers, she sends a message to the PCs. She wants a

chance to see what the party found and to learn what the characters know. She agrees to share what she learns from research, leading to another meeting.

REACH OF THE CLAW

Shava House is a fine apartment complex, housing many scholars dedicated to the study of antiquities. The air is thick with academic discussion of ancient lands and relics, especially Xen'drik and its mysteries. Word spreads quickly about anything of note that occurs in the complex.

Dala Arand, one of the complex's residents, is an agent of the Emerald Claw. Posing as a friendly, young scholar, Dala uses Shava House to keep on top of subjects of interest to her masters. Through Dala, Demise learns of the PCs' find and their meeting with Professor Nephret.

THE KING'S CITADEL

The day after they meet with Professor Nephret for the first time, or before the adventure proceeds to the meeting with Nephret and the Aereni elves, each of the PCs receives a summons to the headquarters of the King's Citadel in the Ambassador Towers district of Middle Central Plateau. They are to present themselves the next afternoon

AVOIDING THE PROFESSOR

It's possible that the PCs never interact with Gydd. That's fine. Instead, Demise contacts them in the guise of Dannae (see page 12) just after the Citadel employs them. She quickly determines that the PCs are formidable, so she tries to purchase *Ashurta's blade*.

If the PCs somehow avoid encounter 9 (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 18), they might still be 2nd level by the time they set out for Six Kings. In that case, Gydd could invite them to visit out of the blue. If they follow up, that leads to encounter 9. You can also have Demise's undead attack elsewhere. Alternatively, the PCs can have a run-in with Bladebearer goblins who also know of *Ashurta's blade* (the additional encounters on page 5 are also an option).

BLADEBEARER RECOVERY TEAM

Level 3 Encounter (750 XP)

- ◆ 1 Bladebearer hobgoblin (level 5 skirmisher; *EBERRON Campaign Guide*, page 114)
- ◆ 2 hobgoblin soldiers (level 3 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 139)
- ◆ 1 goblin warrior (level 1 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 137)
- ◆ 1 hobgoblin archer (level 3 artillery; *Monster Manual*, page 139)

With the goblin and the archer hidden, the soldiers block the PCs on a Sharn thoroughfare. They stand in front of the Bladebearer, who demands *Ashurta's blade*, and any other information the characters have, on pain of death.

to meet with Captain Saj Kalaes. The message, whatever its form, has all official markings and is entirely legitimate. A DC 8 History or Streetwise check confirms the captain's existence and his position in the Citadel.

When the PCs arrive at the Citadel headquarters, read:

Through great double doors of dark wood, you enter a circular antechamber with a marble floor bearing Breland's national seal. Two other dark doors flank a small room divided from the main chamber by a low desk. Arrow slits pierce the polished stone walls—three on each side of the inner doors.

Behind the desk is a young male gnome with cropped blond hair and a pointed beard. He wears a sharp dark uniform and cloak with a silver Brelish seal as a brooch. He smiles.

"Welcome to the headquarters of the King's Citadel, citizens. How may I help you?"

The gnome is Corporal Bronal Tuck. He checks a book to confirm the PCs' appointment, then asks to see their identification papers. He touches a glowing orb and waits a moment. Speaking into the orb, he states that an expected party awaits Captain Kalaes in the lobby.

A short time later, Kalaes arrives. Use the illustration "Captain Kalaes" (see page 27) to help describe him.

When Kalaes enters, read:

A tall, somber human enters through the right-hand door behind the desk. He wears a coat of leather incorporated into a uniform like the gnome's, if slightly fancier. A facial scar speaks of experience in battle. Rigid posture suggests a military background.

"Thank you for coming," he says solemnly. "I am Captain Kalaes. Follow me."

He leads you through the left-hand door into a gloomy, silent hall. Near its end, he opens a door and gestures for you to enter. The room houses a single long table with about a dozen chairs.

"Sit," he says pleasantly.

Kalaes walks to the head of the table and begins.

"Let me lay to rest any fears you might have. You're in no trouble. You're here for two reasons. The first is because you ventured into the Depths and recovered a goblin artifact. I hear you did so to help the locals with a kruthik infestation, which means you're brave. The fact that you're sitting in front of me means you're capable. Breland needs your skills, helping us with a task related to the item you've found. That's the second reason you're here."

Allow the PCs to converse with Kalaes naturally. Some sample pieces of question-and-answer follow; one way or another, the PCs should get all of this information.

What's the task?

"In the goblin nation of Darguun, the Lhesh Haruuc holds onto power in the lowlands. In the Seawall Mountains to the east of that land, Dhakaani goblins plot their return to power. Among these factions is the Kech Volaar clan, the Wordbearers. These

goblins are more moderate than most, interested in acquiring the right to rule by assembling goblin artifacts and building stable alliances. Although they cherish the return of a goblin empire, they lack the savagery common among their barbaric kin.

"You might know that the Wordbearers, even now, seek the blade you recovered. They realize, as you might, that it is part of a mighty goblin artifact. They seek to reassemble this artifact as yet another symbol of their right to rule Darguun as the true heirs of Dhakaan.

"We believe for many reasons, political and otherwise, that we should support the Wordbearers' ascension to power over any of their more aggressive cousins. To this end, we want you to help the Kech Volaar acquire the other pieces of this Ashen Crown."

Why us?

"At this point in this game, we can't let the Kech Volaar—or anyone else—know that Breland supports the Wordbearers' eventual play for control of Darguun. We need a neutral party. You, for example. Be assured that we'll use your success for political advantage.

"Besides, why not you? If you weren't capable freelancers, we'd inform you of our needs and ask for the item to use for the good of Breland. Offering you this opportunity seems like a better choice."

Why can't we or you reveal the truth?

"We don't know how the Kech Volaar might react to any hint of official aid from Breland. It might make them more suspicious. It could drive them away. We can, however, be certain how other organizations, nations, and rulers—such as the "mighty" Haruuc—would react to this if it were undisguised. You are not and will not be recognized as official agents of Breland in this. You must tell no one of your true purpose."

What happens to the blade and the other parts of the Crown when we're done?

"Once you succeed, you are to leave the Crown and its pieces in the hands of the Kech Volaar. This point is nonnegotiable. The Kech Volaar must have the complete Crown. That said, you can keep possession of the fragments you recover until it is time to part ways with the Wordbearers. Use your discretion."

Shouldn't we leave the blade with you or in Sharn?

"No. You'd then have to retrieve it to give it to the Wordbearers. You could be followed, or other complications could arise. Besides, your attempt at an alliance carries more strength if you have the blade."

What's in this for us?

"Service to Breland is its own reward. However, I'm sure you realize that the favor of the King's Citadel, and thereby the Crown of Breland, does have certain intangible benefits."

What aid can we expect?

"Very little that I can reveal. We can supply you with mundane equipment that you think you might need."

How do you know so much?

"As servants of the king, we know because it's our job to know. More than that I cannot reveal until you swear to help."

What do we have to do, specifically?

"That I cannot reveal until you give me your oath to undertake the task. What say you?"

Didn't you already tell us sensitive information?

"That I did. And if word gets out on the streets, I'll know who it came from, won't I? That's not meant as a threat—a certain amount of trust is required to get this job done. But I can't trust you with more knowledge until you swear to help Breland in this."

Captain Kalaes doesn't disclose more until the PCs agree to do the job. He's willing to leave them alone (but with the door guarded) to discuss the situation. The PCs' agreement to do the job must come in the form of this sworn oath:

I hereby vow to perform this mission for Breland and King Boranel to the best of my ability. I shall not allow other duties, loyalties, or obligations to interfere. I vow to protect secrets I learn in carrying out this duty, lest I be branded an enemy of the Brelish Crown.

If the PCs agree, read:

Captain Kalaes smiles.

"Excellent," he says. "I shall return in a moment."

He leaves, returning with some paperwork a few moments later.

"Now for more detail," he says, putting down the stack. "The Kech Volaar in Sharn know you have the blade, but their leader sees dealing with you as something she can do after finding the other fragments of the Ashen Crown. She is heading for the goblin monument known as Six Kings in the northern Graywall Mountains soon. We want you to head northwest, meet her there, and offer your aid. I leave it to you to come up with a plausible reason why you're willing to aid the goblins."

Okay, so how do you know so much?

"We have an agent on the inside. A doppelganger posing as a hobgoblin named Tikulti. He has tribal tattoos around his eyes and on his chin, and he carries a distinctive bejeweled rapier. Tikulti will help you accomplish your mission, but he must do so without revealing his true nature."

Aid the Kech Volaar leader in doing what?

"When you get to Six Kings, you'll offer to help her acquire one of the two Crown fragments she suspects is there. Tikulti tells us that the leader seeks two different parts under Six Kings.

"Tikulti told us they'll be going to a cave beneath the monument. An outcropping of white stone points into the correct opening. You'll have to find out more from the Kech Volaar on site.

"We understand that after Six Kings, the goblin team plans to head to Graywall city in Droaam to recover another piece. At present, I know little more about that portion of the task."

Who is this leader? Whom does she lead?

"The Wordbearers have dispatched a party of eight. Six hobgoblins, counting Tikulti, and two goblins. The leader of the group is a female Kech Volaar dirge singer, a warrior-bard, named Yeraa. Among the hobgoblins, two are soldiers, one an archer, and another a mage. Tikulti is posing as a warrior who also specializes in traps. One goblin is a scout, and the other is a wolf warrior—a berserker. The Wordbearers like to wear tribal tattoos commemorating their deeds. This distinguishes them from other goblin clans."

How do we get there?

"You'll be flying to Ardev aboard a Lyrandar airship. The Kech Volaar have access to a freelance airship called Kordanga, which they're using to make the trip. Our intelligence suggests that Kordanga will be dropping off most of the Kech Volaar in Ardev, then heading to the Droaam town of Graywall to gather information about a Crown fragment in the goblin ruins under that city."

"You'll follow the Wordbearers overland from Ardev, along the Orien trade road that leads west to Graywall and past Six Kings. We suspect they'll travel cross-country, but you needn't do so. Let them take the hard way if they want. The road should be safer."

Anything else we should know?

"We have it on Tikulti's authority that a few bands of Kech Shaarat goblins, Bladebearers, are pursuing the Kech Volaar party. Tikulti tells us that he and his companions have already driven off one band. Neither the Bladebearers nor anyone else can be allowed to steal the fragments or the Crown under any circumstances. Consider any Bladebearers you meet enemies. Their warriors brand themselves with blade-shaped scars."

When do we leave?

"You leave in three days, just after the Wordbearers do. I want you on their heels, but not too close. I recommend you prepare, and come up with a list of equipment and supplies you think you need. I'll see you again for a final briefing before you leave. Remember: Tell no one of your affiliation with the Citadel."

With that, the party is free to go and prepare for the trip. Move on to "A Meeting of Experts," below, when you're ready.

Quest XP: 150 XP (minor quest) if the characters ally with the Kech Volaar.

Quest XP: 875 XP (major quest) if the adventurers acquire all the pieces of the Ashen Crown.

A MEETING OF EXPERTS

After their meeting with the Citadel (see "The King's Citadel," page 10), the PCs are contacted by Professor Nephret (either a second invitation, or a follow-up to their first meeting). If they respond, she has guests—two Aereni elves she invited to join the discussion. These two are Demise and her apprentice, come to check out the PCs.

When the PCs arrive at Shava House, read:

The professor takes you into one of Shava House's comfortable communal sitting rooms. As you enter, you see a thin but striking elf woman sitting there, clad in colorful, exotic robes and jewelry. Her raven hair frames an ornate funerary mask—only her sharp ice-blue eyes and fine chin and mouth are visible. Behind her stands another elf—a male whose exotic robes reveal much of his torso, which is unnaturally withered. A stylized skull tattoo masks his features. The female rises gracefully as you enter.

Professor Nephret explains, "This is Lady Dannae Ulyan of Aerenal and her servant Jaenus. She is interested in the Ashen Crown for its significance in elven history. I hope you don't mind that I invited her to meet you."

"Death overlook you," recites the elf lady in a surprisingly resonant voice. "If my presence offends you, I shall depart. It would be my honor, though, to stay." She gives a slight bow.

The PCs are free to insist that the elves leave. If this happens, they do so without emotion, suggesting another time and offering an apology for intruding. Demise has accomplished much of what she wanted just by seeing the PCs and the inside of Shava House. The professor expresses disappointment if Demise leaves, wondering aloud at the PCs' paranoia.

Demise's Ruse: Dannae identifies herself as an Aereni noble with an abiding interest in elven history. She enjoys researching and acquiring elven items, especially those of religious or magical significance. Demise radiates a quiet air of self-assurance and is very polite. During the discussion, she speaks only when she has significant points to add. Her companion doesn't speak unless spoken to.

Sometime during the conversation, Dannae offers the PCs 3,000 gp for Ashurta's blade. If the PCs think 3,000 gp is worth getting on the bad side of the Citadel and becoming enemies of the Brelish state (see below), they can see where that gets them. If the PCs refuse the offer, Demise simply and politely withdraws. Through her spies, she knows she can keep tabs on the PCs.

What the Professor Knows: Professor Nephret tells the PCs anything they don't already know, or that you would like them to know, about the Ashen Crown (see page 23). She can even hint at its powers.

If Dannae remains part of the discussion, she fills in the PCs about the item's elven history. Gydd or Dannae tells the PCs of the Rite of Arkantaash. If Dannae is absent, Gydd explains that she learned of the ritual from the elf noble.

Before the characters finish their preparations to leave Sharn, they have one more obstacle to overcome. Proceed with "A Rude Reception," below.

A RUDE RECEPTION

On the day after their meeting with Professor Nephret and Lady Dannae, the PCs receive a package from the professor by courier. It contains a key and a note. Give the players "Letter from Gydd" (see page 27). If the PCs act on this information and decide to go to Gydd's apartment, an unfriendly host awaits them.

A thunderstorm is soaking the city when the characters travel to the apartment. (This fact makes no difference in the upcoming encounter, but you can use it to set an ominous mood if you want.)

See **Encounter 9: Postmortem** on page 18 of *Adventure Book Two*.

SEARCHING THE APARTMENT

After the monsters are defeated, the PCs can search for clues.

It's clear that a struggle happened here, then some of the apartment was put right afterward. The office still contains one clue. With a few minutes and a DC 10 Perception check, or with 10 minutes and a DC 5 Perception check, the PCs find a crumpled sheet of paper under the desk. Scrawled upon it are the words "Dannae is Demise. Why Emerald Claw?"

WALL PANEL

With prior knowledge of its location from the professor's letter, the PCs can easily find her hidden wall panel (no skill check needed). It's disguised to blend in with the building stones surrounding it. The keyhole looks like a hole in the mortar. Gydd's key unlocks it.

Within is a little storage area. A loose paper atop the other contents contains a hastily scrawled note about Dannae and her servant Jaenus being members of the Skullborn—elves who practice dark necromancy in reckless pursuit of immortality. The other contents are orderly notes detailing anything the PCs don't already know about the *Ashen Crown*—even its powers. Gydd's notes mention an ancient goblin belief, shared by the Valaes Tairn elves, that either fate or the *Crown* itself dictates who comes to possess it.

DANNAE/DEMISE LORE

Whether before or after Dannae/Demise reveals her wickedness, the PCs can learn more about her by making a successful Streetwise check. A History check can be substituted, but the DCs below all increase by 5.

DC 5: Dannae Ulyan is a wealthy noble from Aerenal. She spends some time in the Shae Lias elf neighborhood of Upper Northedge. However, she prefers Upper Dura and Upper Menthis. She stays in various inns in these districts when she's in town.

DC 10: Dannae is a history buff who travels widely, so she's only in Sharn sporadically. According to the rumor mill, she has hired explorers and academics for various

purposes. She is avidly interested in elven history in Khorvair. As is the case with many elves, she is also interested in magic related to death and the dead.

DC 15: She might be a real elf noble, and her real name might be Dannae, but she's no member of the Ulyan noble house. She and her servant Jaenus are Skullborn, among whom she goes by the name Demise. She also has ties to the Order of the Emerald Claw, although she is not a member of that group.

DEMISE'S DECISION

Through an informant, Demise learns that the PCs survived their encounter with the undead at the apartment. Having heard of the PCs' exploits and now knowing that they escaped her trap, Demise decides not to directly confront the characters again. Instead, she deigns to use them to acquire the *Crown* for her. She already has inside help from Tikulti, her agent (and also an agent of the Citadel) among the Wordbearer goblins.

RED LINE TO ARDEV

After their encounter with Demise's forces, the PCs must prepare for their trip to Ardev. Some facts come to light.

Gydd Nephret: A story is reported in the *Sharn Inquisitive* the next day, with a headline something like "Corpses in Shava House; Professor Missing." The actual information and the accuracy of the story depends on what the PCs left at Gydd's apartment. This report is important only if the PCs haven't visited with the professor. Whether they contacted her or not, they should know the name and should realize that her disappearance could have something to do with their mission.

The King's Citadel: The PCs must meet with Kalaes to receive their final briefing and any equipment. If the PCs tell the captain of the attack at Gydd Nephret's apartment, he is concerned. Whether they relate this news or not, Kalaes mentions that Tikulti got word to the Citadel about an attack by undead against the Wordbearers. He confirms or tells of the Emerald Claw's involvement, as well as one of their star agents—a Skullborn elf known as Demise. Give the players any information about these forces you'd like them to have. Captain Kalaes warns the PCs that the Emerald Claw's warriors are depraved and fanatical. Whether the same can be said of Demise, who is not truly Emerald Claw, he doesn't know.

To Ardev: With preludes and preparations out of the way, the PCs can board the Lyrandar airship *Eminence*. On board, they have no duties. The trip north consumes one uneventful day. After they land at Ardev, the PCs set off on the Orient trade road leading northwest.

ROAD TO SIX KINGS

In this section of the adventure, the PCs make their way from Ardev in west central Breland to the ancient goblin monument of Six Kings in the northern fringe of the Graywall Mountains. The town of Graywall is the unofficial gateway between civilized Breland and the anarchy of Droaam, but those who frequent the western reaches of the Brelish frontier know that civilization holds little sway within sight of the mountains. The road northwest from Ardev resembles any other Orien trade route, if a poorly

ADDITIONAL ENCOUNTERS

Use the following encounters if you want to throw some additional action the PCs' way.

DRAKE CLUTCH

Level 3 Encounter (800 XP)

- ◆ 4 guard drakes (level 2 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 90)
- ◆ 2 spitting drakes (level 3 artillery; *Monster Manual*, page 91)

A single guard drake lopes out into the PCs' path, chirping, hopping, and eyeing the group with curiosity. It stays only close enough to watch. A few moments later, another drake shows up and behaves similarly. A successful DC 10 Nature check alerts the PCs to the fact that these drakes travel in packs with outliers scouting for prey; the chirping is a feeding call. A successful DC 15 check tells the PCs to watch out for spitting drakes among the guard drakes.

As soon as the PCs recognize their plight, or fail to do so, the rest of the drakes show up from various directions. If the PCs succeeded on the Nature check, they're ready for the attack. Otherwise, they're surprised.

SWORDS OF LIBERTY

Level 3 Encounter (750 XP)

- ◆ 1 human mage (level 4 artillery; *Monster Manual*, page 163)
- ◆ 1 human berserker (level 4 brute; *Monster Manual*, page 163)
- ◆ 2 human bandits (level 2 skirmisher; *Monster Manual*, page 162)
- ◆ 1 human guard (level 3 soldier; *Monster Manual*, page 162)

This self-styled war band is one of many such groups active along the frontier, far from the regular Brelish patrols. Moving among the isolated settlements that dot the trade road, the Swords' mission is to create converts to their goal of overthrowing the Brelish monarchy—or to sow fear and unrest among those who defy them. Believing the PCs to be foreign spies, they offer to travel with the party, waiting for the best moment to attack.

maintained one, but only those who have traveled that road can appreciate its dangers.

The skill challenge "A Road Well Traveled" (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 20) might allow the PCs to avoid some trouble en route from Ardev. In any event, the following three encounters find them. Use the map of Breland (*EBERRON Campaign Guide*, page 74) to aid you in this part of the adventure.

A SCOUT'S LUCKY DAY

The PCs come across a Kech Volaar scout captured by Emerald Claw enforcers.

See **Encounter 10: Emerald Claw Scouts** on page 20 of *Adventure Book Two*.

PAY OR PLAY

A band of raiders from the monstrous enclave of Turakbar's Fist have pushed deep into the Brelish frontier. After raiding in the countryside, they set up a temporary blockade in search of easy prey along the trade road. They get more than they bargained for when the PCs arrive on the scene.

The PCs receive a warning that strange events are in the offing along the Brelish frontier. Build tension with this lead-in material as long as it's fun.

A few hours before this encounter, read:

The plains here roll along, intermittently covered in thick scrub. In this region rocky spires, some flat on top, also rise from the grassland. In the distance, from the direction you're traveling (northwest), you hear horns blaring.

History Check

DC 8: *The horn calls are unusual for hunting. They sound more like battle coordination.*

DC 12: *Those horn calls aren't Brelish. They sound like war horns of Droaam. They probably belong to raiders who are preying on far-flung ranches and farms. (Success on this check enables the History check below.)*

DC 10: *News has reached as far as Sharn that raiders have entered into Breland from a minotaur warlord's fortress, Turakbar's Fist, in Droaam. According to rumor, these raiders act without the sanction of the Daughters of Sora Kell, the three hags that rule Droaam. The marauders are savages that despoil anything they can't carry away.*

If you want to do so, use the material on Rhesh Turakbar (*EBERRON Campaign Guide*, page 130) to flesh out this background. Regardless, the horn calls continue sporadically, the sounds coming closer together as time passes.

About an hour before the encounter occurs, the horns stop. If the PCs have more successes than failures on the "A Road Well Traveled" skill challenge at this point, the following Perception check becomes available to them.

Perception Check

DC 10: *You crest a hill in the rolling, stony plains, with a good vantage of the surrounding countryside. A few miles down the road, or maybe a little to the north of it, is a thin plume of white smoke.*

The smoke is the location of the Turakbar “blockade.” This warning allows the PCs to approach stealthily if they wish.

See **Encounter 11: Turakbar Toll** on page 22 of *Adventure Book Two*.

AN UNWELCOME SURPRISE

Demise is off to Graywall, prepared to let the Kech Volaar and the PCs brave the dangers of Six Kings. However, an Emerald Claw officer plans to ambush the PCs, slay the Kech Volaar, and acquire the pieces of the Crown himself.

As the PCs approach the encounter, read:

Plains have given way to a rocky woodland. The trees were once cut back from the road, but the forest has crept closer to the cobles in intervening years. The Graywall Mountains loom in the distance, and on the mountains' northern flank are the towering figures of the Six Kings.

Perception Check

DC 15: *You notice that the foliage on the eastern side of the road ahead is disturbed, suggesting a group of creatures passed through it. (Success on this check enables the Nature check below.)*

Nature Check

DC 10: *More than half a dozen heavy or heavily laden booted humanoids passed into the woods here. They tried to cover their tracks.*

The PCs can follow the trail by succeeding on three DC 10 Perception checks. If they succeed on DC 10 Stealth checks, the PCs might catch the Emerald Claw unready. The knights expect the PCs to be on or near the road, and their scouts are watching. If the PCs fail to move stealthily, Captain Warrick and his cronies attack the PCs in the woods, instead of on the road. In any case, adjust the encounter to account for the PCs' cleverness.

As the PCs close on the encounter site, read:

A thicket covers the forest floor in many places here.

Perception Check

DC 8: *Sinister armored figures lurk among the trees, a cowed humanoid among them.*

DC 10: *Lightly armored warriors with bows also skulk in the foliage of the treetops.*

Those who don't spot the Emerald Claw warriors before the fight are surprised during the subsequent attack.

See **Encounter 12: Emerald Claw Ambush** on page 24 of *Adventure Book Two*.

DEVELOPMENT

The PCs might spot spectators. Use passive Perception checks, unless a player states that his or her character is alert for danger.

Perception Check

DC 10: *You spot a face among the leaves of the forest—the broad, orange face of a hobgoblin warrior in dark armor.*

DC 12: *Two goblins in black leather armor creep nearby, watching the battle.*

Chib Naersaar (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 26) and his sharpshooters are watching the battle. They flee if they are spotted or when a victor starts to emerge in the conflict.

CONCLUSION

The soldiers know only that Demise plans on allowing the PCs and the Kech Volaar to acquire the Crown fragments. Then she plans to somehow steal those pieces. Captain Warrick didn't trust her to succeed.

PCs who saw the goblins can track the Bladebearers back to the road (DC 10 Perception check; DC 13 on the road). You might allow determined PCs to track down Naersaar and fight on their terms. If they do not do so, encounter 13 occurs closer to Six Kings, when and where the PCs choose.

Between this encounter and encounter 13, the PCs get their first good view of Six Kings. When they do, use the illustration “Splendor of Six Kings” (see page 29).

SLIGHTLY CIVIL EXTORTION

Kech Shaarat warriors stand in the way of the party's approach to Six Kings. These bellicose goblins are determined to discover what the PCs have learned, and to take what the characters possess.

See **Encounter 13: Bladebearer Standoff** on page 26 of *Adventure Book Two*.

WORDS WITH WORDBEARERS

On the threshold of Six Kings, the party and the Kech Volaar come face to face. The PCs must prove their worth to the Wordbearers in order to fulfill the Citadel's mandate.

See **Encounter 14: Cautious Allies** on page 28 of *Adventure Book Two*.

SIX KINGS

Where the steep slopes of the Graywall Mountains mark the frontier of western Breland, a legendary monument towers above the plains. More than ten thousand years ago, at the height of the Dhakaani Empire, the best goblin stonemasons labored for a generation to carve a set of six figures from the face of the mountain. Rendered in exquisite detail, they tower a thousand feet high. Although two of the figures have been badly damaged over their long history, the grandeur of each one is breathtaking.

The legendary Six Kings were the great hobgoblin war chiefs who forged an empire with blood and steel. By the time their monument was completed, Dhakaan controlled all of Khorvaire. Even today, with Darguun a shadow of the empire's greatness and the goblins crippled by infighting, Six Kings speaks to a glory that might yet rise again.

At the feet of Six Kings, innumerable caverns cut into the mountain. Although countless goblins have visited the monuments since Dhakaan fell, the caverns have never been fully explored. Those who have entered speak of horrid undead and lurking foulspawn, of lost goblin clans and hidden cities, of buried relics and caches of ancient weapons as sharp as the day they were forged. The Kech Volaar and the PCs know that two fragments of the *Ashen Crown* also wait in caverns beneath Six Kings.

Most of the caverns within Six Kings are natural, carved out by ancient tremors and the flow of water. Among these formations, the Dhakaani excavated great halls, some of which survive. In addition to the encounters described below, the PCs' route into the depths passes through a number of empty caverns meant to inspire caution and careful exploration. The PCs should not automatically know that these areas are empty, so as to keep them on their toes when the encounters truly arrive.

THE SHADOW AWAKENS

An ancient mausoleum marks the entrance to a long and dangerous descent beneath the mountain. The Kech Volaar move along a parallel path to recover the *Crown* fragment not easily accessed by the PCs.

See **Encounter 15: Warriors' Tomb** on page 32 of *Adventure Book Two*.

LURKING DEATH

Two collapsed levels of a once-great hall lead into the depths, but ancient spirits and patches of deadly shadow guard the way down.

See **Encounter 16: Shattered Hall** on page 34 of *Adventure Book Two*.

REMNANTS OF MADNESS

The stalagmites of this cavern conceal the ghostly figures of the goblin warriors who died here. Now, their spirits linger as phantoms and foul undead tainted by the essence of Xoriat. By the end of this encounter, the PCs should be close to or at 4th level.

See **Encounter 17: Stone Ghosts** on page 36 of *Adventure Book Two*.

CONFLICT INTERRUPTED

The PCs interrupt a battle between ghostly goblins and a foulspawn scout party up from the depths. The spirits are indiscriminate in choosing the targets of their vengeance.

See **Encounter 18: Barracks Brawl** on page 38 of *Adventure Book Two*.

FAR EXPLORERS

The PCs happen upon a dolgaunt monk leading a party of foulspawn on an exploratory mission.

See **Encounter 19: Foulspawn Scouts** on page 40 of *Adventure Book Two*.

VENT OF SPIRIT AND FLAME

Three fiery ghosts are bound to the chamber where they were slain. They are determined to share their torment with the PCs.

See **Encounter 20: Burning Vengeance** on page 42 of *Adventure Book Two*.

DEEP GOBLINS

The PCs come across a clan of goblins descended from those who fought the foulspawn in these depths more than five thousand years before. Will these determined defenders of Six Kings prove themselves foes or friends?

See **Encounter 21: Lost Clan** on page 44 of *Adventure Book Two*.

WONDROUS LOCATION

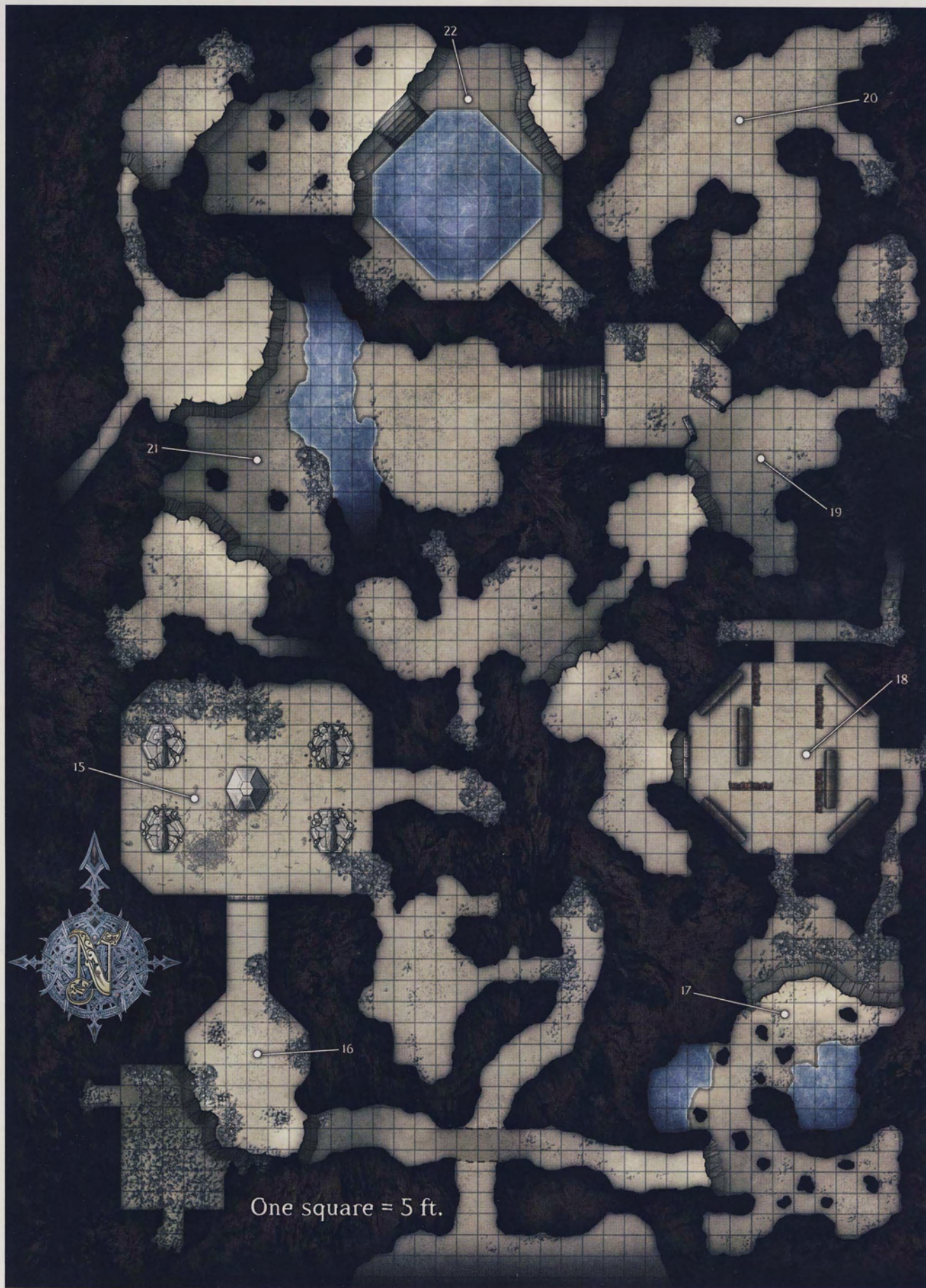
A colony of deathgaunts gathers at the site of the ancient battle that spawned them. Their leader is the unwitting bearer of a fragment of the *Ashen Crown*.

See **Encounter 22: Moon Pool** on page 46 of *Adventure Book Two*.

REPEAT ENGAGEMENT

The PCs reunite with the Kech Volaar, who have successfully retrieved their piece of the *Crown*. Once back on the surface, the party and Yeraa must refight the Kech Shaarat, this time as undead raised by the Emerald Claw.

See **Encounter 23: Dead Enemies** on page 48 of *Adventure Book Two*.



GRAYWALL

Risen from goblin ruins in the waning years of the Last War, Graywall is the gateway between Breland and monstrous Droaam. It is a lawless free city whose reputation for crime, corruption, and violence is well deserved.

History or Streetwise DC 10: Gnolls, orcs, goblins, and other monstrous races make up most of Graywall's population. Most visitors from the heart of Khorvaire stay in the foreign quarter—the Calabas, or “the Kennel,” as it's known to the locals. This city-within-a-city resembles any other relatively civilized Five Nations settlement, and visitors have access to the mundane goods and services described in the *Player's Handbook* while there. Houses Ghallanda, Jorasco, Kundarak, Orien, Phiarlan, Sivis, and Tharashk all have enclaves in the Calabas.

History or Streetwise DC 12: House Tharashk is nominally responsible for law and order in the Calabas, but its patrols dispense little of either. Although the monstrous races of Droaam are less common in the foreign quarter, visitors might find themselves interacting with orc patrols, goblin work crews, gnoll mercenaries, or even a troll or medusa come to deal with the traders of the west.

History or Streetwise DC 14: All travelers are welcome in Graywall, with one exception. The folk of Droaam have long memories of the crusades of the Silver Flame and little love for those who wear its sigil. Even in the foreign quarter, PCs (especially clerics and paladins) devoted to the Flame would be wise to keep any obvious signs of their faith concealed.

For more information on the Calabas, or if you want to expand this part of the adventure, see the *Dragon* article “Backdrop: Graywall” by Keith Baker in issue 368 of *Dragon* magazine on D&D™ Insider.

CITY OF MONSTERS

The PCs arrive in Graywall, accompanying the Wordbearers as they trace the final fragment of the *Ashen Crown* to an ancient goblin shrine. This shrine is located beneath the Roar, the great central plaza at the heart of the city's foreign quarter. Posing as merchants, the PCs must provide cover for the Kech Volaar attempt to retrieve the final *Crown* fragment. Once again, the characters must fight the plots of the Emerald Claw.

Before proceeding to encounter 24, walk the PCs through the Graywall approach material (*Adventure Book Two*, page 50).

COVER PLAY

The PCs and the Wordbearers set up a secret dig site in the middle of one of the busiest spots in Graywall. The nighttime Goblin Market offers a chance to conceal the dig, but the PCs must run interference while the Wordbearer seekers retrieve the final fragment of the *Crown*.

See **Encounter 24: Goblin Market** on page 50 of *Adventure Book Two*.

THE RECURRING VILLAIN RECURS

As the Wordbearers make their way back to the surface with the *Crown* fragment in hand, the PCs spot a familiar face in the market. Demise—or someone wearing her face—attacks with a force of gnoll mercenaries and specialized wraiths. The PCs realize too late that the assault is an Emerald Claw doppelganger's ruse, designed to steal their fragments of the *Ashen Crown*.

See **Encounter 25: A Hated Face** on page 52 of *Adventure Book Two*.

LOST COMPANIONS

In the aftermath of the previous fight, the PCs discover that their Kech Volaar allies have been betrayed, slain, and raised to a mockery of life. The PCs are forced to destroy Yeraa and the Wordbearer undead, as they suspiciously wonder what has become of Tikulti.

See **Encounter 26: Dark Betrayal** on page 54 of *Adventure Book Two*.

A RETURN VOYAGE

The PCs can piece together some clues as they return to the airship, where they learn that Sharn is their next destination (see “Back to Sharn,” *Adventure Book Two*, page 55).



ENDGAME

The PCs should now be 5th level. They get an immediate chance to try out their new daily powers on the trip.

A SKY TOO BLUE

After taking to the sky in the airship, the PCs find their transport under attack . . . by a rogue blue dragon.

See **Encounter 27: Sky Robbery** on page 56 of *Adventure Book Two*.

ENEMIES ON ALL SIDES

All is not well for the PCs upon their return to Sharn. By lying to Captain Kalaes, Tikulti has riled up the Citadel against the characters. The doppelganger knows much about the PCs and their allies. What Tikulti knows, Demise knows.

Tikulti's call (see "A Call to Revenge," *Adventure Book Two*, page 55) should alert the PCs to the difficulties they can expect in Sharn. Yeraa's journal (*Adventure Book Two*, page 55) is a clue to where Demise is preparing her ritual.

WHISPERS ON THE STREETS

The PCs can work their contacts to find out more about the situation. Roleplaying the interaction with a good contact should provide a +2 penalty to any check involved.

Streetwise DC 7: Constable types are on the lookout for the PCs. (Haftak ir'Clarn at the *Sharn Inquisitive*, dragonmarked house or guild contacts, legal authorities, mercenaries, and underworld types are good sources.)

Streetwise DC 12: Gydd Nephret has been missing since before the PCs left Sharn, but was seen around the university a few nights ago, traveling with armored warriors and an elf. (Educational contacts are useful here.)

Streetwise DC 15: Someone fitting Demise's description has been seen in the Cogs. Emerald Claw soldiers have also been spotted in numbers there. (Olaakki can tell the PCs this, as can other contacts in the undercity.)

CITADEL CONFESSIONS

Whether or not the PCs contact the Citadel, Captain Kalaes sends a note asking that they come in for questioning. The Citadel uses a priest of the Sovereign Host to perform the Discern Lies ritual during that discussion. Kalaes can't be convinced of Tikulti's duplicity at this point, but the captain is willing to give the PCs a chance to prove their story. The catch is that he wants Tikulti alive.

TERMINATION

Demise contacts the PCs (through the *sending stone* they received in encounter 14) shortly after they return to Sharn. Tikulti has urged elimination of the characters, and it's likely that the PCs still have pieces of the Crown. With so many variables, it's hard to plot specifically what

Demise might say at this point. One important point is that she never mentions Tikulti by name.

Whatever Demise says, the necromancer challenges and taunts the PCs, inciting them. She also uses threats to her prisoner Gydd. Demise allows the professor to speak through the *sending stone*; the undead Gydd sounds like the living one. Demise isn't above threatening and harming the PCs' other friends, allies, and contacts. She warns that it doesn't matter if the PCs hide themselves or the Crown fragments—she'll take what she wants in the end, since she has the *circlet*. (Since the events of encounter 26, Tikulti has given Demise all the Crown components he had managed to acquire.)

If she needs Crown fragments, Demise finishes with: *"You should know where to find me. Our mutual friend tells me we share our ritual spot with that dead Wordbearer warrior-witch. What was her name? So hard to remember these trivial details. Your butchery here was beautifully done. All these wonderful corpses strewn about. Do come soon."*

ASHURTA'S TOMB, REDUX

The PCs must descend to Ashurta's tomb again. Refer again to the overview map on page 7 of this book. Little has changed except as noted in the tactical encounters. Modify these encounters to take into account previous events in the Bug Hunt as needed.

BUG REHUNT

The PCs approach the tomb entrance, where Demise's apprentice is animating the dead kruthiks. Emerald Claw warriors guard him as he works.

See **Encounter 28: Swarm Reanimation** on page 58 of *Adventure Book Two*.

PAYBACK'S A . . .

Tikulti holes up here, nervously waiting for the final confrontation and his ticket to immortality.

See **Encounter 29: Dark Lantern, Indeed** on page 60 of *Adventure Book Two*.

FINAL DEMISE

Demise has set up her ritual, and the adventure's finale, in Ashurta's inner tomb.

See **Encounter 30: Final Demise** on page 62 of *Adventure Book Two*.

FATE OF THE SENDING STONE

The adventure assumes Demise has stashed the Wordbearers' *sending stone*, so it's lost to the PCs and not part of any treasure. The PCs might attune their single stone to another one as part of a later adventure's rewards. Even so, and even if Demise perishes, the lost stone can remain an interesting wild card in your campaign, connected as it is to the stone the PCs possess.

NEW MONSTERS

DEATHGAUNT

Xoriat's insanity lives on through the ages in the bodies of those the daelkylr slew long ago. Such are the deathgaunts.

Deathgaunt Madcaster	Level 6 Controller
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)	XP 250
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +8; darkvision
Xoriat's Shadow (Psionic) aura 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 psychic damage and a -2 penalty to all checks and rolls until the start of its next turn. If the deathgaunt madcaster takes radiant damage, its aura is negated until the end of its next turn.	
HP 68; Bloodied 43	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 19	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant (see also Xoriat's shadow)	
Speed 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
⊕ Push over the Edge (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ) ⊕ Necrotic, Psychic	
Reach 2; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target moves its speed and makes a basic attack against a target of the deathgaunt madcaster's choice as a free action.	
✂ Flying Fangs (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Ranged 5; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the deathgaunt madcaster's next turn.	
Reanimate (minor; encounter) ⊕ Healing	
Targets one destroyed undead creature within 10 squares and of a level no higher than the deathgaunt madcaster's level. The target regains 15 hit points and stands as a free action.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 16 (+6) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 12 (+4)	Int 8 (+2) Cha 19 (+7)

DEATHGAUNT MADCASTER TACTICS

Xoriat's shadow bends the vision of enemies that dare to move against the madcaster. The deathgaunt rids itself of other melee foes, turning them against other enemies, with *push over the edge*. While free of such annoyances, it shoots its *flying fangs*, which regrow instantly. These creatures often rule over lesser undead, using their *reanimate* power to raise a fallen ally, usually one positioned between the madcaster and its opponents.

Deathgaunt Lasher	Level 5 Soldier
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)	XP 200
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +2; darkvision
HP 63; Bloodied 31	
AC 21; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 8	
⊕ Tentacle (standard; at will)	
Reach 3; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the deathgaunt lasher's next turn.	
⊕ Tentacle Lash (standard; at will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Reach 3; targets a creature marked by the deathgaunt lasher; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed and marked until the end of the lasher's next turn.	
⊕ Deathgaunt Kiss (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Targets a dazed, stunned, or unconscious creature; +12 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage.	
Marked Threatening Reach	
A deathgaunt lasher can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares) that it has marked.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 15 (+4)



DEATHGAUNT LASHER TACTICS

A deathgaunt lasher has a clear order of combat. With its tentacles, it strikes a foe to mark that enemy. It then uses *tentacle lash* on the same foe, followed finally by sucking life out of its adversary with *deathgaunt kiss*. It might break this pattern to use *deathgaunt kiss* on those enemies that its allies render vulnerable to the kiss.

Deathgaunt Spinner		Level 4 Artillery
Small aberrant humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
☠ Death Spine (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage.		
✱ Death Spine Burst (standard; recharge [1]) ♦ Necrotic		
Area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 14 (+4)

DEATHGAUNT SPINER TACTICS

A spinner lurks at the edge of combat to target foes with its *death spine* or *death spine burst* attacks. It falls back on its claws only if pressed, spending a round shifting and moving if necessary to get quickly out of melee.

Deathgaunt Drover		Level 4 Skirmisher
Small aberrant humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 52; Bloodied 26		
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 8, climb 4		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.		
⊥ Dirty Bite (standard; at-will) ◆ Necrotic		
Targets a creature that grants combat advantage to the deathgaunt drover; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge.		
Dark Rending (standard; encounter)		
The deathgaunt drover shifts 4 squares. At any point during that movement, it can make two melee attacks.		
Horde Tactics (free, when the deathgaunt drover hits with a melee attack; at-will)		
The deathgaunt drover shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 6 (+0)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 8 (+1)	Cha 15 (+4)

DEATHGAUNT DROVER TACTICS

The drover, which normally works with hordelings, demonstrates the speed and resilience that is the birthright of its goblin blood. It races across the battlefield, making claw attacks against new targets each round. *Horde tactics* allows it to move in and out of melee quickly. It targets a bloodied foe with its *dark rending*, and it uses *dirty bite* whenever it has combat advantage.

Deathgaunt Hordeling		Level 4 Minion
Small aberrant humanoid (undead)		XP 44
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic		
Speed 8, climb 4		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 7 damage.		
Horde Tactics (free, when the deathgaunt hordeling hits with a melee attack; at-will)		
The deathgaunt hordeling shifts 1 square.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 17 (+5)	Wis 6 (+0)
Con 10 (+2)	Int 4 (-1)	Cha 12 (+3)

DEATHGAUNT HORDELING TACTICS

Hordelings attack in mobs to overwhelm their foes. They continually shift, vying for combat advantage. A hordeling might attack from a flank, then shift away to vacate that space for another hordeling to shift into before attacking. Both then receive the benefit of combat advantage.

DEATHGAUNT LORE

Dungeoneering, History, or Religion DC 12:

Deathgaunt lashers were the first creatures of their kind encountered, and were originally called “deathgaunts” for their resemblance to dolgaunts. As more variations of this horror were later discovered, that name was used to refer to all such creatures.

Dungeoneering, History, or Religion DC 17: On

the great battlefields of the Daelkyr War, countless goblins and orcs perished. In some such places, the taint of Xoriat and the shadow of Mabar seeped into the blood and bones of the fallen, raising them as creatures of death and madness.

DREADCLAW

Dreadclaws are deadly undead that seem alive. They are ideal for missions in which hiding their undead nature is an asset. All of them use *living seeming* to surprise their foes.

Dreadclaw Darkliege		Level 4 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
Dread Wrath (Necrotic) aura 5; each creature within the aura that attacks the dreadclaw darkliege takes 5 necrotic damage before making the attack roll.		
HP 55; Bloodied 27		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 8		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
⚡ Dark Howl (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
Close blast 2; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the dreadclaw darkliege's next turn.		
⚡ Terrifying Splendor (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear, Necrotic		
Close blast 5; +6 vs. Will; 3d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Living Seeming ♦ Illusion		
A dreadclaw darkliege appears as it did in life, usually as a Medium humanoid. A DC 15 Insight check pierces the illusion.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Bluff +11, Stealth +10		
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 9 (+1)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 18 (+6)

DREADCLAW DARKLIEGE TACTICS

A dreadclaw darkliege wades into battle, using *terrifying splendor* and *dread wrath* to thwart melee combatants. It prefers *dark howl* to claw attacks.

Dreadclaw Reaver		Level 4 Skirmisher
Small/Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +5; darkvision	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 15; see <i>wrathful retribution</i>		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 8		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the dreadclaw reaver shifts 2 squares.		
Wrathful Retribution (when the dreadclaw reaver is hit by a melee attack on its turn) ♦ Necrotic		
The attacker takes 5 necrotic damage.		
Combat Advantage ♦ Necrotic		
A dreadclaw reaver deals ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) on successful attacks against creatures that grant combat advantage to it.		
Living Seeming ♦ Illusion		
A dreadclaw reaver appears as it did in life. A DC 13 Insight check pierces the illusion.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Bluff +9, Stealth +11		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 6 (+0)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 9 (+1)	Cha 15 (+4)

DREADCLAW REAVER TACTICS

A dreadclaw reaver hits hard and fast, making claw attacks and counting on its *wrathful retribution* to keep its foes at bay. It maintains combat advantage by shifting into positions that provide it with flanking.

DREADCLAW LORE

Religion DC 12: Karrnathi traditions and those of the Skullborn of Aerenal have mixed under the purview of the Emerald Claw. Claw necromancers raise dreadclaws by treating living humanoids with a toxin that reacts to a necromantic catalyst. The toxin kills the humanoid and prepares it for a dark ritual.

Religion DC 17: Dreadclaws can be made to retain some of their sentience, but their transformation leaves them with a measure of insanity. They often use their memories to their advantage against their foes, perhaps as a bluff in combat or to play on an enemy's emotions.



THE ASHEN CROWN

The *Ashen Crown* is an ancient relic, created by the Keepers of the Past of the Valaes Tairn, then taken by the Dhakaani during the wars that drove the elves back to Aerenal. As crafted by the elves, the *Liryana'tani* (Crown of Remembrance) was used to return great warriors to life, and to maintain a connection to the ancient heroes of Xen'drik. When the Crown was claimed by the Dhakaani, goblin mages subtly reshaped its power to create *Arkantaash*. As the *Ashen Crown*, the artifact reflected the goblins' reverence for ancestors and history.

Although the Crown retains a connection to both races, it prefers neither. In fact, its powers can be used by anyone who lives up to its desires. Doing so usually requires daring action and explorations of historic significance. Possession of the entire Crown is appropriate for characters in the middle of the heroic tier and upward.

In its sundered form, the *Ashen Crown* consists of a magic circlet to which the other magic items are attached. A byeshk blade, magically shapeable, is the Crown's front ornament. Two gems—one a magic solitaire, the other a small orb—are set to either side. A braided cord of mithral and gold wraps tightly around the Crown's circlet.

Arkantaash was sundered shortly before the fall of Dhakaan. Legendary goblin heroes wielded the pieces, and each part now bears the name of its last wielder. When the goblin empire fell, the Crown fragments were lost with it for five thousand years.

The Crown can be sundered or reassembled by the performance of a special ritual—the Rite of *Arkantaash* (see the sidebar).

RITE OF ARKANTAASH

You use ancient magic to bind or sunder the fragments of the Ashen Crown.

Level: 5

Category: Creation

Time: 1 hour

Duration: Until the next use of this ritual

Component Cost: 50 gp

Market Price: n/a

Key Skill: Arcana (no check)

By means of this ritual, you bind the five fragments of the *Ashen Crown*, making the artifact whole. Or you sunder the Crown, splitting it into its components.

This ritual can be learned automatically by wearing the *Ashen Crown* for one day, or by possessing all five Crown fragments and meditating upon them for five days in a holy site of lost Dhakaan (determined by the DM).



The Ashen Crown

Heroic Level

A gold and mithral diadem with a purple-black byeshk spike, the Ashen Crown is a powerful relic of two races.

Item Slot: Head.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Arcana checks, History checks, and Religion checks.

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to all defenses against the attacks of aberrant creatures.

Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* You are hit by an attack that deals typed nonweapon damage. *Effect:* You gain resist 5 against typed nonweapon damage until the end of your next turn.

Power (Encounter): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit on your turn. *Effect:* The target of the critical hit slides 2 squares and is knocked prone.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with an attack. *Effect:* A target of the attack is dazed until the end of your next turn. An aberrant creature is also restrained and cannot teleport until the end of your next turn.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit a target that is granting combat advantage to you. *Effect:* You deal 2d6 extra damage to that target.

Power (Daily): Standard Action. As the ritual Gentle Repose (PH 305), but no components are required.

Power (Weekly): As the ritual Speak with Dead (PH 312), with a +5 item bonus to the Religion check.

Power (Monthly): As the ritual Raise Dead (PH 311), with a performance time of 1 hour instead of 8 hours.

Karruuk's Circlet

Heroic Level

This mithral and gold headband enhances your knowledge and forges an unseen link between the scattered fragments of the Ashen Crown.

Item Slot: Head

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to Arcana checks, History checks, and Religion checks.

Power (Daily): You can use a Detect Object effect (as the ritual; PH 303) to know the distance and direction to any one fragment of the Ashen Crown. An Arcana check determines the range of the effect.

Arcana Check Result	Range
9 or lower	2 miles
10-19	5 miles
20-29	15 miles
30-39	30 miles
40 or higher	60 miles

If you do not use this power to locate a particular Crown fragment, or the closest fragment is out of range, you sense the general direction to the closest fragment.

Ashurta's Blade

Heroic Level

This byeshk spike can change size and shape into several bladed forms. It is deadly against aberrant creatures.

Weapon

Enhancement: +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +2d6 damage, +2d10 damage against aberrant creatures

Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to all defenses against the attacks of aberrant creatures.

Power (At-Will): Minor Action. *Ashurta's blade* takes the shape of a broadsword (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 9), dagger, longsword, shuriken, or short sword. It takes on the statistics normal for that weapon until it changes shape into another weapon.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with an attack using the weapon. *Effect:* A target of the attack is dazed until the end of your next turn. An aberrant creature is also restrained and cannot teleport until the end of your next turn.

Zaarani's Solitaire

Heroic Level

The power of this golden spherical gem drives your foes to the ground.

Wondrous Item

Power (Encounter): Free Action. *Trigger:* You score a critical hit on your turn. *Effect:* The target of the critical hit slides 2 squares and is knocked prone.

Special: You cannot use more than one solitaire in an encounter.

Lurtaan's Cord

Heroic Level

Fashioned of braided mithral and gold, this belt grants protection against supernaturally charged attacks.

Item Slot: Waist

Power (Encounter): Immediate Interrupt. *Trigger:* You are hit by an attack that deals typed nonweapon damage. *Effect:* You gain resist 5 against typed nonweapon damage until the end of your next turn.

Murkoorak's Orb

Heroic Level

This crystalline silver gem glows when you have advantage over your foes.

Implement (Orb)

Enhancement: +2 to attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +2d6 damage, or +2d10 damage if you have combat advantage

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit a target that is granting combat advantage to you. *Effect:* You deal 2d6 extra damage to that target.

GOALS OF THE ASHEN CROWN

- ◆ Delve into the legends and lost secrets of the past.
- ◆ Create or be among important people, especially heroes or villains of great destiny.
- ◆ Inspire events that will become historic or legendary.

ROLEPLAYING THE ASHEN CROWN

The *Ashen Crown* is a conduit to history and ancestral spirits—common threads in the cultures of the Valaes Tairn and the Dhakaani. The Crown wants its owners to undertake quests connected to history, whether exploring ancient ruins, finishing uncompleted tasks, or uncovering lost lore.

The artifact follows these goals whether it is whole or in its various sundered forms. It subtly manifests its desires. Those who wield it or its fragments find great attraction to historic and legendary adventure sites. They gain greater satisfaction from adventures that center around the exploration of the past.

The *Ashen Crown* desires to be wielded at least part of the time in its sundered forms. This aspect of the artifact allows the entire party to benefit from the Crown. Any character who possesses one of the Crown's fragments is considered its owner. Thus, the actions of any PC wielding a fragment can affect the Crown's concordance score, making the *Ashen Crown* a more volatile artifact than most.

CONCORDANCE

Starting Score	5
Owner of the Crown gains a level	+1d4
Owner of any fragment is a goblin or an elf	+1
Owner of any fragment is trained in Arcana, History, or Religion	+1
Owner of the Crown completes a major quest relating to ancient history or legend	+1
Owner of the Crown ignores a major quest relating to ancient history or legend	-2
Owner of the Crown keeps legends and history he or she has learned secret without good cause	-2

PLEASED (16-20)

"The spirit of the past lives in me, and my strength is the strength of the kings of old."

The *Ashen Crown* has found its place among heroes whose deeds shall become legend.

Property: If the Crown is whole, the item bonus to all defenses against the attacks of aberrant creatures increases to +3. If the Crown is sundered, all characters in possession of a fragment gain a +1 bonus to all defenses against the attacks of aberrant creatures. (For a character who has *Ashurta's blade*, this bonus stacks on top of the existing +1 item bonus.)

Power (Encounter): No Action. *Trigger:* You make a roll, check, or saving throw result that you dislike. *Effect:* You add 1d6 to the triggering result. If the Crown is sundered, each fragment wielder can use this power as a daily power.

Power (Weekly): With the whole Crown, as the ritual *Raise Dead* (PH 311), with the normal component cost and a performance time of 1 hour instead of 8 hours.

SATISFIED (12-15)

"I have felt a connection to the strength of the past, and I am hungry for more."

The Ashen Crown seeks to shape its wielders' desire for greatness and exploration.

Property: If the Crown is whole, the item bonus to Arcana checks, History checks, and Religion checks increases to +5. If the Crown is sundered, each fragment wielder gains a +1 bonus to checks using these skills. (For a character who has *Karruuk's circlet*, this bonus stacks on top of the existing +2 item bonus.)

Power (Weekly): You can use the Crown's *Speak with Dead* power on any creature you interacted with while that creature was alive, regardless of whether the creature's corpse is present.

NORMAL (5-11)

"History beckons, and I hear its call."

The Ashen Crown subtly pushes its wielders toward investigation of the past.

UNSATISFIED (1-4)

"I stand in the shadows of the heroes of old, and am found wanting."

Special: The powers of the Crown fail to function half of the time. (Each time a character attempts to use a power, roll a d20. On a roll of 1-10, the power does not function.)

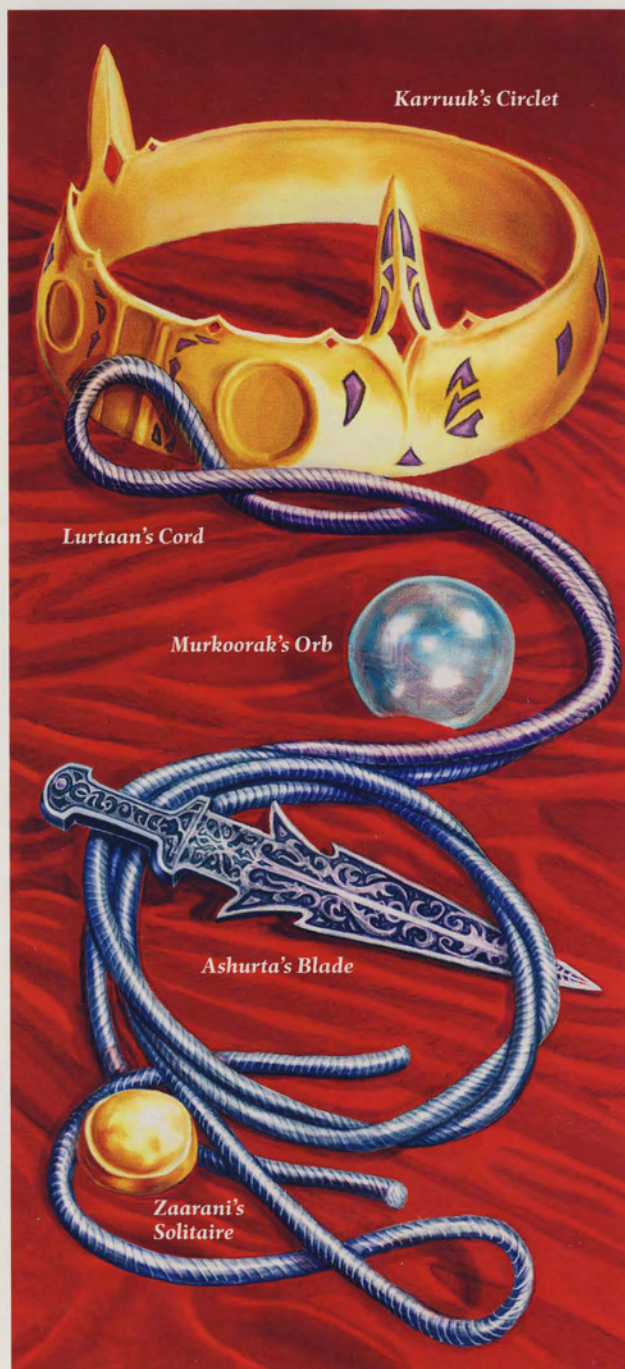
Special: If the Crown is sundered, its fragments have a small chance per day to reassemble of their own accord at the location of the *circlet*. (Roll a d20 at the start of each day. On a roll of 1, the fragments reassemble.) Once it is whole (whether automatically or through the performance of the ritual), the Crown cannot be sundered until its concordance score rises to 5 or higher.

ANGERED (0 OR LOWER)

"I am destined for obscurity, and am not worthy of the memories I bear."

The Ashen Crown seeks a new master. If the character in possession of the Crown is defeated in combat, his or her foe is compelled to take the Crown and flee. Sentient creatures use the Crown; nonsentient creatures abandon it where others can find it.

Special: The powers of the Crown fail to function.



MOVING ON

"I make history."

When the wielder of the Crown or a fragment next gains a level, the Crown compels the owner or owners to give it to an authority figure among elves or goblins. The receiver must then grant the Crown or its parts to other heroes worthy of the honor.

If its wielders refuse to pass on the artifact, the Crown is angered. It remains in this state until it is stolen or lost.

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Described below are five new magic items that can be incorporated into your campaign. Details on the byeshk weapon (expanded from the description of Ashurta's blade in the previous section) enable you to use this new material for other weapons as well. The lesser elixir of invisibility comes into play in encounter 25 (see *Adventure Book Two*, page 52), and the other three items can be gleaned as treasure in the next-to-last and last encounters in the adventure.

Byeshk Weapon

Level 3+

The violet-hued metal that makes up this weapon is anathema to creatures alien to the natural cosmos.

Lvl 3	+1	680 gp	Lvl 18	+4	85,000 gp
Lvl 8	+2	3,400 gp	Lvl 23	+5	425,000 gp
Lvl 13	+3	17,000 gp	Lvl 28	+6	2,125,000 gp

Weapon: Any melee

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus, +1d10 damage per plus against aberrant creatures

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You hit with an attack using the weapon. *Effect:* A target of the attack is dazed until the end of your next turn. An aberrant creature is also restrained and cannot teleport until the end of your next turn.

Demise's Staff of Ruin

Level 8

Fashioned from blackened elven bone, this staff is an implement of devastation.

Implement (Staff) +2 3,400 gp

Enhancement: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +2d10 damage

Property: You gain a +2 item bonus to damage rolls with implement attack powers using this staff.

False Blood Amulet

Level 7

This silver necklace bears a pendant of polished opal. It signifies changeability.

Item Slot: Neck +2 2,600 gp

Enhancement: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will

Property: Choose a specific kind of humanoid creature, such as human, giant, or shadar-kai. You are considered to have that creature's origin and keywords if doing so is beneficial to you. If the creature speaks a language other than Common, you can speak and read that language (but not Words of Power, DMG 171). You also gain a +2 item bonus to Bluff checks to disguise and pass yourself off as the type of creature you chose. These changes last until the end of your next extended rest—when you can choose again—or until you use a minor action to end the effect.

Lesser Elixir of Invisibility

Level 7

When you sip this elixir, your form fades from sight.

Elixir 100 gp

Power (Consumable): Minor Action. You drink the elixir and become invisible until the end of your next turn. The effect ends if you make an attack roll.

Special: Consuming this elixir counts as a use of a magic item daily power.

Shadowdance Armor

Level 5+

This armor shrouds you like dim light woven into threads and sewn into garments.

Lvl 5	+1	1,000 gp	Lvl 20	+4	125,000 gp
Lvl 10	+2	5,000 gp	Lvl 25	+5	625,000 gp
Lvl 15	+3	25,000 gp	Lvl 30	+6	3,125,000 gp

Armor: Cloth, leather

Enhancement: AC

Property: Your area and ranged attacks don't provoke opportunity attacks.

Power (Daily): Free Action. *Trigger:* You move more than 3 squares. *Effect:* In bright light, your space and all adjacent squares become shrouded in dim light until the end of your next turn. If you were already in dim light, your space and all adjacent squares become dark, blocking line of sight, until the end of your next turn. You can see perfectly in this area of dim light or darkness.



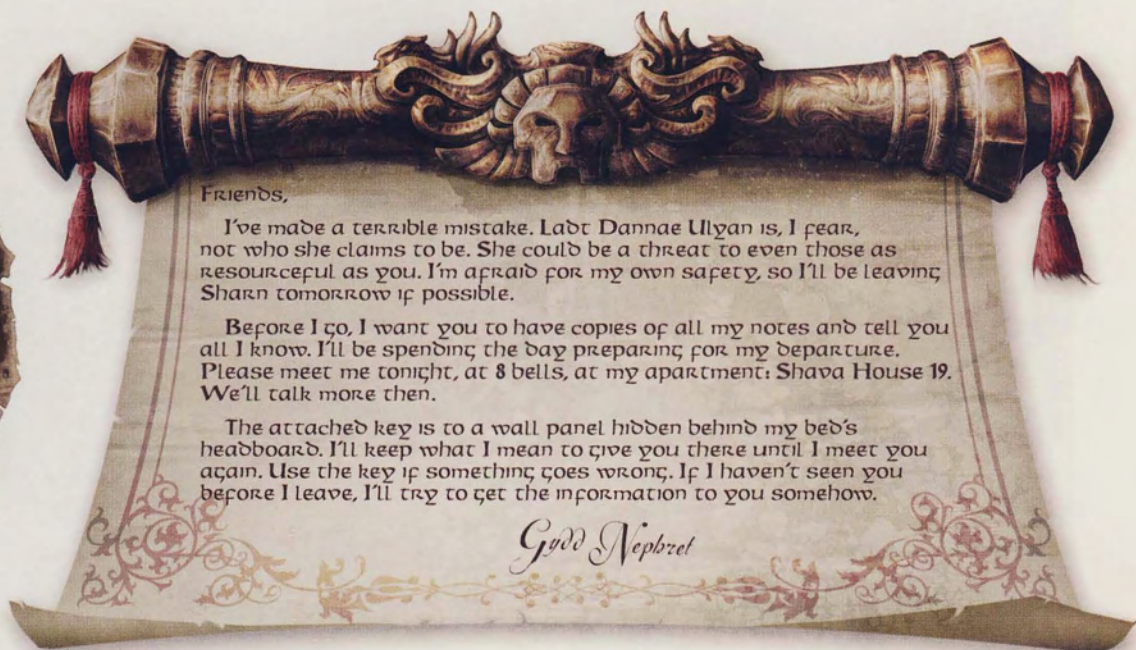
Professor Gydd Nephret



Captain Kalaes



Cryptic Leather



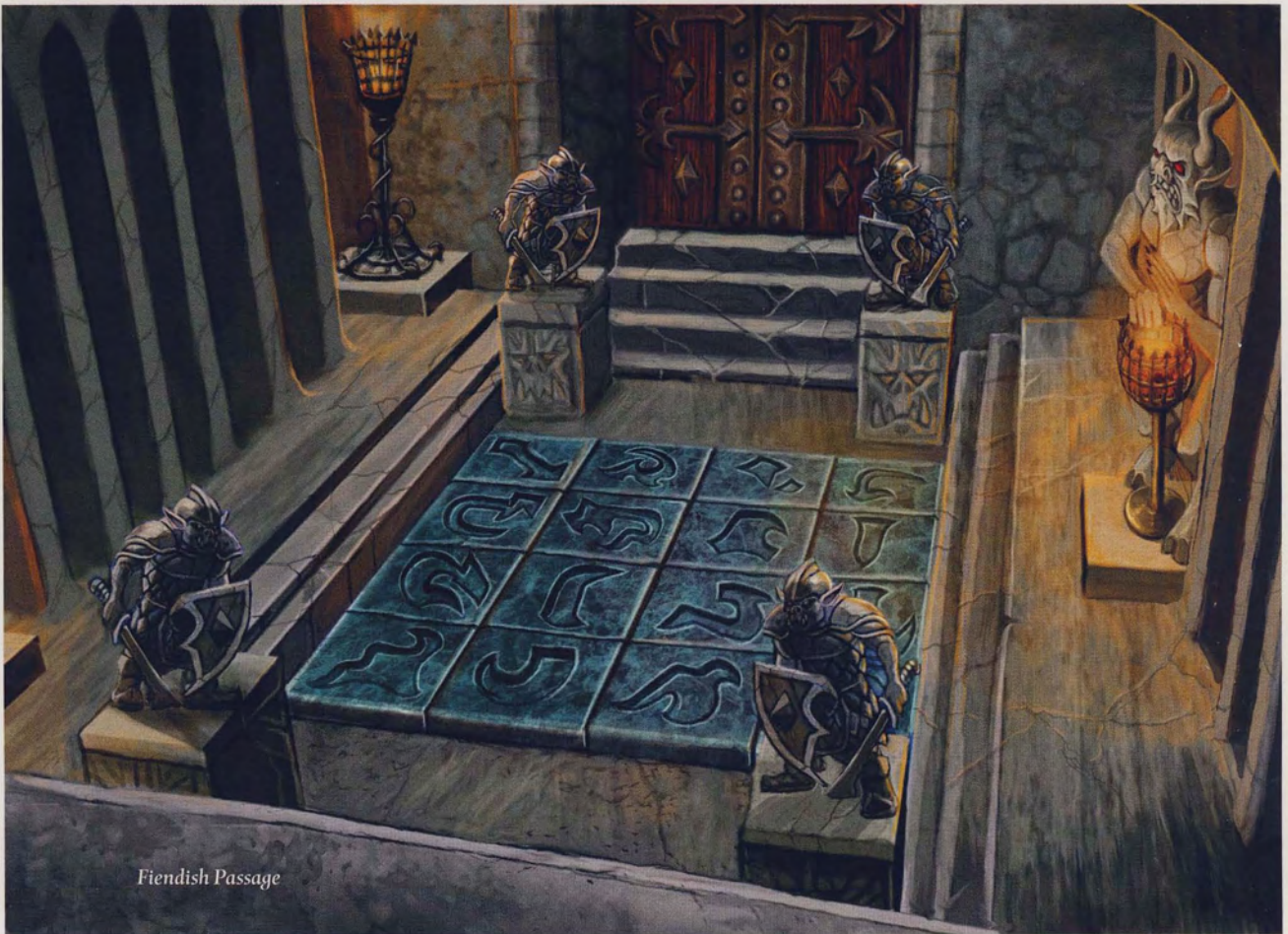
Friends,

I've made a terrible mistake. Lady Dannae Ulyan is, I fear, not who she claims to be. She could be a threat to even those as resourceful as you. I'm afraid for my own safety, so I'll be leaving Sharn tomorrow if possible.

Before I go, I want you to have copies of all my notes and tell you all I know. I'll be spending the day preparing for my departure. Please meet me tonight, at 8 bells, at my apartment: Shava House 19. We'll talk more then.

The attached key is to a wall panel hidden behind my bed's headboard. I'll keep what I mean to give you there until I meet you again. Use the key if something goes wrong. If I haven't seen you before I leave, I'll try to get the information to you somehow.

Gydd Nephret



Fiendish Passage



Hive Foundation



Splendor of Six Kings



DAVID GRIFFITH/STEVE ARCOYLE

Kech Volaar



Stone Ghosts



Burning Vengeance



Moon Pool



The Roar



Death from Above



Final Demise

ADVENTURE BOOK TWO



SEEKERS OF THE ASHEN CROWN™

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ENCOUNTER 1: TOMB ENTRY

Encounter Level 3 (811 XP)

SETUP

2 Sharn kruthiks
3 kruthik young
6 kruthik hatchlings

The entry to Ashurta's Tomb is currently deserted. The kruthiks within the area don't emerge until after the characters have entered the area (see Tactics), so they don't appear on the tactical map.

As the PCs travel the initial passage, read:

The rough-hewn walls and ceiling of the wide tunnel give way to a paved floor ahead. Dim white light washes the passage in a pale glow; the light is brighter in the worked chamber farther on. The faint smell of sharp vinegar exudes from kruthik corpses that lay about the floor. Dark smears and spent black arrows tell of a nasty battle that occurred here recently. Those who fought the kruthiks are nowhere to be seen.

Nature Check

DC 10: The ammunition strewn about on the floor here is clearly goblin-made.

Perception Check

DC 9: From somewhere in the distance, a grinding sound of stone on stone can be heard.

DC 10: Humanoid corpses were dragged from the passage into the tunnel to the south of this area.

DC 15: About a dozen kruthiks fought about half that number of Small and Medium humanoids here.

As the PCs enter the chamber, read:

White motes of light hover in the corner alcoves of this worked chamber, which appears to be the entry to an old tomb. In its center is a pile of blackened skulls, held in place by a low, rune-scribed iron barrier. A tattered red banner hangs from a shining steel shaft that rises from the west side of the barrier. On the western wall, the doors of the tomb's original entrance have given way to encroaching earth—part of a dark iron door lies near a pile of rock, and another part is half-buried in that pile. Pillars hold up the high, vaulted ceiling. Alcoves line the eastern wall and the northern part of the western wall, each holding a scattering of old bones. A stair ascends in the center of the far wall to closed iron double doors. All the walls bear carvings of geometric patterns, and scenes of goblins at war, work, and play.

Four kruthik tunnels pierce the walls.

The kruthiks attack as soon as one or more PCs spend a moment near the central skull pile.

When they do, read:

A tapping like falling rain warns you of an impending kruthik attack from the tunnels in the walls.

2 Sharn Kruthiks	Level 2 Lurker
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125 each
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, blindsight 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 32; Bloodied 16	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 13	
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8, fly 4	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the target is grabbed. While grabbing, the kruthik can claw only the grabbed target, and that target takes 6 damage, instead of 2 damage, from the grabbing kruthik's <i>gnashing horde</i> aura. The kruthik gains +2 to AC and Reflex while grabbing a target.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 8 (+0)

3 Kruthik Young	Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 43; Bloodied 21	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Speed 8, burrow 2, climb 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+5 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)

6 Kruthik Hatchlings	Level 2 Minion
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 31 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)

TACTICS

Each kruthik issues from one of the tunnels numbered 1 through 4 (roll 1d4 or choose) on its initiative count. They try to surround the PCs to prevent any escape from

gnashing horde. The Sharn kruthiks grab targets for the same reason.

Kruthiks ignore difficult terrain in this chamber.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light in the tunnel area; bright light in the chamber from white motes.

Ceiling: The initial passage has a rough ceiling that is 10 feet high. The chamber has a vaulted ceiling, 15 feet near the walls, 20 feet over the center of the room.

Alcoves: Each alcove is large enough for a Medium creature to occupy, but the bones make these squares difficult terrain. The alcove walls are blocking terrain.

Eastern Double Doors: These rusty iron doors are locked (Thievery DC 12 to unlock; Strength DC 15 to break the latch).

Holes: The kruthik tunnels numbered 1 and 3 are holes in the floor. A creature (except for kruthiks) that enters one of these squares can move no farther on its current turn.

Pillars: Each circular pillar is 15 feet high (Athletics DC 15 to climb) and 4 feet wide and is cover terrain.

Rubble Pile: The rubble at the chamber's original entrance along the western wall is 5 feet high around the perimeter of the pile and 10 feet high in the two squares directly east of where the door used to be located. Each rubble square is difficult terrain and also requires a DC 10 Athletics or Acrobatics check to enter. A character who fails this check stops in the square he currently occupies.

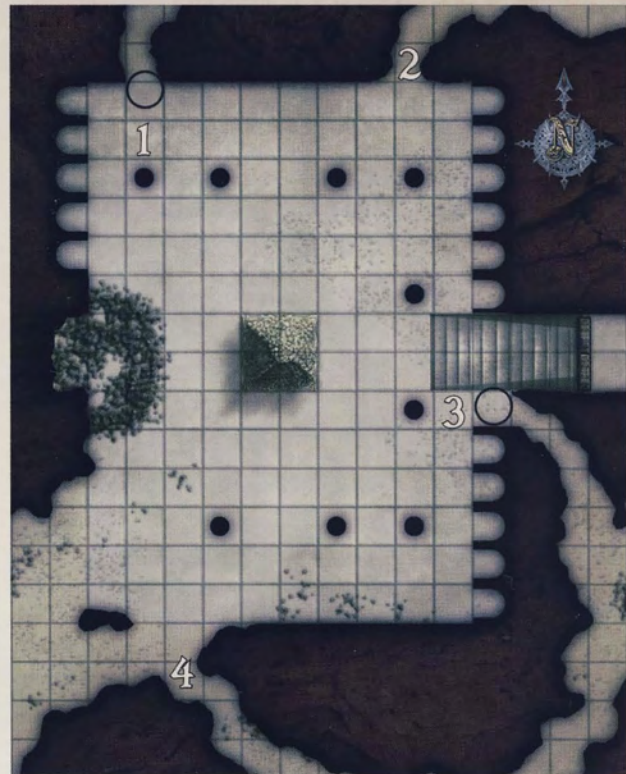
Skull Pile: If a PC inspects the skulls, a DC 10 Nature or Heal check reveals that the pile contains skulls of gnomes, halflings, goblins, orcs, monsters, and foul-spawn—no humans or elves. It slopes steeply to 10 feet high, and iron spikes hold the skulls in place. Anyone forced into or falling on the pile takes 1d6 damage. Entering a pile square requires a DC 7 Athletics check, and climbing to the top a DC 10 check; failure ends the creature's movement. A creature fighting from a pile square must succeed on a DC 10 Athletics check each turn or fall and take damage. Kruthiks are immune to these effects.

Banner: The steel pole holds a tattered red standard that depicts a stylized black bird of prey. The banner is

THE JOURNAL

The pages of this book are stained and cut. The few that are scribed bear Goblin writing in Common script. Ten minutes studying the journal indicates that the writer was a member of the Kech Volaar—the Wordbearers of Darguun. The goblins came here seeking “Ashurta’s Tomb” and “the Blade.” The journal also mentions that they possessed a key to the tomb’s entry doors.

A piece of leather in the journal has symbols on it—give the players a copy of the “Cryptic Leather” illustration (see *Adventure Book One*, page 27). The leather is a clue for encounter 2.



mundane, but the pole is a battle standard of might (see *Adventurer's Vault*, page 179; level 4 magic item).

Bag: When the PCs draw close, it's clear that a creature bled heavily on the pile's southern side. A torn and bloodstained leather bag lies on the pile, its contents partially spilled out. The PCs find a damaged journal (see the sidebar), 11 gp (DC 10 History check reveals Darguun mintage), and a *potion of healing*. If a PC takes a few minutes to search the area (Perception DC 10), he or she finds an ancient key to the eastern doors that fell out of the bag and rests near the bottom of the pile.

Iron Barrier: Runes written in Common spell out Goblin words:

Ashurta, slayer of these weaklings, keeper of the Blade of the Ashen Crown. Even in death, he is stoic and strong. The might of Xoriat has not bested him, and Hell goes with him.

A character who makes a successful History check after reading these runes can come away with some or all of the following information, depending on the check result.

DC 7: Clearly, this Ashurta claims to have killed those who possessed these skulls.

DC 10: “Hell goes with him” is a common saying among goblins. It refers to influence over devils or other beings of a fiendish or fiery nature.

DC 15: If the “might of Xoriat” didn't best Ashurta, he might have fought in the war against the flesh-shaping daelkyr. This tomb could be more than 5,000 years old.

Stairs: The stairs are steep enough to be difficult terrain to those ascending them.

ENCOUNTER 2: FIENDISH PASSAGE

Encounter Level 2 (649 or 750 XP)

SETUP

1 imp
3 magma runners or 3 Sharn kruthik
4 fire sinks 3 kruthik young
3 kruthik hatchlings

When the PCs approach from the west, read:

The tunnel becomes slightly warmer as you reach another set of iron double doors. A hole that cuts partway into the upper northern corner of the doorframe reveals flickering red light coming from within the chamber ahead.

Perception Check

DC 5: The hole is part of a kruthik tunnel.

DC 8: From somewhere in the distance, a grinding sound of stone on stone can be heard.

The doors are unlocked and warm to the touch. A Medium PC can peer through the gap above the door. Show the players the "Fiendish Passage" illustration (see *Adventure Book One*, page 28) when describing this area.

When the PCs can see into the area, read:

Contained in shallow floor indentations, three braziers dance with red fire in this room. One stands in each of the northern corners, at the ends of a row of alcoves along that wall. A stylized fiendish figure with gleaming eyes holds a brazier in the southern wall, and similar alcoves flank it. The central part of this chamber is lower than the area around it, with squat stairs descending to it in all directions. Broad plates scribed with runic words are set into the center of the depression, forming a square containing four rows of four plates. Statues of fierce goblin warriors flank the short staircases on the east and west. Closed iron doors stand in the far wall.

Perception Check

DC 8: A kruthik tunnel comes up through the floor in the southwest corner of this room.

THE PUZZLE

Runes in Common spell out words on each plate. The map shows the first letter of each word. Reading from west to east and north to south, the words are as follows:

East	North	South	Open
Door	Fire	Right	Hell
Rage	Hand	Release	Unlock
Up	Left	Down	Today

A PC who stands on a plate can use a minor action to push that plate down.

Imp

Tiny immortal humanoid (devil)

Level 3 Lurker

XP 150

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +8; darkvision

HP 40; Bloodied 20

AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 15, Will 15

Resist 15 fire

Speed 4, fly 6 (hover)

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

Reach 0; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.

⊕ **Tail Sting** (standard; recharges when the imp uses *vanish*) ⊕ **Poison**

Reach 0; +8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and the imp makes a secondary attack against the same target. **Secondary Attack:** +5 vs. Fortitude; the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and a -2 penalty to Will defense (save ends both).

Vanish (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Illusion**

The imp becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Supernal

Skills Arcana +9, Bluff +9, Stealth +9

Str 12 (+2)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 16 (+4)

Int 16 (+4)

Cha 16 (+4)

3 Magma Runners

Small elemental humanoid (earth, fire)

Level 2 Skirmisher

XP 125 each

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3

HP 37; Bloodied 18

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 14

Immune petrification; **Resist** 5 fire (a magma runner that takes fire damage gains +2 speed until the end of its next turn); **Vulnerable** cold (a magma runner that takes cold damage is slowed until the end of its next turn)

Speed 8

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will) ⊕ **Fire**

+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage plus 1d6 fire damage.

⊕ **Molten Rush** (standard; recharge ⓧ ⓧ) ⊕ **Fire**

The magma runner moves at half speed, and can make a slam attack against each creature it moves adjacent to. Any creature that attacks the magma runner during this movement takes 5 fire damage.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Primordial

Skills Acrobatics +9, Athletics +6

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 6 (-1)

Cha 8 (+0)

Description A little, humanoid-shaped hunk of lava.

Fire Sink

Small elemental animate (blind, fire)

Level 2 Minion

XP 31

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +2; blindsight 10

Fiery Breach (Fire) aura 1; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura loses all fire resistance until the end of the fire sink's next turn. An enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 3 fire damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14

Speed 3

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 8 (+0)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 12 (+2)

Con 10 (+1)

Int 2 (-3)

Cha 3 (-3)

Description A wisp of animate flame.

Solution: If the PCs depress the plates that represent “Open,” “Right,” “Hand,” and “Down” (as the piece of leather found in encounter 1 suggests), the devil statue slides into the floor, revealing a passage leading south. The fires in the braziers go out, replaced by white motes of light that float at ceiling height. The PCs can still get at the statue’s gem-eyes (see “Features of the Area”), and taking them no longer summons the monsters.

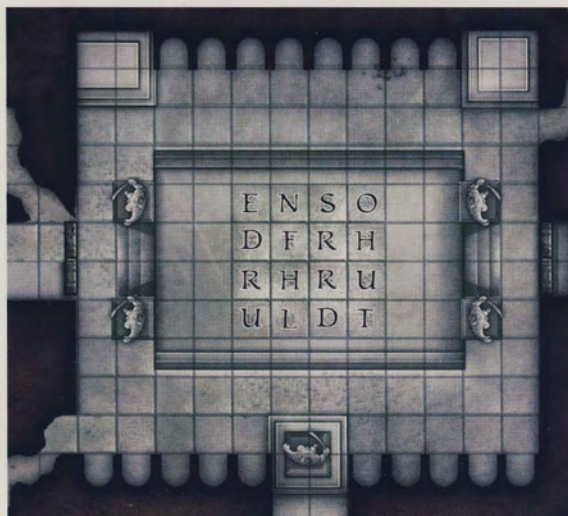
The shifting of the statue alerts kruthiks lurking in their tunnels nearby, and the creatures come to investigate (use the kruthik encounter given in “Setup”; the creatures’ statistics and tactics are found in encounter 1). Each kruthik emerges from either the hole above the western door or the hole in the floor in the southwest corner of this area. Because they solved the puzzle, the PCs gain the higher XP total for overcoming this encounter. (The kruthiks are worth 593 XP, and solving the puzzle accounts for the rest of the 750 XP reward.)

Mistakes: If the PCs depress the “Fire” plate, a magma runner appears in each brazier. If the PCs depress “Hell,” an imp pops into the devil brazier. As soon as one of these events happens, combat ensues, and the monsters’ sudden appearance surprises the characters. The puzzle cannot be solved after the PCs set off either “trapped” plate, so they gain only 649 XP for defeating the imp and the other creatures.

Other Plates: Nothing happens if the PCs depress any of the other plates.

TACTICS

The imp uses *vanish*, then moves to depress the “Fire” plate, summoning the magma runners without making the imp visible. (Any PC standing in the depression notices the plate move.) On its next turn, the imp depresses the “Fire” plate again to summon a fire sink, then flies to a vulnerable-looking character and uses *sting*. It keeps using *vanish* and *sting* as long as it can. If the magma runners can’t press “Fire,” the imp does so until a total of four fire sinks appear.



If the imp is not released initially, the magma runners attempt to reach the “Hell” plate and depress it to bring the imp into play. Otherwise, the magma runners head for the “Fire” plate to summon fire sinks (until a total of four fire sinks appear). They don’t provoke opportunity attacks when moving toward either of these plates, but otherwise they try to reach the plates as soon as they can. The runners use *molten rush*, then slam until *molten rush* recharges.

The fire sinks appear in separate braziers, and each acts in the initiative order just after the creature that summoned it. It moves toward a PC and hovers, relying on its aura to aid its allies.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from fire or white motes.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Alcoves: An alcove is large enough to hold a Medium creature. The walls are blocking terrain.

Braziers: Unless the PCs solve the puzzle, magic fire burns in each brazier. A creature that enters or starts its turn in a brazier square takes 1d10 fire damage.

Devil Statue: This 10-foot-tall statue (Athletics DC 12 to climb) depicts a fiendish creature bound to service. Its northernmost 2 squares are a flaming brazier.

Two large, polished red garnet gems (150 gp each) cause the statue’s eyes to gleam in the light. A successful DC 15 Arcana check reveals that removing the eyes is dangerous. If the PCs pluck out these gems before solving the puzzle, the plates “Open, Hell, Rage, Now” depress, the imp, magma runners, and fire sinks appear immediately, and any PCs within 3 squares of the devil statue are subjected to the following attack:

◀ Life Drain Blast ▶ Necrotic

Close burst 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; the target loses a healing surge.

Miss: The target takes 1d10 necrotic damage.

After the statue is lowered, the squares it occupied are difficult terrain.

Eastern Double Doors: This closed but unlocked portal is part of a trap described in encounter 3 (on the next page). A PC who actively searches the doors while they’re open can make a DC 8 Perception check to see that the hinges on each door are connected to rods embedded in the wall and that the rods can be pulled out of the wall, slamming the doors and keeping them shut.

Goblin Statues: These 8-foot-tall statues (Athletics DC 10 to climb; Strength DC 15 to break and create 2 squares of rubble) are cover terrain, and their squares are difficult terrain. A creature can fight from atop a statue, but must succeed on a DC 12 Acrobatics check each time it is hit, or take 1d6 damage as it falls prone in an unoccupied square adjacent to the statue.

Stairs: The stairs are not difficult terrain, since they ascend or descend only 5 feet.

ENCOUNTER 3: DRAGON'S MAW

Encounter Level 3 (811 XP)

SETUP

6 Dragon's Maw ceiling spike squares (S)

6 Dragon's Maw floor pit squares (P)

6 kruthik hatchlings

No creature begins this encounter on the map. The description assumes the PCs come from the west. The grinding sound from this room might have been heard while the PCs were in the areas of encounters 1 and 2.

Most of the action in this encounter takes place beneath the 4-by-4-square room depicted on the map. Steep stairs descend to this area from west to east (the direction the PCs travel if they move here from encounter 2) and also from the opposite direction (where the PCs come from if they move here from encounter 4). The entire area, including both stairways, is enclosed beneath a 10-foot-high ceiling.

As the PCs descend the stairs, read:

White light and a grinding sound emanate from the room just down the stairs. Carvings of goblin warriors battling various bestial monsters adorn the stairway walls.

When the PCs reach the bottom of the stairs, read:

You descend into a hot, damp room lit by a single white mote. The chamber walls—like those of the stairway—bear images of armored goblins in battle. The ceiling and floor resemble an artistic interpretation of the inside of a great dragon's maw. In the center of the floor, runic words adorn four plates. The grinding sound comes from somewhere below this space.

Runes in Common spell out words on each plate. The tactical map shows the first letter of each word. Reading from west to east and north to south, the words are as follows:

Open	Close
Up	Down

If a character moves into one of these squares, that plate is depressed, and an echoing mechanical sound issues from beneath the floor. If two center plates are depressed at the same time, or if anyone attempts to open the doors on the opposite side from where the characters entered this area, the trap activates (see the "Trigger" section of the statistics block). A center plate resets (does not remain depressed) if a character moves off it.

6 Kruthik Hatchlings

Small natural beast (reptile)

Level 2 Minion

XP 31 each

Initiative +4

Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10

Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12

Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8

⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 13 (+2)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 4 (-2)

Cha 6 (-1)

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters occupy more than one of the four central plates at the same time, or open the doors to the east, the trap activates. Those caught by it slide down the stairs, then are either knocked off balance by a plate opening in the floor, attacked by spikes from the ceiling, or dropped into a pit, landing on the spinning, grinding ball floor.

Fortunately for the characters, they have a number of ways to discern facts about how the trap operates and to prevent it from going off (as long as they continue to succeed on skill checks before they inadvertently trigger the trap). The extensive statistics block for the trap gives you the information you need to understand how it works, and the "Countermeasures" section includes plenty of opportunities for the PCs to forestall or eliminate the threat of the trap.

The Dragon's Maw attacks for 5 rounds, after which the pit squares close and the trap resets. While it operates, kruthik hatchlings boil from a passage in the pit's north wall. (The circle on the map shows the location of the tunnel exit, which opens out into the pit beneath the floor, just above the grinding ball.) They climb the walls and attack, avoiding the trap.

If the PCs manage to disable the trap without triggering it, the kruthiks do not attack.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from a single white mote.

Ceiling: 10 feet high.



Dragon's Maw

Trap

Level 2 Solo Warden

XP 625

Like the fearsome mouth it represents, this trap chews, swallows, and digests its victims.

Trap: The entire room is designed to channel victims down the pit, to be ground into the northern wall by the spinning floor.

Perception

Each successful check provides one of the pieces of information described below.

- ◆ **DC 8:** The steel hinges of the doors at both ends of this area are connected to rods embedded in the wall. The rods can be pulled out of the wall, slamming and keeping the doors shut. (If the trap has been activated, the rods have done just that.)
- ◆ **DC 8:** The stairs are steep (difficult terrain) and made of poorly mortared stone. Scraping away mortar (which takes 1 round) reveals that the stairs are set on heavy steel hinges. A second DC 8 Perception check after a character has succeeded on this check determines that the stairs can flatten to form a steep ramp.
- ◆ **DC 10:** Broad, flat tiles of stone with cracked mortar fill many of the floor squares around the perimeter of this room. The tiles can open along a hinge connected to the wall or the bottom of the steps.
- ◆ **DC 5:** The stone in certain parts of the ceiling is patched with mortar in a conspicuous way. The mortar appears to cover holes 2 inches in diameter. A second DC 5 check after a character has succeeded on this check indicates that a spear, spike, or dart is propelled through each hole.)

Additional Skill: Arcana

Each successful check provides one of the pieces of information described below.

- ◆ **DC 7:** The four plates in the center of the room are not magical.
- ◆ **DC 10:** A large magical emanation can be felt 10 feet below the floor of the room, probably the source of the grinding sound.

Trigger

The trap activates when two center plates are depressed at the same time or when a PC attempts to open the doors opposite those through which the party entered. Triggering the trap has the following effects.

- ◆ **Western Doors:** Slam closed and lock.
- ◆ **Eastern Doors:** Slam closed and lock.
- ◆ **Center Plates:** Rock violently.
- ◆ **Stairs:** Both sets of stairs flatten into steep ramps. Those standing on the stairs fall prone but can make a DC 8 Acrobatics or Athletics check to remain in position. Otherwise, they slide into a square at the bottom of the stairs.
- ◆ **Floor Pits (P squares):** Open immediately. A creature standing in a pit square can attempt a DC 7 Acrobatics or Athletics check to grab the side of an adjacent nonpit square of its choice. Success on this check leaves the creature hanging until it spends a move action and makes a successful DC 5 Acrobatics or Athletics check to hoist itself into a prone position in an adjacent nonpit square of its choice. A creature that fails this second check drops 15 feet (1d10 damage and falls prone) and is subject to the grinding ball attack.
- ◆ **Ceiling Spikes (S squares):** Strike once when the trap activates, and once per round thereafter on initiative count 15.

† Ceiling Spike Attack	
Immediate Reaction or Standard Action	Melee
Target: Each creature in an S square.	
Attack: +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 2 damage.	
† Grinding Ball Attack	
Opportunity Action	Melee

Trigger: A creature falls through a pit square onto the grinding ball or starts its turn in a square on top of the grinding ball beneath the floor.

Attack: +5 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target is knocked prone and slides 1 square northward. If the target is already adjacent to the north wall of this area, it takes 1d6 extra damage.

Miss: The target slides 1 square northward.

Countermeasures

- ◆ **Dungeoneering DC 5 (minor action):** The trap has no master control—its machinery resets on a simple cycle.
- ◆ **Dungeoneering DC 10 (minor action, trained only):** Insight into the whole trap's function grants each party member a +2 bonus to subsequent Thievery checks as described below.

Doors

- ◆ **Thievery DC 8 (standard action):** Disable one hinge. Disabling three hinges on one set of doors unlocks that set of doors.

Pit/Pit Square

- ◆ **Athletics DC 10:** Climb the pit wall.
- ◆ **Athletics DC 7:** Jump over a pit square.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 5 (standard action):** Open a pit square without triggering the trap. The trapdoor remains open until it is closed with another DC 5 check.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 10 (1 minute):** Rig a pit square so that it doesn't open even if the trap activates. Failure by 5 or more means that the square opens, dropping its occupant onto the grinding ball, but the entire trap doesn't activate.

Center Plates

- ◆ **Acrobatics DC 7:** Balance on the rocking stones. Failing this check means that the PC staggers into an adjacent pit square or ceiling spike square.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 5 (standard action):** Rig a plate so that it doesn't rock anymore, requiring no balancing act.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 8 (1 minute):** Disable one plate before the trap is triggered. Disabling a plate after the trap is triggered is irrelevant.

Ceiling Spike Square

- ◆ **Attack:** The spikes in a square have AC 15, Fortitude 13, Reflex 13, and 10 hit points. When the spikes in a square are reduced to 0 hit points, they no longer attack.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 8 (standard action):** Block the holes in a ceiling square, rendering the square safe.

Stairway/Ramp

- ◆ **Acrobatics or Athletics DC 8 (immediate reaction):** Maintain position on a ramp without sliding down.
- ◆ **Athletics DC 10:** Climb the ramp.
- ◆ **Athletics DC 15:** Climb the walls on either side of the ramp (or anywhere else in the room).
- ◆ **Thievery DC 5 (standard action):** Rig a single step so that it doesn't collapse for 1 round after the trap is triggered. Doing this to five steps on the same stairway makes the whole stairway stable for 1 round after the trap triggers. Failing one of these checks causes the stairway to immediately collapse into its ramp form, but does not trigger the trap.
- ◆ **Thievery DC 10 (1 minute):** Rig a single step so that it doesn't collapse even if the trap activates. Doing this to five steps on the same stairway is enough to make the whole stairway stable even if the trap triggers. Failing one of these checks causes the stairway to immediately collapse into its ramp form, but does not trigger the trap.

Grinding Ball

- ◆ **Thievery DC 10 (standard action):** Use an object to disable the grinding ball for 1 round.

ENCOUNTER 4: ROTTEN RAIN

Encounter Level 2 (714 XP)

SETUP

- 1 sodden corruption corpse (C)
- 2 grave drakes (G)
- 3 ancient tomb motes (T)
- 1 Sharn kruthik (not on the map; see "Tactics")

Don't place any monsters on the map until the PCs trigger the combat encounter.

When the PCs open the doors to the area, read:

The smell of decay in this room hits you like a physical force.

A massive pillar stands in the south part of the room, close to a pair of doors leading south. White motes hover near it, shedding eerie light throughout the chamber.

In the chamber's center, a blurry, dark humanoid figure stands under a shower of water falling from a hole in the ceiling. Smaller, bipedal reptilian forms rest nearby. Under their feet, a metal grate is set in the floor. Off each corner of the floor grate is a statue of a skeletally thin, stylized feline with six legs and two long tentacles—four statues in all.

The northern, eastern, and western walls of the room are lined with alcoves. In each, a mummified but sodden corpse or a pile of bones festers. Some of the remains are neither goblin nor hobgoblin.

Arcana Check

DC 15: The blurring of the figures isn't because of the water coming down on and around them. It's a magical effect—probably defensive—that likely exudes from the statues.

Dungeoneering Check

DC 10: The way the water enters this room, drenching parts of the floor enough to have eroded them, suggests it wasn't an original feature of this chamber. It's a leak from the city above.

Perception Check

DC 10: The humanoid is a hobgoblin zombie with blackened, swollen flesh that peels off in sheets and falls through the grate. The reptilian forms are drakes with hollow eyes and dark flesh. (Success on this check enables a DC 10 Religion check to identify these monsters.)

DC 12: The remains in a few of the alcoves stir of their own volition. (The tomb motes gain combat advantage in the first round of combat against those who fail this check and receive no other warning.)

The corruption corpse and the grave drakes do not act until the PCs move within 2 squares of them or attack. If the players say they're going to attack, roll initiative (see the protection provided by the displacer beast statues noted under "Features of the Area").

When a tomb mote attacks, read:

Bits of decayed flesh, bone, and teeth collect in a tiny, vaguely humanoid form. It dashes across the floor.

TACTICS

Both grave drakes defend the corruption corpse. They bite with the intent to grab and *gnaw*.

The corruption corpse stays back and hurls a *mote of corruption*—wet, black globs of its own necrotic flesh—each round. It moves only to avoid melee, resorting to its slam when it must. When it senses its impending destruction, it moves among its foes to end its existence in a *death burst*.

When the tomb motes rush from their alcoves, they try to gang up on one PC to deal more damage. They flank to gain combat advantage if possible.

The Sharn kruthik flies out of the ceiling hole on its first turn, acting with combat advantage (the PCs were unaware of it). It treats undead in its *gnashing horde* aura as enemies.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from white motes.

Ceiling: 10 feet high.

Alcoves: Each alcove is large enough for a Medium creature to occupy, but the remains make them difficult terrain. The alcove walls are blocking terrain.

Displacer Beast Statues: Each statue square is difficult terrain; the statue in it is 4 feet high (DC 8 Athletics check to scramble onto one) and cover terrain.

These statues provide defense for the monsters: The first melee or ranged attack targeting a creature adjacent to a statue in any round automatically misses. Once the creatures are defeated, the statue's magic dissipates forever. Before then, a successful DC 15 Arcana check verifies their inherent power and its effect. The statues have amethyst eyes (total of 8 gems; 50 gp each).

3 Ancient Tomb Motes (T)		Level 3 Minion
Tiny natural animate (undead)		XP 38 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic		
Speed 8		
Ⓛ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+8 vs. AC; 3 necrotic damage, and ongoing 2 necrotic damage (save ends); 6 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) instead, if the target is adjacent to three or more tomb motes.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 20 (+6)	Wis 16 (+4)
Con 17 (+4)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)

Sodden Corruption Corpse (C) Level 4 Artillery

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 175

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
Stench aura 1; each living enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls.

HP 48; **Bloodied** 24; see also *death burst*

Regeneration 5 (if the sodden corruption corpse takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)

AC 17; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

✦ **Corruption of Flesh** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the sodden corruption corpse's next turn.

⚡ **Death Burst** (when the sodden corruption corpse drops to 0 hit points) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 2; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage.

Alignment Chaotic evil **Languages** –

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 13 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+3)

Con 18 (+6) **Int** 4 (-1) **Cha** 3 (-2)

2 Grave Drakes (G) Level 3 Soldier

Small natural animate (undead)

XP 150 each

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +2; darkvision

HP 49; **Bloodied** 24; see *death grip* and *zombie weakness*

AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 14

Immune disease; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed.

⊕ **Gnaw** (standard; usable only against a target grabbed by the grave drake; at-will)

+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 9 damage.

⊕ **Death Grip** (when the grave drake drops to 0 hit points)

The grave drake makes a bite attack against an adjacent target. It can maintain the grab only until the end of its next turn, during which time it can *gnaw*. If it takes 10 damage, its grab ends.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to a grave drake drops it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 15 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 17 (+4) **Int** 1 (-4) **Cha** 3 (-3)

Sharn Kruthik Level 2 Lurker

Small natural beast (reptile)

XP 125

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1;
 low-light vision, blindsight 10

Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16

AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8, fly 4

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the target is grabbed. While grabbing, the kruthik can claw only the grabbed target, and that target takes 6 damage, instead of 2 damage, from the grabbing kruthik's *gnashing horde* aura. The kruthik gains +2 to AC and Reflex while grabbing a target.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 10 (+1)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 4 (-2) **Cha** 8 (+0)

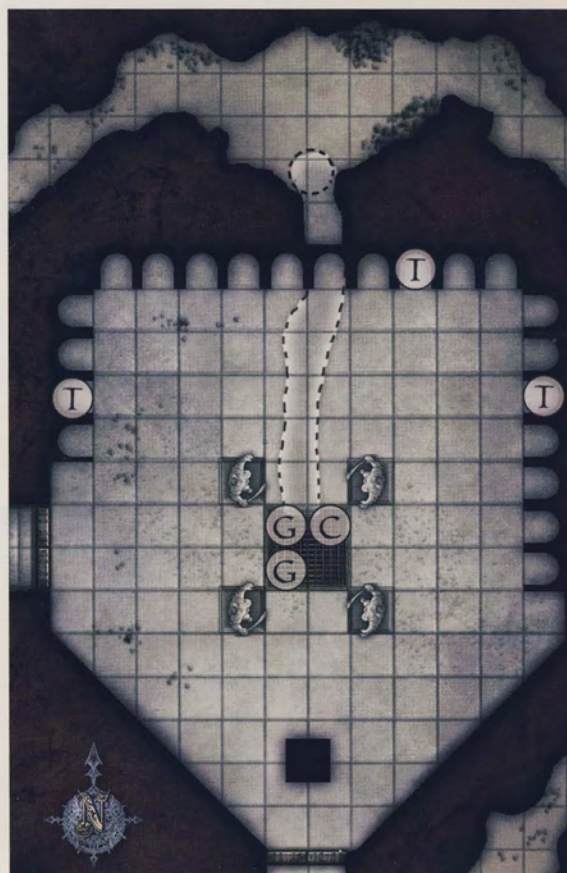
Floor Grate: A character who succeeds on a DC 10 Athletics check can pull the floor grate loose (assuming that no creatures are standing on it). The shaft beneath the floor grate is 10 feet deep. A creature that falls or is knocked into the shaft takes 1d10 damage and falls prone at the bottom. (The water from above falls into this shaft and quickly leaks away through narrow openings around the floor of the shaft.)

Ceiling Hole: In the ceiling directly above the floor grate is a hole through which water pours into the room. Leading away from this hole is a passage big enough for a Small creature to squeeze through (Acrobatics DC 10 to jump up and climb into the passage). The passage leads north (as shown by the dashed lines on the map) until it exits in the ceiling of the area to the north of this room.

Pillar: The squares partially occupied by this pillar are difficult terrain. The pillar is 10 feet high (Athletics DC 10 to climb) and 5 feet wide and is cover terrain.

Western Double Doors: A character who stands at these doors and succeeds on a DC 13 Perception check discerns the sound of the grinding ball in the area of encounter 3.

Wet Floor: The floor grate, the statues, and the squares adjacent to the floor grate are wet and slippery. Anyone hit by an attack while standing on this challenging terrain must succeed on a DC 5 Acrobatics check or fall prone.



ENCOUNTER 5: HONOR GUARD

**Encounter Level 2 (725 XP) or
Encounter Level 3 (825 XP)**

SETUP

1 bloodblade hobgoblin skeleton
1 hobgoblin specter
1 hobgoblin wight
5 bonepile hobgoblin skeletons

No monsters are placed on the tactical map initially. If the blood mist (see below) is triggered, increase the XP value of this encounter by 100.

When the PCs open the doors to the area, read:

This room is cool and humid. The air carries the metallic smell of blood, and thin wisps of mist float through it. Ghostly light illuminates the room—white motes swirl around large pillars. Between these pillars is a hollowed-out stone claw holding a large pool of what seems to be blood. A soft gurgling sound issues from it, and runes are carved into the floor around it. Two upright sarcophagi, shaped like leering, stylized hobgoblin warriors, sit in wide eastern alcoves. Black bones are piled loosely around them. Two pairs of iron doors are on the southern wall, and another double door is set into the western wall.

Perception Check

DC 8: From somewhere in the distance, a grinding sound of stone on stone can be heard. (If the PCs have been through encounter 3, they automatically hear the noise and know that the sound comes from the trap.)

Tampering with any tomb door triggers the blood mist and opens all the tomb doors, releasing the monsters.

BLOOD MIST

When the blood mist is triggered, the blood pool hisses, and mist within 1 square of it turns blood red—the area is lightly obscured. The burst area increases by 1 square each round. Within the mist, undead increase their resistance to necrotic damage by 5 and decrease their vulnerability to radiant damage by 5. When a radiant area or close attack encompasses part of the blood mist, the mist is cleared from the area of effect until the end of the attacker's next turn, and the burst area doesn't increase during the next round.

TACTICS

From tomb A, the bloodblade hobgoblin skeleton wades into melee. It chooses a strong-looking foe and hacks away, its mouth stretched into a silent war cry.

The hobgoblin wight rushes from tomb B, attacking the closest PC. It switches targets if doing so enables it to gain flanking, or if it thinks it can obtain a quick kill. During the fight, it curses the PCs as thieves and weaklings.

Initially veiling itself in invisibility, the hobgoblin specter moves from tomb C among the PCs to make a *spectral scream* with combat advantage on its next turn. It moves stealthily, but the PCs can feel its *spectral chill*. (Mist

Bloodblade Hobgoblin Skeleton		Level 5 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 200
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 78; Bloodied 39; see also <i>bloodblade sweep</i>		
AC 17; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
⚔ Falchion (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage (crit 2d4 + 11), and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
⚔ Bloodblade Sweep (when first bloodied and again when the bloodblade hobgoblin skeleton drops to 0 hit points; requires a falchion) ♦ Weapon		
Close burst 1; +8 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage (crit 2d4 + 11), and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).		
Bloodblade ♦ Healing		
When a bloodblade hobgoblin skeleton scores a critical hit, it regains 5 hit points.		
Alignment Evil	Languages —	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 18 (+6)	Int 3 (-2)	Cha 3 (-2)
Equipment falchion		

Hobgoblin Specter		Level 5 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 200
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
Spectral Chill (Cold) aura 1; an enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.		
HP 36; Bloodied 18		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic, insubstantial		
Speed fly 6; phasing		
⚔ Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+8 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage.		
⚔ Spectral Scream (standard; encounter) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close burst 3; targets enemies; +8 vs. Will; 1d8 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares and knocked prone.		
Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion		
The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack. It remains invisible when it uses <i>spectral scream</i> .		
Combat Advantage		
A specter deals 1d8 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 8 (+1)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 16 (+5)
Description A distorted black and crimson apparition with a burning red hobgoblin skull floating at its head.		

starts to freeze near it.) Aiming for combat advantage, it regularly flanks or turns invisible.

The bonepile skeletons issue from the bone piles at the beginning of combat. They attack the PCs, flanking to gain combat advantage but otherwise spreading out to avoid area and close attacks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from white motes.

Ceiling: 15 feet high.

Bone Piles: The squares in and around the eastern alcoves are difficult terrain.

Blood Pool: The pool in the center of this chamber is full of fresh, churning blood. Magic no doubt maintains and agitates the blood in this way. A creature standing adjacent to the pool for more than a round feels an urge to drink the blood. A DC 15 Arcana check reveals that the pool's aura is magical, with a hint of necrotic energy in it.

Drinking Blood: Any PC who drinks from the pool (a minor action) so can ignore the effects of the blood mist thereafter. A character who makes a successful DC 5 Nature check before or after drinking can tell that the blood seems harmless and is probably humanoid.

Floor Runes: The Common runes around the pool spell out Goblin words: *The blood of my enemies slakes my thirst and that of my servants and sword siblings, now and for all time.* A character who reads the runes and succeeds on a DC 7 History check knows that goblins sometimes drink blood to celebrate victory, and "sword sibling" is a Goblin expression that means "honored ally."

Tomb Doors and Rooms: The iron doors bear the Goblin words "sword sibling" in Common script. Rooms A and B each hold a simple stone tomb containing a skeletal or mummified hobgoblin corpse; the tomb in room C is empty.

The doors are locked (Thievery DC 10 to unlock; Strength DC 12 to break the latch)—but note that any attempt to open one of them causes the blood mist to spring up around the pool. All three doors come open, and

the occupants of these rooms (see "Tactics") come forth to engage in combat.

The squares occupied by a tomb are difficult terrain, and the top of each tomb is 4 feet from the floor. A creature can scramble atop a tomb with a DC 5 Athletics or Acrobatics check.

Pillar: The squares partially occupied by these pillars are difficult terrain. The square pillars are 15 feet high (Athletics DC 15 to climb) and 5 feet wide and are cover terrain.

Sarcophagi: Each standing sarcophagus in the eastern alcoves is 10 feet high (Athletics DC 10 to climb). A Medium PC atop one of these sturdy structures is a bit cramped (only 5 feet of space separates the top and the ceiling), but does not have to squeeze.

Each sarcophagus has a hinged lid. A DC 5 Perception check tells a PC that each lid contains some kind of pressure behind it. Both are full of bones, which burst out when the box is opened and subject all nearby creatures to the following attack.

← Bone Burst

Close burst 1; +8 vs. Reflex; the target is knocked prone.

Hobgoblin Wight

Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Level 5 Skirmisher

XP 200

Initiative +10

Senses Perception +6; darkvision

HP 64; Bloodied 32

AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic (if the hobgoblin wight takes necrotic damage, it can move 7 squares or shift 1 square as a free action); Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 7

⊕ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, the target loses a healing surge, and the hobgoblin wight shifts 3 squares.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the wight suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

The hobgoblin wight makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 9 (+1)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 15 (+4)

Description A pale hobgoblin in tattered rags. It has wild hair, wicked claws, and eyes burning with hate.

5 Bonepile Hobgoblin Skeletons

Medium natural animate (undead)

Level 1 Minion

XP 25 each

Initiative +3

Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 15; Fortitude 12, Reflex 14, Will 13

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic

Speed 6

⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)

+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 13 (+1)

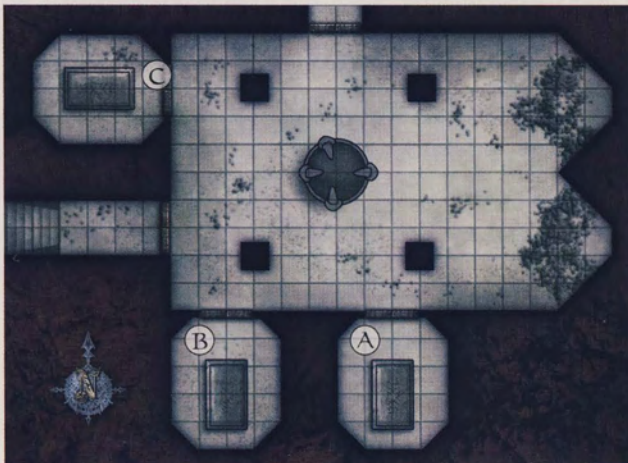
Dex 17 (+3)

Wis 14 (+2)

Con 13 (+1)

Int 3 (-4)

Cha 3 (-4)



ENCOUNTER 6: ASHURTA'S REST

Encounter Level 5 (1,000 XP)

SETUP

Ashurta

2 chainfighter wights

2 hobgoblin soldier zombies

To run this encounter, use the half of the poster map designed for it. (The tactical map on the facing page is a reproduction of area 6 as depicted in the map on page 7 of *Adventure Book One*.) No monsters begin on the map.

When the PCs move into this area, read:

White light bathes this space, originating from the crystal eyes of an immense statue in its center. The figure has four identical sides, each depicting a richly dressed hobgoblin warrior making a heart-crossing gesture, apparently a salute.

Bone-filled alcoves line the north and south walls, and the room has two pairs of iron double doors, one to the east and another to the north (one of which the PCs have just opened). Thick pillars support a ceiling that vaults from about 10 feet at the edges to 20 feet in the middle, high enough for the massive statue.

In each eastern corner is a stylized statue of a hobgoblin warrior wielding a spiked chain, slightly larger than life. Two similar statues stand on a dais in the western reach of the chamber, but these show scimitar-wielding hobgoblin soldiers.

The dais also has a lone sarcophagus set upon it. Ornate stone boxes sit to each side of the coffin.

Perception Check

DC 5: The smaller statues have yellow gems for eyes.

DC 10: From somewhere in the distance, a grinding sound of stone on stone can be heard. (If the PCs have been through encounter 3, they automatically hear the noise and know that the sound comes from the trap.)

HONOR STATUE

The honor statue occupies a 2-by-2-square space and stands 15 feet high (Athletics DC 15 to climb). It sits on a 3-foot-tall base that surrounds the statue and has the word "Ashurta" carved on all sides in Common script. The squares the base occupies are difficult terrain. A creature can balance on the statue's head, but if it starts its turn on the rotating statue, the balancing creature must succeed on a DC 10 Acrobatics check. Failure results in a fall, but the creature can make a saving throw to grab a handhold (leaving it hanging from the statue). If the creature falls, it takes 2d10 damage and falls prone in an unoccupied square adjacent to the statue.

A character who stands adjacent to the statue before it begins to rotate and makes a successful DC 8 Perception

Ashurta **Level 4 Elite Soldier (Leader)**
Medium natural humanoid (undead), hobgoblin wight XP 350

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +6; darkvision

HP 108; Bloodied 54; see also death scream

AC 22; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 19

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5

Action Point 1

⚔ **Ashurta's Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage (crit 2d6 + 15), and an ally within line of sight can shift 1 square as a free action.

† **Dispatch** (standard; requires Ashurta's blade; recharge ☒ ☐) ♦ **Weapon**

+12 vs. AC; 2d10 + 3 damage, and two allies can each shift 1 square as a free action.

⚡ **Bloodcurdling Shriek** (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close burst 2; targets enemies; +8 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to all defenses (save ends both). Ashurta slides each undead ally within the burst 2 squares.

Blade Daze (free, when Ashurta hits with Ashurta's blade; daily)

The target is dazed until the end of Ashurta's next turn.

Combat Advantage

When Ashurta hits with a melee attack against a creature that grants combat advantage to it, that creature also loses a healing surge.

Death Scream (when Ashurta drops to 0 hit points)

Ashurta unleashes a bloodcurdling shriek.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when Ashurta suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

Ashurta makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Quick Command (minor 1/round; at-will)

An ally within 10 squares makes a melee basic attack.

Alignment Unaligned Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +7, Intimidate +11

Str 16 (+5) Dex 12 (+3) Wis 9 (+1)

Con 14 (+4) Int 15 (+4) Cha 18 (+6)

Equipment scale armor, light shield, Ashurta's blade (broadsword), key to the treasure boxes

check can see that the statue has a circular channel around its feet. A subsequent DC 5 Dungeoneering check reveals that the statue can rotate, and a subsequent DC 8 Thievery check (requiring a standard action) enables a character to delay the start of the statue's rotation for 1 round by using rubble or a shim to temporarily block the channel.

HONORING ASHURTA

To lessen the threat they face in this encounter, each PC must salute the statue or otherwise show Ashurta respect (it's up to you whether an action is respectful) before interacting with other aspects of the room in more than a cursory way. Three outcomes are possible.

No Honor: If the PCs interact with the room in any way before any of them respect the honor statue, the light

in its eyes goes out and the room plunges into darkness. The characters only hear what comes next. The honor statue starts to rotate clockwise, and Ashurta emerges from the sarcophagus (using a minor action to do so). The other monsters appear in the squares where the guardian statues stood (the wights in the eastern corners, and the zombies in place of the statues on the dais), as the statues that originally surrounded them crumble to dust. The monsters receive a surprise round.

Ashurta speaks in Common or Goblin: *"Defilers! You have come to slake your greed, but you shall never have the blade of the Ashen Crown. Instead, your faltering spirits shall slake my hunger!"* He and his wight followers decry the PCs as defilers and thieves throughout the fight.

Some Honor: If, before doing anything else in the room, some PCs show respect, but others don't, the statue rotates and monsters appear as described above. Lights in the statue's eyes stay on, so the PCs can see the emergence of the undead. The monsters still receive a surprise round.

Ashurta speak in Common or Goblin: *"The honorable among you should have guided the others, weak and ignorant as they are. Now you all must pay the blood price for your folly! Perhaps some will claim the blade of the Ashen Crown, a painful lesson learned."* He and his wight followers continue to mock disrespectful PCs.

All Honor: If all of the PCs show respect, the monsters don't appear until someone tries to take an item from its location or open the sarcophagus. Then the statue rotates and monsters appear as described above.

Ashurta speaks in Common or Goblin: *"Welcome, claimants. This blade of the Ashen Crown will be yours if you pass this trial by blade and blood. Send us to our rest."* He and his wight followers provide a running commentary on the ongoing combat.

The combatants then roll initiative. Each PC receives a +2 bonus that he or she can apply to one roll during the battle, after seeing the result.

ROTATION

Once the statue starts rotating, any creature that enters the statue's space or starts its turn there is subject to the attack described below. The statue stops rotating at the end of any round in which Ashurta is destroyed.

† Statue Slam

+7 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone.

As a move action, while standing on the statue's base, a creature can make a DC 10 Acrobatics check or Athletics check to snatch the side of the rotating statue and shift to any other square on the base. Alternatively, a creature can use the statue's momentum to make an Athletics check to long jump as if with a running start in any direction away from the statue. In either case, the creature must succeed on an Acrobatics check (DC 10 + 1 per square jumped) or fall prone in the square in which it ends its move.

2 Chainfighter Wights

Medium natural humanoid (undead), hobgoblin

Level 5 Skirmisher

XP 200 each

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic (if the wight takes necrotic damage, it gains an extra move action on its next turn);
Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

⚔ Spiked Chain (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+10 vs. AC; 2d4 + 5 damage, and the chainfighter wight can shift 2 squares.

† Revolving Strike (standard; requires a spiked chain; recharge ☐☐☐)

The chainfighter wight makes spiked chain attacks against two different targets.

Combat Advantage

When a chainfighter wight hits with a melee attack against a creature that grants combat advantage to it, that creature also loses a healing surge.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the chainfighter wight suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

The chainfighter wight makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 9 (+1)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 15 (+4)

Equipment leather armor, spiked chain

2 Hobgoblin Soldier Zombies

Medium natural animate (undead)

Level 2 Soldier

XP 125 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 41; **Bloodied** 20; see also *rise again*
AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 13
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 5

⚔ Scimitar (standard; requires a scimitar; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 + 13), and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin soldier zombie's next turn.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier zombie suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

The hobgoblin soldier zombie makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier

The hobgoblin soldier zombie gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one ally is adjacent to it.

Rise Again ♦ Healing

If a hobgoblin soldier zombie is reduced to 0 hit points or fewer by an attack that does not deal radiant damage, it rises on its next turn (as a move action) with 5 hit points. If it takes a critical hit after using this power or is reduced to 0 hit points after the second time this power triggers, it is permanently destroyed.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to a hobgoblin soldier zombie drops it to 0 hit points.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Skills Athletics +6

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 12 (+2)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 17 (+4)

Int 4 (-2)

Cha 4 (-2)

Equipment scale armor, light shield, scimitar

TACTICS

Ashurta delays if he must, waiting for his allies to close with the PCs. He then uses *quick command* to give one of them an extra attack. After this, he engages in the battle directly, moving toward the melee that contains the largest number of enemies and allies to unleash his *bloodcurdling shriek*. He slides his allies into flanking positions where possible, and his allies use his *Ashurta's blade* shifts to do the same. Ashurta then uses *dispatch* when possible, employing *blade daze* the first time he hits with a weapon attack. Every turn, he gives a *quick command*. He uses *bloodcurdling shriek* again on his turn after he becomes bloodied, and *hobgoblin resilience* as soon as he suffers an effect a save can end.

The chainfighter wights focus their attacks on a PC other than Ashurta's chosen prey. They prefer to flank with a hobgoblin soldier zombie. If they can flank two targets, they do so to better employ *revolving strike*. The chainfighters keep shifting to gain the best position possible, using the honor statue's rotation for help if need be. Have them make spectacular jumps using the statue's rotation if doing so makes sense. This tactic has the added benefit of letting the PCs know how the statue can be used.

The hobgoblin soldier zombies prefer to fight alongside allies to keep *phalanx soldier* active. Still, their primary purpose is to help the wights gain and keep combat advantage. They also mark targets to hinder attacks against the wights. Otherwise, the zombies rain melee attacks on the PCs. They are smart enough to risk using the statue's rotation to shift or jump.

It should become clear to the PCs that the wights in this encounter (including Ashurta) need combat advantage to drain healing surges. This is meant to force the

PCs to keep moving and lessen the overall drain over time (normal wights drain healing surges whenever they hit with a basic attack). If the players don't realize what's happening after the wights have each drained two surges, call for a DC 10 Religion check. On a success, give the players this tactical information.

All the undead fight until they are destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from the honor statue's eyes, unless they go out. In that case, it is dark unless the PCs have a light source.

Ceiling: 10 feet high over the alcoves, rising to 20 feet high in the room's center.

Alcoves: Each alcove is large enough for a Medium creature to occupy, but the bones make these squares difficult terrain. The alcove walls are blocking terrain.

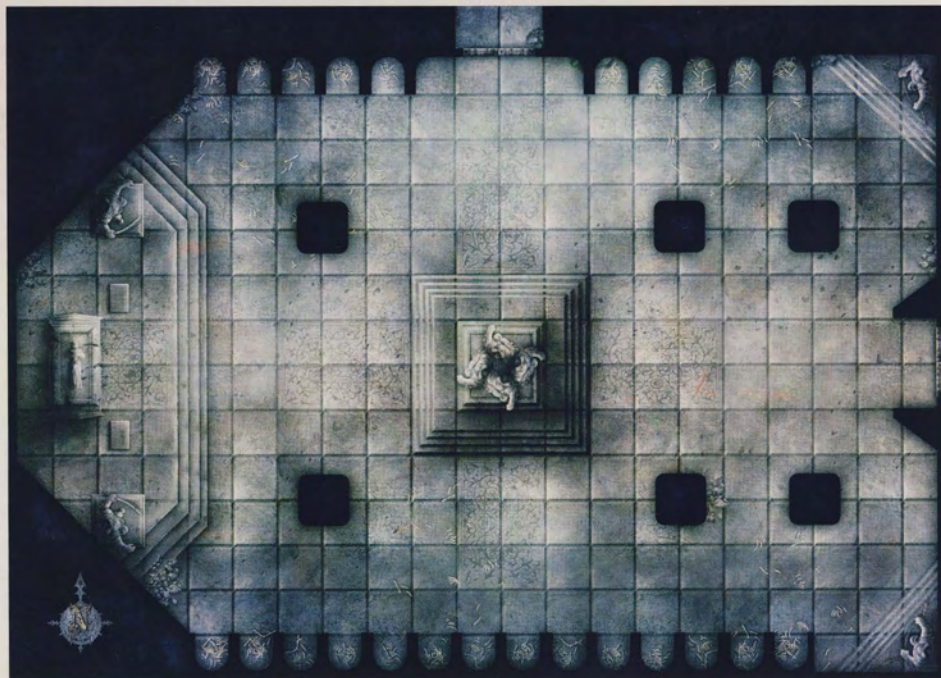
Dais: Three gentle steps lead up to this platform that supports Ashurta's sarcophagus.

Guardian Statues: Each of these statues holds a monster. They all crumble to rubble (creating difficult terrain in the squares they occupied) when combat begins. The platforms in the eastern corners are a gentle step up (not difficult terrain). Amber gems (8 gems in total, 20 gp each) serve as each statue's eyes, remaining whole even when the statue crumbles.

Pillars: The squares partially occupied by these pillars are difficult terrain. The square pillars are 15 feet high (Athletics DC 10 to climb) and 5 feet wide and are cover terrain.

Sarcophagus: This stone coffin depicts a stylized and richly dressed hobgoblin warrior with large tusks. Its squares are difficult terrain. The top is 5 feet from the floor and can be mounted with a DC 7 Athletics or Acrobatics check. A creature gains cover against attackers on the floor by standing in the opened sarcophagus.

Stone Boxes: Each of the squares occupied by these locked chests is difficult terrain. A box can be opened by a character who succeeds on a DC 10 Thievery check. (Ashurta has a key that opens both boxes.) The northern box contains 33 gp and a hobgoblin *skull mask* helm (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 144; level 5 item). The southern box holds 21 gp and a hobgoblin *belt of the brawler* (*Adventurer's Vault*, page 164; level 3 item).



ENCOUNTER 7: HIVE HOLLOW

Encounter Level 2 (662 XP)

SETUP

2 kruthik adults (A)
1 Sharn kruthik (S)
1 kruthik young (Y)
2 kruthik hatchlings (H)

Refer to the material on page 8 of *Adventure Book One* as the PCs approach.

When the PCs enter the area, read:

You are in a roughly semicircular hollow—the interior of an ancient tower foundation. Rubble is strewn around its perimeter and sits in a pile near the center. Two support beams run across the chamber in the space beneath the ceiling. Four openings, including the one you just entered through, exit the hollow in different directions.

2 Kruthik Adults (A)	Level 4 Brute
Medium natural beast (reptile)	XP 175 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 67; Bloodied 33	
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13	
Speed 6, burrow 3 (tunneling), climb 6	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.
✂ Toxic Spikes (standard; recharge ⏏ ⏏) ♦ Poison	
The kruthik makes two attacks against different targets: ranged 5; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 4 (-1) Cha 8 (+1)

Sharn Kruthik (S)	Level 2 Lurker
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, blindsight 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 32; Bloodied 16	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 13	
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8, fly 4	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the target is grabbed. While grabbing, the kruthik can claw only the grabbed target, and that target takes 6 damage, instead of 2 damage, from the grabbing kruthik's gnashing horde aura. The kruthik gains +2 to AC and Reflex while grabbing a target.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 8 (+0)

Kruthik Young (Y)	Level 2 Brute
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 125
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 43; Bloodied 21	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Speed 8, burrow 2, climb 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	+5 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)

2 Kruthik Hatchlings (H)	Level 2 Minion
Small natural beast (reptile)	XP 31 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision, tremorsense 10
Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.	
AC 15; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12	
Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.
Alignment Unaligned	Languages —
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 16 (+4) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 4 (-2) Cha 6 (-1)

TACTICS

The kruthiks assault the PCs viciously. The adults begin the encounter on the beams (from where they shoot their toxic spikes), and the other kruthiks start at floor level but might climb walls to get away from attackers.

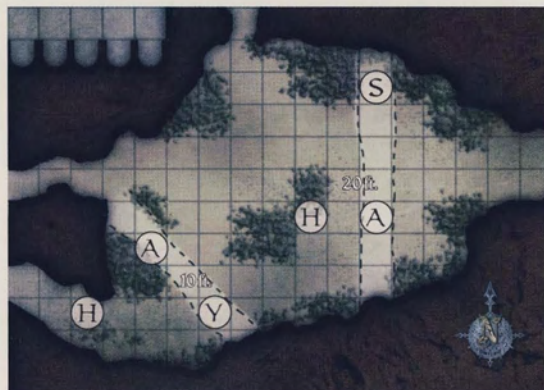
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Rubble: The rubble in this area is difficult terrain.

Support Beams: Jammed between the rough walls (Athletics DC 10 to climb), these 5-foot-wide beams are 20 feet above the floor of this chamber.



ENCOUNTER 8: HIVE FOUNDATION

Encounter Level 3 (837 XP)

SETUP

- 1 kruthik hive lord (L)
- 1 Sharn kruthik (S)
- 2 fresh-hatched kruthik swarms (F)
- 2 kruthik hatchlings (H)

As the PCs approach this area, read:

You move through a tunnel wider than most of the rest in the kruthik hive. An odorless slime coats its walls. The passage widens even more ahead, leading to another hollow in an ancient tower foundation.

Kruthiks sense the approach of light-carrying PCs long before they arrive. Even in the dark, they know intruders are near when the PCs move within 8 squares of this area's entrance. The hive lord lurks behind a mucus sheet. The kruthiks await the intruders, guarding the eggs and groups of newborns. Show players the illustration "Hive Foundation" (Adventure Book One, page 28) before beginning the encounter.

When the PCs enter the area, read:

The widening tunnel yawns into another hollow. Sheets of a slimy, yellow substance divide the cavernous space. A host of shiny, metallic eggs fill gaps in the rubble, coated in similar slime. Dozens of tiny kruthiks swarm over the area. A chittering and hissing rises among the kruthiks as you enter.

Nature Check

DC 5: The sheets of slime are mucus. They're harmless but can form a slippery film if knocked to the floor. Kruthiks are unlikely to be affected by this slipperiness.

DC 10: Destroying eggs is likely to momentarily cause most of the kruthiks to avoid the one who destroyed the eggs. However, a hive lord will attack an egg destroyer with preference and hate.

Perception Check

DC 5: A gleaming strand of metal hangs in one of the slimy sheets.

DC 8: In the communal chittering, you detect the rasp of a larger creature. (The character hears the hive lord and senses its location, but doesn't yet see the creature.)

DC 10: A winged kruthik hangs on the wall across the chamber, maybe 20 feet above you.

TACTICS

The young hive lord rushes at the PCs and sprays an acid blast at them. It uses its claw attack only if it can't hit more than one PC with the blast.

The kruthik swarms move toward the PCs. Each one enters a PC's space, preferably near other enemies and within the hive lord's aura. They move to keep as many foes adjacent as possible, harrying the characters relentlessly.

If possible, the Sharn kruthik flies down to attack a character in or near a swarm or other kruthiks. It grabs a PC and holds on, savaging the character with claw attacks and gnashing horde.

The hatchlings rush and attack. They prefer to stay within the lord's hive frenzy aura.

All the kruthiks know about their terrain advantages, and they use them. None of them flee from this battle. They know that they must protect their offspring.

SHIFTING RUBBLE

The 2-by-2-square rubble area in the center of the chamber is unstable. Anyone can see the loose pile, but a DC 5 Dungeoneering check is required to recognize the danger it poses. Among the monsters, only the young kruthik hive lord is heavy enough to cause the rubble to shift. It avoids the area when it moves. If a character moves onto the mound, the rubble shifts and produces the following attack. It can do so only once.

← Rubble Shift

Close burst 1; +6 vs. Reflex; the target is knocked prone and grabbed (DC 12 check to escape).

When the rubble shifts, eggs within the burst are destroyed. The PC who caused the shift is treated as the one who destroyed the eggs (see "Features of the Area").

Young Kruthik	Level 4 Elite Controller (Leader)	
Hive Lord (L)		
Medium natural beast (reptile)	XP 350	
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision, tremorsense 10	
Hive Frenzy aura 2; allied kruthiks within the aura deal double damage with basic attacks.		
HP 110; Bloodied 55		
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 19, Will 16		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6, burrow 3 (tunneling), climb 6		
Action Points 1		
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)		
+9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage.		
↖ Acid Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid		
Close blast 3; targets enemies; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 acid damage, the target is weakened and takes ongoing 5 acid damage (save ends both).		
Alignment Unaligned Languages —		
Str 18 (+6)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 4 (-1)	Cha 10 (+2)

Sharn Kruthik (S)
Small natural beast (reptile)

Level 2 Lurker
XP 125

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1;
low-light vision, blindsight 10

Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.

HP 32; **Bloodied** 16

AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8, fly 4

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage, and the target is grabbed. While grabbing, the kruthik can claw only the grabbed target, and that target takes 6 damage, instead of 2 damage, from the grabbing kruthik's *gnashing horde* aura. The kruthik gains +2 to AC and Reflex while grabbing a target.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 18 (+5)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 4 (-2)

Cha 8 (+0)

2 Fresh-Hatched Kruthik Swarms (F)

Level 3 Brute

Medium natural beast (reptile, swarm)

XP 150 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision

Swarm Attack aura 1; when any enemy starts its turn within the aura, it takes 6 damage.

HP 55; **Bloodied** 27

AC 15; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12

Speed 8, climb 8

⊕ **Gnashing Claws** (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 16 (+4)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 6 (-1)

2 Kruthik Hatchlings (H)

Level 2 Minion

Small natural beast (reptile)

XP 31 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision,
tremorsense 10

Gnashing Horde aura 1; an enemy that ends its turn within the aura takes 2 damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 15; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 12

Speed 8, burrow 2 (tunneling), climb 8

⊕ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 13 (+2)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 4 (-2)

Cha 6 (-1)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.

Rubble: These squares, full of foundation debris and inedible material from the kruthiks' victims, are difficult terrain.

Eggs: Kruthik eggs (in the squares marked with blue dots) create difficult terrain for nonkruthiks. A nonkruthik that enters an egg square without succeeding on a DC 5 Acrobatics check destroys the eggs, creating slime-covered terrain in that square. A nonacid attack against an egg square also destroys the eggs.



ENCOUNTER 8: HIVE FOUNDATION

A character who destroys the eggs in a square gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against kruthiks other than the young hive lord until the end of his or her next turn. The kruthiks favor other targets. Conversely, the young hive lord gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and damage rolls for the same amount of time against a PC who destroys eggs. It favors such targets.

Mucus Membranes: These filmy sheets (denoted by orange lines on the map) stretch between squares, blocking line of sight but not line of effect. It costs 1 extra square of movement to move through a mucus membrane. Once an attack goes through a membrane, or a creature other than a kruthik moves through it, the membrane is destroyed. It collapses to the floor and covers adjacent squares in slime. Any attack aimed at a mucus membrane destroys it with the same effect.

Slime-Covered Terrain: Where mucus covers the ground, a two-legged creature struck by an attack must succeed on a DC 5 Acrobatics check or fall prone. When a character slips in such a square, the mucus sticks to that character and is no longer a hazard unless mucus covers the square again.

Treasure: The gleaming strand of metal hanging in one of the mucus sheets (marked with a T) is a silver necklace with a leering goblin face as a pendant. It is an *amulet of protection* +2 (level 6 item). Among the refuse is a torn pouch that contains two *potions of healing*, 2 gp, and 38 sp (the coins are of Darguun mintage).

ENCOUNTER 9: POSTMORTEM

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

- 1 Skullborn deathlock wight (D)
- 2 Skullborn rotwing zombies (R)
- 3 Skullborn zombies (Z)

When the PCs approach the apartment, no danger is obvious. Place the monsters only when they can be seen.

When the PCs come to the door, read:

Water drops in sheets off the towers around you, but the professor's porch is dry. You see that the stone door to her apartment, number 19, is slightly ajar.

Nothing can be heard over the storm. The monsters are silently standing in place. If the PCs knock or yell for Gydd, they receive no response. Modify the following text based on whom the PCs have met and what they know. Allow the PCs to move only 1 square beyond the pillars near the entryway before the deathlock emerges.

When the PCs enter, read:

The apartment is large and well appointed, with many windows. In the center is a vaulted ceiling from which a chandelier hangs, shedding dim magical light from tiny crystals. The second floor is merely a small balcony that overlooks the lower floor. You're in a wide hall, carpeted and furnished for sitting and talking. Doors lead to other rooms, and stairs to the north lead to the balcony. A leering goblin statue stands near the stairway's bottom. Papers lay strewn on the floor near doors to the south.

Dannae, the elf woman, emerges from a doorway across the room. She wears an ornate Aereni funerary mask, her hair and eyes wild. Her form flickers.

"Welcome," she says in a hoarse whisper. "Thank you for coming. The professor can't join us. She is with my mistress. But that needn't concern you for long."

Insight Check

DC 8: *Dannae's form flickers because it's an illusion. You see the withered corpse-like monster underneath this veil, clad in loose Aereni robes and marked with Aereni tattoos. Its sunken eyes burn with hate.*

The other monsters are either not apparent or out of line of sight. If the PCs see through the skullborn deathlock wight's illusion, they can roll initiative normally. Otherwise, they're surprised. The illusion that cloaks the wight disappears when the creature attacks.

TACTICS

The deathlock wight opens by revealing its true form with *horrific visage*. If it can move to a position where it doesn't provoke an opportunity attack, it uses *Skullborn bolt* to immobilize a foe. Then it moves in to drain a healing surge with its claw attack. It also uses its claws on those immobilized by a *Skullborn zombie grab*. When bloodied, the wight howls and shudders, using *horrific visage* again. It employs *reanimate* as soon as possible, preferring rotwing zombies to other options.

From the balcony, the rotwing zombies make initial *flying charge* attacks, pushing targets away from the deathlock and toward the Skullborn zombies. Their main aim is to divide the party, so they also push PCs into separate rooms. However, at the deathlock's urging, a rotwing zombie can push an immobilized PC toward the wight. Each zombie flies up to make a *flying charge* as often as possible. The rotwing zombies focus on any foe that ascends to the balcony, trying to keep the high ground as their territory.

The Skullborn zombies rush into melee and use *Skullborn zombie grab*. Each zombie that has a target grabbed starts feeding with *zombie bite*. A zombie without a grabbed target attacks one that is already immobilized. It seeks a new target only if it has no potential targets for *zombie bite*.

Skullborn Deathlock Wight (D)		Level 4 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +2; darkvision	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic		
Speed 7		
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Healing, Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 necrotic damage, and an immobilized target loses a healing surge. When it causes the loss of a healing surge, the Skullborn deathlock wight regains 5 hit points.		
⚡ Skullborn Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold, Necrotic		
Ranged 20; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 cold and necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).		
⚡ Horrific Visage (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Fear, Psychic		
Close blast 5; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 psychic damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.		
Reanimate (minor; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Healing, Necrotic		
Ranged 10; targets one destroyed undead creature of a level no higher than the Skullborn deathlock wight's level + 2; the target regains 10 hit points and stands as a free action. This power does not affect minions.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 16 (+5)	Cha 18 (+6)

2 Skullborn Rotwing Zombies (R) Level 4 Skirmisher

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 175 each

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also *zombie weakness*

AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 14

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic

Speed 6, fly 6

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.

Flying Charge

If a Skullborn rotwing zombie charges while flying and hits with a slam attack, that attack deals 1d8 extra damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to a Skullborn rotwing zombie drops it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 14 (+4) Dex 17 (+5) Wis 10 (+2)

Con 14 (+4) Int 1 (-3) Cha 3 (-2)

Description This corpse has leathery wings magically grafted to its flanks.

3 Skullborn Zombies (Z) Level 2 Soldier

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 125 each

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +1; darkvision

HP 46; Bloodied 23; see also *zombie weakness*

AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic

Speed 6, climb 4

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 2d4 + 3 damage. On a critical hit, the Skullborn zombie can make a *Skullborn zombie grab* as a free action.

✚ **Skullborn Zombie Grab** (standard; requires a free claw; at-will)

+7 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 3 damage, and the target is grabbed. Any escape attempt must target the Skullborn zombie's Fortitude, rather than its Reflex.

✚ **Zombie Bite** (standard; at-will)

Targets an immobilized, stunned, or unconscious creature; +8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to a Skullborn zombie drops it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 16 (+4) Dex 12 (+2) Wis 10 (+1)

Con 16 (+4) Int 4 (-2) Cha 4 (-2)

Description A dessicated elf corpse draped in a fine loincloth, its withered face tattooed to look like a skull.

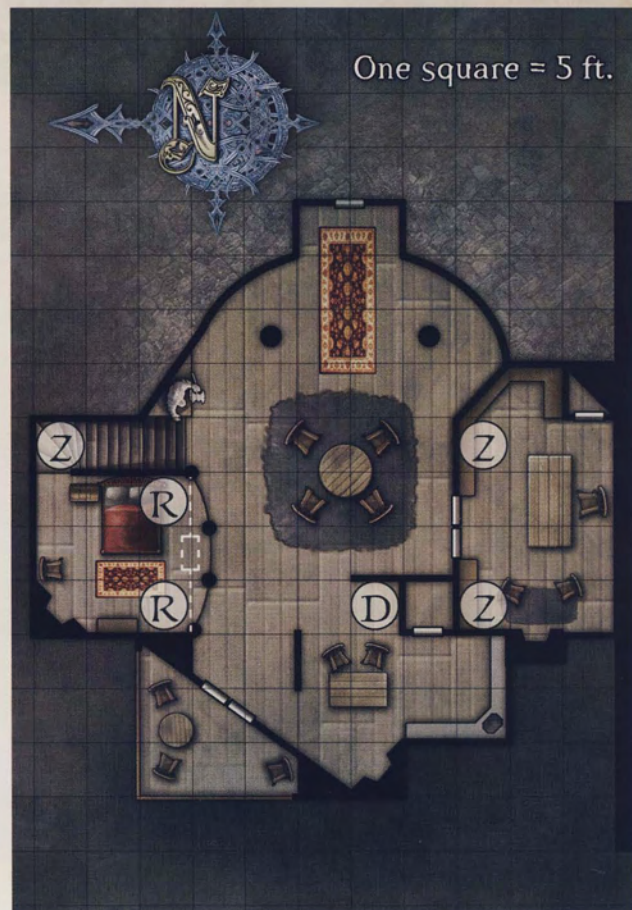
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light. See Chandelier, below.

Ceiling: The apartment is open up to the second-floor with a vaulted ceiling 25 feet high.

Chandelier: This magical light fixture hangs down to 10 feet above the first floor. It is strong enough to bear weight. A crystal on the dining area wall increases (to bright) or decreases (to dark) the light.

Doors: Within the apartment, the doors are light wood (Strength DC 10 to break). When forced movement drives a creature into a door, the door breaks open on a d20 roll of 10 or higher.



Furniture: Squares that contain furniture—beds, chairs, counters, desks, tables, and wardrobes—are difficult terrain. Creatures can stand on furniture. For these purposes, bookcases are not considered furniture.

Balcony: This second-floor overlook is 15 feet above the main floor. It contains no features. (The furniture in the room to the north is on the ground floor, and this area is separated from the rest of the apartment by a wall and a door depicted by white dashed lines.)

Office: The southern room with the desk and bookcases is completely ransacked. Book piles and loose papers make some of the squares difficult terrain.

Pillar: The squares partially occupied by these circular pillars are difficult terrain. Each pillar is 15 feet high (Athletics DC 20 to climb) and 1 foot wide. These pillars do not provide cover.

Stairs: These steep stairs are difficult terrain. A creature descending the stairs can ignore the difficult terrain by succeeding on a DC 10 Athletics check or Acrobatics check. A creature that fails this check by 5 or more falls, taking 1d10 damage and falling prone at the bottom.

Statue: The square containing this Medium statue is difficult terrain, and the statue is cover terrain.

CONCLUSION

After defeating the monsters, the PCs can search the apartment (see *Adventure Book One*, page 13).

INTERLUDE: ROAD TO SIX KINGS

The trip from Ardev to Six Kings covers about 125 miles over a trade road, taking four or five days on foot, followed by at least a day's hike along the shoulder of the Graywalls. This journey to the frontier of civilized Breland is a dangerous one.

A ROAD WELL TRAVELED

The following skill challenge tests the PCs as they make their way along the road to the foot of the mountains, then on the ancient track leading to Six Kings.

During their travel, the PCs face three set encounters—the rescue of a captive Kech Volaar goblin, a confrontation with Turakbar raiders, and an ambush by the Emerald Claw. The less sharp the PCs are on the road, the more their resources are taxed and the harder these encounters become.

The journey from Ardev to Six Kings takes you through some of the most dangerous territory in Breland. You might have a trade road to follow, but that path doesn't ensure easy passage to Droaam's frontier.

Setup: The party travels from Ardev to Six Kings on an unsafe road. Each round of the challenge represents one day of travel. Encounters occur after the PCs have attempted all their skill checks for that day of activity.

Level: 2 (XP 250).

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Endurance, Nature.

Endurance (DC 10): Traveling in the open is hard work, but the road can make it a little easier. As the rigors of travel drain the party, those who succumb to the strain can become a burden to their friends. Each PC must make this check, which doesn't count as an action, every round. Those who fail lose a healing surge. If more PCs fail this check than succeed on it in any round, all the PCs lose an additional healing surge, and the characters earn 1 failure in the skill challenge. Otherwise, the PCs gain 1 success in the skill challenge.

Nature (DC 10): The PC keeps an eye out for natural hazards that have crept into the poorly maintained road.

Foraging for supplies or water and looking for good rest spots are also important. This check can be made once per round by any single character. Failure costs everyone in the party one healing surge because of having to leave the road due to overgrowth, lack of water, or some other minor hazard. Success counts as 1 success in the skill challenge.

Secondary Skills: History, Perception.

History (DC 10): The character's knowledge of the route to Six Kings—and its reputation and lore in the past and present—aids in the party's efforts to avoid trouble on the road. Each character can attempt this check once during the skill challenge. Success grants a +2 bonus to one PC's subsequent Nature check or one PC's subsequent Endurance check.

Perception (DC 10): By carefully watching details along the way, the PC spies trouble long before it appears, or a beneficial landscape feature before the party passes it by. Each character can attempt this check once during the skill challenge. Success grants a +2 bonus to one PC's subsequent Nature check or one PC's subsequent Endurance check.

Success: The PCs go into encounter 12. Emerald Claw Ambush with more healing surges and the benefit from Progress and Encounters (see below).

Failure: The PCs go into encounter 12. Emerald Claw Ambush with fewer healing surges and the penalty from Progress and Encounters (see below).

PROGRESS AND ENCOUNTERS

If the PCs have earned no failures on the skill challenge before they reach an encounter, they gain a +2 bonus to skill checks related to gaining information prior to that encounter. If they have more failures than successes at that point, they take a -2 penalty to such checks.

The encounters should occur on the following days, fit into the narrative of the overland journey as desired.

Day 2: Emerald Claw Scouts (see below).

Day 4: Turakbar Toll (see page 22).

Day 6: Emerald Claw Ambush (see page 24).

ENCOUNTER 10: EMERALD CLAW SCOUTS

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

5 Emerald Claw scouts (S)
Govaan, Wordbearer goblin (G)

While on a deserted stretch of road, the PCs stumble across a goblin captured by Emerald Claw scouts.

Perception Check

DC 10: *From around a curve in the road ahead, you hear raised voices.*

Describe the bluff that rises along the east side of the road, and the stream flows to the west, as well as the dense thickets (see "Features of the Area").

When the PCs see the scouts and the goblin, read:
On the road, three humans have captured a dark-skinned, tattooed goblin and are questioning it. The goblin is silent, but the blade one of the thugs is drawing might change that.

The scouts are questioning the goblin about its purpose and allies in Common.

Perception Check

DC 5: *Although these humans are dressed as hunters or scouts, they wear cloak brooches that mark them as proud knights of the Emerald Claw.*

DC 12: *A rustling alerts you to the approach of two more humans through a scrub thicket on the bluff.*

If the PCs do not notice the scouts to the north, the scouts attack with surprise. The scouts on the road join any combat that commences to the east.

TACTICS

The scouts questioning Govaan leave him tied on the road. Those scouts closest to the PCs throw themselves into melee, flanking for combat advantage. The others shoot, using alchemist's fire arrows, at those characters who hang back from the fight. The scouts in melee can also throw their alchemist's fire arrows to a range of 5 squares.

They do not surrender.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Cliff: This slope rises from west to east to a height of 20 feet (Athletics DC 8 to climb).

Rubble: These areas of loose rock and gravel are difficult terrain.

Stream: The flowing water here is 2 feet deep. Stream squares are difficult terrain.

Thicket: These areas of dense scrub are lightly obscured and difficult terrain.

Treasure: If fired from a bow, alchemist's fire arrows (30 gp each) use the normal range of the bow but the attack modifier and damage indicated in the Emerald Claw scout's statistics (see also *Adventurer's Vault*, page 24). They can also be thrown 5 squares.

CAPTORS AND CAPTIVE

If somehow captured and interrogated, the Emerald Claw scouts tell the PCs that they work for Captain Warrik and Demise. Demise ordered them not to interfere with those seeking the *Ashen Crown*. They don't know why, but they know that Captain Warrik disagrees with Demise about this.

Govaan (see page 29) is unusual in that his skin is dark brown, mottled with lighter orange-brown. He is bound and bloodied. Saying only what he must in a reserved manner, he claims to be a mercenary returning to Ardev after a pilgrimage to Six Kings (Bluff +7). If they press, the PCs might discover that Govaan is a Wordbearer scout trailing his

comrades to report pursuit and other dangers. Govaan is unwilling to accompany the PCs, since that's not his job. He remains with them only if forced to do so. If the PCs release him, he gives them a silver Dhakaani necklace (10 gp).

5 Emerald Claw Scouts (S)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, human		XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +2	
HP 37; Bloodied 18; see also <i>fanatic</i>		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13		
Speed 6		
⚔ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and an ally within 5 squares shifts 1 square as a free action.		
🏹 Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
🔥 Alchemist's Fire Arrows (standard; requires a shortbow; usable three times only) ♦ Weapon		
Area burst 1 within 15; +4 vs. Reflex; 1d6 fire damage. Miss: Half damage.		
Combat Advantage		
An Emerald Claw scout deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.		
Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw scout drops to 0 hit points)		
The Emerald Claw scout makes a basic attack.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Skills Nature +6, Stealth +9		
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow with 3 alchemist's fire arrows and 10 arrows		



ENCOUNTER 11: TURAKBAR TOLL

Encounter Level 4 (875 XP)

SETUP

- 1 young Turakbar minotaur raider (M)
- 1 gnoll Mockery priest (G)
- 1 Turakbar gnoll hunter (H)
- 2 Turakbar orc marauders (O)

"Pay or Play," on page 14 of *Adventure Book One*, helps set up this encounter. Modify your descriptions to account for PC actions. Use the poster map to play out the battle.

When the PCs approach the area, read:

Rolling with the plains, the road twists through short, rocky spires here and there as it ascends into the mountains.

Perception Check

DC 7: A hint of smoke on the breeze catches your attention.

DC 12: Crouching low atop a wide stone spire amid some boulders, a single gnoll watches the road.

If the PCs don't approach stealthily, the gnoll hunter spots them and warns its comrades. The tactical map shows the monsters at the ready. Otherwise, the PCs have ample cover (Stealth DC 7 to avoid notice). If the characters approach without alerting the monsters, all except for the hunter are around the fire. They still demand tribute.

If the monsters are ready, read:

A hulking minotaur blocks the road ahead. Just behind it is a gnoll in chain, its khopesh and shield ready. Dried blood stripes the minotaur's scale armor, shield, axe, and hair. The gnoll has similar decoration, along with piercings and ritual scars. A small fire burns to the west of the road, heating a rough cauldron and giving off a thin plume of smoke. A human head sits next to the blaze.

The minotaur stomps and bellows, "This road is mine. You pay to pass, or you die." The gnoll cackles in response.

Perception Check

DC 10: Two leather-clad orcs lurk among scrub thickets to either side of the road.

The monsters can be placated with 100 gp, unless they have reason to believe they can gain more by fighting. Surly, vicious, and impatient, the raiders are likely to resort to violence regardless of any attempts by the characters to avoid it.

Young Turakbar Minotaur Raider (M)	Level 6 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid	XP 250
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +5
HP 72; Bloodied 36; see also <i>ferocity</i>	
AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 17, Will 18	
Speed 6	
⚔ Battleaxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+13 vs. AC; 1d12 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the young Turakbar minotaur raider's next turn.	
⚔ Goring Charge (standard; at-will)	
The young Turakbar minotaur raider charges and makes the following attack in place of a melee basic attack: +14 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⚔ Shield Smash (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent target marked by the young Turakbar minotaur raider shifts or attacks a target other than the minotaur; requires a shield; at-will)	
+11 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone.	
⚔ Turakbar Charge (standard; encounter)	
The young Turakbar minotaur raider makes a <i>goring charge</i> , followed by a melee basic attack against the same target.	
Ferocity (when the raider drops to 0 hit points)	
The young Turakbar minotaur raider makes a melee basic attack.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Endurance +11, Intimidate +9, Nature +10	
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 14 (+5) Wis 14 (+5)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 12 (+4)
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, battleaxe	

Gnoll Mockery Priest (G)	Level 4 Controller
Medium natural humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +6; low-light vision
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 15, Will 18	
Speed 6	
⚔ Pain Khopesh (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage, or 1d8 + 7 damage while bloodied, and the target takes a -2 penalty to its next attack roll. Reroll any damage result of 1.	
✂ Peel Flesh (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement	
Ranged 5; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).	
✂ Shuddering Agony (standard; recharges when no enemy is taking ongoing damage) ♦ Implement	
Ranged 10; targets a creature taking ongoing damage; +8 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target is knocked prone and takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls, all defenses, and checks until the end of the gnoll Mockery priest's next turn.	
Symbol of Battle (free, when the gnoll Mockery priest hits with an implement attack; daily)	
The triggering attack deals 1d10 extra damage.	
Pack Attack	
The gnoll Mockery priest deals 5 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the priest's allies adjacent to it.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common
Skills Intimidate +7, Religion +6	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 12 (+3) Wis 18 (+6)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 9 (+1) Cha 11 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, light shield, khopesh, +1 symbol of battle	

Turakbar Gnoll Hunter (H) **Level 3 Artillery**
 Medium natural humanoid XP 150

Initiative +4 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision

HP 38; Bloodied 19

AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 14

Speed 7

 ⚔ **Battleaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, or 1d10 + 5 damage while bloodied.

 🏹 **Longbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 20/40; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, or 1d10 + 6 damage while bloodied.

Pack Attack

The Turakbar gnoll hunter deals 5 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the gnoll's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Skills Athletics +8, Endurance +8, Intimidate +5, Stealth +9

Str 15 (+3) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)

Con 14 (+3) Int 8 (+0) Cha 9 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, battleaxe, longbow with 30 arrows

2 Turakbar Orc Marauders (O) **Level 3 Skirmisher**
 Medium natural humanoid XP 150 each

Initiative +5 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 48; Bloodied 24

AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 12

Speed 6 (8 while charging)

 ⚔ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage (crit 1d12 + 15).

 🏹 **Handaxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

 ⚔ **Marauder's Onslaught** (standard; requires a greataxe; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

 +8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage (crit 1d12 + 15), and the target is pushed 1 square (2 squares on a charge). *Special:* When charging, the Turakbar orc marauder can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.

 ⚔ **Warrior's Surge** (standard; usable only while bloodied; encounter)

 ♦ **Healing, Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage (crit 1d12 + 15), and the Turakbar orc marauder regains 12 hit points.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Endurance +9, Intimidate +5, Stealth +8

Str 17 (+4) Dex 15 (+3) Wis 13 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) Int 9 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, greataxe, 2 handaxes

The gnoll hunter shoots into the melee, favoring those subject to *pack attack*. It returns fire against ranged attackers, and the other monsters try to take out ranged attackers to keep their archery advantage.

If badly wounded and clearly losing, the monsters are likely to withdraw. They won't surrender, knowing no good fate awaits them if they do.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: These 5-foot-high rocks (Athletics DC 10 to climb) are cover terrain.

Campfire: Any creature that moves into this square, which is difficult terrain, takes 1d10 fire damage. The pot contains a meaty stew with human parts in it.

Thicket: These areas of dense scrub are lightly obscured and difficult terrain.

Rock Outcrops: The plateaus on the rocky areas scattered around this site are 20 feet above the surrounding terrain (Athletics DC 15 to climb). The outcrop where the gnoll hunter lurks has a rope (Athletics DC 10 to climb) affixed along the southernmost slope.

Treasure: Other than mundane equipment, the gnoll priest's magic holy symbol, and gruesome trophies, the raiders carry 407 sp, 53 gp, and various jewelry (250 gp total). The minotaur also has a tiny ivory box intricately shaped like a stylized dragon skull (125 gp). Inside its red velvet enclosure are 10 gp.



TACTICS

The minotaur opens with *Turakbar charge*, and the orc marauders charge out of ambush. The orcs do so with combat advantage if they weren't spotted before the battle. These combatants stay in melee, maneuvering to gain flanking. The orcs use *marauder's onslaught* to push foes away and allow them to move or charge.

The gnoll Mockery priest uses its ranged attacks on a foe that has two or more of its allies adjacent (*pack attack*). If the priest is caught in melee, the minotaur marks the foe most likely to hinder the gnoll's retreat. The priest isn't afraid to make khopesh attacks, but it prefers ranged powers. It uses *symbol of battle* on its first implement attack that hits.

ENCOUNTER 12: EMERALD CLAW AMBUSH

Encounter Level 4 (993 XP)

SETUP

Captain Warrik (W)

1 Emerald Claw necromancer (N)

1 Emerald Claw knight (K)

2 Emerald Claw scouts (S)

3 Emerald Claw troopers (T)

The details of "An Unwelcome Surprise," on page 14 of *Adventure Book One*, lead up to this encounter. Place only those Emerald Claw warriors the PCs see before the battle starts—none if the characters are surprised. The scouts stay hidden, 15 feet up in trees, until they can fire an arrow volley with combat advantage.

When the battle starts, read:

Steel flashes, and armored warriors emerge from among the trees. They are clad in tabards emblazoned with the symbol of the Emerald Claw. A large human in plate, his dark beard hanging under his helm, holds his halberd aloft. "Leave none alive! For the glory of the Emerald Claw, their deaths shall serve our cause."

TACTICS

Captain Warrik orders the attack, then leads from the front. If he must, he charges on his first turn and makes a halberd attack. If he need not charge, he moves within reach of an opponent so he can attack with his halberd. He gives the order for a *claw maneuver* if doing so allows his troops to move into a better position. He uses *baiting ploy* to draw down his enemy's guard. Whenever he has a marked target in reach and no better option, Warrik makes a *staggering slash* on that target. He's likely to use his action point to make an extra *staggering slash* or *baiting ploy* on a given turn, but he might use it to employ *claw maneuver* or drink his *potion of healing* in addition to taking his normal actions. The captain tries to save *inspire zeal* for keeping the necromancer alive.

Hanging back among the trees, the necromancer opens with *deathly summons* with the burst placed so as to pull the PCs away from his position. He then focuses *ray of enfeeblement* on other ranged attackers, using *deathly summons* again when it recharges. When he is bloodied, he uses his *potion of healing*. When on his last legs, the necromancer fanatically charges into melee.

The other Emerald Claw warriors coordinate in melee to gain combat advantage—for one another and for Captain Warrik. From the trees, the scouts initially shoot a volley of arrows. After climbing down, they draw steel and move into melee.

Success is the only way the Claw warriors can hope to survive Demise's wrath. They fight until slain.

Captain Warrik (W)

Level 4 Elite Soldier (Leader)

Medium natural humanoid, human

XP 350

Initiative +4

Senses Perception +7

HP 106; Bloodied 53; see also *true fanatic*

AC 22; Fortitude 18, Reflex 17, Will 18

Saving Throws +2

Speed 5

Action Points 1

⚔ Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of Captain Warrik's next turn.

⚔ Staggering Slash (standard; requires a halberd; at-will) ♦ Weapon

Reach 2; targets a creature marked by Captain Warrik; +11 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target slides 2 squares. On a critical hit, the target is also knocked prone.

⚔ Inspire Zeal (minor; encounter)

An ally within 5 squares gains 10 temporary hit points.

⚔ True Fanatic (when Captain Warrik drops to 0 hit points; requires a halberd) ♦ Weapon

Close blast 2; targets enemies; +9 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 1 square.

Baiting Ploy (move; at-will)

Captain Warrik moves 1 square, and grants combat advantage until the start of his next turn. If an enemy attacks Captain Warrik due to this movement, Captain Warrik (with reach) or one of his allies adjacent to that enemy makes a melee basic attack with combat advantage against that enemy as a free action.

Claw Maneuver (minor; recharges when first bloodied)

Each ally within 5 squares shifts 2 squares. During its next turn, an ally that shifts because of this power deals +2 damage with its next attack, or +4 if that attack is made with combat advantage.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common

Skills History +9, Intimidate +10

Str 17 (+5)

Dex 10 (+2)

Wis 11 (+2)

Con 13 (+3)

Int 14 (+4)

Cha 16 (+5)

Equipment +2 plate armor, halberd, potion of healing

Emerald Claw Knight (K)

Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural humanoid, human

XP 150

Initiative +3

Senses Perception +1

HP 46; Bloodied 23; see also *fanatic*

AC 20; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14

Speed 5

⚔ Flail (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Emerald Claw knight's next turn.

⚔ Smashing Strike (standard; requires a flail; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target slides 1 square and is marked until the end of the Emerald Claw knight's next turn.

Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw knight drops to 0 hit points; requires a flail)

The Emerald Claw knight makes a melee basic attack against an adjacent enemy.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common

Skills Intimidate +7

Str 17 (+4)

Dex 11 (+1)

Wis 10 (+1)

Con 14 (+3)

Int 14 (+3)

Cha 13 (+2)

Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail, surcoat

Emerald Claw Necromancer (N) **Level 3 Artillery** Medium natural humanoid, human XP 150

Initiative +2 Senses Perception +3

HP 38; Bloodied 19; see also *fanatic*

AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 16

Speed 6

④ **Bone Staff** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage plus 1d6 necrotic damage.

☞ **Ray of Enfeeblement** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened until the end of the Emerald Claw necromancer's next turn.

✱ **Deathly Summons** (standard; recharge ☐ ☐ ☐) ♦ **Necrotic**
Area burst 2 within 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d12 + 3 necrotic damage, and the target is pulled 1 square toward the burst's origin square.

Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw necromancer drops to 0 hit points; requires a quarterstaff)

The emerald claw necromancer makes a melee basic attack against an adjacent enemy.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Skills Arcana +9, Religion +9

Str 10 (+1) Dex 13 (+2) Wis 15 (+3)

Con 14 (+3) Int 17 (+4) Cha 12 (+2)

Equipment robes, quarterstaff, potion of healing

2 Emerald Claw Scouts (S) **Level 2 Skirmisher** Medium natural humanoid, human XP 125 each

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2

HP 37; Bloodied 18; see also *fanatic*

AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 13

Speed 6

④ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and an ally within 5 squares shifts 1 square as a free action.

☞ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

Combat Advantage

An Emerald Claw scout deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.

Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw scout drops to 0 hit points; requires a short sword or shortbow)

The Emerald Claw scout makes a basic attack.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Skills Nature +6, Stealth +9

Str 14 (+3) Dex 17 (+4) Wis 13 (+2)

Con 13 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)

Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow with 10 arrows

3 Emerald Claw Troopers (T) **Level 2 Minion** Medium natural humanoid, human XP 31 each

Initiative +1 Senses Perception +2

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion; see also *fanatic*

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 13, Will 14

Speed 5

④ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 4 damage.

Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw trooper drops to 0 hit points; requires a flail)

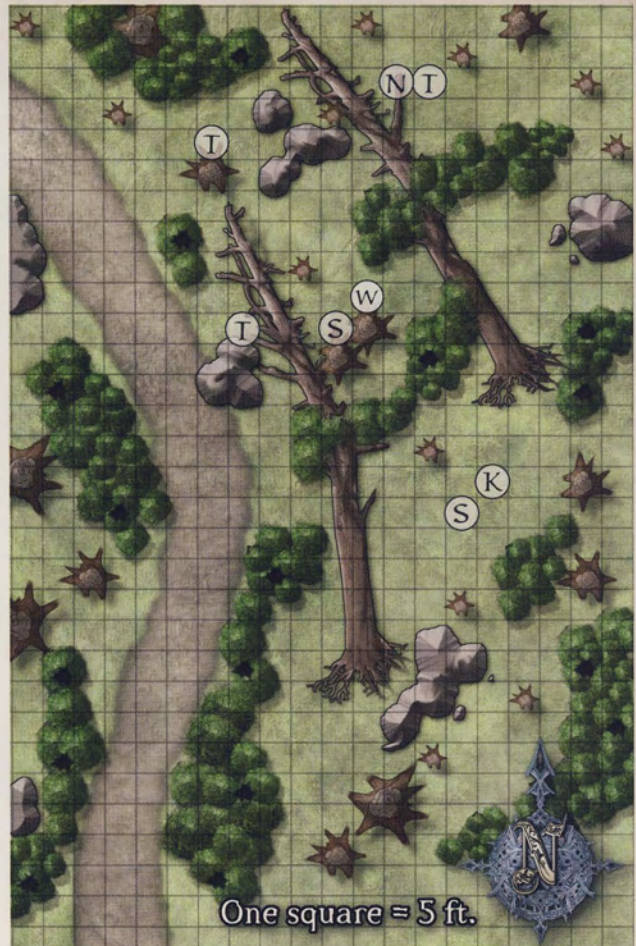
The Emerald Claw trooper makes a melee basic attack against an adjacent enemy.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Str 16 (+4) Dex 11 (+1) Wis 12 (+2)

Con 12 (+2) Int 10 (+1) Cha 10 (+1)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, flail, surcoat



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: These 5-foot-high rocks (Athletics DC 10 to climb) are cover terrain.

Fallen Trees: The fallen trees form a 3-foot-tall obstacle (Acrobatics DC 10 to balance on one) and are cover terrain.

Thicket: The squares of dense scrub are lightly obscured and difficult terrain.

Tree Trunks: Tree trunk squares are difficult terrain. If a tree trunk (Athletics DC 10 to climb) takes up less than a square, it is cover terrain. Larger tree trunks are blocking terrain.

Treasure: Captain Warrik's armor is magical (level 6 item), and he and the necromancer each carry a *potion of healing*. Replace any potion that is used during combat with 50 gp of treasure. The necromancer has six jet gems (25 gp each), and the whole troop has 31 gp among them.

DEVELOPMENT AND CONCLUSION

See *Adventure Book One*, page 15.

ENCOUNTER 13: BLADEBEARER STANDOFF

Encounter Level 4 (976 XP)

SETUP

Chib Naersaar, bladebearer hobgoblin (C)
2 Bladebearer sharpshooters (S)
3 hobgoblin soldiers (H)
2 hobgoblin grunts (G)

As the PCs arrive at the foot of Six Kings, they find their approach blocked. If the characters make no mention of specifically watching behind them, they get only Passive perception checks to notice the goblin sharpshooters (DC 12). The sharpshooters start the encounter behind the boulders, hiding them from sight and providing them with superior cover. Do not place a sharpshooter on the map until it is spotted or hits with an attack.

When the PCs reach the area, read:

A faint path winds up the mountain's slope and slips between two low shelves of gray stone. As you crest that rise, you see figures ahead—armored goblins, all with weapons drawn. This war party is not the Kech Volaar seeker team that Captain Kalaes described to you in Sharn.

History Check

DC 10: *These goblins bear the weapons and icons of the Kech Shaarat—the Bladebearers, a Dhakaani clan.*

Perception Check

DC 5: *The warriors before you have blade-shaped scars on their forearms.*

DC 12: *You hear something moving behind the cover of the boulders on the cliffs behind you.*

Give the PCs a chance to make diplomatic overtures or challenge the goblins before their leader speaks in rough Common.

The lead hobgoblin is a bulky brute in battered black leather armor, a pair of notched scimitars slung across both shoulders. "I am Chib Naersaar. Saw you ambushed by Claw, eh? Good fight you put up, for weak paleskins. Claw not Kech Shaarat, though. You leave maps, notes on Arkantaash. Flee back to the city with your small lives, or lose them here."

In Goblin, "chib" means "boss." Naersaar wants whatever intelligence the party has gathered regarding the Crown. If the PCs do not acquiesce during a brief verbal exchange, he and his followers attack.

Chib Naersaar (C)	Level 5 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin	XP 200
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +5; low-light vision
HP 62; Bloodied 31	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Speed 6	
⚔ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 6 damage (crit 1d8 + 14).	
† Bladebearer Engagement (standard; requires a scimitar; recharges when Naersaar hits with at least one bladebearer strike attack) ♦ Weapon	
Naersaar charges, but doesn't provoke opportunity attacks for leaving the initial square. Effect: Naersaar shifts 1 square.	
† Bladebearer Strike (standard; requires a scimitar; recharge ☼☼☼)	
Naersaar makes a melee basic attack with each of the two scimitars it wields.	
Combat Advantage	
Naersaar deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to him.	
Dhakaani Footwork (free, when Naersaar hits with a melee attack; at-will)	
Naersaar shifts 1 square.	
Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when Naersaar suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)	
Naersaar makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Athletics +12, Stealth +11	
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 16 (+5)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, 2 scimitars	

2 Bladebearer Sharpshooters (S)	Level 2 Artillery
Small natural humanoid, goblin	XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision
HP 31; Bloodied 15	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 12; see also goblin tactics	
Speed 6	
⚔ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.	
🏹 Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
Combat Advantage	
A Bladebearer sharpshooter deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.	
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	
The Bladebearer sharpshooter shifts 1 square.	
Sniper	
When a Bladebearer sharpshooter makes a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 8 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, short sword, shortbow with 20 arrows	

3 Hobgoblin Soldiers (H)

Medium natural humanoid

Level 3 Soldier

XP 150 each

Initiative +7

Senses Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 47; Bloodied 23

AC 20 (22 with *phalanx soldier*); Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 16

Speed 5

⊕ **Flail** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is marked and slowed until the end of the hobgoblin soldier's next turn.

⊕ **Formation Strike** (standard; requires a flail; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the hobgoblin soldier shifts 1 square to a square adjacent to another hobgoblin.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin soldier suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

The hobgoblin soldier makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier

A hobgoblin soldier gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +10, History +8

Str 19 (+5)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 11 (+1)

Cha 10 (+1)

Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, flail

2 Hobgoblin Grunts (G)

Medium natural humanoid

Level 3 Minion

XP 38 each

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 17 (19 with *phalanx soldier*); Fortitude 15, Reflex 13, Will 12

Speed 6

⊕ **Longsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when the hobgoblin grunt suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

The hobgoblin grunt makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Phalanx Soldier

A hobgoblin grunt gains a +2 bonus to AC while at least one hobgoblin ally is adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +7, History +3

Str 18 (+5)

Dex 14 (+3)

Wis 13 (+2)

Con 15 (+3)

Int 10 (+1)

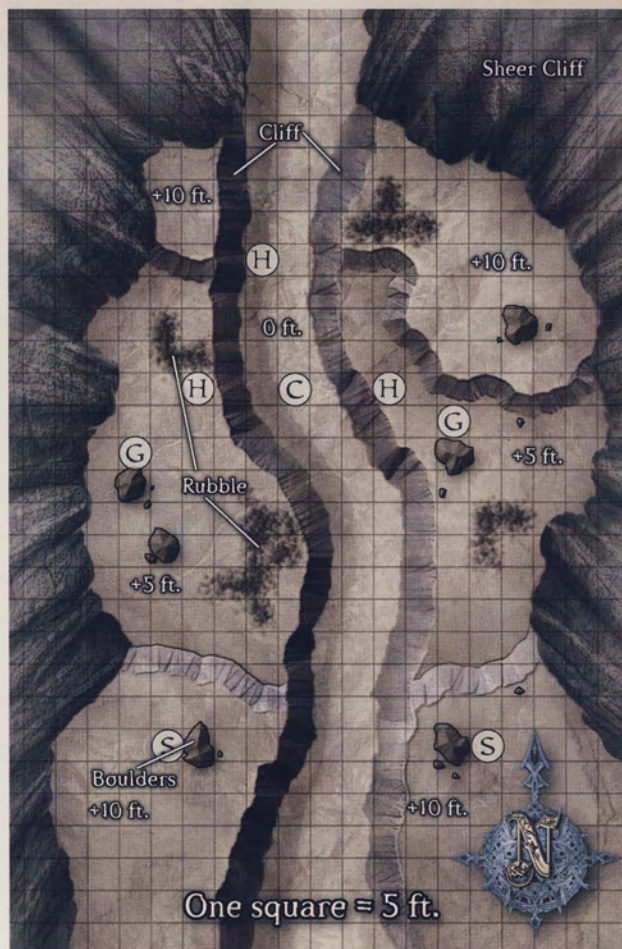
Cha 9 (+0)

Equipment leather armor, light shield, longsword

TACTICS

If the PCs did not notice the sharpshooters behind them, the archers receive a surprise round. The sharpshooters stay on the upper tier for as long as possible, using *Stealth* and targeting the party's rear ranks. If pressed into melee, they flank to gain combat advantage.

Naersaar hurls forward with *bladebearer engagement* against the most powerful-looking melee combatant, trusting in his mobility and his allies to prevent him from being flanked. He uses *bladebearer strike* as often as possible, to keep recharging *bladebearer engagement*. He uses that latter power to escape from a tricky position or to take the battle to a PC ranging at the outskirts of the melee.



The soldiers and grunts fight alongside Naersaar, working to keep him in a flanking situation. They also attempt to stay near one another to gain their *phalanx soldier* bonus.

The Bladebearers are fervent believers in their own martial supremacy. All fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Boulders: These 5-foot-high slabs of rock (Athletics DC 10 to climb) are cover terrain. If a creature has cover from one of these, it has superior cover against a creature on a lower terrain tier.

Low Slopes: These shallow slopes drop 5 feet, cutting the landscape around the path into three distinct tiers. Creatures on the upper tiers have cover against creatures on the lower tiers. The slope squares are difficult terrain.

Rubble: The squares of loose rock and gravel are difficult terrain.

Sheer Cliff: The cliff leads vertically up into the mountains for hundreds of feet (Athletics DC 15 to climb), with no particular resting spot.

ENCOUNTER 14: CAUTIOUS ALLIES

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

Using the Citadel's information, the PCs undertake a skill challenge as they parley with the Wordbearers beneath the Six Kings. Use the illustration "Kech Volaar" (see *Adventure Book One*, page 29), when describing the scene.

When the PCs move closer to Six Kings, read:

You find the landmark that Captain Kalaes said to watch for. Beneath the third king, an outcropping of white stone points the way to a dark cavern. As you approach, figures emerge from hiding among the rocks. This band of goblins and hobgoblins resembles those that Kalaes described—they must be the Wordbearers. They don't look happy to see you.

A frowning hobgoblin female in chainmail, with a bastard sword slung across her shoulders seems to be the leader. Another hobgoblin in dark leather whispers to her, giving you a meaningful look. From the tattoos on this hobgoblin's face, and the bejeweled rapier he carries, you recognize him as the doppelganger Citadel agent, Tikulti.

The leader steps forward and speaks in a deep, feminine voice. "I am Yeraa, leader of these Kech Volaar seekers. Arkantaash belongs to goblinkind. Six Kings belongs to goblinkind. Name your price for Ashurta's Blade, which I believe you have acquired. Then leave this place, and if you desire peace, do not return."

The party must establish a relationship of trust with the Kech Volaar. Only by overcoming Yeraa's pride can the PCs work with the Wordbearers and see the mission carried out. If the PCs have Ashurta's blade, they can use it in their negotiations.

WE'RE HERE TO HELP

You have to convince Yeraa you're on her side, without revealing your true mission.

Setup: In this skill challenge, the party treats with Yeraa, Tikulti, and the other goblins. Each round takes a few minutes, during which time each party member can either make a single skill check of his or her choice or aid another character's skill check.

Freely offering to hand over Ashurta's blade makes Yeraa initially suspicious of the item's authenticity. Allowing her to examine it gains the party an automatic success in the skill challenge.

If the PCs rescued Govaan from the Emerald Claw scouts in encounter 10, he is here. He backs up any claim the party makes of having rescued him, even though Yeraa already knows of this. The PCs gain a +2 bonus to Diplomacy checks during the skill challenge.

Level: 3 (XP 450).

Complexity: 3 (requires 8 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight, Intimidate.

Bluff (DC 13): The PC makes up a story about why the party is willing to help the Wordbearers, without revealing the characters' true employers. Yeraa might express suspicion even if a character succeeds on this check—nongoblins have long oppressed goblins in Khorvaire.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge. No single character can attempt this check more than once (although any character can aid another PC's check as often as desired).

Diplomacy (DC 12): The character assures Yeraa that the party's motives are to help the Wordbearers acquire Arkantaash, perhaps mentioning that Dhakaani ascension is better for everyone in the hands of the Wordbearers. Even after a successful check, Yeraa expresses suspicion at nongoblins wanting to help goblins. The political implications suggest to her that the PCs are working for a government, and she can see why someone would favor the Wordbearers over other Dhakaani clans.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge. No single character can attempt this check more than once (although any character can aid another PC's check as often as desired).

History (DC 12): The PC speaks of the challenges the Wordbearers face in their quest for ascension. The Bladebearers are a significant military threat, and they rule by conquest and fear. The Lhesh Haruuc must also be displaced. Further, the character might point out that Haruuc stole the land he now rules—from the Five Nations and from the rightful heirs of Dhakaan, the Kech Volaar. The magic the Wordbearers are acquiring could be significant in any coming conflict.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge. No single character can attempt this check more than once (although any character can aid another PC's check as often as desired).

Insight (DC 12): Yeraa initially feels that letting the PCs help might be an admission that the goblins are unable to accomplish the task. A successful Insight check persuades her that allowing the PCs to help and thereby succeeding can appear only as wisdom and resourcefulness.

Success on this check grants a +2 bonus to subsequent Diplomacy checks in this skill challenge.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge. No single character can attempt this check more than once, and no character can attempt to aid the one attempting the check.

Yeraa **Level 4 Controller (Leader)**

Medium natural humanoid, hobgoblin XP 175

Initiative +2 Senses Perception +8; low-light vision

HP 56; Bloodied 28

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 17

Speed 5

⚔ **Bastard Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage (crit 2d6 + 14 thunder damage).

⚔ **War Chanter's Strike** (standard; requires a resounding bastard sword; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage (crit 2d6 + 14 thunder damage), and any ally who hits the target before the end of Yeraa's next turn gains 4 temporary hit points.

☞ **Dire Radiance** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear, Radiant**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Will; 1d6 + 3 radiant damage. If the target moves nearer to Yeraa on its next turn, it takes an additional 1d6 + 3 radiant damage.

⚔ **Designating Hum** (standard; requires a resounding bastard sword; recharge ☐ ☐) ♦ **Weapon**

+11 vs. AC; 2d10 + 4 damage (crit 2d6 + 24 thunder damage), and allies gain a +2 bonus to attack rolls against the target until the end of Yeraa's next turn.

⚔ **Raise Spirits** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

Burst 5; targets Yeraa or one of her allies; the target regains 12 hit points and slides 1 square as a free action.

Bard's Valor (when an ally within 10 squares bloodies an enemy or reduces an enemy to 0 hit points)

The triggering ally gains 6 temporary hit points.

Hobgoblin Resilience (immediate reaction, when Yeraa suffers an effect that a save can end; encounter)

Yeraa makes a saving throw against the triggering effect.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Deep Speech, Goblin**Skills** Arcana +10, Diplomacy +11, History +12**Str** 14 (+4) **Dex** 11 (+2) **Wis** 12 (+3)**Con** 16 (+5) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+6)**Equipment** chainmail, +2 resounding bastard sword, wand, 100 gp**Akitani** **Level 3 Brute**

Small natural humanoid, goblin XP 150

Initiative +3 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 54; Bloodied 27

AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 15

Speed 5

⚔ **Waraxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 damage, or 2d12 + 3 damage while bloodied.

⚔ **Rabid Wolf Charge** (standard; requires a waraxe; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d12 + 3 plus 1d8 damage. When charging, Akitani can use this power in place of a melee basic attack. While bloodied, Akitani's movement during a charge doesn't provoke opportunity attacks.

⚔ **Rampage** (free, when Akitani scores a critical hit)

Akitani makes a melee basic attack.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

Akitani shifts 1 square.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Nature +7, Stealth +10**Str** 17 (+4) **Dex** 14 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 8 (+0) **Cha** 16 (+4)**Equipment** hide armor, waraxe (see *Adventurer's Vault*, page 9)**Govaan** **Level 4 Skirmisher**

Small natural humanoid, goblin XP 175

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +9; low-light vision

HP 55; Bloodied 27

AC 19; Fortitude 15, Reflex 19, Will 16

Speed 6

⚔ **Katar** (standard; requires a katar; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 damage (crit 1d6 + 11).

☞ **Shuriken** (standard; requires a shuriken; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⚔ / ☞ **Shifty Attack** (standard; requires a katar or a shuriken; encounter)

Govaan shifts 3 squares and makes one basic attack at any point during that movement. He doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when using this power.

⚔ **Setup Strike** (standard; requires a katar; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage (crit 1d6 + 17), and the target grants combat advantage to Govaan until the end of his next turn.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

Govaan shifts 1 square.

Sneak Attack

Once per round, when Govaan hits a target that grants combat advantage to him, he can deal that target 2d6 extra damage.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Acrobatics +11, Athletics +8, Bluff +7, Nature +9, Stealth +13**Str** 12 (+3) **Dex** 19 (+6) **Wis** 15 (+4)**Con** 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 10 (+2)**Equipment** +2 leather armor, 2 katars, 10 shuriken

Intimidate (DC 15): The character might suggest that the party's strength could easily be turned against the Kech Volaar, yet it hasn't been. Some similar veiled threat might be offered. Yeraa acknowledges the strength the party has shown below Sharn and elsewhere. The goblins respect strength and fierceness.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success in this challenge. No single character can attempt this check more than once (although any character can aid another PC's check as often as desired).

Success: Yeraa begins to agree to allow the PCs to help, but then Tikulti intervenes. Read:

"It is written that the destiny of Arkantaash is bound to those who seek and find its scattered fragments." Behind Yeraa, Tikulti steps forward. "These folk have claimed Ashurta's blade, and they have shown courage, honor, and forthrightness in their actions and in treating with us. Before we join in this quest, let us bond in spirit with the amalorkar."

The PCs are invited to participate in a sporting amalorkar.

Failure: Yeraa is suspicious of the PCs, and she is inclined to refuse their aid. Tikulti intervenes, saying the first sentence above and the following statement:

"These folk have claimed Ashurta's blade. Does that make them thieves, or allies in this quest? I say we let the amalorkar decide."

The PCs are invited to participate in a testing amalorkar.

THE AMALORKAR

Amalorkar is a Goblin word that roughly translates as “honor fight.” The goblins prepare for this competition by padding their weapons for nonlethal combat. Tikulti coaches the PCs on how to do the same, and explains to them how an *amalorkar* works (see “Rules,” below). Meanwhile, Yeraa prepares the *amalorkar* ritual circle.

Yeraa pulls a bag from her pack, opening it to slowly pour ash on the ground. On the flat bluff outside the cave, she sends several minutes outlining a wide circle of ash, open on the north and south ends. As she completes the circle, the ash flares and gives off a ring of thin smoke.

RULES

The *amalorkar* works as follows:

- ◆ For each bout, each side fields a combatant. These champions face each other in nonlethal combat in the ring. Goblins participate in the order presented below, and then repeat. PCs choose who fights a particular bout and need not follow a preset order.
- ◆ Combatants enter the open ends of the circle, roll initiative, and engage.
- ◆ A combatant can use a free action each round to “meditate” or “mitigate” on his or her turn (see below).
- ◆ A combatant loses and must stop fighting when he or she:
 - Is knocked unconscious,
 - Is forced out of the circle, or
 - Takes damage and fails to deal damage to the attacker in the same round.
- ◆ Combatants cannot use healing during or between bouts. PCs can use their second wind, but the entire *amalorkar* is considered a single encounter.
- ◆ The first side to win five bouts is the victor. If the characters lose a third bout before winning their third one, Tikulti steps forward to take one bout and throws it in favor of the PC. (His statistics block, if it’s needed, appears on page 60.)

SPORTING OR TESTING

The real difference between a sporting *amalorkar* and a testing *amalorkar*, from the standpoint of how the adventure unfolds thereafter, is outlined below in the “Failure” section.

In addition to the consequences described there, how the goblins act during the *amalorkar* depends on its type. If the PCs face a sporting *amalorkar*, the goblins treat the contest reverently but playfully. Remember, though, that goblins play hard. During a testing *amalorkar*, the goblins are bellicose rather than playful.

In any case, for the Wordbearers, the *amalorkar* is more about augury than combat. They expect the spirits of Six Kings to show them whether they and the PCs are meant to join forces.

KECH VOLAAR COMBATANTS

The Wordbearers put champions forward in the following order to face the PCs.

Yeraa: This female hobgoblin dirge singer is powerfully built. Her demeanor is one of wariness, but she utters oaths and exclamations fitting her bardic training. She doesn’t waste her weapon’s *resounding* daily power (see *Player’s Handbook*, page 236) on the PCs during the *amalorkar*.

Akitani: This female goblin barbarian is heavily scarred and has evenly filed sharp teeth. Akitani is jovial—she praises prowess and mocks fear.

Govaan: If Govaan is not among the Wordbearers, use a similar male goblin rogue of another name. His demeanor is reserved, and he fights in a low stance.

Jezirpa: This male hobgoblin soldier (see *Monster Manual*, page 139) likes fighting and admires other good soldiers.

Murdaak: This male hobgoblin warcaster (see *Monster Manual*, page 140) is proud and speaks loudly.

Ulkuuz: This male hobgoblin soldier (see *Monster Manual*, page 139) has one eye and is a cautious fighter.

MEDITATION AND MITIGATION

Each round, a combatant attempts a DC 10 skill check as a free action, exclaiming an oath, centering one’s spirit, praying to a deity, or undertaking some other action meant to enhance that individual’s chance of victory. Successful skill checks grant advantages in the bout. Such an advantage lasts until the end of the individual’s next turn.

Meditation: Arcana, History, or Religion.

Arcana: The combatant draws on the mystical power of the *amalorkar* circle, gaining a +2 bonus to one defense.

History: The combatant evokes mental images of great deeds or other significant events, perhaps even including personal ancestors, gaining a +2 bonus to his or her next attack roll.

Religion: The combatant calls on deities, spirits, or other spiritual entities for strength, gaining a +2 bonus to a saving throw.

Mitigation: Bluff, Insight, or Intimidate.

Bluff: The combatant derides the foe’s faith or skill. The foe must roll its next meditation or mitigation skill check twice, taking the lower result.

Insight: By carefully gauging a foe, the combatant gains a +2 bonus to his or her next meditation or mitigation skill check.

Intimidate: The combatant rattles the foe’s nerves with a display of anger. The foe takes a –2 penalty to its next meditation or mitigation skill check.

SUCCESS

The Kech Volaar greet the PCs’ victory with enthusiasm. To them, the characters’ right to join in the search for the *Ashen Crown* has been sanctioned by the spirits of Six Kings. The goblins treat the PCs as allies.

Though the other Wordbearers are friendly to the PCs, Yeraa remains aloof. The PCs can try to bring her out through further roleplaying. Otherwise, she discusses business (see Conclusion) and joins other conversation only when the threats of Six Kings are discussed. For example, if the PCs talk about the possible dangers of the dungeon, she might say:

"Hard to say what we might find there. Spirits still defending ancient halls from foulspawn. Lost goblin clans living in the darkness for five thousand years. Many bold warriors go into the caverns beneath Six Kings, looking for weapons or glory. Not so many come out again."

FAILURE

If the test was a sporting one, the Kech Volaar tease the PCs about their loss. A couple of them might darkly hint that the PCs are doomed to ill luck under the mountain. Yeraa remains suspicious as described above, and the PCs take a -2 penalty to skill checks when interacting with her (until after they succeed in encounter 22; see page 46).

If the PCs fail a testing *amalorkar*, the Kech Volaar refuse to trust or join the PCs (and the PCs gain no XP for this encounter). The goblins might discuss acquiring *Ashurta's blade* from the characters, but they have no intention of joining forces.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light by day; dim moonlight if the PCs arrive here after dark.

Black Smoke Circle: Curls of black smoke billow up from the circle of ash as long as the *amalorkar* continues. The smoke is not thick enough to block sight. However, a creature that enters a smoke square disturbs the ash, which rises up to engulf the creature. That individual must succeed on a DC 12 Endurance check or be blinded until the end of its next turn. A creature that enters a square of ash is not considered to have lost the bout; this occurs only if the creature is forced to move entirely outside the circle.

Boulders: These 5-foot-tall rocks (Athletics DC 10 to climb) are cover terrain.

Sheer Cliff: This cliff leads vertically up into the mountains for hundreds of feet.

Rubble: These squares of loose rock and gravel are difficult terrain.

CONCLUSION

If the goblins have allied with the PCs, Yeraa reveals that two *Crown* components are said to be deep within Six Kings, close to a magical location called the Moon Pool. Time might have changed this fact, and nobody can know if some monstrous force now has the items.

Yeraa explains to the PCs that she plans to use an obelisk that she knows is inside a chamber near the surface of the nearby cave. She thinks the obelisk should open a portal deeper into Six Kings. By using it, she and her



seekers can go into another level where *Lurtaan's cord* is hidden. At the same time, the PCs can seek *Zaarani's solitaire* in the passages closer to the surface.

Yeraa gives the PCs one of a pair of *sending stones* (see *Player's Handbook*, page 255). She keeps the other one and asks the PCs to keep in touch intermittently. Make up the trials the Kech Volaar face on their trek. During the quest, they lose a seeker of your choice aside from Yeraa and Tikulti.

If the PCs have failed to ally with the Kech Volaar, Tikulti speaks with them under the pretense of gathering information for the Kech Volaar and Yeraa. He tells them they need to find the Moon Pool, and that they should seek *Zaarani's solitaire* in the upper chambers of Six Kings. Succeeding at such a task should prove their worth to the other goblins once and for all. They can do so once Yeraa and her seekers depart through the obelisk portal.

Quest XP: 175 XP (minor quest) if the characters acquire *Zaarani's solitaire*.

INTERLUDE: INTO SIX KINGS

The cave mouth opens into a dark passage descending steeply as it follows a northward path inside the mountain. (Refer to the southern central section of the Six Kings overview map on page 17 of *Adventure Book One*.) After about 80 feet, the tunnel dead-ends; two massive rubble falls have resulted from the collapse of the ceiling. Yeraa knows that the area the goblins and the PCs seek lies beyond the westernmost rubble pile, which can be cleared with an hour's work. After the characters and their allies have opened the passage and moved

through the narrow tunnel heading west, continue by reading:

A cavern opens up beyond the corridor, veins of purple byeshk ore gleaming in its walls. To the northwest, you can see another narrow passage partly blocked by rubble but still passable.

"An ancient tomb lies this way," says Yeraa, pointing in that direction. "Within stands the obelisk portal my seekers shall use to go deeper into the Six Kings' vaults. You'll go your own way from there, so we can all get home more quickly."

ENCOUNTER 15: WARRIORS' TOMB

Encounter Level 4 (898 XP)

SETUP

1 hobgoblin shadow skeleton (S)

3 hobgoblin skeletons (H)

8 decrepit goblin skeletons (G)

The corridor leading north from the cavern connects with an ancient chamber of worked stone.

When the PCs enter the chamber, read:

A rough-floored tunnel gives way to a large chamber. You stand among the rubble of its collapsed southeastern corner. The walls of this place are smooth dark stone, the ceiling arching 30 feet overhead. At the center of the chamber stands a six-sided obelisk. Dusty runes mark the structure's sloping sides, its top rising to within 10 feet of the ceiling. Around it stand four other open hexagonal structures—broken and looted communal sarcophagi, judging from the bones and other remains littering the floor around them.

Yeraa is eager to use the obelisk, but she wants to check it out first. Give the PCs a chance to upstage her by discovering information about the obelisk. Either at Tikulti's urging or on her own initiative, Yeraa will step aside so that the characters can interact with the structure first.

If the PCs don't quickly warm to the task, Yeraa and Govaan approach the obelisk. She soon calls her seekers to her. Yeraa then prepares to use it.

THE OBELISK

Worn runes scribing Goblin words cover this slope-sided 20-foot-tall obelisk (Athletics DC 10 to climb it; Acrobatics DC 10 to stand atop it). The words describe great battles fought against foulspawn in these caverns.

If the characters examine the obelisk, they can learn certain facts about it by succeeding on skill checks as described below. If the PCs don't undertake the

examination, you can have Yeraa dispense any or all of this information as you see fit.

Arcana DC 15: The obelisk is a magic portal, seeping necrotic energy from the other side. Only goblins can use it (as can Tikulti, because of his false blood amulet; see *Adventure Book One*, page 26).

Perception DC 10: Examining the obelisk for a minute reveals a series of pictograms that show goblins using it to teleport deeper under the mountain and arriving in a room that holds another obelisk.

Religion DC 10: The other side of the portal is tainted with necrotic energy. The release of necrotic energy when the portal is activated could be dangerous on this side of the portal as well.

When Yeraa uses the portal, read:

Yeraa steps close to the obelisk and says, "Saa'atcha!" The weathered runes flare with a dull gray light. "Watch yourselves..." the goblin leader has time to bark; then she and all the Kech Volaar disappear in a blinding pulse of white. At the same time, shadow pools across the floor of the chamber. Skeletal remains here and there assemble quickly and rise.

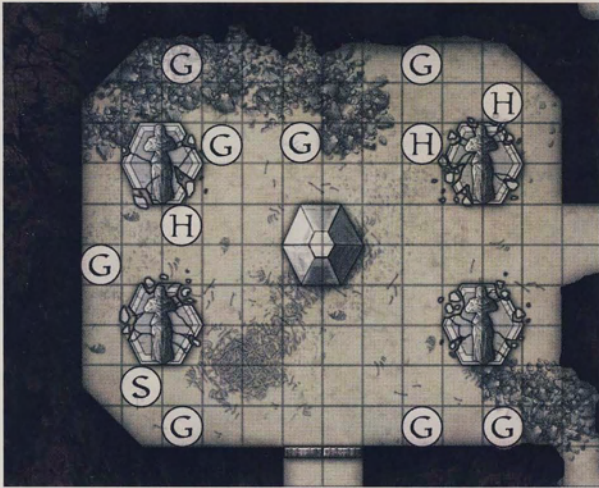
"Saa'atcha" means "Honored to meet you" in Goblin. If the PCs succeeded on the Religion check (or otherwise gained that information), they aren't surprised by the rise of the undead. Otherwise, they are surprised. See "Tactics," below, and proceed with combat.

TACTICS

The decrepit goblin skeletons mob the closest PCs, staying close to take advantage of their *foul strength*. Similarly, the hobgoblin skeletons wade into the thick of melee.

The hobgoblin shadow skeleton stays on the edge of the battle to hurl *black orbs* at the strongest-looking melee combatants, falling back on its *shadow claw* only if pressed.

All the skeletons fight until destroyed.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Bones and Rubble: The squares of bones (southwest of the obelisk) and rubble (in the northwest and southeast) are difficult terrain. Yeraa isn't keen on searching the room—she wants to activate the obelisk and get on with her mission. If the PCs insist on searching the area before the obelisk is triggered, 10 minutes of time and one successful DC 10 Perception check per “H” on the tactical map (a total of three) is enough to uncover the hobgoblin skeletons' equipment. If the PCs collect any of this gear before the obelisk triggers, the affected skeletons take a -2 penalty to AC and use the following attack in place of their scimitar attack.

④ Claw (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin skeleton's next turn; see also *speed of the dead*.

Shattered Sarcophagi: Each of these upright group caskets once held six bodies of legendary warriors that fell in Dhakaan's doomed fight against the daelkyr. With their doors smashed open and their contents looted centuries ago, they stand now as flat roofs set atop pillars of stone at their corners.

Each sarcophagus is 10 feet tall (Athletics DC 10 to climb), open on all sides, and cover terrain. Its squares are difficult terrain.

DEVELOPMENT

The obelisk transported the goblins to an identical chamber deeper within the mountain. The obelisk's twin at that location no longer has the power to return the Wordbearers here.

After the battle, through the *sending stone*, Yeraa reports to the PCs that the goblins were unharmed after teleporting to a similar tomb. There, they fought a few ghouls and found an area tainted with dark energy.

Hobgoblin Shadow Skeleton (S)

Level 5 Artillery

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 200

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +4; darkvision

Black Aura (Necrotic) aura 1; when any creature starts its turn within the aura, it takes 5 necrotic damage.

HP 53; Bloodied 26

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 15

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

④ Shadow Claw (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

+10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 1 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

⑤ Black Orb (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

Ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 13 (+3)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 15 (+4)

Con 17 (+5)

Int 4 (-1)

Cha 6 (+0)

3 Hobgoblin Skeletons (H)

Level 3 Soldier

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 150 each

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +3; darkvision

HP 45; Bloodied 22

AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 5

④ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon

+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage (crit 1d8 + 10), and the target is marked until the end of the hobgoblin skeleton's next turn; see also *speed of the dead*.

Speed of the Dead

When making an opportunity attack, a hobgoblin skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 15 (+3)

Dex 17 (+4)

Wis 14 (+3)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 3 (-3)

Cha 3 (-3)

Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, scimitar

8 Decrepit Goblin Skeletons (G)

Level 2 Minion

Small natural animate (undead)

XP 31 each

Initiative +3

Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13

Immune disease, poison

Speed 6

④ Claw (standard; at-will)

+7 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Foul Strength

A decrepit goblin skeleton gains a +2 power bonus to all defenses while at least two other decrepit goblin skeletons are within 5 squares of it.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages —

Str 15 (+2)

Dex 17 (+3)

Wis 14 (+2)

Con 13 (+1)

Int 3 (-4)

Cha 3 (-4)

ENCOUNTER 16: SHATTERED HALL

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

SETUP

2 force specters (F)
1 wraith (W)
Shadowseed hazard (S)

This ruined chamber is home to ancient evil and a deadly hazard. The specters lurk invisibly in the upper chamber, attacking the first character who moves more than 20 feet away from the northern doors. Do not place their miniatures until they are spotted or they attack.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

A wide hall opens into a partially collapsed chamber, its southern extent buried beneath rubble. To the southwest, you glimpse an area with worked stone walls. The crumbling of this chamber revealed another level below. The floors and walls of the upper level are stained black as if by fire. A half-dozen dusty skeletons are strewn across the floor.

Perception Check

DC 10: *In some places, the dark stain on the floor and walls ripples like black water.*

DC 12: *In the lower portion of this chamber to the southwest, a shadowy creature is apparently lurking.*

The bodies in this chamber are those of hobgoblin warriors who foolishly sought to test themselves against the spirits of Six Kings. The bones have no effect on movement or combat.

TACTICS

The specters use their *spectral force* power to drive PCs into an area of the shadowseed hazard. If possible, they push targets over the edge of the sheer slope to the southwest, where the wraith lurks in wait. They make *spectral touch* attacks while waiting for *spectral force* to recharge, flanking to gain combat advantage if possible.

The wraith initially stays in the lower southwest portion of the chamber in the hope that prey drops in. If no character has moved into the lower area before the wraith takes its turn on round 3, it soars to the upper level to join the specters in melee. It follows any character who subsequently goes over the edge. It makes *shadow touch* attacks against a PC already wounded by the specters, hoping for a quick kill. If bloodied, it uses *shadow glide* to flee to the lower level to regenerate.

2 Force Specters (F)

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 3 Lurker

XP 150 each

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +5; darkvision
Spectral Chill (Cold) aura 1; an enemy within the aura takes a -2 penalty to all defenses.

HP 26; Bloodied 13

AC 15; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;

Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing

⊕ Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

+6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage.

↔ Spectral Force (standard; recharge ⓧ ⓧ) ♦ Force

Close burst 2; targets enemies; +6 vs. Will; 2d6 + 4 force damage, and the target slides 1 square.

Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion

The force specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +9

Str 10 (+1)

Dex 16 (+4)

Wis 8 (+0)

Con 13 (+2)

Int 6 (-1)

Cha 14 (+3)

Wraith (W)

Medium shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 5 Lurker

XP 200

Initiative +10 Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 37; Bloodied 18

Regeneration 5 (if the wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of the wraith's next turn)

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;

Vulnerable 5 radiant (see also *regeneration* above)

Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also *shadow glide*

⊕ Shadow Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic

+8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).

Combat Advantage ♦ Necrotic

A wraith deals 1d6 extra necrotic damage against any target granting combat advantage to it.

Shadow Glide (move; encounter)

The wraith shifts 6 squares.

Spawn Wraith

Any humanoid killed by a wraith rises as a free-willed wraith at the start of its creator's next turn, appearing in the space where it died (or in the nearest unoccupied space). Raising the slain creature (using the Raise Dead ritual) does not destroy the spawned wraith.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Common

Skills Stealth +11

Str 4 (-1)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 13 (+3)

Int 6 (+0)

Cha 15 (+4)

Shadowseed Hazard

Level 3 Elite Obstacle
XP 300

Remote caverns and ancient ruins steeped in necrotic energy are the domain of shadowseed, a growth that appears as a shadowy film clinging to earth and stone. When disturbed by living creatures, shadowseed releases a burst of necrotic energy.

Hazard: Shadowseed fills a square but does not interfere with movement. When disturbed, it releases a cloud of necrotic shadow.

Perception

- ◆ DC 10: The character notices that what appears to be a dark stain is slowly rippling.

Additional Skill: Dungeoneering or Religion

- ◆ DC 12: The character identifies the shifting darkness as a patch of hazardous terrain.

Trigger

When a living creature enters a square of shadowseed, the growth erupts into a cloud of necrotic darkness. A bloodied character in the initial burst or a bloodied character who begins his or her turn in a shadowseed cloud is subject to attack.

Attack

Standard Action	Close burst 1
-----------------	---------------

Target: Bloodied living creature in burst

Attack: +6 vs. Fortitude

Hit: 3d10 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Effect: The cloud lightly obscures a square, but undead ignore this effect. The cloud persists until the end of the encounter. A patch of shadowseed can release one such cloud every 24 hours.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character can move into a square of shadowseed without triggering the cloud by making a DC 12 Dungeoneering check. The character's move must end in the shadowseed's square.
- ◆ A square of shadowseed (but not an existing cloud of necrotic shadow) is neutralized for 1 round if it is exposed to any radiant damage.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.

Ceiling: The ceiling of the upper area is 15 feet high. The rough ceiling of the southwest chamber is 35 feet high. The ceiling of the tunnel leading east (see “Eastern Passage,” below) is 10 feet high.

Shadowseed: The stone in the squares marked with an “S” appears to be stained or shadowed. Each indicated space is filled with shadowseed.

Cliff: This steep slope drops 20 feet (Athletics DC 10 to climb) from east to west, separating the northeast and southwest parts of the chamber.

As indicated on the map, three squares along the bottom of the cliff are filled with shadowseed. A character who falls down the cliff has a 50% chance of landing in a shadowseed square.

Rubble: Loose rock lines the crumbling edge of the upper chamber, and the lower chamber is filled with the rubble of its collapsed ceiling. These squares are difficult terrain. A character who runs through the rubble must make a DC 12 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

Corridors: The narrow passages leading west and south away from the lower chamber are completely blocked after only a few feet and are impassable.

Treasure: A search of the lower chamber turns up a +1 *terror dagger* (see PH 236; level 4 magic item).

EASTERN PASSAGE

The passage that leads east isn't immediately apparent, but a quick search by a character adjacent to the eastern cliff reveals it. The tunnel appears as a cleft along the floor and wall of the upper chamber. The tunnel immediately drops 30 feet (Athletics DC 10 to climb), then levels out in a rough-floored fault passage leading to encounter 17. This tunnel passes beneath the north-south tunnel that the characters and the goblins used to gain access to this underground complex. (See the Six Kings overview map on page 17 of *Adventure Book One*.)



ENCOUNTER 17: STONE GHOSTS

Encounter Level 4 (975 XP)

SETUP

- 1 deathgaunt madcaster (M)
- 1 deathgaunt lasher (D)
- 3 goblin phantoms (G)

A goblin phantom lurks in the tunnel that leads away from encounter 16. If the phantom's Perception check (+15) beats the PCs' Stealth check (or if the PCs approach bearing a light source), the phantom moves closer to investigate.

If the goblin phantom notices the PCs, read:

A dozen strides ahead, a faint light rises, then forms into the shimmering figure of an armored, blade-wielding goblin in the passageway. The creature hisses at you, its face twisting to a skeletal leer as its flesh peels away.

If the PCs manage to approach the phantom without being noticed, they get the drop on it and can take a surprise round. In either case, the spirit forgoes attacking to phase into the ground and make a double move, emerging in the cavern ahead to warn the other creatures of the PCs' approach.

If the PCs attack the phantom, read:

With a hiss, the phantom dives into the floor and is gone.

The rough-floored fault passage ends in a sheer 10-foot cliff (DC 12 Athletics to climb). When the PCs can see into the cavern, show the players the illustration "Stone Ghosts" (see Adventure Book One, page 30).

When the PCs enter the cavern, read:

The irregularly shaped cavern ahead of you is a blaze of color. The steady drip of water is audible, coming from somewhere nearby. Gleaming veins of purple streak the walls, and the cavern's floor and ceiling feature stalactites and stalagmites. Within those tapering stone columns, a grim scene presents itself. Like an image seen through fog, goblin bodies are trapped within murky crystal, their hands outstretched and their dead eyes wide with horror.

Veins of byeshk ore give this damp cavern its distinctive purple sheen. The goblins slain here during the daelkyr incursion had the horror of their death imprinted into the stone by lingering magic. The steady drip of moisture built a forest of stalactites and stalagmites to hold those ghastly images. A DC 10 Arcana check or Dungeoneering check confirms that the images, although they might be unsettling, are otherwise harmless.

A deathgaunt madcaster (formerly a great hobgoblin mage) maintains watch over this onetime outpost. He and his followers attack from cover as soon as two or more PCs move away from the base of the cliff into the cavern.

Deathgaunt Madcaster (M)	Level 6 Controller
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)	XP 250
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +8; darkvision
Xoriat's Shadow (Psychic) aura 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 psychic damage and a -2 penalty to all checks and rolls until the start of its next turn. If the deathgaunt madcaster takes radiant damage, its aura is negated until the end of its next turn.	
HP 68; Bloodied 43	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 19	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant (see also Xoriat's shadow)	
Speed 8	
⊕ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.	
⊕ Push over the Edge (standard; recharge [3][3]) ⊕ Necrotic, Psychic	
Reach 2; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target moves its speed and makes a basic attack against a target of the deathgaunt madcaster's choice as a free action.	
✂ Flying Fangs (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Ranged 5; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the deathgaunt madcaster's next turn.	
Reanimate (minor; encounter) ⊕ Healing	
Targets one destroyed undead creature within 10 squares and of a level no higher than the deathgaunt madcaster's level. The target regains 15 hit points and stands as a free action.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 16 (+6) Wis 10 (+3)
Con 12 (+4)	Int 8 (+2) Cha 19 (+7)

Deathgaunt Lasher (D)	Level 5 Soldier
Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)	XP 200
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +2; darkvision
HP 63; Bloodied 31	
AC 21; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Speed 8	
⊕ Tentacle (standard; at will)	
Reach 3; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the deathgaunt lasher's next turn.	
⊕ Tentacle Lash (standard; at will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Reach 3; targets a creature marked by the deathgaunt lasher; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed and marked until the end of the lasher's next turn.	
⊕ Deathgaunt Kiss (standard; at-will) ⊕ Necrotic	
Targets a dazed, stunned, or unconscious creature; +12 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage.	
Marked Threatening Reach	
A deathgaunt lasher can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares) that it has marked.	
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 10 (+2)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 8 (+1) Cha 15 (+4)

3 Goblin Phantoms (G) Level 4 Skirmisher

Small shadow humanoid (undead)

XP 175 each

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +13; darkvision

HP 36; Bloodied 18

AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 17

Immune disease, poison; Resist insubstantial

Speed fly 6; phasing

⚔ **Phantom Weapon** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage.

Combat Advantage

A goblin phantom deals 1d8 extra necrotic damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The goblin phantom shifts 1 square.

Phantom Tactics

If a target has an ally of the goblin phantom adjacent to it, the goblin phantom has combat advantage against that target.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Goblin

Str 12 (+3)

Dex 14 (+4)

Wis 11 (+2)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 17 (+5)

TACTICS

The madcaster uses the stalagmites as cover, avoiding the water while it targets the PCs with *flying fangs*. If a PC is dazed, the madcaster chooses a new target and the lasher and the phantoms attack. The madcaster uses *push over the edge* to send a melee combatant back against his own allies. It saves its *reanimate* power to use on the lasher if it is destroyed.

The lasher moves into melee and attacks the strongest-looking PC, or a target that is dazed. It aims to keep more than one foe marked and to use its *deathgaunt kiss* as often as possible.

The goblin phantoms stay in the thick of melee, fighting close to one another to maintain combat advantage. They phase through stalagmites to gain cover, as well as to take advantage of unusual angles of attack.

All these guardians fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.

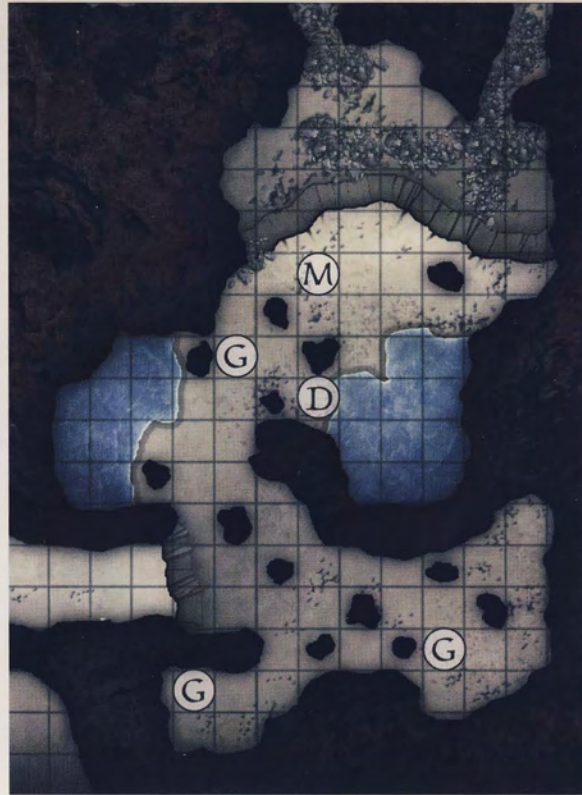
Ceiling: 30 feet high.

Cliff: This steep slope drops 20 feet (Athletics DC 12 to climb) from south to north, separating the northern and southern areas of the chamber. The cliff can be cover terrain.

Rubble: These squares of loose rock and gravel in the elevated northern area are difficult terrain.

Stalagmites: Tapering stone columns rise from the floor of the cavern in all the squares where dark blotches are present. These features are cover terrain.

Water: The dripping water that produced the stone formations in this area pools 6 inches deep to the east and west. These areas are not difficult terrain, but the brackish water conceals loose rock and small fissures. Any creature that traverses more than 2 squares of water in a single



move must make a successful DC 10 Acrobatics check or fall prone.

THE WAY NORTH

Two rubble-choked exits lead away from the lower section of the cavern; both of them have the same destination. Each of the passages is blocked by a 5-foot-high fall of rubble. Only one creature can work within one of these narrow tunnels at a time, but either fall can be easily cleared with 10 minutes of work. When the characters are halfway through the process of clearing the rubble (from one or both passages), the sound of combat is heard from ahead.

When the PCs finish making a path for themselves, turn to encounter 18. Provide the first piece of readaloud text in the "Setup" section of that encounter, and then continue with the action.

ENCOUNTER 18: BARRACKS BRAWL

Encounter Level 4 (875 XP)

SETUP

- 1 goblin ghost boss (B)
- 2 goblin phantoms (G)
- 3 dolgrim warriors (W)

Ghostly goblins, the spirits of warriors slain here millennia before, protect this area. As the PCs enter, these guardians are engaged in battle with a pack of dolgrim scouts that have entered from the north.

The PCs begin this encounter having already heard the sounds of combat in the aftermath of encounter 17. They receive fewer XP for the encounter (875 instead of 1,050) because the monsters also fight one another, instead of just the PCs.

When the PCs hear combat, read:

From the passageway ahead comes the sound of distant combat. The clash of weapons rings out over shrieks, some in Goblin, others in a guttural tongue.

A PC who is fluent in Deep Speech recognizes the dolgrims' battle cries.

When the PCs can see the area, read:

This huge chamber appears to have once been a barracks. Bones and debris are scattered across the floor, as are the rotted remains of what might once have been furnishings and weapons. Rotted purple draperies hang at intervals, some of them obscuring a number of stone benches. In the center of this chamber, a group of ghostly goblins engages in melee with a trio of hideously deformed creatures that have four arms and two mouths on their goblinlike bodies.

Roll initiative and see "Tactics" below.

When the PCs can see the western doors, read:

Bands of rusted iron seal these stone double doors. The massive mummified corpse of a creature that looks like a flayed ape with huge hands stands before the doors. A dusty spear is rammed through the corpse and into the crack between the doors.

TACTICS

The monsters are interested in killing each other initially, but they might also engage the PCs as soon as the heroes enter the fray. During the battle, the goblins and the dolgrims attack their monstrous enemies or the PCs; neither group of monsters acts as allies against or with the characters. The goblins make opportunity attacks against the PCs or the dolgrims as the situation allows, and likewise the dolgrims make opportunity attacks against the goblins or the characters.

The goblin spirits fight to maintain combat advantage—either through flanking or *phantom tactics*. The ghost boss uses *superior goblin tactics* to keep his warriors on the move. These spirits fight until destroyed.

The dolgrims also maneuver for combat advantage, breaking up their *double actions* to attack after gaining a good position. They shift with *dolgrim tactics* to avoid opportunity attacks. Once they are all bloodied or one of them dies, the dolgrims retreat through the north exit (see Northern Passage in "Features of the Area").

Goblin Ghost Boss (B) Level 4 Controller (Leader)
Small shadow humanoid (undead) XP 175

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 38; **Bloodied** 19
AC 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 18
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Speed fly 6; phasing
⊕ **Ghost Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage.
⊕ **Ghost Mash** (standard; recharge [2]); ♦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 6 damage, and the target slides 1 square.
Miss: An ally adjacent to the target can make a melee basic attack against the target as a free action.
Superior Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin ghost boss and up to two allies within its line of sight shift 1 square.

Phantom Tactics

If a target has an ally of the goblin ghost boss adjacent to it, the goblin phantom has combat advantage against that target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Skills Stealth +9, Thievery +9
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)
Con 15 (+4) **Int** 11 (+2) **Cha** 18 (+6)

2 Goblin Phantoms (G) Level 4 Skirmisher
Small shadow humanoid (undead) XP 175 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +13; darkvision
HP 36; **Bloodied** 18
AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** insubstantial
Speed fly 6; phasing
⊕ **Phantom Weapon** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 2 necrotic damage.
Combat Advantage
The goblin phantom deals 1d8 extra necrotic damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)
The goblin phantom shifts 1 square.

Phantom Tactics

If a target has an ally of the goblin phantom adjacent to it, the goblin phantom has combat advantage against that target.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin
Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 11 (+2)
Con 12 (+3) **Int** 10 (+2) **Cha** 17 (+5)

3 Dolgrim Warriors (W)

Small aberrant humanoid

Level 4 Skirmisher

XP 175 each

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +3; low-light vision

HP 53; Bloodied 26

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16

Vulnerable 5 psychic

Saving Throws +2 against charm and fear effects

Speed 6

④ **Club** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

⑤ **Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage.

Double Actions

A dolgrim warrior rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different brain. A dolgrim warrior's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.

Dolgrim Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The dolgrim warrior shifts 1 square.

Combat Advantage

A dolgrim warrior deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Deep Speech, Goblin**Str** 17 (+5)**Dex** 15 (+4)**Wis** 13 (+3)**Con** 13 (+3)**Int** 9 (+1)**Cha** 9 (+1)**Equipment** light shield, club, crossbow with 20 bolts

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The dolgrim warriors fight with torches in hand. The chamber is otherwise dark.

Ceiling: 30 feet high.

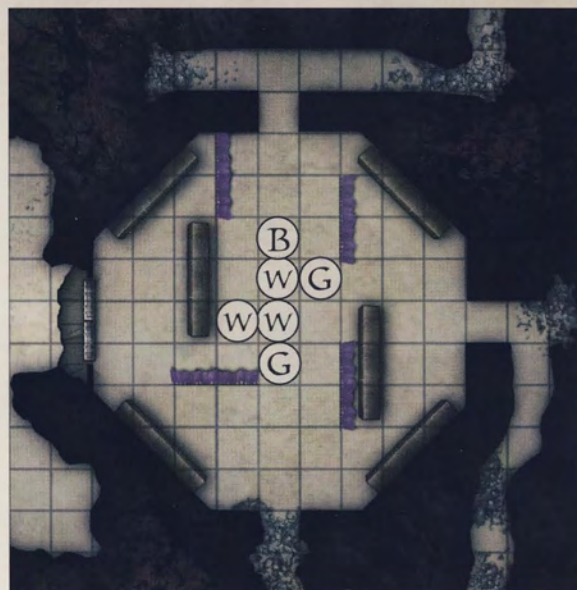
Benches: It takes 1 extra square of movement to step up on or step over one of these low stone benches.

Draperies: These rotted canvas draperies are so threadbare that they provide only concealment. They can be torn down as a free action or moved through without penalty. However, a creature that is not insubstantial and moves through the draperies collapses them to dust, and must make a DC 15 Endurance check or be dazed by a bout of choking and sneezing until the start of its next turn.

Northern Passage: The exit to the north includes a collapsed tunnel through which the dolgrims entered this area. The corridor leading west is solidly blocked after only a few feet. The narrow opening to the east is wide enough for Small creatures only to squeeze through. This tunnel leads to foulspawn realms deep beneath the Graywall Mountains that are not part of this adventure (see "Northeast Cavern," in the next encounter, for more information).

Western Doors: A spear wedged in the door impales a dolgarr corpse and can be pulled out with a DC 12 Strength check. When the spear is removed (see "Treasure," below), the corpse falls to the floor.

It takes a DC 15 Strength check to rend the rusted iron bands and open the stone doors. A character who suc-



ENCOUNTER 18: BARRACKS BRAWL

ceeds on a DC 15 Thievery check can identify a weak spot, granting a +2 bonus to the Strength check.

Beyond the doors is a steep 10-foot drop into an irregularly shaped area (see the Six Kings overview map on page 17 of *Adventure Book One*). The characters must traverse this chamber and the one to the northwest before arriving at the site of encounter 19.

Treasure: Some of the wealth of the warriors and explorers who died here over the centuries is scattered about the room. A search reveals a bone battle horn filigreed with gold (100 gp) hanging on the wall, and a broken game case and board on the floor. Scattered around the board are 20 bloodstone playing pieces (10 gp each) and 25 gp.

The spear in the western door appears aged until it is pulled out of the door and the dust falls from it, whereupon it gleams with a dark hue. It is a +2 vicious spear (see PH 236; level 7 magic item).

WHO ATTACKS WHOM?

The monsters in this area are not friendly to one another—a fact you can use to your advantage when you determine how this encounter will play out.

As the default condition, a goblin is just as likely to attack a dolgrim as it is to attack a character, and similarly a dolgrim might attack a goblin instead of a PC if it has a choice between the two kinds of targets. To reflect the randomness of this situation, you can roll a die to see whether a monster attacks a different monster or a character.

Conversely, if the battle turns against the PCs or if they seem to be having too easy a time of it, you can pick a monster's target with an eye toward leveling the playing field. (You can also decide that the dolgrims fight to the death instead of fleeing, if doing so adds an appropriate amount of drama and uncertainty to the battle.)

ENCOUNTER 19: FOULSPAWN SCOUTS

Encounter Level 4 (975 XP)

SETUP

- 1 dolgaunt (D)
- 3 dolgrim warriors (W)
- 1 dolgarr berserker (B)

A foulspawn patrol has just entered this area. The PCs approach through the deserted caves to the southwest.

As the PCs enter the southwest part of this area, read:

The cavern ahead is bisected by a rubble-strewn bluff. From beyond the downslope comes the flicker of torchlight and the echo of harsh voices.

When the PCs can see into the area northeast of the slope, read:

Below the slope, the cavern opens northeast to a narrow fault passage and northwest to a set of open double doors. Prowling the darkness ahead are two deformed creatures like those you encountered earlier. With them is an enormous hulking foulspawn, its flesh glistening pink as though its skin has been flayed away.

Any PCs approaching the edge of the slope can make Stealth checks against the creatures' passive Perception scores (13 for the dolgrims and 16 for the dolgarr; the dolgaunt has a score of 19 but doesn't alert its comrades if it spots intruders). If the PCs attack before they are detected, they gain surprise against unaware foulspawn. PCs who approach while bearing a light source are automatically spotted.

The dolgaunt and one dolgrim start the encounter out of sight in the chamber to the northwest. Do not place their miniatures until they are spotted or they attack.

TACTICS

The dolgrims stay in constant motion, flanking for combat advantage. They count on *dolgrim tactics* to avoid opportunity attacks, and they confuse foes by splitting up their actions. For instance, a dolgrim might move into position on its first turn in a round and wait to attack on its second turn, after an ally flanks its foe.

The dolgarr wades into the PCs, following up *meaty fist* with *foe-hurler* against PCs trying to stay out of melee. It focuses the extra attacks from *berserk rage* on a foe that damaged it or, hoping for a quick kill, a wounded enemy within reach. If any PCs remain on the upper side of the slope when combat begins (or if any return there), the dolgarr climbs after them—and throws them down to its allies.

Moving stealthily and hoping to gain surprise, the dolgaunt slips through the doorway to make tentacle attacks and use its *vitality drain* power.

Dolgaunt (D)	Level 5 Controller
Medium aberrant humanoid (blind)	XP 200
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +9; blindsight 20
HP 61 Bloodied 30	
AC 19; Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 17	
Speed 7	
⊕ Fist (standard; at will)	
+10 vs. AC; 2d4 + 4 damage.	
⊕ Tentacle (standard; at will)	
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage, and the target is slid 2 squares and grabbed.	
Grasping Tentacles	
A dolgaunt can grab with up to two tentacles at a time. While grabbing an enemy, the dolgaunt can't move more than 2 squares from that creature, and the dolgaunt can't use the grabbing tentacle to attack.	
Vitality Drain (standard; at-will) ♦ Healing	
The dolgaunt deals 5 damage to each target it has grabbed. It regains half that amount of hit points.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Skills Acrobatics +11, Stealth +11	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 11 (+2) Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment	potion of healing

3 Dolgrim Warriors (W)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Small aberrant humanoid	XP 175 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3; low-light vision
HP 53; Bloodied 26	
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 16	
Vulnerable 5 psychic	
Saving Throws +2 against charm and fear effects	
Speed 6	
⊕ Club (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.	
⊕ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 1 damage.	
Double Actions	
A dolgrim warrior rolls initiative twice, gets two turns during a round, and has a full set of actions (standard, move, minor) on each turn. Each set of actions corresponds to a different brain. A dolgrim warrior's ability to take immediate actions refreshes on each of its turns.	
Dolgrim Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	
The dolgrim warrior shifts 1 square.	
Combat Advantage	
A dolgrim warrior deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature granting combat advantage to it.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Deep Speech, Goblin
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 9 (+1) Cha 9 (+1)
Equipment	light shield, club, crossbow with 20 bolts

Dolgarr Berserker (B)

Large aberrant humanoid

Level 6 Brute

XP 250

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +6; low-light vision

HP 86; Bloodied 43

AC 18; Fortitude 19, Reflex 16, Will 17

Immune fear

Speed 6

④ **Club** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 5 damage.

† **Meaty Fist** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 7 damage.

† **Foe-Hurler** (standard; recharge ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐)

Reach 2; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 damage, and the dolgarr berserker pushes the target 3 squares and knocks it prone; the berserker slams the target to the ground and then throws the target at another creature, making a secondary attack against an enemy adjacent to the primary target after the push. *Secondary Attack*: +7 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 5 damage.

† **Berserk Rage** (free, when first bloodied; encounter)

The dolgarr berserker gains 5 temporary hit points and makes a club attack and a *meaty fist* attack.

Alignment Evil

Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Str 20 (+8)

Dex 14 (+5)

Wis 16 (+6)

Con 16 (+6)

Int 7 (+1)

Cha 9 (+2)

Equipment club

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The dolgrim warriors fight with torches in hand. The rest of the chamber is dark.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Rubble: These squares of loose rock and gravel are difficult terrain.

Cliffs: A slope drops 10 feet (Athletics DC 12 to climb) from the southwestern side of the chamber to the eastern section. A 20-foot slope (Athletics DC 15 to climb) drops down to the northeast beyond the door on the northeast wall. Either slope can act as cover terrain.

Doors: The stone doors giving access to the northwest chamber are open and can act as cover terrain. The single door on the northeast wall opens to reveal a steep slope leading down to the area of encounter 20. Beyond the double doors on the western wall, a staircase slopes gently down toward the area of encounter 21.

Treasure: The dolgaunt has a *potion of healing*. (If it drinks the potion, replace the item with 50 gp worth of treasure or another consumable.)

RESTING PLACE

Rotted tapestries on the finished walls of the chamber to the northwest show signs of it having been private quarters once, but it holds only scatterings of rubble now. All the doors adjoining this area can be barred from the inside. Once this area is cleared out, the northwest chamber makes a good location for the party to take an extended rest, either now or after a later encounter.

DEVELOPMENT

If the characters open the door on the northeast wall and indicate their intention to proceed down the slope that lies beyond, turn to encounter 20 and provide the first piece of readaloud text.

NORTHEAST CAVERN

If the characters follow the narrow passage leading east, they discover that the tunnel widens into a small chamber and then dead-ends at a dark fissure clogged with rubble. This fissure, if it could be cleared out, would lead down to foulspawn realms deep beneath the Graywall Mountains. These areas are not part of this adventure.

The PCs see maddening foulspawn symbols on the walls of the small chamber, which function as a warning to anyone who succeeds on a DC 10 Dungeoneering check. If the PCs are intent on clearing a path for themselves and exploring these desolate caverns, they eventually run into more and more dangerous aberrant creatures and undead, and they should come to realize they're off track.

If the characters make it necessary to do so, you can use the aberrant and undead creatures in this adventure to construct your own encounters, which should be level 3 or higher. Or, if you want to discourage this line of thinking, you can arrange for the PCs to see an aberrant creature many levels higher than they are—one that is clearly too powerful for them and whose notice they can avoid only by backtracking.



ENCOUNTER 20: BURNING VENGEANCE

Encounter Level 4 (975 XP)

SETUP

1 goblin flame vent haunt (H)

2 goblin fire phantoms (G)

1 fire bat (B)

Flame vent trap (F)

This cavern was once the nexus of a number of underground passages, and the site of more than one fierce battle. Long ago, goblin warcasters opened a flame vent trap here to slow invading foulspawn. Use the illustration "Burning Vengeance" (see *Adventure Book One*, page 30) to aid your description.

When the PCs open the door that leads to this area, read:

A flight of stairs once descended 20 feet to a rough cavern beyond the door, but these have collapsed beneath a fall of rubble from the ceiling. Beyond this rocky slope, the rough stone walls are blackened as if by fire, and patches of rust-colored moss dot the smooth stone floor.

A trio of ghostly goblins, killed by the flame vent trap long ago, protects this chamber. Forced to relive their death for thousands of years, the spirits' only desire is to treat the PCs to the same fate.

A fire bat also lairs here, drawn to the energy of the flame vent trap.

As the PCs enter the room, read:

The darkness ahead is briefly broken by a flickering light like that of a candle.

Perception Check

DC 12: *A ghostly figure of a goblin warrior appears, beckoning you to approach.* (Success on this check enables the Insight checks below.)

Insight Check

DC 12: *The ghostly goblin's face is a mask of pain and yearning, showing signs of a fiery death.*

DC 17: *Beneath that yearning, you sense a dark malevolence.*

Before it is activated, the flame vent trap gives off faint light that is discernible from any place in this room but does not provide enough illumination to see by.

The two goblin fire phantoms and the fire bat linger out of sight. Do not place their miniatures until they are spotted or they attack.

Goblin Flame Vent Haunt (H)

Small shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 6 Lurker

XP 250

Initiative +11

Senses Perception +8; darkvision

HP 39; Bloodied 19

AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 17

Immune disease, poison; Resist fire 5, insubstantial

Speed fly 6; phasing

⬆ **Fiery Death Touch** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Fire, Necrotic**
+10 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 fire and necrotic damage.

⬇ **Fiery Possession** (standard; recharge [⚡]) ⬆ **Charm, Fire, Necrotic**

Targets a living humanoid; +10 vs. Will; the goblin flame vent haunt enters the target's space and is removed from the map, and the target is dominated (save ends). The haunt can use this power against only one creature at a time. When its target is no longer dominated, or when the haunt chooses to end its *fiery possession* (a free action), it reappears in a square of its choice adjacent to the target. While dominated, the target takes 5 fire and necrotic damage at the start of each of its turns.

Trapbound

The goblin flame vent haunt cannot voluntarily move more than 5 squares from the flame vent trap. If it is forced beyond this range, it is weakened and unable to use its *fiery possession* power until it moves back within range.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Goblin

Str 10 (+3)

Dex 18 (+7)

Wis 11 (+3)

Con 14 (+5)

Int 11 (+3)

Cha 16 (+6)

2 Goblin Fire Phantoms (G)

Small shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 4 Skirmisher

XP 175 each

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +7; darkvision

HP 36; Bloodied 18

AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 17

Immune disease, poison; Resist fire 5, insubstantial

Speed 6, fly 6; phasing

⬆ **Phantom Weapon** (standard; at-will) ⬆ **Fire, Necrotic**
+8 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 3 fire and necrotic damage.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The goblin fire phantom shifts 1 square.

Phantom Tactics

If a target has an ally of the goblin fire phantom adjacent to it, the goblin fire phantom has combat advantage against that target.

Combat Advantage

A goblin fire phantom deals 1d8 extra fire and necrotic damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Goblin

Str 12 (+3)

Dex 15 (+4)

Wis 11 (+2)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 17 (+5)

Fire Bat (B) Level 5 Skirmisher

Medium elemental beast (fire) XP 200

Initiative +8 Senses Perception +8
 HP 60; Bloodied 30
 AC 20; Fortitude 15, Reflex 20, Will 13
 Resist 10 fire
 Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8; see also *fiery swoop*
 ⊕ **Fiery Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire
 +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).
 † **Fiery Swoop** (standard; at-will) ♦ Fire
 The fire bat shifts up to 4 squares and can move through occupied squares as it moves. It makes a melee basic attack against any creature whose space it enters. The fire bat cannot attack a target more than once on the same turn in this fashion, and it must end its movement in an unoccupied square.
 Alignment Unaligned Languages –
 Str 6 (+0) Dex 19 (+6) Wis 12 (+3)
 Con 12 (+3) Int 2 (-2) Cha 7 (+0)

Flame Vent (F) Level 4 Blaster

Trap XP 175

Jets of white-hot fire shoot out from the ground.

Trap: The flame vent trap becomes active when triggered. Thereafter, it attacks every round on its initiative count.

Perception

♦ DC 10: Before moving within 2 squares of the trap, the character realizes that the flickering light comes from a wide crack in the floor.

Additional Skill: Nature or Dungeoneering

♦ DC 12: The character recognizes the danger of the flame vent trap before moving within 2 squares of it.

Initiative +3

Trigger

When a character moves within 2 squares of it, the flame vent trap makes its first attack as an immediate reaction. It then rolls initiative, attacking each round.

Attack

Standard Action Close burst 3

Target: Each creature in burst

Attack: +9 vs. Reflex

Hit: 2d6 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).

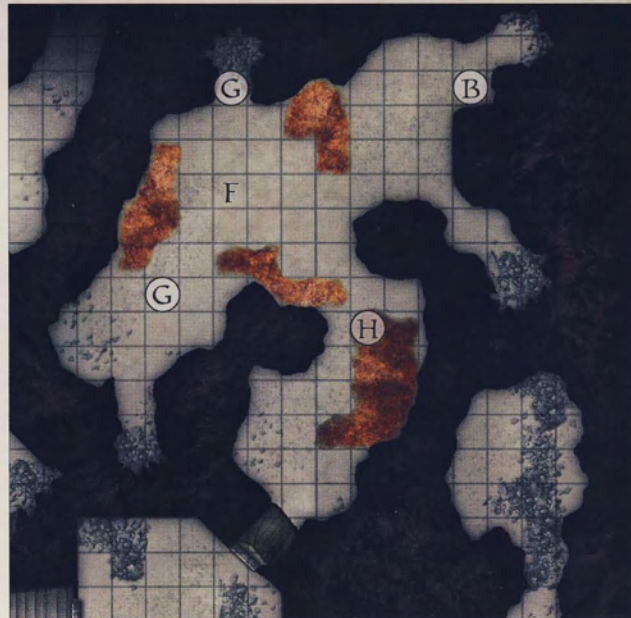
Miss: Half damage.

Countermeasures

♦ A character within the burst can minimize the damage of the flame vent trap with a DC 15 Acrobatics check made as an immediate interrupt before the trap's attack. With a successful check, the character takes half damage if the trap hits and no damage if it misses.

TACTICS

After beckoning, the goblin haunt slips around the corner to the west, then phases through the cavern walls to appear behind the PCs and attack. Once it has dominated a target with *fiery possession*, the haunt forces the PC to move toward the flame vent trap. (A dominated character is not entitled to make skill checks to avoid or lessen the danger of the trap.) When a possessed PC takes damage from the flame vent trap's fiery burst, the haunt ends its possession and seeks another target.



ENCOUNTER 20: BURNING VENGEANCE

The goblin fire phantoms enter the fray alongside the haunt, maneuvering to gain combat advantage. If other PCs attempt to pull a possessed comrade out of the area of the trap, the phantoms try to hem them in so that all are targeted by the trap's attack.

The fire bat is stirred from its rest only when the flame vent trap first activates. It uses *fiery swoop* to attack before ending its move within the area of the flame vent trap, which it does not fear.

The undead fight until destroyed. If the fire bat is reduced to 10 hit points or fewer, it attempts to escape up the slope and through the door to the southwest.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark (except for the faint flickering given off by the flame vent trap before it activates).

Ceiling: 25 feet high.

Rubble Slope: The squares of this rocky slope are difficult terrain.

Southeastern Tunnel: A collapsed passage leading to the southeast contains gaps in the rubble large enough for a Medium creature to squeeze through. This tunnel leads to empty caverns that are not part of this adventure.

Ember Moss: Patches of this rust-colored moss dot the interior of the cavern. Ember moss is highly flammable. A character in a square that contains ember moss takes 5 extra damage from all fire attacks and a -4 penalty to saving throws to end ongoing fire damage.

A character who succeeds on a DC 12 Dungeoneering check or a DC 10 Nature check identifies the substance as ember moss and realizes that it is flammable but does not know its exact effect on a creature that stands in it.

Blocked Tunnels: Truncated passages that lead to the south and north away from this chamber are entirely clogged with rubble and are impassable.

ENCOUNTER 21: LOST CLAN

Encounter Level 4 (964 XP)

SETUP

- 1 deep goblin curser (C)
- 3 deep goblin stoneblades (S)
- 6 deep goblin wretches (G)

Within the deeper caverns of Six Kings, lost tribes of goblins fight on under the banners of long-dead lords. One such clan—made up of pale creatures that have never seen the sun's light or breathed the air of the surface world—occupies this cavern.

When the PCs move west away from the staircase, read:

A wide, slow-flowing river divides the cavern you are in from another chamber to the west.

Unless the PCs approach with stealth and in total darkness, a deep goblin wretch sentry notices them.

When any character comes within 2 squares of the river, read:

On the opposite shore, a pale goblin in filthy skins crouches at the edge of the water.

If the sentry notices the PCs, read:

When it sees you, the creature hisses, drawing a pair of stone knives from its belt as it fades back into darkness.

If the sentry does not notice the PCs, read:

The goblin turns and heads away from the water, continuing to patrol and not aware of your presence.

If the PCs were unnoticed and all of them manage to cross the river in 1 round, place the goblins along the back walls in the two upper chambers. If the PCs were noticed or if they take more time to cross the river, the goblins move into defensive positions as indicated on the tactical map. The stoneblades make Stealth checks to hide, taking cover behind the boulders. Do not place their miniatures until they are spotted or they attack.

TACTICS

The deep goblin curser uses *caveroot curse* on the strongest-looking PCs, reserving *rage rot curse* for foes who engage the stoneblades. If pressed into melee, it attacks with its stone mace, but it scrambles back out of direct contact with attackers as quickly as possible.

The goblin stoneblades wait to engage the first PCs across the water. They flank to gain combat advantage

whenever possible, reserving *stoneblade storm* until they are flanked or hemmed in.

The wretches rain arrows down on the PCs for as long as possible, hoping to push them back across the river. If the PCs make it up the cliff, the goblins enter melee and attempt to flank to gain combat advantage.

STANDING DOWN

The goblins fight to the death as long as the goblin curser commands them. If the curser is killed, a character who succeeds on a DC 12 Insight or Perception check notes that the remaining goblins fight less fiercely—they attack only in response to PC attacks and do not press the battle. If the PCs break off hostilities for 1 round or more, a DC 17 Diplomacy check convinces the surviving goblins to stand down and grant the PCs free passage through their territory.

If hostilities cease, the goblins share their history (see Southern Cavern Walls, below). If the PCs mention their search for the Moon Pool, the goblins inform them that it lies beyond the rubble wall to the north, and that dangerous and foul creatures are found there.

If the goblins do not stand down, the last two survivors try to reach the northern passage and clear away the rubble in a last-ditch attempt to escape with their lives. (This act is meant to serve as a clue to the PCs that an unexplored area lies beyond the rubble.)

Deep Goblin Curser (C)	Level 4 Controller (Leader)
Small natural humanoid	XP 175
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +3; darkvision
HP 54; Bloodied 27	
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 17	
Speed 6, climb 6	
⊕ Stone Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the deep goblin curser's next turn.	
✂ Caveroot Curse (standard; at-will)	
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is restrained (save ends).	
✂ Rage Rot Curse (standard; recharge ⓈⓈ) ♦ Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Fortitude; the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls until the end of the curser's next turn and, if it attacks during its next turn, it takes 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage.	
✂ Incite Bravery (immediate reaction, when an ally uses goblin tactics; at-will)	
Ranged 10; the triggering ally can shift 2 more squares as a free action and make an attack as a free action.	
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)	
The deep goblin curser shifts 1 square.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Goblin
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +9	
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 9 (+1) Cha 18 (+6)
Equipment stone mace, 2 potions of healing	

3 Deep Goblin Stoneblades (S)**Level 4 Skirmisher**

Small natural humanoid

XP 175 each

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +10; darkvision

HP 52; Bloodied 26

AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 19, Will 16

Speed 6, climb 6

⚔ **Stone Blade** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.

⚔ **Mobile Melee Attack** (standard; at-will)

A goblin stoneblade can move up to half its speed and make one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The goblin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of this attack.

⚔ **Stoneblade Storm** (standard; requires two stone blades; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**

Close burst 1; the goblin stoneblade makes a melee basic attack against each enemy within the area.

Combat Advantage

A goblin stoneblade deals 1d6 extra damage against any creature that grants combat advantage to it.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The goblin stoneblade shifts 1 square.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +13

Str 14 (+4)

Dex 19 (+6)

Wis 16 (+5)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 10 (+2)

Equipment leather armor, 2 stone blades

6 Deep Goblin Wretches (G)**Level 4 Minion**

Small natural humanoid

XP 44 each

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +3; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 14

Speed 6, climb 6

⚔ **Stone Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 5 damage (6 damage if the deep goblin wretch has combat advantage against the target).

⚔ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 15/30; +8 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The deep goblin wretch shifts 1 square.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages Common, Goblin

Skills Stealth +12, Thievery +11

Str 15 (+4)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 12 (+3)

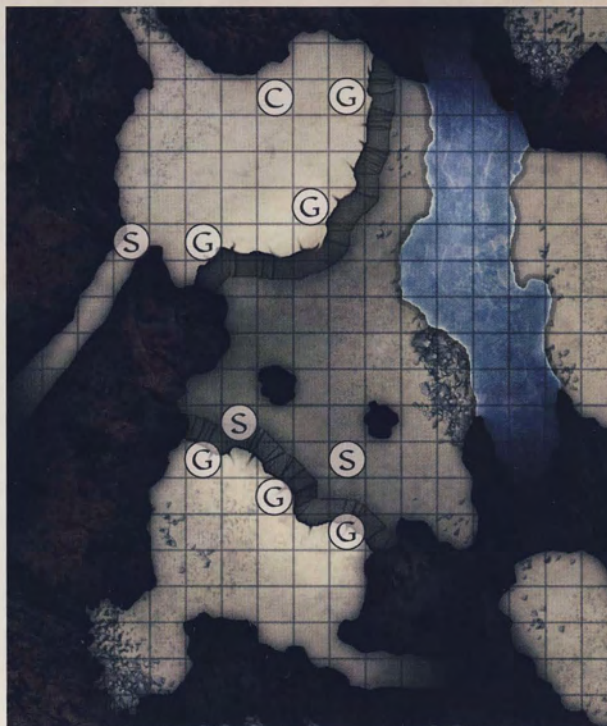
Con 13 (+3)

Int 8 (+1)

Cha 8 (+1)

Equipment stone dagger, shortbow with 10 arrows

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dark.**Ceiling:** 25 feet high in the lower cavern; 15 feet high in the upper caverns.**Boulders:** These 5-foot-tall rocks (Athletics DC 15 to climb) are cover terrain.**Cliffs:** These steep slopes rise 10 feet (Athletics DC 15 to climb), separating the lower central cavern from the caverns to north and south. A cliff can act as cover terrain.**Southern Cavern Walls:** Along these walls in the goblins' living space, the elders of the tribe have scratched their history. Anyone who is fluent in Goblin can read of

untold generations living hand-to-mouth on fish and cave vermin, all the while fighting occasional incursions by the hated foulspawn from the depths. The history tells of numerous tribes such as this one dwelling beneath the Graywalls—descendants of the warriors who fought the daelkyr five thousand years ago, and who have had no contact with the surface world in all the time since.

River: The squares of this slow-moving, 4-foot-deep river are difficult terrain. A character can swim the river with a DC 12 Athletics check.

Tunnels: The goblins enter and exit their territory through tunnels in both upper chambers. These narrow passageways lead to deeper goblin and foulspawn caverns that are not part of this adventure. The northern passage (see below) is an exception.

Waste Pile: The squares of this low mound of rotting waste, piled next to the stream, are difficult terrain. Any creature that moves into the waste must make a DC 12 Endurance check or become weakened until the end of its next turn.

Northern Passage: The narrow tunnel leading north has been filled with rubble by the goblins. It takes 20 minutes to clear the rubble.

Treasure: The deep goblin curser has a gold necklace with red garnets (100 gp) and 2 *potions of healing*. He also carries an ancient book with the Gentle Repose ritual in it. He has 30 gp worth of *residium* as well. If the curser uses a potion, replace the item with 50 gp worth of treasure.

ENCOUNTER 22: MOON POOL

Encounter Level 6 (1,395 XP)

SETUP

- 1 deathgaunt madcaster (M)
- 2 deathgaunt lashers (L)
- 1 deathgaunt drover (D)
- 2 deathgaunt spiners (S)
- 5 deathgaunt hordelings (H)

Beyond the passage leading north from the goblin caverns, a 20-foot drop (Athletics DC 15 to climb) leads to a damp cave. When the PCs emerge into the chamber in the northwest part of this area, show the illustration "Moon Pool" (see *Adventure Book One*, page 31).

The deathgaunt drover is out of sight and hidden when the PCs first enter. Place it only after it appears.

Then read:

You stand on a plateau above the floor of a wide cavern, looking out over a dimly lit chamber to the east. A small flight of stairs leads down on the far side of the chamber. In the center of the area beyond the stairs, a straight-edged, octagonal pool gives off pale silver light. A large group of undead creatures, all oblivious to your presence, is revealed in this bright illumination.

Perception Check

DC 12: A creature lingering by the far edge of the pool appears to be the leader of this foul crew. It occasionally speaks and sways, the others watching it closely like a rapt and macabre congregation.

DC 17: A gleaming golden gem hangs around the lead creature's neck.

The PCs can stay safely out of sight in the western chamber while they plan their final assault. The deathgaunts take no notice of their presence, but they attack at the first sign of any intrusion into the dimly lit central cavern.

TACTICS

The madcaster is the leader of the group. It and the lashers work together. As the madcaster directs its forces, it uses *flying fangs*. The lashers interpose themselves and attempt to block access along the west edge of the Moon Pool. The madcaster employs *push over the edge* against closing melee combatants.

The hordelings and the drover mob the PCs, flanking to gain combat advantage. They use their climb speed to scale the cliffs and move toward PCs on high ground, going up walls if necessary to surround their foes.

The spiners skulk atop the eastern cliff, hurling their attacks at intruders, starting with *death spine burst*. If forced to leave their position, they maneuver behind melee allies.

Deathgaunt Madcaster (M)

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)

Level 6 Controller

XP 250

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +8; darkvision

Xoriat's Shadow (Psychic) aura 2; each enemy that starts its turn within the aura takes 5 psychic damage and a -2 penalty to all checks and rolls until the start of its next turn. If the deathgaunt madcaster takes radiant damage, its aura is negated until the end of its next turn.

HP 68; Bloodied 43

AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 19

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant (see also *Xoriat's shadow*)

Speed 8

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

Reach 2; +11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage.

⚡ **Push over the Edge** (standard; recharge [3][3]) ♦ **Necrotic, Psychic**

Reach 2; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic and psychic damage, and the target moves its speed and makes a basic attack against a target of the deathgaunt madcaster's choice as a free action.

🦋 **Flying Fangs** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 5; +10 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of the deathgaunt madcaster's next turn.

🧛 **Reanimate** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Healing**

Targets one destroyed undead creature within 10 squares and of a level no higher than the deathgaunt madcaster's level. The target regains 15 hit points and stands as a free action.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Str 16 (+6)

Dex 16 (+6)

Wis 10 (+3)

Con 12 (+4)

Int 8 (+2)

Cha 19 (+7)

2 Deathgaunt Lashers (L)

Medium aberrant humanoid (undead)

Level 5 Soldier

XP 200 each

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 63; Bloodied 31

AC 21; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 8

⚔ **Tentacle** (standard; at will)

Reach 3; +12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the deathgaunt lasher's next turn.

⚡ **Tentacle Lash** (standard; at will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Reach 3; targets a creature marked by the deathgaunt lasher; +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 4 damage, and the target is dazed and marked until the end of the lasher's next turn.

⚡ **Deathgaunt Kiss** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Targets a dazed, stunned, or unconscious creature; +12 vs. AC; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage.

Marked Threatening Reach

A deathgaunt lasher can make opportunity attacks against all enemies within its reach (3 squares) that it has marked.

Alignment Chaotic evil

Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Str 12 (+3)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 15 (+4)

Int 8 (+1)

Cha 15 (+4)

Deathgaunt Drover (D) **Level 4 Skirmisher**

Small aberrant humanoid (undead)

XP 175

Initiative +8

Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 52; Bloodied 26

AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 8, climb 4

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.

⚔ **Dirty Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Targets a creature that grants combat advantage to the deathgaunt drover; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage, and the target loses a healing surge.

Dark Rending (standard; encounter)

The deathgaunt drover shifts 4 squares. At any point during that movement, it can make two melee attacks.

Horde Tactics (free, when the deathgaunt drover hits with a melee attack; at-will)

The deathgaunt drover shifts 1 square.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Skills Stealth +11

Str 15 (+4)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 6 (+0)

Con 12 (+3)

Int 8 (+1)

Cha 15 (+4)

2 Deathgaunt Spinners (S)**Level 4 Artillery**

Small aberrant humanoid (undead)

XP 175 each

Initiative +6

Senses Perception +7; darkvision

HP 45; Bloodied 22

AC 16; Fortitude 15, Reflex 18, Will 16

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

☠ **Death Spine** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 4 necrotic damage.

✱ **Death Spine Burst** (standard; recharge [1]) ♦ **Necrotic**

Area burst 1 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Skills Stealth +11

Str 10 (+2)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 15 (+4)

Int 8 (+1)

Cha 14 (+4)

5 Deathgaunt Hordelings (H)**Level 4 Minion**

Small aberrant humanoid (undead)

XP 44 each

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 15

Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic

Speed 8, climb 4

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+9 vs. AC; 7 damage.

Horde Tactics (free, when the deathgaunt hordeling hits with a melee attack; at-will)

The deathgaunt hordeling shifts 1 square.

Alignment Chaotic evil Languages Deep Speech, Goblin

Str 14 (+4)

Dex 17 (+5)

Wis 6 (+0)

Con 10 (+2)

Int 4 (-1)

Cha 12 (+3)

FRIENDS IN HIGH PLACES

The tunnel that leads northeast out of this area connects with the route that Yeraa's seekers have followed beneath Six Kings. The Wordbearers are meant to reappear after the characters defeat the monsters in this encounter. If the heroes are in trouble, however, the Kech Volaar might show up in time to help out. They could also be a source of rescue if the PCs all fall. Don't introduce the goblins in a way that requires you to play them for several rounds. Use them as a dramatic device to make the PCs grateful for their alliance, and to increase the emotional connection.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The glowing pool fills the eastern chamber with bright light and the central cavern with dim light. The western cavern is dark.

Ceiling: 10 feet high above the western cavern; 20 feet high above the central cavern and the small area to the northeast; 30 feet high above the pool chamber.

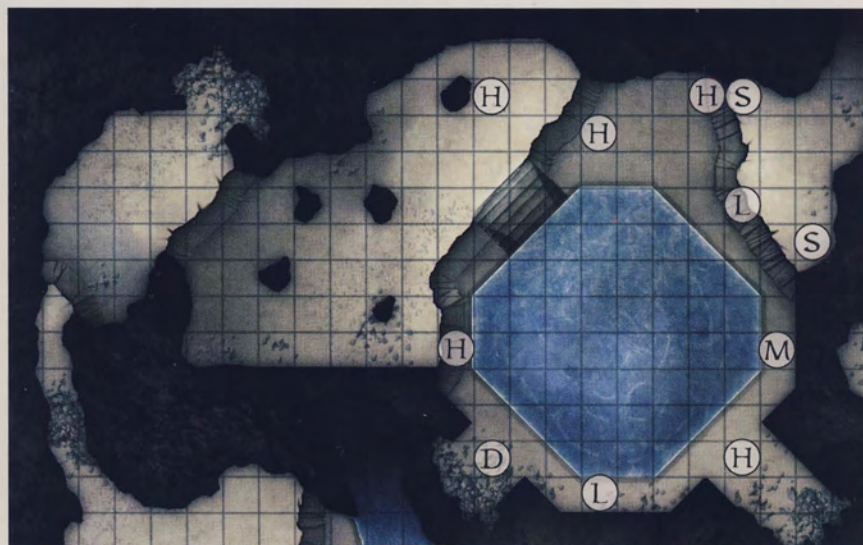
Cliffs: These slopes are 10 feet tall (Athletics DC 12 to climb), separating the different sections of the cavern. A cliff can act as cover terrain.

Pool: This water glows with residual magic. It is 2 feet deep, and its squares are difficult terrain.

Stairs: The squares of the cracked and crumbling stairs leading down to the pool are difficult terrain.

Stalagmites: These squares of tapering flowstone can act as cover terrain.

Treasure: The gem that the mad-caster wears is Zaarani's solitaire (see *Adventure Book One*, page 24). A search of the pool turns up 240 gp, a polished amethyst (100 gp), and a pair of fist-sized moonstones that are carved with intertwining patterns and glow slightly (250 gp each). The deathgaunts threw these valuables into the glowing pool as offerings.



INTERLUDE: REUNION

If the Kech Volaar don't enter the melee at the Moon Pool (see encounter 22), they appear in the northeast tunnel after the PCs have claimed the treasure and taken a short rest.

Like the PCs, Yeraa and her seekers have had a harrowing journey through the caverns beneath Six Kings. Although they were able to obtain a component of the *Ashen Crown* (*Lurtaan's cord*), the goblins were less than thorough in eliminating the foulspawn and the restless spirits that guarded it. As a result, retracing the PCs' route is the safer way out.

The journey out of the mountain is uneventful. If the PCs show *Zaarani's solitaire* to Yeraa, her reverence for the item is clear. Once both groups are outside, Yeraa orders the remaining seekers to scout ahead while she talks to the party. A DC 10 Insight check reveals to the PCs that Yeraa has something to say, but does not want to do so in front of her followers.

She has had a change in attitude. Once her followers are out of sight, Yeraa offers an apology for her earlier suspicion. She admits that the PCs have proved the truth of their convictions by demonstrating bravery in facing Six Kings and recovering *Zaarani's solitaire*.

Yeraa makes a formal declaration of alliance with the PCs, if she has not already done so. The town of Graywall, where the last piece of the Crown is hidden, is the Wordbearers' destination. Yeraa says the Kech Volaar would be honored to have the party travel at their side.

The Wordbearer leader joins the PCs for the next encounter, and she receives an equal share of the XP. Have Yeraa lend a hand if one of the PCs is in trouble, or put her into trouble so the PCs can intervene. Do whatever you can to increase the sense of trust and respect between the party and the Kech Volaar leader, so that the PCs feel it that much more sharply when Yeraa and the Wordbearers are bested in encounter 26 (see page 54).

ENCOUNTER 23: DEAD ENEMIES

Encounter Level 5 (1,039 XP)

SETUP

Chib Naersaar, bladebearer zombie (C)
4 hobgoblin zombies (H)
2 goblin zombie archers (G)
3 zombie rotters (Z)

Undead approach as the PCs finish up discussions with Yeraa. The PCs are within 3 squares of the cave entrance when the encounter starts.

As the monsters arrive, read:

From ahead comes a skittering of loose rock. Yeraa looks up, then quickly draws her sword with a snarl. Shambling up the path before you are five of the Kech Shaarat hobgoblins you fought earlier, their mutilated bodies risen as horrid zombies. In the forefront is the dead Bladebearer leader, a scimitar clutched tight in his bloody hands.

TACTICS

These zombies are simpleminded combatants. Naersaar uses *bladebearer stride* as often as possible, staying in constant motion in melee. The hobgoblin zombies attack in pairs, flanking to gain combat advantage and grabbing foes who move back for ranged attacks.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light by day; dim moonlight if the PCs arrive here after dark.

Boulders: These 5-foot-tall rocks (Athletics DC 10 to climb) are cover terrain.

Sheer Cliff: This cliff leads vertically up into the mountains for hundreds of feet.

Rubble: These squares of loose rock and gravel are difficult terrain.

AFTERMATH

The Emerald Claw is the obvious suspect for having raised the Kech Shaarat warriors as undead, but any search of the surrounding area shows no sign of the Claw's presence.

Yeraa is anxious to discover why her scouts didn't return, leading the party along a side trail running up and around a low peak. There, the PCs not only find the Kech Volaar well, but they make a surprising discovery.

A dilapidated airship floats moored to the cliff face by a tight web of ropes and lanyards. The name "Kordanga" graces its prow in faded black letters. The crew is a mix of humans, goblins, and hobgoblins, including a half-elf at the helm with the Mark of Storm on his forearm.

Yeraa is relieved to see that no harm has come to the seekers, but Tikulti reports that they and the crew drove off a Claw attack just minutes before. Although no lives were

lost, alchemist's fire arrows damaged two of the airship's struts. Yeraa tells the PCs that *Kordanga* has come from Graywall to pick them up. Now, that trip is delayed.

Delan, a taciturn House Lyrandar exile, leads the friendly twelve-person airship crew of *Kordanga*. The captain has worked for Yeraa and the Kech Volaar for about a year now. From the crew, the PCs learn that the lower decks contain the crew's quarters and the barracks for the Kech Volaar seekers and the PCs, converted from old cargo space.

It takes a day for the ship's crew to make repairs, during which time a character who succeeds on a DC 15 Insight check realizes that the Emerald Claw's tactics weren't designed to seize or destroy the ship, but to damage it. From that conclusion, the PCs might deduce that the Claw's purpose was not to prevent their journey to Graywall, but to delay it.

Behind the scenes, Demise has gone to Graywall to set a trap for the PCs, though she will be gone by the time they arrive. Either way, the party knows that Demise and her agents have not given up their search for the Crown.

Chib Naersaar, Level 4 Skirmisher

Bladebearer Zombie (C)

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 175

Initiative +6 Senses Perception +2; darkvision

HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also *zombie weakness*

AC 17; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 14

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 6

⊕ **Scimitar** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 + 13).

⊕ **Bladebearer Stride** (standard; requires a scimitar; recharge ☐ ☐)
♦ **Weapon**

Naersaar charges a target without provoking opportunity attacks for leaving the initial square. *Effect:* Naersaar shifts 1 square.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to Naersaar reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 17 (+5) Dex 15 (+4) Wis 10 (+2)

Con 14 (+4) Int 3 (-2) Cha 3 (-2)

4 Hobgoblin Zombies (H) Level 2 Brute

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 125 each

Initiative -1 Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 40; Bloodied 20; see also *zombie weakness*

AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant

Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.

⊕ **Zombie Grab** (standard; requires a free hand; at-will)
+4 vs. Reflex; the target is grabbed. Checks made to escape the hobgoblin zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.

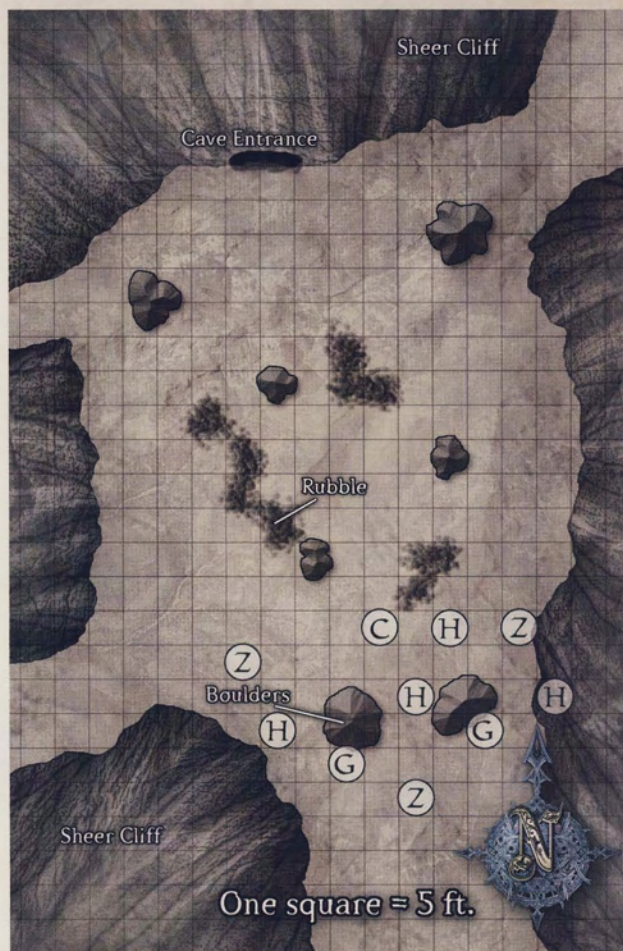
Zombie Weakness

A critical hit to a hobgoblin zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 17 (+3) Dex 6 (-1) Wis 8 (+0)

Con 10 (+1) Int 1 (-4) Cha 3 (-3)



2 Goblin Zombie Archers (G) Level 2 Artillery

Small natural animate (undead)

XP 125 each

Initiative +5 Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 31; Bloodied 15

AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 11

Speed 6

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.

⊕ **Shortbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.

Zombie Weakness

A critical hit to a goblin zombie shooter reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 14 (+3) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 8 (+0)

Con 13 (+2) Int 3 (-3) Cha 3 (-3)

Equipment leather armor, shortbow with 10 arrows

3 Zombie Rotters (Z) Level 3 Minion

Medium natural animate (undead)

XP 38 each

Initiative -1 Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10

Immune disease, poison

Speed 4

⊕ **Slam** (standard; at-will)
+6 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Alignment Unaligned Languages –

Str 14 (+3) Dex 6 (-1) Wis 8 (+0)

Con 10 (+1) Int 1 (-4) Cha 3 (-3)

INTERLUDE: GRAYWALL

An hour after Kordanga leaves the vicinity of Six Kings, Graywall comes into view.

You see a faint pall of smoke along the western horizon. At your side, one of the crew confirms that this is Graywall, about two hours out.

Approximately three hours after leaving Six Kings, after flying about 60 miles, Kordanga sails into Graywall.

Graywall passes below you, a sprawling mass of stone buildings and canvas workers' shelters obscured by the smoke of wood fires and furnaces. The wall that surrounds the town shows signs of recent and ongoing construction. To the west rise new buildings; to the east are great quarries where stone is cut. Ahead, your destination is the foreign quarter, called the Calabas—or, as the locals refer to it, "the Kennel."

Graywall has nothing resembling an airship dock, so Kordanga moors above the House Orien enclave in the foreign quarter, where Delan has allies. Further, the Graywall Orien enclave can't afford to turn away the Kech Volaar's business.

THE ORB

Either here or earlier on the airship, Yeraa tells the PCs of the final missing component of the Crown, and of the Wordbearers' plans for retrieving it.

"Dhakaani ruins are the deep foundations of Graywall, and it is there that our seers say Murkoorak's orb lies. Rumor and legend place it beneath what has become the Calabas. Now, the circlet will show us the way."

While Yeraa pinpoints the location of Murkoorak's orb within the foreign quarter, the PCs can accompany the Wordbearers as security. In any event, the characters have

some time to wander the foreign quarter (or any other part of the town) on their own if they wish.

Streetwise Check

DC 12: *Emerald Claw agents have been spotted in the foreign quarter in recent days (though the PCs see no sign of them).*

DC 17: *Demise was here for a time, but she teleported to Sharn a day ago by way of the Orien enclave.*

THE ROAR

Yeraa and her seekers trace Murkoorak's orb to an ancient goblin shrine located beneath the Roar—a huge open plaza within the Calabas.

For the better part of a day, you walk the foreign quarter with Yeraa and her best seekers, as the circlet allows her to subtly sense distance and direction to the orb. In the end, you find yourselves led to a great public plaza. This is the Roar, named for the House Tharashk dragonne statue at its center.

Show the players the illustration "The Roar" (see *Adventure Book One*, page 31).

Yeraa stops suddenly in a space between two tents. "This is it," she whispers, but when you look around, she taps her blade on the cobblestones. "Below. Two hundred feet or so. The orb is buried here."

Armed with this knowledge, the group returns to Kordanga, where Yeraa consults an old map that indicates that the orb's hiding place is an ancient goblin shrine now buried beneath the cobbles of the plaza. Claiming the orb should simply require digging down to it—in the center of one of the busiest parts of the town. Yeraa suggests setting up a fake merchant stall to cover the digging. Once the job is done, Kordanga, the PCs, and the Wordbearers can return to Sharn victorious.

ENCOUNTER 24: GOBLIN MARKET

Encounter Level 4 (875 XP)

The PCs and the Kech Volaar must find some way to conceal an archeological dig they are about to undertake in the middle of the Roar. By night, the plaza becomes the Goblin Market, a great bazaar where monstrous races and humanoids rub shoulders and nearly everything has a price. The noise and chaos of the market gives the PCs and the Wordbearers the cover they need.

This encounter is a skill challenge in which the PCs disguise and guard the goblin dig site over the course of a night. The default assumption is that the PCs use Yeraa's idea and set up a market stall over the site of the dig. However, if the PCs have other ideas, run with them. The only stipulation is that the seekers' activities be fully obscured, including covering up the noise of the dig and having some way to hide approximately 10 cubic feet of cobblestones and dirt. Simply shielding the site with walls on all sides and putting up a "Keep Out" sign will attract

the attention of House Tharashk. The PCs must create the impression that they belong in the market.

The choice of what kind of stall to set up is left to the players, and you should let them make those plans themselves. A party that has an abundance of treasure or mundane gear might decide to sell some of it off. PCs who came to town with cash on hand could resell relics or stolen goods obtained from the town's less savory quarters, after roleplaying those risky shopping expeditions.

The relatively small price of 10 gp obtains a stall tent with side walls and tables high enough to obscure the goblins' dig. Lay out the poster map and pick one of the larger enclosures in the market as the place where the Wordbearers and the PCs set up shop.

By arriving early, you lay claim to the spot Yeraa identified, quickly setting up your stall to obscure the dig site from all sides. The seekers already have the cobblestones pried up from the ground as other stalls begin to fill the space around you.

Midway through the skill challenge (after either 6 successes or 2 failures), the Wordbearers reach their first goal.

The Kech Volaar are experts at excavation, digging swiftly through six feet of gravel and dirt to find a cracked slab of blood-red stone. With pry bars and rock hammers, the seekers force an opening, revealing a five-foot-wide shaft heading directly down. The light of a shrouded lantern shows a rough rock wall laden with handholds and footholds.

Yeraa's plan is for the Wordbearers to descend while the PCs hide their activities by continuing the skill challenge. If any of the PCs are insistent on accompanying the Wordbearers down, Yeraa explains that the shrine below is a goblin holy site that might be warded against nongoblin intruders. She thinks it's less risky for her and her seekers to do the dirty work.

She points to the PCs' *sending stone* (or gives one to them if they returned hers earlier). With such an easy means of staying in contact, she has no fear of being ambushed below without access to help. Although Yeraa needs the circlet to find the orb, she does not object to leaving the cord with the characters for safekeeping if they insist she do so.

NIGHT IN THE MARKET

Giving the Wordbearers time to find the orb requires equal parts observation, distraction, and ingenuity.

Setup: The PCs must play the part of Graywall merchants while they keep unwanted attention away from the goblins' dig. Each round of the skill challenge represents about one-half hour of time. At your option, award a +2 bonus to checks on which the players effectively roleplay their interactions with customers, merchants, and the other folk of the Goblin Market.

Level: 4 (XP 875).

Complexity: 5 (12 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Athletics, Acrobatics, Bluff, Diplomacy.

Athletics (DC 11): Two characters engage in some entertaining demonstration of physical prowess to keep passersby distracted away from what's happening in the stall.

Two PCs can put on a demonstration of combat moves, with one character making the check while the other aids him or her.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge. No more than three Athletics checks can be attempted during the challenge.

Acrobatics (DC 11): The character uses the roar of the crowd to cover the goblins' hammers with a display of juggling, tumbling, or some other type of performance.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge. No more than three Acrobatics checks can be attempted during the challenge.

Bluff (DC 13): The character entertainingly inflates the history of wares being sold, invents a fanciful tale to charm or distract passersby, or diverts the attention of a customer who sees evidence of the dig.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge.

Diplomacy (DC 12): The character placates an angry merchant, sweet-talks a monstrous mercenary band looking for a fight, or stays on the good side of a passing Tharashk patrol.

This skill can be used to gain 1 success per round in this challenge.

Secondary Skills: Insight, Perception.

Insight or Perception (DC 12): By watching onlookers carefully, the character knows who among the crowd might be a potential problem, and how to approach that person to distract him or her.

Each successful Insight check or Perception check, grants a +2 bonus to the next primary skill check made in this challenge.

Success: The PCs manage to keep up their charade long enough for the Kech Volaar to successfully complete their mission in the hidden shrine below.

Failure: The PCs gain no experience points from this skill challenge, and their actions draw the hostile attention of a group of orc mercenaries. The orcs suspect that the PCs are hiding something valuable within the stall—something they plan to steal. These mercs know the market well, and they time their attack to coincide with the absence of any Tharashk patrols.

Level 4 Encounter (850 XP)

- ◆ 1 orc eye of Gruumsh (level 5 controller; MM 204)
- ◆ 2 orc berserkers (level 4 brute; MM 203)
- ◆ 2 orc raiders (level 3 skirmisher; MM 203)

To stage this encounter, cluster the PCs around the stall and put each orc in a square adjacent to at least one character. The mercenaries make melee attacks only, and they all flee as soon as any one of their number is bloodied.

INTERLUDE: EMERALD CLAW PLOTS

Demise and Tikulti have carefully planned to turn any successful search for the Ashen Crown to their advantage. While exploring the hidden shrine with the Kech Volaar, Tikulti uses a *sending stone* to keep in contact with a doppelganger Emerald Claw agent in Graywall. After the Kech Volaar find the orb, Tikulti smashes a vial of alchemical catalyst that activates a toxin he has been feeding the Kech Volaar for weeks. The reaction renders the Word-bearers unconscious, and Tikulti finishes them off. The

duplicitous doppelganger then uses a ritual scroll Demise gave him to raise the dead goblins as dreadclaws (Demise knows this ritual, which she might already have used on Gydd Nephret; see Encounter 30). Through his *sending stone*, Tikulti orders the Claw agent to take on Demise's appearance and close in on the party, and then he uses Yeraa's *sending stone* to contact the PCs to tell them of the goblins' success and imminent ascent. This is the moment when the next encounter begins.

ENCOUNTER 25: A HATED FACE

Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

SETUP

- 1 Claw doppelganger darkmage
- 3 Graywall gnoll mercenaries
- 2 filching wraiths

This encounter unfolds after the fight with the orcs (allow the PCs a short rest if they want one), or shortly after successful completion of the Night in the Market skill challenge.

When the encounter begins, read:

The crowd is thinning out as the Goblin Market begins to shut down. Then Tikulti's voice suddenly comes through the sending stone. "The orb is found and taken," he whispers. "We are making our way back now."

If the PCs ask, the doppelganger tells them there is no sign of danger belowground. If someone asks to speak to Yeraa or one of the other goblins, Tikulti acts the part (Insight DC 12 to hear something "wrong" with the goblin talking).

When the PCs finish speaking to Tikulti, read:

You spot a familiar face in the distance. Demise is here, in dark leather robes, watching you with a thin smile. Nearby, three gnolls dressed in scale armor cackle as they charge forward. Whispering, two small humanoid shadows flit from near Demise toward you.

This encounter uses the full poster map. Allow the players to place the PCs' miniatures within 2 squares of their stall. Place the doppelganger and the gnolls 10 or 12 squares away, preferably near the edge of the open plaza. The wraiths begin adjacent to the doppelganger.

Tharashk patrols in this area are in the process of changing shifts. As a result, the fight goes uninterrupted. Many of the stalls in the market are wholly or partially dismantled by this time, so that fighting space and line of sight are not hard to come by.

Claw Doppelganger Darkmage	Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)	XP 175
Initiative +2	Senses Perception +6
HP 42; Bloodied 21	
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 17	
Speed 6	
⚔ Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
⚡ Dark Blast (standard; at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 4 necrotic damage, or 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage against a target at full normal hit points.	
⚡ Cursebite (standard; encounter) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Close burst 20; targets cursed enemies; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage.	
Curse (minor 1/round; at-will)	
The Claw doppelganger darkmage curses the nearest noncursed enemy. The curse lasts until the end of the encounter. Once per round when the darkmage hits a cursed enemy, it can deal that enemy 1d6 extra damage.	
Darkmage Fanatic (when the Claw doppelganger darkmage drops to 0 hit points)	
The Claw doppelganger darkmage makes a basic attack.	
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	
A doppelganger can alter its physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see <i>Monster Manual</i> , page 280).	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Elven, Goblin
Skills Arcana +10, Intimidate +11	
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 10 (+2) Wis 9 (+1)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 16 (+5) Cha 18 (+6)
Equipment leather robes, mace, rod, 2 potions of healing	

TACTICS

The gnoll mercenaries charge and use *line sweep*. They then mix it up with the PCs, having orders to keep their foes occupied so the filching wraiths can do their work.

The Claw doppelganger darkmage hangs back, cursing and hurling *dark blast* at the PCs. She waits until she can strike multiple cursed targets before using *cursebite*. Whenever she can, she uses a market stall for cover.

3 Graywall Gnomer Mercenaries

Medium natural humanoid

Level 4 Soldier

XP 175 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +5; low-light vision**HP** 54; **Bloodied** 27**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16**Speed** 7

⚔ **Triple-Headed Flail** (standard; requires a flail; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+11 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Graywall gnomer mercenary's next turn.

⚔ **Marked Bite** (immediate interrupt, when an adjacent enemy marked by the Graywall gnomer mercenary shifts or attacks a target other than the gnomer; at-will)

+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the Graywall gnomer mercenary's next turn.

⚔ **Line Sweep** (standard; requires a flail; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**

Close burst 1; targets enemies; +9 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Graywall gnomer mercenary's next turn. *Special:* When charging, the gnomer can use this power in place of a melee basic attack.

Pack Attack

The Graywall gnomer mercenary deals 5 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against an enemy that has two or more of the gnomer's allies adjacent to it.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin**Skills** Intimidate +8**Str** 18 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 16 (+5)**Con** 14 (+4) **Int** 9 (+1) **Cha** 10 (+2)**Equipment** scale armor, light shield, triple-headed flail**2 Filching Wraiths**

Small shadow humanoid (undead)

Level 4 Lurker

XP 175 each

Initiative +10 **Senses** Perception +7; darkvision**HP** 30; **Bloodied** 15

Regeneration 5 (if the wraith takes radiant damage, regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15**Immune** disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic, insubstantial**Speed** fly 8 (hover); phasing

⚔ **Filching Touch** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+7 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage. If the wraith was invisible or hidden, the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) or the filching wraith can make a Thievery check to pickpocket the target (see PH 189). The wraith ignores the penalty for attempting to pickpocket in combat. If the target was unaware of the wraith's location when the attack occurred, the wraith receives a +2 bonus to the Thievery check.

Filcher's Jaunt (move; recharge ⏏ ⏏ ⏏)

The filching wraith becomes invisible until the end of its next turn or until it attacks, and it shifts 1 square.

Hide Away (minor; at-will) ♦ **Teleportation**

The filching wraith can teleport an object it's holding 5 squares to a place it knows or can see.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common**Skills** Stealth +11, Thievery +11 (see *filching touch*)**Str** 3 (-2) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 10 (+2)**Con** 13 (+3) **Int** 6 (+0) **Cha** 15 (+4)

While the PCs are fighting, Tikulti ascends the tunnel, drinks a *lesser elixir of invisibility* (see *Adventure Book One*, page 26), and spends 2 rounds moving to a predetermined spot (Perception DC 15 to hear him leaving the stall). As he does so, he uses *change shape* to take the form of a human that the filching wraiths and Claw doppelganger

darkmage recognize. He then lurks near the battle like a bystander. When all the *Crown* components are in Tikulti's possession (or when all his allies are dead), he quietly leaves the scene.

The filching wraiths use *filching touch* in attempts to pickpocket components away from the PCs. (One of the characters almost certainly carries the *blade*, and the *cord* and the *solitaire* are possibly also in their possession.) If a wraith succeeds, it uses *filcher's jaunt*, and then moves close enough to Tikulti to employ *hide away*. After teleporting a component to Tikulti, it moves back toward the PCs, or charges and attacks, before it becomes visible.

The darkmage is a devoted Emerald Claw agent, and she fights to the death. The wraiths are her servants and also fight until slain. If the doppelganger falls, bloodied gnomers can be made to surrender or flee if a PC succeeds on a DC 12 Intimidate check. The gnomers flee 1 round later either way.

DEVELOPMENT

Demise and Tikulti have planned the theft of the *Crown* components carefully. This scene is mostly about tension, however. Any losses the PCs suffer should be part of a fair fight. It doesn't matter if Tikulti manages to steal all the pieces, and it might even be better if he doesn't. For instance, the filching wraiths can't steal *Ashurta's blade* if one of the PCs is wielding it. But the other monsters might focus on that PC to knock him or her unconscious so the wraiths can take the blade.

The filching wraiths disappear into nothingness when slain, dropping any *Crown* pieces they still hold. If the characters check the slain "Demise," they find the doppelganger and her treasure.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light (daylight or lanterns).

Bystanders: Place a total of ten bystanders—a mix of Medium and Small humanoids—across the market in squares outside stalls. These bystanders ignore the fight. On initiative count 0, each moves up to 5 squares away from the battle toward the edge of the map. The bystanders are blocking terrain. A PC can get past one with a DC 12 Intimidate check (free action) or a DC 12 Acrobatics check (part of a move action).

Market Stalls: Any square containing part of a canvas stall is difficult terrain. Squares within a stall are difficult terrain and cannot be entered without a DC 12 Athletics or Acrobatics check. On a failed check, a stall's rigging temporarily entangles a character in the square he or she tried to leave, ending the movement.

Treasure: The doppelganger wears a fine platinum chain necklace (250 gp) and carries 33 gp. Among them, the gnomers have 87 gp. Add 50 gp of treasure for each *potion of healing* the doppelganger drinks.

ENCOUNTER 26: DARK BETRAYAL

Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

SETUP

Yeraa, dreadclaw darkliege
5 goblin dreadclaw reavers

This encounter commences soon after the previous fight. The PCs can take a short rest before this encounter if they want to.

When the encounter begins, read:

You hear scraping from behind the screen of your market stall, signaling the safe return of Yeraa and the other seekers. "Friends!" shouts Yeraa, her voice ragged. "We have returned." The Wordbearers emerge into your stall, clearly worse for the wear. They are stiff and ill at ease. The Dark Lantern agent, Tikulti, isn't with them.

The PCs can make Insight checks if the players suggest it. Otherwise, use their passive Insight scores.

Insight Check

DC 10 *Although the seekers wear the seeming of life, you see shredded flesh clinging to exposed bone. Oversized claws extend from their gnarled hands.*

DC 12: *The creature that looks like Yeraa is not as you remember her. Dark fire traces her twisted form. Noticing your piercing gaze, mocking laughter racks her and she attacks.*

PCs who fail the Insight check are surprised by the dreadclaws. This encounter uses the full poster map. The PCs' miniatures should be left close to their positions after the previous combat. Place the dreadclaws in and around the location of the PCs' stall.

TACTICS

Yeraa engages in melee, maximizing the effect of her *dread wrath* aura as she uses *terrifying splendor* to knock PCs prone for her allies. She prefers *dark howl* to claw attacks. Early in the battle, she uses Bluff and her *living seeming* to pretend to be under a curse or in some way compelled. If a target buys this tactic, she can attack with combat advantage.

The dreadclaw reavers make claw attacks against PCs knocked prone or dazed by the darkliege's attacks. Against other foes, they flank to gain combat advantage.

Though these creatures were once the Kech Volaar the PCs knew and trusted, the undead they have become are beyond saving. They mock and laugh at any attempts at communication as they fight to the death.

Yeraa, Dreadclaw Darkliege **Level 4 Controller**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 175

Initiative +5 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
Dread Wrath (Necrotic) aura 5; each creature within the aura that attacks Yeraa takes 5 necrotic damage before making the attack roll.

HP 55; **Bloodied** 27

AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 8

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

◀ **Dark Howl** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Close blast 2; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d4 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is dazed until the end of Yeraa's next turn.

◀ **Terrifying Splendor** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear, Necrotic**

Close blast 5; +6 vs. Will; 3d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is knocked prone.

Living Seeming ♦ **Illusion**

A dreadclaw darkliege appears as it did in life, usually as a Medium humanoid. A DC 17 Insight check pierces the illusion.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Bluff +11, Stealth +10

Str 15 (+4)

Dex 16 (+5)

Wis 9 (+1)

Con 15 (+4)

Int 10 (+2)

Cha 18 (+6)

5 Goblin Dreadclaw Reavers **Level 4 Skirmisher**
Small/Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 175 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +5; darkvision

HP 56; **Bloodied** 28

AC 18; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15; see *wrathful retribution*
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 8

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+9 vs. AC; 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the dreadclaw reaver shifts 2 squares.

Wrathful Retribution (when the dreadclaw reaver is hit by a melee attack on its turn) ♦ **Necrotic**

The attacker takes 5 necrotic damage.

Combat Advantage ♦ **Necrotic**

A dreadclaw reaver deals ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) on successful attacks against creatures that grant combat advantage to it.

Living Seeming ♦ **Illusion**

A dreadclaw reaver appears as it did in life. A DC 15 Insight check pierces the illusion.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Bluff +9, Stealth +11

Str 16 (+5)

Dex 18 (+6)

Wis 6 (+0)

Con 16 (+5)

Int 9 (+1)

Cha 15 (+4)

CONCLUSION

When the last dreadclaw falls, the PCs can readily identify the fallen as the former Wordbearers, all transformed into monsters. Tikulti grabbed the orb and the circlet after he killed the Wordbearers, but didn't take their other items before he set them on the PCs. If the characters

search the corpses, among their regular equipment, they find Yeraa's +2 *resounding bastard sword* (level 7 item), Govaan's +2 *leather armor* (level 6 item), Yeraa's journal, and 100 gp.

As soon as the PCs have assessed the situation and gathered what they wish, and perhaps taken a short rest, a House Tharashk patrol enters the market. The half-orc guards initially take a greater interest in property damage from the two brawls than they do in the dead. Unless the PCs are determined to hang around, they can slip away from the Roar before the guards come close.

YERAA'S JOURNAL

This well-worn, leather-bound book contains Yeraa's notes on her quest for the *Ashen Crown*. It also describes the failure of the first Wordbearer team (one survivor) in Ashurta's tomb, and the fact that "tomb robbers" stole *Ashurta's blade*.

Her later notes speak of the PCs. The records are poetic, describing persons and deeds, and likely to be flattering. Yeraa also records that she plans to learn and perform the Rite of *Arkantaash* in Ashurta's tomb, which is a holy site of ancient Dhakaan. The journal notes that Tikulti knows and approves of the choice to use Ashurta's tomb—he seemed pleased and thoughtful when Yeraa suggested it.

In the book, Yeraa records how she met Tikulti in Rhukaan Draal, the capital of Darguun. It's clear that she admires the knowledgeable and brave hobgoblin in more than a professional way.

Furthermore, Yeraa's book includes the names of her contacts in Sharn, Graywall, and Darguun. Prominent among them is a trusted advisor, the seer Huugan of Rhukaan Draal. She planned to carry the completed *Crown* back to him.

You can plant clues to further adventures of your own design in Yeraa's journal as desired.

INTERLUDE: BACK TO SHARN

The PCs can take whatever course of action they wish in the aftermath of the Wordbearers' transformation and the theft of the *Crown* components. However, they should eventually work their way back to the Orien enclave and *Kordanga*.

Delan and the Kech Volaar airship crew are shocked and horrified when they learn the fate of the seekers. Delan tells them that the enclave was buzzing not an hour ago about a teleportation to Sharn. That's a rare event in the "backwater" of Graywall, especially when one had already occurred so recently. One of the crew heard that it was a doppelganger who made the trip, suggesting that someone in the enclave knows more.

The PCs' desire to reclaim the stolen components of the *Crown* or to seek vengeance on Demise or Tikulti for the deaths of Yeraa and the seekers should see them quickly bound for Sharn, a little over a day away by airship. Delan offers the PCs the services of *Kordanga* to get them there (see encounter 27). The PCs can instead buy a Linked Portal ritual in the Orien enclave, for the normal fee of 50 gp. (If the PCs teleport, give them an extra level 8 magic item in a later encounter to replace the one they would have gotten in encounter 27.)

Streetwise DC 10: An hour or so of talking to people in the Orien enclave reveals that the teleportation customer was a doppelganger in black leather. He carried a bejeweled rapier.

Streetwise DC 15: If the PCs make inquiries about the earlier trip, they find that a thin female elf in Aereni garb, complete with funerary mask, teleported to Sharn a day before their arrival in Graywall. She traveled with a knight of the Order of the Emerald Claw.

A CALL TO REVENGE

Tikulti still has the *sending stone* formerly owned by Yeraa, and the PCs have its companion. If the PCs use their stone to try to contact Tikulti before he teleports to Sharn, he answers. If the PCs don't contact him, he eventually calls them.

If Tikulti does not have all the Crown components, he says:

"The endgame approaches, and you still have something I need. I'll take what I have to my comrades in Sharn. I think you've met my lady friend and her Karrnathi pawns? Anyway, play along and chase me if you have the guts. It should be interesting, at least, since I'll be able to talk to Kalaes first. I wonder which of us he'll believe in the end? I suppose you'll have to find me and force me to confess. That should be fun. Of course, you could just hand over the Crown pieces. We'll contact you when you get to Sharn."

If Tikulti has all the Crown components, he says:

"Sorry, friends, the game is ending. Looks like you lose. I would say score one for the Citadel, but they're losers too. Of course, Kalaes will be extremely upset at your betrayal. How could you do this to the Kech Volaar and the Brelish Crown? Listen, the way I see it, you're loose ends I can't afford to have hanging around. Besides, my lady friend and her Karrnathi pawns don't need you on their backs either. You know she prefers finality. Don't call us; we'll call you."

The clues here reveal that Tikulti is working with Demise and the Claw. If the players don't figure that out, their PCs might with a DC 12 History or Streetwise check. Tikulti is confident that the PCs have no chance against Demise and the Emerald Claw. In any case, he and Demise prefer their enemies dead. "Endgame," on page 19 of *Adventure Book One*, continues the story in Sharn.

ENCOUNTER 27: SKY ROBBERY

Encounter Level 4 (875 XP)

SETUP

1 blue dragon sky bandit (D)

After the PCs take to the air for their trip to Sharn, read:

You lift off into clear skies, quickly leaving the town of Graywall behind. You head east across the sprawling plains of the frontier toward the pass between the Graywall Mountains.

Delan plans to take Kordanga back to Darguun, but he's more than willing to help the PCs get back to Sharn. The skies become cloudier as Kordanga moves southeast.

Halfway through the journey, read:

You cruise just below the clouds, passing over the gloomy landscape that abuts the mountains. Suddenly a dragon plummets through the clouds, pulls up sharply, then hovers above the fore-castle deck. The crew panics and scatters.

"Give me what you carry—all valuables and food. That will be sufficient tribute for me to allow you to live," says the dragon. It snarls, and its mouth and horns dance with lightning as it lands on the deck.

When the dragon attacks, show the players the illustration "Death from Above" (see Adventure Book One, page 32). Airships are rare enough above the borderlands that this dragon has taken Kordanga for a rich merchant vessel or a diplomatic envoy laden with loot. It is youthful enough to consider securing such loot "fun."

KORDANGA

Delan puts Kordanga into an emergency dive in a futile attempt to shake off the dragon. It remains anchored to the deck, its sharp claws digging into the planks. The PCs must hang on through 3 rounds of near free-fall, then make DC 12 Acrobatics checks as the airship levels off. On a failed check, a character is knocked prone before combat begins.

Delan pulls out of the dive 30 feet above the ground, but he keeps the ship moving at twice its speed. Because the dragon can't fly as fast as the ship, it can spend no more than 1 round in the air without losing the momentum the ship grants it and being left behind. If the PCs can force the dragon to become airborne and keep it in the air for 2 consecutive rounds, it falls 20 squares behind, and the airship can safely escape the encounter. Award full XP no matter how the dragon's threat is overcome.

For the purpose of combat, consider the airship deck to be standing still while the ground rushes past at 40 squares per round. Characters who are forced over the

Blue Dragon Sky Bandit (D)	Level 4 Solo Artillery
Large natural magical beast (dragon)	XP 875
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +8; darkvision
HP 232; Bloodied 116; see also bloodied breath	
AC 21; Fortitude 19, Reflex 16, Will 16	
Resist 15 lightning	
Saving Throws +5	
Speed 8, fly 10 (hover), overland flight 15	
Action Points 2	
⚔ Gore (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning	
Reach 2; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 plus 1d6 lightning damage.	
⚔ Claw (standard; at-will)	
Reach 2; +8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
⚔ Draconic Fury (standard; at-will)	
The dragon makes a gore attack and two claw attacks.	
⚡ Breath Weapon (standard; recharge ⚡ ⚡) ⚡ Lightning	
The dragon targets up to three creatures with its lightning breath; the first target must be within 10 squares of the dragon, the second target within 10 squares of the first, and the third target within 10 squares of the second; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d12 + 4 lightning damage. Miss: Half damage. This attack does not provoke opportunity attacks.	
⚡ Bloodied Breath (free, when first bloodied; encounter) ⚡ Lightning	
Breath weapon recharges, and the dragon uses it.	
⚡ Frightful Presence (standard; encounter) ⚡ Fear	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +9 vs. Will; the target is stunned until the end of the dragon's next turn. Afterside: The target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).	
⚡ Lightning Burst (standard; at-will) ⚡ Lightning	
Area burst 2 within 20; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 3 lightning damage. Miss: Half damage.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic
Skills Athletics +16, Insight +8, Nature +8	
Str 20 (+7)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 18 (+6)	Int 12 (+3) Cha 13 (+2)

edge of the deck can make the normal saving throw to hang on.

Anyone who fails that saving throw can make a DC 12 Athletics check or Acrobatics check to grab a binding strut or the rigging hanging along the airship's hull. On a successful check, the character takes 1d10 damage, but can make a DC 12 Athletics check to climb back onto the deck in the following round.

A PC who falls takes 3d10 damage. The airship moves away at a speed of 40 squares per round, most likely taking that character out of combat even if he or she survives. Kordanga comes back after the battle to pick up those who were thrown overboard.

KORDANGA'S CREW

During the combat, Delan and the crew focus on keeping the vessel in the air and steady at its low altitude. Delan hopes to minimize damage and loss of life if the dragon forces a crash. The five crew members on duty don't fight the dragon—if the PCs had not been aboard, they probably

would have complied with the robbery demands. The other crew members in the hold prepare for the worst and stay below to avoid the dragon.

Feel free to have the dragon kill a few of *Kordanga's* crew to add tension to the scene. Treat them as minions. *Kordanga* can be flown by only five crew members, and you can give the PCs an opportunity to pitch in.

TACTICS

The dragon starts with *frightful presence*, then spends an action point to unleash its *breath weapon*. It uses its *draconic fury* against the closest PCs until its breath weapon recharges. When that happens, it uses its *breath weapon* against the characters that have dealt it the most damage. It then alternates *lightning burst* and *draconic fury* attacks while it waits for its *breath weapon* to recharge again. If the dragon is adjacent to a PC on the outside edge of the ship, it passes up its regular attack to bull rush the character over the edge.

The dragon does not voluntarily use its fly speed (because it doesn't want the ship to leave it behind). It can be forced into the air by a power that subjects it to forced movement. In such a case, it attempts to land on the ship again at the start of its next turn.

The dragon is smart enough to recognize that the PCs are the greatest threat, and it focuses its attacks on them. However, the creature has no great interest in dying. If reduced to 50 hit points or fewer, it takes to the air and flees the battle.

Kordanga, Kech Volaar Airship

Gargantuan vehicle

HP 600

AC 4; Fortitude 25, Reflex 2

Speed 0, fly 20 (hover), overland flight 25 (hover); If *Kordanga's* speed is reduced by 20 or more, the pilot must use every action on his or her turn to keep the ship from going out of control.

Pilot

The pilot stands at the control wheel, on the helm near the stern of the ship.

Crew

Kordanga requires a crew of five, in addition to the pilot. It normally carries 12 crew in addition to the pilot. Reduce speed by 4 for each crew member under the minimum five.

Load

Twenty-five Medium creatures; five tons of cargo.

Out of Control

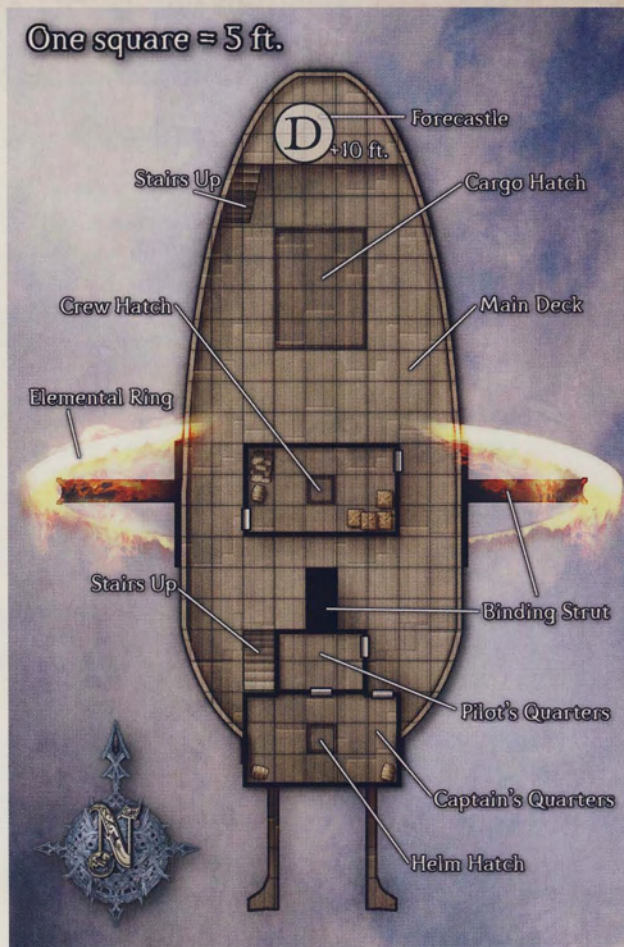
If forced to speed 0 by damage or loss of crew, or if without a pilot, *Kordanga* goes out of control. It moves forward at half speed, and it descends 5 squares per round. If it hits the ground after descending more than 20 squares, it is destroyed.

Decks

Kordanga has three decks. Topmost is the main deck that includes a forecastle, a central observation platform, and the aftcastle on which the helm sits. Under that is the crew deck, for passengers and crew. Below that is the cargo deck.

Fragile Propulsion

For every 30 damage *Kordanga* takes, it loses 1 square of speed.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight (bright) or moonlight (dim).

Binding Strut: Two great struts arch forward from the deck and the keel, and two others extend out from the sides of the hull. These buttresses house the bound elemental that propels the airship. The squares that protrude forward of the pilot's quarters are blocking terrain and can be cover terrain.

Cargo Hatch: This area is 3 feet above deck level. Moving onto it takes 2 squares of movement or a DC 10 Acrobatics or Athletics check.

Crew Hatch: This trapdoor covers a stair to the lower decks. It opens as a door, and the stairs leading from it are difficult terrain.

Elemental Ring: The ship's bound elemental forms this ring near the binding struts. Flames arc 25 feet above the deck and extend 20 feet from the hull. A creature that enters, or begins its turn in, a ring square takes 3d6 fire damage.

Pilot's Quarters: Delan steers the airship from this raised area 10 feet above the main deck.

Stairs: These steep staircases are difficult terrain.

Treasure: If the PCs kill or drive off the dragon. Delan gives them a prized level 8 magic item in thanks.

ENCOUNTER 28: SWARM REANIMATION

Encounter Level 5 (1,226 XP)

SETUP

Jaenus, Demise's apprentice (J)
2 Emerald Claw stalwarts (E)
2 kruthik young zombies (K)
3 weak kruthik zombies (Z)

The creatures here are expecting enemies, but they're also working to set up undead guardians.

When the PCs enter the tunnel area, read:

You follow the familiar tunnel leading to Ashurta's tomb until you see light emanating from the crypt's entry chamber. Ahead, you hear voices.

"We'll gather these animates to guard this entrance with you," says a raspy male voice. "Then I will rejoin Demise to prepare for the ritual."

"Aye, Jaenus," says another male voice.

The PCs can approach stealthily and try to surprise their enemies. If the characters carry a light source, the creatures here know they're coming automatically when they reach the edge of the tactical map. Otherwise, the PCs make it to just outside the tomb's antechamber before combat starts.

When the PCs can see their foes, read:

A willowy male elf with a stylized skull tattoo on his face stands among kruthiks that have oozing wounds on their bodies. He bears a rod of black bone. Two heavily armed and armored humans stand nearer your entry point, their tabards and shields marked with the symbol of the Emerald Claw.

The PCs should recognize Jaenus from meeting with him at Shava House. He attacks when he sees them.

TACTICS

Jaenus likes to use *bone dart* rather than engaging in melee. However, he moves forward to use *grave chill* as soon as he can hit two or more PCs without harming his allies. If a character marks Jaenus, the elf uses *draining touch*, then *mortal terror* on that foe. He uses *elven accuracy* to make a new *mortal terror* attack if he misses. If not marked, Jaenus shifts away from melee to use *bone dart*. He is no Emerald Claw fanatic, and is afraid enough of death that he uses *false life* when he becomes bloodied. He flees when reduced to 17 hit points or fewer. He withdraws toward other allies if possible, and escapes into one of the kruthik tunnels if he has no other choice.

The Emerald Claw stalwarts are a different story. They move into the fore of the battle, using *imposing smite*

on frontline melee combatants. They push their targets onto the skull pile if feasible. The knights then alternate broadsword and *craven smite* attacks against marked foes. If Jaenus flees, bloodied knights consider withdrawing to the east, toward the area of encounter 29. Otherwise, they fight until they fall.

At Jaenus's command (a free action at the start of combat), the kruthik zombies fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Dim light in the tunnel area; bright light in the chamber from white motes in the corners.

Ceiling: The initial passage has a rough ceiling that is 10 feet high. The chamber has a vaulted ceiling, 15 feet near the walls, 20 feet over the center of the room.

Alcoves: Each alcove is large enough for a Medium creature to occupy, but the bones make these squares difficult terrain. The alcove walls are blocking terrain.

Holes: The northeast and western kruthik tunnels create holes in the floor. Stepping into one of these ends a humanoid creature's move.

Pillars: Each circular pillar is 15 feet high (Athletics DC 17 to climb) and 4 feet wide and is cover terrain.

Rubble Pile: The rubble at the chamber's original entrance along the western wall is 5 feet high around the perimeter of the pile and 10 feet high in the two squares directly east of where the door used to be located. Each rubble square is difficult terrain and also requires a DC 12 Athletics or Acrobatics check to enter. A character who fails this check stops in the square he currently occupies.

Skull Pile: This pile of skulls slopes steeply to 10 feet high, and iron spikes hold the skulls in place. Anyone forced into or falling on the pile takes 1d6 damage. Entering a pile square requires a DC 9 Athletics check, and climbing to the top a DC 12 check; failure ends the creature's movement. A creature fighting from a pile square must succeed on a DC 12 Athletics check each turn or fall and take damage. Kruthiks are immune to these effects.

Stairs: The stairs are steep enough to be difficult terrain to those ascending them.

CONCLUSION

If they retreat, the villains stay in the area of encounter 29 long enough for PCs who pursue quickly to catch them there or in the passage. In any case, the villains don't come to the PCs. If the PCs rest, wounded bad guys each use a healing surge too. If Jaenus or the stalwarts warn Tikulti, he waits no more than 10 minutes before coming here to attack the PCs. He sends the stalwarts in first, so he can better use his skills. If allowed to do so, Jaenus withdraws to the area of encounter 30 when Tikulti goes to hunt the PCs.

Jaenus, Demise's Apprentice (J) **Level 6 Controller**
 Medium fey humanoid, elf XP 250

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +11; low-light vision
HP 69; **Bloodied** 34
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 19
Speed 7

Ⓢ **Draining Touch** (standard; at-will)
 +9 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 2 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude and Will until the end of Jaenus's next turn.

Ⓢ **Bone Dart** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
 Ranged 10; +10 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).

⚡ **Grave Chill** (standard; recharge Ⓢ Ⓢ Ⓢ) ♦ **Cold, Necrotic**
 Close blast 3; targets creatures; +9 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 necrotic and cold damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls (save ends).

⚡ **Mortal Terror** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear, Psychic**
 Close blast 10; targets one enemy; +10 vs. Will; 1d8 + 4 psychic damage, and the target moves its speed + 4 squares away from Jaenus.

Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)

Jaenus can reroll an attack roll, taking the second result.

False Life (minor, in the same turn after hitting with *bone dart*; encounter)

Jaenus gains 12 temporary hit points.

Wild Step

Jaenus ignores difficult terrain when shifting.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +11, Bluff +12, Religion +11

Str 10 (+3) **Dex** 12 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+4)

Con 13 (+4) **Int** 16 (+6) **Cha** 19 (+7)

Equipment robes, bone rod

2 Emerald Claw Stalwarts (E) **Level 5 Soldier**
 Medium natural humanoid, human XP 200 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +8

HP 62; **Bloodied** 31; see also *fanatic*

AC 22; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17

Speed 5

Ⓢ **Broadsword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 +12 vs. AC; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Emerald Claw stalwart's next turn.

Ⓢ **Craven Smite** (standard; requires a broadsword; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Weapon**
 +12 vs. AC; targets a creature marked by the Emerald Claw stalwart; 1d10 + 5 damage, and the target is slowed and takes 2 necrotic damage for each square it moves away from the Emerald Claw stalwart each turn (save ends both).

Ⓢ **Imposing Smite** (standard; requires a broadsword; encounter) ♦ **Weapon**
 +12 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 2 squares and knocked prone. The target can instead ignore these effects, but if it does, it grants combat advantage to all enemies until the end of the Emerald Claw stalwart's next turn.

Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw stalwart drops to 0 hit points; requires a broadsword) ♦ **Weapon**

The Emerald Claw stalwart makes a melee basic attack.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common,

Skills Intimidate +9, Religion +8

Str 18 (+6) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)

Con 14 (+4) **Int** 12 (+3) **Cha** 15 (+4)

Equipment plate armor, heavy shield, broadsword

2 Kruthik Young Zombies (K) **Level 5 Brute**
 Small natural animate (reptile, undead) XP 200 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2;
 darkvision, tremorsense 5

Gnashing Horde aura 1; when any enemy ends its turn within the aura, it takes 2 damage.

HP 75; **Bloodied** 37

AC 17; **Fortitude** 18, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15

Speed 6, burrow 1, climb 4

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
 +8 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage.

Ⓢ **Death Spiral** (when the kruthik young zombie drops to 0 hit points)
 The kruthik young zombie deals *gnashing horde* damage and makes a melee basic attack.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to the kruthik young zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 17 (+5)

Dex 15 (+4)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 15 (+4)

Int 1 (-3)

Cha 2 (-2)

3 Weak Kruthik Zombies (Z) **Level 4 Minion**
 Small natural animate (reptile, undead) XP 44 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +2;
 darkvision, tremorsense 5

Gnashing Horde aura 1; when any enemy ends its turn within the aura, it takes 2 damage.

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 16; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 14

Speed 6, climb 2

Ⓢ **Claw** (standard; at-will)
 +8 vs. AC; 5 damage.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 15 (+4)

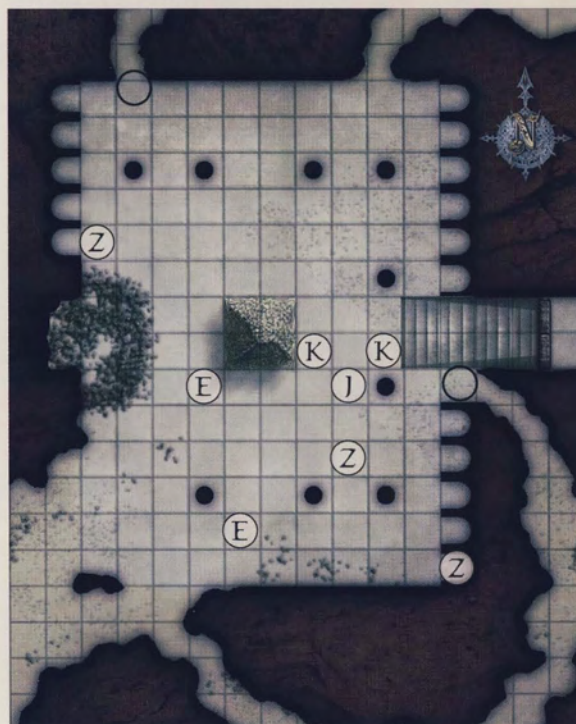
Dex 14 (+4)

Wis 10 (+2)

Con 13 (+3)

Int 1 (-3)

Cha 2 (-2)



ENCOUNTER 29: DARK LANTERN, INDEED

Encounter Level 6 (1,450 XP)

SETUP

Tikulti (T)

2 Emerald Claw stalwarts (E)

1 Emerald Claw fireblade assassin (F)

1 shadowskull (S)

Regardless of circumstances, the villains here heard the disturbance in the tomb entry. Unwilling to risk investigating, Tikulti, the tiefling, and the shadowskull are hidden (see below). The stalwarts stand in place, acting like oblivious guards.

Moving to this area quietly allows the characters to glimpse the layout before the battle. (The characters need no light in the passage to this room—magic light illuminates it.) The villains wait until the PCs enter the room to attack.

When the PCs approach the western doors, read:

The iron doors at the end of the stairway are open to the lit room beyond them.

When the PCs see the room, read:

This room is little changed since your last visit, except all the bones once in the alcoves are gone. The fiendish statue is lowered into the floor, leaving the passage to the inner tomb open. Two Emerald Claw knights flank that doorway.

If the PCs have line of sight to one or more of their hidden foes, use these Perception checks.

Perception Check

DC 12: A black skull floats silently in an alcove, shadows dancing around it like smoke.

DC 14: A sallow doppelganger with Tikulti's dark armor and rapier lurks in an alcove.

DC 16: A horned female humanoid with dark skin and darker leather armor skulks in an alcove, short flamelike blade drawn.

TACTICS

The Emerald Claw stalwarts fight much as the ones in the previous encounter did. If they act before the PCs, they step into the middle of the room and ready their attacks. During the ongoing fight, they keep the PCs off the shadowskull while providing flanking partners for Tikulti and the tiefling. Their job is to make sure the PCs perish, and they fight to the death.

Even if its initiative count is higher than that of the stalwarts, the shadowskull delays until they attack. It then targets grave strands on a PC adjacent to one or more other

Tikulti (T)	Level 6 Elite Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid, doppelganger	XP 500
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +9; low-light vision
HP 142; Bloodied 71	
AC 22 (25 against opportunity attacks); Fortitude 18, Reflex 22, Will 20	
Saving Throws +2	
Speed 6	
Action Points 1	
⚔ Rapier (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage.
🗡 Shuriken (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Ranged 6/12; +11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage.
⚔ Riposte Strike (standard; requires a rapier; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 7 damage. If the target attacks Tikulti before the start of its next turn, Tikulti can make a rapier attack against that target as an immediate interrupt.
⚔ Sharp Feint (minor; requires a rapier; recharge ⏳ ⏳ ⏳) ♦ Weapon	+9 vs. Reflex; 1d8 damage, and the target grants combat advantage to Tikulti until the end of his next turn.
👁 Blinding Barrage (standard; requires a shuriken for each target; encounter) ♦ Weapon	Close blast 3; targets enemies Tikulti can see; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 6 damage, and the target is blinded until the end of Tikulti's next turn. Miss: Half damage.
🔄 Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph	Tikulti can alter his physical form to take on the appearance of any Medium humanoid, including a unique individual (see <i>Monster Manual</i> , page 280).
Sneak Attack	Once per round, Tikulti deals 2d8 extra damage against a target that grants combat advantage to him.
Tumble (move; encounter)	Tikulti shifts 3 squares.
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic, Goblin
Skills Acrobatics +13, Bluff +13, Insight +11, Stealth +13, Thievery +13	
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 20 (+8) Wis 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 12 (+4) Cha 16 (+6)
Equipment +1 leather armor, +1 rapier, 15 shuriken, +2 false blood amulet	

characters. Hovering behind its allies, it fires ghost rays. It shifts away from melee or stays high in the air. If it's marked or cornered, it creates a column of darkness to escape.

If still hidden, Tikulti delays until the stalwarts engage. Otherwise, he attacks on his initiative count. He moves close to a foe he knows to be dangerous and employs riposte strike with sneak attack. Tikulti saves tumble to gain a superior position or escape a tight one. He uses blinding barrage as a tool for maneuvering and for gaining combat advantage against multiple PCs. His favorite tactic is to take out a wounded foe with blinding barrage, then attack another blinded foe by spending his action point. It's a good day when he can take out two enemies in a single round, so he pays close attention to how wounded each PC is.

2 Emerald Claw Stalwarts (E) **Level 5 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid, human XP 200 each
See statistics, page 59.

Emerald Claw Fireblade Assassin (F) **Level 6 Skirmisher**
Medium natural humanoid, tiefling XP 250

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +4; low-light vision
HP 71; **Bloodied** 35; see also *fanatic*
AC 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 19, **Will** 18; see also *path of fire*
Resist 8 fire
Speed 6
⚔ **Short Sword** (standard; requires a short sword; at-will) ♦ **Fire, Weapon**
+11 vs. AC (+12 against a bloodied target); 1d6 + 5 damage plus 1d6 fire damage.
⚔ **Mobile Melee Attack** (standard; at-will)
The Emerald Claw fireblade assassin moves half its speed and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The assassin doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of its attack.
Fanatic (when the Emerald Claw fireblade assassin is reduced to 0 hit points)
The Emerald Claw fireblade assassin makes a melee basic attack.
Infernal Wrath (minor; encounter)
The Emerald Claw fireblade assassin gains a +1 power bonus to its next attack roll against an enemy that hit it since its last turn. If the attack hits and deals damage, it deals 3 extra damage.
Path of Fire (when the Emerald Claw fireblade assassin is hit by a melee attack during its turn; at-will)
The target takes ongoing 3 fire damage (save ends).
Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Bluff +13, Stealth +14
Str 13 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 15 (+5) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 16 (+6)
Equipment leather armor, short sword

Shadowskull (S) **Level 7 Artillery**
Tiny natural animate (undead) XP 300

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +9; darkvision
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32
Regeneration 5 (if the shadowskull takes radiant damage, regeneration is negated until the end of its next turn)
AC 21; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 21, **Will** 19
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic
Speed fly 8 (hover)
⚔ **Bite to the Bone** (standard; at-will)
Reach 0; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 damage, and ongoing 5 damage (save ends).
☞ **Ghost Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Will; 1d10 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target treats the shadowskull as insubstantial until the end of its next turn.
☞ **Grave Strands** (standard; encounter) ♦ **Fear, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +11 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target is restrained until the end of the shadowskull's next turn. Enemies adjacent to the target take 5 necrotic damage and are slowed until the end of the shadowskull's next turn.
Column of Darkness (minor; encounter)
The shadowskull's square is filled with darkness 4 squares high until the end of its next turn.
Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common
Skills Stealth +12
Str 4 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+7) **Wis** 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6) **Int** 12 (+4) **Cha** 20 (+8)

The tiefling moves about, attacking outliers and flanking with her allies. She uses *infernal wrath* as quickly as possible.

Tikulti jokes with and mocks the PCs during the fight, and he reveals his desire for immortality as a sentient undead at this point. He knows he's dead if he fails to take the PCs out, so he doesn't flee. Tikulti might surrender, unless he thinks the PCs plan to kill him no matter what. If he capitulates, he gives his word not to harm the PCs further. Still, he does his best to help Demise in the final battle—if he is able.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light from white motes.

Ceiling: 20 feet high.

Alcoves: An alcove is large enough to hold a Medium creature. The walls are blocking terrain.

Braziers: These squares are difficult terrain.

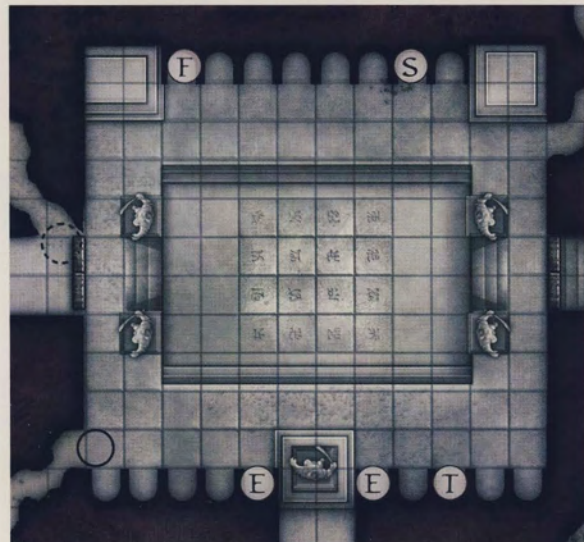
Devil Statue: This fiendish statue is lowered into the floor. Its squares are difficult terrain.

Eastern Double Doors: This closed but unlocked portal is part of a trap described in encounter 3 (on the next page). If no character has previously done so, a PC who actively searches the doors while they're open can make a DC 10 Perception check to see that the hinges on each door are connected to rods embedded in the wall and that the rods can be pulled out of the wall, slamming the doors and keeping them shut.

Goblin Statues: These 8-foot-tall statues (Athletics DC 12 to climb; Strength DC 17 to break and create 2 squares of rubble) are cover terrain, and their squares are difficult terrain. A creature can fight from atop a statue, but must succeed on a DC 14 Acrobatics check each time it is hit, or take 1d6 damage as it falls prone in an unoccupied square adjacent to the statue.

Stairs: The stairs are not difficult terrain, since they ascend or descend only 5 feet.

Treasure: Tikulti's items include a +2 *false blood amulet* (Adventure Book One, page 26; level 7 item).



ENCOUNTER 30: FINAL DEMISE

Encounter Level 8 (1,900 XP)

SETUP

Demise (D)

Gydd Nyphret, dreadclaw soulbound (G)

4 Skullborn ghouls (S)

4 Skullborn zombie husks (Z)

As the PCs approach the closed doors, they hear soft chanting (a DC 12 Perception check recognizes Demise's voice). Even if she has been warned, the elf continues preparing for her ritual. If the PCs are stealthy, they can surprise her with DC 10 Stealth checks. However, if the doors are not opened carefully, they stick on the bone piles, requiring Medium and Small characters to squeeze through. A DC 12 Athletics check (standard action) is then required to force the doors fully open.

Use the illustration "Final Demise" (see *Adventure Book One*, page 32). This battle uses the poster map for Ashurta's Rest.

When the PCs can see into the area, read:

Ashurta's tomb is changed only slightly since you last saw it. No bones linger in the alcoves; instead, they are piled around the northern doors. Mummified corpses with Aereni tattoos lean in a few alcoves.

The immense statue remains in the center of the room, but a silvery circle of arcane symbols surrounds it. Demise stands to one side of the circle, clutching her black staff.

Several hunched, ashen corpses tattooed with Aereni designs stand between you and her. They bare fangs and flex their clawed hands as they eye you hungrily.

"Welcome," says Demise.

"Thank the Host you've come," says Gydd in a hoarse voice. Her hands are bound to Ashurta's sarcophagus. She looks haggard and ill-treated. "Get me out of here!"

When Gydd attacks, read:

Gydd isn't herself. She has hollow, milky eyes and a subtly feral look. Her flesh peels, exposing bone and clawed hands.

Demise isn't interested in negotiating. Here in the depths of Sharn, she plans to kill the PCs. Then she'll make slaves out of their dead flesh.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Bright light (from the honor statue's eyes).

Ceiling: 10 feet high over the alcoves, rising to 20 feet high in the room's center.

Alcoves: An alcove is large enough to hold a Medium creature. The walls are blocking terrain.

Demise (D)

Medium fey humanoid, elf

Level 8 Elite Controller

XP 700

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +5; low-light vision

HP 174; Bloodied 87

AC 22; Fortitude 20, Reflex 21, Will 22

Saving Throws +2

Speed 7

Action Points 1

④ **Staff of Ruin** (standard; requires a staff; at-will) ♦ **Cold, Weapon**
+12 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 6 cold damage (crit 2d10 + 18), and the target is slowed and takes a -2 penalty to Fortitude until the end of Demise's next turn.

⑤ **Vampiric Ray** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
Ranged 10; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage (crit 2d10 + 22), and Demise gains 4 temporary hit points. If this attack bloodies a target, that target is weakened until the end of Demise's next turn.

✂ **Death Glare** (standard; recharge ☐☐☐☐) ♦ **Fear, Necrotic**
Ranged 5; +12 vs. Fortitude; 2d10 + 6 necrotic damage (crit 2d10 + 26), and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends both). The target cannot save until it ends its turn farther from Demise than it was at the start of its turn.

✂ **Zombie Cloud** (standard; daily) ♦ **Poison, Zone**
Area burst 1 within 10; +10 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 poison damage (crit 2d10 + 12). The burst creates a zone of lightly obscured squares. A creature that enters the zone or starts its turn there takes 1d8 + 4 poison damage. A living creature reduced to 0 hit points or fewer within the zone rises on its turn with 1 hit point and is dominated (no save), but can use only basic attacks. Any healing used on a dominated target works normally and ends the dominated effect. Demise can move the cloud 3 squares as a move action. Sustain Minor: The zone persists.

Elven Accuracy (free; encounter)

Demise can reroll an attack roll, taking the second result.

False Life (minor; encounter)

Demise gains 22 temporary hit points.

Ghostwalk (move; encounter)

Demise can move up to her speed, and she has insubstantial and phasing until the start of her next turn.

Shadowdance Robes

Demise's area attacks and ranged attacks don't provoke opportunity attacks.

Wild Step

Demise ignores difficult terrain when she shifts.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Draconic, Elven, Giant

Skills Arcana +13, Bluff +12, History +13, Religion +13, Stealth +12

Str 8 (+3)

Dex 12 (+5)

Wis 13 (+5)

Con 15 (+6)

Int 19 (+8)

Cha 17 (+7)

Equipment see Treasure in "Features of the Area"

Bone Piles: Demise piled bones from other areas of the tomb at the entry points into this room. These squares are difficult terrain.

Dais: Three gentle steps lead up to this platform which supports Ashurta's sarcophagus.

Honor Statue: The honor statue occupies a 2-by-2-square space and stands 15 feet high (Athletics DC 17 to climb). It sits on a 3-foot-tall base that surrounds the statue and has the word "Ashurta" carved on all sides in

Common script. The squares the base occupies are difficult terrain. A creature can balance on the statue's head, but if it starts its turn on the statue, the balancing creature must succeed on a DC 12 Acrobatics check. Failure results in a fall, but the creature can make a saving throw to grab a handhold (leaving it hanging from the statue). If the creature falls, it takes 2d10 damage and falls prone in an unoccupied square adjacent to the statue.

Pillars: The squares partially occupied by these pillars are difficult terrain. The square pillars are 15 feet high (Athletics DC 20 to climb) and 5 feet wide and are cover terrain.

Ritual Circle: Demise has drawn a ritual circle for the Rite of Arkantaash. It glimmers in the candlelight, but is harmless (a PC who makes a DC 12 Arcana check as a standard action can tell this).

Sarcophagus: Ashurta's coffin no longer has a lid. Its squares are difficult terrain. The top is 5 feet from the floor and can be scrambled onto with a DC 7 Athletics or Acrobatics check. A creature gains cover against attackers on the room's floor by standing in the sarcophagus.

Gydd Nephret, Dreadclaw Soulbound (G) **Level 5 Lurker**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +6; darkvision
HP 53; **Bloodied** 26

AC 19; **Fortitude** 16, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 18

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 8

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

+10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty to Will until the end of its next turn.

👁 **Milky Eye** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**

Ranged 5; +8 vs. Will; 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the target treats Gydd as if she were invisible until the end of her next turn.

👁 **Seeming's Sanctuary** (minor; recharge 2/3) ♦ **Illusion, Psychic**

Close burst 1; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 5 psychic damage, and the target sees Gydd as she was in life, granting combat advantage to her, until the end of her next turn. To attack Gydd during this time, the target must spend a healing surge and regain no hit points.

Combat Advantage ♦ **Necrotic**

Gydd deals ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) against creatures that grant combat advantage to her.

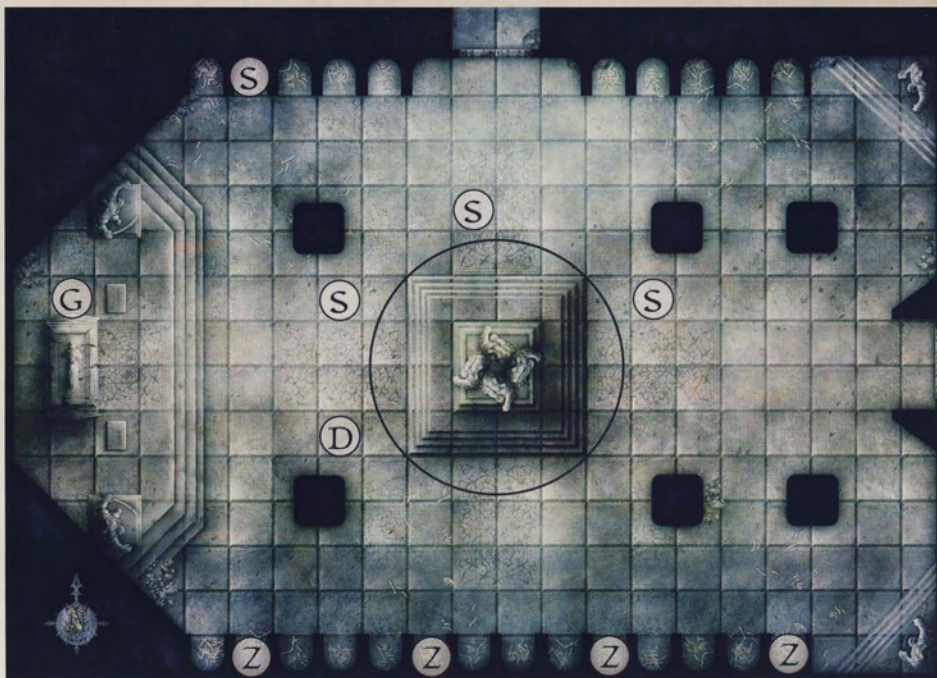
Living Seeming (minor 1/round; at-will) ♦ **Illusion**

Gydd appears as she did in life. A DC 17 Insight check pierces the illusion.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven, Goblin
Skills Bluff +12, History +14, Stealth +9

Str 12 (+3) **Dex** 15 (+4) **Wis** 9 (+1)

Con 17 (+5) **Int** 18 (+6) **Cha** 20 (+7)



Stone Boxes: The squares with these empty chests are difficult terrain.

Treasure: Demise has +1 shadowdance robes (level 5 item), Demise's staff of ruin (level 8 item), a potion of healing,

4 Skullborn Ghouls (S) **Level 5 Soldier**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 200 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +3; darkvision
HP 63; **Bloodied** 31

AC 21; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 20, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Speed 8, climb 4

⚔ **Claws** (standard; at-will)

+12 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

👁 **Bloody Ghoulish Bite** (standard; at-will)

+10 vs. AC; targets an immobilized, stunned, or unconscious creature; 2d6 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 damage and is dazed (save ends both).

Wild Step

A Skullborn ghoul ignores difficult terrain when it shifts.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Stealth +11

Str 14 (+4) **Dex** 19 (+6)

Wis 13 (+3)

Con 15 (+4) **Int** 10 (+2)

Cha 12 (+3)

4 Skullborn Zombie Husks (Z) **Level 5 Minion**
Medium natural humanoid (undead) XP 50 each

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +4; darkvision

HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.

AC 21; **Fortitude** 19, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16

Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 5 necrotic

Speed 6, climb 4

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will)

+11 vs. AC; 7 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the Skullborn zombie husk's next turn.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** —

Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 15 (+4)

Wis 14 (+4)

Con 21 (+7) **Int** 4 (-1) **Cha** 4 (-1)

an Aereni deathmask (100 gp), jewelry (100 gp), ritual components (200 gp), an Aereni ceremonial dagger (25 gp), and 23 gp. She also has any components of the *Ashen Crown* that the PCs lack.

TACTICS

The ghouls and zombie husks rush the PCs to keep them away from Demise. They mix it up in melee, and do not retreat even if Demise does so. During the battle, they make gruesome comments about the PCs.

Unless a PC moves to her aid, Gydd seems to free herself on her initiative count as if she had loosened her bonds before but was biding her time. She attacks anyone she can dupe into approaching her. Otherwise she pretends to run toward the passage to the north. If the PCs let her pass, she attacks rear-echelon PCs with *milky eye* or her claws, as well as *seeming's sanctuary*. Once she knows her initial ruse is over, she maneuvers so she can keep combat advantage with flanking and *seeming's sanctuary*. She prefers melee combat, but uses *milky eye* if doing so is safe or needed. For example, she might use it against an adjacent melee combatant who suffers a reduced Will and is affected by *seeming's sanctuary*. She might also use *milky eye* against a troublesome ranged attacker to give herself some respite. Gydd fluctuates between a ravaging beast and something like her old self, even expressing horror at her own actions or begging for help before renewing her attacks.

Mocking the party, Demise hangs back behind the melee combatants, and starts by dropping a *zombie cloud* on the party. She sustains the cloud each round, and moves it to keep it damaging the PCs. If she needs to move, she forgoes a standard action to keep the cloud damaging two or more PCs. Otherwise, she employs *death glare* when it's available and *vampiric ray* when it's not. Since her ranged and area attacks don't provoke opportunity attacks, Demise favors them. She uses her melee basic attack only when she wants to lower a target's defenses. If a melee attacker sets upon her, she also uses her melee attack to slow that target, then moves into difficult terrain. In fact, she prefers to fight with difficult terrain between her and possible melee threats. Demise uses *false life* when she starts her turn with 43 hit points or fewer. She keeps *ghost-walk* in reserve for a full retreat when she starts her turn with 30 hit points or fewer. After using that power, she runs to get away.

CONTINUING VILLAINY

If Demise escapes, she makes an excellent recurring villain. She probably still possesses parts of the *Crown*.

At this point, Demise has become an enemy of the Brelish state—among the most wanted criminals of that nation. The PCs might be able to win vengeance and more prestige with the Citadel for defeating her later. If she's captured or slain, it still might not be the end for her. She could escape or be raised from the dead by Emerald Claw

or Blood of Vol agents. Consider whether your players might enjoy seeing Demise again before reusing her. Her reanimation doesn't have to be something she wants or enjoys. It could be a horrible fate.

Tikulti's motivation all along was gaining immortality through service to Demise and the Claw, and the Blood of Vol through them. He's no longer welcome in the Citadel from this point on, and he knows it. Even if the PCs die, suspicion within the Citadel is certain to reveal him for what he is. If he is turned over to the Citadel, Tikulti talks and exonerates the PCs. If he somehow escapes, he becomes a hunted person on par with Demise. This also clears the PCs—eventually. It's possible that he later attains his ultimate goal, however, perhaps as a vampire. He too could come back to haunt the PCs in later adventures.

THE CROWN

If the PCs fail to acquire the crown components, they have incentive to pursue them in adventures you devise. Captain Kalaes has plenty of motivation to continue employing the PCs to this end. Conversely, he might decide the characters just can't pull it off, allowing you and the players to go on to something new.

You have other options with the *Ashen Crown* in victorious PC hands. Kalaes could take the *Crown* as a diplomatic tool, but it's more interesting if the PCs keep the artifact. With the Wordbearer seekers slain, Kalaes might want the PCs to take the *Crown* into Darguun and to the Kech Volaar there. Other Skullborn and Emerald Claw agents still covet the item. Who knows, maybe even the Valaes Tairn become involved after they catch wind that the *Crown* has been recovered. That's a continuing adventure for you to design, sure to be fraught with goblin treachery, undead depravity, elven wrath, and bloody clashes. Even if you'd rather go on to another plot line, the PCs can still end up with the *Crown* for a time.

In encounter 14, Tikulti said, "It is written that the destiny of *Arkantaash* is bound to those who seek and find its scattered fragments." A Kech Volaar emissary, such as the seer Huugan mentioned in Yeraa's journal, could announce that those heroes who found the *Crown* are destined to carry it until they are called into service for Dhakaan, or until the artifact deems otherwise or finds another home. Having the PCs keep the *Crown* with Wordbearer approval satisfies Breland. The PCs thus have future adventure hooks connecting them to Breland, Darguun, Valenar, Aerenal, Karrnath, and Vol.

The PCs might want to use the *Crown* to raise NPCs who died in this adventure. It's your decision whether the character is willing to be raised. Most likely, the Wordbearers are happy to remain among their departed ancestors. Gydd could be different. Regardless, the PCs might be able to use a satisfied *Ashen Crown's* power to keep in contact with Yeraa and Gydd for some time to come.



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