



# VEIL OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

DAUGHTER OF THE  
SHADOWS





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# CAMPAIGN OVERVIEW

*Daughter of the Shadows* is a high-level campaign meant to be a sequel to *Soliloquy of Annihilation*.

## SET IN ANCERRA

This campaign is set in the world of Ancerra, the official campaign setting for the MythCraft TTRPG. This campaign contains all of the information that you need to run the adventures herein, but if you wish to read more about Ancerra writ large, you can do so in the *MythCrafter's Guide*, available on DriveThruRPG or mythcrafttrpg.com.

Notably, this campaign uses sc instead of gp when measuring the costs of objects. The term sc refers to silver coins, the standard currency in Ancerra. When using any published D&D content with this campaign, you may convert gp to sc at a 1:1 ratio.

This book is divided into three parts for ease of consumption. The first chapter of each part is a narrative overview of the major villains that the heroes are expected to face.

Note that Part One and Part Two are intended to be played simultaneously, with the heroes managing threats presented from both arcs. Part One details Lilith's cult in linear fashion, and Part Two outlines Morgana's descent into madness. A major challenge for the heroes will be managing both threats at once.

Part Three details the heroes' ultimate battle against Palorva herself, which spans a significant swathe of Ancerra and showcases three distinct combats against Dracula's daughter.

Part One of *Daughter of the Shadows* also contains detailed regional write-ups of each nation in Norspina, as well as each major plane of existence that the heroes are likely to visit.

## CAMPAIGN REGIONS

Given the nature of *Daughter of the Shadows* as a sequel to *Soliloquy of Annihilation*, the heroes will often revisit locations that they have explored already. These regions are included in both campaign books. The only information that changes between books in these entries are the random encounter tables, which are rewritten to reflect higher level threats in *Daughter of the Shadows*. Other plot-relevant information that may differ will be called out specifically in the campaign narrative.

## FEAR AND SANITY

This campaign uses the Fear and Sanity rules as explained in *HGrVH*. Make sure your players account for this during character creation. Information on what constitutes a Haven or Shrine will be included throughout this campaign as relevant. You may assume that any village, town, or city is a Haven.

By default in this campaign, heroes gain +1 Fear the first time they or one of their allies reach 0 HP within the hero's range of vision or hearing. This can only happen once per day, so even if multiple allies reach 0 HP, a hero will only gain 1 Fear in this way.

Heroes gain +1 Fear when they Take a Rest outside of a Haven, unless they have Psyche talents or other abilities that allow them to override this.

Finally, the campaign's narrative will clearly mark points at which the heroes may gain additional Fear.



## CONTENT ADVISORY

*Daughter of the Shadows* is a mature campaign that deals with difficult themes. The narrative of this campaign involves a great deal of bloody, gory body horror. Children and animals die in this campaign. Palorva and the other villains in the story behave in depraved fashion. There is no sexual violence in this campaign, but there are undertones that could suggest domestic abuse. Many NPCs have their free will violated when they become the thralls of vampires or when they are imprisoned to be used as livestock.

As the MC, it is your responsibility to have an open, constructive dialogue with your players before starting the campaign. Utilize various safety devices such as yellow and red zones, safe words, or the "X card." The point of any TTRPG is to enjoy telling stories with your friends. The nature of gothic horror and vampire-centric campaigns is quite dark, and very bloody, but this is secondary to the comfort and enjoyment of your table. While DMing this campaign, be careful to rewrite or change certain elements of the story if it would cross into a player's red zone or bring up topics that the players would rather not discuss.

## GOODWILL

This campaign utilizes Goodwill, a mechanic from the MythCraft game engine.

Goodwill is a mechanic that tracks a community's sentiment towards an individual. Any action a party or player takes may generate positive or negative Goodwill. Professions have a particularly strong effect on Goodwill.

Goodwill is tracked across several spheres of the community, roughly correlated to occupations: academic, aristocratic, layfolk, mercantile, militant, religious, underworld.

Goodwill is tracked privately and can range anywhere on a scale from -20 to +20.

Goodwill	Effect
-20 to -15	<b>Villain.</b> You are hated and feared by your community. Community resources will be levied towards your arrest and destruction.
-14 to -10	<b>Hated.</b> The community is hostile to your presence and will refuse your trade and lodging. Angry mobs might attempt to exile you.
-9 to -4	<b>Disliked.</b> Goods and services often cost more for you and merchants are unlikely to haggle.
-3 to 3	<b>Neutral.</b> You are unknown to the community overall.

4 to 9

**Liked.** Citizens usually go out of their way to accommodate you and give you good deals.

10 to 14

**Beloved.** Citizens rejoice to see you and you can always find friends and allies in town.

15 to 20

**Hero.** You are idolized by your community and can get virtually any good or service for free. Local authorities will overlook minor crimes that you commit and will help you when they reasonably can.

## GAINING WEALTH

Over the course of the campaign, the heroes will need to find ways to fund their quest. This campaign does not focus on the specifics of the heroes' financial situation, instead focusing on their struggle against Dracula. When the heroes complete a side quest, award them a number of sc equal to the party's level x100. A party of level 16 heroes should receive 1,600 sc for completing a side quest, while a party of level 19 heroes should receive 1,900 sc.

When the heroes complete the following milestones, award them more substantially. Award **each individual** a number of sc equal to the party's level x100. A party of level 16 heroes should receive 1,600 sc **each** for completing one of these milestones, while a party of level 19 heroes should receive 1,900 sc **each**.

- Defeating Darakma.
- Helping or defeating Evyna Stoneleaf.
- Defeating Lilith.
- Defeating the Ringmaster.
- Defeating Morgana.
- Defeating Jack the Ripper.

## A HIGH LEVEL CAMPAIGN

*Daughter of the Shadows* is a high-level campaign that will take your heroes from level 11 to 20. By nature, a high-level campaign must be more reactive to the heroes' actions than a low-level campaign. Heroes have the capacity to teleport vast distances, cleave through common guards without a second thought, and even resurrect the dead. Below are some general guidelines to follow when running a high-level campaign and responding to the unexpected twists that players throw at you.



## POWERFUL MAGIC

As heroes increase in power, they will have a stronger and more versatile repertoire of magic that they can use in a variety of situations.

Keep track of any spells of 4th-level or higher that your heroes may cast. These are the spells that may dramatically alter certain battles or non-combat challenges.

## A TOOL TO TELL THE STORY

Encourage your heroes to use their powerful spells. Heroes that have invested in powerful magical builds should be rewarded for this play style, and it can make storytelling easier for you as the DM. Teleportation magic is especially handy, allowing you to hand-wave long weeks of travel across an otherwise quite dangerous region.

If a hero uses a powerful spell to trivialize a specific encounter - combat or otherwise - this only means that they will have limited resources to use on the remaining encounters of the day. If they save all of their SP to trivialize the final encounter of the day, that is their prerogative, as the lead up to that encounter will be more difficult for them.

## ONE-TRICK PONYCORN

Discourage heroes from using the same spell over and over to minimize the same kind of combat encounter. At your discretion, you can discourage this out-of-game by having a conversation with the player, or in-game by determining the consequences of the hero's actions.

For example, if a hero uses the *banishment* spell to send a fiend back to Hell, this can be a very cool and powerful moment for that hero. If they proceed to then use the *banishment* spell in every major combat encounter for the rest of the campaign, this can become boring and frustrating for both you as the DM and for the other players at the table.

In this scenario, you might speak with the player, asking them to mix up their spell usage or to target the second-most-powerful creature in a combat encounter with the *banishment* spell, allowing the whole party to still contend with the main threat. Alternatively, you might look for an in-game solution. Perhaps you rule that every creature that the hero banished now has a vendetta against that hero. If the hero banished ten fiends over the course of a few weeks, then later in the campaign those same ten fiends may show up to add a much more deadly challenge to a combat encounter as they specifically target that hero.

## NUKING KEY VILLAINS

Some players may approach the campaign as a game to be won, and that attitude is fine if the entire table is in agreement. Most find a more narrative-focused gameplay experience more rewarding, but that is for each table to determine on their own.

If your table is looking for a more narrative experience, then consider making all creatures with the Legendary Resistance feature immune to spells that would immediately end the fight if successful, such as the *banishment* spell.

If your table wants a more gamified experience, then do not modify creatures with the Legendary Resistance feature. Many of them will still be very difficult to defeat. If they are hit by a spell that automatically ends the fight, but does not kill them outright - again, such as the *banishment* spell - then the villains may easily make a reappearance at a later point and will have even more of a vendetta against the heroes.

## ALTERING THE WORLD

Infamously, the *wish* spell can fundamentally reshape a campaign, which has trivialized many DMs' carefully crafted plans.

As a DM, it is within your power to ban certain spells of high consequence. If you are considering this, think through the following questions to arrive at a well-reasoned conclusion:

- Are any of my players looking forward to using these spells?
- Can I find a way to accommodate the dramatic consequences of these spells?
- Does the story still feel fulfilling if a hero uses a powerful spell one time?
- Would the player be receptive to certain uses of a world-altering spell (such as one-hit killing a major villain) being banned?

If the answer to the majority of these questions is no, then consider banning certain spells such as *wish* and *banishment*. If the answer to the majority of these questions is yes, then do not ban the spells, but perhaps set up certain expectations, allowing yourself a veto if a hero's actions would lead to the campaign's fun being diminished for the whole table. Whatever your decision, be sure to clearly communicate these expectations to your players so that everyone is on the same page.

## CAMPAIGN STRUCTURE

Campaigns can be structured in many ways. The two most commonly known terms when structuring a campaign are "sandbox" and "railroad," but there are plenty of other types of campaign structures on a spectrum between these two extremes.



## YOU'RE RAILROADING ME!

In many TTRPG spaces, the term “railroading” has taken on a negative connotation that conjures images of an overbearing game master intent on running a story in exactly their way, without offering room for players to impact the story. Such a DM style is unpleasant to play in and should be discouraged. However, the term “railroad” can also be used in a constructive way. After all, the expression “off the rails” generally implies too much chaos. In this section, railroad is used to discuss an overall approach to structuring a campaign and is distinct from a domineering DM refusing to make room for their players’ ideas.

## RAILROAD

A railroad campaign has a specific intended progression of events. Heroes have autonomy within certain predetermined parameters. This style of campaign is the easiest to prepare and run, as it is intended to direct the heroes on a certain course and minimizes surprises for the DM. An example of a railroad campaign is MythCraft’s *Kings of Tyranny* campaign. *Soliloquy of Annihilation* is also written as a railroad campaign, though it has some contingencies for if the heroes do anything unexpected, especially in the early campaign.

## SANDBOX

A sandbox campaign does not have an intended progression of events, or if it does, that intended progression is held loosely. The heroes have the greatest agency in this style of campaign, but may get lost in the weeds as they do not always have clear goals. Sandbox campaigns can still have intended milestones, such as defeating key villains, but how and when the heroes arrive at these milestones is widely variable. *The Cloven Lands*, another MythCraft campaign, is an example of a sandbox campaign.

## FISHBOWL

A third type of campaign, called a “fishbowl” campaign, combines elements of railroad and sandbox campaigns. *Daughter of the Shadows* is a fishbowl campaign.

The heroes are, metaphorically, in a giant fishbowl. As in a sandbox campaign, they may travel wherever they wish and pursue any side quests or major quest threads that they wish in approximately any order. However, the world is not static; Palorva and the other major villains of this campaign remain constantly on the move. If the heroes do not proactively follow the key plot arcs, then the villains’ power will grow unchecked. Their power and influence - the walls of the fishbowl - shape and contain the campaign. Eventually, regardless of what the heroes do, they will run into these walls, and will be forced to confront the major villains directly.

## HOW TO THREATEN HEROES

In high-level campaigns, the heroes are much harder to seriously threaten. They have more health and more powers, and when they work together in coordination they may pose a nearly unstoppable front.

But simply killing heroes is not the only way by which a cunning DM may threaten them. To be sure, the high-level villains in this campaign are incredibly deadly and pose a great threat to the heroes during combat. But there are other ways to drain a hero’s lifeblood. Think of the heroes no longer as mere adventurers, but as celebrities. A celebrity’s life has many benefits, but myriad pitfalls as well.

## INFAMY AND POLITICS

As the heroes’ reputations grow, they will have to contend with politicians and people of influence at an increasing rate. Mayors, priests, dukes, and monarchs will seek out the heroes’ favor, or may denounce the heroes in order to curry favor with other influential individuals. The latter can be especially damaging to the heroes. If a mayor claims that the heroes are acting in opposition to the interests of their town, then the townsfolk may be unwilling to do business with the heroes. Struggling to prove their good intentions is a challenge that no amount of swordsmanship or evoking magic can account for, especially if a local ruler is not operating in good faith. This becomes especially tedious if the heroes attempt to remove the problematic leader, as it may influence public perception to see the leader as a spokesperson for the people, and the heroes as mere magical bullies.

## WEALTH AND RESOURCES

Finding ways to tax the heroes’ wealth and resources can also cause serious problems for them. Heroes in an unfriendly town may find that their expenses are unreasonably increased. Certain elements from their backstories, such as aging parents or obligations to the civic life of their former towns, may cause the heroes to feel obligated to part with some of their currency. If the heroes have other resources, such as influence with local guilds or military organizations, then politicians, priests, and the like may wish to deal in favors. A priest calling in all of the heroes’ influence on the priests’ behalf is a great way to make the heroes feel that their resources are being taxed when they have more hard coin than they know what to do with.

When the heroes are in the Morgana arc of the campaign, their wealth and resources will be especially strained.



## LOVED ONES

The heroes may be incredibly powerful and difficult to kill, but that does not mean that their loved ones are also difficult to kill. Threatening a hero's family can drive up the tension in a profound way, as a parent, sibling, or childhood friend without the ability to protect themselves will immediately motivate any hero with a great sense of urgency.

In particular, the Lilith arc of the campaign will place the heroes' loved ones in grave danger.

## MORALS

Finally, the more power a hero has, the harder it can be to use it well. In situations where the heroes are not themselves in bodily harm, they may come up against difficult moral decisions. As armies of vampire thralls approach two towns at once, do the heroes save the smaller town with their loved ones, or the larger town that has more lives at stake and a greater economic benefit to the region?

## AN ENEMY IN DISGUISE

Early in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*, and again in the beginning of this campaign, Palorva visits the heroes in disguise. She teases out what their individual moral underpinnings are, and spends the extent of this campaign trying to completely destroy the heroes' morality. Palorva may attempt to drive a hero intent on helping the homeless population in a city to instead murder them all - which technically does solve homelessness for a time. A hero attempting to avenge their parents might be encouraged to do so by killing the parents of other perceived perpetrators of violence. In any and every way imaginable, Palorva subtly twists and erodes the heroes' morals for the extent of the campaign, attempting to turn them into the very things that they stand against.

## A CHANGED WORLD

*Daughter of the Shadows* is canonically set twelve years after the conclusion of *Soliloquy of Annihilation*. The following subsections detail Dracula's ongoing legacy and the current state of nations and threats across Norspina.

## DRACULA'S LEGACY

Dracula's cult, the Cult of the Deadfall, continues to operate after his death. In addition to being an ongoing nuisance for the heroes, the Cult of the Deadfall actively seeks to create more vampires, kill vampire hunters, and ultimately try to find a way to resurrect Dracula himself. When the leaders of the cult find a possible way to resurrect him, they bring this information to Palorva, which leads to the final arc of this campaign.

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Finally, Dracula's own actions prior to, and during, *Soliloquy of Annihilation* have ongoing ramifications during this campaign. Many of the great sulfurous rifts that Dracula opened in Derk continue to belch smoke into the sky, turning Derk into a desolate, forlorn wasteland. His steam-powered machinery that produced enormous clouds have been replicated in Kess, Noord, and Lesmishan, allowing vampires to roam with a greater degree of impunity. Above all, the pervading sense of fear, despair, and meaninglessness that many felt under Dracula's rule continues to persist under the dire threats that still haunt the land.

## THE THREE QUEENS

The majority of *Daughter of the Shadows* revolves around three major villains: Morgana, Lilith, and Palorva. Each of these three villains have their influence felt in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*, but they take center stage in this campaign. Lilith and Morgana may be confronted in either order; whichever one is confronted second has more time to spread her influence and develop more power. Palorva watches and manipulates the world from the shadows, eventually confronting the heroes in a series of fights across prominent locations in Norspina. Each of these villains have whole chapters dedicated to their schemes and questlines, but they are briefly summarized below.





## LILITH

The first vampire of Shadowcroft and an archfiend in her own right, Lilith has spent time since the events of *Soliloquy of Annihilation* creating a cult following across Norspina and Shadowcroft. In both locations, local cult followings hold black masses, sacrifice innocents to summon fiends, and otherwise cause chaos and misery for the innocent commoners of the world.

The heroes will likely see Lilith as the greatest immediate threat at the start of the campaign and will have to work their way through a variety of cult cells before they confront Lilith herself. Lilith, for her part, has a deadly assassin - Ichabod, the headless horseman - who begins to hunt the heroes once they cause a little too much trouble for Lilith's liking.

When the heroes defeat Lilith, she dies, but this is not permanent. The strength of her cult following has spread too far; hundreds of years later, she will return to harry another generation of heroes.

## MORGANA

Morgana has always had aspirations to become the totalitarian ruler of one or more worlds. She saw Lilith's and Dracula's alliance as an existential threat, but also as an obstacle to be removed. After the heroes defeated Dracula in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*, Morgana immediately began securing political alliances across Norspina. She especially focuses on paragovernmental guilds, religious institutions that are not as mainstream, and other organizations that offer her a wide reach of soft power. She will attempt to recruit the heroes into attacking and defeating various political rivals - either through force or by swaying public opinion - and removing them to create more room for Morgana's own following.

Over time, Morgana becomes more and more paranoid thanks to a shady lieutenant that she recruits. This lieutenant - a demon named Paranoia - was a calculated move that Palorva made to weaken Morgana's standing.

The heroes may grow suspicious of Morgana's intentions over time, eventually leading to a showdown in Morgana's mansion, an extraplanar stronghold that shapeshifts in accordance with Morgana's tarot readings.

## PALORVA

Palorva has consolidated power in Kess, a small nation bordering the northeast Great Chasm. She still makes frequent trips to Dracula's Castle and to Icepoint, the capital of Derk and Dracula's original home. King Dekland VI, ruler of Derk, is firmly in Palorva's pocket. Palorva has also consolidated her influence in the other nations that supported Dracula, primarily Noord and Bishal, and expanded her region of influence to include Lesmishan, Forsten, and Kandiff.

In addition to toying with the heroes and turning their own morals into sick parodies of themselves, Palorva seeks to rebuild Dracula's direct influence. She does so first by finding and resurrecting his court members, to varying degrees of success, in the twelve years after *Soliloquy of Annihilation*. In the climax of the campaign, Palorva takes it upon herself to resurrect Dracula directly by using the same mechanisms that Dracula used to create Heaven and Hell. This involves traveling to the ancient Avadri city of Vadreheim and activating the avadrium core of Ancerra. Over the course of the campaign, the heroes may learn of this plan and that if Ancerra's core is activated again, it will all but certainly lead to the entire planet's destruction. This leads to a multi-phase showdown with Palorva in key locales across the two campaigns: Vadreheim, Dracula's Castle, and Lorvan, Palorva's seat of power.

## OTHER VILLAINS

Palorva, Morgana, and Lilith pose the greatest threats to Norspina, Ancerra, and the cosmos, but they are far from the only threats that the heroes must contend with. A cunning serial killer stalks the streets of Lorvan, a deranged ringmaster leads a carnivale of blood and doom, and a headless horseman stalks the forests at night. These villains pose great threats in their own right, but they are generally subservient to, or unknowingly manipulated by, one of the three main villains of this campaign.

## HEAVEN AND HELL

The demiplanes of Heaven and Hell are now better understood and partially explored. Many sages know the basic facts of Heaven and Hell, and can cite the following facts to any heroes that ask:

- Heaven and Hell are planes of existence that can be traveled to and from.
- Heaven and Hell hold all of the same landmarks that Ancerra does.
- Dracula created Heaven and Hell by manipulating time itself, and this has never been replicated. Given how destructive it was, anyone who attempts to replicate this is clearly mad.

Over the course of the campaign, heroes may wish to travel to Heaven or Hell for a number of reasons. Traveling in Heaven or Hell is a little faster than on Ancerra, and moving between planes of existence may make it more difficult for key villains to pinpoint the heroes.





## CHARACTER PROGRESSION

This campaign takes the heroes from levels 11 to 20. The intended progression of the campaign pits the heroes first against Lilith, then against Morgana before they have finished the adventure arc regarding Lilith. This forces them to manage their time and resources effectively in order to take on the threats posed by both Lilith and Morgana. This will take the heroes from levels 11 through 16, including the Ringmaster or Jack the Ripper as an interlude to level them up once during this venture (see the Ringmaster and Jack sidebar).

### THE RINGMASTER AND JACK

The Ringmaster and Jack the Ripper serve as lesser villains that the heroes face between each major arc and can be used interchangeably for the heroes to face at levels 13 and 17.

Level Up	Milestone
11	Beginning of Campaign
12	Defeat Darakma in the Lilith adventure
13	Defeat the Ringmaster's Carnivale
14	Defeat Ichabod in the Morgana adventure
15	Defeat Lilith in Shadowcroft
16	Defeat Morgana in her mansion
17	Solve the mystery of Jack the Ripper
18	Defeat Palorva in the clock tower
19	Defeat Palorva in Vadreheim
20	Defeat Palorva in Dracula's Castle

While the heroes may progress in their respective quests against Lilith and Morgana in either order, the anticipated order of character progression is listed below. Adjust the milestones as needed based on the order of events that your individual party undertakes. The heroes may face Morgana and Lilith in either order without impacting their final showdown against Palorva.

While multiple plot threads are intended to be tangled together in this campaign, note that they are presented in linear fashion for clarity. Part One details the entire Lilith adventure; Part Two explains the Morgana adventure in its entirety; and Part Three narrates the heroes' ultimate showdown with Palorva.

## A NEW GENERATION

As you prepare to embark upon the new campaign with your players, talk with them about the heroes' attitudes on the world. Some heroes may wish to continue adventuring, while others may have retired in the twelve years since *Soliloquy of Annihilation*. The players may wish to try new character concepts, and this is a great time to phase out certain heroes in favor of new ones.

It can be especially rewarding to make the new heroes related to the former ones in some way. Maybe a new hero is the younger sibling or relative of a previous hero, or maybe they are an apprentice to the previous hero. Having the former heroes hand off their legacy artifacts to new heroes can be a fun, emotional prologue to immediately get your players invested in the new heroes.

If you wish, you may rule that the time difference between *Soliloquy of Annihilation* and *Daughter of the Shadows* is actually thirty years. Although it may be hard to justify why the villains take so long before they begin enacting their plans, this time difference otherwise has no mechanical bearing on the campaign. A gap period of thirty years also allows most previous heroes the chance to start a family and raise children that can then be the new heroes of this campaign.



# PART I: CULT OF THE DARK ONE

*“Learn from me, if not by my precepts, at least by my example,  
how dangerous is the acquirement of knowledge, and how much  
happier that man is who believes his native town to be his world,  
than he who aspires to become greater than his nature will  
allow.”*

*Mary Shelley, Frankenstein*





# CHAPTER 1: CULT OF THE DEVOURER

In this adventure, the heroes come across a cult that is rapidly expanding its influence and threat across Norspina. By following a variety of rumors and leads, the heroes come face to face with various cult leaders and ultimately trace the founder of the cult to Lilith, one of Dracula's former allies. The heroes must venture into Lilith's domain in Shadowcroft to face her directly.

This adventure is divided into five arcs, briefly outlined below.

- **Arc 1:** The heroes catch wind of an uptick in cultic activity throughout Norspina. They may follow these leads to Skoro, a town in southeast Noord (or another town, if it better suits your group's background).
- **Arc 2:** The heroes learn of the murderous activity that local cultists have engaged in. By following clues or laying an ambush, they may find cultists and trace them to the local cult leader... a vampire hiding in the nearby ruins of an ancient keep. Defeating this vampire allows the heroes to discover more information about how widespread the Cult of Lilith has grown.
- **Arc 3:** The heroes return to Derk having heard that the Duchess of Ice Coast is a member of the cult. But things are not as they seem: The duchess is being blackmailed by the cult. If the heroes can help her, she proves herself a powerful ally.
- **Arc 4:** The heroes travel to Forsten, home of a charismatic figure known as the Father of Mercies. The Father is a powerful spokesperson for the cult and harbors a dark secret that threatens to utterly destroy the heroes when they finally confront him.
- **Arc 5:** Having weakened Lilith's hold on Ancerra, the heroes journey into Shadowcroft itself to face her directly. If successful, her cult completely recedes into the deep shadows and does not cause another major international threat for at least one generation.

## TENETS OF THE CULT

Cultists of Lilith hold certain beliefs and tenets. They generally feel no qualms with hiding their true beliefs in order to maintain a low profile, as survival is key to the proliferation of their ideas across the land.

**Ambition.** Do not settle for mediocrity, nor for complacency. The sharpest and strongest leaders in the cult only retain their power until sharper, stronger underlings stage successful coups.

**Conquest.** Only by inserting yourself and your organization on top of the world - by any and every means available to you - can you ensure your own security and happiness.

**Cruelty.** The world is cruel. If you do not tear others down, then you leave yourself open to be torn down. Survival of the fittest has been, and always will be, the ultimate truth.

**Gluttony.** The world is yours for the taking, for the burning, for the pillaging. Satisfy every hunger you crave.

## MONIKERS

The cult goes by a variety of epithets. The most common are the Cult of Lilith, the Cult of Endless Hunger, the Cult of the Dark One, and the Cult of Devouring or Cult of the Devourer.

## CULT MEMBERS AND BEHAVIOR

Humanoid cultists will attempt to avoid combat whenever possible. If the party manages to corner a cultist and threatens it, the cultist will attempt to bribe the heroes or offer false or misleading information to get the heroes off of their case.

Cultists prefer to only attack heroes when they are backed by fiends that participate in the cult's activities or when they can ambush the heroes to gain the upper hand. When cultists are able to stage an attack on the heroes, it should be a medium to difficult encounter based on the circumstances.

When the heroes deal with cultists of Lilith at any point, use any of the following creatures.



## CULT OF LILITH CREATURE TABLE

CR	Creatures
1/8	Bandit, Cultist, Noble
1/4	Acolyte, Skeleton, Zombie
1/2	Scout, Shadow, Thug
1	Eyesquito, Ghoul, Spineclot
2	Bandit Captain, Berserker, Cult Fanatic, Fireblight, Priest
3	Eyesquito Progenitor, Veteran
4	Succubus/Incubus
5	Air Elemental, Fear Eater, Giant Crocodile, Sanguine Flame, Vampire Spawn
6	Hellcrafter, Invisible Stalker, Mage, Manticore (Croftian), Vrock
7	Energy Vampire, Vampire Courtier
8	Assassin, Cloaker
9	Bone Devil, Unicorn
11	Horned Devil
12	Archmage, Erinyes
13	Vampire
14	Ice Devil, Vampire Reaver, Vampspider
18	Shadowcroft Vampire





Humanoid creatures that could not otherwise cast spells may cast the following spells based on their CR using Charisma as their spellcasting modifier.

CR	Spells
1/8-1	(At Will) <i>brimstone blast</i> , <i>nick</i> (1/Day) <i>jagged bones</i>
2-3	(At Will) <i>brimstone blast</i> , <i>nick</i> (1/Day each) <i>disembowel</i> , <i>jagged bones</i>

## ARC 1: DISCOVERING THE CULT

To begin this adventure, the heroes will need to become aware of the Cult of Lilith. This is a great opportunity to tie the heroes' backstories into the current adventure. Use the following rumors table and plot hooks as inspiration for how you might interest your heroes in the cult. Perhaps they discover it because one of their family members is affected, or because a local person of influence asks the heroes to investigate. These rumors can serve as a useful backdrop to utilize during the heroes' other activities. If any of the heroes have taken the initiative to pursue a specific personal goal, these rumors may help direct them back into conflict with Lilith.

## GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION

Depending on your heroes' particular abilities, they may be well suited to travel great distances with relative ease. Even if they are, they may not be particularly interested in heading specifically to southeast Noord, where the second arc is canonically set. If this is the case, feel free to relocate the town in the second plot arc so that it aligns with the heroes' interests. Perhaps this is a town where individuals from the heroes' backstories live, or it is a town that the heroes have traveled to before, either in their backstories or in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*. The town of Broken Shield is a fine substitute for this town if needed.

However it occurs, the heroes will pick up on enough rumors and plot hooks that they eventually head to this town to investigate the cult threat.

## CULT RUMORS TABLE

Roll or select from the rumors table when the heroes are in a public setting, such as a tavern or a marketplace, where they might overhear gossip.

Whenever a hero is intentionally looking for rumors, they may make a Wisdom (Perception) or Charisma (Persuasion) check to overhear a number of rumors based on their roll, as noted on the table below.

DC	Rumors Gained
12 or lower	1
13-16	2
17-22	3
23 or higher	4

A party that is not intentionally looking for rumors should still hear a minimum of one rumor per populated area that they spend any amount of time in. Rumors 1-4 tie directly to the plot hooks that you can use to interest your heroes in going to Skoro in arc 2, while rumors 5-8 do not link to specific plot hooks but should still garner the heroes' interest.





## RUMOR TABLE

1d8	Rumor
1	The heroes overhear news of a parent or couple whose teenage child has been acting up recently. Nobody has seen the child in several days. The heroes also overhear where each of the parents work or spend the majority of their time.
2	When asking about or listening for information regarding an old friend, the heroes learn that the friend has not been heard from in a number of days.
3	Several people have turned up dead and appear to be killed in exactly the same way. Perhaps this is cult activity, but it almost feels like a serial killer is leaving some kind of calling card.
4	Rumor has it that the cultists believe their own god is more powerful than any other. Some clergy have mentioned that the cult issued written challenges to them, but the clergy are not brave enough to take the cultists up on it.
5	Someone heard that the cultists are actually cannibals, but there are disputing narratives on this. Some maintain the belief that the cultists are all vampires, so the cannibalism rumor is only tangentially true.
6	The cult is somehow tied to Shadowcroft and one of Dracula's former allies. Vampires from Shadowcroft are believed to be especially nasty.
7	Across Norspina, certain cult cells are disproportionately powerful and call the shots for the lesser cult cells. One prominent cell is in southeast Noord, near the Bishalian border.
8	The cult is somehow tied to Shadowcroft. It is probably strongest near the areas where Kamelot appears from time to time.

## CULT PLOT HOOKS

In addition to the rumors that the heroes might hear, the following plot hooks may get the heroes invested in side quests that lead them to Skoro. These side quests come with small rewards if the heroes complete them, so consider offering the heroes at least one plot hook even if they are already invested in pursuing this thread. The more closely you can tie these plot hooks to the heroes personally, the better.

1d6	Plot Hook
1	Concerned Parent
2	A Missing Friend
3	The Bloody Trail
4	Unrighteous Challenge
5	A Promise of Power
6	By Invitation Only

## CONCERNED PARENT

An NPC, preferably one from the heroes' backstories or whom they have had dealings with in the past, confides in them that they have grown increasingly worried about their teenage child. Their child has become withdrawn, angry, and prone to rageful outbursts in recent months. The parent has caught the child drawing strange symbols when they think themselves unobserved.

A week ago, the child vanished. In their room, there was a note with a simple, ominous message: *Don't look for me*. With all the talk about cultists going on, the parent is dreadfully worried... not just that the cultists may have kidnapped their child, but perhaps worse, that the child left of their own accord to seek out the cult. If the heroes can find and deradicalize the child, the parent will be forever grateful.

In the months leading up to their sudden departure, the child often asked about Noordan culture and the best ways by which to travel to Noord. They have also taken an increasing fascination with vampires and with planar travel, particularly looking for any information available about Shadowcroft.

## A MISSING FRIEND

One of the heroes' friends from their backstory or from previous adventures has gone missing. They left no note or notice, and as the heroes inquire, they can learn from their friend's acquaintances that the friend loudly denounced the cult in recent days. They worry that the friend's disappearance is an act of retaliation from the cultists.

This plot hook does not automatically offer the heroes any direction as to where they might look, but it does give them personal vested interest in finding the cultists.



## THE BLOODY TRAIL

Pick one of the heroes in your party that has a reputation for killing hostile creatures in especially bloody ways. This works better if the hero has a signature move with which they finish most battles, but as long as they have a violent reputation within the party then that is sufficient.

While in town or on the road, the heroes come across a gruesome butchery of several innocent commoners. They are each killed in a fashion resembling the hero's trademark. A note is stuffed in one of the victims' wounds. It reads: *To [hero's name]. Training in your techniques. How did I do? The Cult of Devouring thanks you for your ferocity. It will live on.*

Each of the commoners' hands are arranged to point towards the Noordan town of Skoro. The heroes will probably not automatically assume this, but if they set out in the direction that the hands are pointing, then after 1d3 days they come across another imitation murder. The corpses' hands still point in the same direction, and another note has been left for the hero. *Dearest [hero's name]: Our greatest display yet will be in Skoro in four days' time. I personally hope that you witness your handiwork.*

## UNRIGHTEOUS CHALLENGE

Pick the hero in your party that has the highest number of levels in cleric and/or paladin. If there is a tie, pick the hero that has a stronger moral alignment against violating societal norms.

When the heroes are in any town, a barkeeper will hand that hero a sealed envelope. If questioned, the barkeeper will explain that he was threatened by hooded figures that insisted he deliver the letter to that hero specifically.

The letter reads: *My dear [hero's name], you have a reputation of piety, but we have seen through your facade. You are weak of body and spirit, and your faith is found wanting. We offer you a simple challenge: Meet us at Skoro. Pitch your faith against ours. May the true believer win out.*

## A PROMISE OF POWER

Choose one of the heroes in your party that is especially interested in gaining knowledge and might go to great lengths to acquire it. While that hero is sleeping, their dreams are visited by an elvish librarian. The librarian, Sylvia, is a star elf and a concerned citizen of Skoro who is worried about the threat that the cultists pose. If the heroes can travel to Skoro and defeat the cultists, then the cultists' wealth of knowledge written in various tomes will belong to the heroes. Any esoteric musing, obscure magical powers, and the like will be made available to the heroes if they can end the cultists' threat.

This plot hook can easily be adapted with a promise of monetary wealth or political influence if that is more likely to interest a specific hero in your party.

## BY INVITATION ONLY

Choose a member of your party that is morally unscrupulous, especially if this has caused them to butt heads with other party members in the past.

While the hero is sleeping, they are visited by an elvish cultist. The cultist says that great power, wealth, and influence will be given to the hero if they lead their party to Skoro and then turn their party over to the cultists to be slaughtered.

## NOORDAN TOWNS

Using the information provided from most cult plot hooks and clues, the heroes may determine with minimal difficulty that Skoro is an epicenter of cultic activity. If they do not head directly to Skoro, they might instead head to any number of towns in Noord where Kamelot appears at regular intervals.

If they head to such a town, they may gain an additional plot hook that redirects them to Skoro after spending one day in the wrong town.

If the heroes do not have any inkling as to where they should look, then they may be ambushed on the road by cultists. This should be a difficult encounter. Provided that the heroes incapacitate any of the cultists, they may question the cultists. On a DC of 22 or higher using any Charisma skill or using Strength (Intimidation), the cultist caves in and reveals that Skoro is one of their main strongholds in the region. If the heroes fail this DC but roll higher than a 14, then the cultist caves in and reveals that one of their strongholds is in Noord, but refuses to say anything further. The heroes may travel to any Noordan town; if they do not head to Skoro, then they gain an additional plot hook that redirects them to Skoro after spending one day in the wrong town.

## A STRANGER ON THE ROAD

If the heroes have not met "Anette" - a disguise that Palorva uses - then they meet her on the road or in a town on the way to Skoro. Heroes that first completed *Soliloquy of Annihilation* already met her many years ago, so this encounter is not needed if this is the case for any heroes in the party.

Anette will not reveal this to the heroes, but she is actually Palorva, Dracula's own daughter. Palorva is immune to magic that forces her to tell the truth, but is also magically capable of appearing to the caster as though she has been compelled into truthfulness, making her an incredibly dangerous liar. She is using illusory magic to alter her appearance, and if the heroes detect this magic and ask her about it she will feign embarrassment and explain that her hair clip is enchanted to cast illusory makeup on her face. While this is true, it masks the more dangerous illusory magic that completely hides her vampiric nature.



**Read Aloud:** A short distance behind you on the road, you see an expensive-looking carriage drawn by a team of four horses. A heavily armored individual is holding the reins, and through the open front flap of the carriage you can see that a noble lady is riding inside. The carriage gradually gains on you, and it draws up to a halt when it reaches you.

“Greetings, fellow travelers,” the noblewoman says. She is a human with pale skin and dark, elaborately curled hair. She wears fluffy silken finery and a red velvet hat with numerous plumed feathers protruding from it. “What is your destination?”

Provided that the heroes engage in conversation, they can quickly learn the following information.

- The noblewoman is named Anette of house Valethorne.
- She is on her way from Icepoint, Derk’s capital, to Apakku. As an ambassador for her family, she intends to make economic dealings with the Baishin, the oligarchic class of Apakku.
- Her driver is, in fact, an enchanted suit of armor. Its sword is silvered. It has no personality, but offers Anette adequate protection on her journeys.

Over the course of their interactions, Anette teases out each of the heroes’ current goals and deeper motivations. Palorva will use this information to attempt to manipulate the heroes into becoming antithetical to their own held beliefs.

## ARC 2: THE SKORO CELL

The heroes may follow a variety of leads from the first arc to the town of Skoro, where there is a high volume of cult activity in addition to other monstrous threats in the region.

When they arrive in Skoro, they may spend time getting to know the locals and trying to determine who is part of the cult. Going on various side quests may improve the heroes’ standing in the community, and based on the heroes’ individual quest hooks that led them to this point, the cultists may attempt to bribe or recruit the heroes.

### NARRATIVE INFORMATION

Note that this arc is presented in much more detail than arcs 3 and 4. This is because arc 2 deals with a single town while arcs 3 and 4 deal with entire nations. Given the broad number of actions that heroes might take, arcs 3 and 4 provide top level information as opposed to granular information.

## SKORO

This subsection includes an overview of the town of Skoro. For specific information regarding locating the cultists, see the Finding Leads subsection below.

After the town overview, notable locations and NPCs are listed in alphabetical order.

## TOWN OVERVIEW

Skoro is a town of medium size, home to a few thousand people. It has several inns, taverns, and marketplaces as well as large residential neighborhoods that curve around the Skoro Lake in a crescent shape. The center of this crescent is the busiest, most highly populated region of the town and is where most of the specific buildings mentioned can be found.

The town is primarily made of wood cut from the nearby forest and bricks made from the clay-rich hills to the south. It has mild, rainy summers and frigid, snowy winters. The cuisine generally consists of potatoes, fish, root vegetables, grain, and livestock.

**Academic.** Skoro has a school that offers basic education to the youth of the town. People generally stop attending school in their early teen years to begin apprenticeships with hunters, lumberjacks, woodworkers, fishers, tanners, merchants, clergy, or the town guard.

**Aristocratic.** The mayor of Skoro is elected once every eight years out of a pool of candidates that are nominated by residents. The mayor acts as chief legislator and justicar in the town. Though not legally binding, the mayor is expected to listen to the counsel of the local priests, economists, and town guard captains when passing legislation.

**Mercantile.** Skoro trades heavily with other towns throughout Noord and with the nomadic tribes in Bishal. They primarily export wood and fish to the Bishalians in exchange for textiles and weaponry.





**Military.** The town guard in Skoro is large and well-trained for handling roving monsters around the town's borders. They are not as well-trained in dealing with disputes that arise within the town, and have a reputation for lacking nuance in their dealings with the townsfolk.

**Religious.** Skoro is a multi-religious town with a variety of churches, including one to multiple gods in the Celestial Council and three to various Archfae Conclaves.

**Social.** The people of Skoro tend to be interested in outside travelers for their stories, but are otherwise an insular community. Humans and dwarves are the most populous in Skoro, though all major lineages can be found in the town. Most teens and adults in the region are competent with a wood axe and a fishing rod and are not strangers to fighting off monsters. However, they often rely on regional heroes to deal with greater threats, such as the pack of werewolves that has recently taken up residence in the forest.

Any hunter or trapper in Skoro can inform the heroes that the woods have become a much more dangerous place in the past generation, especially in the past twelve years since Dracula's demise. Werewolf packs roam the forest, and nobody has seen it, but they suspect that a vicious unicorn lurks in the woods as well.

If you need to use stats for any NPCs in Skoro, **commoner**, **scout**, **thug**, or **veteran** are all logical choices for a typical towns person in this region.

**Underworld.** Prior to the Cult of Lilith, there was not a unifying criminal element in Skoro. Teenage townsfolk commonly form rival groups that occasionally lead to brawls, but these rarely cause any real damage. The Cult of Lilith capitalizes on the blind spots in the town guard to operate in the town without being caught.

## CHURCHES AND TEMPLES

There are four places of worship in Skoro.

**Celestial Chapel.** Near the town square, heroes can find a squat, single-story brick building with star ornamentation on the doors and stained glass windows. Inside, a simple sanctuary faces a podium from which a speaker might deliver a sermon. More commonly, this sanctuary is used as a place of quiet contemplation of the celestials. The building is maintained by two halfling sisters, Selma and Maggie, who live in a small home a block away. Both are devout worshippers of the Celestial Council, but neither is much of a public speaker.

**Churches of Shibmar and Stravon.** These churches of two Archfae Conclaves neighbor one another with a narrow alley running between them. Each church is similarly designed, though their interior and exterior ornamentation match their respective Conclaves. The Shibmar church is constructed of pine and cedar, while the Stravon church is a brick building.

Each one is a two-story building with a central sanctuary and small, perfumed side rooms for personal contemplation. Each one also has a gathering hall on the second floor that is used for feasts on special occasions.

The Shibmar church is stewarded by an elderly black bear urkou named Winnifred. She is deeply concerned about both the cultists and the werewolves, and is personally offended by the concept of lycanthropy.

The Stravon church is maintained by a three-horned bhrunai named Benedict, who has an eclectic personality and often changes the subject without any discernible rhyme or reason.

**Vertumna Steeple.** A four-sided wooden steeple decorated with depictions of the four seasons in Skoro's north neighborhood is surrounded by a lush flower garden. This is the church of the Vertumna Conclave. A satyr named Gideon tends the flowers and leads seasonal worship services four times a year.

## FISHERY

In the northeast neighborhood, there is a group of three long piers and a number of fishing boats. A large warehouse-style building sits on the shorefront next to these three piers. This is a place where fishers can store their catches, repair their nets or rods or boats, and relax with one another.

The fishery is run by an elderly peg-legged dwarf named Duskar. Duskar's beard is iron-gray, his face lined with age and scars, and his peg leg made from the old warhammer that he used to wield when he was a coastal raider in his younger, more adventurous years. Duskar is wildly conspiratorial and spouts insane theories regarding the alignment of the moons, the significance of the color orange, and the impossibility of cheese being good for you. Duskar also believes that every person - himself included - is part of at least one cult and may or may not realize it. He does not know which cult he is part of, but believes that statistically he must belong to at least one unknowingly.

## LUMBER MILL

The lumber mill has been closed for six weeks. If the heroes explore the mill, they find large piles of sawdust and broken machinery. The mill is incapable of producing any usable lumber at the moment.

The mill is owned and run by a family of kleppin with features resembling beavers. The family consists of three brothers (Bucky, Charles, and Pan), their spouses (Any, James, and Linda), and their adult children.

The heroes may find these families and speak with them about the lumber mill's closure. If they do, they learn that the family has been menaced by hooded cultists and told to close down operations. Bucky believes it is because the cultists are probably working with or for a vampire, and the lumber mill can easily mass-produce stakes.



After the heroes defeat Darakma at the end of this adventure arc, if they are on friendly terms with this kleppin family, then the family provides them with a lifetime supply of free pine stakes that they can redeem any number of times whenever they are in Skoro.

## MAYOR'S MANOR

The mayor's manor is a large building in the center of the crescent of Skoro. It is a three-floor building made of brick for the first floor and wood for the second and third floors. In addition to being the mayor's home, the first floor is a public town hall. It is open to the public from morning to evening each day. Anyone may enter the town hall to discuss business with one another, trade gossip or deals, or petition the mayor on civil or criminal grounds.

The current mayor is a middle-aged female elf named Layli. Layli has been a lifelong resident of Skoro and lived through its conquest under Dracula's iron hand. As mayor, Layli has helped Skoro recover from the brutality of Dracula's regime, but she struggles with exerting any military authority against the cultists for fear of turning into another dictator.

## OBSIDIAN INN

In the shadow of the spike, the Obsidian Inn is a sprawling brick building with several taprooms, private meeting rooms, and overnight accommodations.

The Obsidian Inn is a two-story building with a sizable storage cellar. The ground floor has all of the common areas and private meeting rooms, as well as a large central kitchen servicing every room on the ground floor. The rooms on this floor are usually dimly lit but otherwise hospitable enough. The food is warm and comforting, the drink fresh and merry. Minstrels often perform in the various taprooms in exchange for free drinks. Rusty swords and helmets decorate the walls.

The second floor contains the bedding accommodations, including both private rooms for 5 sc per night and hostel-style arrangements with foot lockers for 1 sc per night.

The cellar has nothing noteworthy but is where the staff keep their food and drinks well stocked.

The heroes may pick up rumors about the cultists here if they have not otherwise determined a course of action. If they did not hear about it otherwise, they hear about the cultists' most recent victims: A family of woodworkers in the northwest neighborhood.

The innkeeper is a trollkin named Louis. Louis has a story or joke for any occasion and is skilled at changing his demeanor to match the energy of any given customer. Anyone who spends time getting to know Louis learns that he is anti-religious; he acknowledges that gods exist, but thinks that they care nothing for sentient species.

## THE SPIKE

A massive shard of obsidian juts out of the ground next to the Obsidian Inn. Nobody knows what kind of natural or magical phenomenon led to the creation of the spike, but it is an odd and notable landmark that draws tourists and pilgrims in various measures year after year.

The spike is harmless and has no magical properties.

## TANNERY

Skoro's tannery is located on the west end of the town square. Business has been thriving lately; hunters sell hides to the tannery, and hunting has been good of late.

Hamond, the tanner, is a middle-aged halfling that has a sour disposition and usually provokes people into arguments for no reason.

The tannery holds an ominous secret, however. Walden, a human hunter, was mauled and turned into a **Garvor werewolf**. He is trying to keep his transformation a secret, but on the last full moon he bit Hamond. Garvor's next full moon is three days after the heroes arrive in town, and this marks Hamond's first transformation.

As panic regarding werewolves spreads through town, the cultists utilize this chaos to commit additional murders.

## TOWN SQUARE

A large town square allows plenty of room for cart merchants and peddlers to sell their wares. Heroes can buy any mundane gear here at normal market pricing, or at a 20% discount if the goods are made entirely out of wood. On festival days, the center of the town square is cleared out for folk dances or displays by performing artists.

## FINDING LEADS

The night before the heroes arrive in Skoro, and every night after that, there is a murder in the town. On the night of Garvor's full moon (three days after the heroes arrive), the murder is committed by Garvor werewolves; on all other nights, the murder is committed by cultists.

The cultists' motives are twofold. Primarily, they intend to prove their loyalty to Lilith. Of secondary importance, the cultists want to prove to the people of Skoro that their gods cannot protect them. As such, the targets of their attacks are folk that have displayed piety and consistently worship at any of the churches in town.

When the werewolves attack on the night of the full moon, they attack Louis at the Obsidian Inn. They do so out of pure happenstance, as he is the closest target to them at the time of their transformation. This is an anomaly in the pattern of murders and is intended to confuse or mislead the heroes. Bloody paw prints abound at the scene of Louis's murder. If the heroes follow these tracks, they lead out of town and into the forest.



The heroes should attempt to proactively find and stop the cultists if they wish to prevent the most deaths. Heroes may come up with any number of ideas. Some of the most anticipated ideas are presented below, but be prepared to adapt to other shenanigans that the heroes attempt.

- Gather all of the vocally religious folk in a single area, such as a church or the mayor's manor, so that they are easier to protect.
- Use one or more clergy as bait and be prepared to ambush the cultists when they make a move.
- Pose as a cultist or cult-curious individual trying to get recruited.
- Issue a public challenge to the cultists, playing to their egos.

Heroes with specific plot hooks from the previous subsection may have additional ideas regarding how they might gain the cultists' attention.

If the heroes manage to catch the cultists in the act of attacking someone, they face a medium encounter. Provided that they incapacitate any of the cultists rather than killing them, they may interrogate the cultists. On a DC of 18 or higher with any Charisma check, the cultist reveals the location of this cell's leader: Darakma, a vampire that lurks in the ruins of an old keep a day's travel west into the forest.

In an interrogation scenario, a hero may also make an unmodified d20 roll. On a roll of 16 or higher, they interrogate a cultist that does not actually believe in the cult's ideals but is participating in order to save themselves and their family from harm. The halfhearted cultist will readily tell the heroes whatever they need to know.

If the heroes fail at their interrogation, then the cultists do not break and the heroes must capture additional cultists in later encounters in order to try again.

If the heroes approach the cultists in a non-combat scenario based on any of their plot hooks, then the cultists may attempt to recruit the heroes. Any hero that wants to play along with this must succeed on a DC 20 CHA/Deceiving check to avoid having their ruse seen through.

If all the heroes succeed on this check, they may skip the Pursuing the Cultists subsection below and move straight to Darakma's lair, the Ruins.

## PURSUING THE CULTISTS

Once the heroes have successfully located Darakma's lair, they must travel through the forest to reach the ruined keep. The forest is full of dangerous threats, so if they do not travel along with other cultists, they must contend with two combat encounters before reaching the ruins.

The first combat is against a pack of Garvor werewolves. Use the stats of **Garvor werewolves**, **Garvor bloodhunter werewolves**, and **Garvor alpha werewolves**, along with as many **dire wolves** as needed. This encounter should be deadly. The werewolves will all fight until dead.

After this encounter, the heroes get a chance to take a short rest before the next encounter. The second encounter pits the heroes against two **unicorns**. One is a midnight black, and the other has dark, rust-colored fur. Both unicorns are cruel and look to torture anyone they can, but they also have a greater survival instinct than the werewolves and they will retreat once reduced to one half their maximum hit points.

After overcoming these combat encounters, the heroes may reach the ruined keep.

## THE RUINED KEEP

***Read Aloud:** A crumbling, decrepit keep, this building may have once been taller and larger. Now, it is still a foreboding four-story stone bunker. You see a broken glass window on the third floor, completely blackened windows on the fourth floor, and a menacing iron gate on the ground floor. Ivy clings to the keep's walls, and the entire estate looks to be in utter disrepair. If you did not know better, you might assume nobody has lived here in many years.*

Inside the Ruined Keep, Darakma may be located anywhere that you believe to be most interesting. If you wish to leave it to chance, roll on the table below to determine where she is and what she is doing. When the heroes come face to face with Darakma, she will fight to the death. Darakma is a **Shadowcroft vampire**. She may have additional help based on where the heroes face her.

### 1d4 Darakma's Location and Activity

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Ritual Room. Darakma is overseeing a new initiation. When the heroes face Darakma, add 2 <b>priests</b> and 1 <b>cultist</b> .   |
| 2 | Ground Floor. Darakma is holding a meeting with new initiates. When the heroes face Darakma, add 4 <b>priests</b> .              |
| 3 | Second or Third Floor. Darakma is drinking the blood of one of her prisoners. When the heroes face Darakma, add 1 <b>mimic</b> . |
| 4 | Fourth Floor. Darakma is studying her notes on the cult. Darakma has no additional backup when the heroes face her.              |



## THE IRON GATE

The iron gate by which any foot traffic may enter the keep is unlocked, but completely covered in runes that appear to be painted out of dried blood.

A creature may make a DC 22 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) check to determine the effects of walking through the gate. On a failure, they learn no information and cannot repeat the check. Living creatures that walk through the gate gain one level of exhaustion and suffer 3d10 necrotic damage. Creatures that have been indoctrinated into the cult by completing the Blood Ritual in the ritual chamber are immune to this effect.

Darakma may also temporarily bless up to six creatures at a time and grant them sanctuary, allowing them to pass through the gate unaffected.

## CLIMBING THE KEEP

Heroes that wish to avoid the Iron Gate may climb the outside of the keep. A broken window three floors up allows an alternate entry point. The keep is covered in vines, so there are ample handholds. Climbing the keep requires a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check. Creatures that fail fall and take 3d6 bludgeoning damage, then may try again. Maneuvering over the broken glass in the window requires a DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Creatures take 2d4 slashing damage on a failure, and half as much on a successful check.

## GROUND FLOOR

The ground floor is fitted to serve as a council room. A central oval table is surrounded by eight chairs, one of which is high-backed to signify greater authority.

The table is currently bare but is dust-free, signifying that it is often used.

A spiral staircase against the far wall leads up to the second floor or down into the ritual room.

## SECOND AND THIRD FLOORS

The second and third floors are each divided into four bedchambers accessible along a central stone corridor. The spiral staircase at the back of the hall continues up from second to third and from third to fourth floor.

Each suite is furnished with three small beds, a washbasin, and a wardrobe with several sets of tattered common clothes. Each bed has a foot locker next to it, but each of these are actually **mimics**. If the heroes threaten or attempt to rescue the prisoners in these rooms, the mimics attacks them.

Each suite also contains three humanoids that are enthralled to Darakma. She rotates between them to keep her hunger sated. The humanoids are commanded never to leave the tower, but their enthralled condition breaks upon Darakma's death (even if this death is not permanent).

## FOURTH FLOOR

The fourth floor is Darakma's personal suite. The windows have thick curtains drawn over them and have been painted black. Most of the fourth floor is Darakma's study, which includes a small personal library and a series of journals and ledgers that Darakma has filled out with detailed information regarding certain cult cells across Norspina. This information allows the heroes to learn of a powerful and influential cell in the Duchy of Ice Coast (see arc 3 in this adventure).

Next to the bookshelves, a doorway opens out to an overhanging balcony that offers a panoramic view of the forest around the keep. Darakma often admires the forest here at night.

A walk-in closet behind Darakma's writing desk contains a coffin filled with ancestral soil from Shadowcroft. This is where Darakma regenerates if she is killed. Burning the coffin and salting the earth with garlic salt is sufficient to prevent her from resurrecting.

## THE RITUAL ROOM

The cellar floor is bare stone covered in bones, both animal and humanoid. It is also covered in dried blood.

Creatures that wish to join the cult must bring an unwilling humanoid to the ritual room, slit its throat, and bathe in its fresh blood until their body is fully coated. They must then drink the remainder of the blood and eat the creature's heart. After doing so, the cultist gains access to the occult magic based on their CR as shown in the Cult of Lilith spells table. A hero that does this gains access to Lilith's occult magic and can cast the following spells from *HGtVH*.

(At Will) *brimstone blast*, *nick*  
(1/Day) *jagged bones*





## DARAKMA'S NETWORK

After defeating Darakma and looting the keep, the heroes can easily determine that this is much bigger than just Darakma. If they did not know already, the heroes learn that they are dealing with “the Cult of Lilith” and it has spread across most of Norspina. Stopping it will be difficult and will require both grueling combat and careful application of political influence.

Darakma's notes and ledgers specifically mention the Duke of Ice Coast as one of the cult's major players. Ice Coast encapsulates the northwest region of Derk. Icepoint, Derk's capital and the original home of Dracula, is in the center of this region.

## ARC 3: A MISGUIDED DUCHESS

Over the course of this adventure arc, the heroes will interact with Evyna Stoneleaf, the Duchess of Ice Coast. Duchess Stoneleaf has been bought and paid for by the Cult of Lilith; she is a member of the cult, but she has made this allegiance because she believes it the best way to establish safety and stability for her people. She does not believe in or support the tenets of the cult, but turns a blind eye to their nefarious practices. She originally hoped that this would minimize the extent of their damage, but this quickly morphed into fear for her own life and the lives of her immediate family.

Although this arc contains plenty of potential for combat, the heroes will primarily need to utilize every noncombat resource at their disposal to convince Duchess Stoneleaf to take a stand against the cultists. Once they convince her to do so, the region erupts in chaos as town guards and commoner militias try to militarily oust the cultists from the region.

## THE DUCHY OF ICE COAST

Ice Coast is the duchy that extends along the northeast of Derk. Icepoint, the capital of the nation, is at the heart of the duchy, and Duchess Stoneleaf's estate is in Icepoint. The heroes may need to travel throughout the region during this arc, and some of the other key locations in the duchy are briefly mentioned below.

## REDROCK

Redrock is a small coastal town accessible only by boat or by journeying through the Mad Forest. Redrock is a Haven.

Redrock has each of the major buildings common to a town: An inn and tavern, a small market, and trade buildings for various craftspeople.

The town hall is an imposing gothic building that houses the brutal city watch and Mayor Otar von Red. Otar's office includes a hidden passage behind his bookshelf. At the end of this passage, there is a bare wooden room with a stone arch in it. This arch can be activated as a portal that teleports anyone to or from the matching arch in Frankenstein's personal bedchambers in the laboratory. Both portals must be simultaneously active to work, so this portal has long been dormant given that Frankenstein is dead and Shelley missing.

Mayor Otar von Red rules Redrock through fear. He was completely loyal to Dracula before Dracula was killed. Now, in order to retain power, Red has doubled down on ruling through the use of a brutal police force. Both Red and most of the force are also now members of the Cult of Lilith.

## ADDITIONAL AREAS

There are dozens of additional villages and principalities in the duchy of Ice Coast. As you see fit, the heroes may need to travel to additional areas in order to achieve any number of goals pertinent to the campaign. Suggestions for such goals include:

- Quietly secure support for Duchess Stoneleaf's plan to denounce the cultists.
- Assassinate a cult leader.
- Find and rescue a member of Duchess Stoneleaf's family.

Towns and villages throughout the Ice Coast generally have the following characteristics.

**Academic.** Small villages in Ice Coast generally do not have large schools. They might have a single school teaching basic reading and arithmetic; alternatively, several villages within a day's travel of one another might collaborate to establish a more robust boarding school that they each share responsibility for.

**Aristocratic.** Derk is governed using a traditional peerage system. Individual villages have barons that report to regional viscounts. These viscounts, in turn, report to the duke or duchess of their region - in this case, Evyna Stoneleaf. These positions are hereditary and each noble family may choose who their successor is.

**Economic.** Most villages in the Ice Coast region are not wealthy but not impoverished. Their close proximity to the capital of the nation promotes a decent amount of trade across principalities and with international merchants traveling to and from Icepoint.

**Military.** The towns in Ice Coast each have a small militia that can be quickly levied by the baron. Most also have at least a rudimentary town guard. If the heroes fight the common town guard or militia, then use **guards** to represent the town guard, **thugs** to represent the militia, and **veterans** to represent the sheriffs, captains, and the like.



**Religious.** Derk's national patron religion is veneration of the Stravon Conclave, but there is a strong subculture of folk who worship the Celestial Council. The priests that worship the Stravon Conclave typically do not begrudge those that worship one or more celestials and individuals are given the freedom to choose which religion they practice, or if they practice at all.

**Social.** As is true of most towns in Derk, the folk in towns throughout Ice Coast are usually hospitable but guarded around strangers. It takes a lot to earn the trust of these folk, but if the heroes do, then the cult will be significantly weakened and will find little success among prospective recruits in the region.

**Underworld.** Ice Coast did not have any organized criminal networks for many years, but this has changed in light of the Cult of Lilith. Local gangs of miscreants often cause minor problems for the villages, but the cult is a much more significant ongoing threat.

## ICEPOINT OVERVIEW

Icepoint is the capital of Derk and the largest city in the duchy of Ice Coast. A detailed rundown of Icepoint can be found in Chapter 2. A brief overview for ease of reference is included here.

## THE ARISTOCRACY

Many noble families have estates in Icepoint. Nobles may have earned their place in high society due to wildly successful business ventures or military contribution, but most come into power hereditarily. Most noble families have been established for several hundred years. Each ducal region has an estate here, although most dukes and duchesses live in their own duchies and only stay in their estates in Icepoint when they are visiting the king or other nobles.

Duchess Stoneleaf, as the duchess of Ice Coast, has one large estate in Icepoint. She occasionally travels to tend affairs throughout the region but primarily stays in Icepoint, hosting lesser nobles in her own estate when needed.

## KING DEKLAND VI

The heroes may seek an audience with King Dekland VI during this arc. Dekland VI is fourteen years old. On his sixth birthday, Palorva murdered his father, Dekland V, in front of Dekland VI. She then emptied Dekland V's blood into a gilded tub and gave Dekland VI a bath in his father's own blood while singing to him the entire time.

Needless to say, Dekland VI is a broken person. He is erratic, prone to outbursts of paranoid anger, and terrified of doing anything to upset Palorva. He knows nothing of sound governance or economic welfare. Every decision he makes is born out of fear that he may one day suffer the same fate as his father.

The heroes will find that Dekland VI is not helpful in regards to the cult. If they try to get him to intervene, he will do so on the cult's side, declaring the heroes fugitives from the law and placing a bounty on their heads.

Dekland VI is not immune to any form of magical manipulation, but he is one of Palorva's familiars, so he is incapable of doing anything that would be explicitly against her wishes. She has told Dekland that she desires for Derk to remain a place of corruption and despair.

The heroes may use spells or other methods to change specific decrees that Dekland might make, but if anyone in Dekland's court learns of their attempted meddling then the heroes will still come under fire. In such an event, Dekland VI would be ousted and his advisors - two of whom are vampires sired to Palorva - take control of Derk directly.

## THE CULT AND THE UNDERWORLD

Prior to Dracula's rise a couple decades ago, Derk had no form of truly organized crime. Local gangs would smuggle goods in and out of the ports, but that was the extent of nefarious activity.

Now, under Dekland VI, Derk in general and Icepoint in particular are essentially police states. Two of Dekland's advisors - Vlad and Martyn - are both vampires sired to Palorva. Both of these advisors, along with Dekland himself, oversee Derk's governance in accordance with Palorva's wishes. Vlad and Martyn oversee a spy network that reports on anyone engaging in any activity that seems remotely conspiratorial.

The Cult of Lilith is allowed to blossom freely in Derk. Palorva is cautious about Lilith's strength, but finds it delicious that the nation that once killed her mother on religious grounds is now overrun by cultists.

Derk's criminal element is inextricably linked to the Cult of Lilith by the time the heroes arrive in Derk. As the heroes try to clean up corrupt officials like Duchess Stoneleaf, they will find that fixing any one piece of the system leads to two more corrupted links in a conspiratorial web of criminals and cultists.

## DUCHESS STONELEAF OF ICE COAST

She is not the only politician that the heroes will need to worry about during this arc, but Duchess Evyna Stoneleaf of Ice Coast is the focal point of this arc. She has more influence than anyone in Derk currently given Dekland VI's weakness, so getting her out of the cult's circle of influence dramatically shifts the prevailing narrative in Derk.

Evyna Stoneleaf's full character writeup is in Appendix A. She has the stats of a **noble**.



## GETTING TO THE DUCHESS

The heroes will need to find a way to get the duchess to stop supporting the Cult of Lilith. The easiest short-term solution is assassination, but this will lead to a power vacuum that does not solve any long-term problems. If the heroes can convince Duchess Stoneleaf to denounce the cult and side with them against Lilith, this is a much more beneficial long-term solution.

Information for assassinating, discrediting, or flipping the duchess is provided below. Each of these approaches involve several challenges and potential setbacks that set the trajectory for the majority of this adventure arc.

## ASSASSINATING THE DUCHESS

If the heroes decide to assassinate Stoneleaf in hopes of propping up a noble less sympathetic to the cultists, they may proceed accordingly. Breaking into the duchess's estate or catching her elsewhere in Icepoint is not particularly difficult. She is escorted at nearly all times by a personal bodyguard named Heinrich, who has the stats of a **gladiator**. The rest of her personal security have the stats of **guards**.

The heroes will be able to overcome these forces and assassinate her with very little difficulty. The real trouble starts after the assassination. The heroes find that any noble that they elevate to the position of duke or duchess is quickly bought or blackmailed by the cult, leading them to the same problem but with a new head. Worse, after the assassination, public sentiment turns against the heroes if there were any witnesses, and the cultists are able to claim that they are the ones keeping peace and stability.

The heroes will need to travel to individual towns and villages as well as different neighborhoods in Icepoint to confront different cult cells directly. After the assassination, the heroes must defeat a minimum of ten cult cells before the political headwinds finally turn in their favor. Each cult cell should involve a number of encounters of various difficulties as shown on the table below.

Cult Cell	Encounters
1-2	2 Medium
3	1 Medium, 1 Difficult
4	1 Medium, 1 Deadly
5-6	2 Difficult
7	1 Difficult, 1 Deadly
8-9	2 Deadly
10	2 Difficult, 1 Deadly

## DISCREDITING THE DUCHESS

If the heroes mount a nonviolent political campaign against the duchess, then over the course of several weeks they will be able to gin up enough support among the non-corrupt city officials and military personnel that Duchess Stoneleaf will abdicate her title, allowing the heroes or one of their allies to ascend to the role.

This approach is far more likely to work in the heroes' favor than assassination, but it comes with a built in challenge: It takes a great deal of time and effort to maintain political momentum. The heroes will need to actively campaign in taverns, town halls, guard garrisons, marketplaces, temples, and the like in order to garner the support they need for this to be successful.

Once a new duke or duchess is in power, the cultists will immediately attack this individual with blackmail, physical threats, and political slander. This direct attack will allow the heroes a chance to trace the cultists to some of their strongest cells and confront them directly.

The heroes must defeat a minimum of six cult cells before the political headwinds finally turn in their favor. Each cult cell should involve a number of encounters of various difficulties as shown on the table below.

Cult Cell	Encounters
1-2	2 Medium
3	1 Medium, 1 Difficult
4	1 Medium, 1 Deadly
5-6	2 Difficult

The heroes will also have to contend with the ongoing threat posed by the different events that the cultists enact (see Cult Events below) given the long-term nature of this plan.

## FLIPPING THE DUCHESS

If the heroes find a way to get Duchess Stoneleaf to denounce the cultists and side with them, then they will be able to defeat the cultists most quickly and most permanently.

Getting to Duchess Stoneleaf will be difficult given the extent to which the cult has already blackmailed her. She will be paranoid and unwilling to trust that the heroes actually have her best interests at heart. She will even privately worry that this is some kind of test that the cultists have set up to see whether she is truly loyal to them.

If the heroes are able to convince her otherwise through a series of skill checks, magic, or combination thereof, then she will admit that she wishes to see the cult eradicated. She fears for the lives of her relatives, however. If the heroes can travel to four different towns across the duchy and discreetly extract her adult children and their spouses, bringing them back to Icepoint and kept in a safe undisclosed location, then she will publicly side with the heroes.



It is up to the heroes to determine what might be a safe location in Icepoint. Three of Stoneleaf's four children (Evylyn, Junyper, and Jadyne) are in large but not particularly noteworthy towns throughout Ice Coast. Her eldest, Forrest, lives in Redrock, which will pose the largest challenge to the heroes.

Some parties may be very well suited to extraction missions. Teleportation magic in particular makes this much more easy. If the heroes maintain a low profile, then they may extract the Stoneleaf heirs without raising any suspicion. If they are caught, they will face a very deadly encounter wherein they must worry about the safety of their wards as well as their own health.

Each of the Stoneleafs and their spouses have the stats of **nobles**.

After rescuing Duchess Stoneleaf's family, she is willing to publicly denounce the cult. There is an attempt on her life that same night. The creatures include two **assassins** and enough additional creatures from the cult to provide the heroes with a very deadly encounter.

If Duchess Stoneleaf does not survive this encounter, then her son Forrest becomes the Duke of Ice Coast and maintains the position that she set out before she was assassinated. In either case, town guards and citizen militias across Ice Coast drive out many cult cells on their own. The heroes must only contend with three cult cells themselves.

Each cult cell should involve a number of encounters of various difficulties as shown on the table below.

Cult Cell	Encounters
1-2	2 Medium
3	1 Medium, 1 Difficult

## CULT EVENTS

The Cult of Lilith does not stand idly by while the heroes attempt to mount a political campaign or espionage activities against them. While hit squads may attack the heroes at any interval, the cult as a whole also has nefarious plans for the region. At regular intervals, the cultists perform some kind of terrible act. This keeps the stakes high and forces the heroes into action. It may also distract the heroes from actually finding a permanent solution to the cultists' threat as they respond to individual crises that the cultists cause.

The chaotic events that the cultists cause are presented in chronological order below.

## PESTILENCE

The cult introduces pestilence into Icepoint ten days after the heroes first reach Icepoint.

The cultists intentionally release **deathplague rats**. There is a severe outbreak of Deathboil Plague as a result. The heroes will need to act quickly and decisively to quarantine people, trace the infected, and source medicine for the ill.

Heroes may track down the responsible cult cell. If they do, include at least one **erinyes**.

Heroes lose Goodwill if more than 25% of the population dies. They gain +2 Goodwill among the Mercantile facet of Derk if fewer than 15% dies, and +4 Goodwill if fewer than 7% of the population dies.

## BLOOD SACRIFICE

Two weeks after the cultists begin the plague in Icepoint, they conduct a blood sacrifice in a small town a day's ride southeast of the capital.

This blood sacrifice includes laying siege to the town so that nobody may escape; defeating the town guard or militia as needed; tying up every towns person; and slaughtering them all in cold blood.

The town immediately loses its status as a Haven and becomes desecrated ground as a result. Any creature that is not a member of the Cult of Lilith gains +2 Fear upon entering the town until it is cleansed of its evil via *greater restoration* or similar magic.

The heroes likely will not be in the area and as such are unable to stop this atrocity. If they are in the area, they may protect the town by engaging in a very deadly combat encounter with at least one **vampspider**.

## GRAND ARSON

One week after the Blood Sacrifice, the cultists burn down 80% of a town's property. Dozens if not hundreds of people are injured and homeless as a result, which is especially brutal in the cold winter. The heroes may find solutions for the unhoused villagers and may hunt down the individual cult cell responsible, which includes at least one **fire elemental**. Successfully rehousing the commoners earns the heroes +4 Goodwill in the Mercantile facet of Derk.



## BLACK MASS

Five days after the Grand Arson, the cultists put out the word that there will be a black mass in Redrock in three days' time. The heroes may hear of this and travel to Redrock in time to witness the black mass, which involves the slaughter of dozens of innocent prisoners shipped in by the Fordraugr vampires from Noord.

The heroes may intervene at any time. At the beginning of the black mass and upon intervening, each hero must make a DC 16 Sanity check. Heroes that actively practice a religion suffer a -2 to their rolls when making this check.

On a failure, a hero gains +2 Fear. On a success, a hero only gains +1 Fear.

Provided that the heroes intervene in the black mass, they may face the cult cell directly. Fighting this cell is a very deadly combat encounter with at least one **erinyes** and Otar von Red, who uses the stats of a **berserker**.

## REPEAT

Every 2d8+2 days after the Black Mass, roll 1d4. The cultists strike again based on the roll, targeting new towns each time.

1. Pestilence
2. Blood Sacrifice
3. Grand Arson
4. Black Mass

## CULT MEMBERS AND RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Throughout this arc, use combat encounters with cult members liberally. See the Cult of Lilith Creature Table for a list of creatures that make for ideal cultists (or the fiends and monstrosities with whom they consort). These cultists will try to assassinate the heroes at any turn. They will also attempt to discredit the heroes, turn public sentiment against them, and make it impossible for the heroes to find food, lodgings, or supplies wherever they go. The heroes will need to utilize their professional ranks and non-combat abilities as much as their combat prowess to defeat the cult in Derk.

## A HIGH-STAKES SIDE QUEST

As the heroes travel throughout Ice Coast campaigning against the cultists, consider introducing an ongoing side quest involving Laucian Virir and Algernis Fylaxos (see Appendix A for both NPC entries). These scientists are seeking a cure for vampirism and may recruit the heroes into procuring occult texts, scrolls, or ingredients from various cultist cells. The heroes may pursue this side quest without being seriously diverted from their overarching quest to defeat the cultists in the region. If they are successful in the side quest, then each hero is given a rare potion of their choice and 1,000 sc as thanks.

## AFTERMATH

The state of affairs in Derk after the heroes move on from this plot arc may be orderly or extremely chaotic. Consider whether Duchess Evyna Stoneleaf is still in power and consider the heroes' reputations. How many of the Cult Events were allowed to transpire? How many towns were thrown into disarray? Were the duchess and the heroes able to keep the townsfolk from tearing one another apart, or were there a series of false accusations of being a cultist? The heroes may choose to stay in Derk for a prolonged amount of time attempting to put out each fire that springs up, but they might come to realize that they may never solve every problem in Derk that springs up in the aftermath of the cultists' takeover. The amount of chaos that the heroes leave in their wake should be directly tied to how well they handled each crucial social confrontation throughout this arc.

## ARC 4: THE FALSE PRIEST

Both the Cult of Lilith and the heroes are well known entities, and the events of the third adventure arc secures their infamy in one another's eyes. The heroes will quickly hear of another powerful cell leader in the cult, this time operating out of the capital of Forsten.

Heroes may hear of this individual in a variety of ways. Darakma's notes that the heroes find in arc 2 mention Wolden, Forsten's capital. The various cult cells that the heroes break up over the course of arc 3 also offer a way for the heroes to learn of the cult activity here. Finally, if the heroes seem a little lost as to where they might be needed next, a variety of allied NPCs can direct them to Wolden. Joanna Harker and Credence Bradshaw are both reasonable candidates. If you feel like making matters especially complicated, Morgana can direct the heroes here if she is still serving as an ally or semi-ally to the heroes.



# TOWNS IN FORSTEN

For many years, Forsten was ravaged by civil war. Individual regions or towns became their own ruling entities and squabbled over territory and resources with their neighbors. Janice Magillory was nominally the queen and was not entirely unsuccessful at establishing herself as a unifying figurehead for the nation, but after she was assassinated the nation completely imploded into infighting.

Each town capable of fortifying itself turned into a fortress city, and each village incapable of doing so pledged fealty to the closest bastion of safety. Crime syndicates flourished in this environment and warlords became the governors and legislators of the region.

It took many years of effort, but over the past decade a unifying voice has consolidated much of the fractious land back into a nation. Benedict Sundry, known to most simply as the Father of Mercies, emerged on the national stage as a powerful orator. He is now the high priest of Tovare in Forsten. By scapegoating the Old Forest as the source of their problems, the Father of Mercies managed to pull together enough towns and regions throughout Forsten that Wolden, the nominal capital of the nation, once again exerts political authority over the land.

The Father of Mercies is a false priest and is the primary villain of this arc. A full writeup of his story is in Appendix A.

As heroes travel to each town in Forsten, you may use the following tables to determine certain aspects of the town. More information about Forsten's economic and societal norms can be found in Chapter 2.

## 1d4 Town Size

- 1 **Tiny:** 200-1,000 people
- 2 **Small:** 1,000-3,000 people
- 3 **Average:** 3,000-10,000 people
- 4 **Large:** 10,000-25,000 people

## 2d6 Town Prosperity

- 2 **Impoverished:** Most merchants ask 200% the market price of any goods when they sense that the heroes are affluent. There is little to no infrastructure and conditions are unsanitary.
- 3-5 **Poor:** Most merchants ask 200% the market price of any goods when they sense that the heroes are affluent. Infrastructure is poor and the town guard ill equipped.
- 6-8 **Average:** Market prices are standard. The town's infrastructure is adequate, the town guard fairly competent, and sanitation conditions reasonably healthy.
- 9-11 **Wealthy:** Most merchants on friendly terms with the heroes offer them deals, such as free trinkets with any purchase. Infrastructure is good, the city guard well equipped, and crime relatively uncommon.
- 12 **Prosperous:** Most merchants on friendly terms with the heroes offer them deals, such as free trinkets with any purchase. Infrastructure is exceptional, the city guard well equipped, and crime at an all time low.





### 1d10 Cult Presence

- 1-4 Extremely strong. Every major town official is a member of the cult or beholden to the cult.
- 5-7 Very strong. The baron, sheriff, or another prominent official is a member of the cult or beholden to the cult.
- 8-9 Present, but not strong. There are several cultists in town but they are not in positions of power.
- 10 Weak. There are fewer than a dozen cultists in the town and they are disorganized.

## WOLDEN

Wolden, the capital of the nation, is a fortified coastal city built along the bottom of a series of craggy cliffs. A large fortress rests on the top of these cliffs. It is accessible via switchback stairways and large lifts operated by thick chains and industrial cranks that teams of oxen are trained to pull by walking in circles while yoked to the contraption. The stretch of land between the base of the cliffs and the docks is densely packed with apartment housing and a variety of bustling marketplaces.

## WOLDEN OVERVIEW

Basic information about the various aspects of life in Wolden is provided below. The heroes may interact with any of these facets of life in Wolden.

**Academic.** Under the direction of the Father of Mercies, Wolden's first university is currently under construction. Forsten has not placed much stock in formal education in the past, but the Father of Mercies insists that this will be healthy for the nation. If left unchecked, the Father of Mercies will use the university to indoctrinate more people both within Forsten and from other nations into the Cult of Lilith.

**Aristocratic.** King Aaron van Wolden nominally serves as the ruler of Forsten. He was not elected and is not particularly popular, but he was chosen by the Father of Mercies, who claims that the gods deemed Aaron the correct person to become the monarch. In private, Aaron has no power and does whatever the Father of Mercies wants him to.

**Mercantile.** Wolden never completely collapsed during the civil war and its position as a notable maritime trade hub allowed it to maintain a degree of prosperity. Now that the infighting in the nation is almost entirely resolved, Wolden has prospered as more seafaring and overland merchants trade their goods and services with Wolden.

**Military.** Wolden has a sizable standing military that is beholden to the wishes of King Aaron van Wolden. The Temple of Tovare also has a personal standing army directed by the Father of Mercies.

The king's army consists of **guards** and **veterans**. The church's army consists of **thugs**, **priests**, and **gladiators**. The vast majority of the church's army are personally dedicated to the Father of Mercies and ideologically dedicated to the Celestial Council, especially the militaristic goddess Rasheen. Most would be devastated to learn that they have actually been serving Lilith all along.

**Social.** The social fabric of Wolden is generally unified under the leadership of the Father of Mercies. Most people of Wolden see the Father of Mercies as solely responsible for reuniting the nation and believe him to be a prophet. Most view themselves as lucky to be alive during the rebirth of Forsten that he has brought about.

**Religious.** An overwhelming majority of Woldenians worship the Celestial Council, especially Tovare and Rasheen. Many believe that the Celestial Council blessed them with leadership from the Father of Mercies. A significant minority of these devotees are actually cultists of Lilith, and they quietly enjoy the knowledge that the Father of Mercies himself has led an entire nation into the inadvertent veneration of Lilith.

**Underworld.** While crime syndicates used to flourish in Wolden, the Father of Mercies has put an end to such sinful activity. Of course, the Cult of Lilith is a glaring exception, and they are given the license to freely perform any activities they wish.

## THE FORTRESS

The fortress overlooking Wolden is large enough and secure enough to house the entirety of Wolden's population in it for three weeks in the event of a siege, although living conditions are not very comfortable in such an event. Living quarters are in bunkers carved into the cliff faces just beneath the fortress itself. The fortress is outfitted with heavy catapults, half a dozen crenelated walls with staggered portcullis gateways, and magical wards designed to keep out fiends. Unbeknownst to King Aaron van Wolden, these wards have long since been deactivated by the Cult of Lilith.





## THE TEMPLE

The epicenter of all cultural, economic, and spiritual matters in Forsten is the Temple of Tovare in Wolden. In addition to being a place of public worship, it is the Father of Mercies's home and personal palace. It is a magnificent estate of marble and gold with grand auditoriums, stunning courtyard gardens, and a variety of museum-style chambers showcasing various items of religious import that the Father of Mercies has collected or been gifted over the years.

People gather at the temple three times per week to listen to the Father of Mercies deliver rousing sermons of unity and strength against the darkness posed by the forest and by the world beyond.

## CULT ACTIVITIES

Partially to give the Father of Mercies an issue to demagogue, and partially because of an overwhelming desire to destroy and consume, the Cult of Lilith will engage in a variety of nefarious activities throughout Forsten over the course of this arc. As in arc 3, the heroes may respond to these events or prevent them if they are very proactive. These events do not happen in Wolden, as the cultists wish not to interfere with the Father of Mercies.

## BLOOD RIVER

Five days after the heroes arrive in Forsten, the Cult of Lilith dumps thousands of gallons of blood into a local stream. Any nearby towns and villages experience an immediate crisis as they no longer have reliable access to fresh water. This could lead to a crop blight, famine, and/or plague unless the heroes quickly find a way to solve the issue. The blood clears out of the water after six days, but the damage may already be done. Successfully resolving the crisis so that there is no severe famine or plague earns the heroes +4 Goodwill in the Mercantile facet of Forsten.

## GRAND ARSON

One week after the Blood River clears up, the cultists burn down 80% of a town's property. Dozens if not hundreds of people are injured and homeless as a result, which is especially brutal in the cold winter. The heroes may find solutions for the unhoused villagers and may hunt down the individual cult cell responsible, which includes at least one **fire elemental**. Successfully rehousing the commoners earns the heroes +4 Goodwill in the Mercantile facet of Forsten.

## WITCH REVELS

Five days after the Grand Arson, the cultists engage in a ritual that involves celebrating Lilith's unending hunger. This is a publicly announced event that the heroes may catch wind of before it occurs, so the heroes have a reasonable chance of arriving before or during the revel. The revel involves sacrificing dozens of innocent townsfolk and painting occult symbols on the ground using their entrails. Provided that the heroes intervene before or during the revel, they face a very deadly encounter involving at least 1 **treant** and at least 3 **druids**.

## BLACK MASS

Five days after the Grand Arson, the cultists put out the word that there will be a black mass in Broken Shield in three days' time. The heroes may hear of this and travel to Broken Shield in time to witness the black mass, which involves the slaughter of dozens of innocent townsfolk.

The heroes may intervene at any time. At the beginning of the black mass and upon intervening, each hero must make a DC 16 Sanity check. Heroes that actively practice a religion suffer a -2 to their rolls when making this check.

On a failure, a hero gains +2 Fear. On a success, a hero only gains +1 Fear.

Provided that the heroes intervene in the black mass, they may face the cult cell directly. Fighting this cell is a very deadly combat encounter with at least one **erinyes** and at least one **mage**.

## REPEAT

Every 2d8+2 days after the Black Mass, roll 1d4. The cultists strike again based on the roll, targeting new towns each time.

1. Blood River
2. Grand Arson
3. Witch Revels
4. Black Mass





# THE FATHER OF MERCIES

The Father of Mercies is the primary villain of this arc. Although he claims (and truly believes) to be a high priest of Tovare, he is in fact the arch-cultist of Lilith and is possessed by Legion.

## SEVERE COGNITIVE DISSONANCE

The Father of Mercies holds two utterly contradictory thoughts in his head at once. These thoughts are completely irreconcilable, but he has been so completely psychologically tortured and manipulated by Palorva that he refuses to realize or confront this dissonance.

On the one hand, the Father of Mercies truly believes everything that he espouses in his sermons. He believes that he is a champion and a prophet of the celestials chosen by Tovare to unite Forsten and bring it into an era of glory. He believes that he is the embodiment of morality and justice and sees it as his responsibility to shepherd the nation.

On the other hand, he is also aware that he is possessed by Legion and is the head of the Cult of Lilith. He believes that his position as the leader of Lilith's cult allows him power over the cultists, which enables him to direct their efforts across Forsten. When the Cult of Lilith performs a horrendous ritual in one of Forsten's towns, the Father of Mercies sees this as a necessary act of pruning. He often mentions in his sermons that people who suffer great travesties at the hands of the cult had it coming due to a lack of faith.

## THE FATHER'S MESSAGE

If the heroes attend any of the sermons delivered thrice-weekly by the Father of Mercies, they see that he has united Wolden through a combination of fear and hatred for the unknown. While he claims to be a spokesman of Tovare, his messages have little to do with salvation, redemption, or cultivation. Instead, they have to do with security, conquest, and judgment. Nonetheless, the Father of Mercies has a tremendous amount of support and the vast majority of Woldenians are avid supporters of the Father.

## THE DARK BOON

The Father of Mercies has received a unique boon as a result of the confluence of demonic energy suffusing his Essence. So long as a critical mass of people believe in his cult of personality, he cannot be permanently killed.

Heroes that attack the Father of Mercies directly will find that he is quite easy to defeat. Although he is protected by his temple's private army, the Father himself simply has the stats of a **priest**.

However, if they kill the Father of Mercies, he appears - completely intact, alive, healthy, and vigorous - the very next day. He delivers a rousing sermon about how he was murdered and brought back to life by Tovare's mercy. He shows off the scars from the weapons or spells that the heroes used to kill him, claiming that the celestials have marked him as their champion. This makes his popularity soar to even greater heights and causes the population of Wolden to turn against the heroes.

## DISILLUSIONING THE MASSES

In order for the heroes to finally confront the Father of Mercies for good, they must first turn the people of Wolden against him. Doing so will likely take weeks or even months of strenuous work.

The heroes should be encouraged to utilize every non-combat ability, backstory connection, and any other method that they can think of to take on the Father of Mercies's reputation.

This will take a prolonged amount of in-game time. As the campaign against the Father of Mercies progresses, Wolden becomes a dangerous and chaotic place. Cultists may attack the heroes or their followers; the pro-Father and anti-Father common folk of the town may riot against one another; and the heroes will have to figure out a careful balancing act of denouncing the Father and maintaining social order to the best of their ability.

Below are three key ideas that the heroes might utilize, but be prepared to adjust to other ideas that your party comes up with.

### AN UNCHECKED THREAT

If the heroes neglect to take on the Father of Mercies in a timely fashion, then he gains so much popularity that it will be nearly impossible for the heroes to isolate him from his supporters. If they pursue too many side quests or allow a significant number of weeks to pass, make each of the following methods of disillusioning the masses significantly harder and more time-consuming.



## REHABILITATING THE CHURCH'S ARMY

The Temple of Tovare's standing army are devout worshippers of both Tovare and Rasheen along with the rest of the Celestial Council. The majority of the army's members would be devastated to learn that the Father of Mercies has actually been helping the Cult of Lilith all along. If the heroes are able to offer any proof of this, or get some of the captains to become suspicious, they can eventually drive a wedge between the Father and the army. Given enough time and pressure, the heroes may be able to widen this rift and cause a full split. The majority of the army would side with the heroes and denounce the Father of Mercies. If the heroes manage to achieve this, it will send tremors through all of the Father of Mercies's support throughout Wolden. With the army of the church opposing him, common folk will have to reevaluate their faith in him.

## CONNECTING THE FATHER TO THE CULT

By engaging in skullduggery and infiltrating the Temple of the Celestials, the heroes may be able to procure evidence that demonstrably links the Father of Mercies to the Cult of Lilith. An Unerring Sphere would be an easy method to verify his connection to them if the heroes can place the sphere in the vicinity of a conversation between the Father and members of the cult. Other spells or nonmagical documentation may suffice if the heroes can present the evidence to enough of the Father's followers. Showing this evidence to key supporters of the Father that are influential in other areas - such as guild leaders, respected mages, or even King Aaron van Wolden - may prove powerful enough to cause a portion of the Father's following to abandon him.

## A DIFFERENT SCHOOL OF THOUGHT

Heroes that are devoutly religious may openly debate the Father of Mercies or try to host their own sermons to counter the messages that the Father espouses. This is dangerous and likely to lead to physical conflict, but clever heroes may use any conflict as grounds to propel their own message to greater heights. If they are persistent enough and compelling enough, they may be able to peel away portions of the Father's supporters who find the heroes' theology more compelling.

## THE SHOWDOWN

Once the Father of Mercies has the support of fewer than 10% of the people of Wolden, the heroes may confront him physically. As with any previous confrontations, he only has the stats of a **priest**, and he may not even have any guards to protect him if the heroes have turned the church's army against him.

However, once he dies, the demon that calls itself Legion bursts forth from his corpse, looming above Wolden's rooftops and drawing the bodies of hundreds of innocents into Legion's own writhing mass.

The heroes must battle Legion directly at this point.

Immediately upon defeating them, Legion's Essence tears a hole in reality as it is sucked back into Shadowcroft. This portal to Shadowcroft remains open for 10 minutes. Heroes may travel through this portal to arrive directly at Lilith's Keep in arc 5, bypassing the Hungering Wastes portion of that adventure arc.

## ARC 5: HEAD OF THE SNAKE

When the heroes are ultimately ready to face Lilith, they must journey into Shadowcroft and travel to her stronghold to defeat her once and for all.

Immediately upon defeating Legion in Wolden, the heroes may travel through Legion's portal. If they do, they each gain +1 Fear and arrive at the base of Lilith's Keep. Skip the Hungering Waste section if this is the case.

If the heroes do not travel through the portal left by Legion, then they may enter Shadowcroft using powerful magic or by traveling to one of Kamelot's points of contact with Ancerra. From Kamelot, the heroes may learn from any of the locals the direction of Lilith's keep. They may scale the walls and set out through the Hungering Waste to reach Lilith's keep.

## THE HUNGERING WASTE

Advancing through the Hungering Waste involves traveling through a dangerous, uncharted landscape in Shadowcroft for two consecutive days. When heroes attempt to take a long rest while traveling in the Hungering Waste, they must make a DC 16 Sanity check. On a failed save, they gain +1 additional Fear.

The landscape of the Hungering Waste is that of a mountainous forest. The trees are gnarled and leafless, the undergrowth more thorns and burs than true vegetation, the rocks sharp and jagged, and the entire area blanketed in a thick layer of mist.

Each day in the Hungering Waste involves three combat encounters. Roll or select from the table below each time.

Remove one or more monsters from these encounters if the heroes' total party level is lower than 55.



1d6	Encounter
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Balor
3	2 Hydras
4	2 Unicorns
5	2 Treants
6	2 Vampires

The heroes arrive at Lilith's keep after the third difficult encounter on the second day.

## LILITH'S KEEP

Lilith's keep overlooks a gaping black pit that has no bottom in sight. A light source dropped down this pit becomes too small to see before hitting any potential bottom.

The keep itself is not difficult to navigate. Lilith does not expect anyone to challenge her here or to survive the Hungering Waste, and her arrogance means that the keep is almost entirely unguarded. The heroes may enter the unlocked gates and ascend the central stairwell without opposition. Marching into Lilith's throne room, the heroes may fight Lilith directly. Lilith is not likely to be alone, however. Add a number of creatures from the Cult of Lilith Creature Table, along with any number of **grotesques** and **gargoyles**, to make a very deadly encounter.

## DESCENT INTO MADNESS

When Lilith becomes Bloodied, the ground crumbles and the keep falls into the pit. The heroes will need to continue battling her while navigating the falling keep.

When the keep first falls, each creature's inertia causes them to fall upward to the ceiling 30 feet above, taking 3d6 bludgeoning damage.

## FLYING DEBRIS

At the start of each creature's turn, that creature must make a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) skill check, taking 2d6 bludgeoning damage on a failure.

## MOVING WHILE FALLING

While on the rooftop, creatures may move as normal but their speed is halved. If they wish to fall more quickly than the building around them and direct their fall to reach other portions of the throne room, they must spend a bonus action to make a DC 16 Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence check. On a success, they may move vertically down towards the ground or horizontally in any direction, but their speed is still halved.

A creature that falls prone while falling immediately falls back to the ceiling, potentially taking falling damage.

## THE HUNGER'S PRESENCE

As the heroes descend through the pit, they feel a great red presence glaring in on them from the surrounding darkness. On Initiative count 0, each hero must make a DC 14 Sanity check. On a failure, they gain +1 Fear and take 1d6 psychic damage.

## HUNGER OF THE DARK ONE

When the heroes defeat Lilith, the sheer power of her hungering soul explodes outward, searing the heroes. Each hero must make a DC 8 Sanity check. Any hero that fails gains the following Psyche Talent.

## HUNGER OF THE DARK ONE

*Psyche, Isolated, Soul Scar, -0 Fear*

You suffer from an insatiable desire to cannibalize humanoid flesh. You must eat humanoid flesh or drink humanoid blood at least once every 7 days; if you do not, then you suffer a -2 to all attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws indefinitely until you do eat humanoid flesh or drink humanoid blood, whereupon your hunger abates for the next 7 days.

## RETURN TO SANITY

Upon defeating Lilith, the heroes may acquire one of her rings, which is a magic item. It contains a ruby that opens a teleportation gateway to Pendragon's castle in Camelot, allowing the heroes to easily return to Ancerra.





# CHAPTER 2: EXPLORING NORSPINA

This chapter presents the regions and planes of existence pertinent to this campaign in alphabetical order.

## THE PLAINS OF BISHAL

The vast, flat plains of Bishal may appear seamless and singular, stretching from one horizon to the other with no marks on the surface and nothing to hide; but roots here run deep, and grudges run deeper. The placid grasslands on the steppes will show no mercy to those who underestimate their dangers or their people.

## THE HORSE LORDS

The history of the nomads on the Bishal plains is a tempestuous one, full of tribes gathering, splitting, fighting, and making peace depending on the strength and reliability of their leaders: the Horse Lords. In the present day, eight Horse Lords battled out rough borders to their territories before Dracula united all of them under his rule. While Tilion was known as the strongest among the Horse Lords, he opposed Dracula. In the end, Tilion was forced to flee to Tapsankad in the mountain country of Betaal. His fate is still unknown in Bishal, and he is believed to be dead.

Among the Horse Lords, Bolkhadar, Iltani, and Tartu were the first to announce their loyalty to Dracula. They have continued their allegiance, giving Dracula's descendants free access to their lands—and to those of their people no one will miss.

Have heroes make Intelligence or Wisdom checks with appropriate bonuses to see what they know about Bishal beyond the things that are common knowledge.

Skill Roll	Result
1-8	The eight Horse Lords are Mujaan, Tilion, Udir, Khachig, Bolkhadar, Sonzan, Tanzil, and Lorskir. Each tribe is named for its Horse Lord. Mujaan-Ger is in the northwest. Tilion-Ger is in the middle of the western edge, extending beyond the Riverflow. Udir-Ger is in the southwest, below the rivers. From north to south, Khachig-Ger, Bolkhadar-Ger, and Sonzan-Ger make up the middle of Bishal. Tanzil-Ger is in the northeast corner, around the large lake. Lorskir-Ger is in the southeast corner. Tanzil-Ger and Lorskir-Ger were respectively once known as Iltani-Ger and Tartu-Ger.
9-15	The largest disputes over borders recently have been between Tilion and Bolkhadar; Tilion and Khachig; Khachig and Iltani; and Bolkhadar and Sonzan.  After Tartu, Bolkhadar, and Iltani, the most powerful Horse Lords since Dracula previously came to power are Khachig, Mujaan, and Udir.
16-20	Everyone knows Tilion was the most influential Horse Lord before Dracula arrived, but Khachig used to rank just below him. They were well matched on the battlefield and strong forces in council. Tartu, on the other hand, never ranked far from the bottom among the Horse Lords before. Kachig-Ger has ongoing conflict between Bolkhadar-Ger, Tanzil-Ger, and Lorskir-Ger.
21-24	Some folk near the borders have heard that many of Bishal's own people have been taken as feeding stock for vampires. Those who escaped have been run from their homes.  The hero may also learn one random item from the Conflicts table.
25+	A few refugees who crossed the border safely mentioned that people from Tilion-Ger and Sonzan-Ger helped them to escape. There may be people in those tribes willing to work against Palorva and the other major powers in play.

The hero may also learn one random item each from the Alliances table and the Conflicts table.



# CONFLICTS

## 1d6 Conflict

- 1 A generation ago, Bolkhadar-Ger and Itani-Ger were in a bitter feud over an encampment near their shared border. The Bolkhadar-Ger settlement suffered a plague they insisted came from Itani-Ger territory. Bolkhadar demanded assistance. Itani sent riders to burn the town until no traces remained, and replied he had “cured the plague.” The ensuing conflict lasted until Dracula united the tribes.
- 2 Udir-Ger and Sonzan-Ger had a conflict when the Horse Lords were young that people still speak of in hushed tones. A shaman among the Udir-Ger crossed the river into Sonzan-Ger territory on a dream quest, or so they said. The Sonzan-Ger noble who said the shaman stole his horses claimed there was nothing spiritual about thievery. Who can say who was the more offended? Both tribes spilled blood.
- 3 To get at the root of why Tilion-Ger cannot stand Mujaan-Ger, and in this the feeling is mutual, one must go back at least ten generations, if not twenty. No one remembers who poisoned whom anymore, or which child newly promoted to Horse Lord rode over the borders to claim the life of the one who ordered it. They only know one killed the other, and then that one’s people took revenge, and so on. Of course other things have happened, but the hatred has been there ever since.
- 4 It was 20 years ago when tensions first started between Itani-Ger and Bolkhadar-Ger. When it happened, they were gathered to celebrate Bolkhadar’s ascent as Horse Lord, and suddenly, with the slash of a blade through the air, the envoy from Itani lost their head. The others cried out, “How was it necessary to take a life?!” And Bolkhadar asked, “How was it necessary to call me by my father’s name?” Itani could not retaliate in the moment, but the time came.
- 5 Just one more example of how things are between Tilion-Ger and Mujaan-Ger: the chariot races Mujaan-Ger held by their shared border many years ago. No one thinks the chariot accident that killed that poor boy was really an accident. He looked like one of Tilion-Ger’s heroes at the time, and a rumor started that he had infiltrated the race to embarrass Mujaan. Well, someone replaced his axles with wax, and that ended the only way it could on a racetrack full of people with murder in their hearts. Naturally, the people of Mujaan-Ger blamed Tilion-Ger for arranging the whole misunderstanding somehow, and claimed they had sabotaged the chariot, too. While the people of Tilion-Ger, this time, had no idea any of it had happened until they heard the accusations—*this time*.
- 6 There are many very useful guidelines to remember when going to meet diplomats from another tribe. One is to ensure that guards know when not to pull their weapons. Udir would do well to train people better on that. Another is to check your bags thoroughly before you leave to ensure no rabid animals join you for the trip. Tanzil-Ger’s people failed there once, and the lasting enmity over Udir-Ger’s envoy drawing blades before Itani’s heir to kill some frothing beast is as unsightly as it is unnecessary.





# ALLIANCES

## 1d6 Alliance

- 1 Mujaan-Ger and Khachig-Ger used to be part of the same tribe many generations in the past. They split because of population growth, and retain a strong bond. They share a memorial graveyard for Holy Mounts on their common border.
- 2 As one of the historically weaker tribes, Udir-Ger has made a point of maintaining good relations with Tilion-Ger and Bolkhadar-Ger: the two tribes on its immediate borders noted for having the strongest warriors. Although these two tribes are not always at peace with each other, Udir-Ger prefers to remain at peace with both and safely out of their conflicts.
- 3 Tilion formed strong alliances through bonds of personal friendship with Sonzan and Itani. These are on shaky ground with Tilion in exile and Itani dead, but they represent a legacy of good faith.
- 4 Despite conflicts with the Khachig-Ger over territorial expansion, the Tanzil-Ger and the Mujaan-Ger have an established trade alliance exchanging imported goods from their neighboring countries.
- 5 The Sonzan-Ger and the Lorskir-Ger maintain a level of cooperation that both feel goes beyond politics to ensure the safety of Bishal. The fire breaks in the plains surrounding the Tar Pits cross the borders of the tribes, and whoever is on the land will tend to them carefully to prevent runaway wildfires.
- 6 Between sharing common allies and Tanzil's inherited interest in trading for ore mined from the Great Chasm, the Sonzan-Ger and the Tanzil-Ger have professional, if not friendly, relations.

## KEY LOCATIONS

### THE RIVERFLOW

On the south-western end of Bishal, where the two major rivers meet, is an old encampment where all the Horse Lords have met for generations when they agree the time has come to speak as one. They call this place the Riverflow. It belongs to none, for it belongs to all.

For more on this location, see the section for "The Riverflow."

### WANING HILLS

In the southernmost parts of the western reaches, deep in the territory of the Udir-Ger, travelers should take care and watch where the sun stands in the sky before setting foot in the Waning Hills. Here, where the broad, flat stretches of the steppes begin to give way to more varied terrain, the particular dips in these hills cause shadows to stretch as the sun sets that trace broad circles on the ground.

Those who risk watching the Waning Hills through sunset swear these shadows trace out the image of all five moons, from full to new and back again. More superstitious types claim these shadow moons, when they reach the full breadth of their darkness on the ground, transform into portals through which wolves disguised as ordinary folk enter this plane. The more sensible people, of course, say shadows are only shadows.

If the heroes visit the Waning Hills, whether or not there are werewolves present, they will face **vampire spawn** in any shadowed area they enter.

## STANDING STONES

Further to the east, just north of the mouth of the Great Chasm, the field of Standing Stones covers over two square miles inside the territory of the Sonzan-Ger. These stones are massive pillars carved from the same rock as the Great Chasm, each two yards wide at the base and ten yards tall. They appear to have no logical arrangement, with no two stones closer than thirty yards together and nothing connecting them.

Whatever they once were, they predate the civilization of the Horse Lords by long enough that no record exists explaining their creation. Etched lines clearly show that, once, each pillar had engravings. Perhaps a shape, perhaps words. Wind and rain have weathered these marks beyond recognition, leaving only a vast monument to baffle modern researchers, overgrown with grass.

The Horse Lords make every effort to keep their herds far away from the Standing Stones, as legend says that no one who wanders into the heart of their lost memories ever comes home. Befuddled by trackless, identical pillars on every side, a person could wander until they starved.

If the heroes enter the Standing Stones, everyone must make at least two checks of appropriate difficulty attempting to find a method to leave the area. Add together the sum of all the rolls. Subtract this total from 40 x the number of players. If this would result in a negative number, count the difference as 0. This difference + 2 is the number of hours it takes for the heroes to leave the Standing Stones.



## BARROW OF THE ANCIENTS

Near the southern border of the Khachig-Ger's territory, in the northern half of the nation, an ancient stone slab covered in lichens carries dire engraved warnings not to disturb the bodies that lie in the ground beneath. This, the barrowstone declares, is the burial hall of kings.

What is equally clear if one reads more closely under decades, if not centuries, of disrepair is that these kings did not come from the Khachig-Ger. This tomb belongs to the Kholyag-Ger, whose territory has shifted further south due to the Khachig-Ger's expansion. Where they have buried their lords in the years since, only they can say. Those honored dead do not lie here. A single glance will show that no one has cleaned this stone, or the cavernous stone crypt below the earth, in generations.

If the heroes enter the crypt using the open stone stairs beside the barrowstone, they will find a long, poorly lit stone hall filled with a double row of caskets. While the skeletons inside were buried with weapons, none are in usable condition. The crypt has long wallowed in the damp, and everything is in an advanced state of decay.

If the heroes stay more than a moment, the awakened mosses that have infested the crypt will attack them. Include up to 5 **shambling mounds** in addition to any number of **awakened shrubs** for an encounter of medium difficulty.

## SYUNSTEI-NUR

Far in the upper northeast of Bishal, a dark sapphire lake is nestled in the plains, but for a while now it has become shunned, and no herders take their animals there to drink. The notorious Syunstei-Nur in the heart of the Tiimye-Ger's territory is a place better left alone.

The shores are choked with **awakened shrubs** and **corpse blossoms**, and many rumors of plague trace back to the vermyr that crawl out of its waters and teem in the grass in surrounding lands. Hellspawn congregate here in greater and greater numbers, and everyone who leaves there will explain in breathless tones how lucky they were to escape with their lives.

Unknown to most, a large portal to Hell sits at the bottom of this particular lake, which accounts for its haunted character.

If the heroes choose to come to Syunstei-Nur, allow them to make Wisdom (Perception) checks at DC 18 to avoid regular dangers. Have them make a flat 1d20 roll once for every hour they are there. If the average for the party is below 10, they encounter a **fear eater**, accompanied by the DM's choice of local flora and fauna. This should be a medium encounter.

## TAR PITS

As far south as one can go along the eastern edge of Bishal, slow-bubbling tar pits form a major linchpin of the Jivsen-Ger's trade exports as well as an occasional threat to the grasslands.

The tar is a natural waterproofing agent, sold across Bishal to patch seams in housing and rainwear, and makes a fine accelerant for flaming arrows. This is a good place to find people of the Jivsen-Ger tribe if you wait long enough, as someone will always show up to bottle more tar for sale.

The explosive gasses released by the tar bubbles, however, can be toxic, and have a tendency to start grassfires in dry weather. Luckily, if you fall in, you should sink slowly enough that a party member will be able to save you, because there is no coming back from underneath the tar. Just expect a burn to remember the experience by.

People who fall into the Tar Pits should immediately receive a rescue, but take 1d6 fire damage and 2d4 poison damage at the start of each of their turns while in the tar pits. A hero in the tar pits cannot get out without the assistance of a creature outside of the pit.

## FIELD OF HALLOWED BONES

The Field of Hallowed Bones is considered a Haven.

Back in the north-east, rows upon rows of bones lie pressed into the dirt just enough to see when brushing the grass aside. The skeletons they form, however, are not humanoid. Here on the border between the Mujaan-Ger and the Khachig-Ger is the Field of Hallowed Bones, a burial ground for the Holy Mounts of Bishalian Cavaliers.

Simple, unshaped rocks engraved with names and riders for each horse sit by the horses' bleached skulls. Reading back through the years, the history shows a time when every horse and every rider came from the same clan. The epitaphs tell a story, however, as some few hundred years ago a number of the riders were born in the tribe that is now Mujaan-Ger, and left for the tribe that is now Khachig-Ger.

When Mujaan-Ger's people outgrew their structure and their lands, the people sent out to found the Khachig-Ger tribe under their Horse Lord's brother were separate in name and rule, but close in spirit. To this day, both tribes meet here and treat this as a shared space where they laid the bones of their ancestors and will honor their own fallen horses in time.

The ground here is consecrated to A'rl'ng. Any vampire who was faithful to A'rl'ng in life has disadvantage on attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws when within 30 ft of the Field of Hallowed Bones.



## HAZARDS

The open plains are a dangerous place, full of dry grasses that take fire easily. The grasses hide sudden drops in the ground; when storms steal upon the heroes, they will find no cover for miles. And the animals are just as fierce as the terrain.

### TERRAIN HAZARD TABLE

1d6	Hazard
1	Quicksand
2	Grassfire
3-4	Sudden Storm
5	Hidden Creek
6	Portal to Shadowcroft

#### QUICKSAND

Stepping on a patch of sandy dust that appears solid and dry reveals that water pushing up through the soil has created a patch of quicksand. If the heroes remain calm and do not move, they will not sink deeper than their waists. However, the more they thrash, the more liquid the quicksand will become, and the more they will sink. Each hero must make an Intelligence or Wisdom check to avoid reacting when they begin to sink. They receive successes based on that check as follows.

Skill Roll	Successes
8 or less	-2
9-13	-1
14-17	0
18-22	+1
23-25	+2
26 or more	+3

The heroes must make a Dexterity (Stealth), Dexterity (Acrobatics), or Strength (Athletics) check of DC 22 to slowly walk or float out of the quicksand. They add their successes from the previous roll to this check. On a success, the hero escapes the quicksand and may help the other heroes escape.

Any hero who fails has caused the sand to liquefy again, and must return to the Intelligence or Wisdom check to restart the escape process. Any hero that cannot escape on their own may accept help from a hero who has already escaped. Assisted escape automatically succeeds.

#### GRASSFIRE

Dry heat in the tall grasses leads to a wildfire snaking from the horizon toward the heroes' party. The searing heat will catch them in a matter of seconds, leaping up to 10 feet into the air, and they must find or create whatever defenses they can in four rounds of action before the fire arrives.

During those four rounds, request appropriate checks for measures to avoid damage from the fire. Total the result of these checks for each hero. Heroes that cast a relevant spell in lieu of a skill check may consider one of their rolls to be a 20. Each hero whose total beats a DC of 55 successfully avoids damage from the fire.

Any hero who fails suffers 10d6 fire damage, unless the hero has found a position where it is impossible for the fire to reach. If the hero suggests a reasonable course to evade the fire completely, they take no damage even if the total for their checks was 55 or below.

#### SUDDEN STORM

Driving rains begin without warning, and continue for 2d4 hours. The party must find or create shelter as soon as possible to avoid ill effects. Walking conditions in the rain are treacherous, and all members of the party have their speed halved while outside in the rain.

Finding shelter requires a Wisdom (Survival) check of DC 18. Creating shelter requires the appropriate materials and a Wisdom (Survival) check of DC 10. Anyone who remains in the rain for more than 30 minutes gains a level of exhaustion.

#### HIDDEN CREEK

Any hero at the vanguard of the party must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check of DC 22 to avoid falling 5 feet when happening upon a deep ditch hidden by the deceptively flat grasslands. If the heroes at the front warn the rest of the party that the ditch is there, the heroes with the warning must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check of DC 12 to avoid falling.

At the bottom of the ditch is a stream with clean water where the party may refill their stores.

#### PORTAL TO SHADOWCROFT

One of the more supernatural hazards of the terrain in Bishal is the occasional portal to the Shadowcroft plane. It can be so tempting to investigate the odd-looking castle or terrain that appears shimmering like a mirage in the distance, yet does not disappear when the heroes approach. See information on Shadowcroft for what to do if the heroes end up crossing over.



## WILDLIFE HAZARD TABLE

2d4	Hazard
2-4	Snakes
6-7	Owls
8	Hellspawn

### SNAKES

The party member with the highest passive Perception may notice a gentle swaying in the grass and a low hiss gradually growing louder before a cluster of snakes swarm the party's feet. If they notice, they may warn the rest of the heroes. If they do not, the entire party starts the fight Surprised.

The attacking snakes should be an easy to medium encounter using equal numbers of **poisonous snakes** and **constrictor snakes**. If the heroes flee, the snakes will not pursue. This was simply the wrong spot to stand.

### OWLS

A **giant owl** will cry three times, coming progressively closer to the heroes' position. If the heroes choose to stay rather than leaving the location or finding shelter, 2d6 **giant owls** will attack them after the third call.

### HELLSPAWN

One unfortunate consequence of a war-torn land littered with portals to Hell is the tendency for spirits from Hell to reanimate those bodies, creating the nightmarish terrors known as hellspawn.

They come in many varieties, detailed in *HGtVH*. Roll 1d6 to determine which manner of creature the heroes stumble upon.

1d6	Hellspawn Types
1	Hellspawn Shambler
2	Hellspawn Shrieker
3	Hellspawn Buzzer
4	1 Hellspawn Charger, plus Hellspawn Striker troop
5	Hellspawn Flutterer
6	Hellspawn Coldblood

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

Not all of these encounters are without risk, but by managing social interactions well or through judicious use of interrogation, the heroes can pick up key information about Bishal and the Horse Lords. Roll 2d6 or pick an encounter from the table.

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Bandits
4-5	Merchants
6-8	Refugees
9-12	Bishalian Nomads

### BANDITS

Allow each hero to make a Wisdom (Perception) check of DC 13 to notice a carefully approaching group of bandits. On a failure, the bandits take the hero by surprise. On a success, the hero is not surprised for the first round of combat. Anyone succeeding at DC 18 or above may alert other members of the party.

The attacking bandits include one **bandit captain** and a number of **bandits**. At half their maximum hit points, the bandits will flee. If the heroes flee, they will not pursue.

If the heroes are able to start a conversation with any bandit, either by offering a bribe or capturing the bandit alive and succeeding at a Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check to persuade them to talk, the bandit will share one item from the Conflicts table.

### MERCHANTS

While traveling, the heroes' party sees a merchant caravan hurrying down the dusty road. The group is not going in exactly the same direction as the heroes, but it is very close, and they will offer food, water, and a generous day's pay for able guards. People courageous enough to defend them on these roads grow fewer by the day, but their livelihoods depend on trade.

During the walk, friendly merchants who know the area will also engage in conversation about Bishal. When the heroes begin traveling with a merchant party, and once per 3 days thereafter, they can tell the heroes one random item from the History and Geography table, and one item from the Alliances table.

Traveling with merchants in this way allows heroes a modicum of safety. They do not gain 1 Fear when taking a long rest in the wilderness, but traveling with the merchants also does not count as a Haven.



## REFUGEES

Thanks to Palorva's campaign of domination across the nations, many families who have lost their place in Bishal find themselves destitute, seeking assistance to find their way to safer borders. While they may not have money or much in the way of goods to trade, refugees who may ask for protection on their way out of Bishal are at home on the land, and experts in foraging for food when necessary. While present, everyone in the party should gain +2 to foraging checks thanks to their advice.

When you begin traveling with a refugee party, and once per 3 days thereafter, they can tell the heroes one random item from the Alliances table or one random item from the Conflicts table.

The DM should exercise judgment in awarding Goodwill based on the number of refugees protected and the countries where they go.

## BISHALIAN NOMADS

Throughout the country of Bishal, despite everything, there are still countless ordinary people living their lives. They tend their flocks of sheep or herds of bison, cattle, and horses. They move from encampment to encampment following weather and trade conditions. For these people, the war can sometimes be a far-off story they have heard from travelers or a truth that struck too close to home. Either way, what they wish for most is to live in peace.

If the heroes show up at their door, a kind word and a fair price may buy supplies and a place to sleep out of the wilds. Charming conversation with a Charisma (Persuasion) check of DC 10 will also convince them to share one item from the Alliances table or one item from the Conflicts table.

## MILITANT ENCOUNTERS

The militant powers of Bishal patrol the plains regularly to maintain the security of their encampments. If they see a suspicious party, they will attack. However, if the heroes are able to capture any of their attackers alive, they may make a Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check to convince them to lead the heroes to where any of the Horse Lords are currently encamped. That may be easier said than done. The heroes must defeat the target's mental defenses, but the target may receive bonuses to these defenses from any active condition inflicted by a vampire, such as frightened or charmed.

Roll 2d6 or pick an encounter from the table.

2d6	Encounter
2	A Wolf by Any Other Skin
3-4	Strangers Unwelcome
5-7	Born to Ride
8-10	Roaming Fiend
11	Lurking Vampire
12	A Stalking Shadow

## A WOLF BY ANY OTHER SKIN

As the five moons cross the sky, waxing and waning, from time to time mundane wolves are not the only wolves to run across the plains. Roll 1d6 to determine whether the heroes meet one of the five types of werewolves...or another sort of transforming wolf entirely.

See *HGtVH* for Werewolves. This should be a medium encounter. If there is a significant gap in adjusted CR, but adding another primary opponent would be too dangerous for the heroes, use the **dire wolf** as needed to even the levels.

1d6	Encounter
1	Diminus Werewolf
2	Garvor Werewolf
3	Primor Werewolf
4	Scarlan Werewolf
5	Sylvin Werewolf
6	Garvor Bloodhunter Werewolf

## STRANGERS UNWELCOME

The proud, aloof centaurs of Bishal might have let unknown strangers pass unchallenged in the past, but in these troubled days there are no safe faces except the faces of their own. The **centaurs** will not pursue if the heroes run, but have no interest in hearing terms, offers, or promises. They have heard such things before, and the only result has been a nation overrun while one by one vampires pick off their brethren to transform them into a corrupted mirror of themselves.



## BORN TO RIDE

The horse-mounted archers of Bishal are renowned fighters, prepared to defend their lands against invading threats. While the heroes are fairly unknown, parties of riders may send one person to question them about their identity and intentions, leaving the other to watch from afar with an arrow nocked to their bow. An Intelligence or Charisma check of DC 22 should allow the heroes to succeed if they try to persuade the riders they mean no harm. On success, the riders will encourage the heroes to move quickly, and they will leave without engaging in conversation.

As their notoriety increases, this will become harder. On each subsequent encounter, increase the DC for this check by +4. After one combat encounter with the Bishalian riders, all further groups will attack on sight. The difficulty of combat with the Bishalians should be medium to deadly. Use any of the creatures on the table below when designing these encounters.

CR	Creatures
1/8	Bandit
1/2	Scout, Warhorse
2	Bandit Captain

## ROAMING FIEND

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Bishal for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the following table.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any hellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a **vampire** that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## A STALKING SHADOW

The adventurers should get an opportunity to notice a strange gathering of shadows that seems to move out of the corner of their eyes. This is a corrupted **treant**.

It follows them as they travel during the day, but is maddeningly impossible to pin down. Over the day, several of them should roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) versus the creature's Dexterity (Stealth). If they succeed, they are certain they see a vaguely humanoid shape just out of the corner of their eyes. If they fail, they see vague movement that is gone when they turn to look.

If the heroes attack the treant, they find that it is not alone; 2d6 **awakened shrubs** emerge from the brambles nearby and attack the heroes as well.

## THE RIVERFLOW

In the western reaches of Bishal, where the Tsever River coming from the northwest joins the Ulaan River from the northeast, the tribes of the Horse Lords have gathered for centuries to make terms in times of peace and times of necessity. They call this place the Riverflow, a floodplain with few permanent buildings but campgrounds for each tribe and space cleared for both friendly and deadly competitions.

Combat is not forbidden, but by long tradition the Bishalians expect all people here to challenge their rivals to a fair fight, and conduct it in view of witnesses on the tournament grounds. Evidence of foul play in any sense would incur a higher than usual level of disgust, as this is a place where even the most bitter foes are expected to set their differences aside and deal honestly with one another. Expect the consequences for murder, poison, deceit, or cheating to be serious and enduring if they happen in the Riverflow. Even a person's own allies would find it difficult to excuse underhanded actions taken here.

**Read Aloud:** *Across the rustling blades of grass that seem to stretch forever, at the line of the horizon, colorful banners whip through the air. The heat haze rising to the sky off the dry plains shimmers, making it hard to see more than flashes of red, yellow, green, black, and a growing range of shades as the flags grow closer. Finally, the flagpoles resolve in the distance: the line of banners marking the edge of the Riverflow, with banners for each of the Horse Lords soaring proudly. But now, amid the eight repeating pennants for the allied clans, a ninth flies: Dracula's flag, now used by Palorva, known to all who have seen their forces spread across the lands.*



## THE RIVERS

The core of the Riverflow is the confluence of two of Bishal's major rivers, a location deemed important enough for trade and lucrative enough as potential grazing and farmlands that allowing any one Horse Lord to control it would result in endless war. To forestall such conflicts, the people of Bishal decided that these lands would remain untethered to any one tribe, and all tribes would be allowed to access them freely. Their function as a neutral meeting place when the times called for cooperation and negotiation grew naturally out of the history that in the Riverflow, all the Horse Lords met as equals.

### TSEVER RIVER

The roots of the Tsever River flow down from the western mountains, leaving the water cold and clear as it cuts through the plains. Half a mile above where the rivers connect, in the heart of the camping grounds, the Horse Lords have built a bridge known as the Morin-Gyur from wood sourced in the western foothills. It connects the Tsever Bank to the Midriver grounds, with the well-weathered wood carved with intricate reliefs of dancing horses.

Because of the clear waters, the Tsever is a favorite for Bishalians who wish to show off their spear fishing talents, or occasionally their skills at catching fish barehanded.

### ULAAH RIVER

The tributaries of the Ulaan River come from the east, bubbling up through the plains themselves, and as a consequence it carries more clay and silt particulates in the water. This river is somewhat slower and warmer, with cloudy water tinged slightly red. The bridge connecting the Ulaan Bank to the Midriver is known as the Khunii-Gyur, and Horse Lords from the eastern expanses of Bishal brought wood from their borders and traded from their neighbors to construct it, as well as keep it in good repair over the years. Engravings on each of the pillars down each side of the bridge depict the five arts of a Bishalian hero: horseback riding, archery, charioteering, saber fighting, and barehanded fighting.

Those fishing in the Ulaan River are more likely to use a fishing rod and bait, leaving competitive displays for those fishing in the Tsever River. The clay deposits also make this a common source of raw materials for pottery among craftspeople in the encampments.

### ISLE OF SERPENTS

Just at the point where the Tsever River and the Ulaan River converge, there is a small island large enough for one stone house overgrown with vines and a small garden. This is the Isle of Serpents, home of Yerluu, the Serpent-Deluge Shaman.

They are a human of indeterminate gender (use stats for a **priest**), revered within Bishal as a fearless but private and wrathful mystic with complete neutrality between the tribes. Only a select few acolytes may approach the island by boat to leave food. When unauthorized persons are present, Yerluu can trigger a permanent enchantment on the house to transform the vines hanging on it to **poisonous snakes**.

Although famously neutral in the past, Yerluu made a covenant with Dracula. After Dracula's powers were able to raise Yerluu's sister, Shavar, as a vampire, granting her some semblance of life when divine spells and medicine could not save her from certain death, they gladly removed every remnant of their faith in A'rl'ng from their house. A shrine remains outside, at a distance where it will not harm the vampire living within, and the acolytes sworn to secrecy share their blood on a rotating schedule.

### DOWNRIVER

A few yards beyond the Isle of Serpents, the tribes have built a river gate to prevent trading ships from washing too far down, to where the Ulaan extends below the rivers' convergence into a waterfall over the Great Chasm. This gate consists of tall pillars carved out of stone from the Chasm itself, sunk ten feet into the mud at the bottom of the river and standing three feet above the water's surface with the full height of the river between them. Thick, cabled ropes made of plains grasses wrap around each of the stones where they rise above the water and weave between the stones to form a net.

The stones themselves are close enough together to be used as stepping stones, either for crossing the river or rescuing someone whose boat has gone astray. What the pillars themselves cannot catch, the nets offer solid purchase, and the anchoring ropes tying both sides to shore are a last line of security. Should anything have the force to knock over the stone pillars, people nearby can grab the lines to haul it back.

### MIDRIVER

While considered a less convenient place to camp, as the grazing lands are dry and trampled down, and the kitchens are a long distance away, the Midriver is also the heart of the Riverflow. The land between the two rivers houses all the most important central meeting areas: the Lords' meeting circle, the communal temple, and the dedicated Tournament Grounds where any matters too personal to resolve with words can be settled.



## STEWARD'S RESIDENCE

One of two small permanent buildings very close to where the two rivers meet, this is a modest but comfortable residence in the shape of a yurt constructed out of wood and stone. The steward of the Riverflow has lived here for generations, with the tribes agreeing to name a new steward for training when the previous one has no heir.

The current steward is a dapple-gray centaur man named Varyn with long hair in a single braid that would reach to the floor if left unsecured. He has never wished to engage in spectacle or gain fame, but would say that he understands the importance of financial security. Those who are familiar with Varyn are well aware that a generous tip to compensate him for his time will make him very willing to assist you in a time of need. His fondness for wealth has never crossed the line into breaking the law, so the Horse Lords have seen it as a minor personality flaw.

Palorva has taken the opportunity to reward Varyn with an extremely generous stipend in addition to his regular earnings as the steward of the Riverflow, and to promise that there is always a warm welcome waiting in her palace should Varyn wish to visit. Varyn knows very well that the current safety and comfort in his life is thanks to Palorva. He would not betray that lightly, if at all.

## APOTHECARY'S HALL

Not far from the Steward's residence, the Riverflow keeps a permanent infirmary and medical center. A few treatment rooms allow any injured or sick persons to receive treatment from the doctors, and one dormitory with ten cots allow doctors to watch over patients with critical needs. Apothecaries store herbs for medication in the back rooms, and mix them up into prescriptions as needed.

The head doctor and apothecary here is an elderly elf named Nawe with short white hair and abstract blue tattoos down their face and arms. While they chose to serve at the Riverflow in their youth to care for the people in need here, and they do not regret the good they have done, they often wish for the chance to see the wider world before they pass on. They have collected travel logs from across many countries, and occasionally exchange letters with foreign medical experts about interesting new techniques, although these letters have grown much less frequent of late as it grows harder to find people willing to deliver them.

## LORDS' CIRCLE

A large, grand yurt appointed with the best in furnishings from every tribe sits in a cleared area equidistant between the Morin-Gyur and the Khunii-Gyur. When the time for revelry and small talk has passed, and the time has come for the Horse Lords and their trusted elders and lieutenants to settle political matters, this is where they come. Just as the Riverflow is no one tribe's land, the Lords' Circle is no one Horse Lord's hearth.

Everyone who gathers in this room is on neutral ground, prepared to speak before the greatest of Bishal.

Very few aside from the Horse Lords and those they invite ever see the inside of this yurt. As their allied lord, Palorva or her representative would receive an invitation, but there is only one exception to the requirement that one must be a lord or enter at a lord's side. This privilege is called the Champion's Voice, afforded on the rare occasions when one person, or representatives of one pre-declared contingent attempting to gain the Champion's Voice, can take first place in all five events of the Grand Tournament. That level of martial skill will qualify the person to enter the Lords' Circle, or qualify the declared contingent to send one person into the Lords' Circle, to take part in the discussions.

How persuasive a person using that opportunity is able to be, and what level of regard the Horse Lords' give any words they say, depends entirely on the person. This is a chance to use carefully, not one to squander.

## TOURNAMENT GROUNDS

At the north end of the Midriver, the Bishalians have set up a large area purely for contests of strength and martial skill. A track cleared and maintained for footraces, horseback races, and chariot races encircles the main field with distance markers along the edge for setting start and finish lines. The middle of the field has marks for distance as well, allowing challengers to set targets for archery—whether that target is a bundle of straw covered in ox hide or a horse rider tossing a ball in the air. Cleared circles placed around the field serve both as fighting rings for armed and bare-handed martial arts, and as locations to erect obstacles for trick riding competitions.

Members of every tribe come here throughout any meetings at the Riverflow to match their skills in these and any other challenge they care to make. Sometimes, these are duels for honor, as a fair fight on the Tournament Grounds is the only accepted way to settle a personal grudge at the Riverflow. If neither party yields, a serious bout can even end in death. However, as long as the challenge was properly given, and the fight was cleanly won in front of the watching crowds, such a death is considered a fair kill, and the family of the slain fighter has no grounds to seek revenge. More often, however, Bishalians challenge each other to friendly fights or competitions, whether in the five heroic arts or in children's ball games.

The highlight of each meeting at the Riverflow, however, is the Grand Tournament. In the first week, before talks begin in earnest, each tribe sends its greatest warriors out to compete in the five heroic arts. The Horse Lords take this time to assess the relative strength of the other tribes and quietly sound out the political positions of their peers. On the Tournament Grounds, various warriors compete for the renown of being the greatest in all of Bishal. This tournament also offers a rare chance for anyone looking to speak directly to the Horse Lords in the Lords' Circle.



On the rare occasion that one person takes first place in every event—chariot racing, trick riding, saber fighting, bare-handed fighting, and archery—that person may claim the privilege of the Champion's Voice. A small group may also try for this privilege, but only if they announce before the tournament who is in their party and that they wish to attain the Champion's Voice. Someone from their designated group must then place first in every event. These victories gain one person, and one person only, the right to enter the Lords' Circle to treat with the Horse Lords.

**Shrine to Arl'ng.** Since time immemorial, a shrine in honor of Arl'ng has stood between the campsites in the Midriver and the Tournament Grounds, overlooking the competitions. The shrine itself was built of wild briars growing live in the ground, woven into each other to form an arched trellis from which people could hang tokens. At the bidding of Palorva's representatives, the steward, Varyn, moved the briars and all the consecrated dirt around them roughly twenty yards closer to the Tilion-Ger and Sonzan-Ger campsites. This prevents the shrine from having any potential ill effects on vampires among the Bishalian people, although uprooting and moving the shrine has caused whispers of disapproval among many of Arl'ng's faithful.

This is mechanically a Shrine; heroes may deposit 50 sc worth of incense, gems, or other finery at the base of this Shrine to remove 1d4 Fear. A hero may only benefit from this once per month.

**Prison Wagons.** At the far north of the Tournament Grounds, near the perimeter of the Riverflow, any Horse Lords who bring prisoners with them will leave those unlucky souls chained in the prison wagon used to transport them here. The tribes rotate placing guards on these prisoners, who must suffer the sun, wind, and rain on open platforms covered only with a wooden cage. They receive food and water, and the chance to fight a member of the tribe imprisoning them for their freedom.

## QUESTS

### CHAMPION'S VOICE

If the heroes become aware of the Champion's Voice privilege before the Horse Lords begin their conference, they may make an attempt to place first in every event in the Grand Tournament. If they succeed, they may send either one member of their own party to negotiate with the Horse Lords, knowing that one of Palorva's representatives will be present, or they may send a Bishalian ally who has joined them in this attempt.

The heroes may learn about the Champion's Voice privilege from anyone with advanced knowledge of the politics of Bishal, including people who live outside of Bishal. As such, the leaders of the anti-vampire coalition may have sent the heroes with this goal in mind.

However, the heroes may also receive this quest at the Riverflow by hearing about the Champion's Voice privilege through gossip or from someone asking for their help to claim a place in the Lords' Circle. In order to win, the heroes must pass the conditions described in the sections for the Lords' Circle and the Tournament Grounds, taking first place in all five events during the Grand Tournament.

**Chariot Racing.** A test of the charioteer's judgment and ability to control four horses harnessed to a two-wheeled hunting chariot. Have the competing hero make one check each in Wisdom, Dexterity, Intelligence, and Strength using applicable bonuses. For example, if a hero is skilled in Wisdom (Animal Handling), they may wish to use that in their check, but if they have more ranks in Wisdom (Insight) and can make a good case for using them, that may be to their advantage.

Add these four checks together. If the total is 100 or above, the hero takes first place in chariot racing.

**Archery.** Competitors will need to shoot a longbow while riding on horseback, striking a small moving target from at least 100 yards. Have the competing hero make three Dexterity checks with a DC of 25. If the hero succeeds at all three checks, the hero takes first place in archery.

**Trick Riding.** While riding a horse around a series of obstacles, the hero must perform a variety of acrobatic tricks such as handstands or jumping from one horse to another without falling or spooking the horse. As with chariot racing, have the competing hero make four checks. However, for this event, the checks are Wisdom, Strength, and two Dexterity checks.

Add these four checks together. If the total is 100 or above, the hero takes first place in trick riding. If the hero is able to describe a compelling routine, the DM may award them up to a +2 bonus for any roll in this event.

**Saber Fighting.** The competing hero will enter a fighting circle armed with only a saber (use stats for a scimitar) and have a one-on-one battle against a Bishalian commander (use the stats of a **gladiator**). The first to 0 hit points withdraws from the friendly bout. If the hero wins the bout, they take first place in saber fighting.

**Bare-Handed Fighting.** The competing hero and a frost giant enter a fighting circle and are stripped of all weapons. The only permitted attacks are punching, kicking, grappling, and other similar. The first to 0 HP withdraws. If the hero wins the bout, they take first place in bare-handed fighting.



**Lords' Circle.** If and only if the heroes take first place in every event, they will earn the chance to speak directly to the assembled Horse Lords at their official council meeting. If they do not earn this right, they must find other opportunities to take any political actions required.

If the heroes earn the right to speak before the assembled Horse Lords, the leaders of the anti-vampire coalition will reward them with 700 sc per person, and they will earn +3 Aristocratic and Militant Goodwill, and +2 Social Goodwill in Kandiff and Forsten. The effects in Bishal will depend on how the heroes use their opportunity, but the Horse Lords will recognize their strength.

Any Bishalian who works with the heroes to gain this privilege will consider it a favor equal in weight to a life debt, and will also reward each hero with an uncommon magic item. This is in addition to the reward from the anti-vampire coalition.

## DERK

Derk was the seat of Dracula's power, and his legacy is painfully apparent. His enormous castle occupies a large valley and mountainside where the town of Helsing was once built. To its east, the Haunted Forest sprawls between Dracula's castle and the capital of Derk, Icepoint, where King Dekland VI rules the country in fearful deference to Palorva's wishes.

Derk's landscape is dark and twisted. The spells Dracula cast decades ago, along with the large, industrial devices he built, spew vapor and smoke into the atmosphere, resulting in constant cloud cover. Derk's grasses and trees are all wilted and warped due to the lack of sunlight. Its animals are gaunt and prone to feral temperaments. Finding edible food in Derk's wilderness is quite difficult, requiring a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Nature) check for a hero to scrounge 1 ration, or a DC 20 check for a hero to scrounge 2 rations.

Note that once the heroes reach Derk, intense cloud cover and billowing smoke render the landscape shrouded from the sun. During daylight hours, creatures can see as far as they typically could, but the entire region is considered dim light unless an artificial light source is implemented.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll on the table below to determine the number of random encounters that the heroes must contend with on a given travel day.

### ENCOUNTER TYPE

1d6	Exploration	Combat
1	1d4+1	1d6
2-3	1d6+1	1d4
4-6	1d4+1	1d2

## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

Most of the exploration encounters that the heroes face will be significantly less difficult than they were when the heroes were lower level. However, their journey across Derk's heartland may also bring them into contact with a couple dangerous new environmental threats.

2d6	Encounter Type
2	Ashfall
3	Quicksand
4-5	Navigating a Ravine
6-7	Abandoned Farmstead
8	Thunderstorm
9-10	Destroyed Wagon
11	Volcanic Chasm
12	Brush Fire

### ASHFALL

Ash rains from the sky as a result of the great volcanic chasms that have been opened in Derk's heartland. Each hero gains +1 Fear. For the next 2d6 hours, each hero that breathes must make a Constitution saving throw. The DC starts at 6 and increases by 3 for each consecutive hour. Whenever a hero fails, they gain one level of exhaustion.

### QUICKSAND

The hero with the lowest Wisdom score stumbles into quicksand. They may make a DC 20 Strength or Intelligence check; on a failed check, they escape the quicksand but gain 1 level of exhaustion. If they fail, they also lose 2 rations or 1 weapon of their choice. Regardless of whether the hero succeeded or failed, they gain +1 Fear.





## NAVIGATING A RAVINE

Each hero must make two skill checks in order to descend a ravine and climb up the other side. For each hero, the sum total of these skill checks must be at least 34. Heroes may use Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, or Wisdom checks if they can make a reasonable pitch as to why. Any hero whose sum rolls are lower than 24 takes 2d6 falling damage and gains one level of exhaustion.

## ABANDONED FARMSTEAD

The heroes venture across a farmstead that has obviously been attacked. Smoke still trails from certain portions of the house and the barn, though there do not appear to be any active fires. Heroes that explore the wreckage can find the slaughtered remains of farmhands and livestock.

Any hero may make a DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) check, finding each of the following items on a success:

- 1d10 arrows
- 1d8 rations that are still good
- 1d20 sc
- 1 pitchfork (use the stats of a spear, but it cannot be thrown)

If the heroes attempt to take a short or long rest in the vicinity of the farmstead, they must face the Fiend and its Minions random encounter.

## THUNDERSTORM

A massive thunderstorm sweeps across the plains and hills. If the heroes do not seek shelter, all nonmagical fires are extinguished and 10% of their rations spoil. Furthermore, each hero gains 1 level of exhaustion as they are drenched to the bone.

If the heroes do seek shelter, any number of heroes must make Wisdom (Survival) skill checks. Take the average of each check that was made; on a DC of 14 or higher, the heroes find shelter, do not gain exhaustion, and avoid their rations spoiling.

## DESTROYED WAGON

The heroes come across a wagon that has clearly been destroyed violently. Its wooden wheels are shattered, its canvas shredded. Any sign of its rider or its horses is long gone, though old blood stains the ground.

Heroes may make a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check. Any hero that succeeds finds one item as determined by 1d4:

1. 1d12 arrows or crossbow bolts (based on the hero's weapon of choice)
2. 1d6 rations that are still good
3. 2d20 sc
4. 4 daggers

If the heroes attempt to take a short or long rest in the vicinity of the destroyed wagon, they must face the Fiend and its Minions combat encounter.

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

1d4	Encounter Type
1	Lurking Vampire
2	Fiend and its Minions
3	Pack of Werewolves
4	Vampire Warlord

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a vampire that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the following table to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Jotun vampire
2	Vampire reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## FIEND AND ITS MINIONS

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Forsten for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the following table.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any hellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.



## VAMPIRE WARLORD

A **vampire courtier**, **vampire jotun**, or **vampire reaver** attacks the party, possibly leading a handful of underlings.

After determining which type of vampire is attacking the party, add any assortment of hellspawn until the encounter's adjusted CR is deadly for the party. Once the **vampire** is reduced to one half its maximum hit points, it will retreat, but will order its hellspawn to keep fighting until dead.

## WHITEBREAK

The largest city in Derk, Whitebreak is a cosmopolitan city filled with a wide variety of colorful characters. Whitebreak is responsible for over half of Derk's economy, and is considered by most to be the most important city in Derk—Icepoint is an insular afterthought. Even under the control of Palorva, Whitebreak remains a tough, resilient city. It is filled with vampires, with mortals who ally with Palorva out of fear, and with both hidden and brazen rebels.

## WEATHER

Whitebreak is located in Derk, and thus the steam from Dracula's castle blankets the entire city in dark fog. Frigid winds are common in Whitebreak, as it sits on the coast.

## THE CULTURE OF WHITEBREAK

One of the largest trading hubs in the world, and certainly the largest in the country, Whitebreak's culture is fueled by merchants, sailors, thieves, prostitutes, and nobles who monopolize it all. Whitebreak has always been an exuberant and chaotic city, where one has to watch their back and their wallet to avoid being swindled.

Everyone in Whitebreak, without exception, wears a face covering. These serve a dual purpose: 1) protection from the cold and the wind, and 2) protection of one's own identity. No one can see if someone has fangs or not if they cannot see their mouth. Vampires, although they generally have control, do not want to out their identity, lest they be hunted. Non-vampires do not want to out their identity, lest they be hunted. Most everyone has grown tired of the endless fighting in Whitebreak, and this cultural phenomenon has emerged so that life may keep going.

Note that, should the party enter Whitebreak without face coverings, this would make them an immediate target of suspicion and eavesdropping. Likely, a keen-eyed vampire would peer closely and notice the lack of fangs, causing them to become targets of vampiric rogues.

Since the beginning of Dracula's reign, Whitebreak has also become an increasingly volatile city. Information is a highly prized commodity. Taverns are dangerous as people must lower their face coverings to take bites or drink.

Tavern brawls are common.

## ECONOMY

It is worth noting that the economy of Whitebreak is back on its feet and thriving after a dismal dive when Dracula's regime began. Whitebreak flourishes under Palorva's regime and is one of the greatest revenue generators in her empire.

## TAVERNS AND TANKARDS

Whitebreak is a highly prominent port city governed by a culture of suspicion, resilience, and exchange of goods and information. Taverns are by far the most popular (and interesting) aspect of the city. For this reason, you may wish to give your players the following options, or roll on the table to see which one they randomly stumble into.

Furthermore, note that any NPC (unless stated otherwise) may be found in any given tavern, or in the marketplace, or in an alleyway. The NPCs listed below are intended to help the heroes figure out what they might need to do next.

Note that all taverns are bustling and busy. This is important, in case a Tavern Brawl occurs in any of them.

## TAVERNS AND INNS OF WHITEBREAK

1d6	Encounter
1-3	The Breaking Point
4-5	Unicorn's Delight
6	Moonshiver Tavern and Inn

When you roll on the table, consult the matching subheading to determine what happens or whom the heroes meet.

Holy Water used to be a famous tavern and brothel made in the ruins of a converted temple. In the dozen years since Dracula's fall, Holy Water has fallen into disrepair and is no longer operative.

## THE BREAKING POINT

Whitebreak's oldest and largest tavern. All the stereotypes of a tavern are true here—boisterous bards, bloody brawls, and endless ale are all part of the Breaking Point experience. The Breaking Point is notable for its famous Fireflagon, a highly alcoholic and oddly spicy drink that is absolutely free... if you make it through three flagons of it. Very few people have ever successfully consumed three flagons without projectile vomiting. Those who can keep it down might burp flames!

The Breaking Point also has a large table seating eight players with a game of cards that has been going on for centuries, according to the legends. Folk can leave the table between the game's rounds, or opt in when a new seat is available. A seat at the table is highly coveted, and there is almost always a crowd watching the game closely.



## UNICORN'S DELIGHT

Formerly pitched as a fanciful fae-themed tavern with whimsy at every table, the branches and plants that line the decor have since wilted. Unicorn's Delight is openly vampire owned and vampire run, and serves blood as its primary beverage of choice. It is a dark, mysterious, and seedy joint.

Face coverings are still commonplace in Unicorn's Delight, and secrets even more tightly kept. Some non-vampires come (and force themselves to drink blood) in order to garner tightly kept secrets or in order to make people believe that they are vampires. Coming to Unicorn's Delight and not ordering a goblet of blood is extremely suspicious and immediately puts a target on one's back.

## MOONSHIVER TAVERN AND INN

On the pricier ends of taverns in Whitebreak, Moonshiver Tavern and Inn is a venue that highly values the arts. It boasts the biggest constructed stage in Derk, and hosts numerous troubadours, entertainers, and storytellers a night.

The Moonshiver family has existed and run this tavern since before the reign of Dracula. Originally their business first suffered, but has strengthened since Dracula's takeover and Palorva's subsequent reign. While the family is not necessarily tied to the court of Palorva, the name on its surface might imply so. Furthermore, Moonshiver is a powerful name in town, and thus receives a lot of political pressure from Palorva-allied politicians and high ranking officials.

The institution claims neutrality... but many have observed vampire friendly tendencies, such as serving blood as a beverage. Furthermore, garlic is no longer served in the tavern.

## ICEPOINT

The capital of Derk, although not its largest city, Icepoint is a stony fortress city on the northern coast from which Dekland VI decrees laws and settles disputes. Already far removed from the heart of Derk, and insular by the nature of its geography and architecture, Icepoint has an unfavorable reputation among the people of Derk. Controlled by governors loyal to Palorva, the policies of the city favor the creatures of the night over any mortal who lives there. Silver, alchemy, and carpentry are outlawed.

The city itself is surrounded by a heavily fortified wall. Guards patrol the wall constantly, and admittance to the city involves a brief but thorough investigation of all goods. Any items with any sort of magical trace are immediately confiscated by the city. Garlic is burned, and anyone transporting garlic is detained.

## WEATHER

Icepoint is far north, and (as indicated by the name) is often plagued with frigid winds and icy storms. The steam from Dracula's castle blankets the country of Derk, and Icepoint is no exception. The sun is never seen in Icepoint—all is overcast gloom and despair.

## THE MANORS OF ICEPOINT

Icepoint was once home to a group of rival noble houses, all vying for power and influence. These noble houses still exist, although some are now long abandoned, notably the Amadeus Estate. Icepoint has always been a wealthy city, and it was once true that with some grit and guile a house could rise in the ranks.

## THE TEMPLE OF TOVARE

The Temple of Tovare has been completely ransacked, and the insides entirely burned. What was once a magnificent cathedral is now a depressing reminder of Icepoint's better days. The structure of the temple has remained relatively intact, with the only real damage being missing patches of the roof, and a few shattered windows. The main source of damage is the loss of all literature and the destruction of furniture, which occurred when Dracula's forces raided the place many years ago.





## THE HAUNTED FOREST

Time is fickle in the haunted forest. The branches of the twisting, towering trees interlock into a blanket of darkness, impenetrable by sunlight. One wrong turn in the dense and frightening woods, and adventurers may find themselves back at the edge of the forest. Reality itself seems to bend in the dark confines of the Haunted Forest. Legends say that the forest itself feeds on magic, as powerful mages venture into the woods never to be seen again, whereas common adventurers often find their way back to the edge of the forest. Some say the trees themselves watch you...

The forest is home to various horrors. Among them, the most notable and widespread monstrosities are packs of werewolves and malevolent spirits. Travelers in the forest cannot travel far without hearing bloodcurdling howls and unsettling whispers.

Unbeknownst to those outside of the forest, the forest is home to a surprisingly large inn named Keepers Inn, a self-sustaining town all contained within one building. The inhabitants are all rather eccentric magic wielders, who ventured into the forest in search of knowledge, and remain stuck, unable to find their way out. Keepers Inn is a Haven.

## INTO THE WOODS

**Read Aloud:** *The gnarled branches of a thousand trees beckon you closer. The empty hollows of a hundred trunks watch you as you approach. The Haunted Forest stretches before you, the boughs of the twisting, towering trees interlock into a blanket of darkness, impenetrable by sunlight. The caw of crows, howl of wolves, and whispers of the wind are somehow enticing, drawing you into the infinite void that stares back at you.*

The Haunted Forest draws powerful spellcasters through the maze of its ever-changing branches. Navigating the forest consists of a series of Checkpoints. Those Checkpoints are: The Entrance to the Woods, the Old Hollow, Keepers Inn, the Old Well, and finally the Mad Forest. As the heroes progress through the forest, they find each Checkpoint in sequential order.

In order to progress through the forest, the player capable of casting the highest level of spell must make a Wisdom check. If two players are tied for the highest magic Power Level, then the party may determine which player to designate as leader through the forest. Have the appropriate hero make this Wisdom check at the beginning of each travel day. When the players reach the Old Well, they must also face a combat encounter.

DC	Result
9 or less	The party finds themselves back at the Checkpoint which they most recently left—either the Entrance to the Woods, the Mad Forest, Keepers Inn, or the Old Well. The heroes do not progress forward today.
10	The party explores the Haunted Forest without gaining much ground. After dealing with a random combat encounter, the party leader may make another check.
20 or more	The party discovers a new Checkpoint—either the Old Hollow, Keepers Inn, the Old Well, or finally the Mad Forest.

## HAUNTED FOREST ENCOUNTERS

As the party explores the Haunted Forest, feel free to make use of the following tables to generate random encounters, or give yourself ideas from which to generate side quests or strange occurrences. The Haunted Forest is dangerous and disconcerting at every step.

## COMBAT

2d6	Encounter
2	Malevolent Spirits
3-4	Essence Parasites
5-9	Pack of Werewolves
10-11	The Trees Have Eyes!
12	Why Don't You Stay a While?

The Haunted Forest is host to a wide range of terrifying creatures interested in consuming flesh, magic, or even Essence. The spirits of the forest siphon magic from the mages of Keepers Inn, stealing spells for themselves or gorging themselves upon magical energy.

Each of these combat encounters should be medium or dangerous difficulty.





## MALEVOLENT SPIRITS

The party is attacked by a number of **ghosts**, **wraiths**, or **shadows**. As needed to achieve the correct encounter difficulty, add skeletons and zombies as auxiliary forces. These various undead are the lurking spirits of previous adventurers that have fallen to the forest's hunger.

## ESSENCE PARASITES

This encounter pits the heroes against creatures that have evolved to feast on magic and Essence. They often lurk near the Keepers Inn.

The party is attacked by any of the following creatures: **invisible stalkers**, **shadows**, and **wights**.

Each of those creatures gain the following reactive action in this encounter.

**Absorb Energies (Recharge 6).** When the creature is hit by a magical attack, it may make a Charisma saving throw vs the caster's spell save DC. On a success, the creature immediately regains 1d10 hit points. If the triggering magic was a spell, the creature also gains temporary hit points equal to double the spell's level.

In order to reach the desired encounter difficulty, add **Giant Spiders**, **Reaper Bats**, **Skeletons**, and/or **Swarms of Insects**.

## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

Due to the ambient magic that suffuses the Haunted Forest, Ancerra's five moons all appear to be full at all times while traveling in the forest. As such, werewolves can transform much more effectively and frequently.

If you wish, roll on the following table to determine what kind of werewolf the heroes must face. At your discretion, roll one time for the whole pack, or roll individually for each werewolf. Use **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired encounter difficulty.

2d6	Type of Werewolf
2-3	Scarlan
4-5	Primor
6-8	Diminus
9-10	Garvor
11-12	Sylvin

## THE TREES HAVE EYES!

If this encounter is randomly selected from the Haunted Forest Encounter table, then preface the combat encounter by utilizing descriptions of how the players feel as though they are being watched, or make a randomly chosen character see an eyeball pop out of a tree hollow before disappearing again. The greater the buildup to this encounter, the more rewarding it will be.

Use **treants**, **eyesquitos**, **eyesquito progenitors**, and/or an **eyesore of eyesquitos** to create this encounter. This encounter should be of deadly difficulty.

## WHY DON'T YOU STAY A WHILE?

The allure of the forest attempts to enthrall travelers into staying there forever. Bleeding into this reality from the Pale, an **incubus/succubus** and **otyugh** attempt to hypnotize and subdue the party. The incubus/succubus will continually try to charm the party, while the otyugh rips them apart with its tentacles.

## THE OLD HOLLOW

**Read Aloud:** *As you press deeper into the forest, the twittering of bats and cawing of crows give way to the groaning of trees and the faint, unsettlingly humanoid sigh of mist. The foliage continues to press in closer and closer around you, and it seems that the jagged branches of the trees are actively clawing at your clothing. Finally, when you push into a small clearing of wilted grass and choking briars, you see a large, gnarled tree turn to face you, spreading its limbs in a menacing gesture. This is no mere trick of the mind; the trees themselves are moving to claim you.*

When the heroes reach this Checkpoint, they will need to battle their way through the corrupted copse of trees. If they attempt to circumvent it, the trees will magically reposition, forcing a combat encounter. The encounter should be difficult or deadly. Use the following table to build the encounter.

Creature's Role	Creature	Adjustments
Miniboss	Treant	This creature cannot be charmed or frightened.
Lieutenants	Shambling Mound, Vampire Spawn, and/or Vrock	-
Minions	Reaper Bat and/or Skeleton	These creatures have 1 hit point, but never take damage from attacks that miss them.



After they defeat the trees, they find a decrepit old graveyard with crumbling tombstones and soggy, rotten soil. This is a Shine with a unique effect: The heroes may sleep in the shallow, sunken graves. Doing so allows them to take a long rest and ignore any Fear above their Fear Threshold when doing so. However, when they finish taking their long rest, the heroes gain +1 Fear. Heroes may discern the nature of this Shrine by succeeding on a DC 8 Intelligence check.

## KEEPERS INN

**Read Aloud:** *Through the twisted branches, the winding paths, and the oppressive darkness, you begin to hear the faint playing of a lyre and lute. As you keep traversing, the playing grows and grows, and you begin to see light peeking through the trees. You find a grandiose, three story inn with multiple active chimneys, just sitting in the middle of the woods. Some of the higher rooms were clearly built after the main body of the inn, as they hang off the side of the building precariously. All of the windows of the inn are boarded up, but light flows through the cracks; it is clearly occupied.*

A massive, heavy, polished oak door with an ornate knocker is the only way in or out of the inn. Next to the doorframe, a shiny needle pokes through the door, apparently hooked up to some contraption of glass tubes that runs in between the boards of the nearest window. A sign next to the needle says “Welcome! Prick me!”

Each character must prick their finger on the silver needle to prove they are not a werewolf. When a character pricks their finger, they watch as their blood is taken through the glass tubes of the window. If the entire party does not prick their finger, a whimsical voice from the window may call out “All visitors must be pricked!” Once all the blood has been drawn, assuming no party member is a werewerecreature, the party is admitted into the inn.

If there is a werewerecreature in the party, the party may convince the folk within the inn to allow their werewerecreature companion into the inn if the werewerecreature agrees to remain in a jail cell locked with a silver padlock, with the bars wrapped in silver barbed wire.



## THE INN

Keepers Inn is a Haven. The inn itself has a large first floor, furnished with a bar, a stage, numerous tables, some couches, and a storeroom. The upstairs floors are individual rooms, where the inn's denizens spend most of their time. Many of the inhabitants have potion laboratories, or cauldrons, or strange magical experiments going on in their room, hence the numerous chimneys.

All residents of Keepers Inn are eccentric magic wielders. Any and all NPCs interacted with here are probably a little strange, having already been peculiar before venturing into the forest, and now having lived in a Haunted Forest for many years.

## KEEPERS INN SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

As the party rests in Keepers Inn, feel free to make use of the following table to generate random encounters, or give yourself ideas from which to improvise adventures or strange occurrences.

1d6	Encounter
1	"Blood"
2	Danwillow Stonefoot
3	Inkback Hobbler
4	Penelope
5	Glorb Miniscule
6	Mirabel Moonshiver

When you roll on the Social table, consult the matching subheading to learn about this character. Note that Elroy Stonefoot (2) and Mirabel Moonshiver (6) offer Side Quests.

### "BLOOD"

A kettek tinkerer who is invested in the potential of combining magic, technology, and blood to create new life. Everyone calls them "Blood," and they have forgotten their original name. Blood is the character who sits at the window and manages the bar, analyzing all blood absorbed by the needle. They have unkempt, flaming red hair.

### DANWILLOW STONEFOOT

A young halfling zealot who went looking for his father Elroy; Danwillow found him, but became trapped in the Keepers Inn as well. Elroy has since passed away, but Danwillow has found himself unable to leave the forest, so he stays in the Keepers Inn with no hope of ever escaping. He is clearly despairing and regretting his life decisions.



## INKBACK HOBBLER

A kleppin badger mage who collects animal and monster parts. She has hundreds of scrolls filled with the anatomy of various monsters, and is willing to sell and/or bargain with the party in exchange for monster parts. Her cheeriness regarding animal parts may be disconcerting, as she carries around a badger skull and refers to it as her wife, “Matilda.” She can often be seen eating meals and having lively conversations with said badger skull.

## PENELOPE

An elderly elven witch who specializes in all sorts of potions and brews. Penelope may be able to help cure the party of any ailments they have... for a price. Penelope exclusively refers to herself in the third person.

## GLORB MINISCULE

A gretchling who tries to keep the Keepers Inn as tidy as possible, Glorb feasts on the ambient magic in the Haunted Forest. He will never go hungry, but the corrupt nature of the forest has caused Glorb’s features to warp and darken. He has an appearance like that of a black-and-yellow salamander. He tends not to be very chatty, instead keeping to himself and hurrying forward to clean up if anyone drops anything on the floor.

## MIRABEL MOONSHIVER

A human woman troubadour, the only person unversed in magic in Keepers Inn. She keeps the inhabitants entertained, with nightly performances and engaging storytelling. She often tells stories of the sun, utilizing it as a symbol of hope for what life could be. She has heavy perfume.

## THE OLD WELL

*Read Aloud: You stumble upon a clearing in the forest, where the darkness is less oppressive, and the whispers of the forest are dampened. No wolves howl, and you feel no eyes watching. It is quiet, serene. You notice that there is a gap in the trees, and you can see the stars winking down at you.*

In the center of the clearing, there is an old, dilapidated stone well. The wood is rotting, and you do not see a bucket. Peering into the well, amid dusty webs and skittering bugs, you see glittering coins reflecting the light of the stars.

The Old Well is a Shrine. A crumbling stone well has glittering coins in its watery depths. A hero may throw between 1 and 100 sc into the well. Roll percentile dice. If the die roll is equal to or less than the number of coins thrown into the well, the hero removes 1 Fear and regains 1d10+5 hit points. On a roll of 1, the hero may also remove a Psyche Talent. A hero may only benefit from this well once per week.

## THE MAD FOREST

The Haunted Forest borders the Mad Forest, and entering the Mad Forest leaves the proximity of the Haunted Forest. This means the border of the Haunted and Mad Forest acts as a Checkpoint, outside the realm of the Haunted Forest’s magic.

## THE MAD FOREST

The Mad Forest is something out of a fever dream. True to its name, it has a way of driving people mad when they enter its reaches.

The Mad Forest itself is a massive m’lykkri that grew to become dozens of miles wide.

This m’lykkri is too large to fight and acts as an environment rather than a monster. Other m’lykkri drawn to the corruption of the Mad Forest have resulted in the forest’s disgusting state remaining relatively unchanged.

## HUSK OF A TITAN

If this m’lykkri died in the events of *Soliloquy of Annihilation* at your table, then adjust the Mad Forest’s topography to include a giant horseshoe-shaped mountain with a deflated center. This is the corpse of the ancient m’lykkri, and it has been overgrown by vegetation. Four smaller m’lykkri that use the typical stats of m’lykkri have taken up residence in the Mad Forest.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

The Mad Forest might appear to be a normal forest at first, but this is a gross facade.

Digging more than 1 ft into the earth would strike meat, and potentially cause a geyser of infected blood to jet into the air. If the heroes peel away the bark of any of the trees, they find raw meat underneath.

Corpses disappear in 1d4 hours, absorbed into the m’lykkri’s body.

There are no sounds of typical forest critters such as woodpeckers and squirrels; these noises are replaced by an incessant buzzing and the occasional hacking caw of an infected carrion bird.

Maggots are everywhere. Every fold of bark in a tree contains hundreds of maggots. Brushing a tree’s limb could cause thousands of maggots to rain down on the heroes. These maggots are harmless to the heroes.

In the Mad Forest, there is persistent thick fog that restricts all vision past 30 feet. A twisted canopy of gnarled branches and “leaves” that are actually membranes of skin completely block all sunlight.



It can be hard to notice this given the terribly restricted lighting, but most of the standing water in the Mad Forest is primarily fecal, and most of the running water is actually blood or pus.

The forest is vaguely aware of itself. It is one creature with a thousand parts. It is a fattened, slothful, and slow creature that is not fully awakened at this time.

## SURVIVAL IN THE MAD FOREST

The Mad Forest is an incredibly hostile place, and surviving in the forest is quite difficult.

Food and rations spoil at a heavily increased rate. Any rations that the heroes bring into the Mad Forest spoil after 24 hours and become infested with maggots at that time. Water goes putrid after 72 hours, growing mold and larvae.

### PURIFYING FOOD AND DRINK

Some heroes may have magical abilities allowing them to purify their rations, or they may have spells such as Nature's Bounty that allow them to produce magical food.

If they do not, then all hope is not lost; they can procure up to 3 vials of cleansing olive oil each at the Keepers Inn by completing side quests assigned by the denizens living there. Expending one use of cleansing olive oil extends the purity of food or water by 24 hours.

Any usage of magic has a chance of evoking a reaction from the Mad Forest. If a hero uses any magical ability, they must also make a saving throw using their spellcasting modifier. This check starts at a DC of 5, but increases by +2 for each additional instance of any hero casting magic on a given day. On a fail, then the heroes immediately trigger a combat encounter as the forest's antibodies spring into action.

The stench of the forest grows increasingly vile. Each time the heroes finish take a long rest, they must make Constitution saving throws. The DC is 6 + 4 per day that they have spent in the Mad Forest. On a fail, the hero becomes poisoned until they make this check again or until they leave the forest or enter the Laboratory.

## STARVATION

Heroes may typically go without food for a number of days equal to their Constitution modifier. If they go without food for an additional day, they gain one level of exhaustion at the end of that day. They may go for 2 days without water, gaining one level of exhaustion on the third day that they do not have water.

In the Mad Forest, the grotesque environment and utter stench may also cause the heroes to vomit.

About halfway through each day, each hero must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC of 8 + 2 for each day that they have been in the Mad Forest. On a fail, the hero vomits. This reduces the number of days that they can go without food or water by 1 each.

## EATING THE FOREST

Heroes may attempt to cook and eat forest's flesh. Doing so automatically triggers a combat encounter as the forest's antibodies fight back. If the party attempts to cook the forest's flesh, each hero gains +1 Fear, then one member of the party must make an Intelligence check and can add their proficiency with Chef's Tools if relevant. The meat produces 1 day's worth of rations for each hero, but may also afflict the hero with a disease. Each hero must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC determined by the initial Intelligence check as shown on the following table. The initial Intelligence check also determines the severity of the disease if the hero fails their saving throw.

DC	CON Save DC	Disease
5 or less	None; automatically hits	Anthrax
6-10	22	Dysentery
11-13	18	Rabies
14-16	17	Deathboil Plague
17-20	17	Scarlet Fever
21-22	16	Leprosy
23-24	16	Boil Plague
25+	-	None

## BRAVING THE MADNESS

In order for the heroes to reach the laboratory at the heart of the Mad Forest, they will need to spend at least 5 days traveling at a normal pace. The distance on a map would suggest that it takes only 3 days, but the m'l'ykkri very subtly rolls its flesh, effectively meaning that the heroes are walking against a conveyor belt that extends their time in the forest. The m'l'ykkri can also bunch its flesh up into rolling hills that add to the heroes' walking time.

In addition to finding ways to keep their rations from spoiling each day, the heroes must contend with a certain number of environmental and combat encounters as shown on the following table. You may select or randomly determine which environmental encounters they face. Note that some of their actions may prompt additional combat encounters, such as trying to eat the forest.

Traveling at a faster rate may allow the heroes to skip days 4-5, though of course they must contend with the possibility of gaining exhaustion from the added exertion of walking without resting.



Day	Exploration Encounters	Combat Encounters
1	2	1d4-2 (min 0)
2	2	1d4-1 (min 0)
3	3	1d4-1 (min 0)
4	3	1d4
5	4	1d4+1

## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2	Fecal Swamp
3-4	Bursting Blood Vessel
5-7	Rolling Hills
8-10	Encroaching Trees
11	Absorbing Mud
12	Hungering Cave

## FECAL SWAMP

The heroes must wade through a swamp of fecal matter. Each hero must make a Constitution, Intelligence, or Wisdom check to pick their way through the swamp. Then, each hero must make a Constitution saving throw, rolling individually and using a modifier based on the hero's initial check. On a hit, the hero suffers from Dysentery.

Original DC	CON Save DC
5 or less	None; automatically hits
6-10	20
11-13	18
14-16	16
17-20	14
21+	-

## BURSTING BLOOD VESSEL

The heroes come upon a hill that has a strange, red membrane running along its length. It seems to be pulsing. This is one of the m'lykkri's skin blood vessels. If the heroes do not move on immediately, then the blood vessel bursts. Each hero must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failed save, the hero takes 4d6 acid damage. On a success, the hero takes half damage. If the heroes linger, then they trigger a combat encounter as antibodies emerge from the burst vessel.

## ROLLING HILLS

As the heroes are climbing a hill, the m'lykkri rapidly flattens and bunches its skin, causing what is effectively an earthquake. Each hero may make a DC 20 Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, or Wisdom check to stabilize themselves. On a fail, they take 4d6 falling damage. On a success, they take half damage. On a roll of 1, they also suffer a broken rib (*HGtVH*).

## ENCROACHING TREES

The trees seem to press in around the heroes, making it harder and harder to progress. One or more heroes may make an Intelligence or Wisdom check to navigate the forest. Take the average of each hero that rolled. On a DC of 16 or higher, the heroes navigate the trees and manage to press forward. On failure, the heroes face a combat encounter as creatures emerge from the trees and attack.

## ABSORBING MUD

The heroes stumble into quicksand. Each hero must make a series of DC 20 Strength, Dexterity, or Intelligence checks. Once they have made two successes in a row, they escape. On a failure, they get sucked deeper into the mud. After two failures, they begin to suffocate. They may continue making checks to escape until dead.

A creature that has escaped the mud may spend their turn helping a hero, allowing that hero to roll 2d20 and use the higher result. In order to do so, the escaped creature must use rope, a pole, or some similar item to help the hero escape. If they use a tree branch, then this triggers a combat encounter 1 round later.

## HUNGERING CAVE

The heroes notice a cave that seems to have toothlike protrusions. If they ignore the cave, they witness it again several hours later. If any heroes approach the cave, they can see that its walls look like a throat.

If any heroes enter the cave, it attempts to swallow them using the following attack.

**Swallow.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 0 ft, any target inside the cave. *Hit:* 35 (5d10+8) bludgeoning damage and the creature is swallowed. A swallowed creature is restrained and blinded and takes 14 (4d6) acid damage at the start of each of its turns. A swallowed creature can make a DC 18 Strength check to break its restrained condition, and a swallowed creature or a creature that has not been swallowed can make a DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check to pry the cave's mouth open again, allowing any creatures that are no longer restrained to escape. On a miss, the creature takes half damage and the creature narrowly escapes from the cave before it is swallowed.



## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Most of the creatures that the heroes might fight in the Mad Forest are actually extensions of the m'lykkri. The other creatures manage to live in the horrid environment in some symbiotic fashion, such as insects that gorge themselves on the meat and blood. Below is a table of creatures that you may use when the heroes face a combat encounter. These encounters should be of medium difficulty, given that the brutality of surviving the forest itself is already a significant challenge.

CR	Creatures
¼	M'lykkri Flesh Worm
½	Needlebeak, Swarm of Insects
1	Eyesquito, Giant Spider, Wamph'lykkri
2	M'lykkri Fleshling
3	Eyesquito Progenitor
5	Otyugh
6	M'lykkri Flesh Swarm
9	M'lykkri Lumberer
9	Treant

## FORSTEN

Forsten exists almost entirely within the Old Forest. With mild summers and cold winters that often bring snow, the folk of Forsten are a tough lot. Most treat the forest with deep respect and a little fear.

Once a single kingdom along with Constel and Kendaria, Forsten seceded from Constel a few generations ago. The oldest folk of Forsten would remember the days when it was the northern half of a larger kingdom. Virtually none living today, with the exception of very elderly elves and similar lineages, would recall it being one with Kendaria, which split away after a civil war several hundred years hence.

## FORSTEN AT A GLANCE

Forsten has been ravaged by civil war over the past few decades. In recent years, however, a religious figure known as the Father of Mercies has risen to prominence. His proselytizing throughout Forsten has reunified much of the nation. Most towns across the nation are actively participating in intercity trade again and acknowledge Wolden as the official capital of Forsten. While individual opinions may vary, the majority of governing officials are willing to cooperate with this reunification to stop further bloodshed.

This information will have some degree of variation from town to town, but the most common traits of Forsten are detailed below.

**Academic.** Most Forsteners place more stock in one's ability to chop timber or skin game than in their ability to recite poetry. Formal education is uncommon, but entertainers do hold a special place in society as they spin fanciful tales long after the sun has set.

**Aristocratic and Political.** In recent years, Forsten has begun to piece itself back together after dozens of years of civil war. The Father of Mercies and King Aaron van Wolden are commonly accepted as the two most prominent and influential figures in Forsten, and Wolden is widely agreed upon as the capital of the nation.

**Mercantile and Trade.** Although its relationship with Constel is still quite tender, Forsten maintains a trade relationship with its neighbor. Many Forsten merchants are also sailors and trade with Kendaria to the south and Derk to the north.

Forsten primarily exports timber, although some of the locals fear that deforestation will anger the ancient gods of the Old Forest, as they believe happened in Constel.

**Militant.** Forsteners tend to be a strong, sturdy lot and make competent fighters. Many hunters, lumberjacks, fishers, and long-distance merchants have had to fight off numerous monstrosities from the untamed stretches of the Old Forest.

**Religious.** Forsteners are quite spiritual and often superstitious. Many believe that small actions will have unforeseen consequences and worry about the wrath of the old gods. Most will pray to multiple pantheons, but especially the Shibmar Conclave of the Archfae. Tovare and the Celestial Council also receive a good deal of attention thanks to a widespread interest in the Celestial Council after Dracula's death.

**Social.** Forsten is not a particularly hospitable region. Fear of the forest has led many to treat strangers with suspicion or outright hostility, even if the strangers are just from another town in Forsten.

**Underworld.** Crime syndicates flourish in the underbellies of all major cities in Forsten. The Father of Mercies has had a great unifying effect throughout the nation, but even he has not been able to stop these crime syndicates. Smugglers traffic weapons, gems, and drugs in and out of their nation, and mercenaries will take any protection or assassination job for the right price.



## WOLDEN

Overlooking a port city at the base of the craggy cliffs, Wolden is an expansive fortress that could house a small army and enough merchants and craftsfolk to keep the army well-supplied and entertained. Built of stone and wood, Wolden is an impressive fortress and besieging it would certainly be a protracted affair, especially given that it can easily access both the land and sea with roads that are well-maintained within a day's ride of the fortress.

Detailed information about Wolden can be found in the campaign narrative; see Chapter 1.

## TOWNS IN FORSTEN

As the heroes travel through Forsten, whenever they stop in a new town, you may roll on the table below to determine how large the town is, its approximate level of prosperity, and how deep-rooted the Cult of Lilith is in this town.

### 1d4 Town Size

- |   |                                     |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | <b>Tiny:</b> 200-1,000 people       |
| 2 | <b>Small:</b> 1,000-3,000 people    |
| 3 | <b>Average:</b> 3,000-10,000 people |
| 4 | <b>Large:</b> 10,000-25,000 people  |

### 2d6 Town Prosperity

- |      |   |
|------|---|
| 2    | <b>Impoverished:</b> Most merchants ask 200% the market price of any goods when they sense that the heroes are affluent. There is little to no infrastructure and conditions are unsanitary.                              |
| 3-5  | <b>Poor:</b> Most merchants ask 200% the market price of any goods when they sense that the heroes are affluent. Infrastructure is poor and the town guard ill equipped.  |
| 6-8  | <b>Average:</b> Market prices are standard. The town's infrastructure is adequate, the town guard fairly competent, and sanitation conditions reasonably healthy.   |
| 9-11 | <b>Wealthy:</b> Most merchants on friendly terms with the heroes offer them deals, such as free trinkets with any purchase. Infrastructure is good, the city guard well equipped, and crime relatively uncommon.          |
| 12   | <b>Prosperous:</b> Most merchants on friendly terms with the heroes offer them deals, such as free trinkets with any purchase. Infrastructure is exceptional, the city guard well equipped, and crime at an all time low. |

### 1d10 Cult Presence

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 1-4 | Extremely strong. Every major town official is a member of the cult or beholden to the cult.                    |
| 5-7 | Very strong. The baron, sheriff, or another prominent official is a member of the cult or beholden to the cult. |
| 8-9 | Present, but not strong. There are several cultists in town but they are not in positions of power.             |
| 10  | Weak. There are fewer than a dozen cultists in the town and they are disorganized.                              |

## DREAMHAZE MOUNTAINS

The mountains that overlook the Old Forest are known as the Dreamhaze Mountains, so named because of the strange, dreamlike quality evoked by their misty slopes. It is very easy to become lost in the Dreamhaze Mountains, even for skillful trackers, so most just avoid the mountains altogether. Those who do journey into the mountains often find inexplicable runes, come face to face with incarnations of their old memories, and must contend with strange monsters they have never heard of.

## THE OLD FOREST

The Old Forest sprawls across most of Kendaria and Forsten, and was once a major feature of Constel as well. While monster sightings are rare in these picturesque woods, travelers and locals alike are often left with a vague sense of unease after hiking therein. Children tell each other ghost stories that seem a little too real, somehow, and even skilled hunters have occasionally gone missing with no explanation. Forsteners get most of their food and raw materials from the forest, but they also worry that they will awaken the forest's wrath.

When the heroes travel in the Old Forest, roll on the Random Encounters table to determine how many exploration and combat encounters they must contend with each day.

### 1d6 Exploration Combat

- |     |     |     |
|-----|-----|-----|
| 1   | 1d2 | 1d6 |
| 2-3 | 1d4 | 1d6 |
| 4-6 | 1d4 | 1d4 |



## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Exploration Encounter
2	A Grisly Sight
3	Talking Animals?
4-5	Tangled Effigies
6-8	Faerie Houses
9-10	Disembodied Singing
11	Bleeding Wychmark
12	A Lavish Feast

The Old Forest is a place of fae magic and mystery. Many strange things can be found by striking out into its wilderness. You can roll for these while the group is traveling to use between encounters and to build a general atmosphere of mystery, danger, and whimsy within the Old Forest. When you roll on the Exploration Encounters table above, consult the matching subheading to find details of the odd encounter.

### A GRISLY SIGHT

The beauty of nature is often tempered with the undeniable evidence of its cruelty. While traveling, the group comes upon the bloodstained carcass of a now unidentifiable animal. It is (or was) quadrupedal, but its head is missing, its flesh is torn and flayed, and its trunk has been completely hollowed out of organs. Despite the totality of its destruction, it is still wet and not yet bearing much in the way of decay—this creature’s demise and devouring were recent, and whatever may have slain it may still be nearby...

### TALKING ANIMALS?

The adventurers hear what sounds like a conversation happening between two people with unusually high-pitched voices. The specific words are difficult to make out at first, but as they draw closer they hear snippets of the following (perhaps by means of a DC 12 Wisdom check):

Voice A: “— just sayin’, if She wants us to arrive a’faster, maybe She should hold court somewhere closer by.”

Voice B: “Oh hush, you know the trees are listening. I won’t be a party to your blasphemies.”

Voice A: “We’ve got a deal, me ‘n’ them trees. I don’t piss on ‘em and they don’t snitch on me.”

Voice B: “Anyso, we should hurry-hooves. Nowt good about leaving the Birch Lady waiting.”

If the party draws closer to the source of the chatter, either with a Dexterity (Stelath) check or otherwise, they will find an unremarkable yet still odd scene: a squirrel and a deer standing just feet apart. The squirrel quietly chitters to itself and flicks its tail while scrabbling in the dirt, apparently looking for something to eat. The deer impassively stares into the distance while absentmindedly munching on some berries from a nearby bush.

Neither shows any indication of being intelligent or capable of speech, and both will flee if the adventurers draw too close. If the party watches them flee into the distance, they might see (DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) check) the squirrel appear to climb up the deer’s leg and begin riding atop its head as the animals tear off into the forest.

Following the animals beyond a certain point becomes impossible, as if they’ve simply vanished.

### TANGLED EFFIGIES

As the party travels along, they’ll run into a strange and off-putting thicket of vaguely humanoid-shaped bundles of sticks tied up with grass twine. Each effigy dangles from the boughs of a single, massive tree, hanging by a knot of vines. The effigies seem warm to the touch and give any who draw near them the distinct feeling of being alive, like the hero has just stumbled into a room full of people, but none of them will look at or acknowledge the hero.

The odd feeling passes as quickly as it comes, and the effigies are once again nothing but dead twigs and twine—the feeling of warmth from these objects remains, however. If a hero takes an effigy, they have the feeling that something is watching them, and is very displeased with them. If they keep the effigy, they will be plagued by strange nightmares of being wrapped in vines and left to dangle from a tree, surrounded by countless others but unable to speak or move.

If a hero destroys an effigy, they not only get the feeling that something is watching and is upset with them, but that they are actively being hunted. Roll on the Combat random encounter table immediately. If an encounter begins, the hero that broke the effigy is the primary target of the creatures’ aggression, and their AC is reduced by 1 for the duration of that encounter.

### FAERIE HOUSES

So-called “faerie houses” can be found all over the Old Forest, but especially in places where tragedy has struck and people have disappeared. They are small “buildings” made of stacked stones, river rocks, daubs of mud, and sandstone chips, often constructed by the loved ones of people who have disappeared under mysterious circumstances. The tradition dates back centuries and is described by some scholars as an offering to the fae, in hopes that they’ll release the people they’ve supposedly kidnapped.

Destroying a faerie house is said to be very bad luck, and if a particular hero knows about this superstition and believes it to be true, they will suffer a –1 penalty to all skill checks after knocking one over—even by accident. This penalty lasts until the hero’s next rest, but can be removed early if they either rebuild the house they destroyed, or build a new one that’s taller than the original. Building a faerie house requires a skill check using an appropriate crafting skill.



The DC is 12, unless you are looking to create a house larger than the average size (all houses found in the environment will be of this “average size”), in which case it is DC 14. The heroes will find that the stacking of unworked stones in this way is surprisingly difficult to get right.

## DISEMBODIED SINGING

While traveling, the group comes upon a stream while traveling that emits a faint, barely audible sound like the singing voice of a humanoid creature. The source of this sound is unclear, but the song itself is melodic, mournful, and beautiful, albeit seeming to be quite sad. If the stream gathers in a deeper pool somewhere along its path, the sound will be much more audible there, sounding like a small chorus of three or four distinct voices all harmonizing to hum the same tune.

Sleeping near the stream or a pool of this strange singing water will cause the heroes to have very vivid dreams—the content of the dreams is no different from what they would normally dream, but they awake remembering every detail of the dream in a way that is unusual for most people.

## BLEEDING WYCHMARK

A strange symbol appears to be burned into the bark of a tree, at about eye-level for the average adult humanoid creature. The same pattern also appears beneath the tree, spreading out to surround its erupted roots as if the tree was a demon summoned into a protective circle. The wood of the tree where this scorched mark is located oozes a strange red sap that smells and tastes both coppery and sweet, like blood mixed with sugar maple sap.

The cause of Bleeding Wychmarks is uncertain, and it apparently cannot be artificially reproduced. A tree is simply un-marked one day, and marked the next. Normally these trees are located far from anything resembling civilization, but there have been some that appear as far as the outer edge of the Old Forest. The odd bloody sap of these trees is prized by alchemists and healers for its ability to significantly preserve the healing properties of healing potions (to say nothing of its ability to improve their flavor).

Sap gathered from the marked tree can be added to any healing potion. Doing so doubles the potion's expiry time (e.g. from 12 hours to 24 hours, or from 7 days to 14 days). Bleeding Wychmarks only yield enough sap to affect 1 potion every 7 days. If the sap of a Bleeding Wychmark is harvested for three consecutive 7-day periods, rather than letting the sap remain on the tree, the affected tree withers and dies within an hour of the third harvesting. Attempting to tap a tree to directly harvest more of the unusual sap will get you enough sap to affect 3 potions, but then cause the tree to immediately wither and die within an hour of the tap being installed.

## A LAVISH FEAST

While traveling, the party's nostrils suddenly catch a waft of something delicious on the air—cooked meats, fresh-baked fruit pies, butter and cream and sugar and starch, and all the things people tend to crave. If they choose to follow the scent with a successful DC 12 Wisdom check, they will come upon a most bizarre sight: a lavish feast set out upon the finest porcelain and silver dishes, on a long banquet table made of beautiful, polished dark wood. The table sits in a smallish clearing, ringed by trees whose canopies still hang above it, but with just enough space to accommodate the table and the plush chairs which surround it.

The feast is made up of food of all sorts, but mostly features dishes that the characters recognize from their homelands, or even from specific meals they have strong memories of in their childhood, recreated in perfect detail. Even characters with unusual dietary requirements will find something they recognize as edible, and which seems at least passingly enticing to them. If the characters sit down to eat of this meal, they find that it is not only very real, but also very nourishing. However, as the characters eat, they may hear very quiet chuckling and giggling coming from somewhere just outside the table's clearing. If they try to search out the sources of this laughter, they will find nothing.

The main trick of this meal is the paranoia it instills, as it is a manifestation of fae humor, but the “punchline” is that the food is actually completely safe, real, and offered with no ulterior motive... other than the humor of watching hungry travelers twist themselves into knots over whether or not they should eat the suspicious, clearly magical food.

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Combat Encounter
2-3	Pack of Werewolves
4-5	Lurking Vampire
6-8	Fae Trickery?
9-10	Roaming Fiend
11	A Stalking Shadow
12	Hag Coven

## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.



## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a **vampire** that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Jotun Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## FAE TRICKERY?

A strange trick of the light, a bizarre quirk of shadows & movement, or maybe even a flash of the Old Forest's ancient fae magic toying with the adventurers' senses. One moment, the group sees the indistinct shifting forms of something in the dark of the forest— something uncanny and frightening and undeniably hostile, coming for them! Hearts race, hands leap to unsheath weapons, but then... nothing.

The shapes dissolve into the waving of branches, the strange foes' footsteps are nothing but the forest echoing the party's own footfalls as they crunching leaves. They're certain there was something there a moment ago, but now there's nothing. Magical attempts to probe for invisible assailants will turn up nothing, as there was never any danger to begin with...

## ROAMING FIEND

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Forsten for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the table below.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any hellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## A STALKING SHADOW

The adventurers should get an opportunity to notice a strange gathering of shadows that seems to move out of the corner of their eyes. This is a corrupted **treant**.

It follows them as they travel during the day, but is maddeningly impossible to pin down. Over the day, several of them should roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) versus the creature's Dexterity (Stealth). If they succeed, they are certain they see a vaguely humanoid shape just out of the corner of their eyes. If they fail, they see vague movement that is gone when they turn to look.

If the heroes attack the Treant, they find that it is not alone; 2d6 **awakened shrubs** emerge from the brambles nearby and attack the heroes as well.

## HAG COVEN

The heroes enter into a swampy, thorny tangle of the forest. They are attacked by a number of **green hags** and **night hags** looking to add the heroes' organs to their personal collection. This should be a medium encounter.





# HEAVEN

This demiplane came into existence as a result of Dracula's second attempt to win over Theresa. On the grand timeline, it became accessible to planar travelers not long after Hell under the control of Dracula and infernal influences, perhaps demonstrating that all actions truly do result in an equal and opposite reaction. The topography of Heaven also duplicates that of Ancerra to a great degree.

In this plane, the Celestial Council established complete control, eradicating all fiends and exiles. Palorva's calculated nudges resulted in the Celestial Council becoming the authoritarian planar conquerors that they once swore to defend against. Their goal became eradicating both the presence and influence of any vampires or fiends from Inferno, whether that meant killing fiends on sight, persecuting allies of infernal creatures, or taking steps to stamp out any threat to orderly rule under celestials among local citizens.

Any crack in the perfection of Heaven, so they say, could become the flaw through which a seed of evil enters to topple a mighty fortress. The celestials wish to use Heaven as a base from which they can launch new offensives to destroy all fiends. If they must salt and burn all fields where evil has the potential to grow, they will.

The new governing class, known to local residents as their "celestial benefactors," promised a life where none starve, where illness and war are gone, and where there is no evil—if everyone obeys.

Everyone who wishes to survive learns very quickly what it means to obey their powerful celestial benefactors in the marble and gilt towers that rise among the clouds. They know what to fear, and things they should never see. They know to appreciate warnings when given, because often they are not. Most of all, they know the walls have ears and the mountains have eyes.

Heroes may make an Intelligence roll with appropriate bonuses to determine what they know about Heaven before they enter, or the first time they visit. The details they know on the table are cumulative, up to the result of their Intelligence roll.

DC	Knowledge
8 or less	Heaven is an empyreal duplicate of Norspina, modified by the Celestial Council of Iztari in an effort to eradicate any traces of dark or corrupt influences. Many familiar things have been transformed.
9-13	The nations of Ancerra are obsolete, with all people living under the unified rule of their celestial benefactors to eliminate strife. The shape of the land is the same, and celestials will permit traditional cultural practices in ceremonial form as long as celestial review does not determine traditions could have links to evil, former national identity, or rebellion against celestial rule.
14-16	Visitors have asked about things like jails or hospitals, and report meeting "Information Officials" who tell them those are unnecessary. Their celestial benefactors eliminated crime and sickness, and everyone lives in harmony. The Information Officials had publications approved by the celestial governing class. Learning anything not in these publications is difficult without first-hand experience.
17-19	The celestials instituted an identity token system: bespelled marks on the skin received in childhood. They resonate with other identity tokens, and with monitors throughout Heaven. Visitors receive a temporary wristband token, as no one can pass a checkpoint without one. Guards can use magical tools to activate a crystal-like light projection with the person's identity, any government file, recent activities, and people with whom they were in close contact.
20-22	To preserve the sanctity of life, harming monsters or other natural wildlife beyond personal need is a punishable crime. However, harming any celestial is considered an act of rebellion, not justified under any circumstances. No one who harms a celestial, even by accident, is seen again.
23-25	A few well-connected travelers report well-appointed naga soldiers patrolling fortifications down the length of the Great Chasm. Inquiries receive an official response that there is no Great Chasm. People who have seen it agree, it looks like the soldiers are keeping someone or something from escaping.
26 or more	Families in Heaven often have illustrations, writings, or other memorabilia showing someone who is no longer around. Asking about missing people gets no response, as if the person you are talking to does not understand. Rarely, they may give a spare answer, such as a name and saying the missing person is "gone." Pressing the question results in the person you are talking to changing the topic or ending the conversation with escalating agitation.



# MAJOR LANDMARKS

## DIAL OF PROHIBITION

In the northern reaches of Heaven, the celestials have constructed fifteen fortified tower compounds in the snow-white marble and radiant gold that marks all celestial construction. These towers are laid out in a pentagram that will look very familiar to any heroes who have studied Edgar Hawthorne's map of locations where Kamelot and Shadowcroft bleed into Ancerra.

In Heaven, these sites are collectively known as the Dial of Prohibition, with towering walls outside each location carved with murals that depict the celestials' subjugation of fiends and their allies. Each mural has an individual theme, showing fiends engaging in a terrible act such as wanton killing, selfishness, betrayal, pollution, obsession, waste, laziness, cruelty, disrespect, and similar wrongs. In showing themselves vanquishing the fiends committing these crimes, the celestials symbolically depict themselves ridding the world of their influence—and warn residents not to follow in the footsteps of the demons.

Like many other strongholds the celestials maintain, naga soldiers keep watch over the doors to the inner areas of the towers. Few outside of the ruling celestials ever see the inner regions, although many speculate on what they keep there. Guesses range from mundane things like training grounds, meditation retreats, or workspaces for bureaucratic officials to more sensational theories, like the celestials using the Dial to craft a magical array that maintains weather for the plane or smites evildoers.

In truth, each compound contains a large array crafted in marble that blocks interplanar travel within the compound walls. Emissaries of the Celestial Council visit regularly to ensure that the seal maintains its integrity, and to reinforce it with any innovations from recent study.

Each compound features beacons of eternally burning holy fire that shed radiant light on the walls in daytime or darkness.

**Cut Off One Head.** Each entrance of each site in the Dial is guarded by **naga**. If there are three heroes in your party, have two naga guard the door. If there are six heroes in your party, have four naga guard the door. For parties of four or five heroes, choose two or three naga based on what is appropriate as a dangerous challenge for the party's level.

These encounters may be social or violent depending on the outcome of roleplay. Only if the battle becomes violent, these guards receive backup after 2d4 rounds from another squad of guards double the size of the original squad. If the heroes do not escape, every 2d4 rounds, additional naga reinforcements will arrive. Each new reinforcement squad will be double the size of the previous reinforcement squad.

The guards will fight to incapacitate the group, not kill them, and will transport them to the Great Chasm upon capture. If the heroes flee, the Naga will not pursue. However, other consequences may apply, such as the attack appearing on a character's identity record or attracting attention from the Eyes of Heaven. (See "General Threats.")

## WORLD MOUNTAIN RANGE

Like many of the natural landforms in Heaven, the rocks of the World Mountain Range have transformed to smooth, gilt-edged white marble, as if they are now life-size hewn statues of mountains instead of natural formations of rock and dirt. An icy fog shrouds the foothills leading into the mountains, echoing the clouds where the peaks themselves hang.

Common residents find themselves easily lost here, filled with a frozen dread and unable to find a path that leads into the heights of the mountains. Chosen celestials have a very different experience, as brilliant rays of light pour out of the mountains when they approach to burn away the fog and reveal a path to the summit. Once they have passed, the fog rolls in once again. Anyone trapped within it may have difficulty finding their way out.

The upper heights of the mountains, above the clouds, are where the Celestials have built their beacon towers known as the Eyes of Heaven. This immense scrying system allows a network of Celestials to keep watch over everyone in the land below, no matter where they are. The bright white spots of light they trail across the land in the focused centers of these scrying fields blaze with a searing brilliance that hurts the eye to stare at too long, but they are common enough that the thoughtful and fanciful have noticed the last quarter inch on the edges tends to blur into rainbows.

These roving lights are a constant reminder that someone is always watching. For dangers associated with the Eyes of Heaven, see "General Threats."





## JADE POOL PALACE

The grand palace that serves as the western command compound for the celestial hierarchy sits at the northern end of the World Mountain Range, towering above the crumbling remains of Betaal. All former residents have been relocated to new, more suitable homes to allow the ruling celestials the necessary space and security to construct their citadel. This complex is known as the Jade Pool Palace, command center of the Western Marshal and the seat of final authority in Heaven. The name comes from a startlingly blue-green spring that forms a natural mineral bath in the central courtyard, roughly 125 feet on the shorter axis and 175 feet on the longer axis. This spring was one of the few natural sources of the “Essence of Radiance,” an elixir known to reveal vampires, fiends, werewolves, and other creatures of darkness.

In constructing the Jade Pool Palace, the Western Marshal declared that no one was to disturb the pool itself. They built the walls and towers around it, including grates to allow the water to pass through. It has become tradition that any person granted the honor of visiting the Jade Pool Palace must leave all their clothes and belongings in the front hall and pass unclothed through the pool on the long axis before they may enter the Western Marshal's presence. Guest robes are provided upon reaching the other side.

Each turn the creature is in the pool, it must make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw. On any failure, the creature takes 2d8 radiant damage, which creates visible abrasions. On a success, or if the creature is Immune to radiant damage, the creature takes no damage. If a celestial that cannot pass the pool is in favor, they may receive an opportunity to leave with a warning to purify themselves before returning. Others that fail may be taken to the Great Chasm or the Pacification and Serenity Academy for questioning, and to ensure that they are not allied with Inferno. A single failed roll will fail the test.

The Western Marshal herself, Yol Agelata, is a **planetar** who takes audiences in a plain chair surrounded by the massive scale model of Heaven she and her staff keep updated with reports from across the plane. She is known for maintaining a modest and upright lifestyle among the celestials, never indulging in any kind of vice or excess, which she says leads to weakness. The only ornament that sets her apart from any other Emissary is what looks like a tiger-skin cape at first glance, fashioned from the purified skin of a rakshasa lord she killed in the battle to claim Heaven.

## EASTERN CELESTIAL GUARDIAN PALACE

Within Heaven, this compound better known to Ancerrans as Dracula's Castle has officially been renamed the “Eastern Celestial Guardian Palace.”

Every inch of what was once Dracula's Castle has transformed into the same snowy marble that makes up the mountains of the region formerly known as Derk, with gilt edging on all of the relief carvings and opalescent glassware tiles on the roof that create a blinding, resplendent gleam under the sun. The fields to the north are a rich old-growth oak forest, while the outer regions of the castle have been converted into an informational tour where citizens and planar visitors are encouraged to visit.

In guided groups of ten or fewer, Information Officials will lead them through the public areas of the castle to tell them about the terrible beings known as vampires, fiends, and other creatures of darkness, explain the depraved way they live their lives, and educate visitors on the untold horrors that would await the innocent victims of Heaven if their celestial benefactors were not here to protect them. To some degree, the retellings in these tours are inspired by facts, but unquestionably sensationalized.

Inner areas of the castle are a working military compound, firmly off-limits to the public, where the Eastern Marshal, a **planetar** named Ley Ignasi, arranges troops and logistics. While the Western Marshal is the head of the entire planar organization with direct command over the Eyes of Heaven, the Eastern Marshal directly oversees prisoner containment and reeducation in the Great Chasm and in the Pacification and Serenity Academy.

He has a slim build but a quick mind, and is known throughout the ranks for having elegant taste in clothing when not in uniform. The Eastern Marshal performs his assignments rigorously, demonstrating that although his throat was crushed during the campaign to conquer Heaven—costing him his power of speech—his ability to write and use sign language more than suffice for a major command role. On the rare occasions when people other than trusted subordinates who can understand his signs are present, he may use an interpreter.

There are rumors in the upper ranks that, had Ley Ignasi not been injured, he would have been chosen as the leader of operations in Heaven, and that keeping him subordinate is why Yol Agelata has never allowed an officer capable of *greater restoration* into the ranks of the Eastern Regions. Naturally, no one would dare question the Western Marshal herself on this matter, and the Eastern Marshal quickly indicates he does not appreciate speculation.

For details on the construction of the Eastern Celestial Guardian Palace, see Dracula's Castle in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*.



## GREAT CHASM

Any citizen can explain that there are no jails or dungeons in Heaven. Most will become visibly uncomfortable and attempt to end the conversation if someone asks where celestials keep prisoners, because their priority is avoiding a similar fate to those who have been taken before. The illusion of peace and tranquility throughout Heaven is strictly enforced.

This is the same reason why the Great Chasm does not appear on any maps, and patrolling guards will block passing travelers from coming within 1 mile of the Great Chasm in any direction. This keeps everyone other than the celestial personnel who guard the Chasm too far out of range to hear any screams from the captives or sounds of weapons, let alone the smell of unburied corpses left to rot as an example to other captives.

As with many prominent rock faces in Heaven, all natural stone has transformed to white marble with veins of gold. Very little grows here in terms of desert underbrush, and consequently there are few native animals other than carrion scavengers. Celestial forces have built fortified guard walls at the top of the natural chasm walls on both sides of the chasm, with a command-and-control tower overlooking the cliffside in what used to be southernmost Bishal. These walls have braziers of eternally burning holy fire that gives off a brilliant light. Each brazier is in front of a large, curved golden mirror, flooding the Great Chasm with radiant light regardless of the time of day and allowing the guards to see the prisoners clearly at all times.

For each minute a creature is in the Great Chasm, it must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 1d10 radiant damage from beams of holy fire.

Placement in the Great Chasm is the punishment for any crime committed, from murder or arson to shoplifting, questioning authority, contracting an illness not treatable with a simple healing potion, or failing to return library books. When placing prisoners in the Great Chasm, wardens strip them of armor, weapons, and personal effects to their greatest ability, issuing standard prisoner clothing. Heroes may attempt to smuggle items in if they are arrested, but the players must make a case for how this is possible and the MC must have them make an appropriately difficult skill check. For example, a player may argue that a magical tattoo would not raise suspicion, and the MC may choose to allow this or set a low DC. On the other hand, smuggling a physical item may depend on the size of the item, what skills the hero can use, and whether the guards can counter those skills.

Water is freely available from streams and kept free of contagion, but is not universally safe. Using the waterfall by the command-and-control tower, celestial forces fill the water that runs through the Great Chasm with elixirs that will poison creatures of darkness either directly or when vampires drink the blood of someone with the elixir in their system, and that prevent werewolves from changing shape. Other than this, the water is safe to drink.

**Conform or Die.** The guards in charge of the Great Chasm offer two options to prisoners. The first is to accept lessons from the teams of **deva** teachers that the **naga** guards will lead through the chasm at irregular intervals. If a prisoner can properly repeat the laws and truths of Heaven that the deva come to teach, they will receive plain food or replacements for torn and soiled clothing. Eventually, they may be allowed to qualify for return to society, usually by agreeing to serve as Information Officials.

Those who do not accept teaching will starve, as this is the only source of food in the chasm. Additionally, guards may kill prisoners on the spot for any number of offenses. Among them:

- Attempted escape.
- Sharing food with one who did not accept lessons.
- Demonstrating a vampiric or fiendish aspect.
- Worsening illness, or spreading illness.
- Creating weapons.
- Approaching the corpse of a dead prisoner.

While the rule about killing any prisoner that approaches the corpse of another prisoner is controversial among the celestials that guard the Great Chasm, the majority agreed it was necessary following the most major near-escape in Heaven's history. This involved a region of the Great Chasm where prisoners organized a form of "burial mound" and created ropes out of scraps of old clothing, transforming these suddenly into a mile-long staircase of corpses before the guards' eyes. After celestials contained the chaos, the final escapee was cut down about 300 ft outside of the chasm.

Naga guards watch the prisoners within the Great Chasm at all times from the top of the walls, with additional guards watching the doors placed at regular intervals at the base of the wall. If the heroes are able to approach these guards, the encounter should proceed as with "Cut Off One Head" under the "Dial of Prohibition."



## PACIFICATION AND SERENITY ACADEMY

Most celestials in Heaven would consider an invitation to study at the Pacification and Serenity Academy the greatest possible honor. Located in the foothills of the mountains where the country of Derk once was, east of the Great Chasm, this academy has a reputation as the premier institution of higher learning on the plane, with students entering only by invitation, never by application. Anyone who receives an invitation is, naturally, expected to attend.

On rare occasions, select members of non-celestial races receive invitations to study at the academy. Friends and family universally describe the people who receive this honor as unusually bright, charismatic, and inquisitive members of their communities. They often show both interest in a life beyond the limits of Heaven and the skills for leading others in their age group.

If they come home at all, these non-celestial students typically return changed, sometimes unrecognizable. This has led some members of non-celestial families to try to reject the invitation to the academy in recent years. In some cases, the invited student reconsiders and attends the academy after a personal discussion with a local member of the celestial leadership. Other cases were rendered moot after the sudden disappearance of the student's family left the student a ward of the celestial leadership, whereupon the student was immediately transferred to the academy.

According to upper levels of the celestial hierarchy, even though such students are not themselves celestials, providing appropriate education for minds of excellent caliber renders its own rewards. By finding people among the non-celestial population who are prone to asking questions and ensuring they receive the answers they need, the celestial benefactors for the people of this plane can effectively prevent the trouble that comes from radical ideas before it starts.

Guards on the property are generally **deva** and **naga**, but the faculty include a range of celestials, including **planetars** and **gynosphinx**.

## GRAVE OF APAKKU

In the northeast of what used to be Kandiff, a giant mountain rises out of the grasslands, sun-bleached bones sticking out here and there, with the crest of a great turtle shell on top where the people have been unable to bury it. A stone with a heartfelt elegy marking Apakku's grave tells about how, at the changing of the world, when their celestial benefactors came to free them all from evil, the radiant lights of heaven blinded the great turtle. Though she kept on her path for some time with the citizens leading her, she ultimately rejected the celestial in her blindness, leading to her death. Her grave stands as a reminder of the ruin that waits for all who persist in following the paths of the blind.

Celestials and Information Officials will bring people to this site regularly to remind them of the story of Apakku, although they watch crowds carefully for any sign that they sympathize with the giant turtle. Prior to official tours, all people undergo a search for weapons, dissident propaganda, or devices that could be used to transmit messages such as chalk, firestarters, or flags. No one going on these tours is permitted to carry a bag, especially a backpack, or to wear a hat for the length of the tour. Lockers are provided in tour departure areas.

Careful dissidents will sometimes still manage to meet in the shadow of the Grave of Apakku, or leave cautious messages in code around the mountain. They may use smuggled tools or natural materials they find on the site, such as piled rocks and sticks. They will never meet in large groups, nor meet for very long. Due to the major figure of resistance Apakku represents, the great turtle herself is a semi-divine figure and underground worship of the Shibmar conclave is common among dissidents, especially worship of Immort and A'rl'ng. Archfae holy symbols may be common elements of coded messages left at the Grave of Apakku.

## GOLDEN CLOUD TOWER

The citadel where the Southern Marshal maintains her domain is not a walled fortress, but nevertheless the majority of people choose not to test what its guards are capable of. Golden Cloud Tower sits on a well-maintained compound in the center of what used to be Lesmishan, with the grounds laid out in the form of a traditional mausoleum. The entry hall where new officials receive orientation and training is a windowless rectangular processing center built of cold, fog-shrouded marble known to workers as the Casket. Successfully passing training here is the time celestials mean when they say that a person must die once before entering service in Golden Cloud Tower. They quickly assure any concerned friends that, naturally, this death is not literal.



At the head of the Casket, where a real mausoleum might have a memorial or statue in honor of the deceased, rises the Golden Cloud Tower itself. Tier upon tier of a magnificent pagoda, built in solid gold and tiled in iridescent glass, rises up into the clouds themselves. It stands as the highest structure built to date in Heaven. The many floors house analysts and researchers of various types who are responsible for the network of identity tokens and checkpoints across Heaven.

Some departments maintain the magical implements themselves, or design potential improvements to identity tokens, scanners, location devices posted regularly throughout Heaven, and population control fences. Others analyze information from reports across the plane to identify people by name or description whom guards should arrest or question. Still other departments operate enforcement squads for finding important information and locating people who evade normal systems.

The director of the Golden Cloud Tower is the Southern Marshal, an Emissary to the Celestial Council named Aur Notos who reports to Yol Agelata but finds herself with a fair amount of freedom in handling southern affairs due to the distance. Although she is on the short and waifish side for an Emissary, she is far from safe to underestimate. Most population control systems in Heaven originated in magical concepts she designed herself, and she combines an eye for detail with a tendency towards paranoia into a network of hidden tunnels and lethal traps throughout the tower. The biggest mistake to make, however, is taking any flashy elements of her regular uniform for granted, such as bright colors, clinking decorations, or swirling capes. She may shed these at any time to sneak into a crowd incognito.

Her iron-fisted management style takes inspiration from a fortune given to her once by a soothsayer in the Celestial Sea: “Neither glory nor fortune upon this life attend, ambition leading to death’s door.” Where those around her grew resigned that Aur Notos’s life would be one of little renown, she asked, “And once I die, what can I do?” Purging oneself of the bonds of life, be they relationships that may introduce bias, sympathy for the ordinary needs of life, or the desire to affect the world, is a requirement to serve in the Golden Cloud Tower. Aur Notos wrote the first rule just as she demanded it of herself: “Those who enter the Tower must first kill their hearts, that they may see the world as though dead.”

## GENERAL THREATS

**Eyes of Heaven:** As described under the “World Mountain Range” section, the Eyes of Heaven are a network of scrying towers for keeping watch on the population, which produce roving spots of light over the land—inside and outside of buildings. These spots are 5 foot radius areas of bright light, and celestials that are operating the towers can see anything within a 60 foot radius of the bright lights. Blocking this light requires the capacity to block divining magic. Physical barriers are ineffective.

Officials using the Eyes of Heaven monitor random areas within the plane constantly for forbidden actions. The list of forbidden actions includes things that are criminal, potentially fiendish, potentially aimed at overthrowing celestial rule, or occasionally things that the celestials deem inconvenient, such as sneezing. This list may change at any time based on events within the campaign. For example, if celestials discover dissidents worshiping Arl’ng, they may ban symbols that resemble horseshoes, which may include the letter U and similarly trivial things.

If an Eye locks on to any person, the circle of light will begin to follow them. According to the law of Heaven, this constitutes a warning to cease any forbidden action immediately. If the person does not cease, a second Eye will join the first Eye after 1d8 rounds. Additional Eyes will appear as long as the person does not cease their actions every 1d8 rounds until a total of five Eyes of Heaven have locked onto the target. Every round, a creature in the beam of one or more Eyes of Heaven must make a Constitution saving throw using the DC in the following table. On a success, the target takes no damage. On a failure, the target takes radiant damage according to the table.

Eyes	DC	Damage
1	15	1d6
2	17	2d6
3	19	3d6
4	21	4d6
5	23	5d6

1d8 rounds following the arrival of the fifth Eye of Heaven, a squad of **deva** will attack the target, either killing them or taking them to the Great Chasm. For most local citizens, the celestial leadership will dispatch a single deva. For more challenging opponents, such as a confrontation with the heroes’ party, the adjusted encounter CR should be as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

**Fire.** Evil-reduction measures such as the Eyes of Heaven or various uses of light that produces radiant damage effects in security arrays may cause buildings, objects, or parts of the terrain to catch on fire from time to time.



In populated areas, most locals are aware of safe zones and fire-safety procedures. Designated people will act quickly to extinguish any flames while everyone else heads in a fast but orderly fashion to a nearby safe location. If the heroes follow along and do not interact with the fire, they will be safe. After the fire, Information Officials will come by to ensure that all evidence of damage to the area is gone. At this time, everyone will begin to pretend the fire never happened. If anyone insists there was a fire, the Information Officials will take them away for a “safety lesson” at the city hall. Repeated insistence may result in the person being taken to the Great Chasm.

If any heroes attempt to ask about a fire of this kind, especially if an Information Officer is present, local citizens will make concerted but underhanded attempts to stop the hero from talking.

If a fire begins in an unpopulated area, the heroes will have 2d4 rounds to prepare for the fire to arrive. The longer the fire burns before arriving, the more flame there will be when it arrives, and the more potential damage it can do. The maximum damage the fire can do is 1d6 radiant damage per round the heroes have to prepare.

While preparing for the fire to arrive, the heroes must take actions to prevent the fire from damaging them. Add up the total of the skill rolls they make on these actions. If a hero has a relevant spell, they may cast it in place of a skill, counting it as a total roll of 20. The base DC for two rounds is 35. For every additional round, the DC increases by 10.

Any character that fails to reach the cumulative DC will take the maximum damage from the fire. Any character that succeeds in reaching the cumulative DC will take ½ the damage. If a character can persuasively put themselves in a position where the fire would not damage them, such as flying above the fire, they take zero damage regardless of their skill check total.

**Checkpoints.** Leaving or entering any city requires passing through an official checkpoint staffed by **deva** guards. Longer roads may have additional checkpoints, such as toll collection stations, and large cities may require people to pass through checkpoints to move between districts. Travelers will need to answer questions such as where they came from, their destination, and why they are traveling.

Guards at checkpoints will verify each person’s identity token, and may pull people aside for arrest or for questioning if they appear on various lists:

- Wanted for criminal or dissident activity.
- Registered a close interaction with a person wanted for criminal or dissident activity.
- Appeared to have been close to the scene of a crime when it occurred.

If someone does not have an identity token, they may not pass through any checkpoint, and will receive instructions on how to obtain one from an Information Official.

People who find a way to avoid checkpoints will create aberrant signals in the system of identity token monitoring stations created and maintained by the celestials working in Golden Cloud Tower.

Being pulled out of line at a checkpoint is not an automatic death sentence, nor does it necessarily mean a trip to the Great Chasm. Through compliance and giving acceptable answers, it is possible to leave an encounter with checkpoint guards after only a few hours of questioning. Failure to comply, however, can mean that a few hours of questioning may become up to a week of high-pressure interrogation, and the Great Chasm will remain a threat—one the guards will happily fulfill for a troublesome customer.

Of course, if a guard pulls someone out of line because their name is on a list for transport to either the Great Chasm or the Pacification and Serenity Academy, the guard will arrange transport immediately.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

As characters roam through Heaven, they are likely to meet a certain mix of locals who can tell them details about the surrounding area, and who usually will cause the heroes little or no trouble. While mishandling any of these situations can lead to dangerous consequences, none of them are inherently dangerous, and none of the characters involved intend harm towards the heroes.

Roll 2d10 and use the weighted chart below to choose an encounter.

2d10	Encounter
2-10	Information Official
11-14	Off-Duty Guard
15-17	Traveling Merchant
18-19	Dissident Band
20	Person in Trouble

## INFORMATION OFFICIAL

These helpful employees of Heaven’s celestial benefactors abound in every populated region, always ready to provide answers someone needs to know. Whether someone is looking for directions to the nearest lodging house or answers to philosophical questions of right and wrong, there is an Information Official on every corner, ready to give you a textbook-perfect answer and probably a detailed pamphlet on the topic.

While some Information Officials are low-level celestials, this is also one of the few professions in the celestial government of Heaven that is open to non-celestial races. As long as someone is capable of offering service with a smile and remembering their lines, they can do this job.



Every Information Official will happily take you to any location where regular civilians are permitted to go, or tell you anything you want to know, as long as you never insist on asking dangerous questions or doubting the curated version of the truth they receive from the celestials.

Attempts to trick an Information Official into taking a person somewhere off-limits or admitting something unauthorized result in signs of increasing psychological strain. Although they will not stop smiling, and will not cooperate, they will grow agitated rather than aggressive, insisting that places do not exist, information is not correct, or they do not understand questions with the air of a hostage with a knife to their throat. In extreme circumstances, passing guards or the Eyes of Heaven may intervene, treating the person questioning the Information Official as a threat.

## OFF-DUTY GUARD

While standing out in public, a **deva** approaches to mention that the group looks familiar. This is an off-duty guard from a local checkpoint who remembers seeing the party pass by, and was intrigued as Heaven gets so few visitors, let alone ones of such impressive skills.

If the party has an average negative Aristocratic Goodwill in Heaven during this encounter, the deva will offer whispered caution that the heroes should watch their step to avoid getting in trouble. They will offer particularly helpful advice about issues where the heroes may have been running into difficulty, but will not be detailed enough to make the heroes worry that anyone is watching them. The deva will indicate that, because they are off-duty, they will not do anything about any infractions they notice at the moment, but they will point out things that might get the heroes in trouble, saying they do not want to see it happen.

If the heroes offer to thank the deva in any way, the deva will not accept until the party has an average positive Aristocratic Goodwill in Heaven.

If the party has neutral or positive Aristocratic Goodwill in Heaven when meeting the deva, the guard will offer to treat the party to a meal so they can talk and get to know each other better. The guard will take no offense if the heroes do not accept. If the heroes do go to the meal, they can learn about the military hierarchy of Heaven and details about various important sites.

The deva is a genuinely friendly person who treats the heroes fairly and straightforwardly, but who will mention the encounter to supervisors when they return to work. This includes informing supervisors if the heroes said or did anything that involved vampires or fiends, or that would represent a threat to Heaven.

## TRAVELING MERCHANT

Whether moving their goods between towns or currently working at a street stall in a town, a vendor of assorted useful general goods catches the heroes' eyes. This merchant is an older person who remembers life before the celestials came to Heaven, but who is willing to adapt to any circumstance as long as they can continue doing business.

Because of this, they will do business with both celestials and dissidents, as well as ordinary folk, and they are very adept at identifying when someone around might report a conversation to the celestials as proof of dissident leanings. Once the heroes agree to purchase goods worth at least 10 sc, the merchant will be willing to make conversation. If no one who poses a threat is around, the merchant may be willing to talk about how life has changed since the celestials arrived, details about the celestials' conquest of Heaven including stories about cities with plague burned with all citizens trapped inside, secrets the celestials are hiding, or where to find dissidents. They may even be willing to sell you illegally printed dissident pamphlets.

Of course, if someone dangerous is listening, they will hint that the heroes should come back another time, or tell the heroes that it would be better to ask an Information Official.

## DISSIDENT BAND

A pair of musicians, one playing a spike fiddle made from a turtle shell and one playing a set of home-made drums, accompany a handful of acrobatic dancers performing a fluid dance that appears to cross athletic stunts with kicks closely timed to barely miss hitting the other dancers in the head. They have gathered an excited crowd, who are cheering for the dancers to try more daring stunts and are filling a hat with money.

Instead of a coin, one person in the crowd tosses a horseshoe-shaped charm into the hat. A few moments later, they walk off toward a side street. On a Wisdom (Perception) roll of 20, the heroes may notice the person takes a note from the drummer between beats. This note is a coded message with a location for where to distribute dissident literature on self-defense.

If the heroes choose to pursue this, the dissidents will be suspicious of outsiders but cautiously interested in recruiting powerful allies should the heroes be able to persuade them that they are trustworthy. They will be eager to share details about problems with Heaven, but only in a location they perceive as safe and only if they believe the heroes will not betray them.

The dissident group will be aware of any issues with identity tokens from identified dissidents implicating other people if they spend too long together, and will actively take steps to mitigate this. In this way, they retain members who can pass through checkpoints. They will also take these precautions when working with the heroes.



## PERSON IN TROUBLE

Someone attempting to escape a squad of guards after committing some infraction of Heaven's law runs by, but is trapped by nearby terrain. Based on sounds the party can hear, the squad of guards is about 1d4 minutes behind. Roll 2d8 and use the table below to determine what kind of person is in trouble.

2d8	Result
2	Felon. Premeditated murder, arson, or other major violent crime. Motivation of MC's choice.
3-4	Committed a major violent crime by accident. Manslaughter, destruction of property, or similar circumstances.
5-6	Committed a minor violent crime, such as fighting or theft.
7-9	Committed a harmful non-violent crime, such as fraud or embezzlement.
10-11	Person who committed a crime against control ordinances, such as printing unlicensed pamphlets, giving an unapproved speech, or catching a major illness.
12-13	Engaged in some largely victimless activity with long-term impact, such as posting graffiti with no overt dissident overtones or littering.
14-15	Engaged in a largely victimless activity with no long-term impact, such as jaywalking when no horses or carriages are present.
16	Parent carrying child under seven years old who committed a prank.

The heroes can choose to assist the person in trouble, assist the guards, or remain neutral, and they may take action to different degrees. All of this may have different consequences for Goodwill in Heaven, especially within Aristocratic and Underworld circles. This can have significant effects in the form of establishing which characters are willing to interact with the heroes as they establish their reputation.

MCs should remember that prolonged interaction with a wanted criminal will create a record via resonance between identity tokens. This will be visible the next time the heroes pass through a checkpoint, and the person in trouble will be a local who is aware of this. Whether they are inclined to remind the heroes of this depends on the MC's impression of the character.

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

### POPULATED AREAS

Beast encounters under "The Wilderness" are designed for travel outside of cities, while most populated areas are safe aside from General Threats and characters escalating an encounter with celestials. However, an MC may choose to use beast encounters in a populated area as desired, with clean-up efforts resembling those in the "Fire" General Threat, or may roll 1d4 on the following reduced list for cities.

Bear in mind that the legal punishment for fighting, killing, or assaulting celestials in Heaven ranges from execution to imprisonment in the Great Chasm.

1d4	Encounter
1	Random Checkpoint.
2	Double Trouble.
3	Beat Cop.
4	Just the Facts, Please.

### RANDOM CHECKPOINT

Celestials set up a new checkpoint fitting the description under the "General Threat" in a place where the heroes must pass in order to leave their current location. A group of **deva** guards an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter is looking for a specific wanted criminal. The description matches the member of the party with the lowest current hit points, although everyone in the party is aware that this person could not be the culprit. The guards at the checkpoint have hostile attitudes.

Players should be allowed to persuade the guards of their innocence or endure harsh interrogation if they can succeed at these tactics. Guards will flee at one half their maximum hit points in combat, but note that characters may incur consequences if the guards escape. If the characters flee, the guards will pursue.

### DOUBLE TROUBLE

Use the instructions for "Person in Trouble" from the Social Encounters section, with the variation that the pursuing guards are initially hostile towards the heroes upon seeing them near the fugitive. These guards should be a group of **deva** with a **naga** captain, with an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

As in "Random Checkpoint," players should have the option to use social skills if they can succeed in doing so. Guards will flee once reduced to one half their maximum hit points in combat, but heroes may incur social consequences for fighting with celestials. If the characters flee while under suspicion, the guards will pursue.



## BEAT COP

One or more **deva** guards on patrol under the command of an Emissary to the Celestial Council stop the heroes due to a perceived problem with their behavior. This may be anything from accidental vandalism or littering to wearing a hat or scarf in a color that was recently banned if the heroes do not have any actual suspect behavior to comment on.

The heroes must navigate this encounter as the celestials demand that they change their behavior and turn in any contraband items, or face the consequences. Use the following table for suggested encounter difficulty.

Players	Celestials
3-4	1 Planetar, 1 Deva
5	1 Planetar, 2 Deva
6	1 Planetar, 3 Deva

## JUST THE FACTS, PLEASE

A **gynosphinx** attached to the Pacification and Serenity Academy approaches the heroes' party with a summons to answer various questions from the celestial leadership about who the heroes are, what they want in Heaven, and what their ideological stances are with respect to vampires or fiends from Inferno. This summons is not optional.

The gynosphinx, and their retinue of **deva** notaries if they are present, take the heroes to the nearest fortified celestial stronghold and keep them there with no interpersonal communication unless the heroes establish it, minimal food and water, and constant supervision for two weeks to complete questioning. Use the following table for suggested encounter difficulty with respect to the main party.

Players	Celestials
3	1 Gynosphinx
4	1 Gynosphinx, 1 Deva
5-6	1 Gynosphinx, 2 Deva

In the event that the heroes escape by force or stealth, the stronghold exit is guarded by **naga** guards as described in the "Dial of Prohibition" section "Cut Off One Head."

## THE WILDERNESS

Thanks to reclamation efforts on the part of celestial leadership to ensure that all native species of Heaven have sufficient space to live in a natural habitat, areas outside cities or agricultural districts are often far more like untamed wilderness than the familiar countryside of Ancerra. Bandits are basically unheard of, but leaving civilization means holding one's own with packs of animals or magical creatures that only obey the laws of the wild. As long as no one tries to establish a competing civilization, the celestials will almost always stay out of conflicts with beasts and fae.

The only concern regarding celestials would be tangling with celestials themselves, as the laws against harming celestials extend to invasive animal species, and the reach of their empire does not stop at their walls.

Roll 2d8 on the following table to choose a Wilderness Combat Encounter.

2d8	Encounter
2	Dog Eat Dog
3-4	Stone Cold
5-6	The Water is Fine
7-11	Random Checkpoint
12-16	Keep Off the Griffons

Refer to the "Populated Areas" section for "Random Checkpoint," "Beat Cop," and "Just the Facts, Please."

## DOG EAT DOG

A cackle of **dire hyenas** scavenging an unrecognizable carcass nearby perceive the heroes' party as competition for their meal. The hyenas circle, putting on a threat display, and begin to attack with the intent of driving the heroes off. If the heroes leave, they will not pursue. At one half their maximum hit points, the dire hyenas will flee.

The hyena pack should have an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

## STONE COLD

The party stumbles on the overgrown remains of an old cemetery. It looks like it has been neglected for at least a decade, with headstones and marble monuments showing varying signs of wear. If the heroes look closely, many of the less weathered statues appear frozen in poses of fright or combat, and don't quite line up with the surrounding graves. As they are looking around, a nest of **giant constrictor snakes** begins attacking the heroes. While the heroes are focused on the snakes, a **medusa** hiding in a mausoleum begins sneaking around the graveyard trying to pick off members of the party before they notice her.



See table below for recommended encounter difficulty.

Players	Creatures
3	1 Medusa, 3 Giant Constrictor Snakes
4	1 Medusa, 4 Giant Constrictor Snakes
5	1 Medusa, 6 Giant Constrictor Snakes
6	1 Medusa, 7 Giant Constrictor Snakes

## THE WATER IS FINE

The heroes find a body of water, such as a creek or pond, with safe, fresh water partially covered with various floating plants. There are several **giant crocodiles** and **water elementals** hiding under the floating plants, with an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter. If the heroes stop to drink or wash, the monsters attempt to pull them under the water.

## KEEP OFF THE GRIFFONS

As one of the Eyes of Heaven scans the nearby area, a flock of **griffons** dives at the heroes' party. The encounter should have an adjusted CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

The griffons pick at shiny objects to carry them off and play catch over the party's heads, like a game similar to "Keep Away" or "Monkey in the Middle". This appears to be a habit of teasing citizens the griffons have developed. The griffons will lose interest if the heroes can secure all of their shiny objects so the griffons cannot take them, or if they take shelter somewhere the griffons cannot follow.

The griffons will also flee once reduced to one half their maximum hit points if the heroes choose to engage in combat; however, because griffons are celestial beasts on this plane, if any hero kills a griffon, the Eye of Heaven searching nearby will focus on the hero who harmed the griffon. After the Eye of Heaven focuses on the battle, if the heroes continue trading blows with the griffons, every hero will progress through the stages of the "Eyes of Heaven" section under "General Threats." This includes mounting levels of radiant damage from an increasing number of Eyes of Heaven, and ultimately an attack by a squad of **planetars**.

Separately, "violent assault on celestials" will appear on the heroes' identity tokens at checkpoints, even if they cease fighting after the Eyes of Heaven appear. If the heroes have low Aristocratic Goodwill in Heaven, they may be subject to arrest.





# HELL

Thanks to Dracula's attempts to mold the shape of the cosmos to his will, this demiplane is a much harsher environment than Ancerra. Parts of it bear more resemblance to Inferno, at least in essence. Its form, however, is an almost perfect duplicate of Norspina in its entirety.

Almost perfect.

Unlucky travelers who find themselves in a bloody, flame-filled imitation of their home with no warning, beset by endless storms, parching heat, and toxic fumes and floods might say this is the stuff that nightmares are made of. Within the plane of Hell, almost everything will kill.

Those who survive make a point of remembering that fact any time they venture into the dusty, cracked fields dried to a bloody crimson or look at the thunderstorms rumbling without cease on the horizon.

Heroes may make an Intelligence check with appropriate bonuses to determine what they know about Hell before they enter, or the first time they visit the plane. The details they know on the Knowledge chart are cumulative, up to the level of their Intelligence check.

DC	Knowledge
8 or less	Hell is a fiendish duplicate of Norspina, similar to Inferno, that serves as the source of the fiendish spirits that become hellspawn. Many familiar things here have become twisted or unsafe.
13	The brought this plane into existence through tampering with the fabric of the cosmos, and he used it as a source of allies. Some also say Palorva uses it to punish enemies she wants to keep isolated.
16	Dracula brought this plane into existence through tampering with the fabric of the cosmos, and he uses it as a source of allies. Some also say he uses it to punish enemies he wants to keep isolated.
20	There is no natural source of potable water in Hell. Anything that was a waterway in Norspina has become something else, whether one of the many naturally occurring poisons in the plane, blood, boiling oil, or hot lava. Travelers must bring water, learn to create it, or forage for moisture from plants.
23	Travelers should be wary of collecting anything shiny or silvery, especially in the Great Chasm. Those who have lived to tell tales claim that most things resembling precious metals are dangerous in the extreme. Some claim the metals are more unstable and explosive than alchemical powder. Others say they are deadly toxins that will drive adventurers mad. Everyone agrees it is safest to leave them alone.
25	A few people who have escaped Hell say enclaves of fiends will often keep a small group of humanoids prisoner to take care of menial tasks, serve as entertainment, and to cook as a light snack when needed.
26 or more	Histories pieced together by travelers indicate that, although Dracula created this plane within the last several decades, the copy he made of Norspina includes time as well as space. The planar history goes back much further than its creation, slowly shifting from a world like Ancerra to something more like Inferno over centuries.



## THE FROSTBURN WASTES

In the far north, past the remains of what Ancerra would call Noord, lies a picturesque but deadly oceanscape. Despite the name, the Frostburn Wastes are not cold, merely less hot than most of Hell. Daily temperatures are generally a degree or so above that of a humanoid with a dangerously high fever, almost half as hot as boiling water. The air carries a particularly pungent smell of sulfur and ozone at all times, even drowning out the scent of the blood rains within minutes after they end.

Travelers should be wary of the glimmering crystalline glaciers and thick floes of ice that manage to survive in this heat. Both the clear, slowly melting and freezing ice and the vast oceans that surround it are a pure acid known as Acidum Vindictae. The rocky shore has been washed as sharp as a blade by the hissing waves. Any creature that starts a turn in contact with the acid takes 1d12 acid damage.

When a large acid ice floe or glacier is dry, clothing and armor can prevent the acid from doing damage. However, strong waves can wash liquid acid onto the surface of the ice, or blood rains can activate the inert solid acid.

For the Frostburn Wastes, the ocean shore means that some terrain hazards for the rest of the continent will not apply. Substitute 6 hours of particularly low tide when a “Terrain Hazard” roll calls for “Fire”. This will reveal more uneven ground between three-story-tall beached ice floes, with regular puddles of acid. Treat this as difficult terrain. If a “Terrain Hazard” roll calls for “Dangerous River,” substitute high winds with 30 to 50 foot crashing waves for 1d8 hours. Heroes will need to take shelter to avoid acid splashes, and if they are standing on an ice floe, may need to make a Dexterity saving throw of DC 15 to remain standing.

## DRACULA'S CASTLE

High in the reddened and charred mountains of an area best described as the corpse of Derk, this facsimile of Dracula's Castle is one of the best-preserved areas in the plane. Although the steam-powered machinery has been altered to run on heat compression from the rivers of lava that flow through the compound instead of water, various hellspawn and fiends pledged to Dracula's service have kept this version of his castle in good order in case they ever find a way to resurrect their lord.

This includes maintaining cloud cover to protect it from sunlight, stopping wildfires before they get out of hand, or replacing the masonry when the blood-soaked stone becomes too weathered (or proves to contain explosive minerals). Hellspawn servants even maintain a small collection of humanoid prisoners to ensure any visiting vampire lords can have a suitable meal, as the blood rain that falls from the sky contains too many impurities and no connection to a living creature.

This includes maintaining cloud cover to protect it from sunlight, stopping wildfires before they get out of hand, or replacing the masonry when the blood-soaked stone becomes too weathered (or proves to contain explosive minerals). Hellspawn servants even maintain a small collection of humanoid prisoners to ensure any visiting vampire lords can have a suitable meal, as the blood rain that falls from the sky contains too many impurities and no connection to a living creature.

A creature that starts a turn in the lava or moves into the lava must make a Constitution saving throw of DC 26. On a failure, the molten rock does 4d12 fire damage. On a success, the creature takes half that damage.

For layout details, see the description of Dracula's Castle in Derk from *Soliloquy of Annihilation*.

## THE DEATHLESS BLAZE

In the heart of the ruins of Bishal, two mighty rivers meet, just as they do in Ancerra. However, in Hell, the Tsever river is filled with a boiling hot, toxic poison natural to Hell known as Aqua Doloris, and the Ulaan's riverbed is filled with boiling oil that bubbles up from the middle of what would have been the grasslands. Where they meet, the clash of superheated oil and poison water creates a flaming oil slick that overflows the riverbanks and burns without end. The vapor from the Tsever's poisoned waters also creates a smokey green miasma for miles around the site that is highly toxic.

The Aqua Doloris in the Tsever acts as both a contact poison and an ingested poison. Any creature that comes into contact with it during their turn, or that starts their turn in contact with it, takes 1d10 acid damage. A creature that ingests Aqua Doloris takes 2d10 poison damage.

The boiling oil in the Ulaan will often hiss and spit small drops of oil within a 3 foot radius. Although they do not do significant damage, they are startling, and may kindle small fires if there is burnable material nearby. These fires may cause variable amounts of damage. Coming in contact with the boiling oil is more dangerous, as it will stick to any creature that touches it. Immersion in boiling oil causes a creature 3d6 fire damage while they are in the river.

The miasma surrounding the area where these two rivers meet is highly toxic and best avoided. Any creature breathing it in will take 1d12 poison damage. Although the sight of a so-called waterfall made of flames cascading into the Great Chasm out of this green smoke is considered one of the most majestic sights in Hell, it is one best viewed from a distance.



## GREAT CHASM

As dangerous as the Great Chasm can be in Ancerra, its cognate in Hell holds even more dangers. Rich mineral ores are still embedded in the rocks throughout the yawning canyon, over a mile deep and varying in width as it cuts down the continent. However, while some of the minerals are valuable, all of them are deadly.

Red veins of cinnabar form a majority of the walls, and its dust fills the air constantly. Because of this, experienced travelers recommend wearing a mask to avoid breathing the dust. Wrapping a scarf or other cloth around the face will suffice. For every 10 days an adventurer spends in the Great Chasm without a mask to filter out the cinnabar dust, they must make a Constitution saving throw of DC 17. On a failure, they gain +1 Fear.

Another common mineral is fool's gold, which can explode and release clouds of sulfurous arsine gas if air reaches it through cracks in the rocks. These explosions are only mildly dramatic, but a mask will not prevent the gas from affecting a creature. Any creature that enters or starts their turn in a cloud of arsine gas should make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 1d12 poison damage, becomes nauseous, and gains one level of exhaustion. In 1d20+10 minutes, the creature will begin vomiting, coughing violently, and will show red, swollen patches on their skin.

To heal from arsine gas poisoning, the creature must make three Constitution checks over the next 24 hours once they are out of the gas. The cumulative total of the three checks must meet or exceed a DC of 50. If they receive at least one quart of clean water, they may receive +2 to each roll. Alternatively, someone else may provide medical treatment up to three times to meet the cumulative DC using Wisdom (Medicine) checks, or a character may provide magical healing for three times the damage taken.

Fool's gold should not be confused with the many incendiary minerals such as natron, magnium, and kalium, which are all silvery in appearance and will gleam from between cracks in the rocks, but are not poisonous. They should nevertheless be handled with care. Avoid exposure to flames, extreme heat or rough handling, or any kind of liquid. A rain of blood is a particularly dangerous time to be in the Great Chasm. These minerals are unstable explosives that will launch surrounding rocks at high speed, create blinding plumes of light, and do a range of damage depending on proximity.

Kalium flames are lavender, and do damage in units of d8. Natron flames are yellow, and use a d6. Magnium flames are white, and use a d4. Substitute the correct size die in the following description.

If a creature is standing at the epicenter, the explosion forces the creature to make a DC 25 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, they take 10dX fire damage and 10dX bludgeoning damage. On a success, they take half damage. Within 30 feet, the explosion forces the creature to make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 5dX fire damage and 5dX bludgeoning damage. On a success, they take half damage.

These are not the only dangerous ores in the Chasm, but finding others would require mining the rich mineral veins as they are much more stable. Aside from those dangers, a vast number of rivers cut through the rocks of the Great Chasm. None of them are water, and travelers should be wary. If they travel far enough south, they will also find an ancient, weathered bridge spanning the narrowest part of the Chasm at twenty miles across, with the remains of a once-great city-state built on its face. However, the shell of this bridge is now a fiend stronghold. The heroes will find no allies there.

## SCORGRAF

The foothills of what Ancerrans know as Kess are covered in trees and bushes in a thriving woodland, but travelers will quickly notice that the trees here are uniquely suited to life in the Hell plane. Various species, such as the flame ash and the phoenix poplar, have adapted to grow leaves made of fire that never wholly consume the wood of the tree. Theories abound as to how this happened, ranging from the work of a local mage long passed away to dryads either being replaced by or making a bargain with flame fiends.

Whatever caused this phenomenon, it has begun to affect other flora as well, trickling down to bushes and flowers made either entirely or partially of flame. Meanwhile, the local salamander population is thriving, able to eat their fill of magical flame without fear of predators. Most other animals will not attempt to eat the plants made of fire, but some are adapting. The hills glow day and night here in the place called perhaps the most peaceful realm in Hell.

Fiends do still terrorize anyone they meet, and the weather is still threatening, but everything is relative.

Chopping down one of the trees in the Scorgraf is considered bad manners, and can make you enemies among locals, be they surviving refugees, fiends, fauna, or flora. However, anyone may pick up fallen branches. A branch from a flame tree will burn without being consumed, able to serve as a torch or in a campfire indefinitely. Submerging it in water or smothering it in dirt will extinguish it.



## THE BONES OF APAKKU

In the northeast regions of what used to be Kandiff, visitors to Hell can find the bones of a massive alligator snapping turtle, weathered by sand and bleached white in the heat. Dried sticks and stones cover her shell, the disordered remnants of the great city that once rode on Apakku's back. Any people who were here have either left or were long lost to scavengers.

Although still massive in scale compared to humanoids and other turtles, this version of Apakku died decades ago, possibly more, and is slightly smaller than present residents of Kandiff know her to be. Her shell, from the head end to the tail end, is a scant eight miles long. The mountain of bones would be possible to scale and explore inside of a day or two, if one used the time wisely.

If the heroes attempt to piece together what happened here, accounts from journals, graffiti, and letters scattered through the town will reveal elements of what happened long ago. Following a strange rain of blood—the first the citizens of what was then Kandiff had witnessed, which they viewed as a terrible omen—bolts of ominous red lightning crossed the skies and a dramatic change came over the land. The next river where Apakku stopped to drink turned to a viscous, silvery fluid they named “Argentum Furoris,” as it seemed to drive the great turtle mad.

According to the records, Apakku behaved erratically for some days, circling the river, occasionally digging or lying down as if despondent instead of continuing her journey. Shortly thereafter, a swarm of fiends visited a plague upon the city, leading to countless deaths. Witnesses write that Apakku seemed to feel each death like a stab in the heart, writhing in pain until at last she collapsed and died. A number of mourning offerings from days past rest by her skeleton, and in the shrine near the head end of her shell.

The silvery river of Argentum Furoris described in Apakku's histories runs through the dusty ground several yards away. Any remains of plant life within ten feet are blackened and shriveled. This liquid appears very thick, and leaves no trace of wetness behind. Touching it does not cause a problem, but drinking one mouthful or eating food steeped in it causes 1d10 poison damage, incurs +2 Fear, and 1 level of exhaustion.

## WORLD MOUNTAIN RANGE

The spine of the World Mountain Range cuts from the ice floes of north to the west of the plains that border the Great Chasm. They tower above much of Hell, with lava pouring down the black volcanic peaks hidden high in sulfurous clouds. Those willing to dare the unpredictable lava flows will find even the rocky terrain unfriendly.

The sheer sides of almost every peak are coated in gleaming obsidian. The volcanic glass shines like black ice in the sun, but is far more difficult to climb. Where it is smooth, it offers no grip and gives off a heat like fire under the sun.

Where storms or bold adventurers have tried to shatter the rock to form paths, it has broken into rough, sharp edges. Glinting obsidian spikes up to 6 inches long rise from the footpaths, no more than 3 inches apart. Attempting to scale the mountains on these paths is the same as walking on knives.

Some mosses and herbs attempt to take root in the cracks of rocks here, but few succeed. Almost all of the people found in these mountains are newcomers who have not yet learned better or refugees fleeing the ruins of Betaal in the wake of a sudden volcanic eruption.

## TERRAIN HAZARDS

While traveling through Hell, heroes must face conditions that have rendered most of the plane lifeless, or changed life upon it forever. Temperatures range from sweltering to infernal, storms of blood and lightning rumble constantly on the horizon even when they are not overhead, and rivers of toxins, acid, boiling oil, or lava cross the landscape.

Once per hour while traveling, roll 2d4 to determine if the party encounters a terrain hazard on the following chart.

2d4	Encounter
2	Red Lightning
3	Rain of Blood
4	High Heat
5	Sudden Fire
6	Hazardous River
7-8	No hazard

## RED LIGHTNING

The lightning that flickers constantly around Hell gives off an eerie, reddish glow, and appears to light up the clouds as it strikes and forks wildly around the terrain. The flash of light happens more quickly than regular lightning, to the point where a creature might question whether they saw it if not for the angry crack of thunder that follows.

This happens fairly frequently within visual range, but on rolling a 2 for a Terrain Hazard, red lightning will strike the party's current position. Have every creature make an unmodified d20 roll. The creature with the lowest result gets struck by red lightning. If characters are tied for the lowest result, all tied characters get struck by red lightning.

Struck creatures must make a DC 22 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, they take 8d10 lightning damage. On a success, they take half damage.



## RAIN OF BLOOD

The clouds darken overhead and the ongoing storms of blood roll over the party's position for 1d8 hours. As the air fills with a coppery smell and everything in sight gets coated with fresh blood, every player must make a DC 17 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, in addition to gaining +1 Fear, they undergo one involuntary reaction from the following table until the rain of blood stops or the party can find shelter.

Roll 1d6 to determine the involuntary reaction.

1d6	Reaction
1	Blurred vision. -2 on Wisdom (Perception) checks where the character would use their vision.
2	Sweaty, clammy skin. Can take one action or bonus action on each of their turns, but not both.
3	Pronounced dizziness. Suffers disadvantage on skill checks.
4	Fainting. Unconscious.
5	Nausea. Poisoned.
6	Persistent ringing in the ears. Suffers a -2 to d20 rolls.

## HIGH HEAT

All temperatures in Hell have a minimum of around 100°F during the day, which means that characters must make ordinary Constitution saving throws of at least DC 10 starting at sunrise, although the DM may choose to vary this. Failing the save causes a creature to gain 1 level of exhaustion.

If the "High Heat" Terrain Hazard appears, the party experiences unusually high temperatures for 1d12 hours. Add 2d10 + 5°F to the current temperature, and adjust the party's Constitution saving throws accordingly.

Because of the lack of available water in Hell, any water the party must drink in order to offset penalties for the heat must be water they carry with them or can create through mundane or magical means.

## SUDDEN FIRE

One of the many dry grasses or bushes that will often burst into fire across the landscape catches the surrounding plants in a swift, runaway blaze. Upon seeing the approaching fire, the heroes have 2 turns each to prepare themselves, finding ways to divert the flames, avoid the flames, or take cover.

During those 2 turns, they must make skill checks for appropriate actions to protect themselves. Any hero with a cumulative total of 35 or more on these skill checks will succeed. If the hero casts a spell in lieu of one of their skill checks, count it as rolling a total of 20 on one of their skill checks.

When the fire arrives, heroes that fail to meet the cumulative total will take 4d6 fire damage. Heroes that succeed take ½ damage. Any hero that demonstrates a solution for avoiding the fire entirely, such as flying above it, takes no damage regardless of their total result.

## HAZARDOUS RIVER

Hell has precisely as many rivers, creeks, ditches, and other such things as Ancerra, but none of them are what we would call "waterways." For that, they would need to contain water, the lack of which is one thing that makes Hell especially unwelcoming to humanoid adventurers.

Upon finding a river, roll 1d6 and use the following table to determine what the heroes see instead of water.

1d6	Reaction
1	Boiling oil
2	Lava
3	Blood
4	Sulfur
5	Urine
6	Acid

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

The rare occasions when adventurers run into someone from whom they can learn more about the history of the plane or the layout of the surrounding terrain tend to fall into four distinct categories. Roll 1d4 on the following table below to select an encounter for the party.

1d4	Result
1	Lost Civilian
2	Escaped Hostages
3	Grumpy Hermit
4	Examine a Corpse

## LOST CIVILIAN

From time to time, ill-fated travelers will take a wrong turn, fail when casting a spell, touch a cursed artifact, or make a particularly vicious enemy. However they ended up here, it was not intentional, and they were not prepared.

A Lost Civilian (use stats of a commoner) will often be haggard and desperate, but equally wary of strangers after run-ins with creatures that were not so friendly. They will be able to give descriptions of places they have been and hazards they have encountered, but will not know the history of the area and will find the entire experience upsetting and bewildering. At the DM's discretion, they may be subject to the effects of up to 2d4 Fear with appropriate Psyche talents to offset this.



It may not be much, but they will gladly tell the heroes anything they know for the promise of protection, food and water, and a way home. This person will promise to owe you a favor, and returning them safely home will earn every party member +1 Social Goodwill in their nation.

## ESCAPED HOSTAGES

Various enclaves of fiends and hellspawn will keep living hostages, for food, sport, labor, or a handful of other reasons. Two main strongholds that keep groups of living hostages are servants of Dracula in Dracula's Castle, and the fiend commune living in the ruins of Bridgemoor to the south. There are, however, smaller groups with a few hostages scattered here and there throughout the plane.

At any time, the heroes may come across a party of 1d6 former hostages (use stats for a **veteran**) that have escaped their captors and are trying to find their way to safety before their supplies run out. They will be well adapted to the environment in terms of camouflage, any possible scavenging, handling the weather, and navigating the terrain.

After persuading the Escaped Hostages that the heroes are not a threat, they will request aid with getting to safety. In exchange for this help, they will share information on foraging, finding and making shelter, or identifying hazards. This information provides a +2 bonus to relevant checks. The DM chooses which skill the heroes learn. This bonus stacks with additional information you acquire from other groups if you learn more about the same skill.

This group can also give you detailed information about the terrain surrounding the fiend stronghold they escaped from, and the layout of the stronghold itself. They can tell the heroes either two details about the general history and function of the plane chosen at random from the Knowledge table, or three details of the DM's choice specific to the plans and actions of the group holding them captive.

The DM should award appropriate Goodwill for returning the Escaped Hostages to their homes based on the number of people.

## GRUMPY HERMIT

No matter how unpleasant the circumstances, there will always be at least one person that somehow finds the means to survive—and wishes to do so without anyone bothering them. Even in Hell, some people simply wish to live their lives and be left alone.

As a rule, hermits are not particularly social. If a Grumpy Hermit (use stats of a **scout**) appears while the heroes are in good health and not facing any apparent danger, the heroes must make a Charisma roll of DC 22 to get any response beyond a glare. On a success, the Grumpy Hermit will grudgingly engage in conversation, but is only interested in telling the heroes the fastest safe way to leave, and will walk away without saying goodbye. The explanation should include useful information that will give the heroes a +2 bonus to avoiding hazards in the future.

If any of the heroes are wounded or ill, the Grumpy Hermit will approach looking annoyed. Curtly, they will offer instructions on how to identify specific plants and where they grow in sufficient quantities to be of help. These may be medicinal herbs, or they may be plants and berries that are safe to eat to restore strength and moisture. This information provides a +2 bonus to foraging on future checks. Provided all heroes can now walk, the Grumpy Hermit leaves, muttering that people should take better care of themselves and not cause trouble by dying on the hermit's doorstep.

If all or most of the party is unconscious due to injury, illness, or trauma during a Grumpy Hermit event, the Grumpy Hermit will bring the heroes back to their home, either alone or with any assistance conscious party members can offer. They will offer no more explanation than necessary to render assistance. While refusing to speak, they will perform a competent but not professional job of treating any obvious illness or injury, and will prepare a meager meal for the heroes. The shelter is extremely well made, and blends impeccably with the surroundings. From studying the Grumpy Hermit's home, the heroes gain a +2 bonus to finding and making shelter in Hell.

While waiting for their fellow heroes to wake up, any conscious heroes that succeed at a Charisma check of DC 22 with relevant bonuses can get the Grumpy Hermit to tell them three facts from the Knowledge table. After the discussion reaches three facts, the Grumpy Hermit declares, "That's enough of that," and begins fixing a piece of gear, refusing to talk again until he is telling the recovered heroes to leave.

Any offer to rescue the Grumpy Hermit or take them away from the plane of Hell receives a derisive scoff in reply, followed by the hermit going about their business. They clearly have no interest in leaving.

## EXAMINE A CORPSE

At least as often as they come across living people, adventurers in Hell will find the remains of someone who did not survive. Just because they are not alive, however, does not mean they have no story to tell.

The heroes may be able to learn a great deal from how a corpse was dressed, the types of things the person was carrying, or sometimes the way they died. Obvious wounds on a fresh body may reveal what kind of enemies are in the area. Signs of poisoning may offer a hint that something the person ate recently was not safe. Final words scratched in the ground nearby always send a message. Consider what the heroes need to know, and dress the corpse to tell them the story.

Every Examine a Corpse encounter should include one key item, such as a journal, map, personal letter, ledger, or token, that will reveal information about the plane of Hell in general or about a specific location within Hell.



## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Roll 2d8 or select an event from the following random combat encounter table. Encounters in Hell are intended to be difficult for a party between levels 14 and 16.

2d8	Encounter
2-4	Your Worst Nightmare.
5-6	We Ride at Dusk.
7-9	Cooking Up Trouble.
10-11	Once Bitten.
12-13	Flowers of Evil.
14-16	Hell's Legions.

## YOUR WORST NIGHTMARE

Among the many creatures forced to survive in Hell from its creation or who have wandered in from other realms, several have found that their talents lend themselves to cooperation in ensuring their mutual survival. One common band of threats are **fear eaters**, **doppelgangers**, and **vermyn**, known to stalk any living creature for days or weeks in order to subject them to the greatest possible psychological torture before moving on to find fresh prey.

The fear eaters will often track a party from a distance for some time, creating a frightening atmosphere and impersonating other things and creatures that hold particular fear for members of the party. Doppelgangers offer a convenient avenue to interact directly with party members, infiltrating the group to gain additional information on both fears and future tactics by pretending to be local residents, refugees in need of help, or even disguising themselves as party members when necessary. Many of them have taken to keeping vermyn to release among party food stores, as the fear and helplessness of finding oneself ill and without provisions in Hell are difficult to simulate.

To fight these enemies, the characters must first realize they are the target of an attack. A character making appropriate inquiries may discover this on an Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) roll of DC 22. When fighting a doppelganger, the doppelganger will try to convince the heroes that they are making a mistake, which should involve appropriate opposed social and mental checks. Once reduced to one half their maximum hit points, the doppelgangers will flee.

The heroes may need to search the surrounding area for any fear eaters. As long as the potential remains to frighten the heroes, the fear eater will maintain a terrifying form. If the heroes can no longer be frightened, or once reduced to one half their maximum hit points, the fear eater will flee.

Use the following table for recommended battles:

Players	Creatures
3	1 Fear Eater, 2 Doppelgangers, 3 Vermyn
4	2 Fear Eaters, 3 Doppelgangers, 5 Vermyn
5	3 Fear Eaters, 4 Doppelgangers, 5 Vermyn
6	4 Fear Eaters, 5 Doppelgangers, 7 Vermyn

## WE RIDE AT DUSK

The warrior hordes of Cholereth have found Hell to be a promising new land to conquer, especially the realm that was once Bishal. Taking it as their new home, they will send in riders to rout anyone who appears to be making camp as soon as the sun begins to fall. Heroes should make a Wisdom (Perception) check of DC 17 to avoid being Surprised.

The Cholereth war bands will not pursue anyone who flees. At one quarter its maximum hit points, the warriors will flee.

See table for recommended encounter difficulty:

Players	Creatures
3	1 Chain Devil, 1 Bearded Devil
4	1 Chain Devil, 1 Bearded Devil mounted on a Nightmare
5	1 Erinyes, 1 Bearded Devil mounted on a Nightmare
6	1 Erinyes, 1 Bearded Devil, both mounted on Nightmares

## COOKING UP TROUBLE

**Sanguine flames** and **imps** rove the plane of Hell in droves, making nuisances of themselves for both adventurers and residents alike. If any see the heroes, they will launch an attack without warning. If the heroes flee, they will not pursue.

See table for recommended encounter difficulty.

Players	Creatures
3	4 Sanguine Flames, 4 Imps
4	5 Sanguine Flames, 8 Imps
5	7 Sanguine Flames, 4 Imps
6	8 Sanguine Flames, 8 Imps



## ONCE BITTEN

The extreme heat of Hell makes it the perfect breeding ground for infestations of m'l'ykkri, which roam the plane with swarms of fleshlings and flesh worms trailing them the same way one might expect to see wild geese in Ancerra wandering with their flocks and their young. Take great care confronting them. They are rabid, and will fight to the death over nothing more than someone stepping too close. They will not pursue if the heroes flee.

Players	Creatures
3	1 M'l'ykkri, 1 M'l'ykkri Flesh Swarm, 2 M'l'ykkri Fleshlings
4	1 M'l'ykkri, 2 M'l'ykkri Flesh Swarms, 2 M'l'ykkri Fleshlings
5	2 M'l'ykkri, 1 M'l'ykkri Flesh Swarm, 3 M'l'ykkri Fleshlings
6	2 M'l'ykkri, 2 M'l'ykkri Flesh Swarms, 3 M'l'ykkri Fleshlings

## FLOWERS OF EVIL

The frequent rains of blood throughout Hell have led to massive numbers of corrupted **treants** joining the ranks of **shambling mounds** as carnivorous flora roaming the land. Adventurers should learn quickly to check the local plants for signs of ill intent as well as animals, humanoids, and fiends.

Treants and shambling mounds will remain still as long as creatures do not suspect them, waiting for prey to drop their guard before they strike. They may attempt to fashion themselves in the form of an attractive, shady area where travelers may rest or search for food. Heroes may make an Wisdom (Perception) roll of DC 17 to notice the danger from the surrounding plants, with appropriate bonuses for specialized knowledge. If they fail this roll, the heroes will be Surprised when the plants attack.

See table for recommended encounter difficulty.

Players	Creatures
3	1 Treant, 3 Corpse Blossoms
4	1 Treant, 5 Corpse Blossoms
5	1 Treant, 1 Shambling Mound, 3 Corpse Blossoms
6	1 Treant, 1 Shambling Mound, 5 Corpse Blossoms

## HELL'S LEGIONS

While roaming the wastes of Hell, the heroes catch the attention of a **hellcrafter** mounted on an **eclipse hunter** out to increase the size of their horde (*HGtVH*). When the encounter begins, the hellcrafter has a horde of hellspawn of the DM's choice sufficient to have an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

## KANDIFF

There should be 1d4-2 (min 0) random combat encounters per day while the heroes are approaching Apakku, and 1d4-1 (min 0) while they are setting out from Apakku to Betaal. These encounters have some overlap with those in Bishal, given that Palorva's forces have taken over most of northern and eastern Kandiff.

## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Roll 1d6 or pick an encounter from the table.

1d6	Encounter
1	Pack of Werewolves
2-3	Lurking Vampire
4-5	Bishalian Riders
6	Roaming Fiend

## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a vampire that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire



## BISHALIAN RIDERS

The horse-mounted archers of Bishal are renowned fighters, prepared to defend their lands against invading threats. While the heroes are fairly unknown, parties of riders may send one person to question them about their identity and intentions, leaving the other to watch from afar with an arrow nocked to their bow. A DC 22 Intelligence or Charisma check should allow the heroes to succeed if they try to persuade the riders they mean no harm. On success, the riders will encourage the heroes to move quickly, and they will leave without engaging in conversation.

CR	Creatures
1/8	Bandit
1/2	Scout, Warhorse
2	Bandit Captain, Centaur

## ROAMING FIEND

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Bishal for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the table below.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any hellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## APAKKU, THE LIVING CITY

While Kandiff is a land of few wonders, its capital city is unlike any other. The nation's seat of government rests on the shell of a legendary alligator snapping turtle whose enduring lifespan has allowed her to grow to the size of a mountain. Residences and public buildings of all kinds fill the swooping valleys tucked between the cresting ridges of Apakku's shell. The city teems with life, from the transient, pelt-covered domes of visiting merchants from the north and the ancient structures in government and the temples that have existed since the earliest days. Tenements and brownstone walk-ups made with the most modern comforts imaginable mark the city as a living record of architecture throughout Kandiff across history.

In the words of Mazelet Talbar, a legendary third-generation Oligarch from the southern provinces who helped define many of the governmental systems that persist today, "Apakku treads every corner of our land. In this, every person is a citizen of Apakku." Three times per year, the great turtle travels her route crossing every region of Kandiff, allowing the Oligarchy to see conditions across the land. Across the steppes of Kandiff, giant stone staircases that seem to lead to nowhere dot the land, solid monuments to Apakku when she is absent and a functional means to board the turtle when she arrives.

Prior to Apakku's regular visits, locals will cluster around the stairs for days, waiting for a chance to see the capital, make a plea before the federal government, or sell their wares in the great markets. Local administrators must keep these lines orderly, although the less scrupulous may see their control over access to the stairs as a chance to make extra money from those who will pay for a better place in line.

How each person greets the sight of a monumental cityscape walking past the horizon varies. For some, it may be a rare chance to see an old friend or family member. Local merchants may see it as a chance to impress powerful clients. The underworld may be split between bandits who lay low to avoid the military power that comes with the capital and con artists who can access new and wealthy marks. Likewise, upright local officials may look forward to the chance to make a good impression on members of the central government, while corrupt officials may hurry to hide evidence of their wrongdoing.

If there is crime, unrest, or a natural disaster in an area where Apakku stops on her tour of Kandiff, consider how this may affect Apakku's welcome and tensions in the city. Petitioners asking the high courts of the central government to set injustices right, citizens unsatisfied with their local governance who wish to overthrow a ruler, or local governors who fail to handle a flood, famine, or plague and hide the victims to protect their reputations are all complications that could arise somewhere. These are exactly the things that Apakku travels to find. She won't find them everywhere, but there should be a possibility of finding them anywhere.



Roll 1d20 before Apakku enters each of the nine provinces of Kandiff. The result on the following chart indicates a response waiting there. These do not need to affect the plot of the game, but may serve as background for events in the city.

1d20	Result
1	Entire region afflicted by disaster, such as flood, famine, or plague.
2-3	Significant unrest in one or more districts due to dissatisfaction with local leadership.
4-5	A citizen in one town has a petition exposing a local crime or failure of justice.
6-8	The governmental office receives a large number of complaints that postal delivery is taking too long.
9-12	About one in ten citizens thinks taxes are too high.
13-15	Regular patrols by trained guards means that bandit activity is down.
16-17	A citizen in one town managed to avert a disaster with an act of selfless courage, becoming a local hero.
18-19	Significant success in one or more districts with local government initiatives that can offset shortfalls elsewhere in Kandiff.
20	Entire region flourishing because of revolutionary cultural achievement, such as literature, art, or a medical or agricultural breakthrough.

## BOARDING APAKKU

Once close enough to Apakku to see that she is in fact a living turtle, it is impossible to see all of her at once. Over her long life, she has grown to massive proportions. Each of her feet spans nearly a quarter the distance of the Great Chasm's towering walls, and her deadly claws alone are the size of ancient tree trunks.

From up close, waiting citizens of Kandiff may see a brief view of the smooth shell plating Apakku's chest before she settles to allow people to board. The steep ridges of the reptilian shell on her back reach higher than the unaided eye can see, not quite breaching the clouds. In the long, shallow valleys between shell ridges, permanent and temporary residents find ways to secure buildings when the great turtle moves and find ways to access the aqueducts that serve the city.

## STAIRCASE MONUMENTS

The oldest sets of monumental stairs throughout Kandiff have grown with Apakku, adding new levels, and sometimes landings or pulley systems as technology has advanced. Every time safety experts in the Bureau of Accounting rule that the safe angle of entry onto the shell of Apakku will soon rise higher than a given boarding staircase, that town must extend the structure to ensure the capital city is available to their citizens.

One common feature on these staircases, especially those without pulley systems, is a wide ramp to allow merchant carts and delivery vehicles to board the city. However, individuals of means may also get permits from the Bureau of Labor for personal loading scaffolds to raise goods from the ground, or contract with spellcasters for assistance, as long as the goods go through proper import procedures with the Bureau of Civil Affairs.

## NAVIGATING THE CITY

The directions of north, south, east, and west mean little when navigating within a city that moves. New visitors quickly learn that residents have their own way of giving directions specific to Apakku. The "head end" and the "tail end" are exactly what they seem, while the "stair side" is on the right when facing the great turtle's head. Naturally, Apakku will always dock with the stairs on this side, so a resident would never get confused. The opposite side is what residents call the "gap side."

At the top of the shell is an area that lays mostly horizontal, except for the places where the ridges on Apakku's shell crest into tall natural walls. This area, known as "the Crown," is by far the most desirable for building. The seat of government, the most expensive housing, and many centers of culture are found here. As Apakku's shell begins to curve down at the edge in each direction, these are the four slopes. Property becomes increasingly difficult to maintain and subsequently less expensive as the incline increases, up to the point where city policy forbids building because the slope incline is too dangerous. Such policies may not stop people who flaunt the law from stepping outside the line, but they take the consequences on their own heads as warning signs are clearly posted.

## BUILDING LOTS

As with many other things in Apakku, building lots are highly regulated. Every ten years, the Bureau of Accounting will survey the terrain on the back of the great turtle and determine where lines defining building lots currently lie, and whether there is space to create new building lots. If such space exists, the Bureau of Accounting will give their new maps to the Bureau of Civil Affairs, who will begin the process of appointing a city planner to design a revised layout for the city of Apakku.



This is a coveted position, often awarded as an honor to celebrate a remarkable career, or to a new official who has made an impressive achievement. The Bureau of Civil Affairs rarely awards this honor to the same city planner more than once.

While the location and size of government buildings and public resources would be part of the city planner's design, other property owners in the city take part in a complicated lottery process to select their new building lot, run by the Bureau of Procedure. The bartering and trading for position in the selection is always one of the greatest fluctuations of money, power, and influence in Apakku. Naturally, the end result is the furthest thing from random. Those who call bureaucracy the national sport of Kandiff have described the property lottery that happens perhaps once or twice a century as the discipline's highest achievement.

While buying property in Apakku is possible given money and luck, most experts will recommend leaving your house budget and instructions in the hands of a trusted professional, then waiting up to five years to hear back.

## DISTRICT ASSOCIATIONS

Naturally, not everyone who lives on Apakku owns their own building lot. Much like any city, those who can afford a space will buy it, and those who cannot will rent. Within Apakku, any person or group of people together who own ten or more continuous building lots may form a District Association. This gives them the right to set local building maintenance standards, rent building lots, or create public amenities within their district.

Some District Associations are wealthy investors acting as landlords who may be benevolent or may be cruel. In either case, this kind of District Association is likely to take money and nothing else in exchange for renting all or part of a building lot. One week's rental in a less favorable location may range from 20 sc to 40 sc, while a one-week rental in the heart of Apakku may cost over 450 sc.

Other District Associations are cooperative groups of permanent residents who all own their building lots and arrange their district rules through mutual agreement. Often, these groups will purchase additional building lots together to qualify as a District Association, and use them as public space such as a park, playground, or community garden. If a member of the adventuring party succeeds in a Charisma check of DC 12, one of these District Associations may be willing to lease vacant space in exchange for assistance maintaining the neighborhood grounds or doing security patrols. On a critical success, the District Association will also pay them a wage.

## MOBILE BUILDINGS

Among the unique features of the city of Apakku, life on the back of a turtle who continues to grow larger throughout her eternal life means that the ground itself grows and shifts underneath the buildings. It may take years, but even the most permanent structures in the city will eventually need to shift when city districts reorganize space.

Many visitors and temporary residents, and even some longer-term residents on the slopes, prefer to live in buildings modeled after traditional nomadic life on the steppes. Citizens from northern regions close to Bishal might prefer a large, circular yurt design, whether covered with traditional furs or more modern insulated wool and canvas. People from more southern areas may prefer a taller, conical design, or long, boat-like structures made with wooden ribs over a long crossbeam. All manner of homes the residents can assemble or break down in under an hour appear throughout Apakku.

However, the grand homes built to resemble fashionable mansions of the age where powerful officials and rich merchants live in Apakku year-round have their own ways to handle this. Some older structures have foundations that the owners can raise to set on wheels, but an architectural breakthrough two generations ago perfected modular, interlocking building pieces. With these, a building owner can relocate, replace broken elements, or remodel the building with new rooms as needed. The only limit is that buildings require special permits to go over three stories high, as taller buildings may suffer damage if they sway while Apakku is walking, and buildings must stay in the owner's designated lot.

## TURTLE TRAILS

The ridges where Apakku's wide scales jut up into natural walls are one of the few places where the people of the city cannot place their buildings. Over time, these have become known as "turtle trails," with prominent ridges serving as the bases for the main aqueducts that catch rainwater and circulate it throughout the city.

The ridges themselves serve as posting spaces for announcements, community art, and essays. Heated chains of essays in response to each other can become the talk of the town for weeks. This may give Apakku a reputation as a boring place, but longtime residents will insist that others simply do not understand the thrill of essayists up in arms over proactive debt relief in the second year after a famine.

Along with harmless entertainment, spies and members of the Underworld post on turtle trails to send covert messages. Edgar Hawthorne may have also left a message or two here pointing to more information.



## AQUEDUCTS

With no groundwater, rainwater and imported stores are the only sources of potable water in the city. Aqueducts running throughout the town deliver water fresh from government-maintained reservoirs, fed by rainfall in the aqueducts themselves and at collection points around the slopes.

By moving into key positions, some District Associations can control access to fresh water in their neighborhoods, a powerful negotiating tool with citizens who have no government connections and fear what their landlords' hired muscle may do next.

## CAPITAL OF KANDIFF

Through centuries of uninterrupted rule, government has become the industry, culture, and focus of Apakku, which, many of the permanent residents joke, has no natural exports other than legislation. To whatever extent Kandiff develops thinkers who hope to make a difference, they will naturally gravitate toward either serving in the halls of Apakku's well-worn system of bureaus and interwoven hierarchies, or towards the storied academies in foreign lands.

## THE OLIGARCHY

Each of the nine provinces of Kandiff selects one Oligarch to speak for them on the ruling council in Apakku. These Oligarchs speak with equal voices, by tradition rotating their responsibilities as Speaker for the council. Within their daily affairs of government, they will receive written reports from the six bureaus of the Baishin, meet regularly in closed council sessions, and draft directives for lower-level officials to carry out. They may perform inspections or request to speak directly to specific officials and experts.

At least once per month, the ruling council of the Oligarchs will convene a full meeting at their ceremonial table in the center of the Baishin, giving all lower officials an opportunity to address the Oligarchs directly. While this is rarely more than a ceremonial occasion, sometimes a whistleblower will take the opportunity to present evidence they considered damning—to greater and lesser effect.

## THE BAISHIN

The Baishin is both the name of the building where the majority of court officials perform their duties and the name for the court itself as a representative body of major clans, cities, guilds, and other civil districts. Whether each official, known by the title Khibai, is selected by the group they represent or is in attendance because the Oligarchs have demanded their presence in Apakku, they make up the managerial class of government. From the six bureaus of the Baishin, they advise the Oligarchs and direct the details of executing the Oligarchy's orders.

Early in Kandiff's history, the Baishin operated as one group, handling all affairs of government. Years later, the ruling council adopted the proposal from Mazelet Talbar to create the six bureaus. At the time, the division of labor was meant to simplify processes by assigning clear roles. Over the centuries since, however, the steps in each task have become more intricate, and few processes if any remain under a single bureau. It is far more common for even the simplest action to require the cooperation of two or three bureaus. The specific balances of power and requirements to complete tasks are entire branches of professional study.

Any civil district or mercantile concern, from clusters of small villages to powerful craft guilds, may merit inclusion in the Baishin if the Oligarchy wishes to grant them a place. Entry into the Baishin comes with seats for two Khibai. While choices for Khibai vary, it is traditional to choose one for civil interests and one for military interests.

The six bureaus of the Baishin each work in open office spaces with low desks near the main building of the Baishin. While the main building is round, built in concentric circles around the ruling council's table to emphasize their equality before the law, each of the bureau buildings is a long, rectangular building on stilts with an open front, meant to symbolize the processes of government action made visible.

In their current alignment, the six bureau buildings surround the main Baishin building like points of a star, with their openings pointing towards the main central building. The work each bureau handles in the present day is below, although responsibilities tend to change with each generation.

**Bureau of Civil Affairs.** Manages personnel throughout the city, and throughout the nation.

**Bureau of Accounting.** Manages any need for counting or measurement, such as financial matters, censuses, or population statistics.

**Bureau of Procedure.** Manages diplomatic relations, national events such as holiday celebrations and parades, and communications.

**Bureau of the Military.** Manages military training, deployment, and resources. If it involves the military, they are likely to have a hand in it.

While the heroes are in Apakku, they may seek out a Khibai named Khaleen Sukh, the training master for the anti-vampire initiative under the Bureau of the Military. A fierce, renowned fighter from the southeastern provinces near the border with Lemishan, recognizable by the tattoos dedicated to the worship of A'rl'ng on their face that continue down their neck and back. They claim this will ensure they cannot rise as a vampire if bitten, but no one wants to test it. Khaleen may be in the Capital area or in the training grounds.

**Bureau of the Judiciary.** Manages trials and punishment, including incarceration, execution, and remediation of prisoners. They handle judgment but not investigation, which is the purview of the Gazar Khyan.



**Bureau of Labor.** Manages public works, standards and measurements, and worker compensation. Please note, the measurements under the Bureau of Labor are subjects such as standardizing the exact weight of one pound, or the exact length of one foot. The Bureau of Accounting is responsible for taking measurements.

## THE KHELTES

The Kheltes are outside the representative government of Kandiff but work hand in hand with the government as expert advisors. They came into existence over the years as the demand for trained experts in government service increased, and the bureaucracy has long since absorbed them. Anyone working for one of these organizations would say they work for the Oligarchy. Given the amount of work the Kheltes do for the Oligarchy, few would argue. These are, however, independent positions, not part of the court, and they do not have special privileges to report to the Oligarchs.

Often called the “three A’s” by visitors, the Academy, Administration, and Archives are staffed by hired or recruited experts rather than local representatives. Being chosen as an advisor under the auspices of any of the Kheltes is a great honor.

**The Academy.** The letterhead says, “Kheltes of Academic Development.” The goal of this institution is to accumulate the aid of the foremost experts in their fields throughout the world. Very often, the luminaries of the Academy are not actually present, as they live in far-flung regions in more favorable circumstances. Its halls are generally filled with local Kandifese intelligentsia deemed qualified to write and interpret correspondence with the great minds of the world, although sometimes the Academy will host a symposium where these great minds will meet in person.

**The Administration.** Formally, the “Kheltes of Guidance for Administrative Actions.” Within these halls, experts who have studied bureaucratic functions train their workers in how to assist any and all government officials, or the occasional merchant who needs their services. Trainees here learn to make appointments, provide summaries of meetings, and understand every minutiae of law and policy on the books, whether the question is as minor as what kind of toe guards to put in shoes for military recruits or as major as what etiquette to observe with foreign dignitaries to avoid a diplomatic incident. If they do their job well, they keep the wheels of bureaucracy running cleanly enough that you would never know they were there.

**The Archives.** Also known as the “Kheltes of Archival Records.” For most important meetings or speeches, the Archives contain a full transcript recorded by a stenographer. The federal government of Kandiff maintains a standing contract to transcribe most meetings. Meetings without a transcript at least have a record of the minutes. Any business or individual may negotiate terms with the Archives for transcription. Official government documents

all have a copy stored here. Ledgers, censuses, duty rosters, are all bound into books lining seemingly endless shelves. Archivists maintain orderly records and carefully preserve everything within, producing copies upon request from an authorized individual but never lending out official records. For the most part, only government officials have the authority to request the original document instead of a copy.

## THE GAZAR KHYAN

The mandate of the Gazar Khyan is oversight, investigation, and review. They perform audits of other governmental offices, for cause and at random, to ensure that everything is in order. This office is the personal nightmare of every corrupt local official who might find themselves stripped of power and assigned to punishment by hard labor, prison, or whatever the Bureau of the Judiciary deems appropriate.

Some see this as an extension of their role as intelligence agents and spies who report directly to the Oligarchs. However, any work they do infiltrating enemy ranks or the criminal underworld is something the Gazar Khyan considers separate from keeping their own people on the straight and narrow.

In addition to government oversight and review, they act as the investigative service for incidents of civilian crime, charged with following evidence trails and presenting reports before the Bureau of the Judiciary for assessment along with witness reports. Most of these orders to investigate come from the Oligarchs or the Baishin, with crimes reported through ordinary channels receiving ordinary attention. Not every situation is so simple.

**Petitioner’s Drum.** Sometimes, a person cannot use ordinary channels. Whatever the reason, if someone with a grievance believes they can prove their story, there is a drum on a tower in front of the Gazar Khyan main office. A petitioner may accept ten lashes of a whip to strike the drum.

The tradition that the government must publicize and immediately investigate the grievance of anyone who strikes the drum dates to Kandiff’s earliest days, before the federal government or the maze of bureaus. Every generation, someone advances legislation to remove the drum and close this avenue to bring forward a petition for justice, calling it “backward” or “barbaric.” To date, these attempts have never been successful because, to the common people, the Petitioner’s Drum represents the idea of justice served when hope seems lost. In songs, plays, and literature around Kandiff, even in the modern day, it plays a dramatic role in bringing hidden wrongs to light.



# LODGINGS

## ALTAN SARAANA

A five-story palatial inn that caters to visiting dignitaries and social luminaries. This grand wood, gilt, and stone building surrounds a carefully tended courtyard of lush plants in raised container rows, a rare sight on the great turtle's back. The foundation and walls hide state-of-the-art counterweights, wheels, and soundless hydraulics to cancel out any sway or shear while Apakku is walking, the secret behind this inn's height and legendary stability.

The owners, a married couple named Zure Baidal and her wife Nao Baidal, boast that even a first-time visitor to the turtle's back can stay on their top floor and feel as if they are on the unmoving earth. Zure is an architect, and Nao is an engineer, with the duo working together to maintain the inn's reputation. When Nao needs to put on overalls and work gloves to repair mechanisms in the walls, Zure will be standing behind her with a lantern and the toolbox. While they rarely leave the inn, their unassuming appearances lead many customers to overlook them. As a result, they hear all the juiciest gossip in Apakku.

On rare occasions when Altan Saraana must adjust its position due to Apakku's growth rather than others shifting around it, Nao's hidden mechanisms also enable the inn to roll smoothly without deconstructing its walls. Their secret is one many would go to great lengths to learn, and so the owners hide it behind layers of mysticism and well-guarded screens whenever the building needs to shift.

This jewel among Apakku's lodgings is located at the top of the head slope, near the crown of Apakku's shell and the residences of government officials. Anyone who asks for directions to the finest inns in Apakku will surely find this one near the top of their list, but finding accommodations on short notice without connections may be difficult—or at least pricey.

**Room and Board.** One can rent a room for 10 sc per person per night, or 30 sc for a four-person room. This includes a morning and evening meal (of the “nice” grade in Chapter 6 of the Core Rulebook), an individual bed with private sleeping and washing areas, and the ability to arrange with inn staff for sending and receiving private messages. If securing these rooms without at least five days' notice, the party should make a Charisma check with a base DC of 14. Raise the DC by +2 for each additional room required. Players may receive +1 to their roll for every three Aristocratic Goodwill in Kandiff. On a failure, the heroes must look elsewhere for room and board, but may make reservations allowing them to stay here five days later.

Luxury rooms may be available even when all of the normal rooms are full for 15 sc per person per night, or 45 sc for a four-person room. These rooms are larger, with the best views in the inn of the courtyard and the monuments of the capital. This cost also includes a nice midday meal in

addition to the morning and evening meal, which the inn will pack to eat while outside. Luxury single rooms include two complimentary hours in one of the private meeting rooms. Four-person rooms include fully reserved private meeting spaces attached to the suite.

**Private dining and meeting rooms.** This is a popular destination for business meetings, even among people in the city who do not need a place to stay. Impress high profile connections by reserving a comfortable, private room for discussions with light drinks and refreshments provided for 1 sc per hour, or 6 sc for a full workday.

**Kitchen specials.** While the chefs excel at most local dishes and several types of cuisine from abroad, a few of their offerings are particularly famous.

sc	Item
7	Slow-cooked braised lamb with spiced radish and cabbage
4	Sugar-dusted pancakes with fruit, eggs, and fresh cream
2	Toasted millet and green milk tea
1	Sweet pastry dough, braided and deep-fried.
10	Imported wine (bottle)

## THE SPOTTED MARE

For those in need of ordinary accommodations, a large, pleasant inn halfway down the gap slope has built its rooms as lofts with hammocks separated by dividers made of waxed canvas. Insulated by the colorful tapestries hanging all around, it stays warm even in winter. The side windows boast a view of Kandiff few can match. The inn is also in a part of Apakku that is further from the central government. While the inn itself is safe, adventurers may be more likely to find low ranking members of the Underworld stopping for a meal, or walking in the area.

They have equipped several of the lofts with ascent platforms on pulleys for those who have trouble climbing the ladders, and their kitchens keep food hot throughout the day. While the hammocks do sway whenever Apakku walks around a town to graze, or moves to the next town, visitors who swear by this inn call it part of the charm. A few of the inn's specialties are in the following table.





sc	Item
7	Slow-cooked braised lamb with spiced radish and cabbage
4	Sugar-dusted pancakes with fruit, eggs, and fresh cream
2	Toasted millet and green milk tea
1	Sweet pastry dough, braided and deep-fried.
10	Imported wine (bottle)

## COMMERCE

There are three major centers of commerce in Apakku, with the Mercantile sectors clustering on the tail and stair slopes near the Crown.

## ZARAKHAAR

The Zarakhaar district near the top of the stair slope features a labyrinthine, boisterous open-air market built from the rolling stalls that merchants bring onto the great turtle's back. The scent of fresh vegetables, salted meats, imported spices, and fragrant wines war with the cries of vendors vying for shoppers' attention. Permanent storefronts owned by the major guilds who form the Zarakhaar District Association surround the massive town square, where they lease spaces for stalls to the lucky vendors they choose.

The head of the Zarakhaar District Association is the halfling manager of a national book importer with branches across Kandiff: Phrixus Elman. Phrixus is elderly but far from infirm. He has a reputation as being unmoving, and despite his diminutive stature, he gives off a towering aura. Even when he is not a person's employer, having him call for a meeting gives the awkward impression that he wants to fire you.

The Zarakhaar market is a hot bed for trade in goods both large and small. If a person can carry it or promise it, someone in this market will sell it to you. Let the buyer beware, however: not all salespeople are honest. Con artists and pickpockets love the chaotic atmosphere as much as merchants do.

Large stores with branches across Kandiff will all have dependable stalls here, restocked everywhere Apakku stops. But if someone wants to see the offerings from merchants in local towns, they only need to look a little harder. Small vendors hoping to make a name for themselves on a national level see Zarakhaar as the best place to start, although woe betide those who fail to meet the District Association's expectations. For vendors, this is a cutthroat market with few second chances.

## MATENKH AUCTION HOUSE

The auction house is a building constructed like a vault on the tail end of the Crown, and guarded twice as well. The auction house employs trustworthy guards to watch the doors and transport the merchandise, and they keep experts on staff to assess whether merchandise brought to their door is worth the asking price. From consumable goods like rare elixirs to magical artifacts, they stake their sizeable reputation on assuring the client that they have gotten what they paid for.

Messengers for the auction house seek out items for sale throughout the world, and they board Apakku in every region disguised as ordinary citizens. This is how they acquire most of the stock for their monthly auctions. However, if someone comes to them with an item of particular interest, the staff of Matenkh will assess the treasure for sale. If they have an interest, they will name a price the seller may take or leave.

Every month, Matenkh runs one of their regular auctions. There is a deposit of 100 sc per person to enter, which the auction house will return if that person does not make a purchase. If they do make a purchase, the 100 sc deposit will count towards the total value spent. Quantities available are limited, such that players will have only one opportunity to buy each item.

Because this is an auction, if a player wishes to bid on something, they must make a Wisdom (Perception) check to hear the winning bid. Use the winning bid table and the standard price table to determine the price to beat, and ask the player to name a higher bid or withdraw.

DC	Winning Bid
1-8	3x Standard Price
9-12	2x Standard Price
13-17	1.5x Standard Price
18-23	Standard Price
24+	Standard Price – 10%

Item	Standard Price (sc)
Common Potion	50
Uncommon Potion	250
Rare Potion	500
Ritual Spell Scroll, no prerequisite	50
Spell scroll (2nd level or lower)	Spell level x 200
Spell Scroll (4th level or lower)	Spell level x 250
Common Magic Item	400
Uncommon Magic Item	900



The auction house may also be willing to act as an importer for respected citizens who wish to purchase the goods they acquire regularly. An adventurer with at least 16 Aristocratic Goodwill in Kandiff who has previously done business with the auction house can place a special request with the management. For rare or epic items, it will take 1d12 x10 days to receive the shipment.

## FARM EXCHANGE

On the surface, this is the livestock-trading market within Apakku, although no actual livestock are present. This long wooden building near the top of the tail slope houses salesmen who have come to negotiate for single animals or entire herds, using long strings of beads marked with the seal for a farmer or herder. Animals of particular value may have a signature bead with their name or likeness. The animals themselves are in the fields at the feet of the great turtle, and purchase of a token here allows a traveler to claim a horse, cow, or sheep from the guards tending the flock when they leave Apakku.

In the back rooms behind the horse trading, the heroes might find less legal commerce, as the District Association for the area, which also owns the Farm Exchange outright, has strong ties to the Underworld. The individual farmers and herders who come to trade rarely do dirty business, but the amount of money changing hands in the Farm Exchange daily provides good cover for a robust black market.

## CULTURAL HIGHLIGHTS

### TEMPLE OF IMMORT

On the foremost ridge of the head slope, as close as anyone can come to the actual head of Apakku herself, devotees of the turtle god maintain a shrine of polished black jade. The entrance is fashioned out of large hexagonal slabs fitted together into a dome to resemble a turtle's shell.

The shrine opens in the rear to look out on Apakku's head. Those with the privilege of entering this sanctum are residents who have devoted their lives to service of the great turtle, known as Dreamers of Apakku. Very few citizens of Kandiff in the modern day can boast that Apakku has spoken directly into their minds. While they have all heard stories of the great turtle visiting the dreams of corrupt officials to stare down at them in cold disappointment, to most this remains a fantasy. The Dreamers of Apakku are their closest link with the great turtle.

Once a day, one of the devotees will ring the bell outside the temple, and any who wish to hear one of the Dreamers speak may come sit in the plaza outside the shrine. A few people come every day, but most come once a week or once a month, when it suits their schedule. The dreams these adepts relate are often fanciful parables where Apakku does not speak, but instead leads the dreamer through a series of symbolic situations, prompting the dreamer to interact with them. It is considered bad manners to ask what these dreams mean, with the crowds expecting listeners to seek meaning within themselves.

In exchange for offerings of food or money, an individual may have one of the Dreamers of Apakku tell their fortune. The Dreamers do this by having the person pour wheat stalks out of a tortoise shell to create a design they interpret. If having one of the Dreamers tell a fortune, roll 1d8, and use the associated concepts to define the character's fortune.

#### 1d8 Fortune

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Light, warmth, abundance               |
| 2 | Openness, joy, fruition                |
| 3 | Parting, separation, consumption       |
| 4 | Pressure, destruction, excitement      |
| 5 | Gentleness, obedience, invisible power |
| 6 | Depth, crisis, uncontrolled events     |
| 7 | Stillness, height, achievement         |
| 8 | Darkness, cold, potential              |





## TEMPLE OF A'RL'NG

The devotees of the archfae A'rl'ng, patron of all equine beasts, built their temple on the tail slope in sight of both the Farm Exchange and the many herds that would gather behind Apakku. As one of the most prominent deities in Kandiff, this temple sees a great many worshipers, especially among people who hope to find a good horse at the Farm Exchange or find a good price from a reputable buyer.

From the outside, the temple is very unassuming. It is a natural wooden structure marked only with a horseshoe over the main door, maintained well but hard to differentiate from a regular house except for the number of people coming in and out. Newcomers to Apakku often need someone to tell them what this building is, although adepts in the service of A'rl'ng will be able to tell.

Inside, there is no mistaking this for anything but a temple to A'rl'ng. Murals devoted to the archfae cover every wall, and continue onto the ceiling. Statues of A'rl'ng and key figures or symbols from the Shibmar Conclave stand in focal points throughout the rooms. Any place a person might choose to sit or stand offers a reflection of the archfae's exemplar of the free spirit in the untamed horse.

Unlike the Temple of Immort, there are no regular lessons here, and the adepts give no public speeches. The devotees encourage worshipers to walk through the space and admire the different pieces of art. They offer conversation, but believe that each person will find an image within the different visions of A'rl'ng that speaks to their individual needs. Likewise, visitors to the temple are encouraged to talk to each other, and to leave offerings of food, flower garlands, or money with the different statues. If they are so moved, they may even create a statue of their own, or paint on any surface in the temple, as this is how all the existing art came to be.

Regular attendees find the joyful, convivial atmosphere freeing. Within the temple, many constraints of everyday society do not apply, which means it is common there for strangers to begin conversations, or for someone to yell, laugh, or cry suddenly with no warning. Many say that inspiration is always easy to find here, although the adepts will tell you the answers are all inside you already, waiting to run free.

## APOTHECARIES' GUILD

Kandiff has always been humble compared to other nations, but their expertise in the medical field has increased notably since Apakku became a critical defensive line against vampire incursions. The Apothecaries' Guild maintains dormitories, ingredient stores, and laboratories in a compound near where the gap slope meets the head slope. Recently, they have increased the security on this compound to protect from direct attacks and infiltration by spies. Their newest specializations are anti-vampire weapons and treatments for victims of vampires.

The head of the Apothecaries' Guild is Anais Udor, an overworked middle-aged kleppin woman with the features of a field mouse who is particularly proud of her large ears, although she needs to put them under a cap during experiments. She moved to Apakku to advance the science of medicine. In moments of frustration, she will often mention using mind-altering drugs to cut her way through the endless morass of bureaucracy, but would never actually do it. She owns a house, but she spends most days in her laboratory, and may even sleep there. The easiest way to find her is when she makes a report to the Academy, or to ask for access to the Apothecaries' Guild.

## LIVING LIBRARY

While the Archives retain written documents of every word, written or spoken, in official business, the Living Library prides itself on remembering Kandiff's history and sharing it. The apprentices hired here train to become Raconteurs, learning oral history from their masters until they can repeat the stories flawlessly and perform them for public crowds.

The final test for an apprentice is to create a new story relating a major event of present times. If the other masters judge that it meets their standards for historical importance, accuracy to events, and entertainment value, the apprentice becomes a new master. They will then all learn the story, which will enter the oral tradition.

The library has a proud place on the Crown of the turtle's shell, toward the stair side. Inside, countless small chambers for private recitation practice surround the main auditorium like a honeycomb. On request, the library will happily assign you an apprentice or a master who will sit with you in one of these small rooms and recite any history you ask to hear. Every Raconteur would rather perform for an audience than an empty room as long as they must go over their stories regularly or risk forgetting them.

Visitors would be wise to remember, however, they are going to hear a story, not to ask a question and get an answer. Those are very different things.

Donations are optional but encouraged. A generous donation may make the difference between sitting with a master or with an apprentice.

## AMPHITHEATER

One of the key public grounds on the Crown, toward the gap side of the Capital, is a large stadium amphitheater that was one of the earliest experiments in modular architecture in Apakku. It was also the first ambitious large building designed specifically for their city carried on the great turtle's back, with architects designing concepts for construction generations before Apakku would grow large enough to implement the full design, and adding pieces slowly over successive years until it became the colossal icon it is today.



While far from the seamless construction available to modern builders, tessellating foundation blocks and stacking sections of walls and benches create an engineering marvel. The building, although it can seat 50,000 at full capacity, needs only one day for trained artisans to separate the sections and move them from one location to another. Or, if staying in the same location, they can reconfigure the amphitheater into any specified configuration in about two hours. The most common shapes are the oval open stadium, a proscenium auditorium, an open-air bandshell, amphitheater seating with no backing, and a stage in the round, but some sports or artistic performances have special requests.

When not booked for an official performance, the maintenance staff will leave the grounds configured in amphitheater style. It is always open to the public, and singers, actors, or entertainers of any stripe are permitted to enter the Amphitheater any time it is unbooked to put on an impromptu performance. People regularly stop by to see who has stepped up to the stage, and an appreciative crowd may offer tips or the opportunity for future work.

## MILITARY TRAINING GROUNDS

The Bureau of the Military is currently one of the most powerful bureaus in the Baishin due to the vampire threat, and recently acquired enough building lots on the tail end of the gap slope to double the size of their training grounds. In addition to regular drills, the Bureau of the Military develops and trains their anti-vampire techniques here. The increased incentives to join the military have resulted in more recruits, although most of the new soldiers have not yet seen real combat. They are certain the more terrifying stories from veteran soldiers must be sensationalized fiction.

The Bureau of Civil Affairs and the Bureau of Procedure helped with the relocation of citizens: “Emergency Redistricting,” as it was called, ensuring that all residents were able to move to equivalent building lots on the gap slope or the tail slope when the military needed the space. However, the move was not popular.

Visitors to the city marvel at the resiliency Apakku has shown in keeping the vampires at bay, but residents sometimes wonder if the threat is really as bad as people claim. They question whether so much of the budget and so many resources need to go towards fighting vampires when they themselves have never met a vampire. The need for these expenditures, explaining how other people are suffering and that those who are able need to take decisive action to stop this threat before disaster happens, is a common topic for essays posted on the turtle trails in recent days.

Just as common are essays arguing that Apakku must budget resources for critical infrastructure, like aqueduct maintenance and waste disposal, to prevent the real threat of disease rather than worrying about the potential threat of vampires. Several people in government and experts in the fight against vampires believe that these arguments may originate with spies working for the vampire forces who wish to demoralize and undermine Apakku’s defenses. Nevertheless, some citizens find them persuasive.

## ENCOUNTERS IN APAKKU

Use the following random tables of encounters to create events for adventurers while they spend time in Apakku. The options under “Dangerous Encounters” could lead to negative consequences. Actual fights are rare, and will attract attention quickly, but these could still represent a minor risk to property, safety, or reputation. “Everyday Encounters” may delay the heroes or cause a distraction, but are more likely to be neutral events or provide a positive outcome.

### DANGEROUS ENCOUNTERS

1d8	Encounter
1	Con Artist
2-3	Robbery
4-5	I, Spy
6-7	District Trouble
8	Turtle Prophet

### CON ARTIST

A man in the uniform of the Gazar Khyan (use the stats of a **veteran**) stops the heroes on the street and asks them to come with him to answer a few questions. He gives the name Ular Bamad, but his actual identity is Marcade Xiao, a notorious figure in the Underworld. The heroes may make an Intelligence or Wisdom check of DC 19 with relevant bonuses to notice that this man is not a legitimate officer. Characters local to Apakku or who have been residents for more than five years should receive +2 to this roll. The insignia on his sleeve is the wrong color, he did not present a stamped authority document to detain the heroes, as he is required to do, and he does not have a second officer present, which is also required.

If the heroes accompany him, they also do not go to the main Gazar Khyan office. He takes them to a nondescript building close to the Zarakhaar, with a brass sign by the door engraved with the words “Gazar Khyan Zarakhaar District Branch,” where each person must wait in a separate room. This is not a legitimate branch, and the sign does not have the Oligarchy’s seal.

If the party flees, the man will not pursue them. If they accompany him, he will attempt to intimidate them.



He speaks to each member of the party in turn, asking them for identifying information, details about their backgrounds, and information on where they have been in Apakku. If anyone insists on knowing what this is about, he presses harder on claiming that reports place the heroes near the Farm Exchange, accepting stolen merchandise. The interrogator insists on hearing proof that this is not true, but no proof presented will be sufficient to convince him.

After several frustrating hours, he will leave the heroes in isolation, and return two hours later with an irritable disposition. He will explain that his supervisors say he cannot detain the heroes without further evidence. The only option he has is to fine them each 500 sc for loitering. He yells at the heroes to go downstairs, pay the clerk at the front desk, sign the paperwork for the fine, and go. He hopes he never sees their faces again.

The heroes may make another Intelligence or Wisdom check of DC 12 if they are still in the office for someone to realize that the Gazar Khyan would neither assess guilt nor collect fines. They would send evidence to the Bureau of the Judiciary for assessment, and the Bureau of Accounting would collect any fines owed.

If the heroes realize that this is not a real Gazar Khyan interrogation, they may leave at any time. The con artist will protest, but will not pursue or fight them. If they hand over any money before leaving, they will not be able to recover it. Any information they give the con artist, including their name, background, signature, and activities in Apakku may be information the con artist sells to the Underworld. This may result in the real Gazar Khyan taking an interest because of a false criminal trail.

## ROBBERY

While walking in a low-traffic area, someone (use the stats of a **bandit**) grabs the party member with the lowest Dexterity from behind. This person is a wiry twenty-something in worn out clothes that hang loosely on their frame. They do not appear to have had access to regular food or a place to bathe. After getting the attention of the party, the thief states that if you turn over your money, no one will get hurt.

Upon reaching one half of its maximum hit points, the bandit will flee. If the adventurers break free and run, the bandit will not pursue. The adventurers may give the bandit at least 50 sc to avoid a fight.

If the heroes choose to try talking the bandit out of the robbery, they learn that the bandit lived in a rented building lot on the tail slope, where they have been caring for their ailing mother. After a recent late rent payment, their District Association took all of their possessions, including their home, and evicted them from the building lot. Helping them find the right contacts in government to take action will also result in the bandit and their mother entering a new housing program. Should the heroes need a favor in the future they offer to assist.

## I, SPY

A distraught young lady (use stats for an **assassin**) in medical attire nearly runs into you carrying a bag marked as containing hazardous biological materials from the Military Training Grounds. After apologizing profusely, she insists that she cannot allow you to leave without going through a medical checkup, as the contents of the bag are contaminated samples she must take to the Apothecaries' Guild. She would take you immediately, but she dropped her identification token in the bag by accident, and now she is locked out.

This is Marissa, a halfling spy working for Palorva. Her goal is to gain information about anti-vampire activities in Apakku.

She offers to make sure that nothing contaminated has affected the heroes if they are able to help her get past the front door, so she can take the bag to the appropriate sterilization facilities. If the heroes offer to take her to a government official who will check her credentials and issue her a new identification token, she will explain that it is "not that kind of problem" and find a reason to leave, while stressing that the heroes should wash thoroughly. If the heroes challenge her story directly, she will pull a short blade from the bag and initiate a fight. At one half of her maximum hit points, she will flee. If the heroes flee, she will not pursue.

If the heroes choose to assist her, they may be able to convince the guards at the Apothecaries' Guild to let her pass with an Intelligence or Charisma check of DC 24. However, this character is a spy looking for information on Apakku's anti-vampire capabilities. Getting her access to the Apothecaries' Guild may result in more problems in the future.

## DISTRICT TROUBLE

A representative of the local District Association approaches to inform the heroes that they are in violation of district codes. If they have their own house in the district, this may be something about the condition of the house or the appearance of the property. If the heroes do not have their own house, this may be any small charge, such as littering, openly carrying a weapon, running too fast, posting notices in an area where that is not allowed, eating in public, or any other minor nuisance.

The heroes may choose to accept the charge, and perform 2d6 hours of community service or pay a fine of 50 sc to the District Association. Alternatively, they may choose to contest the charge, and bring the case before the Bureau of the Judiciary.



Convincing the Justice Official assessing the claim that the charge is false will require an Intelligence or Charisma check of DC 22. Heroes may pay for assistance at the Administration at a rate of 10 sc per hour. For each hour of assistance, the heroes receive a +3 bonus to this check.

If the heroes convince the Justice Official, the District Association must drop the charges and reimburse Administration fees up to 50 sc. If the Justice Official sides with the District Association, the heroes will owe double the previous fine or number of community service hours.

## TURTLE PROPHET

A wizened old man (use stats of a **priest**) in green and black robes with bare feet writes on one of the turtle trails with chalk, "Apakku is here. Heed the warnings of Great Apakku. Mortals shall touch the sky, only on the turtle's back. The death of one is the death of all." Similar chalk writings appear throughout the city. Everyone sees them, and eventually everyone sees the man who writes them.

If the heroes do not immediately leave, the Turtle Prophet will approach them and ask if Great Apakku has spoken to them. He is honestly curious if Apakku has spoken in the dreams of the heroes, not asking a metaphorical question. He has no affiliation with the Temple of Immort, and no one in Apakku knows where he came from.

The Turtle Prophet is harmless, coherent, and peaceful, but zealous. Given the opportunity, he will continue to speak to anyone who will listen until they physically leave, ignoring all social indicators that someone is trying to end a conversation. He wants nothing but someone to talk to, but will happily go on his way when the adventurers say goodbye.

## KESS

A dwindling shadow of a nation, Kess occupies a strip of land between the eastern mountains and the Great Chasm. Through unknown machinations, Palorva has cast a powerful ritual over Kess; it is always nighttime in this nation.

The more well-resourced towns across Kess have well-lit primary thoroughfares that are illuminated by lamp posts bearing glass bulbs from Yodvan. Side streets might be illuminated by kerosene lamps or might be in complete darkness.

## THE RAVAGED NATION

Thanks to years without sunlight, the vast majority of plant life in Kess has died off. What plant matter does survive is tough, leafless, gray, and spiny, surviving off of the scant warmth of the earth rather than the sunlight. Fungal matter grows without too much difficulty in this region.

Most wild animals have died or migrated away from Kess. Some survive off of mushrooms and other fungi, so a small but savage ecosystem of wildlife does persist despite the eternal night.

Exploring Kess is incredibly depressing for most folk. When the heroes spend a day on the road in Kess, they must make DC 14 Sanity checks, becoming demoralized for the next 24 hours on a failure. A demoralized creature suffers a -1 penalty to its AC and saving throws.

## KESS AT A GLANCE

All power in Kess is consolidated in Lorvan, the capital. Throughout the nation, the following information is true to varying degrees. For example, while the academic information throughout Kess is primarily controlled by Palorva and utilized as a propaganda machine, the occasional unsanctioned, secret school might exist in a peripheral town that Palorva has overlooked.

## ACADEMIC

Palorva ensures that the serfs that work her fields are too overworked and underfed to spend any energy on academic ventures. She has burned hundreds of books and replaced them with her own alternate history books, so those among the merchant caste who are able to read are told a very different historical account praising Palorva as a saintly hero.

## ARISTOCRATIC AND POLITICAL

Any person or family with a claim to aristocracy was impaled while still living and then slowly drained of blood. Those who are still alive and think they might have a claim to nobility make absolutely no such proclamations. Palorva's word is law.

## MERCANTILE AND TRADE

The merchant caste of Kess is forced to keep set prices for their wares. No market competition is allowed under the watchful eye of Palorva.

Merchants that do try to offer deviant prices do so at great risk to their own lives. Several feeble black market dealings can be found in any town and across Lorvan, but they are sniffed out and shut down on a regular basis.

In order to bring more raw goods into Kess, Palorva's army extorts other nations across Norspina.

## MILITANT

Palorva's powerful military includes various trained monstrosities, numerous fiends from Inferno and Hell, **Kamelot knights** from Pendragon's court, and countless hellspawn. This powerful army maintains brutal authoritarian control over both Kess in particular and Norspina more broadly.



## RELIGIOUS

No religious practice is allowed under Palorva's regime, and all houses of worship have long since been burned to the ground. The ground has then been doused in noxious acid.

In private, many common folk entreat Tovare, Rasheen, and the whole Celestial Council for deliverance.

## SOCIAL

Kess is a strictly communist society, with Palorva and her secret police ensuring that wealth and resources are distributed with absolute, unyielding equality, household by household based on the number of residents living therein. This leads to untold suffering, and when possible, serfs and merchants will quietly offer one another the goods and services that they need to subsist. If the secret police find out, punishment is swiftly forthcoming.

## UNDERWORLD

What passes as crime in Kess might pass as common decency in any other nation. In addition to secretly offering one another extra food and clothing as able, some among the serf and merchant caste are also planning a rebellion against Palorva. These plans are often found out, leading to swift and brutal punishment.

## LORVAN

The capital city of Kess is nestled in the craggy foothills of the East Range. To an outside visitor, Lorvan looks quite splendid. In the neighborhoods closest to Palorva's Palace, grand stone buildings in the gothic style overlook wide, clean streets that are kept brightly illuminated with Yodvan's glass bulbs. These large stone buildings contain living quarters, taverns, and government offices wherein Palorva's servants carefully oversee the administration of Lorvan. Farther out from the city center, Lorvan is less impressive. The buildings are not so elegant and have an air of crumbling decay about them. Apartments sag in disrepair, plague rats skitter through the alleys, and the streets are dark in the absence of any artificial light save that which the denizens of this desolate area carry themselves.

## A CITY OF MISERIES

The capital has nothing in the way of entertainment. Aside from some lodgings, some inns and taverns with regulated prices, and a few shops that are equally regulated, Lorvan has nothing to offer except heartache.

## THE SECRET POLICE

Palorva has an extensive network of secret police that operate in Lorvan and brutally suppress any opposition. The secret police are divided into three groups: The Incisors, the Fangs, and the Molars.

The Incisors are what most think of when they hear the term "secret police." They dwell covertly among the other civilians of Lorvan and report any untoward activity to Palorva. The existence of the Incisors is well-known and keeps the population in a state of constant fear. Anyone might be a member of the Incisors, and if you say the wrong thing to the wrong person, it could spell your death.

The Fangs are a group of **assassins** and **thugs** that enforce the law or quietly eliminate people that the Incisors have deemed problematic.

The Molars are a group of skeletons led by wraiths that dwell in the catacombs beneath the city. Whenever the Fangs kill a target, they find the nearest entrance to the catacombs and hand off the corpse to the Molars, who strip the corpse of its flesh and bring the new skeleton to one of the wraiths beneath the city to be reanimated. The new skeleton immediately becomes a new member of the Molars.

## THE CATACOMBS

A vast network of catacombs sprawls underneath Lorvan in a maze-like tangle. In order to enter the palace, the heroes will likely need to explore the catacombs. Details on the catacombs can be found in the campaign narrative; see Chapter 8.

## TOWNS IN KESS

The heroes may visit small towns in Kess on their way to Lorvan. These towns are Havens but offer little else in the way of benefit for the heroes. While in these towns, they may experience any of the urban encounters on the following tables. They may also learn one secret about Lorvan (roll on the following table). If they seek out any information about Lorvan, have each hero make a Wisdom check and take their average. On a roll of 8 or lower, an Incisor overhears them and sends the Fangs after them. The heroes must face a Fang Strike encounter 2d12 hours later.



### 1d6 Rumor or Secret

- 1 The catacombs underneath the city connect to Palorva's Palace.
- 2 Palorva employs three major facets of her police force. Incisors are her secret police and informants. Fangs are her assassins. Molars clean up the bodies.
- 3 Don't trust anyone, or the secret police known as the Incisors will turn you in.
- 4 Palorva is planning something terrifying. Her notes are in her study inside the palace.
- 5 Palorva releases plague rats in the city to keep the population culled.
- 6 Getting through the catacombs requires someone to willingly sacrifice himself.

## WILDERNESS ENCOUNTERS

As the heroes travel through Kess, they will have to contend with a savage landscape. Roll on the table below to determine how many exploration and combat encounters the heroes will need to face on a given day.

1d6	Exploration	Combat
1	1d4	1d8
2-3	1d6	1d6
4-6	1d4	1d4

## EXPLORATION ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter Type
2	Quicksand
3-5	Navigating a Ravine
6-7	Abandoned Farmstead
8	Thunderstorm
9	Destroyed Wagon
10-12	Desecrated Ground

## QUICKSAND

hero with the lowest Wisdom score stumbles into quicksand. They may make a DC 20 Strength or Intelligence saving throw; on a failure, they escape the quicksand but gain one level of exhaustion. If they fail, they also lose 2 rations or 1 weapon of their choice. Regardless of whether the hero succeeded or failed, they gain +1 Fear.

## NAVIGATING A RAVINE

Each hero must make two skill checks in order to descend a ravine and climb up the other side. For each hero, the sum total of these skill checks must be at least 40. Heroes may use Strength, Dexterity, Constitution, Intelligence, or Wisdom check if they can make a reasonable pitch as to why. Any hero whose sum rolls are lower than 40 takes 2d6 falling damage and gains 1 level of exhaustion.

## ABANDONED FARMSTEAD

The heroes venture across a farmstead that has obviously been attacked. Smoke still trails from certain portions of the house and the barn, though there do not appear to be any active fires. Heroes that explore the wreckage can find the slaughtered remains of farmhands and livestock.

Any hero may make a DC 20 Wisdom (Survival) check, finding each of the following items on a success:

- 1d10 arrows
- 1d8 rations that are still good
- 1d20 sc
- 1 pitchfork (use the stats of a spear, but it cannot be thrown)

If the heroes attempt to take a short or long rest in the vicinity of the farmstead, they must face the Fiend and its Minions random encounter.

## THUNDERSTORM

A massive thunderstorm sweeps across the plains and hills. If the heroes do not seek shelter, all nonmagical fires are extinguished and 10% of their rations spoil. Furthermore, each hero gains 1 level of exhaustion as they are drenched to the bone.

If the heroes do seek shelter, any number of heroes must make Wisdom (Survival) skill checks. Take the average of each check that was made; on a DC of 18 or higher, the heroes find shelter, do not gain exhaustion, and avoid their rations spoiling.

## DESTROYED WAGON

The heroes come across a wagon that has clearly been destroyed violently. Its wooden wheels are shattered, its canvas shredded. Any sign of its rider or its horses is long gone, though old blood stains the ground.

Heroes may make a DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check. Any hero that succeeds finds one item as determined by 1d4:

1. 1d12 arrows or crossbow bolts (based on the hero's weapon of choice)
2. 1d6 rations that are still good
3. 2d20 sc
4. 1 buckler, 1 dagger, and 1 knife

If the heroes attempt to take a short or long rest in the vicinity of the destroyed wagon, they must face the Wolf Megapack combat encounter.



## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

Any wild animals that the heroes face in Kess are ravenously hungry and will fight until dead.

2d6	Encounter Type
2	Desperate Bandits
3-5	Wandering Vampire
6-8	Fiend and its Minions
9-10	Wolf Megapack
11-12	Pack of Werewolves

### DESPERATE BANDITS

A party of bandits waylay the heroes and attempt to steal all of the heroes' food and coin. These bandits will let the heroes pass if each hero pays them 400 sc. Otherwise, they will attack. As desperate as they are, they will fight until killed. A hero may make a DC 20 Charisma check to dissuade them from doing this; if successful, then the bandits their AC is reduced by 1 for the first round of combat.

There are 2 **bandit captains** per hero plus 2 **veterans**.

### WANDERING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a **vampire** that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to one half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully.

### FIEND AND ITS MINIONS

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Kess for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the following table.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any bellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## WOLF MEGAPACK

A massive pack of wolves sniffs out the party. Using **dire wolves** and **wolves**, design this encounter to make an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter. These wolves fight tactfully and will target whoever they determine to have the lowest defenses first.

### PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.

## URBAN ENCOUNTERS

When the heroes are in a town or in Lorvan, you may use these urban encounters to add variety or urgency to the heroes' day.

2d6	Encounter Type
2	Plague Rats
3-5	Blood Drive
6-8	Incisor Interrogation
9-10	Fang Strike
11-12	Insurgency



## PLAGUE RATS

The heroes hear screams from some nearby townsfolk. **Plague rats** are in the alley! If they are not killed and disinfected quickly, there could be an outbreak.

Have each hero make an unmodified d20 roll, then take the average. If they rolled below an 8, then these are actually **deathplague rats**; add +6 to the d6 roll when determining what infection they carry.

There are 2d4 rats. They carry a disease determined by a roll on the table below.

1d6	Disease
1	Boil Plague
2	Common Cold
3	Pneumonia
4	Typhoid
5	Tetanus
6	Polio
7	Bubonic Plague
8	Anthrax
9	Leprosy
10	Rabies
11	Tuberculosis
12	Influenza

If the heroes do not successfully kill and disinfect these rats, then there is an outbreak of the relevant disease.

## BLOOD DRIVE

The heroes see a line of commoners in a town square. An overweight vampire lounges in a chair in the center of the square. As the heroes watch, a commoner approaches the vampire, exposes their neck, and lets the vampire drink from them for a few moments. Then, once the commoner is clearly enfeebled, the vampire pays the commoner 1 sc.

The heroes may be fed upon to gain 1 sc.

If the heroes attack the vampire, roll on the table below to determine the vampire's stats. It will fight until reduced to one half their maximum hit points and then retreat if able.

1d4	Vampire Type
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## INCISOR INTERROGATION

While in a tavern or marketplace, a commoner strikes up conversation with the heroes. The commoner, actually a member of the Incisors, tries to get the heroes to confess that they are here to kill Palorva. If the heroes do, then they must face a Fang Strike encounter 2d12 hours later.

## FANG STRIKE

Using the following creatures, design a difficult encounter. The Fangs are intelligent and will try to ambush the heroes or poison their drinks before attacking them.

**Fangs:** Assassin, Kamelot Knight, Energy Vampire, Mage, Scout, Vampire Courtier, Veteran

## INSURGENCY

The heroes happen upon a group of commoners that are planning an insurgency. The commoners stop talking once the heroes approach, but the hero with the highest Wisdom score overheard what they were planning. The heroes may choose to participate or to ignore the commoners.

If they do participate, they must complete two Fang Strike encounters. The Fangs do not get a chance to set up an ambush during these combats.

Then they must fight a fiend or vampire determined by rolling on the following table. Add hellspawn, **imps**, **sanguine flames**, and **spineclots** of any CR to make adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically difficult or deadly encounter.

1d8	Vampire Type
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Erinyes
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil
5	Vampire Reaver
6	Vampspider
7	Vrock
8	Vampire

These encounters take place in the city streets and in the government buildings. If this occurs in Lorvan, then the insurgency is brutally put down and all commoners that participated are executed 4d12 hours later. If it occurs in another town, then the insurgency is brutally put down and all commoners that participated are executed 3d4 days later.



# LESMISHAN

The nation of Lesmishan is a pleasant place to live, for the wealthy and ruthless owners of the banks and the mines. For everyone else, however, it is harsh, grueling, and full of injustice. Nearly anything is legal if you have the funds to pay the fines, and the powerful are not afraid to take advantage of that.

## BRIBERY IN LESMISHAN

In Lesmishan, money talks. During combat encounters in Lesmishan, the heroes may attempt to bribe their opponents to end the fight. If the heroes offer their opponents at least 100 sc, they may make a DC 20 Charisma check. The DC is reduced by 1 for each additional 100 sc the heroes offer. For example, if the heroes attempt to bribe their opponents by offering 1000 sc, the DC of the check will be 10. For monsters with the Mythic trait, the initial bribe must be at least 1000 sc, and the DC is reduced by 1 for each additional 500 sc the heroes offer.

## LESMISHAN RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

The following tables describe social and combat-based encounters that the heroes might become involved in during their time in Lesmishan. Many of these encounters provide clues as to possible quests within Lesmishan, and if the heroes seem to be stuck on what to do next, it may be worth selecting one of those encounters rather than rolling for a random result.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2	Underminer Crew
3-4	Recruiter
5-9	Confiscated Goods
10	Overheard Rumors
11	A Group of Miners
12	A Cursed Contract

### UNDERMINER CREW

A group of agents from the Underminers is curious about the party's business within the city. If the party chooses to tell the agents about their goal of removing the restrictions on the silver trade, the agents will express that their supervisors might be able to assist, and provide the party with an address and a meeting time. If the players attend the meeting, see the "Undermining the Bankers".

### RECRUITER

A recruiter is attempting to convince passers-by to sign on with the Lesmishan mining crews. They describe a number of persuasive benefits - very few of which are truly available to the majority of the miners. From an outsider's perspective, the recruiter's pitch is blatant propaganda - but may still be useful in understanding the political climate within Lesmishan.

### CONFISCATED GOODS

A group of debt collectors is confiscating goods from a nearby artisan's stall within the market. If the party chooses to intervene, they may either attempt to pay off the artisan's debt (1d10x100 sc) or fight the debt collectors. If they choose to fight, use the "Debt Collectors" combat encounter.

If the party successfully drives off the debt collectors, either by paying the debt themselves or by fighting, the artisan will express gratitude, grant them a small reward and promise to spread the word of the party's help to their friends. The party gains Recreational Gear worth up to half the value of the artisan's debt, and +1 Goodwill amongst the citizens of Lesmishan.

### OVERHEARD RUMORS

Have one party member make a Wisdom (Perception) check. The party overhears one of the following rumors, determined by the roll. If the rumor rolled is one the party has already received, choose a rumor from one of the previous rows.

Skill Roll	Successes
Less than 8	There is a secret order of miners that are training an army of thieves.
8-11	Some of the recruiters are really there to keep an eye on suspicious activity on the streets, as they suspect that a group is working against the bankers.
12-16	A thief attempting to rob one of the banks had their hand bitten off by a monster hiding in a treasure chest.
17-22	A man named Lucien Ironstead is offering loans with much lower interest rates than the other bankers. (See "Side Quest: Deal with a Devil")
23 or more	Many of those who have signed contracts with Lucien Ironstead have begun to have strange dreams of a battlefield full of fiends. (See "Side Quest: Deal with a Devil")



## A GROUP OF MINERS

The party comes across a group of miners heading home from the tavern. If one of the heroes attempts to speak with them about current events, the hero must make a DC 15 Charisma check. The hero automatically succeeds on the check if they have at least 5 Goodwill with the citizens of Lesmishan. On a success, the miners will explain that things have been more tense than usual within the mines lately, as they have been expected to work longer hours with less pay. There is a group from one of the nations south of Lesmishan that has promised to aid them, but the miners are concerned that this will merely draw the wrath of the bankers - essentially, they will cooperate with the plan, but only once it shows signs of success (See "Side Quest: Undermining the Bankers").

## A CURSED CONTRACT

One of the locals requests the party's aid in determining what is unusual about the contract they signed. They claim to be getting a headache whenever they try to read it. A DC 17 Intelligence (Religion) or Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal that the contract was created using fiendish magic. The individual who requested the party's aid will inform them that they made the contract with Lucien Ironstead (See "Side Quest: Deal with a Devil").

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d4	Encounter
2-3	Thieves
4-5	Debt Collectors
6-7	Guards
8	Infernal Influences

## THIEVES

10 **bandit captains** attempt to rob the party. Upon incapacitating or killing them, the party finds 2d10 sc on each of their opponents. If the party attempts to investigate further, the thieves do not appear to be affiliated with the Underminers.

## DEBT COLLECTORS

Eight **veterans** are harassing the locals in an attempt to collect money they claim the locals owe to the bankers. Upon incapacitating or killing the debt collectors, the party finds 1d100 sc on each of their defeated opponents.

## GUARDS

The guards within Lesmishan are known to be cruel and quick to anger. Whether the party aggravates them, intervenes in another conflict, or is simply in the wrong place at the wrong time, use the stats for 2 **veterans** and 2d4 **berserkers**.

## INFERNAL INFLUENCES

It is not uncommon, within Lesmishan, to see dangerous-looking individuals intimidating someone into paying back a debt. It is, however, uncommon to see 3 **vrocks** taking the role of debt collectors.

If the party defeats the Vrocks, the commoner being threatened will be very grateful, granting the party +2 Goodwill with the citizens of Lesmishan and explaining that the debt that was being collected is owed to Lucien Ironstead (See "Side Quest: Deal with a Devil").

## POINTS OF INTEREST

Though life in Lesmishan is often difficult, that has not stopped the local residents from finding ways to enjoy themselves. The following points of interest may be suggested by the residents if the party asks about notable places to visit within the region.

## THE ECHOING CAVERN

An abandoned mine shaft that opens into a larger cave. The shape of the cave creates strange echoing effects, and many of the locals gather there frequently for casual musical performances, featuring anyone who wishes to show off their talents. Party members who play instruments may decide to perform there, earning +2 Goodwill with the locals of Lesmishan regardless of how well their performance goes.

## THE RISEN CANARY

The Risen Canary is a local tavern popular with the miners. If the party visits the tavern for food or drinks, use the Overheard Rumors social encounter to determine what they might hear during their visit.

## DEALS AND CONTRACTS

For the powerful and influential in Lesmishan, the only thing prized as highly as wealth is the art of exploiting one's subordinates. The bankers and bureaucrats of Lesmishan brutally shut down anyone who attempts to offer fair deals to those looking for loans or employment - after all, much of their corrupt activity is enabled by the fact that most of Lesmishan's citizens have no other options.

Contracts issued by Lesmishan's bankers are often extremely exploitative, and are occasionally magical as well as legally binding. Of course, it is very difficult to tell whether a contract one has signed will have magical consequences upon being broken, so many of Lesmishan's residents have learned not to risk it.



## THE SILVER LINING

Due to lobbying from supernatural creatures, such as vampires and lycanthropes, the bankers of Lesmishan have placed strict regulations on silver, resulting in silvered weapons being much harder to obtain. In order to remove these restrictions, the heroes must find a way to take down the bankers, blackmail them, or otherwise negotiate with them. The following quest hooks provide examples of methods the heroes might use to achieve this goal.

### SIDE QUEST: DEAL WITH A DEVIL

Though magically enforced contracts are well-known in Lesmishan, they are typically created with the aid of a spell or enchanted item. However, a number of new contracts seem to show signs of being created by a fiendish agent from Inferno - and many seem to bear fine print risking the souls of those who sign. Through rumors, investigation, or discussions with the local residents, the heroes may discover this danger. If the heroes can track down the fiend who created the contracts, they could kill him, freeing the locals from their contracts with him - or make a deal with him themselves.

## LUCIEN IRONSTEAD

Lucien Ironstead is a **rakshasa** masquerading as a dwarf banker within Lesmishan. He has quickly gained power and influence, offering deals that, for many, seem too good to possibly turn down. His contracts are long, and full of confusing legal terminology that he assures his clients is all to their benefit. Thanks to his natural charm, many are willing to sign, unaware of the many unpleasant clauses hidden within the elaborate contracts. If the heroes choose to fight him, he will call his bodyguard (an **occult maniac**) to fight alongside him.

If the heroes kill him, the magic on his contracts will be voided, granting the heroes 3 Goodwill with the citizens of Lesmishan, and a drawer full of blackmail material on the other bankers, which can be used to convince them to re-open the flow of silver in Norspina.

Alternatively, if the heroes choose not to fight him, they may choose to make a deal with him themselves. If the heroes choose to do this, they will lose +3 Goodwill with the citizens of Lesmishan. Lucien will agree to re-open the flow of silver in Norspina, though his aid will come at a steep price. He may suggest one or more of the following conditions, or another of the DM's choosing. The heroes may negotiate, but each time they reject one of his conditions, they must make a check with a relevant Charisma skill. The DC begins at 10, and increases by 5 with each condition they reject. On a failure, Lucien will refuse to renegotiate, and tell the heroes that they must accept the deal as it stands or find another way to accomplish their goals.

### Lucien's Deals

The heroes must give Lucien a non-consumable magic item that is very rare or rarer.

One of the heroes must agree to allow Lucien to consume a portion of their soul, reducing their maximum hit points by one fifth of its total value.

The heroes must agree to kill three of Lucien's rivals within Lesmishan, without allowing it to be traced back to him.

The heroes must convince five citizens of Lesmishan to sign contracts with Lucien.

The heroes must give Lucien 10,000 sc worth of currency, trade goods, and/or gemstones.

## SIDE QUEST: UNDERMINING THE BANKERS

A local branch of the crime syndicate known as the Underminers also has interest in taking down the bankers of Lesmishan. They have come up with a plan to frame the bankers for counterfeiting, but require assistance in planting the counterfeit money. They agree that if the heroes assist them with their plan, they will ensure that the restrictions on silver are removed, and if they do especially well, the Underminers will reward them with 1,500 sc in addition to assisting with the silver restrictions.

The Underminers want the heroes to break into one of the banks, and plant counterfeit funds in the vaults of three notable individuals. The Underminers will warn the party that one of the individuals in question is known to have mages on retainer, and may have magical protections on their vault. Though the plan is certainly risky, it seems to be well thought out and based on accurate information. If the heroes choose to accept the task, they will face the following challenges.



## ENTERING THE BANK

The heroes must get into the bank and access the vaults without raising suspicion. They might choose to do so by attempting to go unseen, in which case the following skill challenge will revolve around Dexterity skills. Alternatively, they may attempt to use more complex social manipulation to conceal their true motives, such as by disguising themselves as employees or by tricking an employee into allowing them to access the vaults. In this case, the following skill challenge will make use of Charisma skills.

Each hero can make a check using the relevant ability score, or a relevant skill that makes use of that ability score. Consult the following table to determine the success of their attempt.

If the heroes gain fewer than 5 successes, they are unable to pass through undetected, and are confronted by the bank's guards. Use the Guards encounter. If the heroes had fewer than 3 successes, add a **mage** to the encounter.

If the heroes gain 5 or more successes, they succeed at sneaking into the bank. Additionally, if the heroes gain 8 or more successes, they obtain a ring of keys that can be used to bypass the skill challenge to enter the first vault.

Skill Roll	Successes
Less than 12	-1
13-16	0
17-22	+1
23-29	+2
30+	+3

## THE FIRST VAULT

The vault is sealed by two fairly secure locks. A DC 23 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check can unlock it. On each failure, the party member attempting the check takes 3d10 poison damage, as they trigger a trap within the lock. The party may continue to attempt to pick the lock, but after the third failure, six nearby guards come to investigate the noise. Use **veteran** stats for the guards.

If the party defeats the guards, they find a key to one of the two locks, reducing the check to a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

## THE SECOND VAULT

The security on the second vault is surprisingly lax, and the heroes are able to break in with little difficulty. However, once inside, they discover that the owner of the vault has installed additional security measures. Four **mimics** ambush the heroes within the vault, and the heroes must defeat them in order to complete their mission.

## THE THIRD VAULT

The third vault is the one the party was warned about, and is sealed with the *knock* spell cast at 2nd level. A hero may make a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check to determine this.

If the party is unable to open the third vault, they will still succeed on their quest, but they will not receive the additional monetary reward from the Underminers.

## ESCAPING THE BANK

After accomplishing their objectives, the party is able to escape the bank fairly easily - security seems to be primarily focused on preventing people from entering, rather than preventing people from leaving. However, if the party has attempted to steal items from the vaults, an alarm will be triggered as they exit. Use the Guards combat encounter, with twice as many enemies as usual.

## NOORD

*Read Aloud:* A frigid range of icy peaks menace against the gray sky, like fangs in the mouth of a hungry god. Narrow roads cut into the silvery crags lead from one plateau village to the next, with alpine forests running up and down the lower hills, and treacherous, snowy climbs to challenge even the hardest of travelers. The valleys between the mountains are narrow and most run downhill directly into the fjord coastlines.

*The air here is sharp and cold, merciless as freezing steel or the bite of a predator's jaws.*

## WHERE BLOOD RUNS DEEP

The Mountains of Noord are a harsh, unforgiving land that yields equally harsh and unforgiving people. They are a treacherous place of many man-eating predators, both bestial and supernatural. A powerful and ancient lineage of vampires called the Fordraugr have lived here for centuries, occupying many stations of rulership and bearing many grandiose titles. These undead warrior-princes are foremost among the viking raiders of this land— among both the most feared and the most fearless. They have long followed the guidance of a coven of wizened vampiric diviners called the Hreisethyr, the Carrion Priests, whose peering into the Eternal Blood allows them to augur fates and advise the Fordraugr warlords of where to raid, whom to slaughter, and when to hunt.



For centuries, an explicit fear of the Fordraugr vampire vikings has paralyzed the mortal leaders of Noord, leaving them unwilling to even acknowledge the problem, let alone act against it. The last great leader of the Noords to dare to bring war upon them, Lord Rorak, was torturously murdered, his armies annihilated, and his family corrupted and transformed into vampires. Though this was almost five-hundred years ago, the memory of this humbling still casts a blood-red shadow over any who would dare to raise a hand against the Fordraugr.

Any, that is, except members of the Fordraugr themselves. Decades ago, the self-styled Bloodtide Queen Thyra turned against the traditions of her people and rallied a small but significant force of bloodraiders in opposition to both Dracula and the Hreisethtyr's traditions. These monstrous warriors were subsequently crushed when Palorva came to power.

## LIFE IN THE MOUNTAINS OF NOORD

The mortal people of the mountains are many, far more than the undead who plague them. But they are still too weak and their leadership too frightened of reprisal to do much more than lament their position as livestock for the bloodthirsty undead. As such, life in the mountains is even nastier, more brutish, and shorter than it would otherwise be. While running afoul of a vengeful noble is bad news for a commoner in any land, running afoul of a hungry (or worse, bored) member of the Fordraugr is a truly terrible twist of fate.

Many people in the Noordan isles west of the mountains, or in the western forest along the coast, have little or no knowledge of the Fordraugr. Those who have heard that there's a "vampire problem" up in the mountains likely think of it as a rare, localized thing, or even as an outright myth. That is, of course, until a drake ship of bloodraiders arrives on their shores and begins to drink the blood of whole villages to slake their unholy thirst.

All but the most well defended (both martially and politically) bastions of mortal power, places like the capital city of Phalanx, are riddled through like worm-eaten apples with the corruption of the vampires. What they cannot kill they seek to tame, and what they cannot tame they seek to subvert. Such has it ever been, and with such have the people of Noord had to contend for many hundreds of years.

## MOUNTAINS OF NOORD LORE

### INT DC Information

- 5 The Mountains of Noord are a dangerous place where the temperature and thin air claim the lives of many travelers. The higher up you go, the better prepared you'd best be.
- 12 The Mountains of Noord are a land with a long maritime history. Though most Noordish youths become soldiers and raiders for a time, the people of the mountains are known as especially good shipwrights & sailors. Many of the ships used by Noordish vikings are made by shipwrights in the fjords between the mountains.
- 17 The seas to the north and west of the Mountains of Noord are extremely treacherous and full of places that cause shipwrecks either by natural or supernatural means. If looking to travel through these waters, it would be best to hire a local captain, someone who knows the waters well.
- 23 The Fordraugr, a powerful class of wealthy vampire vikings, are said to be the true power in this region of Noord and have been so for centuries. Though the Chancellor of Phalanx and the regional governors of Noord are the nominal rulers, the Fordraugr are said to have their claws in everything.

## MOUNTAINS OF NOORD RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

### COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Pack of Werewolves
4-5	Lurking Vampire
6-8	Fordraugr Bloodraid
9-10	Roaming Fiend
11	A Stalking Shadow
12	Hag Sisters



## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a vampire that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## FORDRAUGR RAID

A marauding warrior of the Fordraugr haunting the mountains with a band of their mortal warrior-thralls comes upon the heroes and decides they look like an enjoyable hunt, easy meal, or worthy prey.

Roll on the table below to determine the stats of the vampire leading the attack.

1d4	Fiend
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Jotun Vampire
3	Vampire Reaver
4	Vampire

Add additional **bandit captains**, **veterans**, and **frost giants** to achieve an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

## ROAMING FIEND

A fiend from Hell is patrolling a region of Forsten for Palorva. When the heroes move through its territory, the fiend attacks. Determine the stats of the fiend by rolling or selecting from the table below.

1d4	Fiend
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil

Using any hellspawn stat block, along with **sanguine flame**, **imp**, and **spineclot** stat blocks, make the encounter medium to hard difficulty. The leading fiend calls off the attack and retreats once it is reduced to half its maximum hit points, but it does not care if any of its minions are killed.

## A STALKING SHADOW

The adventurers should get an opportunity to notice a strange gathering of shadows that seems to move out of the corner of their eyes. This is a shadowy, almost ethereal **glabrezu**.

It follows them as they travel during the day, but is maddeningly impossible to pin down. Over the day, several of them should roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) versus the creature's Dexterity (Stealth). If they succeed, they are certain they see a vaguely humanoid shape just out of the corner of their eyes. If they fail, they see vague movement that is gone when they turn to look.

## HAG COVEN

The heroes enter into a swampy, thorny tangle of the forest. They are attacked by a number of **green hags** and **night hags** looking to add the heroes' organs to their personal collection. This should be a medium encounter.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Looks Fouler, Seems Fairer
4-5	Take It or Leave It
6-8	The Light Procession
9-10	A Test of Courage
11-12	Hiders & Seekers



## LOOKS FOULER, SEEMS FAIRER

The heroes come to a fork in the road. A grim, hooded man is resting atop a large boulder next to a massive graven rune stone that serves as a shrine to Strack, the Winter Goddess. This shrine is also a mile marker of sorts; whatever town the heroes may be drawing close to, the shrine has a sign nailed to it indicating that this fork of the road will lead them there. The hooded man wordlessly offers them some of the food he's cooking. It smells good, if a bit underseasoned; it's a hearty goat meat and root vegetable stew. He speaks almost monosyllabically, answering questions taciturnly or with head-nods, but will warn them to be careful at night, as the mountains are full of monsters like vampires and related undead.

The scabbard of his sword bears the flaming, crowned eye of the Bale Eyes (see the Eldrvalli Bastion section); the stranger is named Torren Magnarsson, a ranger & vampire hunter (not that he's likely to offer that information to a group of strangers). If any of the heroes discuss their adventures in slaying vampires and their ilk, it's possible Torren may open up to them, or even direct them to Eldrvalli Bastion's crypt with the following helpful information:

**Read Aloud:** *The man grunts and looks ruefully into his bowl of stew for a moment. "Eldrvalli Bastion. Mountain town; not far. If ye have time... visit the crypts below. If ye can't find it, tell someone ye're visitin' dead relatives. When ye get below, tell the watchman Torren sent ye. If they ask what the Eye sees, tell em it sees the walkin' dead, an' naught else."*

Torren has just given them a way to interact with the Bale Eyes vampire hunters hiding in the crypt beneath Eldrvalli Bastion. The call-and-response with the Bale Eyes watchmen is "What does the Eye see?" and "It sees the Dead Who Walk, and nothing more". Torren's version here is slightly wrong, but more than close enough for the watchmen to let them into the Bale Eyes' camp (they're used to hearing everything from "It sees the dead, ye fool, now open up!" to "Just let me in, Ragnar, it's been a long night").

## TAKE IT OR LEAVE IT

Along a mountain road, the heroes come upon a rattletrap cart being pulled by a swayback old mare who looks on the verge of collapsing. A man wrapped head to toe in robes and furs, wearing a wide-brimmed navy blue hat peers out at them suspiciously from atop the cart. He is flanked on both sides by what appear to be soldiers, wrapped up in the same rags and cloaks as he, but with armor, helmets, sheathed swords, and shields on their arms.

The cloaked man is a **mage**, but he is also a merchant who funds his profane magical experiments with proceeds from riches he's robbed from graves. The "soldiers" at either side of his cart are meticulously wrapped **skeletons**. It would take a Wisdom (Perception) check of DC 20 to see past their disguises to recognize what they actually are, but there's something immediately unsettling to all people about the silence and absolute unison with which these soldiers operate, each stopping completely at the exact same moment when the cart comes to a stop, each turning to look at whomever the "merchant" is looking at, etc.

The merchant has the following in stock, plus anything else you may wish to give him. Everything he sells is either caked in barely-cleaned dirt, covered in a persistent layer of dust, or partially wrapped in cobwebs. If the heroes buy anything, you should roll once on the Haunted Items table for each item. Magic items they buy, except the Draught of Fortitude, have a +30 to their roll on the Haunted Items table. The Dagger of Venom and Sword of Sharpness have a +50 on their rolls. The effects of the Haunted Item table begin only half an hour after purchasing the items—once the peddler has moved on and disappeared down the road.





Item	Description	Cost (sc)
<i>Battle Chess</i>	Made of expensive ivory & obsidian.	50
<i>Blacksmith's Tools</i>	Old, their leather bundle falling apart.	65
<i>Bag of Holding</i>	A sturdy, thick cloth bag made of velveteen. Absolutely covered in dust and cobwebs.	1250
<i>Clothes (Fine)</i>	A bit outdated, partially moth-eaten, very musty.	25
<i>Potion of Giant Strength</i>	Smells just a little bit... off...	200
<i>Dulcimer</i>	A bit cobwebby, and the strings could use tuning.	70
<i>Sword of Sharpness</i>	Shaped like a viking sword. Its scabbard is partially rotted.	500
<i>Rope (50 ft)</i>	The rope is one of the highest-quality things on the cart. Looks almost new.	10
<i>Shovel</i>	Caked in both fresh and long-dried dirt, but otherwise looks fine.	10
<i>Dagger of Venom</i>	A short, broad-bladed seax dagger. Its scabbard is silver, tarnished and warped.	400
<i>Wine Bottle</i>	It smells suspiciously of vinegar, even when corked...	4

## HAUNTED ITEMS

d100	Effect
1-20	This item actually somehow repels or diminishes spiritual attachments— if rolling for multiple items on this table, reduce the next roll on this table by -20. Rolls reduced in this way cannot trigger this effect, they can only roll a minimum of the 21-40 result.
21-40	No effect, the item is not haunted, cursed, or otherwise the locus of a spirit attachment.
41-60	Mildly oppressive. The buyer of this item feels intensely uneasy for the next 12 hours.
61-80	Severely oppressive. The buyer of this item feels like they're being watched and followed for the next day. They see movement out of the corners of their eyes occasionally; flashes of shadow figures moving in the dark. They are <b>Surprised at the start of the first combat encounter to occur within this period.</b>
81-100	Mildly haunted. The buyer of this item feels the presence of a mournful, furious, aggrieved spirit watching them. They suffer the effects of the 61-80 result. When they take a long rest, they are assailed by terrible nightmares or else visions of ghostly visitation. The disturbance causes them to only regain an amount of hit points equal to half their maximum. This effect continues for 2 days.
101-120	Severely haunted. The buyer of this item is assailed by flashes of nauseating phantom pain, pangs of loss and despair, and sudden waves of mortal dread. They can see a single pair of luminous, pale eyes looking at them from within the dark, wherever they look. They suffer the effects of the 81-100 result, except that they last until the item is relinquished or cleansed of its spiritual attachment in some way (such as by the <i>exorcism</i> spell in <i>HGtVH</i> ).
121+	Cursed. The item has a horribly malevolent spiritual attachment. This functions as the 101-120 result, except that the bearer also suffers a -1 to all d20 rolls while in combat. This condition cannot be removed or suppressed. The item also cannot just be willingly relinquished; it must be sold to someone else, must have its spiritual attachment cleansed, or must be destroyed completely in a single action (such as by tossing it into a pool of lava or powerful acid).

The hooded peddler's cart cannot be found again after it has departed. It will crest a nearby hill or go around a mountain bend and seemingly disappear completely.



## THE LIGHT PROCESSION

The heroes come upon a brightly-lit, small caravan of narrow carts pulled by a single moose each, well-designed for narrow mountain paths. The carts, the mooses' antlers, and everything else are decorated in dozens of the glass pear bulbs from the Glowing Forest. These carts are carrying a harvest of lights from the forest below the mountains up to the mountain towns. The procession is led by the Iscald family matriarch, Ingrid Iscald (human, uses the **commoner** stats), and protected by a handful of armed folks using **guard** stats.

If the group wishes, they can buy some from the caravan, at a slightly cheaper price than they might be able to from a seller in a town. Each pear-sized bulb will continue to glow for quite a long time (more than a year), and will cost them 25 sc. If they would like to buy five or more, Ingrid will be willing to give them a bulk discount, knocking the price down to 20 apiece. Make sure the players are aware that they do not know how to turn these lights off— they are permanently glowing objects that shed light as a torch.

## A TEST OF COURAGE

The heroes come upon a pair of young human warriors, boys in their late teens or so, who are standing on the edge of a darkened thicket of alpine forest. They are arguing over which of them should go in first, both citing the other as to blame for the mess they're in, and saying that the other should go in, or else reveal themselves to be a coward.

If the heroes stop to ask the boys what the matter is, or if you'd like for the boys to reach out for help, you can read or paraphrase the following.

**Read Aloud:** *The boys are both shaking cold, pale, wearing very little aside from their chainmail hauberks and helms. Each bears a spear in one hand and a hunting bow slung across their backs. They look at each other sheepishly for a moment before one of them speaks up.*

*"Sorry... we come out here with our master, one of the Undying Ones, a great lord named Vardna. The Master was bored and wanted a hunt, so he let loose one of his thralls into the hills for a chase. Well... we missed our shots a few too many times and the thrall disappeared into these trees. The Master went in after him, even though we—"*

*The other boy speaks up, "Even though I warned him—there's s'posed to be an old priest in there. A terror, he is. Wild-eyed worshiper of the Cursed Celestials. A mad priest of Tovare who can turn the Undying Ones to ash with a prayer!"*

*The first boy continues, "Right, like I was sayin', Master Vardna didn't listen to us. Said all the celestial priests were driven from the mountain, that they're all in Phalanx or down in the valleys. He went into the woods. Haven't heard a thing for near an hour!"*

*The second boy says, "We can't go back to the keep without the Master, or at least not without some bit of him to explain what happened, else his master will flay us alive for sure!"*

The boys are named Jaron and Fredri. If the group wishes to help them out, despite their unusual circumstances, there are many ways they might do so. Offering to escort them to a different town entirely isn't impossible, but they'll be resistant to it as they were raised to view the "Undying Ones" (Fordraugr vampires) as nearly godlike creatures, and to revere and respect them. The boys aren't very bright though, and it could be easy enough to trick or bribe them into abandoning their previous way of life with some silver and a ride to another town, if the offer is worded properly. They'll resist any attempts by the heroes to "adopt" them, as they're very proud young men with a desire to become mighty warriors— they don't want to hang out with a bunch of people they likely see as old vagabonds (though they may be too polite to put it quite like that).

If the heroes travel into the woods, they won't have to go more than about twenty minutes past the tree line before they find a small clearing with a nice hut and handful of small outbuildings (one toilet, one that appears to be a tanning shed, one that seems to contain a workbench and carpentry tools). An old man and a shivering young man draped in bear skins are sitting around a campfire. The old man is Volund Vell (use the stats of a **veteran**), and the young man is Ronard, the thrall that was loosed to be hunted by the other boys' master Vardna.

Volund is a kindly old man, but will confirm that he slayed the vampire and burned his remains to ash using his blessed blade, Gravetender, the divine blessing of which makes it capable of slaying lesser vampires (vampire spawn) even at night— preventing them from transforming into mist and escaping. In the scuffle, he managed to knock several of the vampire's teeth out, including his fangs. Volund offers them the teeth to give to the other boys, saying that while he sympathizes with those whose minds have been so poisoned by the vampires, he has no mercy for them should they come into his woods.



## HIDERS AND SEEKERS

Ahead of the heroes the road splits, one way rising higher into a small hill and another way dipping low into a small valley, before rejoining a half mile or so down the way. In the middle of this split path is a bit of a rocky, muddy overhang. A small group of peasants— a few very young, a few very old— are hiding in a hollow under a tree that's growing on the high road, and they look terrified. A black-clad horseman with milky-pale skin and slightly glowing eyes approaches from the high road just in time to intercept the heroes. Read or paraphrase the following.

**Read Aloud:** *A horseman clad in black leathers and a dark steel breastplate stops his midnight-black horse atop the high road, his steed's hooves on the edge of the overhang looming over the huddled mass of dirty peasants, who hold hands to their mouths to prevent any sound from escaping. The people below the horseman look at you with wide, pleading eyes, shaking their heads slowly. Their terror is obvious.*

*"Greetings... travelers." The horseman inspects you for a moment, his eyes clearly drawn to your weapons and armor, seemingly recognizing you for the fighters that you are. "You wouldn't happen to have seen a pack of filthy serfs around here anywhere, would you? I lost track of them a way's back there... I... found this doll." His fanged mouth lingers sinisterly on the final word as he produces a small, ragged doll daubed with a bit of dirt from the road. "It'd be a shame to keep a child from their precious toy, don't you think?"*

The horseman is a **vampire spawn**, and is not after a fight with heavily-armed adventurers. Rather, he was hoping for a cruel, easy meal. He's aware that many warriors traveling through the Mountains of Noord are valuable thralls belonging to one of the other vampires in the area, and is eager not to step on any toes by killing someone else's beloved pets.

If the group tells the rider that they haven't seen the peasants or convinces him they saw them somewhere down the road, he will move on, giving the peasants hiding below him an opportunity to flee once he's out of sight. If they help the peasants in this way, one of them named Sheldon is good friends with an innkeeper at the next town the heroes are likely to visit. Telling that innkeeper that Sheldon sent them will get the heroes a 50% discount on room and board in thanks for helping the innkeeper's friend escape.

## DREYRFELL

Dreyrfell, also called the Mountain of Blood, is the ancestral home of the Fordraugr. It is here, deep within the cavernous interior of this foreboding black mountain, that the mystical Hreisethtyr (HRAI-seth-er) carrion priests whose divinations and blessings have led the bloodraiders for centuries, hide and work their magics. The mountain is beyond treacherous in the climbing, its stones razor sharp and its many hollows causing frequent collapses and rockfalls. The monstrous undead creatures that stalk its outer crags, from ghouls to ghosts, are all in some way caused by, bound to, or intentionally created by the wicked vampire occultists dwelling within the mountain.

Dreyrfell's miles of interior passages and caverns wind around a central shaft, marking this mountain as having once been an active volcano. Along its inner walls are the Umrasta, the Graven Past, a series of relief sculptures carved into the living rock which depict the long and monstrous history of the Fordraugr. These depictions narrate their entire history from their first arrival in Noord to their most recent political squabbles and triumphs in battle. The most recent engraving depicts the coronation of Laskara, daughter of the Bloodtide Queen Thyra, and Laskara's declaration of fealty to Palorva, ending the feud between the Bloodtide Queen and the Hreisethtyr.

Bragdin opposed the elder Feyn's leadership after the older vampire's cowardice had cost them an entire ship of thralls and spawn, some of them Bragdin's own. He challenged Feyn to Dreyrdrekka, a traditional Fordraugr duel to the death. In short, Feyn won. Bragdin was slain by the older captain and his shriveled corpse tossed into the magma pools below the lowest chamber of the mountain. All while Thyra watched, unable to do anything to help her brother.

When it was over, Thyra demanded the right to challenge Feyn as well, and the Hreisethtyr refused her on no basis other than that they deemed the matter concluded. The next day, Thyra crowned herself the Bloodtide Queen and set about sinking every Fordraugr drakeship that refused to join her. She renounced her ties to the Fordraugr, and cursed the names of both the shriveled old leeches of the Hreisethtyr and their de facto god, Dracula's daughter Palorva. Thyra's daughter Laskara rejected her mother's vow to tear down the very mountain of Dreyrfell around the Hreisethtyrs' ears, given that Palorva's dominance united the two factions.



## ADVENTURE IN DREYRFELL

Dreyrfell is a deadly place full of powerful enemies. These foes are unlikely to be attacked directly unless the group is traveling alongside Thyra and her loyalists; indeed, the heroes should look for nondirect ways to fight these foes. They might sneak in to free a prisoner, steal something important, or perhaps poison the Eternal Blood, the pool of blood the Hreisethtyr use to conduct their divination rites and from which they derive their sustenance.

The mountain is supernaturally shrouded in darkness and fog, meaning Wisdom (Perception) checks relying on sight are made at -6 at all times while on the outside of the mountain (i.e. not within its interior caverns). There is a 50% chance each day that the mountain experiences snowfall.

## ELDRVALLI BASTION

Eldrvalli Bastion is a small, heavily fortified mountain town surrounding a walled keep. It is set upon a mountain plateau and was once the seat of a great Noordish leader, Lord Rorak, who led an early revolt against the Fordraugr when they first made their presence in the region known, more than five-hundred years ago. Lord Rorak's torture, abacination, and beheading at the hands of a vampire called Voldram Eyeburner signaled the end of that particular popular revolt against the Fordraugr vampires.

It also led directly to the founding of a secret order of viking warriors devoted to the hunting and slaying of undead called the Bale Eyes. In honor of Lord Rorak and defiance of his murderers, they use as their symbol a single eye wreathed in flame, with a crown hovering above it. They are known by different bynames in different places—the Lord's Watchers, the Fireblind Eyes, the Sea's Vengeance—but all refer to the same loosely affiliated organization of vampire hunting vikings.

The Eldrvalli Bastion of today is one of many keeps (but one of only very few towns) openly ruled by vampires. After slaughtering Lord Rorak and corrupting his heirs into vampires, Voldram Eyeburner left one of his own spawn to rule over Rorak's seat of power, a brutal and unimaginative bully of a vampire named Rollov. Voldram wanted someone effective enough, and cruel enough, but not particularly ambitious, so he elevated his least favorite spawn to the task. At first, his other spawn took offense, but it didn't take long for them to realize Rollov's appointment to the Bastion was sort of a punishment, or at least a kind of mark of disfavor.

Rollov still hasn't caught on, even these hundreds of years later. He misses the sea and his marauding lifestyle terribly, and takes his boredom out on the mortal subjects of the Bastion. Life in Eldrvalli Bastion is difficult for the peasants and mortals who are not (literally) branded by the mark of Lord Rollov's favor—a twisting gothic "R", usually burned onto the forearm or neck. Rollov calls these branded mortals his "prized pigs". Even for these nominally lucky individuals, this mark just means Rollov's menagerie of monsters and ghoulish enforcers aren't allowed to feed on them, not necessarily that the Lord Himself will show them any particular mercy.

Most of those branded are people who are in some way integral to the Bastion's continued functioning, such as people in highly specialized or difficult to replace professions. Even the wealthy are not guaranteed this mark of favor just for their elevated economic station. For those whose jobs don't mark them as especially valuable, it's up to Rollov's whim who he chooses to gift with the brand.

## THE TOWN ABOVE

Eldrvalli is a smallish town of only 7,000 people for how built up it is, but includes under its purview several farms and hamlets in the valley below the mountain upon which it sits. The town of Eldrvalli Bastion has a large central keep, a small cluster of larger manor-like houses where the handful of lesser elders live and study, and a larger sprawl of narrow row-houses with steeply angled white birch-shingled roofs.

It is a town that's intensely suspicious of strangers, and which lives in a near constant state of peril. The mortals are split fairly evenly into people who are loyalists to Rollov and his monstrous regime, and those who are little more than hostages in their own town. Even during the day they're not truly safe, as one never knows which of one's neighbors might be watching and listening—seditious acts performed during daylight hours always reach the vampires' ears come nightfall.

There is an inn called Moldr's Wayrest, which is run by Olfrik Moldr (he/him, dwarf, middle-aged), but it makes most of its money as a drinking establishment and only has two rooms which are almost never rented out (and so may take some time to clean up if the heroes attempt to rent them).



## A FOILED REBELLION

Six years after Dracula's demise, many vampire hunters quietly convened beneath Eldrvalli Bastion. Palorva, aware of this planned coup, activated her spy network to encourage more and more vampire hunters to convene. Then, once the majority of vampire hunters throughout Norspina were gathered in one place, Palorva orchestrated a cave-in that devastated their ranks. Fiends and vampires loitered around the rubble, slaughtering any survivors that managed to dig their way out.

## PHALANX

Phalanx is the mountainous capital city of all of Noord, be it the country's mountain regions, its islands, or its vast coastal tundras. It is a daring, beautiful city clinging to the cliffs of four different mountains in the northern reaches of the Cloudpiercer Range. Each of these mountains makes up one district of the city, each able to access the others through a massive network of bridges, but outsiders are forced to reach the city by only one traversable road up a mountain that is already both treacherous and difficult to reach in its own right. Phalanx stands defiant, eternal as the very mountain upon which it rests.

The web of magically-reinforced bridges that connect the districts are called the himvegr ("sky-roads"). They form a web connecting these four mountains into one massive city. They are a masterpiece of dwarven engineering whose like is seldom seen elsewhere. It is said that between the city's spacious aboveground portions and its truly massive subterranean depths, called the Underdistricts, the entire population of the country of Noord could fit comfortably within Phalanx's walls. Indeed, young children have been taught for countless generations that if ever the nation were in danger, it is to Phalanx they should flee.

Those who grow up in the Mountains of Noord often feel as though they are in danger— constant danger, even— and that Phalanx has done nothing to address the issue of the Fordraugr. The reasons for this are many, varied, and overlapping, but the bottom line is that the vampires have the Noordish people in an intractable hostage situation. The moment it became clear that Phalanx was moving to liberate a keep and its surrounding villages from its local Fordraugr tyrant, the rest would begin a wholesale slaughter of the mortals under their "protection". This untenable risk, this threat of mutually assured destruction, has deadlocked the Chancellor's Council on the issue for centuries.

## THE DISTRICTS AND UNDERDISTRICTS

Phalanx is split into four main districts, with a fifth unofficial district in the form of The Crossroads, the nexus point of the sky-roads where both cross over one another to form an enormous "X" shape. Each of the four main districts also has a gargantuan subterranean section called an Underdistrict. These are typically not as populated as the aboveground portions of the city, but a great deal of industry (particularly metalworking and mining) goes on below. In at least one case, the lower-income housing for the district is also located in its Underdistrict.

## BELLTOLL TOWERS

Belltoll Towers is the southernmost district of Phalanx. It is an industrious district primarily populated with dwarves and halflings, though people of any lineage can be found there. Its central feature is a series of carillon bell towers which can be played like a massive instrument, whose music rings out across the mountains. Many of these bells are specially pitched and padded so as to create only "local" sound (i.e. they can only be heard within the district and a bit beyond it onto the sky-road), while others are fully unleashed, designed to be heard for miles.

The district is primarily middle class tradespeople, who spend most of their days toiling in the Underdistrict, the Clockwork Vault. The Clockwork Vault is, as its name suggests, a place of remarkable clockwork engineering. In many regards the entire cavern is sort of one giant machine. Cogs whirl and click along the walls nearly everywhere the heroes go, each a part of some massive, mostly hidden machinery. These gears control everything: from automated lift platforms going up and down the shafts of the Underdistrict to the timing of chutes and valves that pump molten rock from the volcanic heart of the mountain up to power the district's forges.



Life is fast-paced, hectic, stressful, and busy in Belltoll Towers. Most of the residential space is aboveground, in large, nearly identical ten-storey buildings called stacktowns that house around sixty or so families each. It is the newest of the city's districts, at just a few hundred years in age, and is typically regarded as either a noisy eyesore or a symbol of Noordish innovation and genius—sometimes both by the same person, depending on whether or not the carillons happen to be ringing at that moment.

## MOONRISE FULCRUM

Moonrise Fulcrum is the easternmost district of Phalanx. It was built after Valkynheim, but before Belltoll Towers. The name comes from a unique astrological conjunction that only happens very rarely, but which occurred on the first night that the workers of Phalanx had begun to construct the new district. Two moons appeared on one side of the mountain's peak, two on the other side, and one was hidden in the middle.

This was taken to be an auspicious sign, and was later even used as the basis for an entirely theoretical (really only used for fun or by the especially superstitious) method of moon-based horoscopy and divination called Fulcrum Balancing. One asks a question of a so-called Moon Balancer, who reads the angles of the visible moons relative to the mountain's peak in order to divine an answer.

Moonrise Fulcrum is a diverse district both in terms of the lineages of its inhabitants and their socioeconomic status. It has neighborhoods for those of lesser means, and some for those of significant wealth, as well. Unlike some of the other districts, it doesn't have a particular industry it supports, but is instead a site of culture and the arts for the city. The Bluedrop Orchestral House, Coldwynd Theater Row, and even the infamous bawdy houses of the Perfumed Tier are all open for business late into the night, all around the calendar.

Moonrise Fulcrum's Underdistrict is called the Overstar Halls, and is mostly remarkable for the large number of mountain elves who dwell within it, and for the fact that its cavern ceilings are host to a shimmering starry tapestry of luminescent crystals that look like stars in the night sky.

## SHIELDHALL

Shieldhall is the eldest of the districts of Phalanx, located on the northernmost mountain. It is militaristic, spartan, clean, and disciplined. It's the seat of government for the city, and also houses the rows of barracks for the warriors who defend Phalanx and Noord at large. The Chancellor's Manor is located in Shieldhall (in fact it is the eponymous Shieldhall), which serves both as the current Chancellor's living quarters, and the primary state building where meetings are held and legislation is discussed and drafted.

Shieldhall's Underdistrict is called the Low Vaults, and is among the smallest of the Underdistricts. Few people live down there full-time (dwarves and some trollkin mostly), and its wide-open halls are primarily used for storing military equipment, stockpiling resources (like long-lasting foodstuffs and building materials), and sheltering refugees on the rare occasion when a village is attacked and survivors make it all the way to Phalanx.

The Cloudchasm Courts are also located in Shieldhall. These are a trio of large, imperious amphitheater-like structures built into the side of the mountain, where criminal trials are held. In the most dire of cases, the condemned are hurled off the side of the mountain after sentencing, ensuring—if nothing else—some truly swift justice.

Despite being the seat of political power in Phalanx, the Shieldhall district does not play host to many of an aristocrat's favorite venues. Better food and culture can be had in Moonrise, and finer goods can be purchased in Belltoll. Shieldhall is, in that way, something of a shock to the few wealthy travelers who find cause to visit Phalanx.

## VALKYNHEIM

Valkynheim is the westernmost district of Phalanx. It was the second to be built after Shieldhall when the city decided it needed to expand, but was unsure how to do so once Shieldhall had more or less found every safe nook & cranny within and without its mountain to occupy. Valkynheim was originally envisioned as a place for the growing lower classes of Phalanx to live—a place for the peasantry and merchants that put them further away from the elders and warriors of Shieldhall. Over time, however, it evolved into something quite different.

A priest of the winter goddess Strack was gifted with a miraculous vision, so the story goes, somewhere deep in the caverns beneath the new district. Others with a religious bent to them (something of a rarity in Noord) flocked to the area to see if they too might make contact with Strack, in this strange place deep within the earth's rocky skin. Dozens if not hundreds of people did.

It didn't take long to discover that the root cause was geothermal fumes venting noxious gasses into the cavern, causing hallucinations. But by then it was too late, the believers refused the explanation, or else insisted the ecstatic state brought on by the gasses was simply a gift from their various gods anyway, side-stepping the issue in favor of the conclusion they'd already decided they preferred. Valkynheim quickly gained a reputation for being a district of mystics, sorcerers, priests, and general oddballs, and has retained more or less that same character even unto the modern day.



The district's primary trades are stonecraft-related, and its Underdistrict is called the Grand Lodge. It is equal parts an active dig-site & mine, and residential area, with workers extracting valuable stone like the blue-veined, pale gray marble known as Phalanxite or Phalanx marble. Many of the most important or expensive buildings in the city are made at least in part from this beautiful material.

## SHATTERKEEL BAY

Shatterkeel Bay is a small city of around 10,000 people located on the northern coast of Noord, at the foot of the very mountain by which one can reach Phalanx. It sits within a short distance of several major shipwrecking sites: Whalecull Reef, the Stracken Circle, and the Winterfloe Rogue Icefields. The people of Shatterkeel have a highly specialized economy built almost exclusively around deep-sea salvage of shipwrecks from each of these three dangerous locales.

Shatterkeel has a number of competitive tinkerer workshops and shipwrighting concerns who make frequent use of Avadri technology stolen, bartered, or otherwise “acquired” from their Yodvan and Teivos neighbors. The Shatterkeelers use this technology—reverse-engineering it when possible, or else just implementing it as-is when they cannot—to innovate new and cutting-edge gadgets and gizmos for everything they can. It has uses from catching fish and propelling ships to creating deep sea exploration suits and gravity-reducing tow chains that allow them to haul back otherwise immovable hulks from the bottom of the sea floor.

Just like the rest of Noord, the majority of the learned folk in town are elders, so the tinkering shops are overwhelmingly staffed by those too old to work as salvagers themselves anymore. Unlike much of Noord, instead of becoming warriors and reavers for their mandatory four-year term of duty, the youth of Shatterkeel sign up with a salvage ship or company (or else are drafted by one of the less reputable ones, if they can't find anyone to take them on willingly).

Amongst the things found at the bottom of the ocean, the Shatterkeel salvagers most highly prize Avadri doodads and trinkets—anything from the humble light blooms from the Glowing Forest to the hyper-advanced baubles found in Vadreheim by Teivosan pilgrims. Not only are these objects helpful for feeding back into the town's primary industry of deep sea salvage, but are also typically worth a fortune in the wider world outside the frozen north. It is by this trade in salvaged goods that the people make most of their money.

## THE SHIPBREAKERS' CIRCLE

Officially, Shatterkeel salvagers are called Shipbreakers, a title they wear with no small amount of pride. While Shatterkeel Bay doesn't have a governor or mayor in the traditional sense, it does have a small council of senior tradespeople called the Shipbreakers Circle, whose job is to negotiate salvage contracts between companies and deal (harshly) with “illegal” salvage. Which includes, but is not limited to, anyone who goes after a ship the Circle has officially claimed for Shatterkeel.

The Shipbreakers' Circle has an official office where they engage in most of their work, located near the center of town. The Circle's current members are as follows:

**Brekan Dol.** (He/Him) An elderly urkou gentleman with stark white fur except for a shock of dark gray behind his ears. Brekan is badly scarred all across the left side of his body from a salvage accident long ago. He is the Circle's current leader (or First Among Equals, as he calls his position). He is patient but forthright, willing to hear anyone out, but expecting his final judgment to be accepted and carried through.

**Danzi Goldtongue.** (He/Him) A late-middle aged dwarf. His eyes are milky white and blind; he has an on-again-off-again relationship with Wylla (see below), though the two keep things strictly professional when conducting Circle business. He used to own a sizable company of salvagers across ten whole ships, but sold his shares in their operation when he was offered a seat on the Shipbreakers' Circle.

**Thenna Hamabund.** (She/Her) An elderly halfling woman who never goes anywhere without a tiny, high-tech Avadri golem creature (about two-thirds her height, so quite small) whom she calls Piddles. Piddles has a tendency to leak a mysterious purple fluid when he stands in one place for too long. Thenna is a cunning woman with a sharp wit who enjoys getting one over on her fellow Circlemates.

**Urvan Gorek.** (They/Them) An elderly trollkin with long white hair and beard, small reading spectacles, and massively muscular frame despite their advanced age. Urvan is normally a soft spoken and kindly individual, and is difficult to rouse to anger.

**Wylla Forrsdottir.** (She/Her) An elderly human. The newest member of the Circle, Wylla is a no-nonsense businesswoman with a firm focus on profits, expenses, and the balancing thereof.

Despite the fierce competition and the relatively high-tech nature of their operations, there are some shipwrecks and some areas that are simply too dangerous (or too supernaturally cursed) to safely go after, and as a result, the ocean is still littered with wrecks over which the Shipbreakers stake no claim.



## ARCTIC PLAINS

**Read Aloud:** Sparse scatterings of boreal forest occasionally interrupt what is otherwise a vast and abiding tundra, a veritable desert of ice, hard-packed snow, and unyielding frozen earth. The Arctic Plains are merciless and harsh, practically wastelands, but even here—just as with deserts of heat and sand—life can still thrive. Assuming, of course, that it is hardy, ruthless, and stubborn enough to survive.

The wind howls and bites into warm-blooded flesh like icy daggers. Life is quickly lost here by the careless and the foolhardy.

## ROARING WINDS AND FROZEN HEARTS

The Arctic Plains of the north are harsh lands that mold their inhabitants into severe people and dangerous creatures. They stretch across much of northern Gathandia from the vast expanse north of Derk to the plains of Noord. Though only sparsely inhabited, there are still a great many people and creatures well-adapted to the brutal environment.

The Arctic Plains are under the looming presence of Shadowcroft and the long shadow of Lilith, Kamelot's fiendish queen. Their presence is relatively limited throughout much of the region, but still felt in some way by all the many scattered inhabitants of the region.

## COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Coldhands
4-5	Lurking Vampire
6-8	Knights of Blackhold
9-10	A Stalking Shadow
11-12	Pack of Werewolves

## COLDHANDS

While walking across a frozen lake, the heroes hear a terrible cracking sound. Then another. Then half a dozen more. Tiny pops of shattering ice precede frostbite-blackened hands emerging from below as waterlogged yet strangely preserved corpses lumber and lurch their way to the surface, dripping in water that quickly freezes into razor sharp icicles on their flesh once exposed to the chilling winds.

**Zombies** and **ghouls** emerge from the ice. They inflict slashing damage instead of bludgeoning damage with their melee attacks, as the icicles on their bodies form natural claw-like protrusions.

## KNIGHTS OF BLACKHOLD

The heroes stumble upon cruel knights of Shadowcroft's outpost in the region, Blackhold. This patrol was lost in a snowstorm and is making its way back to Blackhold. But after chancing upon the heroes, the beleaguered knights decide these adventurers are probably up to no good and might make for some fine trophy kills to earn favor with their masters back at the holdfast.

The Knights are all clad in black armor with fur-lined cloaks. Their ragged breaths issue forth in steaming puffs from the darkness of their tall, ominous helms. They have few words for the heroes other than a simple, "You should not have come here..."

Use **knights** and **Kamelot knights** to make an adjusted encounter CR as close as possible to a typically medium or difficult encounter.

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a vampire that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once reduced to half its maximum hit points, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## A STALKING SHADOW

The adventurers should get an opportunity to notice a strange gathering of shadows that seems to move out of the corner of their eyes. This is a corrupted **treant**.

It follows them as they travel during the day, but is maddeningly impossible to pin down. Over the day, several of them should roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) versus the creature's Dexterity (Stealth). If they succeed, they are certain they see a vaguely humanoid shape just out of the corner of their eyes. If they fail, they see vague movement that is gone when they turn to look.

If the heroes attack the Treant, they find that it is not alone; 2d6 **awakened shrubs** emerge from the brambles nearby and attack the heroes as well.



## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.

## SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Aurora's Message
4-7	To Build a Fire
8-10	Blackhold Sheriff
11-12	Iceberry Harvest

### AURORA'S MESSAGE

The group may notice with a DC 16 Wisdom check that there is a deep track in the snow traced in strange, winding patterns, serpentine and occasionally looping back over themselves or waving like a ribbon in the wind. The track of these patterns are wider than an adult human's stride would be, but definitely look like they were made by some kind of bipedal creature, as there are large, unusually circular-looking footprints in the snow in the few places where the track is wide enough to see the bottom.

After seeing these odd patterns for some time while traveling, they'll eventually come upon a stone golem at the "end" of these tracks, wandering in concentric circles as if their long winding path has finally terminated here in an ever widening ring. If they call out to this golem or try to speak to them, they will stop walking briefly and reply to the heroes' pleasantries.

Their name is Boulderstone, and they are a priest devoted to Aurora, the goddess of the northern lights whose portents guide many in the north. Boulderstone has been tracing out in the snow a pattern they saw in the sky the last time Aurora's light appeared to them. They're not sure why, but this pattern was exceptionally clear to them, and has refused to leave their mind. They're not sure what it could possibly mean, and had hoped that by tracing it here on the face of Ancerra its meaning might reveal itself to them. Thus far, they are stumped—hence the wandering in circles, lost in thought. Boulderstone is generally friendly, but so entirely mired in their theological ruminations that they can't provide much help to the party beyond simple directions or perhaps a single casting of the *cure wounds* spell.

## TO BUILD A FIRE

While traveling, the heroes notice a hunched-over humanoid figure leaning against a tree. It is a human man, dead from hypothermia with evidence of having attempted to make himself a fire to stay warm. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) will reveal what likely went wrong—it looks like the man started his fire under the branches of a tree which were laden with snow. As the fire heated up, the snow above it melted slightly and fell down onto the fire, drenching the kindling.

A successful Wisdom (Medicine) check can reveal that the man has only been dead for a few days. It is likely the man was already dying of hypothermia by the point of his failed fire, otherwise he probably would have been able to try again.

Examining the man's belongings, they will come upon a missive from a distant village near the coast called Whitewind Village. It is addressed to the people of another village not far from where the man died, warning them of the coming of a force of Shadowcroft knights who are seeking to extract taxation in the form of food and resources. The missive warns that dark days are approaching and the people of the Arctic Plains will need to band together if they're to survive the presence of this new overlord.

### BLACKHOLD SHERIFF

This encounter is especially appropriate while the heroes are present in another location that qualifies as civilization (such as the Stonehearth Respite or Wintercross, detailed below). Otherwise, you can have the group come upon a tiny fishing settlement on the plains that exists expressly to host this encounter.

The heroes come upon the sight of a man in black armor atop a large warhorse, flanked on either side by two similarly (though less grandly) armored riders. He announces himself as Sir Mordane of Blackhold, the Knight-Sheriff of the Arctic Plains (each uses the **knight** stat block). Sir Mordane demands the villagers or locals hand over a tax levy of 50 sc, plus 4 sc per adult and 50 sc per child. If they cannot pay, the Sheriff says the settlement or location he's visiting "... shall be vulnerable to all manner of unfortunate and evil predations—alas, there's simply nothing we can do to protect you without your generous support".

If the location cannot pay, he will mutter something about what a pity it will be to see such a fine place burned to cinders. If the heroes intervene, try to threaten him to leave, or else attack him, Sir Mordane and his warriors will attempt to flee. Whether he escapes alive or not, a group of enemies similar to the Knights of Blackhold encounter will arrive within a few hours of this encounter and put the settlement or location to the torch in retaliation.



## ICEBERRY HARVEST

At some point when traveling, the group may come upon a smallish grove of exceptionally sharp, thorny bushes. Suspended over this field of needle-sharp plants are a pair of halflings on stilts using hooks on the ends of short poles to harvest handfuls of strange white berries that seem to be growing on the thorny bushes.

If one of the heroes successfully identifies these plants with a DC 14 Wisdom (Medicine) or Intelligence (Nature) check, tell them that they are called iceberries, and while they have a repellant, astringent taste, they are often used as a potent ingredient in healing potions and other medicines. The halflings—Bertholdt and Jekra—are herbalists and alchemists harvesting the berries for just that use, and would be willing to brew up potions of lesser healing for the heroes at a cost of 25 sc per potion.

If a hero tries to harvest iceberries themselves, they will suffer 1d4 piercing damage per Wisdom (Survival) check they'd like to make. They will retrieve an amount of sc worth of iceberries equal to half their roll.

## STONEHEARTH RESPITE

The heroes come upon a large, sturdy longhouse with a pair of chimneys on either end from which curl gray tendrils of smoke. There is also a large stables and a series of other small outbuildings behind the longhouse clustered in a little semicircle. If they approach, a massive trollkin woman with long dark-green braids wearing a heavy fur cloak will appear in the doorway to the longhouse, bearing a greataxe. She's not brandishing the weapon or pointing at the heroes, but is very much making its presence visible to them.

Her name is Gathla Korsaff and this is her establishment, the Stonehearth Respite. Once she determines that the group means her no harm, she'll put the axe up and welcome them to her roadside inn.

The Stonehearth Respite is a mostly self-sufficient operation, but there are some things she and her nephew Kordam (who is out gathering and splitting firewood at the moment) cannot get from the local environment, so she gladly takes coin and barter in exchange for rooms, stabling, and food. She doesn't have much more than food and drink in terms of goods for sale, but the longhouse and its loft rooms are comfortable, warm, and well-tended. Kordam will arrive a couple of hours after the heroes do with a sleighful of firewood. He's in his mid thirties, restless in his aunt's employ, and eager to hear stories about the heroes' adventures, if they have any to tell.

## WINTERCROSS

On the edge of a frozen lake, at an intersection of two rough plains roads, is the village of Wintercross. It is a small village of about 500 people, but that still makes it one of the largest settlements in the whole of the Arctic Plains. Wintercross serves as a hub town through which travelers crossing the plains often journey, as a convenient location to switch or rest up their horses, buy supplies such as salted fish and dry wood, and prepare for the next leg of their travels.

Prices for everything in Wintercross are fairly high (at least 10% higher than book price), as it is a distant and out of the way locale without much in the way of meaningful competition for its goods. The heroes can get room and board at the Frosty Tap inn, run by a male hondu named Yevis. You can use this town as a location for other encounters, as a destination to give the heroes a half-way point on their way elsewhere, or just as a way to break up the monotony of camping in the wilderness.

Though most magic items cannot be found here, the group can buy *potions of lesser healing* from the Icemire Druggist, run by a bhrunai woman named Gelvali Oedis.

## SHADOWCROFT

Shadowcroft is a plane of existence from another reality. When Dracula reset the cosmic timeline of Ancerra for the second time, the sheer power of the cosmic magic channeled through Ancerra's core was enough to serve as a sort of magnet. Given Dracula's skill in occultism and his pact with Death, the magic latched onto Shadowcroft, a realm of darkness and ruin.

One of the most notable regions of Shadowcroft is the kingdom of Avalon, which was co-opted by Lilith, the mother of vampires in Shadowcroft. Lilith and Dracula quickly found one another and made an alliance, placing both Ancerra and Shadowcroft in eternal peril. Lilith's most powerful familiar was the formerly mighty king of Avalon, Uther Pendragon.

The primary region of Shadowcroft pertinent to *Daughter of the Shadows* is Lilith's keep. Lilith's keep is a two day journey outside of Camelot, the capital of Avalon. This is the city that the heroes might witness in Norspina. When the heroes enter Camelot from Norspina, they enter into Shadowcroft; when they exit Camelot, they reemerge in Norspina, either in the same region or in a different region based on the number of days that have passed.

If the heroes wish to explore Shadowcroft beyond Camelot - or wish to travel to Lilith's keep from Camelot - they must climb over Camelot's walls rather than passing through its gates, which would return them to Norspina. If they leave Camelot by scaling its walls, they immediately gain +2 Fear.



## THE HUNGERING WASTES

Advancing through the Hungering Waste involves traveling through a dangerous, uncharted landscape in Shadowcroft for two consecutive days. When heroes attempt to take a long rest while traveling in the Hungering Waste, they must make a DC 16 Sanity check. On a failed save, they gain +1 additional Fear.

The landscape of the Hungering Waste is that of a mountainous forest. The trees are gnarled and leafless, the undergrowth more thorns and burrs than true vegetation, the rocks sharp and jagged, and the entire area blanketed in a thick layer of mist.

Each day in the Hungering Waste involves three combat encounters. Roll or select from the table below each time.

Remove one or more monsters from these encounters if the heroes' total party level is lower than 80.

1d12	Encounter
1	Shadowcroft Vampire
2	2 Guardian Naga
3	2 Glabrezu
4	2 Unicorns
5	2 Erinyeses
6	2 Treants
7	Ice Devil
8	2 Behir
9	2 Chain Devils
10	2 Hydras
11	2 Vrocks
12	3 Wyverns

The heroes arrive at Lilith's keep after the third difficult encounter on the second day.

## KAMELOT

The heroes may spend time in Kamelot in order to quickly travel vast distances across Norspina. Given that Shadowcroft has been connected to Norspina for over ten years now, the knowledge of how to use Kamelot to travel inordinate distances is relatively commonplace.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF KAMELOT

Kamelot was founded by Uther Pendragon's great-grandfather, Constantine the Great, after he united the kingdom of Avalon through a combination of warfare and diplomacy. Both Uther's grandfather and father were counseled by a wise old sage named Merlin. While Uther's father, Constantine III, raised Uther to be a noble warrior and generous king, Constantine III also adopted an urchin girl named Morgana. Morgana trained under Merlin, becoming skilled in both magic and politics.

When Uther came to power, Merlin retired from public life and Morgana became Uther's key advisor. Through a series of tragedies, Uther's early reign proved disastrous despite Morgana's best efforts to advise him. Eventually, Morgana left Kamelot, unable to fix Uther's mistakes. When a new court advisor, who called herself Lilian, ingratiated herself into Uther's favor, she quickly took over the kingdom. Lilian - truly Lilith, the mother of vampires - made Uther Pendragon her familiar. Uther's pregnant wife, Igrayne, fled Kamelot and has never been heard from again.

### KAMELOT'S TIME DILATION

Shadowcroft exists in a plane separate from, yet interposed on top of, Ancerra's region of Norspina. Time progresses in odd ways between the two planes.

For every two days spent in Shadowcroft, five days pass in Ancerra.

For every five days that pass in Ancerra, Kamelot teleports to its next location, as shown on the following diagram.





## KAMELOT LOCATIONS

The following locations are prominent areas of Kamelot, either significant buildings or notable neighborhoods that the heroes might explore during their time in the city.

### HAVENS AND SHRINES

Kamelot is a Haven. It has a Shrine capable of removing Psyche talents located in the Temple of the Silver Sun.

### BELFRY DISTRICT

The Belfry District, just to the south of Castle Pendragon, is a manicured, grand area of the city notable for its massive manors, each of which are designed in the gothic style with sweeping stone rooftops, flying buttresses, and dark stained glass. This is where the nobility live.

If the heroes end up in this region, **gargoyles** keeping watch from a nearby building will firmly ask them to leave. If they do not, then the heroes will be confronted by a number of **grotesques** and **gargoyles** such that it is an encounter of medium difficulty.

### CASTLE PENDRAGON

Castle Pendragon is an enormous stone keep with soaring towers, defensive crenelations, and heavily protected entryways. Mounting an attack on the castle is virtually suicidal. The gateways into the castle are staggered so that an invading force would get trapped between multiple gates, whereupon Lilith's forces can pour boiling oil or fire ballista quarrels through murder holes in the ceiling. The castle's exterior walls are sixty feet high and constantly patrolled by gargoyles, vampires, and fiends.

### CONSTANTINE ACADEMY

A dismal series of empty lecture halls and moldering libraries, Constantine Academy once held great promise of becoming a stellar educational institution in Avalon, perhaps the greatest in Shadowcroft. However, early in Uther Pendragon's reign, he pulled all funding from the academy and redirected it to his wars with neighboring nations. Anyone who wanders Constantine Academy's forlorn halls might hear phantom knocking coming from beneath the library, but it seems almost a trick of the mind.

Heroes that explore Constantine Academy can make a DC 22 Intelligence check. On a successful check, a hero finds an old book with useful information. Roll 1d4 to determine the contents of the book.

1. A historical account of Uther Pendragon's backstory.
2. A recently-written diagram showcasing the similarities and differences between Ancerran and Croftian vampirism.
3. A spell scroll of *cure wounds*.

4. A bestiary that allows a hero to gain +2 to any checks made to recall factual information about a creature with the beast or monstrosity tag provided that the hero has at least 1 minute to read.

### HALLOWED GRAVE

To the west of the Temple to the Silver Sun, the Hallowed Grave is a large collection of tombstones arranged in sloppy rows on a muddy, earthy plot of land. Leafless, gnarled trees grow interspersed throughout this plot, and a couple small, publicly accessible mausoleums offer respite from the rain that often seems to fall more heavily - or even exclusively - on the graveyard.

Any who visit the graveyard can expect to witness some form of supernatural occurrence. When the heroes enter the graveyard, they feel a sense of somber weight settling over them. For every 10 minutes that they spend in the graveyard, roll on the following random encounter table.

1d6	Encounter
1	1d4 hostile Zombies attack the party.
2	A hostile Ghost attacks the party.
3	A hostile Revenant attacks the party.
4	1d4 hostile Wights attack the party.
5	1d4 hostile Shadows attack the party.
6	1d4 hostile Skeletons attack the party.

If the heroes ask any of the NPCs in Kamelot about why there are so many monsters in the graveyard, the NPC will inform the heroes that the Hallowed Grave used to be truly hallowed, but that was before Lilith's rise. Since then, it has slipped into a mockery of what a graveyard should be: A place of fond remembrance.

### THE HUNTING GROUNDS

The Hunting Grounds sprawls across the northeast of Kamelot. It is accessible directly from one of Castle Pendragon's drawbridges. The forest is large enough to support a small ecosystem, and wolves, boars, stags, and similar creatures are commonly spotted in the forest. Before his descent into tyranny, Pendragon would often lead hunting expeditions in the forest, feasting on whatever he caught at the night's banquet.



## MYSTIC LAKE

The Mystic Lake is a large lake in the center of the Hunting Grounds. It is, according to hearsay, the home to a mysterious ghostly woman who gave Uther Pendragon the Sword of Avalon when he assumed the title of king.

The Lady of the Lake is incredibly reclusive and only appears before the heroes if one of them succeeds on a DC 24 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

If the Lady of the Lake speaks with the heroes, she explains that she is depressed that Lilith took over after Pendragon's fall. She thinks that Lilith is even worse than Pendragon. If the heroes sympathize with her, she grants each of them the Lake Lady's Boon.

### THE LAKE LADY'S BOON

Once in the next year, a hero may spend 0 AP or 0 Reactive AP to activate the Lake Lady's Boon to gain the effects of the *water breathing* spell for 1 minute.

## STONE MARKET

The Stone Market is a large, well-respected marketplace occupying a series of large stone buildings on the southern side of the Camelot Square. Within these larger buildings, many small stands and merchant carts have taken up permanent residence in a gigantic indoor bazaar. The most successful merchants have taken over various permanent rooms in the buildings, turning them into storefronts.

Heroes can find any mundane weapons, armor, and equipment at their standard pricing in the Stone Market.

## TAROT TELLS

Deep within the Stone Market, a velvet curtain hangs in front of a hole in the wall near a textiles merchant. The only signpost above this strange storefront is an oversized tarot card, its details in elegant relief from bronze leaf.

The chambers within are the primary place of business of a fortune teller named Ilyada. If it seems that the heroes might pass her by, she uses telepathy to quietly usher them into her parlor. If this, too, fails, then she will track them down 1d4 hours later and personally introduce herself, explaining that she thinks they can benefit from working together. Ilyada mentions that she works for Morgana.

Ilyada freely offers the heroes the basic information that she has on Lilith. She fears that their alliance spells doom for both Ancerra and Shadowcroft, and she gives the heroes her boon.

## MORGANA'S BOON

A party with Morgana's Boon may seek aid when pursuing a quest that is intended to cause Lilith's demise. To seek Morgana's aid in this way, a representative from the party must find a fortune teller (or another party member) that utilizes tarot cards. In addition to any other benefits that the tarot reading would provide, the hero gains supernatural knowledge as to whether their current actions have the potential to lead them towards defeating the vampires, or whether their current actions have strayed from that mission.

## SWORD INN

The Sword Inn is directly across from the Stone Market on Camelot Square. It is an enormous wood-and-plaster structure with interior walls decorated by battered armor, broken swords, and rusted shields. The innkeeper and waiting staff all claim that each piece of memorabilia on the walls belonged at one point to one of Avalon's ancient knights. Whether or not this is true, each of the items on the wall are enchanted to spring to the defense of the inn staff if they are threatened.

The Sword Inn offers accommodations ranging from that of a modest hostel to a comfortable private room, depending on what the heroes are willing to pay. The Sword Inn has standard rates per night.

The Sword Inn also offers food and drink ranging from modest to elaborate, again at the standard rate.

## TEMPLE OF THE SILVER SUN

A large temple of dark granite walls and bright silver-and-blue stained glass overlooks the Camelot Square, the central gathering point in the city. This temple's stained glass windows are abstract depictions of the light just before a sunrise.



## THE MORNING GOD

Shadowcroft is not only a different plane of existence, but was originally from an entirely different reality than Ancerra. As such, Shadowcroft's pantheon is different from Ancerra's.

The Temple of the Silver Sun venerates any gods that stand against the darkness intrinsic to Shadowcroft, and so the clergy that reside here would respond favorably to any worshippers of the Celestial Council.

However, there is one god that these clergy worship above the others: The Morning God, or the Mourning God.

The two spellings of this deity's name reflect the two key sides of their personality. The Morning God, also referred to as "Silver" or "The Silver Sun," purportedly elevates those who hold out hope in the future. Even the darkest night eventually fades into dawn, the start of a new and glorious day. And, while they keep their agonized vigil for the brighter future, the Mourning God surrounds and comforts mortals in their suffering.

## INSIDE THE TEMPLE

The temple's interior is furnished with worn rugs that used to be a deep blue but have faded with age and dust. Many of the pews in the auditorium are rotted through with termites, though those closest to the podium are kept in reasonably good condition.

A brass pipe organ overlooks the balcony at the back of the auditorium. As drafty as the temple is, these pipes often hum isolated notes even when nobody is playing them. Behind the pipe organ, an old door with rusted hinges leads to a crooked, rickety staircase to the belfry. The bell has rusted so thoroughly that ringing it would cause it to disintegrate. The entire belfry is covered in years-old cobwebs.

The temple's undercroft contains a small food storage cellar and a gathering hall where congregants can dine together around low-rise wooden tables if they are willing to sit on the cold stone floor. The undercroft also contains a row of single-room dormitories where the temple's clergy reside.

## SHRINE OF THE MORNING GOD

The Temple of the Silver Sun contains a Shrine on the podium in its central auditorium. The Shrine is a glass sculpture of an androgynous human bowed over by the weight of a large anvil on their back. By spending 10 minutes in prayer before the Shrine, a hero may remove 1 Psyche talent. The hero becomes overwhelmed by the weight of despair in the world and is Demoralized for a number of days equal to the Fear the Psyche talent removed. A hero may benefit from this Shrine only once per month.

## TOURNEY GROUNDS

In the southwest of the city, there is a large tournament ground. Prior to its current state of totalitarian tyranny, the city often turned out in great numbers to watch knights, mercenaries, and heroes battle one another in feats of strength and daring. Jousting was always the most popular event, although free-for-all melees and elegant one-on-one fencing matches were also quite well attended.

## UNDERCROFT ALLEY

"Undercroft Alley" is a mildly pejorative term that refers to the enormous northwestern neighborhood in Kamelot that is quite poor in comparison to the rest of the city. Whereas most of the rest of Kamelot has been constructed of durable stone and wood, most buildings in the Alley still have thatched roofs and walls of thin plaster between structural crossbeams.

More than half of Kamelot's population lives in the Alley, but Lilith has continually neglected it in favor of spending tax coins on developing the Belfry District.

## BLACK MARKET DEALS

The heroes can purchase any mundane weapons, armor, and equipment at a 40% discount. However, these items are not always reliable. If a hero crit fails on an attack with a weapon purchased in this way, the weapon breaks. If a hero is reduced to 0 hit points while wearing armor purchased in this way, the armor breaks. Whenever a hero uses equipment purchased in this way, they must roll 1d20; on a roll of 3 or lower, the gear breaks.



# YODVAN

A vast plane of ice and tundra stretches out in all directions but one—in the center of this otherwise flat and frozen land is a massive range of mountains of blue-gray stone caked and dusted in white powder snow from cap to foothills. To the west of this range is a strange, vast forest of twinkling, glowing trees, as if a million tiny stars had fallen to Ancerra from the firmament above.

It is a land of light, of frost, and of wonder.

## OF LIGHT AND FROST

The island nation of Yodvan is a modern, industrious land and people who have used their island's unusual resources to tremendous effect in becoming a truly exceptional nation. Originally founded by explorers (and eventually nobles, including their first queen) from Fjordenhaven, Yodvan and their neighbor to the west share many cultural, linguistic, and historical commonalities. But the two are still distinct and independent of one another, especially in their industries, religions, and particular preoccupations. Yodvan is home to the bulk of the Glowing Forest, of which some remnant, scattered copses remain on the main landmass of Noord. It is also the site of the Mountains of Adamant, a large range of exceptionally tall mountains inside of which are some of the only known veins of adamantine ore in the entire world. Adamantine ore can be forged and shaped into high-indestructible objects, but only by those who know the various secrets of working this temperamental metal. And that knowledge is both rare and expensive—especially outside of Yodvan.

The nation's capital and largest city is called Aurora's Hearth, built upon the island's western-central coastline. The vast majority of the total populace of the island dwell there, though there are plenty of smaller towns and settlements up in the Mountains of Adamant, or even across Yodvan's tundras and taigas.

The people of Yodvan interact with their primary deities—a personification of the northern lights as a goddess named Aurora, and the personification of winter as a goddess named Strack—mostly through the interpretation of signs, omens, and portents. This can often take the form of “reading” the patterns seen in the northern lights, or forms of pseudo-divination by reading weather patterns, clouds, or the migratory patterns of birds and other animals. Mostly these sorts of divinatory practices and omen-reading are performed by mystics and priests of Aurora and Strack, but even everyday people in Yodvan have a superstitious streak to them, and will talk of weal and woe omens they've seen throughout the day. This relationship with religion and their gods as mainly one of spiritual barometry marks religious Yodvans as a bit unusual amongst many of the faithful of Ancerra.

## ISLAND OF YODVAN LORE

When the heroes arrive in Yodvan, they may make Intelligence checks to see what they know about the region.

INT DC	Information
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- |    |   |
|----|---|
| 5  | Yodvan is a cold place up north; it has a historical connection to Fjordenhaven.  |
| 12 | In Yodvan there are periods throughout the year during which the sun never truly sets, and those during which it never truly rises, for multiple days at a time.  |
| 17 | Yodvan is the primary source of glass lights, mysterious, glowing biotechnical “fruits” from the trees of its Glowing Forest. It is also the main source throughout Ancerra of adamantine, a mythically hard metal from which some of the greatest arms and armor can be made.  |
| 23 | There are several academies and organizations throughout Yodvan which experiment with and seek to find new applications for the various biomechanical wonders of their homeland, such as the biometallic plants of the Glowing Forest, and the Avadri miracles found both beneath that forest and deep within the Mountains of Adamant. |

## ISLAND OF YODVAN RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

### COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Fire Down Below
4-5	Sudden Stampede!
6-8	Lurking Vampire
9-10	Pack of Werewolves
11-12	A Stalking Shadow

### FIRE DOWN BELOW

While traveling in the Mountains of Adamant, or amongst a particularly rocky outcropping of boulders or barren tundra and cracked earth, a fissure opens up seemingly in response to the heroes' passing. Goopy bubbling magma spews forth, at first seeming to be just that, but it doesn't take long for a sizable blob of the stuff to break off from the rest of the trickling flow. Then a second blob does the same. Both are **fire elementals**.



## SUDDEN STAMPEDE!

The heroes are surprised by a group of furious **giant elk** that barrel into them from seemingly out of nowhere. Each is in a severely agitated state, and seems intent on taking out some kind of aggression upon the heroes. A DC 17 Wisdom (Perception) reveals that the creatures have strange, softly-glowing arrowheads lodged in their flesh in several places. If the heroes are near to the Glowing Forest, you could say the moose appeared from out of the trees, running as if being chased by something. Otherwise, they were simply not there one moment and there the next.

If the group decides to investigate where these creatures came from after the fact, they may learn that there is evidence of a now collapsed temporary portal to the Everwilds (perhaps by use of a Sense Magic spell, or similar effect). It is as if these creatures were being hunted by something and escaped through a tear in the veil between planes—or were they perhaps loosed here on purpose by something?

This encounter works best if the group is wading through natural difficult terrain (e.g. waist-deep snow and scrubby underbrush while walking offroad), because it allows the giant elk to make full use of their Wildheart trait while inhibiting the heroes' movement. To give them some interesting tactical movement options, make sure that there are some large (10 feet long or longer) elevated boulders or other patches of normal terrain they could access.

## LURKING VAMPIRE

The heroes encounter a vampire that is just looking for some fun and thinks that terrifying or killing heroes sounds like a good time. The vampire will flee once Bloodied, but will fight tactfully. Roll on the table below to determine the vampire's exact stats.

1d4	Vampire Stats
1	Jotun Vampire
2	Vampire Reaver
3	Vampspider
4	Vampire

## PACK OF WEREWOLVES

A pack of werewolves stalk the party. The heroes may notice this by succeeding on contested Wisdom checks; the creature with the lowest Dexterity (Stealth) modifier may roll 2d20, keeping the higher roll, as they keep their distance for the first day. They attack the party while they are attempting to take a long rest. Once half of the werewolves in the pack are dead, the remainder will retreat.

The pack of werewolves pose an encounter of medium difficulty. Add **wolves** and **dire wolves** as needed to reach the desired total adjusted CR.

## A STALKING SHADOW

The adventurers should get an opportunity to notice a strange gathering of shadows that seems to move out of the corner of their eyes. This is a corrupted **treant**.

It follows them as they travel during the day, but is maddeningly impossible to pin down. Over the day, several of them should roll opposed Wisdom (Perception) versus the creature's Dexterity (Stealth). If they succeed, they are certain they see a vaguely humanoid shape just out of the corner of their eyes. If they fail, they see vague movement that is gone when they turn to look.

If the heroes attack the Treant, they find that it is not alone; 2d6 **awakened shrub** emerge from the brambles nearby and attack the heroes as well.

## THE GLOWING FOREST

The Glowing Forest is a strange and wondrous location full of bizarre biometallic plants that seemingly grow in unnatural, evenly-spaced rows with nearly identical distributions of branches. Upon these impossible trees grow glass-like bulbs which bear within them strange luminous fibers. These are variously called glass bulbs, glowfruits, glass pears, and any number of other names by the various people who employ them to light their homes and cities. These bulbs continue shining for upwards of a couple of years, and scientists in Yodvan and beyond have uncovered all sorts of ingenious ways to make use of these bizarre biomechanical "fruits".

The forest itself is massive on Yodvan (there are smaller patches of similar trees also called the Glowing Forest in Noord), and though much of it is uninhabited, there are several distinct regions of the forest.

## GLOWING FOREST ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-3	Unusual Tracks
4-5	Biomechanical Mutation
6-8	A Shimmering Mirage
9-10	A Slithering Eye
11-12	The Hanging Man

## UNUSUAL TRACKS

While traveling through the Glowing Forest, the heroes have occasionally heard strange sounds like the creaking of branches in the wind—this sound would be unremarkable in most forests, but the slightly metallic, tinny sound made by the biometallic trees of the Glowing Forest is very distinct. And this creaking sound is very much something else...

After a bit of this, the group comes upon some unusual tracks they are unlikely to be able to identify.



They are crooked, disturbingly thin, massively elongated humanoid footprints about two feet long that appear to be wearing nailed, cobbled shoes. The tracks wander a ways in a winding, serpentine path, before suddenly disappearing, as if the creature leaving them just took wing and flew away.

This check would be an INT check, using either Arcana or History. These are the tracks of the flickershade (see The Flickerpatch section), a fearsome and nightmarish eldritch creature that is said to haunt a strange, flickering portion of the Glowing Forest called the Flickerpatch. There's a good deal of argument between the people of Yodvan whether or not the flickershade actually exists.

Local legend says that the flickershade kidnaps Glowing Forest bulb harvesters who stray too far from their crews, and spills their blood amongst the Flickerpatch, ritualistically feeding their lifeforce to the flickering trees in an attempt to give them a proper, healthy glow again.

## BIOMECHANICAL MUTATION

The heroes stumble upon a squirrel or other small creature that would otherwise be innocuous, but quickly realize that at least half of its body is made of some kind of pliable living metal. An enormous lunamothe flutters past, and the biomechanical mutant opens up its mouth and projects a puff of green gas that instantly paralyzes the insect. Minute tendrils of slithering metal shoot out of the small creature's mouth like tongues and start messily deconstructing the fallen moth and pulling the parts into its maw.

If the group tries to approach the biomechanical creature, it will flee impossibly fast, disappearing into the snow a short way's off as if it just slipped into the unseen entrance to a burrow.

## A SHIMMERING MIRAGE

In the distance, the lights of the Glowing Forest mix with the shimmering mists and flurries of snow to create a strange, nearly impossible to miss mirage that looks like a great house in the distance with barely visible people moving about in a lively manner. Watching the spectacle for a while, one is certain they can make out individual people, going about motions as if they were feasting and having some sort of party with one another, though the image is far too blurry to make out details like lineage, facial features, or the specifics of their clothing.

No matter how close to this illusion one gets, it always seems to be just a few hundred feet further away. The locals of the Glowing Forest call this the Avadri Window and folktales rumor that it's a vision of the past— though most just think it to be an especially strange trick of the light.

## A SLITHERING EYE

Something amongst the strange roots of the glowing trees moves suddenly, and there's a sharp, high-pitched sound like metal cable rapidly unspooling. An odd glassy eyeball on the end of a long flexible metal coil shoots up from the ground near one of the heroes. It moves like a snake, whipping upright to about head height before stopping to regard them. It inspects the heroes briefly, blinks at them twice with a previously unseen metallic shutter that seems to mimic an eyelid of sorts, and then as quickly and unexpectedly as the thing appeared, it sucks back into the ground like a noodle being slurped up.





If the heroes dig through the snow where they saw the eye appear, they will find a small patch of disturbed earth that looks like something burrowed there. What that thing was, where it came from, and where it went are all mysteries.

## THE HANGING MAN

Somewhere far away from the Bulbtender's Rest and anything else that could even remotely be considered civilization here in the Glowing Forest, the heroes may find a strange and unsettling sight. Upon an unusually large glowing tree (unusual in no small part because almost all of the glowing trees are of nearly identical proportions), they find a man's body hanging upside down from a tree by one ankle. It looks almost like the tree itself had grabbed him up, as his ankle is wrapped up and crushed by one of its branches, which has crossed over the trunk of the tree almost like it is an arm bent at the elbow to hold the man directly against the tree.

The man is apparently human, though he is very tall at around 7 feet in height. He is clearly dead. The heroes may make an INT check against a DC 17 to figure out the amount of decay would be indicative of having died around a day or so ago. However, the cold weather may be preserving him, so it is hard to tell with any certainty just how long ago he died. He is missing one of his eyes. There is a spear jammed into the roots of the tree nearby, seemingly just outside the man's reach. They can cut the man down from the tree if they would like, though the biometallic branches of the tree are extremely tough and they might risk dulling, chipping, or even breaking whatever tool or weapon they use to do so.

If one of the heroes would like to take the man's spear, they'll find it has the following statistics:

### The Chieftain's Spear

*Weapon, Spear, Uncommon (Requires Attunement)*

The long, slightly gnarled shaft of white ash wood ends in a shockingly sharp, slightly curved "blade" that is not made of metal, but is an extension of the wood of the spear haft itself. It is a +1 spear that gives you proficiency in Persuasion while attuned.

If at any time the heroes leave the area and come back later, the man is gone. If they did not take the spear earlier, the spear is also gone. If they take his spear, the next time they take a long rest, the one-eyed man they saw in the tree will appear in the dreams of the character who carries the spear and silently chide them with a wagging finger for taking it. If the character attempts to engage the man in their dream in conversation, he will open his mouth to reveal his tongue has been cut off and cannot speak—but he will offer the character a test. Read or paraphrase the following.

**Read Aloud:** *The man strides a few steps from you before turning to look over his shoulder, as if to encourage you to follow him. You stride through the vague, shifting fog of the dreamscape for a short while before coming upon a set of three stone pedestals. Each one bears atop it an object.*

*The first pedestal bears the taxidermied remains of a pair of large ravens, posed strangely, as if to look like they are in conversation with one another. One raven wears little clothes reminiscent of a Yodvan bard while the other is dressed in tiny peasants' clothes.*

*The second pedestal is somewhat less whimsical. It bears a large tome, opened to a page with beautiful illuminated runes that seem both strangely familiar and yet entirely foreign to you.*

*The third pedestal bears the severed head of a wolf, its face frozen in a snarl. In its mouth, amidst its thicket of yellow fangs, is a mangled crown dripping with blood.*

*The silent one-eyed man gestures to the pedestals encouragingly. What he wants seems clear: pick one of the objects before you.*

The first two pedestals represent language and connection. The first represents eloquence, poetry, and storytelling. The verbal transmission of tales from one person to another. The second represents the same, only in written form. The snarling wolf with a bloody crown in its teeth represents, somewhat obliquely, a severed connection. If the player selects either of the first two objects, the man smiles briefly and the dream fades. When the character awakens, they still have the spear. It is a gift from the one-eyed man. If they select the third object, the one-eyed man looks sad and departs as the dream fades. The spear is gone when they awake.

## AURORA'S HEARTH

Aurora's Hearth is a massive, sparklingly clean, and steadfastly modern city rising from the freezing western coast of the Island of Yodvan. It was the very first outpost founded by the Fjordenhavian sailors who struck out to explore the seas east of their homeland, and has simply grown ever since. It has several districts, including (from west to east) the Old Town, Aurora's Path, the Mist Markets, and the Outer Rime.



## THE OLD TOWN

Old Town takes up a large portion of the city's coastal area, as it is the common name for the first iteration of the settlement that would one day grow into Aurora's Hearth. It is here that the Fjordenhavian explorers first landed and built their foothold on the island. This district is home to the monarch's palace, called the Adamant Throne.

It is a melting pot of people at vastly different socioeconomic strata, with individual neighborhoods for people of widely different means being located just a stone's throw away from one another. The houses, row-buildings, manors, and other buildings throughout the Old Town have a characteristic architectural style rarely seen in other parts of the city, owing to their far older make than the rest of Aurora's Hearth. At some point, the narrow-but-tall style of construction fell out of favor when the city had resolved to grow itself past the borders it had set for itself with its first perimeter wall. As such, most other buildings in the city were built with the understanding that they had more or less unlimited room to grow.

## AURORA'S PATH

Aurora's Path is often described as something like a mercantile, artisans', and shopping district, and while this is not untrue, it is also somewhat reductive. The whole district is built along a single, very wide road paved with glittering opalescent stones that shimmer a rainbow of colors when the light hits them just right. This road leads up the hill leading away from the Old Town, in parts at a steep angle. To place buildings alongside its ascent, the builders had to create tiers of solid foundation upon which to build. The overall effect makes Aurora's Path look something like a stairway for unfathomably giant creatures, each step about a block deep before the next appears.

The buildings of Aurora's Path loom high over the Old Town and the sea, especially from the highest tiers that lead to the mouth of the Seadrake's Gate—the central gate in the city's outermost wall that allows travelers in. At the very top of Aurora's Path, very near to Seadrake's Gate is the Skypyre, a large eternal flame that burns wood with minerals and minor enchantments to create a multicolored flame of the blues, greens, and purples of Aurora herself.

## THE MIST MARKETS

Once named for its position within the city as the main mercantile district (before Aurora's Path became the de facto entrance to the city), the Mist Markets are now the largest residential sector in the city where a little over a quarter of its population live. It is a bustling and populous place full of narrow, winding alleys and fairly tall three-storey row houses that meander along the uneven roads.

The awkward placement of the snaking paths in this part of Aurora's Hearth are seemingly dictated as much by the poorly planned-out placement of various housing structures as they are by the topology of the land and the sinuous lines of rivers cutting through the district.

## OUTER RIME

Just outside the city's New Wall is yet another expansion of residential and commercial architecture, this one growing up around the Yodvanian Academy of Sciences, and sort of filling in the space between the city proper and the vast campus of the Academy. Because it is something along the lines of a university town, Outer Rime is actually rather comfortable and relatively high rent, despite being outside the protective walls of the city proper.

Officially, Outer Rime and the Yodvanian Academy of Sciences are absolutely a part of Aurora's Hearth, but the Academy and the little town where most of its faculty and students live has a pretty different character to it from the rest of the city. Rimers are often thought of as haughty, dainty, and overly opinionated people, while stereotypes within Outer Rime about the people of the Hearth are often equally uncharitable.

## THE BOESDOTTIR DELVE

It is widely known that everything beneath the Glowing Forest is just about as strange and impossible as everything above it. The Boesdottir Delve is a cave that leads below the forest, deep into the earth. It was first found and explored by Hyrja Boesdottir some two-hundred years ago after some earthquakes created a small fissure in a previously unremarkable section of forest, revealing caverns below.

The cave is full of strange creatures and technology, and would work very well for you to introduce a small dungeon or diversion with themes of the Avadri, of lost technology, and odd biomechanical creatures.



## BULBTENDER'S REST

A Rest is a smallish settlement on the northern side of the Glowing Forest where harvesters of the trees live (commonly called bulbenders). The little village has a de facto leader in Corela Jessen, an older water elemental woman who has been a bulbender for almost forty years, and to whom the others look for guidance or if they need a dispute settled. There are several different trading companies represented by the harvesters working at the Rest, as well as many independent harvesters.

The rules are pretty simple, and as long as you keep them, you can stay. No thieving, no fighting, and no drinking during work hours. Other than that, the people of the Rest are pretty easygoing and rarely find themselves in need of a more complex legal system than that. If you break a rule too many times, or get on too many people's bad sides, you are out. They cannot stop you from harvesting the forest's bulbs, but they are also not going to welcome you into camp when you are freezing out there after sundown.

The Rest has Yolvin's Commissary, Lowfjord's Tinkering, and the Roadhouse Inn, which serve as the town's general store, smithy and tool shop, and main drinking establishment (and inn), respectively. In Lowfjord's Tinkering the heroes can find Frendwick Lowfjord, a middle-aged halfling and his "students" (other bulbenders interested in the tinkering arts). Here the group can acquire all kinds of interesting things crafted from the unique resources of the Glowing Forest.

Item	Description	Cost (sc)
<i>Adamant Leaf Camouflage</i>	A cloak made from woven-together adamant leaves, the strange biometallic leaves from the trees of the Glowing Forest. These leaves, when oiled and layered correctly, are highly reflective with almost a mirror shine. While in darkness and not moving, gain +2 on Dexterity (Stealth) checks to remain hidden.	200
<i>Glass Light</i>	Glass lights are dirt cheap here, given how many there are. Normally, these things run about 30-50 sc (or even higher, down south, into the 100s of silver coins). Most people won't even sell them to you, though, as they think that's tantamount to cheating a naive visitor. Just go pluck one off a tree!	5-10
<i>Glowfiber Bracelet</i>	A soft bracelet woven of the glowing fibers inside the glass lights. It does not give off heat, and only glows with half the strength of a torch. It's most often used for tenders to be able to keep track of one another in the dark.	20
<i>Glowtorch</i>	A clever contraption that contains a glass light and allows you to turn it on & off. While on, it projects the light outward in a narrow beam, out to about 120 ft. Despite what some think, making the light able to be turned off does not "save" its glow for longer, and instead drastically shortens its lifespan. You must change the glass light in a glowtorch every month.	125
<i>Shimmersap Tincture</i>	A distillation of the bizarre sap from the glowing trees—it smells strangely like celery but tastes like some kind of oil. Consuming a draught of it grants you the ability to see in absolute darkness for up to 6 hours (as per the Darkvision feature of Dwarves, CR page 18), and causes your eyes to faintly glow in the dark.	50
<i>Shining Arrows &amp; Bolts</i>	Arrows with heads made from the biometal of the glowing trees and filled with shimmersap. When they hit a solid surface (i.e. not when they hit most creatures), the arrowhead explodes, creating a glowing surface that shines as a torch for up to 1 minute. Very useful for illuminating far away places. Otherwise functions as a normal ammunition for purposes of inflicting damage on creatures.	5 each



## THE MOUNTAINS OF ADAMANT

The Mountains of Adamant are a massive range of steely gray mountains that take up the majority of the central landmass of the Island of Yodvan. They are the single biggest known source of adamantine ore in Ancerra.

### THE GANAVAR MINE

The Ganavar Mine is one of the oldest continually-in-production mines in the Mountains of Adamant. It was first dug into Mount Klavnirr by the Ganavar Clan of dwarves centuries ago, who were originally looking to make a new clanhold for themselves after being driven north due to some unrecorded, shameful exile which they have long sought to forget. The mine is still owned by Ganavars to this day, though there are maybe a half-dozen other dwarf clans living there, as well as thousands of other people besides.

The mine is no longer just a mine—it is now also a fully functioning small city. As reaches of the mine began to run out of valuable minerals to extract (in particular adamantine ore, silver, and certain precious jewels), those areas were reinforced, masoned smooth, and turned into living areas. This kept happening over the span of centuries, until many, many levels, shafts, caverns, and delves within the earth of Mount Klavnirr were furnished and fit for habitation.

The lowest depths of the mine are still very active, as more veins of adamantine, iron, jadeite, gold, silver, and starstone have been found over the long decades in the dark. In everything they do, the miners of the Ganavar Mine are careful to remember that there are thousands of people living above them, and so excavations and extraction processes are designed to be slow, methodical, and extremely cautious to prevent collapses and cave-ins that might have further reaching consequences than just the tragic loss of a few miners deep below.

### THE GRIFFON AERIE

The most direct route between two of the mountains in the Adamant chain is hunted by hungry gryphons from the Gryphon Aerie, a massive nest of the beasts located near the top of Mount Forlaer, also commonly called the Cursed Peak. Despite their wild and predatory behavior, these gryphons actually are domesticated by a powerful clan of mountain folk called the Oegisvindr.

The Oegisvindr are Noordan in origin. They were descended from viking raiders who came to Yodvan on a pilgrimage, led to this mountain by the visions of a supposed prophet of Strack named Thurmond Icecarver. Thurmond's clan found the Gryphon Aerie, and over the years they learned to coexist with the gryphons, and eventually become interdependent upon one another.

Now the Oegisvindr are feared raiders from the skies who ride their Griffon mounts into battle to loot and pillage.

### MOUNTAINSBLOOD FORGEWORKS

The Mountainsblood Forgeworks is a massive subterranean forgeworks made long ago by a family of fire elementals called the Crucibax. Using the volcanic activity of Mount Mospellan as the everburning heart of their forges, and a vast network of adamantine tubes and powerful bellows to direct and control airflow (called the Lungs of the Mountain), the workers of Mountainsblood are said to be the finest adamantine smiths in the world.

The Forgeworks is somewhere between a place of business and a small village in its own right. Nearly everyone who works there also lives there (though there are some small mountain villages nearby), and the smiths and smelters of Mountainsblood are like one big—mildly dysfunctional—family. That strange family's current patriarch is one Furnan Crucibax, the great-great-grandson of the founders of the Forgeworks, a fire elemental man in his late 30s.

If you want adamantine ore smelted and worked into something, you would be hard pressed to find a better place to do it.

### STRACKENFANE

On the side of a northeastern mountain of the Mountains of Adamant, accessible only by a treacherous path and twisting mountain stairs cut into the living rock, is a small but religiously significant temple of monks devoted to the winter goddess, Strack. Their monastery is called Strackenfane. Every few years, during especially harsh and seemingly interminable winters, people are sent up the dangerous mountain path as a ritual "sacrifice" in keeping with ancient traditions. Long ago, it was the intention of this ritual that people would die of exposure, a sacrifice to Strack to appease her boundless hunger for warmth.

Now, however, this is more of a symbolic sacrifice than a literal one. A person is usually chosen specifically for their good physical health, and is expected to make it to the monastery and spend the rest of the winter with the monks, hearing their stories and giving them news from the villages and world below their mountaintop. The monks have an especially vast and well-tended library, filled with donations from each "sacrifice" sent their way. They mostly subsist on hardy tubers they grow in their rocky plateau fields, and herds of goats they raise, so they are always eager for more "sacrifices" to bring them treats and food they do not normally have access to.

The whole thing often sounds ghoulish and strange to outsiders' ears when they first hear of it, but many people in the mountains have fond memories of their winters spent as "sacrifices" to the monks and to Strack's fury.



## THE ARCTIC SEA

The Arctic Sea, also called the Ice Sea, stretches across northern Gathandia from one end of the continent to the other. The peoples of Fjordenhaven, Yodvan, Noord, and the Teivos clans call this inhospitable region home, and all ply the arctic sea for various reasons.

It is a region of treacherous icy waves, destructive floes, and deadly sea creatures, each of which have sunk a thousand ships. The cold of the water can snatch your breath away and freeze you to death in mere seconds. People travel these seas every single day, certainly... but people also die within them nearly as often.

The the Ice Sea is the northern ocean of Gathandia traveled by the various peoples of the north. It is the source of a great bounty of fish, without which most of these northern lands would surely starve, but it is also a treacherous expanse of water which will sink your ship without a moment's hesitation if you have even a momentary lapse in healthy fear and respect for its many dangers.

## ARCTIC SEA RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

### COMBAT ENCOUNTERS

2d6	Encounter
2-4	Boiling Waters
5-8	The Chosen of Strack
9-10	Dire Drowners
11-12	Eyes in the Dark

### BOILING WATERS

While traveling in the Arctic Sea, give the heroes a chance to notice a strange bubbling patch of water directly in their path. They will spot it far too late to move around it, as its source is the searing hot body heat of one or more Gyo-Gura (use the stats of **dragon turtles**), who will surface and even flop part of their enormous bodies down onto the heroes' vessel (if it is small enough for them to reach the top deck) in an effort to break their ship apart.

Any hero who successfully identifies these creatures may recognize that these creatures are not normally aggressive, but are often fiercely territorial. As such, hastily fleeing the area may make a protracted battle with the creatures unnecessary. Gyo-Gura are fairly powerful creatures individually, and this encounter can be escaped relatively easily by the heroes getting them off the ship and continuing on their way.

## THE CHOSEN OF STRACK

A group of Strack-worshipping zealots were transformed into ice elementals (use the stats of **air elementals** and **water elementals**) while on pilgrimage by contact with a strange idol they found on a rogue iceberg. These poor unfortunates believed themselves touched by the Winter Goddess's own will, and have chosen to believe that the strange whispers from the deep that pervade their minds are the murmurs of their goddess's own voice.

These mutated cultists chase down other sailors to drown them in the icy waters of the Arctic Sea, that their victims might feel Strack's freezing essence within their lungs and know true peace in the Winter Goddess's embrace.

### DIRE DROWNERS

This encounter works best at night time, as a dense and freezing fog overtakes the sea. Small lights in the distance look to be the pilot lights of a nearby vessel, but something's wrong. It is drawing far too close! No attempt to hail alert the other ship is successful, until finally the lights draw close enough and those onboard discover, perhaps too late, that the lights are in fact **will-o'-wisps**, who will immediately begin using their Entice action to try to draw creatures off the boat and into the ocean.

Waiting below are several **giant octopuses** who follow the wisps to feed on those they lure to their deaths. If no one falls in, the octopuses will begin climbing up the side of the heroes' vessel to take matters into their own tentacles.

### EYES IN THE DARK

In the dead of night—or else in a strange supernatural fog that rushes in to envelop the heroes' vessel—a pair of gleaming white eyes flash open, each the size of a large, round dinner table. These horrible, malevolent eyes peer down from an impossible height over the heroes' ship, dripping with malice.

**Abyssal Lurker.** A creature that exudes pure terror in its very gaze, the abyssal lurker strikes fear into the hearts of even the bravest marauders sailing along the icy seas. The abyssal lurker is extremely dangerous, so recognize that it is quite likely to kill one or more heroes if they venture into the seas. Do not reduce its power levels in any way, but consider allowing the heroes to escape if they focus on sailing away from the creature.



## THE BLEAKSTONE PHAROS

The Bleakstone Pharos is a strange solid black ziggurat caked in ice, from which emits a long greenish beam of sickly light. It is located near a treacherous expanse of deadly reefs and is thought of as a boon for its uncanny design. Rather than passively emitting light to indicate the coast, it has some sort of unknown mechanism or clever enchantment within it that causes the shaft of its wan light to trace a path across the choppy waves. Following this path ensures one's safety in this stretch of raking dead reefs, while straying from it means almost certain doom.

Despite being such a beneficial structure, the Pharos itself is seen as dangerous and frightening in its own right. Who built it, when, and how are all unknown. Few who seek to visit it ever return, and fewer still return in a state able to discuss what they've seen. The structure is not built of stone or metal but some unknown black substance, hard and cold at first, yet with what feels like the pulse of a heartbeat reverberating through it.

One narrow doorway inside leads to a hall that seems to breathe, cold air rushing in before warm air rushes out. A single spiral staircase leads up into the ceiling from this central chamber, and down into its floor. Noises can be heard coming from below— something like a quiet murmuring or distant chanting. A faint green light emanates from above. No one who has seen the light chamber above has been able to explain what they have seen within, as if the words are snatched from their throats before they can escape. No one who has seen what lies in the murmuring chambers below has ever reemerged.

If the heroes descend into the murmuring chambers despite these warnings, they are confronted with a horrifying battle. They must fight an undead **jotun berzerker** and his army of **ghasts** and **mummies**. This encounter should be extremely deadly, to the point of being unwinnable for a typical party without any magic items. If the heroes survive, they may plunder the undead jotun's treasure hoard, each gaining 5,000 sc and a very rare magic item of their choice.

## THE ICE TITANS' CLAWS

A stretch of arctic ocean dotted with curving talons of ice, the top portions of hundreds of icebergs shaped by a peculiar wind erosion into what looks for all the world like claws piercing the skin of the ocean and reaching up towards the sky. The Ice Titans' Claws are a dangerous region of sea for sailors without massive ice-cutting vessels, but beloved by pirates and vikings for just that reason. A skilled, attentive sailor with a decent bit of sunlight can navigate them relatively easily, but their fearsome reputation and appearance means few people ever bother to try.

The Claws therefore have become a popular place to moor up onto small floating villages carved into the sides of the gargantuan icebergs and made from the lashed together timbers of shattered ships. Pirates, raiders, and other maritime ne'er-do-wells frequent the area and use it as a muster point for raids or a place to retreat to lick wounds and count coins.

## WINTERFLOE ROGUE ICEFIELDS

A place of geothermal activity boiling and bubbling beneath the waves, the Winterfloe Rogue Icefields are so-called because massive icy drifts from the north and east find their way there before being broken up into dozens of smaller chunks. These ice floes drift on from there to wreck ships for hundreds of nautical miles around in all directions. Winterfloe is mostly avoided whenever possible, but has been visited more often in recent years for a number of profit-driven reasons.

The unique chemical compounds created on the handful of semi-stationary volcanic islands at its center are incredibly valuable to alchemists, serving as a basis for both various explosives and a number of different novel medicines. Additionally, the region's incredible talent for spinning off icy boulders into passing ships like giant cannonballs and sending them unceremoniously to their watery graves has caught the attention of the Shipbreakers' Circle of Shatterkeel Bay. These extreme deep sea salvagers nip at the outer edges of the Rogue Icefields to find the lost bounty of the ships it sinks.



# PART II: MADNESS OF MORGANA

*"There is love in me the likes of which you've never seen. There is rage in me the likes of which should never escape. If I am not satisfied in the one, I will indulge the other."*

*Mary Shelley, Frankenstein*





# CHAPTER 3: DESCENT INTO MADNESS

**T**his adventure arc pits the heroes against their once-ally Morgana, the mistress of tarot. Given that Morgana has been quite a helpful ally to the heroes in the past, they may be reticent to turn on her. In order to drive a wedge between the party and Morgana, have her make increasingly problematic requests of the heroes. She will try to get them to kill prominent political leaders, including innocents such as Dekland VI or former allies such as Credence Bradshaw. From there, she will escalate her requests to include burning key targets (such as hospitals and apothecaries) or otherwise wreaking havoc on various major metropolitan areas (destroying bridges in Icepoint, blowing up a marketplace on Apakku, and the like).

If the heroes still seem unwilling to turn on Morgana, then she becomes more visibly unhinged. She tells them that she knows they are conspiring against her – even if they are not – and demands that they come clean. Her increasingly paranoid behavior eventually leads to her sending Paranoia to put an end to the heroes.

Once the heroes defeat Paranoia, Morgana immediately regains full control of her facilities and begins carefully plotting to take the heroes out before they can retaliate against her. She sends Ichabod to defeat the heroes and retreats to her manor once this fails. The heroes may confront Morgana in her manor, putting an end to her mad machinations before her murderous agenda can continue.



## MORGANA'S DOWNFALL

Morgana has had her eye on global domination since before she joined Pendragon's Court in Shadowcroft. See her writeup in Appendix A for her entire backstory. As cunning and deliberative as Morgana is, she may have been successful in her goal to take over Norspina – and possibly all of Ancerra thereafter – if not for Palorva's intervention. Palorva covertly sent Paranoia, a fiend that she collected from Phlegmereth, to join Morgana's ranks. When Paranoia infiltrated Morgana's inner circle, the sinister effects began immediately. Morgana began to fear that everyone, even her closest allies, was conspiring against her. She first isolated herself from all of her political contacts, and then began acting more and more erratic in the presence of the heroes. Paranoia's effects on Morgana was Morgana's ultimate undoing and a stroke of genius on Palorva's behalf, as Morgana posed a very real threat to Palorva otherwise.

## ARC 1: MADNESS OF MORGANA

During the early stages of the Lilith adventure, Morgana approaches the heroes again and collaborates with them to help them take out some cult leaders. As she does, she tries to ingratiate herself with the heroes.

Morgana asks the heroes to eliminate political and religious figures that are increasingly hard to justify as dangerous. She is only doing this to consolidate more of her own power and manipulate who gets put in charge.

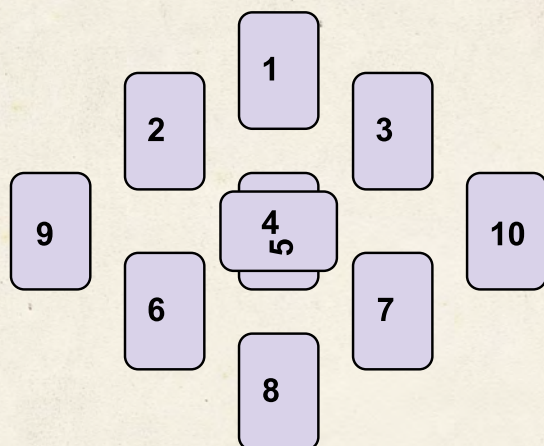
Heroes will become wise to this eventually; if they do not, then Morgana eventually accuses them of planning to betray her as she grows more paranoid. This sparks a falling out and the heroes must find and defeat Morgana before she can have them killed.

Her resources are vast, and she turns as many people as she can against the heroes. This is essentially a battle over popularity and resources, but also seriously harms the heroes' ability to do anything. As it were, Morgana holds all the cards.



# MORGANA'S STAR TAROT SPREAD

Use the Morgana's Star tarot spread to determine the key targets and locations in this adventure arc, as noted below. You may also decide these targets and locations yourself based on what you believe will best suit your party's narrative.



Shuffle a deck consisting of only the 22 Major Arcanas in such a fashion that some of the cards will be "reversed" (upside-down). Then deal them out in the pattern shown in the diagram above.

The result is for your eyes alone and should not be revealed to the players. They may see the cards if you wish, but should not know what each card's position means.

The position of each card determines the quests that Morgana assigns to the heroes; treasure that they may find; what additional abilities Paranoia and Ichabod possess when they finally confront the heroes in combat; and Morgana's prevailing personality characteristics.

## 1. STARTING QUEST

This card determines the first quest that Morgana will ask of the heroes. She should approach the heroes with this quest sometime before or during the Skoro Cell arc of the Lilith adventure. Several cards offer duplicate starting quests, as the more sinister quests do not appear until later in the heroes' working relationship with Morgana.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN: MINOR CULT LEADER

See 20. Judgment.

### 2. THE PRIESTESS: MAJOR CULT LEADER

See 3. The Mother.

## 3. THE MOTHER: MAJOR CULT LEADER

Morgana approaches the party with accurate information pertaining to a major leader in the Cult of Lilith. This cult leader is based in a settled environment within a two days' journey from the heroes' current location. Upon reaching this settlement, they run into one complication (roll on the table below to determine this).

### 1d4 Complication

- 1 The cult leader is very popular in town. The heroes must first expose them for the danger that they truly are.
- 2 Morgana's information was not quite accurate, and the heroes' initial suspect is a red herring. However, Morgana was right about there being a major cult leader in this region.
- 3 The cult leader is never seen in public and has a heavily fortified lair (whether a cave, keep, "abandoned" building, or something else).
- 4 The cult leader is always accompanied by a Bonewraith and 1d4 Skeletons in addition to the normal encounter difficulty.

Upon confronting the cult leader, the heroes must face a medium difficulty combat encounter using creatures from the Cult of Lilith Creature Table.

## 4. THE EMPEROR: BOLKHADAR

Morgana has tracked down one of Dracula's former lieutenants, the Bishalian horse lord Bolkhadar. In the aftermath of Dracula's fall, Bolkhadar amassed complete control of Bishal (Ch. 2) given that Iltani and Tartu were slain.

However, Bolkhadar recently set out on his own for some reason. If the heroes travel to the Standing Stones in the southern stretches of Bishal overlooking the Great Chasm, they can find Bolkhadar unguarded.

When they attack, Bolkhadar summons a vengeful ghost and a swarm of hellspawn to fight alongside him.

Bolkhadar has the stats of a **Kamelot knight**. After accounting for him and the **ghost**, add hellspawn of any CR in order to make this a deadly encounter.



## WHAT HAPPENED TO BOLKHADAR?

If the heroes ask any of the other Bishalian horse lords or any influential traders or nobles with connections to Bishal, they can learn what Bolkhadar has been up to since Dracula's demise. After uniting the clans under his leadership, Bolkhadar was originally obsessed with finding Tilian, who was still hiding somewhere in exile. Over the years, though, Palorva visited Bolkhadar frequently and turned his intensity to another quest: Finding a way to forcibly bind spirits from the afterlife. Once Palorva successfully manipulated him into seeing this as his most important purpose, Bolkhadar fanatically pursued this quest. Although he never fully succeeded, he was capable of reanimating corpses by imbuing them with slivers of Essence from creatures that have long since died (using the stats of any hellspawn). He also managed to summon forth a vague impression of Tartu's Essence (the ghost that the heroes fight alongside Bolkhadar himself). Palorva kept close tabs on Bolkhadar's findings and uses this information to successfully resurrect five key members of Dracula's Court at a later point in this campaign.

## 5. THE PROPHET: VAMPIRE

See 13. Death.

## 6. THE LOVERS: BLACKMAIL

In an effort to gain more control over a region, Morgana asks the heroes to help blackmail a key political figure. Roll on the table below to determine the region and figure.

1d6	Region and Target
1	Derk; Dekland VI
2	Bishal; Bolkhadar
3	Wolden; the Father of Mercies
4	Northeast Forsten; Credence Bradshaw
5	Rural Noord; Nandor Vladislov
6	Lesmishan; any banker

The nature of the blackmail must be tailored to suit their target. Once the heroes come up with something suitable, they may each make Intelligence or Charisma checks. Take the average of their roll to determine the outcome.

DC	Outcome
8 or less	The target of the blackmail musters forces to attack the heroes. This may range from a very easy to deadly encounter based on the target's resources.
9-16	The target of the blackmail is unfazed.
17-26	The target of the blackmail offers the heroes 1,000 sc each to cover the affair up.
27+	The target of the blackmail willingly cooperates with the heroes on whatever they request for 1d6 weeks. After this time, Palorva kills the target and installs a replacement.

## 7. THE CHARIOT: ROBBERY

A wealthy merchant in the nearest settlement has come by their wealth unscrupulously according to Morgana. Morgana claims that if the heroes can perform a heist and steal a significant portion of the merchant's coin or wares, then this will help restore stability in the region.

Robbing this merchant proves trivially easy. Their wares are protected by a nonmagical lock that can be broken or picked with a DC 8 Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. The merchant has no guards or protection and may not even be present when the heroes break in.

A day or two later, the heroes may hear rumors swirling in the streets about a new crime syndicate in town that might be targeting certain merchants. There is no new crime syndicate; these rumors are regarding the heroes themselves.

## 8. JUSTICAR: ALGERNIS FYLAXOS

A suspicious physician by the name of Algernis Fylaxos has come to Morgana's attention. She believes him to be working on another form of synthetic vampirism. Nothing good can come from such experimentation, as Dracula has shown, so Morgana asks the heroes to find him and assassinate him.

The heroes may find him in any large town in Noord, Icepoint, or Whitebreak in Derk.

Upon confronting Algernis, the heroes may find that his research is actually quite the opposite of what Morgana thought: He is looking for a cure to vampirism.

If the heroes attack him anyway, Algernis Fylaxos has the stats of a **commoner** with expertise in the Medicine skill.



## 9. THE HERMIT: NANDOR VLADISLOV

Morgana suggests to the heroes that Nandor Vladislov, Dracula's former mentor, may return to the political stage to assist Palorva in her aggressive takeover of Norspina. Hunting down Nandor and removing him from play preemptively would be prudent.

If the heroes head back into the mountains of Noord to look for Nandor, he will attempt to ambush them. Have each hero make a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by Nandor's Dexterity (Sneaking) check. Any hero that does not spot him is Surprised.

### NANDOR'S STATS

Nandor has the stats of a **vampire reaver** with the following additional attack, which he can use in the place of any Greataxe attack.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

He also has the following additional attack, which he can use in place of any Blood Drain attack.

**Spellcaster.** Nandor can cast one of his spells.

Nandor also has the following feature. **Spellcaster.** Nandor is an innate spellcaster who uses Charisma as his spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 16; +8 on spell attack rolls). He can innately cast the following spells, needing no material components.

*At Will:* *detect magic, locate object, misty step*

*3/Day:* *blur, counterspell, haste, major image*

*1/Day:* *cone of cold*

## 10. THE WHEEL: DISRUPT TRAVEL ROUTE

Morgana asks the heroes to disrupt a major travel route between two towns. The easiest two means by which to do this are destroying a bridge or felling trees to blockade a portion of the road.

This is a very easy quest, but may lead the heroes to question Morgana's motives and the lengths to which she will go. The next time the heroes travel to either disrupted town, they should witness the difficulties that their actions have caused for common folk.

## 11. VIOLENCE: DESTABILIZE LESMISHAN

It has come to Morgana's attention that the bankers of Lesmishan have a great quantity of silver but are unwilling to sell or trade it. If the silver could be injected into Norspina's greater economy, then more silver weapons could be created and both Croftian vampires and werewolves would not pose so great a threat.

Morgana asks the heroes to travel to Lesmishan and assassinate, depose, kidnap, blackmail, or otherwise remove from power each of the kingpin bankers in the nation.

The heroes may find that this is actually in their best interests, especially given that Morgana does not care whether the bankers are killed or not so long as they are removed from power.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN: LAUCIAN VIRIR

A suspicious scientist by the name of Laucian Virir has come to Morgana's attention. She believes him to be working on another form of synthetic vampirism. Nothing good can come from such experimentation, as Dracula has shown, so Morgana asks the heroes to find him and assassinate him.

The heroes may find him in any large town in Noord, Icepoint, or Whitebreak in Derk.

Upon confronting Laucian, the heroes may find that his research is actually quite the opposite of what Morgana thought: He is looking for a cure to vampirism.

If the heroes attack him anyway, Algernis Fylaxos has the stats of a **vampire courtier**.

## 13. DEATH: VAMPIRE

Morgana has uncovered information about a vampire masquerading as a common civilian in a nearby town or neighborhood. This information is correct, and the vampire is truly aligned with Palorva, so the heroes may actually wish to follow through on eliminating it.

Determine the identity of the vampire and its stats by rolling on the tables below.

### 1d6 Vampire's Identity

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Blacksmith (sells fake silver)                                 |
| 2 | Herbalist (sells fake garlic)                                  |
| 3 | Clergy (sells fake holy water)                                 |
| 4 | Merchant   |
| 5 | Guard Captain (commands 2d6 Guards in combat)                  |
| 6 | Baron or Count (leverages vast influence to combat the heroes) |

### 1d6 Vampire's Stats

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Shadowcroft Vampire |
| 2 | Vampire Reaver      |
| 3 | Vampspider          |
| 4 | Vampire             |
| 5 | Energy Vampire      |
| 6 | Vampire Courtier    |

## 14. TEMPERANCE: FIEND

See 15. The Devil.



## 15. THE DEVIL: FIEND

Morgana has uncovered the whereabouts of a fiend that has amassed a following. This information is correct, and the fiend is aligned with the Cult of Lilith, so finding and defeating it is truly in the heroes' best interests.

Determine the fiend's stats by rolling on the tables below. It is accompanied by a number of Cultists and Hellspawn of any ML to make the encounter deadly.

1d6	Fiend's Stats
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil
5	Rakshasa
6	Ice Devil

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD: VANDALISM

In order to intimidate the cultists, Morgana suggests that the heroes commit various acts of vandalism against buildings that Morgana believes to be the homes or meeting places of cultists.

Compared to some of the other missions that Morgana may suggest of the heroes, this crime is relatively benign. The heroes may commit it without serious repercussions.

## 17. THE STAR: VAMPIRE

See 13. Death.

## 18. THE MOON: VAMPIRE

See 13. Death.

## 19. THE SUN: FIEND

See 15. The Devil.

## 20. JUDGMENT: MINOR CULT LEADER

Morgana approaches the party with accurate information pertaining to a minor leader in the Cult of Lilith. This cult leader is based in the same settlement that the heroes are currently in, or the nearest settlement if the heroes are on the road. Morgana asks the heroes to take out the minor leader before they can become more of a nuisance.

Upon confronting the cult leader, the heroes must face an easy combat encounter using creatures from the Cult of Lilith Creature Table (Ch. 1).

## 21. CREATION: ROBBERY

See 7. The Chariot.

## 22. THE ORPHAN: VAMPIRE

See 13. Death.

## 2, 3, 4, 6, AND 7. ADDITIONAL QUESTS

Interspersed throughout their ongoing adventure arc in conflict with Lilith's cult, Morgana will ask the heroes to undertake additional quests. These quests are determined by the cards pulled below. Note that completion of the fourth quest is followed by an award (see the fifth card).

Morgana believes that each of these quests will help her consolidate more power in Norspina, eventually allowing her to supplant Palorva as Norspina's empress.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN: HERB RICHARD

Unfortunately, even the purest of heart can be corrupted, or so Morgana claims. Morgana tells the heroes that Franklin "Herb" Richard of Broken Shield is actually an informant for the Cult of Lilith.

If the heroes travel back to Broken Shield to confront Herb Richard, they can easily determine that he is not under any magical or nonmagical obligation to the cult and is as stalwart an ally as ever. He is vehemently opposed to the cult and wants to do whatever he can to put an end to its insidious spread in Forsten.

If the heroes fight Herb, he has the stats of a **veteran** and Drago has the stats of a **dire wolf** but is a construct.

### 2. THE PRIESTESS: JOANA HARKER

Morgana informs the party of a disturbing development: Joana Harker has become a pawn of Palorva. She asks the heroes to arrange a meeting with Joana and assassinate her before she can cause more damage as Palorva's assistant.

The heroes may seek out Joana Harker or wait for their paths to cross again. Either way, the next time that they come into contact with Joana, they can easily determine that she is not under Palorva's control, either magically or otherwise.

If the heroes battle Joana anyway, she has the stats of a **veteran hunter** and is equipped with a replica of the Stake Thrower legacy artifact with the following enhancements:

- Distant Shot
- Hail of Bolts
- Piercing Ammunition
- Suppressing Fire
- Firebomb
- Greater Capacity
- Bolt Crafter
- Grappling Hook
- Utility Compartments

She also has 4 potions of lesser healing, 4 doses of garlic, and 4 vials of holy water.

She is a formidable fighter, but likely outmatched against a whole party, as her greatest asset is her careful planning and her ability to get the drop on more powerful enemies.



## CANONICAL TIMELINE

In the official lore of Ancerra, Joana Harker survives the events of *Daughter of the Shadows*. Your table may diverge from this narrative if you see fit.

### 3. THE MOTHER: MAJOR CULT LEADER

Morgana approaches the party with accurate information pertaining to a major leader in the Cult of Lilith. This cult leader is based in a settled environment within a two days' journey from the heroes' current location. Upon reaching this settlement, they run into one complication (roll on the table below to determine this).

#### 1d4 Complication

- 1 The cult leader is very popular in town. The heroes must first expose them for the danger that they truly are.
- 2 Morgana's information was not quite accurate, and the heroes' initial suspect is a red herring. However, Morgana was right about there being a major cult leader in this region.
- 3 The cult leader is never seen in public and has a heavily fortified lair (whether a cave, keep, "abandoned" building, or something else).
- 4 The cult leader is always accompanied by a Bonewraith and 1d4 Skeletons in addition to the normal encounter difficulty.

Upon confronting the cult leader, the heroes must face a medium difficulty combat encounter using creatures from the Cult of Lilith Creature Table (Ch. 1).

### 4. THE EMPEROR: BOLKHADAR

Morgana has tracked down one of Dracula's former lieutenants, the Bishalian horse lord Bolkhadar. In the aftermath of Dracula's fall, Bolkhadar amassed complete control of Bishal given that Itani and Tartu were slain.

However, Bolkhadar recently set out on his own for some reason. If the heroes travel to the Standing Stones in the southern stretches of Bishal overlooking the Great Chasm, they can find Bolkhadar unguarded.

When they attack, Bolkhadar summons a vengeful Ghost and a swarm of Hellspawn to fight alongside him.

Bolkhadar has the stats of a **Kamelot knight**. After accounting for him and the **ghost**, add hellspawn of any CR in order to make this a deadly encounter.

### 5. THE PROPHET: EDGAR HAWTHORNE

Morgana tells the heroes that Edgar Hawthorne has thrown in his lot with Palorva. He is currently in Lorvan helping her organize against his former allies.

## WHAT HAPPENED TO BOLKHADAR?

If the heroes ask any of the other Bishalian horse lords or any influential traders or nobles with connections to Bishal, they can learn what Bolkhadar has been up to since Dracula's demise. After uniting the clans under his leadership, Bolkhadar was originally obsessed with finding Tilian, who was still hiding somewhere in exile. Over the years, though, Palorva visited Bolkhadar frequently and turned his intensity to another quest: Finding a way to forcibly bind spirits from the afterlife. Once Palorva successfully manipulated him into seeing this as his most important purpose, Bolkhadar fanatically pursued this quest. Although he never fully succeeded, he was capable of reanimating corpses by imbuing them with slivers of Essence from creatures that have long since died (using the stats of any hellspawn). He also managed to summon forth a vague impression of Tartu's Essence (the ghost that the heroes fight alongside Bolkhadar himself). Palorva kept close tabs on Bolkhadar's findings and uses this information to successfully resurrect five key members of Dracula's Court at a later point in this campaign.

If the heroes travel to Lorvan, they may find Hawthorne after a number of days based on their Wisdom, Intelligence, and Charisma checks. Take the average of each hero's check and lower the DC by 1 per hero that participates beyond the first hero.

DC	Days
8 or less	4
9-14	3
15-20	2
21+	1

Once they find Hawthorne, he unequivocally denies the allegations of working with Palorva. He is actually in Lorvan trying to determine how best to defeat her and has been building a ledger of people whom he believes to be members of Palorva's secret police.

If the heroes fight Hawthorne, he has the stats of a **commoner**.



## 6. THE LOVERS: BLACKMAIL

In an effort to gain more control over a region, Morgana asks the heroes to help blackmail a key political figure. Roll on the table below to determine the region and figure.

1d6	Region and Target
1	Derk; Dekland VI
2	Bishal; Bolkhadar
3	Wolden; the Father of Mercies
4	Northeast Forsten; Credence Bradshaw
5	Rural Noord; Nandor Vladislov
6	Lesmishan; any banker

The nature of the blackmail must be tailored to suit their target. Once the heroes come up with something suitable, they may each make Intelligence or Charisma checks. Take the average of their roll to determine the outcome.

DC	Outcome
8 or less	The target of the blackmail musters forces to attack the heroes. This may range from a very easy to deadly encounter based on the target's resources.
9-16	The target of the blackmail is unfazed.
17-22	The target of the blackmail offers the heroes 1,000 sc each to cover the affair up.
23 or more	The target of the blackmail willingly cooperates with the heroes on whatever they request for 1d6 weeks. After this time, Palorva kills the target and installs a replacement.

## 7. THE CHARIOT: ROBBERY

A wealthy merchant in the nearest settlement has come by their wealth unscrupulously according to Morgana. Morgana claims that if the heroes can perform a heist and steal a significant portion of the merchant's coin or wares, then this will help restore stability in the region.

Robbing this merchant proves trivially easy. Their wares are protected by a nonmagical lock that can be broken or picked with a DC 8 Strength (Athletics) or Intelligence (Sleight of Hand) check. The merchant has no guards or protection and may not even be present when the heroes break in.

A day or two later, the heroes may hear rumors swirling in the streets about a new crime syndicate in town that might be targeting certain merchants. There is no new crime syndicate; these rumors are regarding the heroes themselves.

## 8. JUSTICAR: ALGERNIS FYLAXOS

A suspicious physician by the name of Algernis Fylaxos has come to Morgana's attention. She believes him to be working on another form of synthetic vampirism. Nothing good can come from such experimentation, as Dracula has shown, so Morgana asks the heroes to find him and assassinate him.

The heroes may find him in any large town in Noord, Icepoint, or Whitebreak in Derk.

Upon confronting Algernis, the heroes may find that his research is actually quite the opposite of what Morgana thought: He is looking for a cure to vampirism.

If the heroes attack him anyway, Algernis Fylaxos has the stats of a **commoner** with expertise in the Medicine skill.

## 9. THE HERMIT: NANDOR VLADISLOV

Morgana suggests to the heroes that Nandor Vladislov, Dracula's former mentor, may return to the political stage to assist Palorva in her aggressive takeover of Norspina. Hunting down Nandor and removing him from play preemptively would be prudent.

If the heroes head back into the mountains of Noord to look for Nandor, he will attempt to ambush them. Have each hero make a Wisdom (Perception) check contested by Nandor's Dexterity (Sneaking) check. Any hero that does not spot him is Surprised.

### NANDOR'S STATS

Nandor has the stats of a **vampire reaver** with the following additional attack, which he can use in the place of any Greataxe attack.

**Longbow.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

He also has the following additional attack, which he can use in place of any Blood Drain attack.

**Spellcaster.** Nandor can cast one of his spells.

Nandor also has the following feature. **Spellcaster.** Nandor is an innate spellcaster who uses Charisma as his spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 16; +8 on spell attack rolls). He can innately cast the following spells, needing no material components.

*At Will:* *detect magic, locate object, misty step*

*3/Day:* *blur, counterspell, haste, major image*

*1/Day:* *cone of cold*



## 10. THE WHEEL: DISRUPT TRAVEL ROUTE

Morgana asks the heroes to disrupt a major travel route between two towns. The easiest two means by which to do this are destroying a bridge or felling trees to blockade a portion of the road.

This is a very easy quest, but may lead the heroes to question Morgana's motives and the lengths to which she will go. The next time the heroes travel to either disrupted town, they should witness the difficulties that their actions have caused for common folk.

## 11. VIOLENCE: DESTABILIZE LESMISHAN

It has come to Morgana's attention that the bankers of Lesmishan have a great quantity of silver but are unwilling to sell or trade it. If the silver could be injected into Norspina's greater economy, then more silver weapons could be created and both Croftian vampires and werewolves would not pose so great a threat.

Morgana asks the heroes to travel to Lesmishan and assassinate, depose, kidnap, blackmail, or otherwise remove from power each of the kingpin bankers in the nation.

The heroes may find that this is actually in their best interests, especially given that Morgana does not care whether the bankers are killed or not so long as they are removed from power.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN: LAUCIAN VIRIR

A suspicious scientist by the name of Laucian Virir has come to Morgana's attention. She believes him to be working on another form of synthetic vampirism. Nothing good can come from such experimentation, as Dracula has shown, so Morgana asks the heroes to find him and assassinate him.

The heroes may find him in any large town in Noord, Icepoint, or Whitebreak in Derk.

Upon confronting Laucian, the heroes may find that his research is actually quite the opposite of what Morgana thought: He is looking for a cure to vampirism.

If the heroes attack him anyway, Laucian Virir has the stats of a **vampire courtier**.

## 13. DEATH: VAMPIRE

Morgana has uncovered information about a vampire masquerading as a common civilian in a nearby town or neighborhood. This information is correct, and the vampire is truly aligned with Palorva, so the heroes may actually wish to follow through on eliminating it.

Determine the identity of the vampire and its stats by rolling on the tables below.

### 1d6 Vampire's Identity

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| 1 | Blacksmith (sells fake silver)                                 |
| 2 | Herbalist (sells fake garlic)                                  |
| 3 | Clergy (sells fake holy water)                                 |
| 4 | Merchant   |
| 5 | Guard Captain (commands 2d6 Guards in combat)                  |
| 6 | Baron or Count (leverages vast influence to combat the heroes) |

### 1d6 Vampire's Stats

- |   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| 1 | Shadowcroft Vampire |
| 2 | Vampire Reaver      |
| 3 | Vampspider          |
| 4 | Vampire             |
| 5 | Energy Vampire      |
| 6 | Vampire Courtier    |

## 14. TEMPERANCE: CRENDENCE BRADSHAW

Morgana tells the heroes that Credence Bradshaw has thrown in his lot with Palorva. As the mayor of Broken Shield and one of the heroes' first real allies, this may come as a tremendous blow.

If the heroes travel to Broken Shield and ask around, they can determine without much difficulty that these claims are false. Credence Bradshaw denies the allegations of working with Palorva and the townsfolk vouch for him.

If the heroes fight Credence, he has the stats of a **scout**, but he has 67 hit points.





## 15. THE DEVIL: FIEND

Morgana has uncovered the whereabouts of a fiend that has amassed a following. This information is correct, and the fiend is aligned with the Cult of Lilith, so finding and defeating it is truly in the heroes' best interests.

Determine the fiend's stats by rolling on the tables below. It is accompanied by a number of **cultists** and hellspawn of any ML to make the encounter deadly.

1d6	Fiend's Stats
1	Erinyes
2	Efreeti
3	Bone Devil
4	Chain Devil
5	Rakshasa
6	Ice Devil

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD: VANDALISM

In order to intimidate the cultists, Morgana suggests that the heroes commit various acts of vandalism against buildings that Morgana believes to be the homes or meeting places of cultists.

Compared to some of the other missions that Morgana may suggest of the heroes, this crime is relatively benign. The heroes may commit it without serious repercussions.

## 17. THE STAR: KIDNAPPING/RANSOM

In an effort to gain more control over a region, Morgana asks the heroes to help extort a key political figure by kidnapping someone that the figure cares about and holding them ransom. Roll on the table below to determine the region and figure.

1d6	Region and Target
1	Derk; Dekland VI
2	Bishal; Bolkhadar
3	Wolden; the Father of Mercies
4	Northeast Forsten; Credence Bradshaw
5	Rural Noord; Nandor Vladislov
6	Lesmishan; any banker

The nature of the kidnapping must be tailored to suit their target. The heroes will need to spend some time finding a suitable target that will elicit the desired response from their mark. Once the heroes come up with something suitable, they may attempt to kidnap their target, who should have appropriate NPC stats no greater than CR 2. After kidnapping this target, the heroes must each make a Charisma check. Take the average of their result to determine the success of the ransom.

DC	Outcome
10 or less	The target of the extortion musters forces to attack the heroes. This may range from a very easy to deadly encounter based on the target's resources.
11-16	The target of the extortion is unfazed.
17-21	The target of the extortion offers the heroes 1,000 sc each to ransom the kidnapped target.
22 or more	The target of the extortion willingly cooperates with the heroes on whatever they request for 1d6 weeks. After this time, Palorva kills the target of the extortion and installs a replacement.

## 18. THE MOON: PLAGUE

Morgana suggests to the heroes that a nearby town is so infested with cultists that there is no reason to even attempt separating civilian from hostile; everyone in the town has verifiably sided with Lilith. Morgana suggests that they release a plague in the city to reduce it to ruin.

If the heroes travel to the town to determine whether this is true, they can easily determine that it is not.

If they do not check the validity of Morgana's claims, they may easily find some **plague rats** or **deathplague rats**, nonlethally defeat them, and release the rats into grain silos in the town. The plague devastates the town in accordance with the type of disease that the heroes unleash.

## 19. THE SUN: ARSON

Morgana suggests to the heroes that a nearby town is so infested with cultists that there is no reason to even attempt separating civilian from hostile; everyone in the town has verifiably sided with Lilith. Morgana suggests that they burn the entire town to the ground.

If the heroes travel to the town to determine whether this is true, they can easily determine that it is not.

If they do not check the validity of Morgana's claims, then they are met with feeble resistance. 6 **guards** and 20 **commoners** try to stop the heroes from burning the town.

## 20. JUDGMENT: MINOR CULT LEADER

Morgana approaches the party with accurate information pertaining to a minor leader in the Cult of Lilith. This cult leader is based in the same settlement that the heroes are currently in, or the nearest settlement if the heroes are on the road. Morgana asks the heroes to take out the minor leader before they can become more of a nuisance.

Upon confronting the cult leader, the heroes must face an easy combat encounter using creatures from the Cult of Lilith Creature Table (Ch. 1).



## 21. CREATION: VIKTOR SHELLEY

Morgana has located Viktor Shelley, one of the creators of Draculean vampirism. She believes that he should be assassinated on grounds that he may go on to create more atrocities at a later point.

The heroes may track Viktor Shelley to a small town a half-day's travel outside of Whitebreak. If they confront him, they can determine that he wishes to atone for his sins, not create more monsters. If they attack him, he has the stats of a **commoner**.

## 22. THE ORPHAN: KING DEKLAND VI

Morgana believes that Derk will never be free of Palorva's influence under the rule of King Dekland VI. She asks the heroes to assassinate or otherwise depose the child king.

If the heroes agree, they will find that King Dekland VI himself is far from a threat as he only has the stats of a **commoner**. However, two of his court advisors directly report to Palorva. One has the stats of a **death knight**, and the other a **vampspider**.

If the heroes do kill Dekland VI, Palorva installs one of her courtiers on the throne in his place, openly solidifying her control over the country.

## 5. TREASURE

Upon defeating Paranoia in Arc 2 of this chapter, the heroes may loot Paranoia's body to gain magic items. If the heroes complete the fourth quest that Morgana assigns them, then they are rewarded with a unique magic item as determined by this card. In addition to the magic item determined by this card, offer the heroes an additional number of magic items equal to the number of heroes in the party minus one. These additional magic items can be any uncommon item from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN

The heroes gain the Robe of the Magician.

#### Robe of the Magician

*Uncommon Robe (Requires Attunement)*

You can cast any cantrip from the Wizard spell list, using your normal spellcasting modifier. If you do not have one, it is your Intelligence modifier plus your proficiency bonus.

### 2. THE PRIESTESS

The party gains a set of six bracelets that are transparent like slightly blue-tinted glass.

#### Pulse Bracelet

*Uncommon Bracelet*

You may spend your action to offer one of your Psyche talents to another creature that is also wearing a pulse bracelet. That creature may spend their reaction to accept the Psyche talent. If they do, you lose the talent and they gain it. If they already had that same talent, they gain another talent on the same track, or they gain a randomly determined one if there are no remaining talents on that track.

## 3. THE MOTHER

The heroes gain the Bear's Tower Shield.

#### Bear's Tower Shield

*Uncommon Shield (Requires Attunement)*

This shield has the stats of a shield, but also offers ½ cover to a creature when the shield is between that creature and a ranged attack. You may make a Bite attack with it as a bonus action. This attack uses your Strength modifier plus your proficiency bonus and deals 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

## 4. THE EMPEROR

The party gains the Emperor's Crown.

#### Emperor's Crown

*Uncommon Crown (Requires Attunement)*

Allies within 20 feet of you have advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed or frightened. Hostile creatures gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against you.

## 5. THE PROPHET

The heroes gain the Third Eye Diadem.

#### Third Eye Diadem

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

The first time you are critically hit after taking a short or long rest, turn the critical hit into a normal hit.

## 6. THE LOVERS

The heroes gain two Rings of Bonding.

#### Rings of Bonding

*Uncommon Rings (2)*

Two creatures must wear these rings for them to work. Each creature halves damage whenever it takes damage, and the other creature takes as much damage as the first creature did.

## 7. THE CHARIOT

The heroes gain the Sandals of Sprinting.

#### Sandals of Sprinting

*Uncommon Shoes*

You gain +5 ft speed and cannot be the target of opportunity attacks.

## 8. JUSTICAR

The heroes find a gilded crusader's helmet.

#### Helm of the Justicar

*Uncommon Helmet (Requires Attunement)*

While wearing this helm, you gain +X to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws. You gain +X on spell attack rolls using spells of 1st level or higher. X = ½ the number of Psyche talents you have.



## 9. THE HERMIT

The heroes gain the Cloak of Solitude.

### Cloak of Solitude

*Uncommon Cloak (Requires Attunement)*

You cannot gain positive or negative conditions, with the exception of exhaustion, prone, and unconscious. Gain Truesight out to 10 feet.

When allies heal you, it only restores half as many hit points as it normally would.

## 10. THE WHEEL

The party gains the Bands of Angels.

### Bands of Angels

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

These bands spin about your forearms and head. They grant you Truesight out to 10 feet. They also grant you Resistance to Fire and Radiant damage.

## 11. VIOLENCE

The heroes gain the carnage pommel.

### Carnage Pommel

*Uncommon Weapon (Requires Attunement)*

The hilt of a weapon that takes the form of any melee weapon you desire. You crit on a roll of 19-20 with this weapon and deal 1d6 additional necrotic damage with it. However, enemies crit against you on a roll of 19-20.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

The heroes find the Noose Necklace.

### Noose Necklace

*Uncommon Necklace (Requires Attunement)*

Gain the Undead creature type. You do not need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe. You are immune to exhaustion. You are immune to nonmagical poisons and diseases.

Suffer disadvantage on Charisma checks that you make, with the exception of Intimidation.

## 13. DEATH

The heroes find a black iron ring of invisibility.

### Ring of Invisibility

*Uncommon Ring (Requires Attunement)*

While wearing the ring, a creature may spend a bonus action to become invisible until the end of their next turn, gaining the Invisible condition. While invisible in this way, a creature deals +2 necrotic damage on all its cantrip and spell attacks that deal damage.

Using the ring expends one charge, and the ring has 30 charges. It regains all its charges at dusk each evening.

## 14. TEMPERANCE

The party finds the Hood of Temperance.

### Hood of Temperance

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

When making a saving throw against becoming charmed or frightened, roll with advantage.

## 15. THE DEVIL

The heroes gain the Horned Crown.

### Horned Crown

*Uncommon Crown (Requires Attunement)*

Gain the Sadistic psyche talent or the next talent in that track. If you have completed the track, gain Hellforged Heart, or a random psyche talent if you already had it.

Gain 2 additional 1st level spell slots. If you knew no spells, learn 2 spells of your choice from the list: *bane*, *burning hands*, *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, and *shield*.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

The heroes find an enamel pin depicting a door.

### Door Brooch

*Uncommon Brooch (Requires Attunement)*

You can spend 24 hours attuning the brooch to a specific building. While wearing the brooch in that building, you may spend a bonus action to teleport to any door in the building that you can see, or an action to teleport to any door in the building that you have seen before.

## 17. THE STAR

The party gains the Star Shard.

### Star Shard

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

Once per week, you may make a DC 20 Sanity check. On a success, remove 1 Psyche talent.

## 18. THE MOON

The heroes find the Silver Shield.

### Silver Shield

*Uncommon Shield (Requires Attunement)*

This shield offers you an additional +1 to your AC and a +1 bonus to your Dexterity and Constitution saving throws while it is equipped.

This buckler has a perfectly smooth tarn on its outward-facing side, reflecting anything like the purest silver mirror.

Creatures that would Surprise you are instead Surprised.

When a creature misses you with an attack, you see its true form until the end of your next turn, bypassing invisibilities or shapechange abilities.

## 19. THE SUN

The party gains the Sun Pendant.

### Sun Pendant

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

You may cause your hands to burst into flame, adding 1d10 fire damage to your weapon and spell attack rolls for 1 minute. You may do this once, regaining the ability after completing a long rest.



## 20. JUDGMENT

The heroes gain the Blood Scepter.

### Blood Scepter

*Uncommon Scepter (Requires Attunement)*

Once per week, you may gain a new psyche talent of your choice whose prerequisites you meet.

You deal +Xd6 necrotic damage with this weapon, where  $X = \frac{1}{2}$  the number of psyche talents you have.

This weapon is otherwise a +1 warhammer.

## 21. CREATION

Gain the summoner's cornucopia.

### Summoner's Cornucopia

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

This item has 4 charges and regains 1 charge at dusk each day. You may spend a bonus action and 1 charge to summon a CR 2 or lower beast of your choice. The beast obeys your mental commands and acts immediately after you in Initiative.

## 22. THE ORPHAN

The heroes gain the Cloak of Solitude.

### Cloak of Solitude

*Uncommon Cloak (Requires Attunement)*

You cannot gain positive or negative conditions, with the exception of exhaustion, prone, and unconscious. Gain Truesight out to 10 feet.

When allies heal you, it only restores half as many hit points as it normally would.

## 8. MORGANA'S PERSONALITY

Morgana's personality undergoes a noticeable change over the course of this adventure. In addition to becoming more paranoid due to Paranoia's influence, her personality changes based on this card. Her values are listed in order of priority. Whatever her values, twist them so that they reflect her ultimate drive to rule the cosmos. She may intend to rule because nobody else is pure enough to do so, or she may simply crave power.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN

#### Values:

- Disloyal.
- Risky.
- Pragmatic.

#### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

#### Quirks:

- Claims (falsely) to be able to see the future.

### 2. THE PRIESTESS

#### Values:

- Cautious.
- Logical.
- Disloyal.

#### Drives:

- **Legacy.** Morgana intends to cement her name in both Shadowcroft's and Ancerra's world history.

#### Quirks:

- Endlessly fascinated with the interconnected workings of the universe, Morgana will share her latest theories with anyone who will listen.

### 3. THE MOTHER

#### Values:

- Pragmatic.
- Loyal.
- Traditional.

#### Drives:

- **Knowledge.** Morgana believes that acquiring enough knowledge of the world will provide her with the means to rule it.

#### Quirks:

- Endlessly fascinated with the interconnected workings of the universe, Morgana will share her latest theories with anyone who will listen.

### 4. THE EMPEROR

#### Values:

- Risky.
- Personal Gain.
- Pragmatic.

#### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

#### Quirks:

- Morgana is physically incapable of making eye contact, instead looking slightly past someone.

### 5. THE PROPHET

#### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Risky.
- Change.

#### Drives:

- **Escape.** Morgana is looking for a way to escape mortality and transcend to godhood.

#### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.



## 6. THE LOVERS

### Values:

- Risky.
- Honorable.
- Traditional.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is extremely superstitious, knocking on wood, throwing salt over her shoulder, and some wildly outlandish practices.

## 7. THE CHARIOT

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Risky.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Exploration.** Morgana wishes to explore the entirety of her domain, both Shadowcroft and Ancerra.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 8. JUSTICAR

### Values:

- Logical.
- Disloyal.
- Cautious.

### Drives:

- **Ambition.** Morgana intends to rule Shadowcroft, Ancerra, and the whole cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 9. THE HERMIT

### Values:

- Cautious.
- Traditional.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Recognition.** Morgana knows that she is destined to rule, but wishes for all to recognize this.

### Quirks:

- Morgana often makes dramatic exits, then returns because she forgot something.

## 10. THE WHEEL

### Values:

- Risky.
- Logic.
- Greater Good.

### Drives:

- **Legacy.** Morgana intends to cement her name in both Shadowcroft's and Ancerra's world history.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is extremely superstitious, knocking on wood, throwing salt over her shoulder, and some wildly outlandish practices.

## 11. VIOLENCE

### Values:

- Disloyal.
- Emotional.
- Risky.

### Drives:

- **Justice.** The cosmos is full of crimes and imbalances, and Morgana intends to right these wrongs.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Change.
- Personal Gain.

### Drives:

- **Protection.** Morgana believes the world to be under grave threat and sees herself as its protector.

### Quirks:

- Morgana refuses to sit on anything other than the ground.

## 13. DEATH

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Cautious.
- Disloyal.

### Drives:

- **Conquest.** Morgana believes it to be her birthright: She will one day rule as she is destined to do.

### Quirks:

- Morgana has an explosively negative emotional reaction to dairy.



## 14. TEMPERANCE

### Values:

- Logical.
- Cautious.
- Traditional.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana swears she once dated a ghost and still consults it for advice. Heroes that can sense undead know this to be untrue.

## 15. THE DEVIL

### Values:

- Logical.
- Personal Gain.
- Risky.

### Drives:

- **Revenge.** Morgana feels that she was robbed of her birthright to rule the cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana often makes dramatic exits, then returns because she forgot something.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

### Values:

- Cautious.
- Traditional.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Ambition.** Morgana intends to rule Shadowcroft, Ancerra, and the whole cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana always refers to herself in the third person.

## 17. THE STAR

### Values:

- Risky.
- Loyal.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Exploration.** Morgana wishes to explore the entirety of her domain, both Shadowcroft and Ancerra.

### Quirks:

- Claims (falsely) to be able to see the future.

## 18. THE MOON

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Change.
- Pragmatism.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana believes that the moon Scarlan is haunted.

## 19. THE SUN

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Loyal.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Escape.** Morgana is looking for a way to escape mortality and transcend to godhood.

### Quirks:

- Morgana has an explosively negative emotional reaction to dairy.

## 20. JUDGMENT

### Values:

- Disloyal.
- Cautious.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Conquest.** Morgana believes it to be her birthright: She will one day rule as she is destined to do.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is physically incapable of making eye contact, instead looking slightly past someone.

## 21. CREATION

### Values:

- Risky.
- Honorable.
- Change.

### Drives:

- **Duty.** Morgana believes it to be her duty to rule the cosmos with a firm and just hand.

### Quirks:

- Morgana insists on being paid in small or valueless objects, such as acorns or pocket lint.



## 22. THE ORPHAN

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Personal Gain.
- Change.

### Drives:

- **Revenge.** Morgana feels that she was robbed of her birthright to rule the cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana insists on being paid in small or valueless objects, such as acorns or pocket lint.

## 9, 10. ADDITIONAL POWERS

Paranoia and Ichabod each gain an additional power based on their corresponding cards. Card 9 dictates Paranoia's new power, and card 10 dictates Ichabod's.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN

The villain may use its Charisma saving throw modifier in place of its Dexterity or Constitution saving throw modifiers

### 2. THE PRIESTESS:

the villain is first reduced to one half its maximum hit points, each hero within 60 feet of it gains +2 Fear.

### 3. THE MOTHER

When another creature within 60 feet of the villain uses a spell to restore hit points, the villain also regains that many hit points.

### 4. THE EMPEROR

The villain gains +2 to their Charisma score and deals +2 psychic damage on all its attacks.

### 5. THE PROPHET

When the villain rolls Initiative, it also rolls 1d20. Once during combat, it may reactively replace one of its die rolls or one of the die rolls of a creature that attacks it with the recorded result.

### 6. THE LOVERS

At the start of each of its turns, the villain chooses a creature to be its Soul Mate. Whenever the villain takes damage, if the Soul Mate is within 120 feet of the villain, then the villain may force the creature to make a Charisma saving throw against a DC of 8 + the villain's proficiency bonus + the villain's Charisma modifier. On a hit, the villain takes half of the damage and its Soul Mate takes the rest of the damage.

### 7. THE CHARIOT

The villain's walking speed increases by 10 feet and it cannot be targeted by opportunity attacks.

## 8. JUSTICAR

When a creature hits the villain, the villain may choose for it to become a critical hit instead. If the villain does, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and gains Fear equal to half that damage.

## 9. THE HERMIT

The villain may spend its bonus action to end all conditions affecting it. This also ends all ongoing effects that were affecting it from cantrips and spells.

## 10. THE WHEEL

When The villain damages a creature that has at least 1 Psyche Talent, that creature takes an additional 4 (1d8) radiant damage and is also frightened of the villain until the end of the creature's next turn.

## 11. VIOLENCE

The villain deals +8 damage and takes +4 damage.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

If this card is for Paranoia, they become Undead. They no longer need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe and cannot be stunned. If this card is for Ichabod, they are no longer Undead. He loses his Vulnerability to Radiant damage.

## 13. DEATH

Magical darkness extends from the villain in a 20 feet radius. Magical light can override this darkness only if at a spell slot of 3rd level or higher was used to create the light. The villain's darkvision functions in magical darkness.

## 14. TEMPERANCE

The villain may choose to ignore any single condition inflicted on it.

## 15. THE DEVIL

The villain can be charmed or frightened despite its written condition immunities. However, when using its multiattack action, it can make one additional attack.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

Once during combat, the villain can cast *magic circle* once instantaneously on its turn, ignoring the normal casting time and materials. The spell immediately ends when the villain is defeated.

## 17. THE STAR

The villain gains an additional ability that it can use by spending 2 of its monster actions it could use to move.

**Guiding Star.** The villain may force the creature to make a Charisma saving throw against a DC of 8 + the villain's proficiency bonus + the villain's Charisma modifier. On a failed save, the effect ends.



## 18. THE MOON

The villain may spend its action to turn into a **young silver dragon** or to revert into its normal form. The villain gains all of the dragon's stats except for its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, which remain unchanged. The villain retains its current hit points and condition immunities.

## 19. THE SUN

The villain can cast *guiding bolt* innately, using its Charisma as its spellcasting modifier.

## 20. JUDGMENT

The villain gains a special attack that it can make on each of its turns in place of one of the attacks it could make with its multiattack action.

**Judge. Ranged Spell Attack:** +X to hit, range 60 ft., one target. **Hit:** 1d10 cold damage. Creatures with no Psychic Talents are immune to this.

X = the villain's Charisma modifier + its proficiency bonus.

## 21. CREATION

The villain begins combat with a **clay golem** that obeys its unspoken commands.

## 22. THE ORPHAN

The villain can be charmed despite its written condition immunities. The villain gains a special attack that it can make on each of its turns in place of one of the attacks it could make with its multiattack action.

**Bewitch. Ranged Spell Attack:** +X to hit, range 60 ft., one target. **Hit:** The creature is charmed by the villain until the end of its next turn. If the villain exceeds the target's AC by 7 or more, the creature will actively attack any other creature threatening the villain.

X = the villain's Charisma modifier + its proficiency bonus.

# ARC 2: PARANOIA

Paranoia finds the heroes either when they reach their fourth quest as determined in the Madness of Morgana tarot spread or when they travel to Icepoint on the Misguided Duchess arc of Lilith's adventure arc.

In either case, when Paranoia tracks down the heroes, use the information below to determine the effects that they have on the heroes and to determine how they fight the heroes when the time comes.

## PREYING ON CONFLICT

When Paranoia is within five miles of the heroes, she begins sowing discord among them by her very proximity. Whenever the heroes are uncertain about a course of action - especially if there is disagreement between them - add more uncertainty to the situation by playing up whichever side appears to be less popular among your players. Narratively, this represents Paranoia's influence on them even when she is not actively present.

## METAGAME PARANOIA

If you wish, consider using metagame tricks to increase the paranoia that your players experience themselves. Set up a battle map that you end up not using. Ask for Wisdom checks or Initiative rolls, say "Interesting" or something else vaguely cryptic while pretending to make notes behind a GM screen, and use other real-world devices to make the players feel ill at ease.

## REGIONAL EFFECTS

The heroes may notice that other humanoids nearby begin acting differently as well. In a five mile radius from Paranoia, humanoids act with greater fear and suspicion in all of their interpersonal interactions. This may manifest itself in the form of an unreasonable merchant, an aggressive city guard, or a former ally who now is unwilling to work with the heroes. This effect may give the heroes a clue that something is off, and may open additional room for discussion wherein you may drive wedges between the heroes.

## FIGHTING PARANOIA

If your table is comfortable with player vs player combat, then ratchet up the tensions between party members until they come to blows or otherwise expend resources on one another (such as casting spells to prevent certain courses of action). As soon as they have expended resources or lost hit points as a result of one another, Paranoia will approach them. Paranoia tries to keep a low profile by hiding in a crowd or in nearby buildings. With the element of surprise on their side, Paranoia targets the hero with the strongest magical powers and attempts to magically goad that hero into continuing to attack the others.

Once the heroes find Paranoia, the heroes will not have a terribly difficult time defeating them, provided that the heroes are not too bogged down fighting one another.

When the heroes defeat Paranoia, Paranoia uses their dying breaths to cackle and inform the heroes that Morgana sent Paranoia to assassinate the heroes.



## BETRAYING MORGANA

Paranoia chooses to tell the heroes that Morgana is behind this conflict because Paranoia's true master is Palorva. Palorva hopes that turning Morgana and the heroes against one another will remove several powerful threats from her domain at once.

## MORGANA'S RECOVERY

Once Paranoia is killed, Morgana regains some level of confidence and competence. However, she knows that the damage has already been done and she is unlikely to repair her relationship with the heroes. As such, she recruits Ichabod to finish the job.

## ARC 3: ICHABOD

After Paranoia is killed, Morgana's own paranoia melts away and she starts acting rationally again. With her wit regained, she tries to outmaneuver the heroes, build up a greater network against them, and remove any advantages they have. She may even try to reconcile with them. Joana Harker can help keep the heroes on track if they waver; Morgana has shown her true colors and has ambitions to dominate the world.

Ichabod tracks down the heroes and attacks them on a lonesome road. Use this encounter whenever possible as the heroes progress on the Lilith adventure, likely in Forsten or Derk.

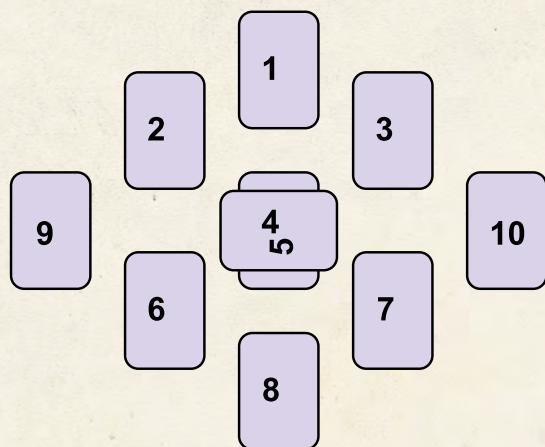
First, the heroes are attacked by a normal **dullahan**. Once they defeat this dullahan, Ichabod tracks them for two additional days and then attacks them himself as soon as they are outside of civilization.





# CHAPTER 4: MORGANA'S MANSION

Once the heroes have defeated Ichabod and are certain that Morgana is beyond being reasoned with, they must confront her in her mansion. Morgana's mansion is heavily enchanted to respond to the heroes based on a reading of the Morgana's Star tarot spread, which you must do once the heroes approach her mansion. Use only the Major Arcanas and disregard any reversed cards. DMs are encouraged to do this in advance of running a session, so that they have time to read their unique spread of cards and prepare according to the reading.



## 1. ENTRY

This card determines the first room that your heroes enter into.

## 2-4. WINGS OF THE MANOR

This card determines three rooms that you can explore from the entry. These will be large rooms, such as a library or a private art museum.

## 5. HIDDEN TREASURE

Somewhere in Room 4, there is hidden treasure. The nature of the treasure is determined by this card.

## 6-7. INNER ROOMS

More personal rooms, like a banquet or a study, that the heroes may explore.

## 8. SHOWDOWN ROOM

This is where you finally confront Morgana.

## 9. ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECT

This determines an environmental effect present throughout the whole manor.

## 10. MORGANA'S ACTIVE ARCANA

This card determines Morgana's active ability when the showdown begins.

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

When preparing the mansion, note cards 6, 7, and 9. Cards 6 and 7 pair together to determine a regional effect throughout the manor, and card 9 adds an additional regional effect. Be sure to incorporate these effects throughout the entire mansion as the heroes explore.

## 1. MANSION ENTRANCE

In order for the heroes to enter the mansion, they must overcome a challenge in the courtyard or entryway to Morgana's mansion as determined by the card in position 1.







## 1. THE MAGICIAN

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. As you advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor, you see that the way is overgrown by sharp, thorny brambles.

Pushing through the brambles requires a DC 22 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to squeeze through the brambles. On a failed save, a creature may make a DC 22 Constitution saving throw to push through. On another failed save, a creature sustains 2d4 piercing damage as the thorns tear their clothes and bite their skin.

If the heroes explore around the mansion, they find a small house that is home to a hex witch (use the stats of a **night hag** with the sidebar modifications). Once they are inside the mansion, if the witch was undiscovered, she will collect torn and bloody clothing from the brambles and make poppets of the heroes. Each room in the manor takes approximately 30 minutes to explore, unless they take a short rest, so calculate the number of poppets that the witch can make accordingly. She will start with whoever sustained the most damage and go in descending order from there.

### HEX WITCH STATS

The Night Hag has the following features.

**Poppets.** The hag can create up to five poppets in the likeness of creatures of whom the hag has some blood or clothing. Creating each poppet requires at least 1 hour. The hag has advantage on attack rolls against creatures for whom she has a poppet. Furthermore, those creatures have disadvantage on attack rolls against the hag.

The witch enters the mansion and joins combat on Morgana's side after the first round of combat against Morgana.



Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 2. THE PRIESTESS

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a narrow spiral staircase made of floor stones that seem to float in the air. The staircase disappears into an overcast sky.

A hero that journeys up the stairway gains +1d10 Fear and learns exactly what spread of Morgana's Star was pulled, and roughly what those cards mean.

The mansion's door is unlocked.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4



### 3. THE MOTHER

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a large tree bearing all kinds of fruit. Apples, pomegranates, oranges, dragonfruits, pears, and the like all blossom juicily on the tree's innumerable branches.*

Any hero that eats the fruit gains a temporary benefit: They become focused, gaining advantage on saving throws against becoming frightened. Each time an hour passes (every 2 rooms unless they take a short rest), the hero must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw. On a fail, the fruit's effects progress, removing the previous effect and offering a new effect:

- Shaken; the heroes suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks.
- Rallied; heroes gain advantage on saving throws against being charmed.
- Poisoned
- Rallied; heroes gain advantage on saving throws against being charmed.
- Shaken; the heroes suffer a -2 penalty to skill checks.
- Focused; heroes gain advantage on saving throws against being frightened.
- The heroes gain 1 level of exhaustion.

The door is unlocked and the heroes may enter freely.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

### 4. THE EMPEROR

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a massive iron sculpture of Pendragon. The statue glares down at you with a derisive expression, a skull crushed in his hand and another under his foot.*

When the heroes approach, the statue of Pendragon springs to life and attacks them.

This statue of Pendragon is a **stone golem**.

In addition, the hedges contain **awakened shrubs** that will attack the party if within reach. While the statue of Pendragon is still alive, on Initiative count 0, any present **knights** take their turn, then 1d3 new Knights emerge from the hedges.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at third level can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the statue of Dracula is defeated, the door magically opens

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

### 5. THE PROPHET

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. The path quickly disappears in a thick mist that seems to magically glow with faint inner light.*

Upon entering the mist, each hero gains +1d10 Fear and learns exactly what spread of Morgana's Star was pulled, and roughly what those cards mean. The entry to the manor is unlocked.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

### 6. THE LOVERS

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to the front entrance.*

When heroes pass through the entryway to the manor, each hero must pick a partner (if odd numbers, there is one group of three). Whenever one of the pair takes damage, the damage is divided evenly between them. (The group of three should instead each take one third of the damage).

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

### 7. THE CHARIOT

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to a grand entryway to the manor. Between you and the stairway, there is a frozen pond.*

Any movement causes the hero to move 5-15 feet farther than they expected (roll 1d3 to determine). The heroes must fight three **air elementals** that emerge from the hedges. Once the last elemental is defeated, the door magically unlocks.



The door is frozen solid until it magically unlocks. Heroes can thaw it out by casting at least 4 levels worth of spells that deal fire damage.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4



## 8. JUSTICAR

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a row of three stone arches that serve no apparent purpose. Each arch is covered in strange, foreign runes.

Deciphering the runes requires magic or a DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success, the heroes glean that the arch on the left gives you 1d4 Fear as you are overcome with day terrors from the deadlands of Shadowcroft. The center arch only works once per hero, but it gives you +X to attack rolls and +half X to your AC, where X = the number of psyche talents you have. The right arch allows you to immediately convert Fear in excess of your Threshold into Psyche talents.

The door is unlocked and can be entered freely.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 9. THE HERMIT

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a gazebo surrounded by an overgrown flowerbed that must have once been beautifully curated.

Inside the gazebo, there is a rune carved in the center of the floor. The first hero that touches it or walks over it is magically teleported to card 2, 3, or 4 (roll 1d3+1 to determine). The rune then fades.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at third level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the rune fades inside the Gazebo, then the door opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 10. THE WHEEL

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a flaming gyroscopic creature with floating eyes and wings. When it sees you, it immediately seems enraged.

The angel has the stats of a **deva** and attacks the heroes when they approach.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher or uses similar magic can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the deva is defeated, the door opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 11. VIOLENCE

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a massive snakelike creature with glowing green eyes.

When the heroes approach, the **hydra** attacks.



The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the Basilisk is defeated, the door magically opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls like an intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to the manor's locked doors. In the center of the courtyard, a huge dead tree spreads its thorny boughs. A skeleton hangs from a noose tied to one of the tree's branches.*

The tree is a corrupted **treant**, and the skeleton uses the stats of a **ghoul**. At Initiative count 0, any **awakened shrubs** take their turn, then 1 **awakened shrub** pushes through the hedges.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the treant is defeated, the door magically opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 13. DEATH

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach what you assume to be the manor, which is completely shrouded in magical darkness.*

The darkness is magical and can be dispelled with *dispel magic*, *daylight*, and similar magic if cast at 5th level or higher.

The courtyard is populated by 1d6 **reaper bats**. They will all try to spawn and then they will attack the heroes.

The mansion's doorway is unlocked but the heroes may struggle to find it in the pitch darkness.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 14. TEMPERANCE

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a large iron anvil, a smith's hammer and tongs, and a wrought iron brooch in the shape of a four-winged angel.*

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when a creature takes the brooch, the door opens.

The brooch is an uncommon magic item and automatically attunes to the first creature that touches it. It makes its bearer immune to being charmed and frightened. While attuned, the creature cannot receive any bonuses from its allies except for regaining hit points.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 15. THE DEVIL

**Read Aloud:** *A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a massive stone sculpture of a feminine fiend with flowing hair, curling horns, and batlike wings. The fiend is genuflecting so that her head is only eight feet high, and her hands are extended at the height of her knee, palm-up, as though to receive an item.*

*At her foot, there is a plaque covered in strange, otherworldly runes.*

Any hero may attempt to decipher the runes by making an Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check. A DC 15 check deciphers the title of the plaque, while a DC 21 check deciphers the whole of the plaque. You may decide whether deciphering the whole plaque allows players to know the mechanical effects of the statue, or if they must rely only on the information their heroes know.

The plaque is as follows:

### LILITH, THE FALLEN DAUGHTER

Should you proffer Lilith an offering,

she shall bless thine arms or armaments

with both great power and a mighty curse.



Any hero that places an item (weapon or armor) in Lilith's hands gains one randomly determined Psyche talent. Their weapon gains a +3 bonus to attacks and damage, or their armor gains a +2 bonus to armor class and saving throws, as long as they have that Psyche talent.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, after the statue of Lilith has empowered at least one weapon or piece of armor, the doorway unlocks.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to... nothing. It just ends in broken stone. Looming out of the clouds overhead, you see a magnificent manor shimmering in powerful magic, with a front door that looks like it is meant to rest atop this staircase.

In the middle of the courtyard before the staircase, there is a large pedestal, as though intended for a statue. Rubble is strewn about its base.

The heroes may explore the courtyard, the staircase, and the hedge. If they push through the hedges, they just see more overgrown garden landscape. This area is riddled with **zombies** and **shambling mounds** that will attack them if they press beyond the hedges.

A hero that stands on the pedestal briefly turns to stone, then cracks and crumbles into rubble. While this looks like instant death, it is in fact just a menacing-looking teleportation spell. The hero appears in the chapel (below).

Any heroes that use magic to detect the nature of the pedestal are able to detect conjuration magic.

## THE CHAPEL

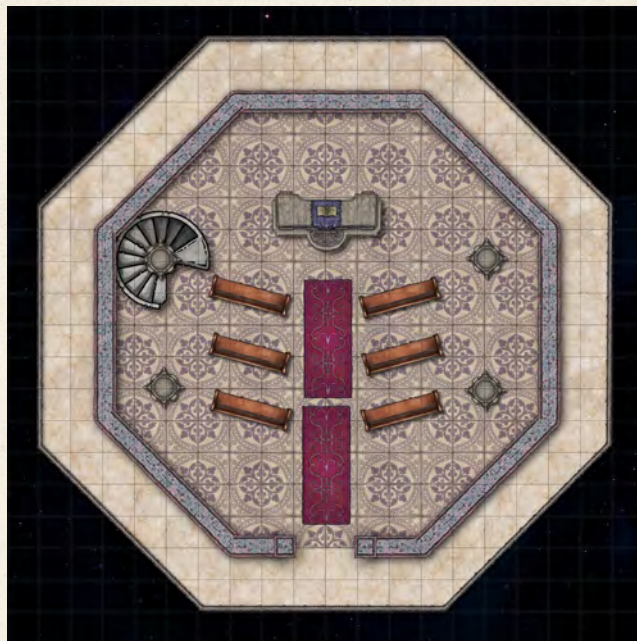
The chapel is a towering room, octagonal like a gazebo and made out of fine white marble. Its windows open onto a wraparound balcony, and any creature on this balcony can always see the stars regardless of the time of day. From the chapel's balcony, a hero may see the courtyard and may shout to alert the other heroes that it is only a portal.

Once at least three heroes are in the chapel at one time, a twisted, corrupted angel and a somehow pure-seeming demon appear and attack them. The angelic creature is a **deva**. The fiend is a **bone devil**. These two creatures will battle the heroes until dead.

One end of the chapel has a staircase that spirals downwards into the foyer. The entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 17. THE STAR



**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, a faint beam of starlight descends onto a pedestal.

The first hero that steps into the circle magically falls asleep for 1d10 minutes, during which time the hero experiences soothing dreams of starlit skies. At the end of this time, the hero awakens and removes all its current Fear (but none of its current Psyche talents).

The second hero that steps into the circle magically falls asleep for 1d10 minutes, during which time the hero is wracked with nightmares of the unknowable void of space. At the end of this time, the hero awakens and gains +1d10 Fear.

Any subsequent heroes that step into the circle have a 50/50 chance of getting the first or second effect (flip a coin or roll odds and evens).

The door is unlocked and heroes may enter freely.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4



## 18. THE MOON

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to the front entrance.

Two **Garvor bloodhunter werewolves** snuffle around in the overgrowth, approaching the heroes. If they do not confront them now, they will attack them in the next room they visit.

The door is unlocked and can be entered freely.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 19. THE SUN

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Bright light and intense heat radiate from directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance. What seems to be a miniature sun rotates and pulsates above a pedestal in the center of the courtyard.

When the heroes approach the pedestal, the miniature sun springs to life and attacks them. It has the stats of a **fire elemental**.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the sun is defeated, the door magically opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 20. JUDGMENT

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the front entrance, you see a massive silver sculpture of the vampiric lord himself. The statue of Dracula glares down at you with a derisive expression.

When the heroes approach, the statue of Dracula springs to life and attacks them.

This statue of Dracula is a **stone golem** with 18 Charisma and the following additional attack, which it can use in place of a Slam attack.

**Judged Lacking.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 30 ft, one target. *Hit:* Xd8 psychic damage, where X equals the target's current Fear.

In addition, the hedges are **shambling mounds** with a speed of 0 feet. They will attack the party if within reach. While the statue of Dracula is still alive, on Initiative count 0, any present **zombies** take their turn, then 1d3 new **zombies** emerge from the hedges.

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, when the statue of Dracula is defeated, the door magically opens.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls in three directions, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 21. CREATION

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. A wide, shallow stone stairway leads up to a wall where a massive waterfall pours down, splashing on the stairs and running into a shallow pool. Trellises of ivy decorate the walls on either side.

The fountain producing the waterfall is a decorative multi-headed gargoyle. Levers tucked under its wings can be unlocked with a successful DC 20 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) or Strength (Athletics) check. Once unlocked, they can be turned with a successful DC 20 Strength (Athletics) or Intelligence (Arcana) check. Any of these checks cost a bonus action to make. Once the levers are turned, the fountain is disabled.

At Initiative count 0 on each turn (roll Initiative when the heroes enter the courtyard), the waterfall spawns a monster. Roll 1d10:

1d10	Creature
1-4	1d8 zombies
5-7	1d2 ochre jellies
8-9	1d2 giant scorpions
10	1 clay golem

The doorway into the manor is magically barred by thick iron rods covered in runes. A hero that uses the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher can unlock the door. Otherwise, after the fountain is disabled, the heroes can enter freely.

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.



- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4



## 22. THE ORPHAN

**Read Aloud:** A wrought iron gateway stands at the entrance to the mansion. You advance along the broken cobbled path and approach the manor between thick, overgrown hedges. Directly in front of the wide, shallow stone stairway leading up to the manor, you see a large pedestal with a small statue of a dirty urchin kneeling on scabbed knees, holding out a cup full of water that glows a faint blue-green.

The manor gateway before you seems to have no entrances. The staircase just hits a stone wall.

Heroes that cast spells to remove illusory magic, or have truesight or the like, can see a doorway. However, the door is sealed and needs the *knock* spell at 8th level or higher in order for it to open.

Otherwise, once someone drinks the water, they can see and walk through the doorway. They can then unlock it from the inside.

The creature that drinks the water gains the following stat alterations for the duration of their time in the manor:

- Cannot receive healing or buffs of any kind from allies, except potions
- Immune to charmed, frightened, and stunned

Immediately inside the mansion, the entry foyer sprawls as a large intersection, offering the heroes access to the right and left wings of the manor or allowing them to venture deeper into the manor's heart.

- Right: Card 2
- Left: Card 3
- Straight Forward: Card 4

## 2, 3, 4. WINGS OF THE MANSION

Once the heroes enter the mansion, they may head to the right or left to explore the east and west wings of the mansion or go straight, moving into the central area of the mansion.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN

This wing of the manor is a dusty, carpeted hallway dimly lit by wall sconces. The hallway is lined by single doors that open into guest bedrooms, all furnished similarly but in disrepair, like an abandoned hotel.

If the heroes explore any of these bedrooms, the hero with the highest passive Perception will notice a depression on one of the beds, like someone is sitting on it. They may attack this apparition, or they might speak with it.

### FIGHTING THE GHOSTS

If the heroes resort to combat, they must fight seven **ghosts**.

### SPEAKING WITH THE GHOSTS

The first ghost the heroes speak with is the ghost of a priest, who will introduce himself as Father Timian. He has no quarrel with the others, but does not want to leave without ensuring the others are willing to pass on into the afterlife as well. He will tell the heroes that there are six other ghosts scattered throughout the wing. However, many of them died angry with one another for a variety of petty reasons, and they have continued to quarrel with one another ever since their deaths. They do not want to block the others from entering into the afterlife, but they also do not want to enter into the afterlife alongside people with whom they are angry, and have thus far failed to reconcile.

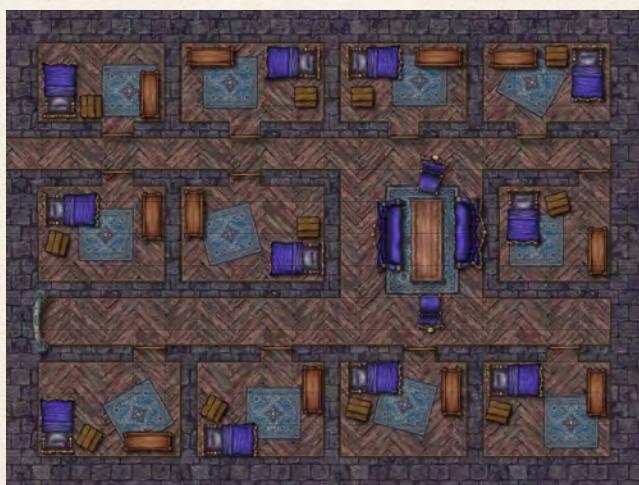
Within the west wing there is an ethereal gateway that will allow the ghosts to pass on into the afterlife. However, it will close one minute after the first ghost goes through. There is only time for three groups of ghosts to pass through before the gateway closes.

If the heroes can arrange the ghosts so that they can pass into the afterlife alongside others with whom they have no issue, then the ghosts will be very grateful.

After the players speak with the priest, they may speak with the other six. Among the other ghosts there are three siblings, a guard, a merchant, and a noble. If asked, they will each explain their quarrels with the others, which are listed below.



Name	Description and Grievances
Perci Weaver <i>The Middle Sibling</i>	Perci refuses to travel with his younger brother Owain, and they both claim the other stole part of the inheritance that was divided between the three siblings. Perci is rude and standoffish to nearly everyone he meets, which has earned him no favors with the other ghosts.
Owain Weaver <i>The Youngest Sibling</i>	Owain does not really think that Perci stole the inheritance, but he is upset that Perci keeps accusing him of it. He wants to show Perci how it feels by accusing him in return. However, he forgives easily and he cares a lot about his siblings, so if Perci apologizes, he is willing to let it go.
Jessa Weaver <i>The Eldest Sibling</i>	Jessa is upset that her younger brothers are fighting, and refuses to choose between them. She will not travel with one of them unless the other is present.
Trader Orvek <i>The Merchant</i>	Trader Orvek is suspicious of the other ghosts, and he refuses to travel without the guard, Captain Leona. He also claims that the courtier, Lady Annetta, was slandering his business, and he refuses to travel with her unless she apologizes.
Captain Leona <i>The Guard</i>	Captain Leona has heard the brothers' accusations against each other, and she refuses to travel with Perci or Owain Weaver while they are suspected of the theft of the inheritance.
Lady Annetta <i>The Courtier</i>	Lady Annetta claims that Perci Weaver was rude and disrespectful to her when they met, and she refuses to travel with him unless he apologizes. She also claims that Trader Orvek overcharged her for jewelry that she bought from him the last time they met while they were alive, and she does not wish to speak with him again.
Father Timian <i>The Priest</i>	Father Timian will travel with anyone, assuming all of the ghosts agree to travel through the gates.



The heroes may attempt to resolve the conflicts between the ghosts, or to arrange them in groups that have no quarrels. If they do not resolve any arguments, then the solution is to arrange a group of three consisting of Jessa Weaver, Captain Leona, and Trader Orvek, to pair Perci Weaver with Father Timian, and to pair Owain Weaver with Lady Annetta.

If the players wish to skip the puzzle or the discussions with the ghosts, or if they get stuck, up to four party members may make Intelligence or Charisma checks to appeal to the ghosts' humanity. On a sum total of 70 or higher, the ghosts can reconcile with one another and pass into the afterlife.

After the heroes have resolved the mystery - either by contenting the ghosts or by defeating them - then an ethereal passageway solidifies into a physical one, allowing the heroes to pass from the end of the west wing's hallway into the inner rooms.

If the heroes have resolved the mystery - either by contenting the ghosts or by defeating them - then an ethereal passageway solidifies into a physical one, allowing the heroes to pass from the end of this wing's hallway into the inner rooms.

#### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, there is treasure hidden underneath Father Timian's room. Resolving the ghosts' conflict results in Father Timian revealing a hidden floor panel to the heroes, under which they find the treasure.

## 2. THE PRIESTESS

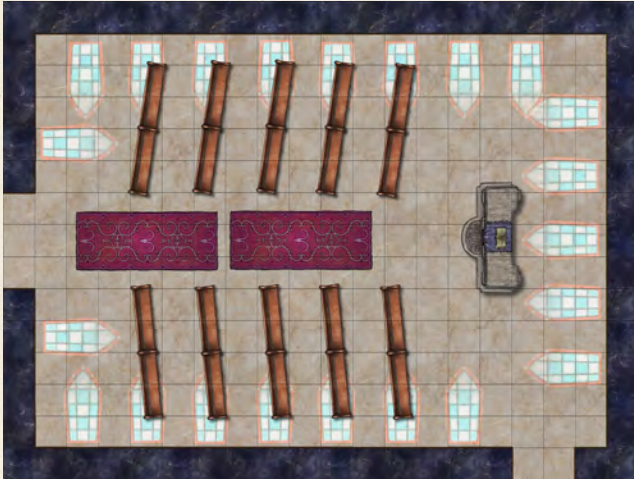
The heroes may explore a chapel with 22 stained glass windows that are each one of the Major Arcanas. An elf nun is in the chapel. If heroes request a service, she will tell them a bit about each of the Major Arcanas. This lecture causes all of the heroes' Psyche talents to be randomly redistributed to other heroes in the party. Treat multiple tripartite or pentacle talents from the same group as a single talent when redistributing talents in this way.



The heroes may freely progress to the next room. The nun will not attempt to stop them.

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may entreat the nun for more aid. Succeeding on a DC 22 Charisma check persuades her to give them treasure, which was hidden in a demiplane that the nun uses for storage, accessible through the Priestess stained glass window.



## 3. THE MOTHER

The heroes advance into a grand public dining hall. The dining hall is riddled with traps. As each hero moves through the room, roll on the table below to see what trap they trigger.

A hero that makes a DC 20 Intelligence (Investigation) check may spot these traps ahead of time. If a hero does so successfully, then the traps still trigger as the heroes walk through the room, but have a -6 penalty to their save DCs.

### 1d4 Trap

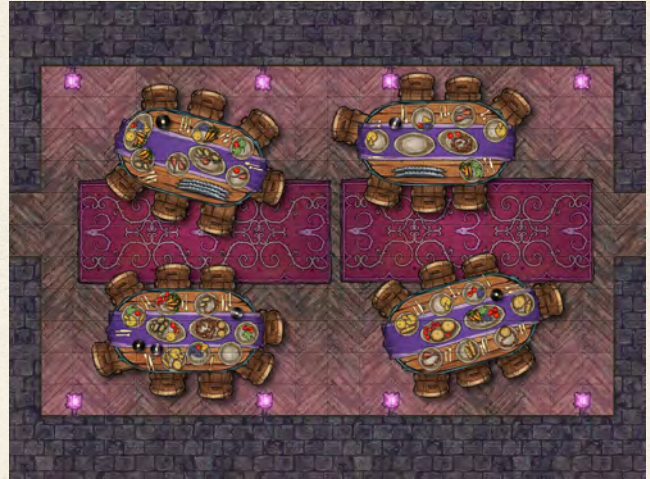
- 1 Whirling bladed plates launch out from the table. DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. 2d6 slashing damage.
- 2 A loose floorboard traps the hero's leg. DC 19 Wisdom saving throw. 2d10 bludgeoning damage.
- 3 A fire beam blasts out from the wall. DC 19 Constitution saving throw. 2d8 fire damage.
- 4 Knives from a knife block are shot across the room, pulled by a hidden magnet. DC 21 Dexterity saving throw. 5d4 piercing damage.

Each time a hero would be hit, another hero may intercede, taking the damage instead. Heroes that do so score critical hits on attack rolls of 19-20 for the next hour. They can only gain this benefit once.

On the other side of the dining room, the doorway takes them to the inner rooms.

### Treasure Room

If card is in position 4, the heroes may find treasure strapped to a hidden compartment underneath the table. Heroes that look underneath the table can spot this compartment with a DC 8 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check. The table collapses on a hero that gets the treasure, dealing 2d12 bludgeoning damage unless another hero takes the damage.



## 4. THE EMPEROR

The heroes descend a stone stairwell into a crypt. The crypt spans multiple rooms, and the largest grave is dedicated to Pendragon, the Black King, who has a carved stone statue blanketed with cobwebs. There is a shrine at his feet with what looks like a bowl of anointing oil in it.

Heroes may anoint themselves. If they do, they gain +1d6 necrotic damage to all their weapon damage rolls for the next 24 hours. However, all enemies gain advantage on attack rolls against them for the duration.

On the other side of the crypt, stairways take the heroes back up to the inner rooms.

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may find treasure inside one of the graves. If they dare to open a sarcophagus, they find the treasure.





## 5. THE PROPHET

The heroes find themselves in a massive library with a vast number of esoteric texts. Heroes can make Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (Religion) checks; on a 22 or higher, they gain 1 portent. A hero that gains a portent may roll 1d20 and write down the result. Once in the next 24 hours, a hero may replace one of their rolled d20s with the result that they rolled in this room.

If a hero makes this check but rolls below a 22, Morgana gets 1 portent as described above.

Heroes in the library lose track of time. If they are very focused on the mission, make them roll a DC 20 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, they lose focus. If all the heroes lose track of time, they gain the benefits of a short rest. Then redo the tarot spread. The next room they walk into is a courtyard, effectively returning the heroes to card 1.

Heroes can advance through the room unimpeded aside from the possibility of losing track of time.

### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, there is treasure hidden within the library. A DC 24 Intelligence (Investigation) check allows the heroes to find a writing desk with a false-bottomed drawer, showing the treasure within.



## 6. THE LOVERS

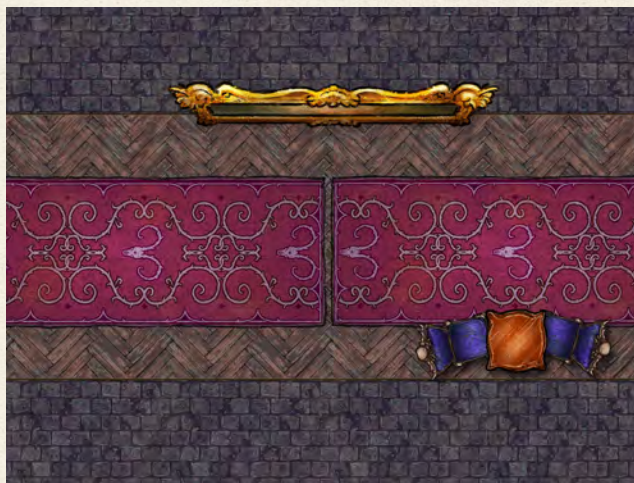
As the heroes walk through the halls, they come upon a mural depicting the epic love story of a powerful warlord and his lover. The events of the mural depict that the warlord's beloved died, so he destroyed the world and rebuilt it. He saved her, but she spurned him, so he again destroyed the world and tried a third time. Whether the third time was successful is unclear.

Each hero must pick a partner (if there is an odd number of heroes, there is one group of three). Whenever a hero takes damage, halve it; their partner takes the same amount of damage. (The group of three instead divides any damage taken into even thirds among each of them).

Heroes can advance through the room unimpeded.

### Treasure Room

If hero must pick a partner (if there is an odd number of heroes, there is one group of three). Whenever one of the pair takes damage, the damage is divided evenly between them. (The group of three instead divides any damage taken into even thirds among each of them).



## 7. THE CHARIOT

The heroes arrive in a rookery with a cacophony of squawking crows and ravens. Their path takes them across a narrow wooden walkway to the other side of the room. They can attempt to cross it, dodging ravens and crows, or they can simply attack the crows and clear it out. If they try to dodge and they fail, then they will fall and take damage. A ladder is notched into the wall on the near side, so heroes that fall may try again.

If they fight, then there is 1 giant raven (use the stats of a **vrock**) and 3 **swarms of ravens**.

If they attempt to dodge, each hero must make 3 Dexterity saving throws: DC 15, 21, and 27.

If they fall, a hero takes 4d6 bludgeoning damage from falling 40 feet.

On the other side of the rookery, the doorway takes them to the inner rooms.

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may find treasure in one of the upper cages. They must climb the maintenance ladder notched into the wall all the way to the upper balcony and get it out of the cage. This automatically guarantees combat, and the hero risks falling 80 feet (8d6 bludgeoning damage).





## 8. JUSTICAR

A grand hallway, drafty and darkened in disuse, yawns before the heroes. A dozen suits of armor stand vigil, six on each side, spaced every thirty feet down the hall. Behind each suit of armor, stained glass depicts a valiant armored crusader dispensing merciful justice wherever it travels. One of the suits of armor has a cape and gilding, setting itself apart as the leader.

These suits have the stats of **animated armor** and will fight if attacked, but otherwise stand a silent vigil.

Heroes may make a DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana), Intelligence (History), or Intelligence (Religion) check to recognize the stained glass as depicting The Justicar. Heroes that succeed this check by 3 or more know that saying “Hail the Justicar” is a formal phrase of respect uttered when interacting with such an individual.

Heroes that say the phrase “Hail the Justicar” will be “knighted” by the caped suit of armor.

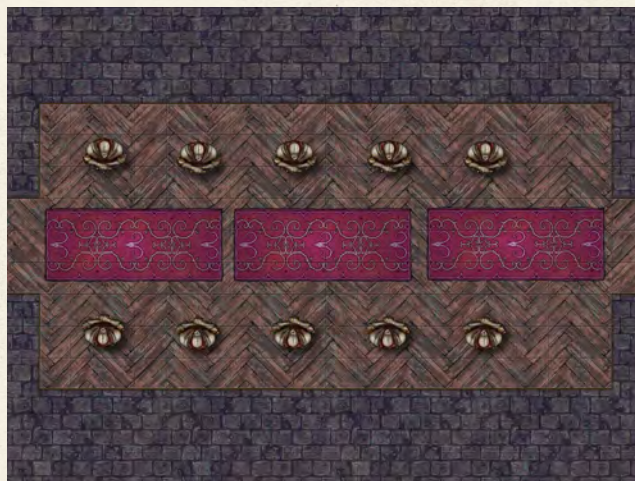
Heroes that do so gain +X to their saving throws. They also deal +X radiant damage on weapon attacks. These benefits last for 7 days. X equals the number of Psyche talents affecting the hero.

Heroes can advance through the room unimpeded unless they are drawn into combat.

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, there is treasure hidden inside the caped suit of armor. If the heroes fight the armors, they can take the treasure.

If they Hailed the Justicar, they may make Charisma checks to persuade the Justicar to freely give the treasure. If any hero succeeds on a DC 22 or higher check, the Justicar will do so.



## 9. THE HERMIT

The heroes find themselves in an enclosed courtyard that is a topiary garden. A lone gazebo stands in the middle of the courtyard.

Meditating in the gazebo for the duration of a short rest removes all conditions and suppresses boons from allies for 1d4 hours.

On the other side of the courtyard, the doorway takes them to the inner rooms.

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may find treasure. A DC 17 Wisdom (Survival) or Intelligence (Investigation) check will uncover the treasure at the foot of a lion topiary.



## 10. THE WHEEL

Heroes that head into this wing will find themselves in a network of endless halls.

Describe to your heroes how they walk through a dimly lit hallway that opens into a circular viewing chamber populated with paintings on the walls and sculptures in glass-encased podiums. The circular chamber has four exits (including the one the heroes came from). If they go through any of these exits, after a short walk down another hall, they come into an identical room. Repeat this process indefinitely.



These paintings and sculptures in each room generally depict the Celestial Council and celestial creatures, such as Emissaries and devas. Be sure to mention one particularly beautiful painting:

**Read Aloud:** *You behold a magnificent celestial being that looks to be multiple concentric rings of fire and sunlight shining with a splendid radiance. This glorious creature spreads blinding white wings, like those of eagles; it appears to be a flaming, multi-winged gyroscope.*

The first time the heroes turn around and retrace their steps, they return to another identical room, but this one is occupied by a deva who appears to the heroes as a kindly monk.

The deva tries to give “directions” to the heroes, telling them that if they keep walking straight, and do not deviate, they will eventually reach their destination. They can try to discern whether the deva is being truthful, rolling their Wisdom (Insight) against the deva’s Charisma (Deception) roll.

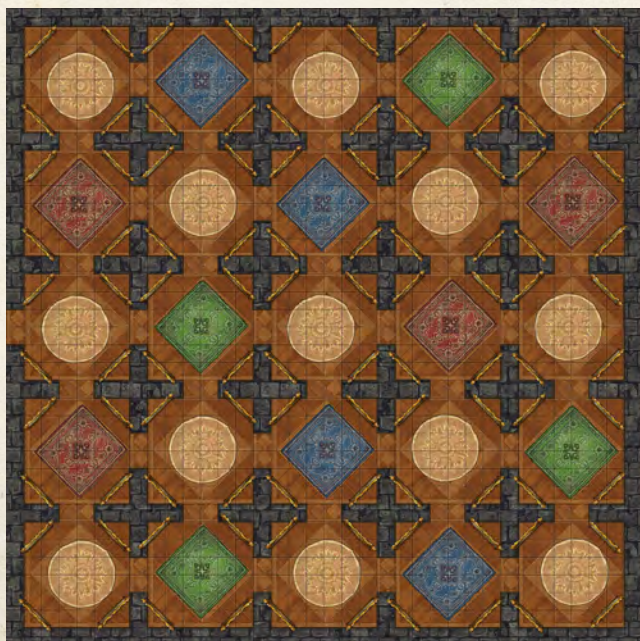
If they believe the deva, they gain one level of exhaustion from walking in a straight line for so long. At any point, if they turn around again and retrace their steps, the first room they return to has the same deva in it.

To overcome this maze, they must confront the deva. When they engage it in combat, it reveals its true form, matching the gyroscopic creature in the painting. Once it is defeated, the endless rooms simply turn into one single room.

After the manor interior has been reduced to a single room, the heroes may advance through a hallway to reach the inner rooms.

#### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, there is treasure hidden behind the painting. If the heroes remove the painting of the celestial gyroscopic creature from the wall in the manor interior, they will find a hidden compartment with the treasure.



## 11. VIOLENCE

**Read Aloud:** *You ascend a stairway and find yourself on an outdoor parapet. Gargoyles overlook the outer wall, and the ground on both the outside and inside of the wall is lined in jagged stakes. It looks like multiple vampires are impaled on these stakes, desiccated into husks of their former selves.*

Falling onto the stakes causes a hero to take 2d6 bludgeoning damage and 2d8 piercing damage. A creature is prone and restrained (escape DC 18) after taking this damage. Upon escaping the restrained condition, a creature begins bleeding. They take 1d8 slashing damage at the start of each of their turns until a creature takes an action to make a DC 14 Intelligence (Medicine) check to stanch the bleeding.

To advance, the heroes must fight 4 **gargoyle elders**. Upon defeating these gargoyles, the heroes may advance unimpeded.

#### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, the heroes may easily find treasure in the far tower. The treasure is in plain sight. If not defeated, the gargoyles will continue to attack whichever creature acquires this treasure.



## 12. THE HANGED MAN

**Read Aloud:** *You descend a narrow stairway into a moldering dungeon littered with torture devices, including a stretching rack, a bed of nails, and an iron maiden. The center of the room has a long, multi-noose gallows. Beneath the gallows, there is a pool of black bile.*

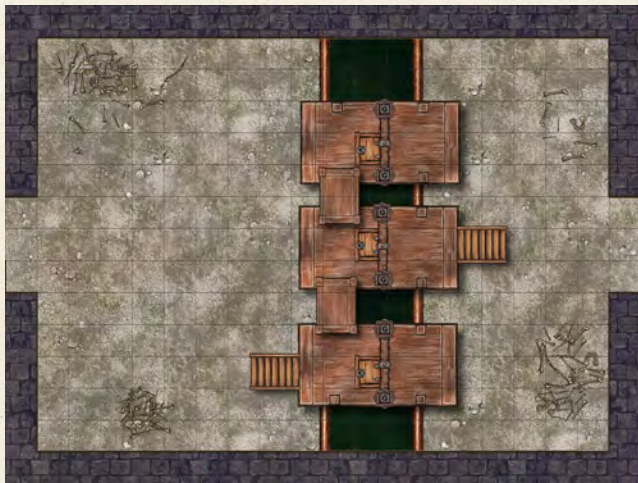
Heroes that dunk themselves in the bile turn into an undead for the next 2d4+2 days (allowing you to ignore the needs of eating, drinking, and halving your need to sleep). Heroes that do this gain 1 Fear, gain advantage on Charisma (Intimidation) checks, and suffer disadvantage on other Charisma skill checks.

Heroes can advance through the room unimpeded.

#### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, then heroes can find the treasure hidden in the rafters. To do this, a hero must lie down on the bed of nails and look straight up. Otherwise, the shadows obscure the treasure.





### 13. DEATH

The pathway takes the heroes to an enclosed courtyard that is completely darkened, and the light of the stars fails to offer any meaningful illumination. The heroes may quickly discern that the ground is loose and muddy. Trudging through the mud, they might stub their toes on a finely crafted piece of stonemasonry.

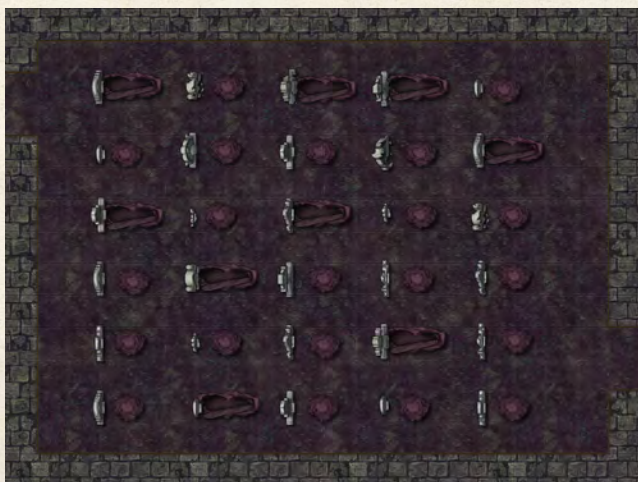
Heroes that examine the stonemasonry see that they are headstones. The courtyard is littered with open, empty graves.

To progress through this chamber, the heroes must fight a **m'l'ykkri lumberer**.

On the other side of the grave, the doorway takes them to the inner rooms.

#### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may find treasure inside one of the open graves. They must succeed a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check to notice it.



### 14. TEMPERANCE

As the heroes walk through the hall, magical darkness overtakes them. Each hero is teleported to a new area in a series of hallways that make up this wing of the manor.

Have each hero roll Initiative. Narrate as each hero emerges from the magical darkness. The heroes are each alone in separate dusty, cobwebbed hallways.

As each hero advances, they eventually see monstrous creatures approaching them. This is powerful illusory magic, and the creatures are actually the other heroes.

Proceeding in Initiative, each time they hit one of their allies, a hero can make a DC 15 Sanity saving throw. On a success, the illusory magic ends and the hero can see their friends clearly. Someone who has "woken up" from this magic can make the same check as an action to shake someone else out of their trance.

Heroes with the truesight or other abilities to see through illusory magic can use those abilities to automatically see through the illusion. They do not have to make the Sanity check in order to break free from the magic.

The heroes can advance unimpeded once they have all overcome the illusory magic.

#### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, then the last hero to enter finds the treasure immediately. Any hero who sees the hero with treasure instead sees a monster guarding treasure.



### 15. THE DEVIL

At the end of the hallway, the heroes walk into a musty storage room full of crates covered in sheets. Random trinkets can be found here, and heroes can take anything from the Trinket table or any miscellaneous, nonmagical jewelry, art, and the like that they desire. This can total up to 1,000 sc worth of goods for each hero, or up to 5,000 sc if they take an unwieldy item such as a large painting.

In the corner of the room there is an iron cage, inside of which is some kind of object with a sheet draped over it. The drape makes the shape underneath look like some kind of trophy or shrine.



Unlocking the cage requires a DC 10 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Removing the sheet reveals the shrine.

The Shrine is of a feminine fiend with flowing hair, curling horns, and batlike wings. She is standing with her arms outstretched in a posture that beckons for people to worship her.

Heroes that worship her by bowing before this idol may gain 1, 2, or 3 Psyche talents.

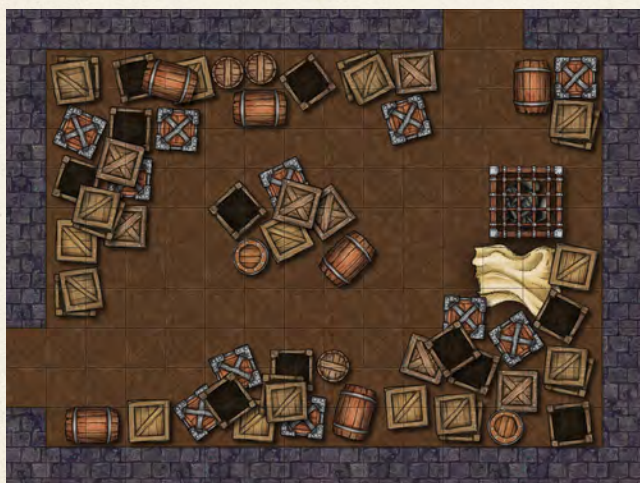
For each psyche talent they gain, they also gain +1 to an ability score of their choice (but cannot pick the same ability score twice).

All selections are permanent; these Psyche talents all have the Soul Scar tag when taken in this way.

The heroes can advance through the room unimpeded.

#### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, heroes may attempt to find treasure. A DC 18 Wisdom (Survival) check allows them to find the treasure.



## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

The heroes travel through the halls until they reach a mostly empty, austere room resembling a temple's interior. It has decorative stained glass windows and a single stone door frame in the middle of the room.

Walking through the frame affects each hero differently, as shown on the following table. These effects last until they leave the mansion.

1d4	Effect
1	Suffer disadvantage on skill checks for 1 hour
2	Gain resistance to fire damage for 1 hour
3	Restore a 1st level spell slot
4	Restore 1d4 HP

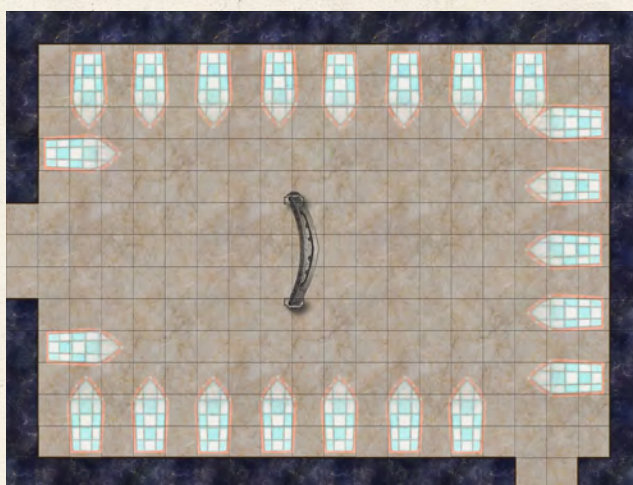
If any heroes walked through the arch, then when they leave the room, the heroes teleport to a randomly determined room.

#### 1d4 Room

- |   |                                |
|---|--------------------------------|
| 1 | Entry Courtyard                |
| 2 | Left room, or center if there  |
| 3 | Right room, or center if there |
| 4 | Inner rooms                    |

#### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, roll 1d4 as though the heroes teleported to determine where the treasure actually is. The first hero that walks through the door is automatically teleported to that room and sees the treasure.



## 17. THE STAR

**Read Aloud:** The mansion's wing is littered with empty bookshelves set into the walls, the dim lighting casting shadows about the narrow hall. At the end of the hallway, there is a large, circular room with an elaborate dome overhead. The black marble columns around the room's edge, the obsidian tile flooring, and the dome's dark interior surface are all of a kind: the surface is both black and shiny, absorbing and reflecting any light source. Small gems are inset into all three surfaces, catching the light and glittering like stars. A ring of these gems forms a circle in the middle of the otherwise empty room. The very center of the dome is open to the air, and a faint beam of starlight descends into the gem-studded center circle.

It appears that there is no other path out of this room, aside from the path you just entered from.

The first hero that steps into the circle magically falls asleep for 1d10 minutes, during which time the hero experiences soothing dreams of starlit skies. At the end of this time, the hero awakens and removes all its current Fear (but none of its current Psyche talents).

The second hero that steps into the circle magically falls asleep for 1d10 minutes, during which time the hero is wracked with nightmares of the unknowable void of space.



At the end of this time, the hero awakens and gains +1d10 Fear.

Any subsequent heroes that step into the circle have a 50/50 chance of getting the first or second effect (flip a coin or roll odds and evens).

If none of the heroes enter the circle in the middle of the room, then they will eventually have to backtrack. They may return to the foyer and explore another wing of the manor.

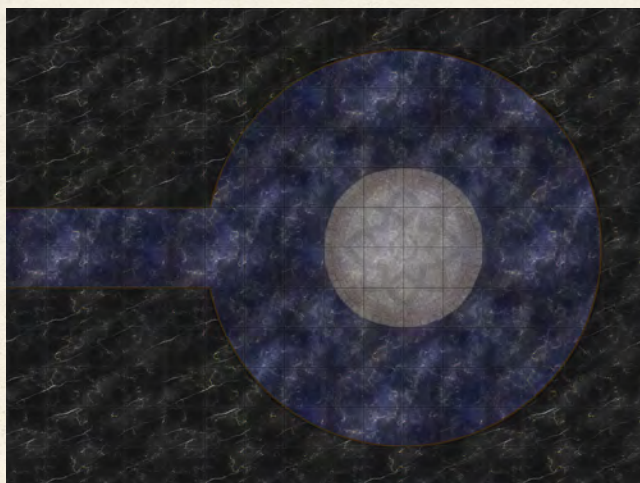
If one or more heroes do enter into the circle, then the entire room magically and subtly teleports. It requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check for a hero to immediately notice that this change has occurred.

If the room teleports, then once the heroes leave the chamber, describe how the hallways are brightly lit by wall sconces and have old, faded paintings on the walls (making no mention of the previous empty bookshelves).

Proceed to the Inner Room Puzzle (cards 6-7).

#### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, there is treasure hidden within the chamber. A DC 19 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal that a piece of marble in one of the columns is carefully cut, allowing it to be removed. This will require magic such as the *knock* spell at 3rd level or higher. If the heroes remove the compartment, they find the treasure.



## 18. THE MOON

The mansion's interior halls lead to a large chamber with walls, columns, and a domed ceiling all made of black marble. The floor is similarly made of marble, but has black and blue tiles in a strange pattern. Twelve orbs about the size of a human's head glow with blue light and hover about 5 feet off the ground. Four of the orbs glow brightly, and eight glow dimly.

Heroes may touch and move the orbs. So long as the orbs remain in this room, they continue to glow and hover about 5 feet off the ground when released. Once removed from this room, they become nonmagical porcelain balls. Four of the orbs glow brightly, and eight glow dimly.

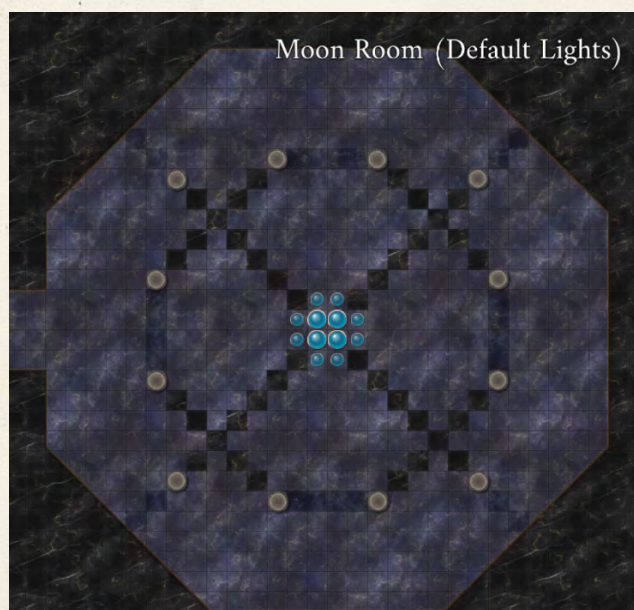
As shown in the following diagrams, these lights can be arranged to cause the columns to cast shadows. When these shadows align with the blue tiles on the floor, then the room fills with bright light that blinds the heroes for 6 seconds. The room otherwise appears not to have changed.

The entire room magically and subtly teleports when this light flashes. It requires a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check for a hero to immediately notice that this change has occurred.

The heroes may leave the room to find that they are now in a new hallway that leads them to the interior chamber.

#### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, then there is a secondary configuration of lighting as shown on the last diagram. If the heroes configure the lights accordingly, then a spring loaded panel releases from the middle of the room, revealing a hidden hatch containing the treasure.







## 19. THE SUN

The heroes walk through the halls for a time before emerging in a large chamber that houses some kind of elaborate puzzle.

The center of the room is bifurcated by iron bars, like a jail cell. Just past the bars, a canal runs through the room. On the leftmost side of the canal, there is a vat of molten lava glowing golden-hot. On the rightmost side, a similar vat holds water. In between these two vats, behind a locked iron door, a massive, horned demon lumbers back and forth, roaring at the heroes and clearly eager to attack them.

Three levers emerge from the iron bars, allowing the heroes to pull them. The lever on the left clearly would open the leftmost vat, filling the canal with lava. The lever on the right would do the same with water. The lever in the middle would unlock the doorway, allowing the demon to launch itself at the heroes.

The demon has the stats of a **hezrou**.

Any creature that looks at this puzzle can clearly determine what each lever would do. However, the heroes feel a supernatural compulsion to pull the wrong lever. Each hero must roll Initiative, then each hero must make a DC 18 Sanity saving throw check. Any hero that fails feels compelled to pull the center lever and release the demon. Acting in Initiative order, the heroes may run to the center of the room and pull levers of their choosing, or may use abilities, maneuvers, or other actions to impede the progress of their compatriots.

If one or more heroes pull the levers to release both the water and the lava, then the lava fills the canal and hardens into basalt, entrapping and instantaneously killing the demon.

If, however, a hero manages to pull the central lever first, then the demon attacks them.

### Treasure Room

If this card was in positions 2, 3, or 4, then there is an additional piece to the puzzle. If this card was in positions 2 or 3, then there is no treasure in position 4.

A raised wooden platform emerges from the trench and is encased in a clear, magically reinforced glass tube. On the top of this platform, the heroes can see the treasure.

If the heroes release the lava before the water, the lava sets the wood ablaze, causing the platform to crumble. If the heroes release the water before the top of the platform reaches the lava, then the top of the platform comes to rest on cooling basalt and the heroes may collect the treasure. If they do not release the water in time, the treasure will burn in the lava and be lost. If this occurs, each hero gains 1 Fear.

If the heroes release the water first, then the lava will harden into basalt before burning the wooden platform. This causes the item to remain stuck behind the magically reinforced glass tube, which cannot be broken unless the magic is first dispelled with the *dispel magic* spell or similar magic. If the heroes cause the item to become stuck and inaccessible, they each gain +1 Fear.





## 20. JUDGMENT

A reception room includes opulent, plush couches and a large hearth that is currently unlit. On the opposite wall, there is a huge tapestry of Dracula. His gold-thread eyes seem to flash with malicious intent. When the heroes see this tapestry, they must make DC 20 Sanity saving throws. On a fail, they gain 1d4+2 Fear (roll separately for each hero). Heroes then take psychic damage: 1d6 per Fear they have above their threshold, and 1d10 per Psyche Talent. Heroes that fail are frightened of Dracula's tapestry.

Heroes can advance through the room unimpeded unless they are frightened, in which case they must take a different course.

### Treasure Room

If this card was in position 4, there is treasure hidden behind Dracula's tapestry. A frightened hero that succeeds on a DC 22 Intelligence, Wisdom, Charisma, or Sanity check can approach Dracula's tapestry. Behind his tapestry, there is a wall panel with a simple lock. The *knock* spell, or a DC 12 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, opens the panel and reveals the treasure.



## 21. CREATION

The heroes find a room that has a barred doorway and wall on one side, like a jail cell. A hallway beyond leads into the inner rooms. Heroes that can shapeshift into a form that can fit through bars, or that can teleport, can get through the area without issue. However, the doorway is magically locked on both sides, requiring a *knock* spell at 8th level or higher to pass.

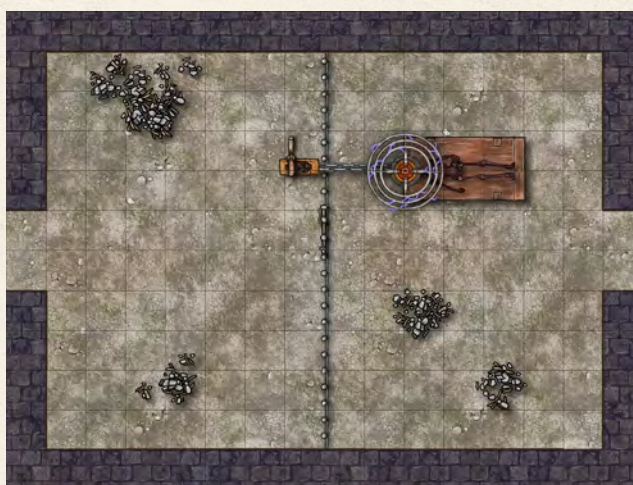
An inanimate **stone golem** lies on a table. Underneath him, there is a movable stone slab with various magical runes on it. By manipulating levers on the near side of the room, heroes may select any of the Five Sources: Arcane, Divine, Occult, Primal, or Psionic. Once they press "on", the golem springs to life, activated by that source. It rips the door open and attacks them. Once they defeat the golem, they may advance through the doorway, which is exposed now that the golem has ripped the door off.

The golem has resistance to three damage types determined by its source of magic.

Source	Resistance
Arcane	Force, Lightning, Necrotic
Divine	Fire, Necrotic, Radiant
Occult	Acid, Fire, Necrotic
Primal	Cold, Lightning, Poison
Psionic	Force, Psychic, Thunder

### Treasure Room

If this card is in position 4, heroes may find treasure inside the remains of the stone golem.



## 22. THE ORPHAN

The heroes navigate through a hallway for a time before they come upon a branching hall that leads to a spiral staircase going up. The heroes may ascend this staircase to find a balcony, where a narrower spiral staircase continues up the outside of the tower. Wind whistles around this staggering height.

A hero that attempts to climb the outside staircase must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw and a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw. Failing either one results in them falling, taking 10d6 bludgeoning damage and landing in the courtyard immediately in front of the entryway into the manor. Succeeding allows them to stand on the very top of the tower, which is just a couple feet in diameter. Each hero may try this exactly one time: once they make their way back into the hall, the stairway has magically disappeared for them.



A hero that stands on this surface sees a shortcut to the final room: a narrow bridge, mostly obscured by mist, that would have been completely invisible to people on the ground. It is accessible from the balcony that the hero passed to find this vantage point. They can take this bridge to the final room, bypassing the inner puzzle.

The heroes can ignore this staircase and go straight on to the inner room.

#### **Treasure Room**

If this card is in position 4, once a hero has gone all the way up, they can see where the treasure is tucked on one of the crenels of the first balcony, hidden so people on the balcony would never see it.

## **5. TREASURE**

If the heroes explore the center area of the mansion as demarcated by the card in position 4, then they have a chance of finding treasure determined by the card in position 5.

### **1. THE MAGICIAN**

The heroes gain the Robe of the Magician.

#### **Robe of the Magician**

*Uncommon Robe (Requires Attunement)*

You can cast any cantrip from the Wizard spell list, using your normal spellcasting modifier. If you do not have one, it is your Intelligence modifier plus your proficiency bonus.

### **2. THE PRIESTESS**

The party gains a set of six bracelets that are transparent like slightly blue-tinted glass.

#### **Pulse Bracelet**

*Uncommon Bracelet*

You may spend your action to offer one of your psyche talents to another creature that is also wearing a pulse bracelet. That creature may spend their reaction to accept the psyche talent. If they do, you lose the talent and they gain it. If they already had that same talent, they gain another talent on the same track, or they gain a randomly determined one if there are no remaining talents on that track.

### **3. THE MOTHER**

The heroes gain the Bear's Tower Shield.

#### **Bear's Tower Shield**

*Uncommon Shield (Requires Attunement)*

This shield has the stats of a shield, but also offers half cover to a creature when the shield is between that creature and a ranged attack. You may make a Bite attack with it as a bonus action. This attack uses your Strength modifier plus your proficiency bonus and deals 1d6 piercing damage on a hit.

## **4. THE EMPEROR**

The party gains the Emperor's Crown.

#### **Emperor's Crown**

*Uncommon Crown (Requires Attunement)*

Allies within 20 feet of you have advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed or frightened. Hostile creatures gain a +2 bonus on attack rolls against you.

## **5. THE PROPHET**

The heroes gain the Third Eye Diadem.

#### **Third Eye Diadem**

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

The first time you are critically hit after taking a short or long rest, turn the critical hit into a normal hit.

## **6. THE LOVERS**

The heroes gain two Rings of Bonding.

#### **Rings of Bonding**

*Uncommon Rings (2)*

Two creatures must wear these rings for them to work. Each creature halves damage whenever it takes damage, and the other creature takes as much damage as the first creature did.

## **7. THE CHARIOT**

The heroes gain the Sandals of Sprinting.

#### **Sandals of Sprinting**

*Uncommon Shoes (Requires Attunement)*

You gain +5 feet speed and cannot be the target of opportunity attacks.

## **8. JUSTICAR**

The heroes find a gilded crusader's helmet.

#### **Helm of the Justicar**

*Uncommon Helmet (Requires Attunement)*

While wearing this helm, you gain +X to Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws. You gain +X on spell attack rolls using spells of 1st level or higher. X = half the number of Psyche talents you have.

## **9. THE HERMIT**

The heroes gain the Cloak of Solitude.

#### **Cloak of Solitude**

*Uncommon Cloak (Requires Attunement)*

You cannot gain positive or negative conditions, with the exception of exhaustion, prone, and unconscious. Gain Truesight out to 10 feet.

When allies heal you, it only restores half as many hit points as it normally would.



## 10. THE WHEEL

The party gains the Bands of Angels.

### Bands of Angels

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

These bands spin about your forearms and head. They grant you Truesight 10 feet. They also grant you resistance to fire and radiant damage.

## 11. VIOLENCE

The heroes gain the carnage pommel.

### Carnage Pommel

*Uncommon Weapon (Requires Attunement)*

The hilt of a weapon that takes the form of any melee weapon you desire. You score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20 with this weapon and deal 1d6 additional necrotic damage with it. However, enemies score a critical hit against you on a roll of 19-20.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

The heroes find the Noose Necklace.

### Noose Necklace

*Uncommon Necklace (Requires Attunement)*

Gain the Undead creature type. You do not need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe. You are immune to exhaustion. You are immune to nonmagical poisons and diseases.

Suffer disadvantage on Charisma checks that you make, with the exception of Intimidation.

## 13. DEATH

The heroes find a black iron ring of invisibility.

### Ring of Invisibility

*Uncommon Ring (Requires Attunement)*

While wearing the ring, a creature may spend a bonus action to become invisible until the end of their next turn. While invisible in this way, a creature deals +2 necrotic damage on all its cantrip and spell attacks that deal damage.

Using the ring expends one charge, and the ring has 30 charges. It regains all its charges at dusk each evening.

## 14. TEMPERANCE

The party finds the Hood of Temperance.

### Hood of Temperance

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

When making a saving throw against becoming charmed or frightened, roll with advantage.

## 15. THE DEVIL

The heroes gain the Horned Crown.

### Horned Crown

*Uncommon Crown (Requires Attunement)*

Gain the Sadistic psyche talent or the next talent in that track. If you have completed the track, gain Hellforged Heart, or a random psyche talent if you already had it.

Gain 2 additional 1st level spell slots. If you knew no spells, learn 2 spells of your choice from the list: *bane*, *burning hands*, *cure wounds*, *guiding bolt*, and *shield*.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

The heroes find an enamel pin depicting a door.

### Door Brooch

*Uncommon Brooch (Requires Attunement)*

You can spend 24 hours attuning the brooch to a specific building. While wearing the brooch in that building, you may spend a bonus action to teleport to any door in the building that you can see, or an action to teleport to any door in the building that you have seen before.

## 17. THE STAR

The party gains the Star Shard.

### Star Shard

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

Once per week, you may make a DC 20 Sanity check. On a success, remove 1 Psyche talent.

## 18. THE MOON

The heroes find the Silver Shield.

### Silver Shield

*Uncommon Shield (Requires Attunement)*

This shield offers you an additional +1 to your AC and a +1 bonus to your Dexterity and Constitution saving throws while it is equipped.

This buckler has a perfectly smooth tarn on its outward-facing side, reflecting anything like the purest silver mirror. Creatures that would surprise you are instead surprised.

When a creature misses you with an attack, you see its true form until the end of your next turn, bypassing invisibilities or shapechange abilities.

## 19. THE SUN

The party gains the Sun Pendant.

### Sun Pendant

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

You may cause your hands to burst into flame, adding 1d10 fire damage to your weapon and spell attack rolls for 1 minute. You may do this once, regaining the ability after completing a long rest.

## 20. JUDGMENT

The heroes gain the Blood Scepter.

### Blood Scepter

*Uncommon Scepter (Requires Attunement)*

Once per week, you may gain a new psyche talent of your choice whose prerequisites you meet.

You deal +Xd6 necrotic damage with this weapon, where X = half the number of psyche talents you have.

This weapon is otherwise a +1 warhammer.



## 21. CREATION

Gain the summoner's cornucopia.

### Summoner's Cornucopia

*Uncommon Item (Requires Attunement)*

This item has 4 charges and regains 1 charge at dusk each day. You may spend a bonus action and 1 charge to summon a CR 2 or lower beast of your choice. The beast obeys your mental commands and acts immediately after you in Initiative. It lasts for 10 minutes or until defeated.

## 22. THE ORPHAN

The heroes gain the Cloak of Solitude.

Cloak of Solitude

*Uncommon Cloak (Requires Attunement)*

You cannot gain positive or negative conditions, with the exception of exhaustion, prone, and unconscious. Gain Truesight out to 10 feet.

When allies heal you, it only restores half as many hit points as it normally would.

## 6 AND 7. INTERIOR CHAMBERS

The sixth and seventh cards on Morgana's Star are taken in concert to determine which interior suite puzzle the heroes must overcome. Consult the table below to determine the puzzle.





Card 6	Card 7	Puzzle
Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	1. Eye to Guide, Foot to Stride
	Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	2. Spirit Burns Brighter
	Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	7. Capital Punishment
	Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	3. Blinding Fires of Justice
	Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	1. Eye to Guide, Foot to Stride
Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	2. Spirit Burns Brighter
	Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	4. A Feast of Remembrance
	Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	5. The Tempered Watcher
	Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	7. Capital Punishment
	Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	6. Unforeseen Consequences
Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	3. Blinding Fires of Justice
	Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	5. The Tempered Watcher
	Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	7. Capital Punishment
	Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	6. Unforeseen Consequences
	Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	4. A Feast of Remembrance
Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	3. Blinding Fires of Justice
	Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	4. A Feast of Remembrance
	Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	6. Unforeseen Consequences
	Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	7. Capital Punishment
	Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	8. Judge, Jury, Executioner
Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	Chariot, House of God, Moon, Stars, or Sun	1. Eye to Guide, Foot to Stride
	Creation, Death, Devil, or Hanged Man	6. Judge, Jury, Executioner
	Hermit, Mother, Priestess, Prophet, or Temperance	5. The Tempered Watcher
	Emperor, Judgment, Lovers, or Violence	8. Judge, Jury, Executioner
	Justicar, Magician, Orphan, or Wheel	6. Unforeseen Consequences



## 1. EYE TO GUIDE, FOOT TO STRIDE

The heroes ascend a wide wooden stairway to see a large chamber in front of them. This chamber has a series of square iron plates on the floor that appear to be pressurized. A series of floor-to-ceiling glass windows and mirrors are arranged in seemingly random fashion across the chamber.

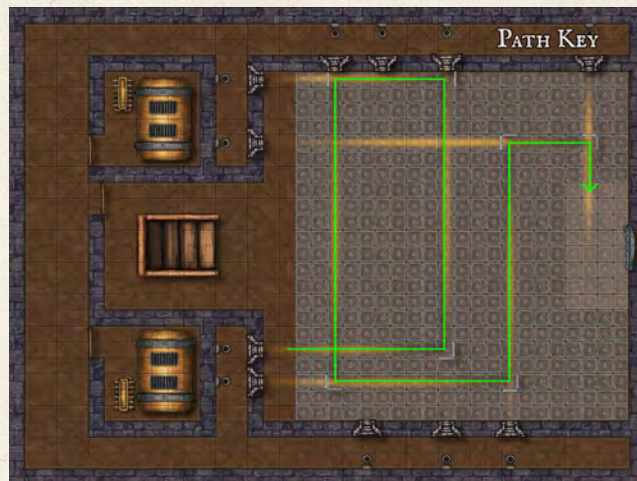
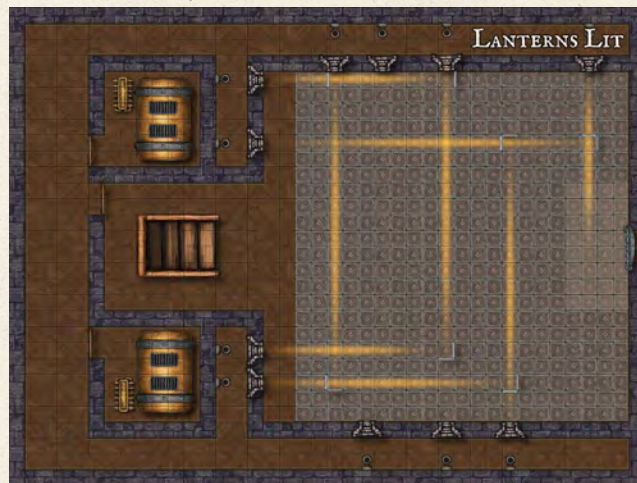
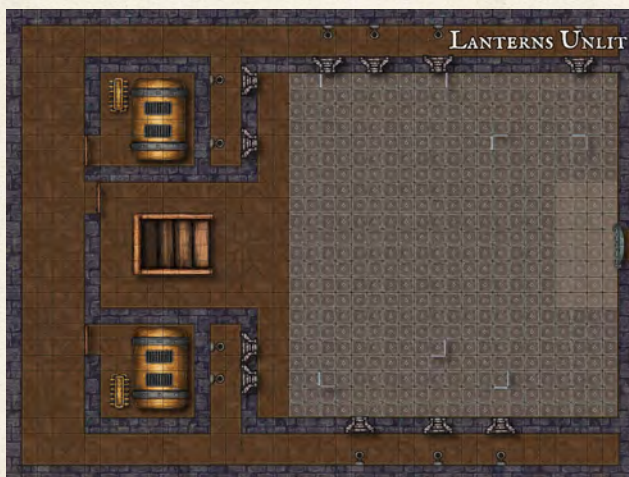
A thick iron blast door covered in an elaborate clockwork safe lock rests on the opposite end of this chamber from the stairwell entry. Finally, the chamber has stone walls with a series of dark arrow slits inset in them. The arrow slits seem designed to face inward to the chamber, rather than outward.

### ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

There are a lot of mirrors - some covered, some uncovered - throughout the manor.

A wooden walkway allows the heroes to double back along the top of the stairway and access an interior balcony overlooking the stairs. From this vantage point, a hero may find a hidden door in the wall by succeeding on a DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check.

Heroes that enter through this doorway find a series of back rooms and halls that allow them to navigate the other side of the stone wall. By lighting torches and setting them in the arrow slits, the heroes will light up certain patterns on the pressure plates in the main chamber. Once all the plates are lit, if the heroes walk straight until they hit a mirror or window and then continue along the path laid out by the lights, then there is only one viable path for them to take, as shown on the last diagram. Walking along the pressure plates in this order causes the gears and cogs on the blast doors to open, allowing the heroes to enter Morgana's chamber.



## 2. SPIRIT BURNS BRIGHTER

The heroes enter a wide hallway lined with skeletons sitting in high-backed chairs against the walls on either side of the hall. On the far wall, a set of double doors looms ominously, locked with heavy iron bolts and chains. In the rooms to either side, there are pools of necrotic black water into which the chains from the main door disappear.

### ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

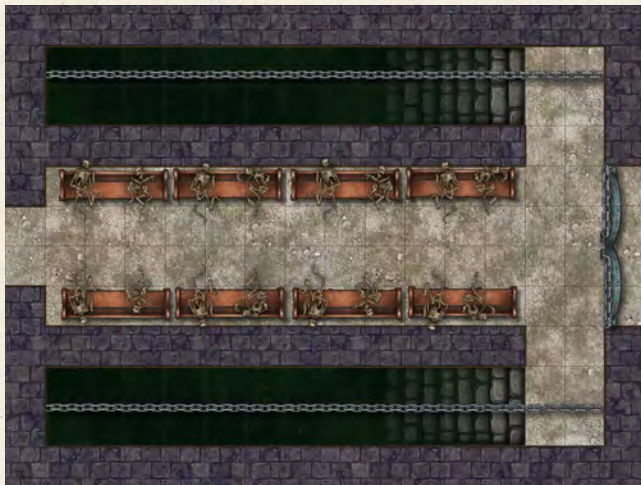
Throughout the mansion, the wall sconces all have oiled but unlit torches. The torches glow green when lit.

Heroes that examine the skeletons notice that the interior of their skulls is slick with oil.

Heroes that light the skeletons' skulls on fire will activate the skeletons as the fire glows green. The necrotic water does not damage undead, so the skeletons, grateful for being animated, will drag the door open.

Otherwise, opening the door requires the heroes to go into the necrotic water, taking 4d10 necrotic damage, and requires them to succeed on DC 22 Strength checks to open the chains. Alternatively, heroes may cast *knock* at 8th level or higher to open the door.





### 3. BLINDING FIRES OF JUSTICE

Whatever path the heroes take to reach the inner rooms, the inner rooms consist of three separate areas. The Antechamber is where the heroes will ultimately solve the puzzle. An indoor Greenhouse offers a place for the heroes to gather fuel for a fire if they do not otherwise have a way to do so. Finally, the Basement contains a bellows and other magically enhanced tools that can be used to stoke flames.

#### ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

When the heroes first enter the manor, note that it is pleasantly warm. As they explore, note that the warmth has grown a little irritating, perhaps stuffy.

##### Antechamber

The antechamber has a large brass brazier in front of a relief sculpture of massive scales. This sculpture takes up most of the far wall. The brazier is warm and has burning embers in its base, but is not actively flaming. There is a doorway into another room off to the right, and a narrow, descending staircase.

##### Greenhouse

Through the doorway to the right, the heroes can explore a greenhouse. The walls on all four sides are stone, but the roof overhead is thick glass, steamy from the humid warmth in the room. The heroes see a strange kind of plant that grows stiff and vertical, like bamboo, but has the porous texture of pine.

A DC 18 Intelligence check will allow a hero to identify this as Burnwood, an alchemical type of tree designed to burn easily without needing to de-green.

##### Basement

The basement contains an extremely hot furnace connected to brass pipes that distribute the heat throughout the manor. Along one wall and scattered on the floor near the furnace, there are several fireplace tools, including pokers, shovels, and bellows. Each of these have runes artfully carved on their handles.

DC 15 Intelligence checks, or spells that detect magic, allow the party to discern that these objects are enchanted to help fires burn more brightly and with more warmth.

##### Resolving the Puzzle

In order to overcome this puzzle, heroes must load Burnwood into the brazier and stoke the flames with the magical billows from the basement.

Heroes may use spells to overcome this puzzle. As long as a minimum of 7 spell levels' worth of fire-based spells are spent, the heroes do not need to go through the aforementioned process.

Once the puzzle is solved, flames leap from the brazier, burning so hot and with such a bright white flame that heroes are temporarily blinded. The afterimage of the flames dances like a pulsating red and green light in the heroes' eyes (or field of vision, if they do not have eyes). The afterimage takes on the shape of a door set into the massive scales on the wall. By walking into this glowing afterimage, the heroes may enter into the final room.



### 4. A FEAST OF REMEMBRANCE

The heroes enter into an opulent banquet hall. The banquet table in the center of the room is covered with food that looks delicious, but has been petrified and perfectly preserved with magic. Thirteen chairs are arranged around the table, one at the head and six on each side. The chair at the head of the table is occupied by an inanimate skeleton wearing a simple yet elegant black robe. A beautiful mosaic on the wall depicts thirteen folk of various lineages and socioeconomic statuses dining together. The one at the head of the table in the mosaic is a human with a simple yet elegant black robe.



## ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

In the rooms determined by cards 2, 3, and 4, there are 4 skeletons each. These skeletons are inanimate but must be recovered and brought into the inner rooms in order to solve the puzzle. Based on the following descriptions, choose which skeletons are in each room..

Beginning at the far left of the mosaic and progressing to the far right, the thirteen banquet attendees and corresponding skeletons are as follows:

- Female halfling in gilded plate armor and diamond-studded gauntlets
- Male kleppin in a humble priest's vestments
- Male dwarf wearing an iron cuirass and some gold bracelets
- Female elf wearing northerner's furs
- Male urkou wearing a philosopher's one-shouldered tunic
- Female hondu in a fine ballgown
- Human wearing simple yet elegant black robes
- Female kettek wearing a scullery dress and apron
- Female trollkin wearing a leather cuirass and pleated leather gladiator skirt
- Male bhrunai inexplicably wearing a yellow dyed commoner's shirt and ragged shorts
- Male human wearing the gilded clothes of a nobleman
- Female dwarf in a fine red dress
- Male halfling in ragged urchin's clothes

### Resolving the Puzzle

In the rooms determined by cards 2, 3, and 4, there are four skeletons each. These skeletons are inanimate but must be recovered and placed in the chairs so that they match the depicted mosaic scene. Once this happens, the mosaic tiles on the wall shift to reveal a doorway into the final chamber.

## 5. THE TEMPERED WATCHER

The inner room is a small, intimate lounge. The hearth on the far side of the room is dormant. On the leather armchair next to the hearth there is a single skull.

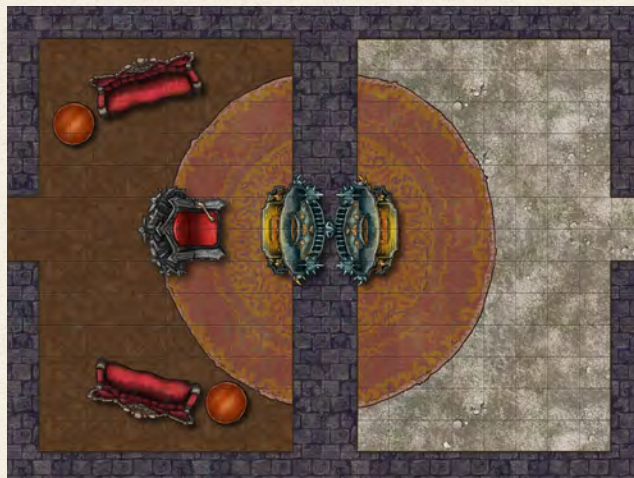
## ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

In the areas represented by cards 1, 2, 3, and 4, there are various pieces of skeleton that need to be found. In each of these locations, these bones are hidden somewhere that is relatively obvious.

The pieces are a full arm; a leg and pelvis; a full leg; and a full arm with the ribcage, spinal cord, and clavicle.

### Resolving the Puzzle

If the heroes reconstruct the full skeleton in the leather armchair, then the entire final room swivels 180 degrees. This reveals a new hallway that takes the heroes to the final room.



## 6. UNFORESEEN CONSEQUENCES

The heroes enter a grand marble hallway that has a door on the far side. A spectral figure is guarding the door. This figure is the Mother: She is dressed in a gown of fig leaves and carrying a cornucopia. She explains to the heroes that their actions have resulted in death. Those creatures will never go on to affect the rest of the world. With each life that they take, hundreds of thousands of possible realities also die.

## ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

Keep an ongoing tally of the number of kills committed by each hero. When they enter a room and there are no hostiles in the room description, roll 1d4 to see if there are hostiles. Such hostiles can only be reasoned with through the use of magic or successful DC 25 Charisma based checks.

1-2. No hostiles

3. 1d4 bandits

4. 1d4 bandit captains

Each hero gains +1 Fear for each creature that they killed while in Morgana's mansion (including her courtyard). If a hero had killed no creatures, they lose 1d4 Fear.

When the heroes gain this Fear, the Mother then imparts upon them the severity of their actions. They must resolve this Fear immediately and do so by gaining one of the following randomly determined Psyche talents. If they roll one that they already have, they may choose any psyche talent whose prerequisites they meet.



1d6	Psyche Talent
1	Cautious
2	Haunted
3	Insomniac
4	Paranoid
5	Rapturous
6	Sadistic

After each hero has received their judgment, they may pass into the final room.

## 7. CAPITAL PUNISHMENT

The heroes enter what appears to be a courtroom. A polished hardwood floor is divided into three sections with a waist-high wooden balustrade. The main floor has wooden pews, the far side holds a judge's pulpit, and the left wall has a jury's bench.

On the far side of the room, a large doorway leads deeper into the manor. Standing in front of the doorway, however, a Sphinx Guardian appraises the heroes with cunning derision.

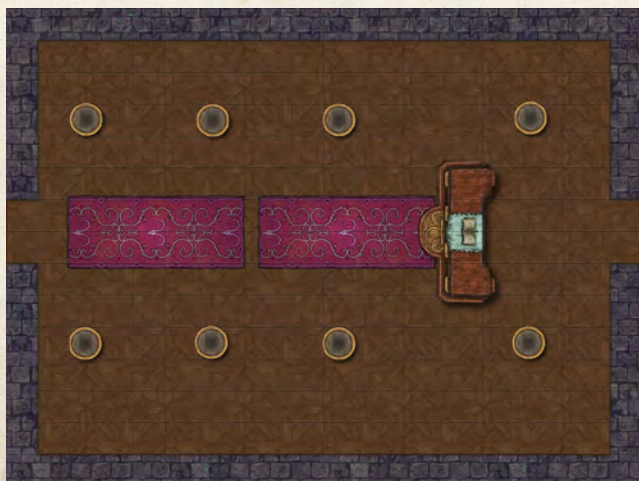
### ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

Pay attention to the heroes' actions. Whichever hero takes the hidden magic item is immediately Guilty. If none are Guilty, choose one based on who caused the most damage to Morgana's property or killed the most monsters.

The **gynosphinx** - who refers to itself as the Judge - accuses one of the heroes as being Guilty. The Guilty hero is determined by the atmospheric detail. The sphinx demands that the Guilty hero be punished - lethally - else the party may not pass.

#### Resolving the Challenge

The heroes may fight the sphinx to advance, or the Guilty hero may sacrifice himself. If they do, then the sphinx is pleased. The sphinx declares that through their act of self-sacrifice, the Guilty's crimes have been absolved. The sphinx stands aside and allows all heroes to proceed.



## 8. JUDGE, JURY, EXECUTIONER

The heroes enter what appears to be a courtroom. A polished hardwood floor is divided into three sections with a waist-high wooden balustrade. The main floor has wooden pews, the far side holds a judge's pulpit, and the left wall has a jury's bench. On the far side of the room, a large doorway leads deeper into the manor.

### ATMOSPHERIC DETAIL

Pay attention to the heroes' actions. Whichever hero takes the hidden magic item is immediately Guilty. If none are Guilty, choose one based on who caused the most damage to Morgana's property or killed the most monsters.

The Judge - a grinning fiend of some kind - tells the heroes that they are Guilty by association, and that the one hero in specific is guilty of heinous crimes against Morgana.

The Executioner then attacks. The Executioner is an **assassin** with an axe instead of a dagger. This does not change the assassin's stats and is intended for flavor only.

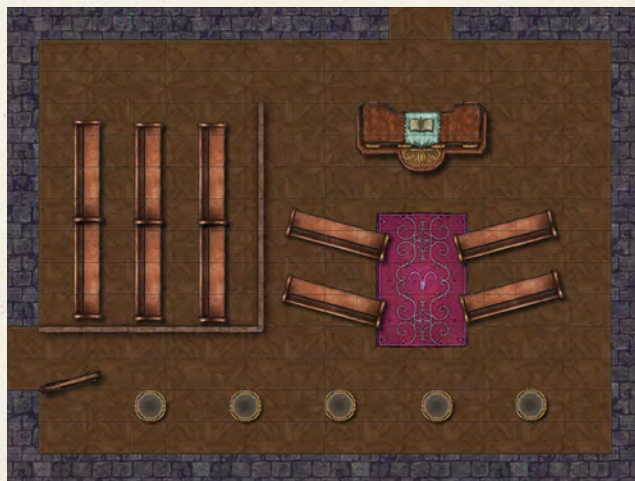
Unless the heroes are specifically looking for the Executioner, it is standing in the shadows behind the door when they walk in. It will likely get to go first in Initiative and it spends all its energy targeting the one who is considered the most Guilty.

After the first round, the Jurors get involved. Twelve **bandit captains** rise from the jury box and attack the heroes.

The Judge is protected by a Circle of Warding, but can still be attacked following the normal rules for overcoming such a circle. Once his minions are defeated or once his hand is forced, he dispels the Circle of Warding joins the battle. The Judge is an **erinyes**.

#### Resolving the Challenge

Once the Judge is defeated, the doorway into Morgana's final room will open.





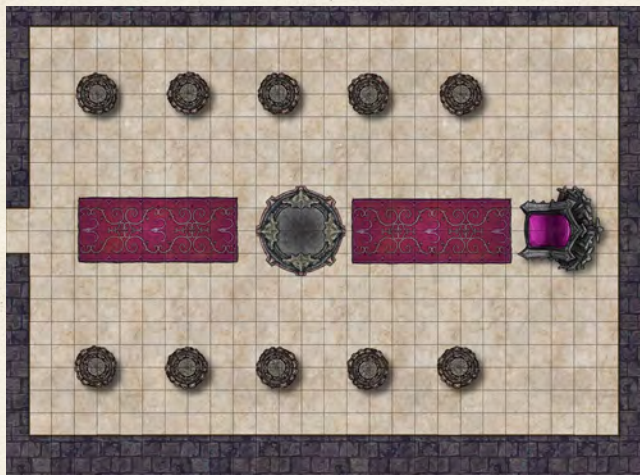
## 8. FINAL CHAMBER

After completing the interior manor puzzle, the heroes may confront Morgana in the final chamber, which is determined by the card in position 8.

Resting on a throne in whichever room is determined, Morgana awaits the heroes.

Unless otherwise stated, Morgana's final chamber has ceilings that are 40 feet tall.

Use the following map if no other map is provided.



### 1. THE MAGICIAN

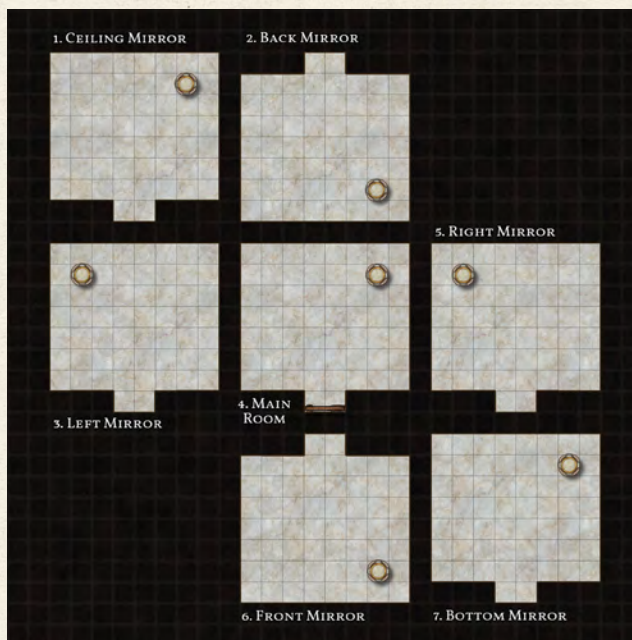
Morgana's throne room is a 40 foot cube room with a mirror floor, mirror walls, and a mirror ceiling.

On a creature's turn, they may spend bonus action to make a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check (Morgana automatically succeeds). On a success, the creature may teleport into one of the mirrors (including the floor or ceiling), swapping places with their reflection. Once a hero makes one successful check, they no longer need to make checks.

At the start of each of Morgana's turns, roll 1d8 to determine whether she is in a mirror-room or the real world as noted on the following diagram.

Heroes may make DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check or Wisdom (Perception) checks to determine which one is really her.

The mirrors have 15 AC, 60 hit points, and take no damage if the damage dealt to them is 14 or less. Damaging a mirror to the point of being reduced to 30 or fewer hit points causes spiderweb cracks to form. A creature that starts its turn inside a cracked mirror takes 2d8 piercing damage. A completely broken mirror instead deals 4d12 bludgeoning damage to creatures that start their turn inside, and the creature is automatically shunted back into the real world. Creatures can no longer enter that mirror space, and if Morgana would enter that space, she instead takes 4d12 bludgeoning damage.



### 2. THE PRIESTESS

Morgana's chamber, a throne-room-like marble hallway, is covered in thin mist that magically aids Morgana's sight. She has +3 to AC and on all saving throws for the duration of the combat.

### 3. THE MOTHER

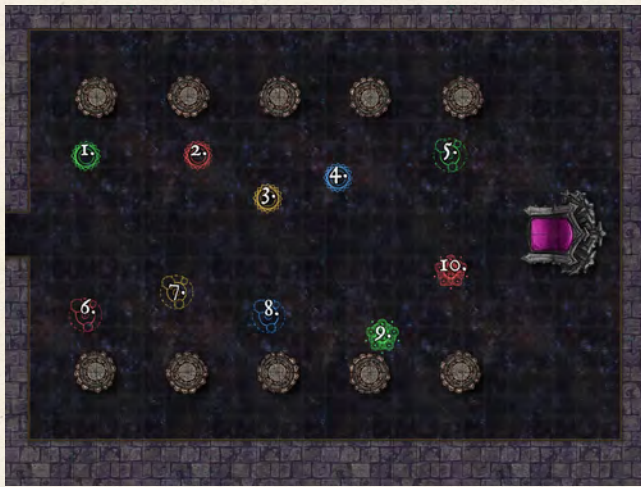
Morgana's throne room has hardwood floors and plaster walls covered in magic runes and fresco depictions of romantic partners.

At the end of each creature's turn, it must pick another creature. If the creature is willing, they swap places. If unwilling, the unwilling creature makes a DC 18 Sanity check (Morgana automatically succeeds). On a fail, they swap places anyway.

### 4. THE EMPEROR

The final confrontation room is a throne room with marble columns, where the walls are rimmed in fiery braziers. Runes are scattered throughout the chamber in an indecipherable pattern. At the end of each initiative count, roll 1d10 to see which rune activates, and roll 1d6 to see its effect. An activated rune has a 10 foot radius of effect.





#### 1d6 Effect

- 1 Creatures in the circle deal +1d6 radiant damage.
- 2 Creatures in the circle have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- 3 Creatures in the circle cannot be charmed or frightened.
- 4 Creatures in the circle have -1 to their AC and saving throws.
- 5 Creatures in the circle have disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- 6 Creatures in the circle take +1d6 radiant damage whenever they are hit.

### 5. THE PROPHET

Morgana's chamber, a throne-room-like marble hallway, is covered in thin mist that magically aids Morgana's sight. She has +3 on her AC and saving throws for the duration of the combat.

### 6. THE LOVERS

Morgana's throne room has hardwood floors and plaster walls covered in magic runes and fresco depictions of romantic partners.

At the end of each creature's turn, it must pick another creature. If the creature is willing, they swap places. If unwilling, the unwilling creature makes a DC 18 Sanity saving throw (Morgana automatically succeeds). On a fail, they swap places anyway.

### 7. THE CHARIOT

The mansion's floors are covered in slick ice, except when near a large source of fire. Creatures that move without flying move variably 5, 10, or 15 feet farther than intended (roll 1d3 to determine this).

### 8. JUSTICAR

Morgana's throne room contains a large obsidian obelisk that has no discernable purpose. Upon defeating Morgana, any hero that touches the obelisk opens a portal to Pendragon's keep in Camelot. This portal remains open for 1 day.

When the party rolls Initiative, heroes may gain +X hit points where X = the amount of Fear they have + twice the number of Psyche talents they have.

### 9. THE HERMIT

Morgana's chamber is a large marble throne room with a single massive marble column in the room's center. The column is covered in strange sigils.

Any creature without any other creature adjacent to it gains +2 to all saving throws.

### 10. THE WHEEL

The final confrontation room is a throne room with marble columns, where the walls are rimmed in fiery braziers. Eight runes are scattered throughout the chamber in a circular pattern. Starting with the rune labeled 1 on the map and rotating clockwise, at the end of each initiative count, the next rune activates. Roll 1d6 to see its effect. An activated rune has a 10 foot radius of effect.

#### 1d6 Effect

- 1 Creatures in the circle deal +1d6 radiant damage.
- 2 Creatures in the circle have advantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- 3 Creatures in the circle cannot be charmed or frightened.
- 4 Creatures in the circle have -1 to their AC and saving throws.
- 5 Creatures in the circle have disadvantage on Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws.
- 6 Creatures in the circle are dealt +1d6 radiant damage whenever they are hit.





## 11. VIOLENCE

Morgana's throne room is grand and dark, made of black marble floors and columns. A statue of Pendragon stands on a rotating pedestal in the center of the room. It points out with a cruel hand. All creatures in a 30 foot cone from the hand score a critical hit on a roll of 19-20. The Pendragon pedestal rotates 45 degrees on Initiative count 0 each round.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

The center of Morgana's throne room contains a dark wrought iron depiction of a skeleton standing on its head.

When the party rolls Initiative, heroes may gain +X hit points where X = the amount of Fear they have + twice the number of Psyche talents they have. Heroes that gain hit points in this way become Undead (or alive if they were already Undead) for 1d4 days. Creatures that become undead in this way do not need to eat, drink, or breathe, but are vulnerable to radiant damage.

## 13. DEATH

The black marble reception room is covered in skeletal decorations. On Initiative count 0 every round, all nonmagical lights go out. The pools contain necrotic water that deal 2d6 necrotic damage upon entry or if a creature starts its turn in them.

## 14. TEMPERANCE

Morgana's throne room is primarily made of gray marble floors, walls, and columns. Heroes must ignore all of their Psyche talents for the duration of combat.

## 15. THE DEVIL

A statue of Lilith stands on a rotating pedestal in the center of the room. It points out with a cruel hand. Creatures in a 30 foot cone from the hand reduce damage they take by X, where X is the number of psyche talents they have. They also deal X fewer damage on attacks. The Lilith pedestal rotates 45 degrees on Initiative count 0 each round.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

This chamber has ten arcane portals. By expending 5 feet of movement, a creature may enter a portal to reemerge from another portal. If a hero attempts this, they must succeed on a DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check to reemerge from the portal of their choice. On a failure, they emerge from a randomly determined portal.

## 17. THE STAR

Morgana's throne room is primarily made of black marble floors, columns, and walls and is open to the skies overhead, which are magically enchanted to display the stars of Shadowcroft.

Heroes must ignore all of their Psyche talents for the duration of combat.

## 18. THE MOON

Morgana's throne room is a 40 foot cube room with a mirror floor, mirror walls, and a mirror ceiling.

On a creature's turn, they may spend bonus action to make a DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check (Morgana automatically succeeds). On a success, the creature may teleport into one of the mirrors (including the floor or ceiling), swapping places with their reflection.

Once a hero makes one successful check, they no longer need to make checks.

At the start of each of Morgana's turns, roll 1d8 to determine whether she is in a mirror-room or the real world as noted on the diagram under the previous Magician entry.

Heroes may make DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check or Wisdom (Perception) checks to determine which one is really her.

The mirrors have 15 AC, 60 hit points, and take no damage if the damage dealt to them is 14 or less. Damaging a mirror to the point of being reduced to 30 or fewer hit points causes spiderweb cracks to form. A creature that starts its turn inside a cracked mirror takes 2d8 piercing damage. A completely broken mirror instead deals 4d12 bludgeoning damage to creatures that start their turn inside, and the creature is automatically shunted back into the real world. Creatures can no longer enter that mirror space, and if Morgana would enter that space, she instead takes 4d12 bludgeoning damage.

## 19. THE SUN

Morgana's throne room is blindingly bright with white marble floors, columns, and walls. Lakes of molten gold fill twin troughs in the floor.

Every creature deals +1d6 radiant damage on all attacks. On a crit, a creature is blinded until the end of their next turn.

A creature that falls into molten gold or starts its turn in it takes 4d10 fire damage. A creature that emerges from the molten gold has its speed halved and takes 1d6 fire damage at the end of each of their turns until they use their action to extinguish the flames.





## 20. JUDGMENT

A statue of Dracula stands on a rotating pedestal in the center of the room. It points out with a cruel hand. Creatures in a 30 foot cone from the hand deal +2X damage on all damaging attacks, where X is the number of Psyche talents they have. They also receive +X damage when taking damage. The Dracula pedestal rotates 45 degrees on Initiative count 0 each round.

## 21. CREATION

Morgana's private sanctum is a long, rectangular room flanked by marble columns on either side. Most of the columns, and most of the walls, all have beautiful flowering ivy growing on them, and magical orbs of multicolored light illumine the chamber. Plush couches with gold trim offer comfortable places to lounge and watch the various stone fountains that burble throughout the hall.

The largest of these fountains is covered in lily pads with fish constantly splashing around from within.

On Initiative count 0 each turn, any creatures spawned by the room take their turn. Each creature spawned in this way has an action called "Evolve." When used, Evolve allows a creature to enter a new form, gaining that new form's stats and losing its previous ones. After this, another creature spawns in the pool of life. The Evolve action takes a creature's full turn.

**Spawn:** The creature is a quipper. It evolves into a poisonous snake.

**Poisonous Snake:** The poisonous snake can evolve into a wolf.

**Wolf:** The wolf can evolve into a warhorse.

**Warhorse:** The warhorse can evolve into a brown bear.

**Brown Bear:** The brown bear can evolve into a giant boar.

**Giant Boar:** The giant boar can evolve into a giant scorpion.

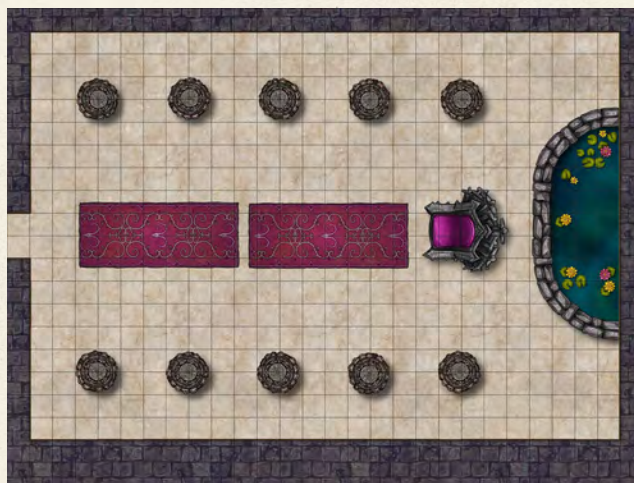
**Giant Scorpion:** The giant scorpion can evolve into an elephant.

**Elephant:** The elephant can evolve into a giant crocodile.

**Giant Crocodile:** The giant crocodile can evolve into a wyvern.

**Wyvern:** The wyvern cannot evolve.

When combat begins, 1d3 quippers are in the pool.



## 22. THE ORPHAN

Morgana's chamber is a large marble throne room with a single massive marble column in the room's center. The column is covered in strange sigils.

Any creature without any other creature adjacent to it gains advantage on saving throws.

## 9. MAGICAL EFFECT

The card in position 9 determines a magical effect that affects the entire manor. Direct effects from this card end on the heroes as soon as the heroes leave the manor. Any secondary situation that arises from these effects (such as the heroes gaining or losing Fear or Psyche talents) persist.

### 1. THE MAGICIAN

While in the mansion, each hero's Fear Threshold increases by 2, but they have a -2 penalty on saving throws against becoming charmed and frightened.

### 2. THE PRIESTESS

Each time the heroes enter a new room (cards 2, 3, 4, and 6-7), they have the chance of finding a glowing crystal ball that looks like a pearl with soft inner light. Have each hero make an unmodified d20 roll when they enter a new room. A hero that rolls under a 6 finds this item. If they touch it, reset the Morgana's Mansion tarot spread. When they leave the room, they enter a courtyard... the new card 1.

### 3. THE MOTHER

Each hero reduces damage they take by X, where X = the number of Psyche talents that they have.

### 4. THE EMPEROR

Heroes that target one another with any ability that enhances another creature (besides regaining hit points) must make a DC 13 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, the effect fails, but the resource is not expended.



## 5. THE PROPHET

Each time the heroes enter a new room (cards 2, 3, 4, and 6-7), they have the chance of finding a glowing crystal ball that looks like a pearl with soft inner light. Have each hero make an unmodified d20 roll when they enter a new room. A hero that rolls under a 6 finds this item. If they touch it, reset the Morgana's Mansion tarot spread. When they leave the room, they enter a courtyard... the new card 1.

## 6. THE LOVERS

When heroes enter the mansion, each hero must pick a partner (if odd numbers, there is one group of three). Whenever one of these creatures takes damage, the damage is divided evenly between them. (The group of three should instead each take one third of the damage).

## 7. THE CHARIOT

The mansion's floors are covered in slick ice, except when near a large source of fire. Creatures that move without flying move variably 5, 10, or 15 feet farther than intended (roll 1d3 to determine this).

## 8. JUSTICAR

Each hero that enters Morgana's mansion gains +X to their saving throws, where X = their number of Psyche talents.

## 9. THE HERMIT

Heroes that target one another with any ability that enhances another creature (besides regaining hit points) must make a DC 13 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, the effect fails, but the resource is not expended.

## 10. THE WHEEL

Heroes gain +X to their Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma saving throws. X = the number of Psyche talents that a hero has. When a hero gains any Fear, they gain +1 Fear.

## 11. VIOLENCE

Every creature in Morgana's mansion scores a critical hit on a roll of 18-20.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

All heroes that enter Morgana's lair immediately gain the undead tag, their skin and sinew magically vanishing. While in the mansion, they do not need to eat, breathe, or sleep and cannot gain exhaustion. They are vulnerable to radiant damage.

## 13. DEATH

All magical and nonmagical light sources only extend half as far as they normally do.

## 14. TEMPERANCE

Upon entering the mansion, each hero's Fear Threshold decreases by 2. Heroes must immediately resolve Psyche talents upon entering the manor. Heroes have advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed or frightened.

## 15. THE DEVIL

All heroes that enter Morgana's mansion gain +1 Psyche talent of their choice without removing any Fear. Then they gain +10 current and maximum hit points.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

While in the mansion, each hero's Fear Threshold increases by 2, but they have disadvantage on saving throws against becoming charmed or frightened.

## 17. THE STAR

A friendly **will-o'-wisp** takes to the heroes, giving advantage on Wisdom saving throws if they are willing to trust it.

## 18. THE MOON

When the heroes cross the threshold from the courtyard into the manor, have them each make an unmodified d20 roll and note the results from highest to lowest.

Based on the heroes' personalities, desires, and fears, in order from highest to lowest, present them with illusory images, scents, or sounds that play with these desires. Do so gradually: perhaps the first hero sees something when they enter the east or west wing, the second hero sees something during a combat encounter, and the third hero sees something when they arrive at the inner rooms on cards 6-7. These illusions are potent enough to cause a hero to have disadvantage on all d20 rolls once the hero first realizes that it is an illusion. After suffering in this way for 6 seconds, the illusions fade to very faint projections and the hero is able to ignore them.

## 19. THE SUN

The mansion is always well-lit unless specified otherwise. When any creature deals radiant or fire damage, increase it by +4.

## 20. JUDGMENT

Each hero reduces damage they take by X, where X = the number of Psyche talents that they have.

## 21. CREATION

When Creation is revealed in position 9, Morgana's mansion grows. Add 3 additional cards between cards 2-4 and 6-7. These additional cards represent extra rooms and follow the same rules as cards 2-4. The card 5 treasure is still hidden in the card 4 room.

## 22. THE ORPHAN

Each hero that enters Morgana's mansion gains +X to their Constitution, Wisdom, and Sanity saving throws, where X = their number of Psyche talents.



## 10. CURRENT ARCANA

This card determines which major arcana is currently active on Morgana when combat begins.

## BATTLING MORGANA

Morgana is a terrifying foe. She is cunning, very intelligent, and utterly ruthless. She will manipulate her arcanas to directly counter the heroes' abilities and will use her Warp Space reaction to keep melee fighters at a distance. She is able to magically spy on the heroes while in her mansion, so she is aware of any abilities that the heroes use while exploring the lair.

## MINOR ARCANAS

When Morgana flips over a new Minor Arcanas card, it changes her mechanics in some small way. Consult the following table to see how her stats change.

In each case, the numeric value of the card revealed equals X in the listed effect. Face cards all have a numeric value of 12. Aces have a numeric value of 13.

## MINOR ARCANAS

When Morgana flips over a new Minor Arcanas card, it changes her mechanics in some small way. Consult the table below to see how her stats change.

In each case, the numeric value of the card revealed equals X in the listed effect. Face cards all have a numeric value of 12. Aces have a numeric value of 13.

Suit	Effect
Cups	Regain X Hit Points when drawn
Pentagrams	Morgana gains +X to saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Swords	+X when dealing slashing damage
Wands	Morgana reduces damage from spells and other magical effects by X.

## MAJOR ARCANAS

When Morgana flips over a new Major Arcanas card, it changes her mechanics in some notable way. Consult the following list to see how her stats change or if she gains a new ability. These abilities immediately end when the card is discarded.

### CHARIOT

Morgana's walking speed doubles and she cannot be targeted by offensive reactions such as opportunity attacks.

### CREATION

Morgana summons a Clay Golem that obeys her unspoken commands.

### DEATH

Magical darkness extends from Morgana in a 30 foot radius sphere. She can see unimpeded in this darkness.

### DEVIL

Morgana is no longer immune to being charmed or frightened. However, she can cast one 1st or 2nd-level spell on each of her turns as a free action, without expending a spell slot.

### EMPEROR

Morgana gains +2 Charisma and deals an extra 4 psychic damage on all her attacks.

### HANGED MAN

Morgana becomes undead. She cannot be poisoned or stunned while undead.

### HERMIT

Morgana regains an expended use of her Legendary Resistance.

### HOUSE OF GOD

Morgana automatically casts *magic circle*, ignoring the normal casting time and materials. The spell immediately ends when this card is discarded.

### JUDGMENT

Morgana gains a special attack that she can make on each of her turns in place of a Black Blade attack.

**Judge.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +14 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. *Hit:* Xd10 cold damage, where X equals 1 + double the number of Psyche Talents the target creature has.

### JUSTICAR

When a creature hits Morgana, she may choose for it to become a critical hit instead. If she does, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and gains Fear equal to the damage it took.

### LOVERS

At the start of each of her turns while active, Morgana chooses a creature to be her Soul Mate. Whenever Morgana takes damage, if the Soul Mate is within 120 feet of Morgana, then Morgana the creature must make a DC 22 Charisma save. On a fail, Morgana takes half damage and her Soul Mate takes the rest of the damage.

### MAGICIAN

Morgana becomes proficient in all saving throws.





### MOON

Morgana turns into an **adult silver dragon**. She gains all of its stats except for its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, her current hit points, and her damage and condition immunities, which she retains. She also retains her Minor and Major Arcanas abilities.

### MOTHER

When another creature within 60 feet of Morgana uses a spell to restore hit points, Morgana also regains that many hit points.

### ORPHAN

Morgana gains the following attack, which she can use in place of a Black Blade attack.

**Bewitch.** A creature within 60 feet of Morgana must make a DC 22 Intelligence saving throw. On a fail, the creature is charmed by Morgana until the end of its next turn. If the creature failed by 7 or more, the creature will actively attack any other creature threatening Morgana.

### PRIESTESS

Each time Morgana shuffles her Minor Arcanas deck, all creatures within 120 feet of her gain 1d6 Fear.

### PROPHET

Morgana gains the following reaction.

**Portent.** When a creature rolls a d20 to attack Morgana, after the die was cast, she can force the creature to reroll the attack, taking the lower result.

### STAR

Morgana gains an additional ability that she can use in place of one of her Black Blade attacks.

**Guiding Star.** A creature concentrating on a spell within 60 feet of Morgana must make a DC 22 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the creature loses concentration on its spells.

### SUN

Morgana gains the *sacred flame* cantrip.

### TEMPERANCE

Morgana may choose to ignore any condition inflicted on her.

### VIOLENCE

Morgana deals an extra 10 damage with her attacks and takes 5 extra damage from attacks.

### WHEEL

When Morgana damages a creature that has at least 1 Psyche Talent, that creature takes an extra 4 (1d8) radiant damage and is also frightened of Morgana until the end of its next turn.



# CHAPTER 5: THE HAUNTED CARNIVAL

As the heroes travel on a lonesome road, they are eventually overtaken by the haunted carnival. Ruled by the Ringmaster - a sinister being from Shadowcroft - the carnival drifts in and out of being accessible from Ancerra, much as Kamelot does. The heroes will need to explore the carnival, overcome a variety of minigames and challenges, and ultimately confront the Ringmaster herself. Once the Ringmaster is defeated, the carnival will fade from Ancerra and be confined to Shadowcroft.

## SIDE QUEST

This mini adventure is effectively a side quest that is not directly connected to the main story of *Daughter of the Shadows*. It offers the heroes a break from Lilith's cult activity and Morgana's machinations. The heroes are intended to confront the Ringmaster (and level up as a result) before defeating either Lilith or Morgana.

## THE CARNIVAL APPEARS

The carnival first appears in the heroes' dreams. 1d4 days later, the carnival appears in the distance, about a mile away from the heroes' campsite or outside of the town where the heroes are residing. If the heroes do not explore the carnival, it appears half a mile closer the next day. It continues to appear slightly closer to the heroes each day until they explore it. This will be almost imperceptible if the heroes remain in a town for the duration of this phenomenon, but is dramatically noticeable if they are traveling on the road.

If the heroes refuse to explore the carnival for an entire week after it first appears, then after they next take a long rest, they wake up inside the carnival's entryway.

A hero may make a DC 24 Intelligence (History) check; on a success, they recall hearing that a haunted carnival travels about Shadowcroft and is run by some kind of demonic entity. The carnival will pose a threat to Ancerra if the creature that runs the carnival is not defeated. Furthermore, rumor has it that great treasure is hidden within the carnival.

## WELCOMING COMMITTEE

Once the heroes commit to exploring the carnival, a group of humanoids in brightly colored motley approach them. The leader tips his top hat to the heroes and welcomes them to the carnival.

**Read Aloud:** "Welcome, welcome! A grand time awaits you here at the carnival! Be warned, though - only the strongest and smartest are allowed an audience with the Ringmaster. Explore the fairgrounds at your leisure. Attempt any number of our fairgrounds games to acquire tickets!" In a fast, monotonous drone, the creature warns you not to use magic. "Magic is illegal in these games and being found liable for using spells and other magical effects while attempting any of the games within this carnival may result in your immediate demise." He then resumes his more energetic welcome. "Once you have eight purple tickets, you may enter the Ringmaster's tent. If you acquire green tickets, you may cash them in at the rewards tent. Oh, and from time to time we will send horrifying monsters to attack you, just to keep things interesting. HAVE FUN!"

The leader of the welcoming committee offers the heroes a map of the carnival. Each of the twelve carnival events are detailed in the Let the Games Begin section.

The heroes may take a short rest any number of times in the food court, but may not take a long rest. Taking a long rest results in all of their tickets magically disintegrating, forcing them to restart their progress.

If the heroes approach the Ringmaster's tent and do not yet have eight purple tickets, then the tent vanishes into a harmless but inaccessible demiplane. Once the heroes approach with eight purple tickets, proceed to the The Ringmaster section.





## RANDOM ENCOUNTERS

Every third time that the heroes complete a challenge, they are attacked en route to their next challenge. Roll on the following table to determine what creatures attack them. The clowns are dressed in garishly bright motley and the other creatures have features and coloration that are almost cartoonishly exaggerated.

For each encounter, add **clowns** until the encounter is of very easy difficulty.

1d10	Creatures
1	6 manticores
2	2 succubi/incubi, 1 barbed devil
3	2 otyugh, 1 xorn
4	2 m'l'lykkri fleshlings
5	2 invisible stalkers
6	2 giant apes
7	4 lions, 1 glabrezu
8	4 elephants, 4 lions
9	4 winter wolves, 1 ghost
10	2 wyverns, unicorn

## OTHER FAIRGOERS

The may attempt these games in any order. Each is dangerous and could result in combat or bodily harm if the heroes fail, but the heroes may repeat the challenge any number of times. Even so, heroes may gain no more than one purple ticket per event and no more than one green ticket per event that offers green tickets.

Completion of any challenge earns them a purple ticket, and exemplary performance earns them a green ticket.

## LET THE GAMES BEGIN!

Heroes may attempt these games in any order. Each is dangerous and could result in combat or bodily harm if the heroes fail, but the heroes may repeat the challenge any number of times. Even so, heroes may gain no more than one purple ticket per event and no more than one green ticket per event that offers green tickets. Completion of any challenge earns them a purple ticket, and exemplary performance earns them a green ticket.

### USING MAGIC

If the heroes use spells, cantrips, chants, or prayers to overcome any given challenge, they automatically fail the challenge. Immediately roll a carnival random encounter as monsters show up to punish the heroes for trying to cheat the system. Add a **ghost** to this combat; this is the ghost of a creature that tried to cheat at a carnival game in the past.

Using any magic such as a spell, ritual, or invocation prior to attempting a challenge is frowned upon but not forbidden.

## FAIRGROUNDS GAME HOSTS

When the heroes approach each event, roll on the creature, description, and name tables to generate an NPC that greets the heroes and instructs them using the relevant read-aloud text.



## SPECIES

1d10	Creature
1	Human
2	Halfling
3	Bhrunai
4	Clown
5	Sphinx Guardian
6	Bonewraith
7	Sanguine Flame
8	Erinyes
9	Jotun
10	Imp

## CLOTHING

1d6	Clothing
1	Offensively yellow jumpsuit
2	Green and pink jester's motley
3	Frilly maid outfit
4	Black and white jester's motley
5	White uniform with multicolored polkadots
6	Black grim reaper robes

## NAME

1d10	First Syllable	1d10	Second Syllable
1	Po	1	Zo
2	Yo	2	Go
3	Bo	3	Yo
4	Go	4	Bo
5	Buf	5	Toy
6	Bus	6	Keys
7	Tick	7	Zie
8	Buck	8	Chow
9	Flow	9	Pop
10	Joy	10	Flop

## 1. GRAND WHEEL

**Read Aloud:** "Ready to unwind? Climb aboard and enjoy the view!"

The party is asked to pile onto a handful of ferris wheel benches in pairs. The wheel turns slightly, and then the next pair can get on. Once all of the heroes are on the wheel, the wheel continues to stop every few moments while more fairgoers get onto additional benches. This process continues for an agonizingly long time as the heroes rise higher and higher.

Heroes that succeed on a DC 17 Wisdom (Insight) check may discern that this ride is simply a slow, leisurely attraction and that there is nothing more they need to do.

If the heroes lose patience and attempt to speed up the wheel or attempt to disembark prematurely, the ride host warns them to stay in their seats and wait patiently. If they ignore the host, then they trigger a random combat encounter.

If they remain in their seats patiently until the end of the ride, the party gains one purple ticket.

## 2. SUPER HAPPY FUN HOUSE!

**Read Aloud:** "Fun for one, fun for all! Come explore this wacky hall! Guaranteed, you'll have a ball. Come explore the super happy fun house!"

The heroes must proceed through a series of rooms, each of which come with their own challenges.

### FIRST ROOM: HALL OF MIRRORS

**Read Aloud:** Dozens of floor-to-ceiling mirrors refract the world back at you in odd, hexagonal patterns. Gradually, by finding the gaps in the mirrors, you slowly work your way through the maze.

Each hero must make an Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check. Take the average of each hero's check, then subtract 16 (min 0). Note this number when determining whether the heroes navigated the fun house quickly enough to earn a green ticket.

### SECOND ROOM: SPINNING FLOORS

**Read Aloud:** Giant circular sections of the floor rotate in one direction or another. Walking across the room results in the heroes getting whisked to and fro in a rather disorienting fashion.

Each hero must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Take the average of each hero's check, then subtract 16 (min 0). Note this number when determining whether the heroes navigated the fun house quickly enough to earn a green ticket.

Any hero that rolled lower than a 14 on this check is poisoned during the third room due to how dizzy they are.



## THIRD ROOM: ABSOLUTELY HAMMERED

**Read Aloud:** A series of heavy hammers suspended from the ceiling swing back and forth, whooshing over a narrow wooden bridge. Zombie stonesharks snap and snarl in the watery depths underneath the bridge.

The hammer pendulums swinging back and forth heroes each have the stats of warhammers, dealing 11 (1d10+6) bludgeoning damage to the heroes if they hit. They are spaced 5 feet apart from one another for 20 feet, and are timed to different tempos, making it quite difficult to maneuver through them.

Heroes that try to time the hammers' patterns and run through the center of the hall may do so one hammer at a time, or may try to run through multiple at once. The DC is much lower for doing one at a time, but this slows the heroes down and may risk them not gaining the green ticket. Timing the hammers takes a Strength (Athletics), Dexterity (Acrobatics), Intelligence (Investigation), Wisdom (Perception), or Charisma (Performance) check. The DC is harder for each subsequent hammer in the progression. If a hero attempts to run through multiple hammers at once, use the highest DC out of the hammers the hero attempts to run through, and add +2 for each additional hammer. On a success, the hero maneuvers through one or more hammers based on their declared intent. On a failure, the hero takes 11 (1d10+6) bludgeoning damage per hammer that they attempted to maneuver past.

Hammer	DC
1	13
2	15
3	17
4	19

A hero that is hit by a hammer falls into the watery pit below, which is occupied by eight zombie **bulettes**. They are undead beasts and have the zombie's Undead Fortitude ability in addition to their typical stats. The bulettes are not hostile until a creature falls into the water pit.

A hero may easily climb out of the water pit on the far side of the room, but will continue to be harried by the bulettes until they are dealt with.

If any heroes fall into the water, their chances of gaining a green ticket are lost. If no heroes fall into the water, note the greatest number of turns that it took a hero to maneuver through the hammers (max 4). Note this number when determining whether the heroes navigated the fun house quickly enough to earn a green ticket.

## FOURTH ROOM: THE SPINNING HALL

**Read Aloud:** You progress to a long, pipelike hallway that is spinning rapidly. Maneuvering through the hallway will likely cause you to be tossed and turned.

Each hero must make a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Take the average of each hero's check, then subtract 16 (min 0). Note this number when determining whether the heroes navigated the fun house quickly enough to earn a green ticket.

Any hero that rolled lower than a 14 on this check is poisoned during the fifth room due to how dizzy they are.

## FIFTH ROOM: JAWS OF DEATH

The heroes enter a pitch-dark room. Any attempts to illuminate the room are futile; it is magically darkened. Creatures that can see in magical darkness see that they are in a long hallway with hundreds of small holes in the floor and ceiling.

The hallway is 120 feet long. After 10 seconds, spikes begin to rise from the floor and lower from the ceiling. The heroes may feel the spikes rising from the floor. Once spikes rise from the floor, the ground becomes hazardous. It is considered Difficult Terrain and deals 1d4 piercing damage per 5 feet that a creature moves across it.

After 18 seconds, these spikes lurch into full extension. The hallway is no longer Hazardous Terrain. Any heroes still in the hallway must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 6d8 piercing damage on a failed save and one half as much on a successful one. Either way, the creature is restrained (escape DC 18).

Whenever a creature attempts to break free from the restrained condition or ends its turn and is still restrained by this effect, the creature takes an additional 2d8 piercing damage. Once the creature successfully breaks free, it takes 1d8 piercing damage at the end of each of its turns until it or a creature adjacent to it takes its action to make a successful DC 16 Wisdom (Medicine) check to staunch the bleeding. Magical healing also ends the bleeding.

## SIXTH ROOM: FIRE SLIDE

**Read Aloud:** This room glows with cheerful torchlight in stark contrast to the previous room. A slick, oily tube slide yawns on the far end of the room.

Heroes that enter the slide are whisked down to the exit, which is next to the fun house's entrance. The slide is oiled, so heroes zip down with great speed. Halfway down, they pass through a ring of magical fire that ignites the oil downstream. Each hero that passes through this ring of fire must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d6 fire damage on a failed save and one half as much damage on a successful one.



## CLAIMING THEIR TICKETS

Once the heroes emerge, the host gives them a purple ticket and says, "We have been told that this fun house is highly unethical due to safety concerns, but it's too FUN to shut it down!"

If the heroes progressed through the fun house in record time, they gain a green ticket as well. Add up the noted numbers from the first, second, and fourth rooms, then subtract the noted number from the third room. If the result is 10 or greater, then the heroes gain a green ticket.

### 3. FUNHOUSE MIRRORS

**Read Aloud:** "Come on in! Don't be shy. See yourself in a whole new light!" The fairgrounds hand gestures for you to enter a room full of oddly shaped mirrors. "Put on a show! Stuffy the Sphinx hasn't laughed in DAYS. Can you get him to crack a smile?"

The heroes enter a room full of funhouse mirrors that distort their appearance. A **gynosphinx** lounges on the far end of the room, watching the heroes with feigned interest.

Each hero must make a Charisma (Performance) check as they display themselves in front of these mirrors. Take the average of the heroes' rolls to determine whether they got a purple ticket, but check each hero's roll individually as well to see if they earned a green ticket. Consult the table below for the results.

DC	Results
10 or lower	Stuffy is deeply offended by the heroes' performance and attacks them.*
11-16	Stuffy the Sphinx thinks that the heroes are boring and immature. He dismisses them without any prize.
17-21	Stuffy the Sphinx finds the heroes' antics amusing. After cracking a grin, the sphinx gives the group a purple ticket.
22 or higher	Stuffy the Sphinx finds the hero hysterically funny. After laughing uproariously, the sphinx gives the hero a green ticket and a purple ticket. This replaces the group result.

\*If Stuffy attacks the heroes, they must each make a DC 15 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, for the duration of the combat, their Dexterity and Wisdom scores are each reduced by 2 as their bodies physically take on the shape reflected in the nearest mirror. This effect lasts until Stuffy is defeated or until dispelled by *dispel magic* or a similar effect.

## 4A. LADDER CLIMB

**Read Aloud:** "Only the steadiest soul will reach the top! Conquer the ladder and ring the bell to claim the prize!"

One hero must climb up a wobbly rope ladder that is suspended over a muddy water pit full of zombie stonesharks.

The hero must make three consecutive Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks. The first is a DC 14; the second, DC 17; and the third is a DC 20 check. If the hero fails any of these checks, then they fall into the water.

Six zombie **bulettes** are in the water pit. They are undead beasts and have the zombie's Undead Fortitude feature in addition to their typical stats. The bulettes are not hostile until a creature falls into the water pit.

If a creature succeeds on all three checks, they gain a purple ticket. Subtract each of their checks from each of the DCs, then add together the three differences. If the sum total is 14 or higher, then the hero rings the bell in record time and also receives a green ticket.

For example, if a hero's rolls are 24, 21, and 28, then their differences are 10 (24 - 14), 4 (21 - 17), and 8 (28 - 20). The sum of these differences is 22, so they get a green ticket.

### 4B. ROCK WALL

**Read Aloud:** "Ready to scale new heights? You look like the type what can climb this wall! Think you got the guts for this?"

One hero must climb a rock wall without a safety harness. Creatures with climbing speeds are prohibited from participating in this event. If the heroes complain about this, the game host informs them that a kleppin school outing cost the carnival hundreds of sc worth of goods because they were so successful at this event. The Ringmaster has since implemented the new rules.

The hero must make three Strength (Athletics) checks. If the hero fails any of the checks, they take falling damage based on how high up they were.

DC	Falling Damage on Failure
14	4d6
18	8d6
22	12d6

Between the second and third check, an **air elemental** hiding in the upper craggy cliff face makes one Whirlwind attack against the hero. If this misses the hero, then the hero may proceed to the third check. If it hits, then the hero is blown off of the cliff face and takes 8d6 bludgeoning damage.



## 5. HIGH STRIKER

**Read Aloud:** “Step right up and give it all you got! Ring that bell loud and clear to prove you’re the strongest far and near!”

One at a time, any hero who wishes may make a Strength (Athletics) check. See the table below to determine the results.

DC	Result
10 or lower	Hero is electrocuted for 4d8 lightning damage.
11-16	Hero is electrocuted for 2d8 lightning damage.
17-21	Hero hits the bell and gains a purple ticket.
22 or higher	Hero hits the bell and gains a purple ticket and a green ticket.

## 6. DART THROW

**Read Aloud:** “Test your precision and let those darts fly! Hit the right target and you’ll get a prize!”

Any number of heroes may attempt this challenge as many times as they wish. A hero is provided three darts and must try to hit small cork targets. These targets have an AC of 24 and have 1 hit point.

If a hero hits two of these targets, they gain a purple ticket. If a hero hits three of these targets, they gain a green ticket.

If a hero misses more than one of these targets, then a flurry of darts shoot back at the hero. The hero must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 6d4 piercing damage on a failed save and one half as much on a successful one.

## 7. RING TOSS

**Read Aloud:** “Grab a ring and take your shot! I’ll put you through the ringer, but if you win you’ll get a zinger of a reward!”

Any number of heroes may attempt this challenge as many times as they wish. A hero is provided three rings and must try to ring small glass bottles. A hero may ring a bottle with a successful DC 23 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check.

If a hero hits two of these targets, they gain a purple ticket. If a hero hits three of these targets, they gain a green ticket.

If a hero misses more than one of these targets, then an arcane rune in front of the rows of glass bottles lights up and shoots a jet of fire at the hero. The hero must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 4d6 fire damage on a failed save and half as much on a successful one.

## 8. FIND THE PEA

**Read Aloud:** “You seem keen. Think you can find the pea in the pod? Watch closely and guess which cup has the pea! But be warned - if you guess wrong, I get to consume part of your soul!”

Any number of heroes may attempt this challenge as many times as they wish. To spot the pea correctly, a hero must succeed on a DC 24 Intelligence (History), Wisdom (Perception), or Wisdom (Survival) check. On a success, the hero gains a purple ticket and a green ticket. For every three times that a hero fails, they permanently lose one of their magic item attunement slots.

## 9. BIGTOP TENT

**Read Aloud:** “Right this way for the show of your life! See our mythical menagerie and our daring acrobats! Witness the world’s strongest man and a cadre of hilarious clowns!”

The heroes may enter the bigtop tent and watch a thoroughly entertaining circus performance. The Ringmaster herself is not present, but an apprentice ringmaster directs the show. The apprentice ringmaster has a green ticket and a purple ticket clearly slotted into the silk band around his top hat.

The heroes may watch the show and leave peacefully or may attempt to steal the ringmaster’s hat.

## STEALING THE HAT

Stealing the hat from the apprentice ringmaster will be exceedingly difficult. The apprentice has the stats of an **archmage** with Truesight and is always accompanied by at least six **clowns**.

However, if the heroes come up with a suitably creative plan, they may attempt to steal the hat. At minimum, any heroes that approach the apprentice ringmaster will need to make a Dexterity (Stealth) check contested by the apprentice’s Wisdom (Perception) roll.

If the heroes’ plan goes wrong in any way, then they will need to fight the apprentice ringmaster along with any creatures that the apprentice has in attendance.



## ATTACKING THE APPRENTICE RINGMASTER

If the heroes attack the apprentice ringmaster while in the bigtop tent, they will need to contend with the entire menagerie. It will be easier for them to fight the apprentice ringmaster if they wait and ambush him later, when he only has four **clowns** with him.

If the heroes attack him in the bigtop tent, they must also fight the following monsters simultaneously:

- 1 **elephant**
- 1 **lion**
- 1 **brown bear**
- 1 **assassin** (acrobat)
- 6 **clowns**

## 10. FOOD COURT

*Read Aloud:* The smells of delectable carnival favorites waft through the air and mingle with one another until the whole area smells oily and scrumptious.

The food court has several food stands and a common area with long, rough wooden tables. There are no opportunities to earn tickets here, but the heroes may indulge themselves in eating carnival food. Food options and their prices (in sc) are listed below.

1d10	Food	Price
1	Corn dog	1
2	Hot dog	1
3	Chili dog	2
4	Candied apple	2
5	Chicken tenders	1
6	Soft pretzel	1
7	Churro	1
8	Popcorn	1
9	Funnel cake	1
0	Tater tots	1

## 10B. MUD PIE TASTING

*Read Aloud:* “Don’t lie to me, I saw you glancing over here! Follow your nose - we have the tastiest pies in all the land! Try a bite. It’s free, hehe! Try for a prize! A prize to the eater of the most pies!”

The pies are made of mud and ooze with bugs, pus, and mold.

At least two heroes must participate in this challenge. Each participating hero must make a Constitution saving throw to stomach the disgusting pies. The hero that rolls the highest is given the purple ticket. Every hero must consult the table below to determine what their side effects are.

DC	Results
10 or lower	The hero is infected with Dysentery.
11-16	The hero is violently sick and suffers the effects of being hit by the <i>emesis</i> spell.
17-21	The hero is quite sick and suffers the effects of being missed by the <i>emesis</i> spell.
22 or higher	The hero is a little queasy. The hero is poisoned for 2 minutes.

If a creature succeeds on all three checks, they gain a purple ticket. Subtract each of their checks from each of the DCs, then add together the three differences. If the sum total is 14 or higher, then the hero rings the bell in record time and also receives a green ticket.

For example, if a hero’s rolls are 24, 21, and 28, then their differences are 10 (24 - 14), 4 (21 - 17), and 8 (28 - 20). The sum of these differences is 22, so they get a green ticket.

## 11. REWARD TENT

Near the food court, the reward tent contains all kinds of delightful goodies for any heroes that gained a green ticket. The following rewards are available, each for the price of 1 green ticket:

- Any uncommon magic item
- Any common, uncommon, or rare potion
- A mascot (see below)

## MASCOTS

Mascots are familiars that bond to the entire party rather than a single person. Mascots have the stats of any familiar you could summon with the *find familiar* spell, but they do not have hit points, cannot take damage, and cannot be the target of attacks.

The party may elect one player to run the mascot in each combat, or take turns running the mascot in each consecutive combat encounter.

## BRIA'S MYTHICAL MENAGERIE

If you own *Bria's Mythical Menagerie*, you may offer the heroes any familiar from that supplement at your discretion, using the above guidelines to modify it to suit the whole party as a mascot.



## 12. HUMAN SLINGSHOT

**Read Aloud:** “You there! You look like you’re one for thrills! Strap in and let loose in the huuuuuman slingshot!”

This contraption uses magically charmed rope that stretches far more than typical hempen rope. One hero may strap themselves in and must make a Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check. Check the following table to determine the outcome.

DC	Results
12 or lower	The harness is not fastened. The hero flies out of the contraption, takes 16d4 bludgeoning damage, and is banned from this attraction.
13-16	The harness is not secure. After making the Constitution roll below, treat the roll as though it was one DC lower if possible.
17 or more	The harness is secure.

Provided that the hero rolled a 13 or higher on their Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check, they must now make a Constitution check to avoid becoming terribly motion sick as they are launched into the air. Consult the table below to determine the outcome.

DC	Results
10 or lower	The hero is horribly motion sick. The hero is poisoned for 2 hours.
11-16	The hero is quite motion sick. The hero is poisoned for 1 hour.
17-21	The hero is motion sick. The hero is poisoned for 30 minutes.
22 or higher	The hero is a little queasy. The hero is poisoned for 10 minutes.

A hero may attempt to show off by making a Dexterity (Acrobatics) check while they fly through the air. A roll of 16 or higher earns the hero a green ticket if they are eligible for a purple ticket in addition to their purple ticket.

Provided that the hero does not fall out of their harness and is not horribly motion sick (a 10 or lower on the Constitution check), then they gain 1 purple ticket.

## 13. RINGMASTER'S TENT

**Read Aloud:** The Ringmaster’s tent, patterned with alternating black and red striped canvas, scowls in the far recesses of the carnival grounds.

Once the heroes have at least eight purple tickets, they may approach the Ringmaster’s tent without it vanishing.

Upon entering the tent, proceed to the Ringmaster encounter.

## THE RINGMASTER

When the heroes finally enter the Ringmaster’s tent, they initially come face to face with the Ringmaster before she sends them each on wild and terrifying journeys through personal hellscape.

**Read Aloud:** The Ringmaster sits slightly hunched in her chair, elbow on her knee and her hand on her forehead. “Welcome to the Ringmaster’s tent,” she purrs. “I’ve been expecting you.” Then, with a snap of her fingers, she sends each of you hurling through the multiverse and into your own personal demiplane of torture.





## THE DARK RECESSES OF THE MIND

Roll Initiative; use this Initiative order once combat ensues, but also use it to determine the order in which the heroes explore their personal nightmare scenarios.

In Initiative order, collaborate with each player to narrate as their character explores a series of horrifying rooms in a madhouse. First, a hall of mirrors with ghostly illumination and thick fog that obscures the floor disorients the hero.

Once the hero finally finds their way through the hall, they emerge into a room containing either their worst fear, or a dead loved one that they were unable to save, or some similarly horrible scenario.

Have the hero make a Sanity saving throw. Their result determines how quickly they can shake themselves out of the illusion, how much damage they take from witnessing such horrors, and what kind of scarring effect this leaves on the hero.

DC	Time in Demiplane	Damage	Scarring
10 or lower	3 rounds	4d6 psychic	Gain +4 Fear and the Haunted and Paranoid Psyche talents if you did not already have them.
11-16	2 rounds	3d6 psychic	Gain +2 Fear and the Haunted Psyche talent if you did not already have it.
17-21	1 round	2d6 psychic	Gain +2 Fear.
22 or higher	1 round	1d6 psychic	-

## FIGHTING THE RINGMASTER

Each hero may emerge from their nightmare scenarios at different speeds. Ironically, the hero that overcomes their horrors the most easily places themselves in great peril as they will be forced to fight the Ringmaster solo for one or more rounds while the other heroes try to overcome their nightmares.

As each hero emerges from their nightmare, they immediately join combat against the Ringmaster. This combat occurs in a demiplane that resembles the bigtop tent, with three empty show rings, a couple tall platforms from which acrobats might leap, and several risers for spectators. Haunting, slightly off-tune accordion waltz music tickles the periphery of each hero's hearing while in this demiplane.

### PARTY ADVANCEMENT

After defeating the Ringmaster, the heroes level up.





# PART III: VEIL OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT

*“Life, although it may only be an accumulation of anguish, is dear to me, and I will defend it.”*

*Mary Shelley, Frankenstein*

*“But we are pledged to set the world free. Our toil must be in silence, and our efforts all in secret.”*

*Bram Stoker, Dracula*





# CHAPTER 6: DAUGHTER OF THE SHADOWS

Once the heroes have defeated both Lilith and Morgana, nothing is standing in Palorva's way except the heroes themselves. While Palorva relishes the act of driving the heroes to become antithetical to their own natures, she also recognizes that keeping them around may pose a threat to her.

Throughout this final adventure, note Palorva's priorities. In order of significance, Palorva wishes to:

- Resurrect Dracula.
- Conquer Ancerra.
- Corrupt the heroes.

## BACK ON THE RAILS

After the relatively open-world storylines in Part One and Part Two of this campaign, this final adventure arc is a bit more linear in structure. The heroes have autonomy to go off of the rails and do whatever they wish, but there will be dire consequences for the world if they do not stop Palorva.

Consult Appendix D if the heroes leave Palorva to her own devices.

## ARC 1: PREEMPTIVE STRIKE

When possible, Palorva will turn an emotional dagger and challenge the heroes to turn against their former selves, but she will not do so at the risk of her own life. Once the heroes reach Lorvan, she decides that the time for games is over; she sends Dracula's resurrected court to eliminate the heroes. They attack the heroes 1d4 days after the heroes arrive in Lorvan.

## COURT TACTICS

While the heroes have fought each member of Dracula's Court individually, they have not faced all of them at once. Dracula's Court is effectively an adventuring party in their own right, and they fight well together. Each of the party members' tactics are listed below.

While Faust and Squick are both alive, the entire team fights with targeted cunning. Having studied the heroes and gained intelligence from the Incisors (see arc 2), they prioritize the heroes in the following order:

- The hero with the lowest maximum hit points.
- The hero with the greatest spellcasting capacity.
- The hero with the highest reliable damage output.

Once Faust and Squick are both defeated, then any remaining court members default to their typical fighting styles.

## DEMETRIUS

Demetrius is at his best in a mid-range role, relying on his at-will psionic attacks to pepper heroes from a distance. He will dart into melee combat to assist Yuriko, then dance away to avoid getting hit himself. Unless otherwise directed, Demetrius targets whichever hero has the least visible armor, such as an unarmored or lightly armored hero.

## FAUST

Faust is a tactical leader of the group. Accompanied by 2d6 hellspawn of randomly determined CR, Faust keeps his distance as much as possible. If a hero attacks Faust, his hellspawn immediately target that hero.

## LANCERIC

Lanceric plays the role of aerial support. He flies above the party and peppers them with eye beams until he is at or below half his maximum hit points, at which point he swoops down to attack the hero with the fewest current hit points unless Faust or Squick direct him to do otherwise.

## SQUICK CRAVENHIDE

Squick lurks in the periphery of combat, calling out with advice to his team when he sees an opening. In addition to his typical stat block, he gains the following Reaction.

**Called Shot (1/Turn).** When one of Squick's allies attacks a creature within 60 feet of Squick and the attack would deal damage on a hit, Squick may call out a word of advice. Squick's ally adds 1d6 to the attack roll and 1d6 to the damage roll.

## YURIKO

Yuriko is the party's attack dog. She follows Squick's and Faust's commands, but if left to her own devices, she will attack the most physically imposing party member as she is intent on challenging her own strength against theirs.



## THE COURT RESURRECTED

The heroes may be shocked to see that Dracula's Court has been resurrected. The Resurrection divine ritual typically only works on creatures that have not been dead for longer than 5 years. However, in Palorva's Palace, the heroes have a chance to discover some of her notes that suggest she has found a way around this limitation, which seems to defy the very nature of Essence.

### THE TOLL OF RESURRECTION

Even Palorva is not entirely able to cheat death. When she brings back members of Dracula's Court, they are husks of their former selves. Only the bare shreds of their Essence reinhabit these bodies, so their memories and personalities are pale reflections of what they were in *Soliloquy of Annihilation*. Palorva hopes to find a way to eliminate these flaws when she resurrects Dracula and Theresa and views the court members as test subjects to be used and discarded.

## ARC 2: THE STREETS OF LORVAN

Edgar Hawthorne, who has been hiding in Lorvan, approaches the heroes to let them know that Palorva is planning something big. He is not sure what she has planned, but he is worried. The heroes will need to find a way into her palace to discover her plans.

Infiltrating Palorva's Palace will be a terribly difficult affair. The palace is well-guarded and heavily enchanted to keep out would-be thieves. However, there are secrets in Lorvan that may help the heroes find a way into her palace if they can maintain a low profile.

### COMMON FOLK

Many of the citizens of Lorvan are deeply dissatisfied with Palorva's regime but afraid to voice their opinions. As the heroes spend time in Lorvan, they may speak to any number of NPCs mentioned in the Lorvan section of Kess (see Chapter 2). Many of these NPCs have problems that the heroes could solve without great difficulty. Each time that the heroes complete one of these side quests, they gain +2 Goodwill in the mercantile facet of Kess. When the time comes to infiltrate the palace, cashing in on this Goodwill will help the heroes maintain the low profile that they will need.

### JACK THE RIPPER

A maniacal and cunning serial killer is committing murders on the streets of Lorvan. These murders do not appear to be directly connected to Palorva's regime, and the common folk simply refer to the unknown killer as "Jack." If the heroes can find and defeat Jack the Ripper (see Chapter 7), they gain 6 Goodwill in the mercantile facet of Kess.

## RUMORS AND SECRETS

Each time the heroes complete a side quest, the grateful citizens will quietly confide a secret to the heroes. These secrets and rumors will help the heroes plan their infiltration of Palorva's Palace.

When determining what kind of secret the heroes learn, roll on the tables below or select specific rumors out of the tables.

### 1d4+X Rumors and Secrets Table

2-3	Roll once on table 1.
4-5	Roll twice on table 1. Reroll duplicates.
6-7	Roll once on table 1 and once on table 2.
8+	Roll once on each table.

X = the number of side quests that the heroes have undertaken successfully in Lorvan.

## RUMORS AND SECRETS TABLE 1

### 1d6 Rumor or Secret

1	The catacombs underneath the city connect to Palorva's Palace.
2	Palorva employs three major facets of her police force. Incisors are her secret police and informants. Fangs are her assassins. Molars clean up the bodies.
3	Don't trust anyone, or the secret police known as the Incisors will turn you in.
4	Nobody knows who Jack the Ripper is, but we don't think he's working for Palorva.
5	Palorva releases plague rats in the city to keep the population culled.
6	The sausage everyone eats is probably made out of humanoids... but we try not to think about it.



## RUMORS AND SECRETS TABLE 2

1d4	Rumor or Secret
1	Palorva releases plague rats in the city to keep the population culled.
2	A scarlet Vrock lurks in the catacombs.
3	Getting through the catacombs requires someone to willingly sacrifice themself.
4	The sausage everyone eats is probably made out of humanoids... but we try not to think about it.

## RUMORS AND SECRETS TABLE 3

1d4	Rumor or Secret
1	Palorva releases plague rats in the city to keep the population culled.
2	A scarlet Vrock lurks in the catacombs.
3	Getting through the catacombs requires someone to willingly sacrifice themself.
4	The sausage everyone eats is probably made out of humanoids... but we try not to think about it.



## THE INCISORS

The Incisors are a group of spies and thugs that serve as Palorva's secret police. Anyone might be a member of the Incisors, and the pervading sense of fear will make it difficult for the heroes to gain any headway currying favors in the city.

A variety of NPCs in the Lorvan section of Kess (see Chapter 2) are actually members of the Incisors as noted in their NPC entries.

Make note of the number of side quests that the heroes complete for members of the Incisors, as well as the number of meaningful conversations that they have with these individuals. This will make their life more difficult when it comes time to infiltrate Palorva's Palace as the Incisors report back to Palorva's guards.

## THE FANGS

The Fangs are an elite group of assassins and thugs that take care of anyone that the Incisors deem a threat. Every 1d4+1 days while the heroes are in Lorvan, a group of Fangs attack them. Using the following creatures, design a difficult encounter. The Fangs are intelligent and will try to ambush the heroes or poison their drinks before attacking them.

**Fangs:** Assassin, Bandit Captain, Kamelot Knight, Energy Vampire, Scout, Vampire Courtier, Veteran

## THE NIGHTMARE PLAGUES

Palorva regularly releases low-lethality plagues in the city to keep the population weakened. After the heroes defeat Dracula's Court, however, Palorva resorts to scorched earth. She releases three dozen **deathplague rats** into the city. These rats each carry different diseases. Divide the rats into six groups and roll six times on the table below to determine what each group carries. At your discretion, you may reroll duplicates or determine that there are more rats carrying that particular disease. Palorva's goal is to weaken the heroes and force them to deal with the consequences of the plague while she finishes her plans.



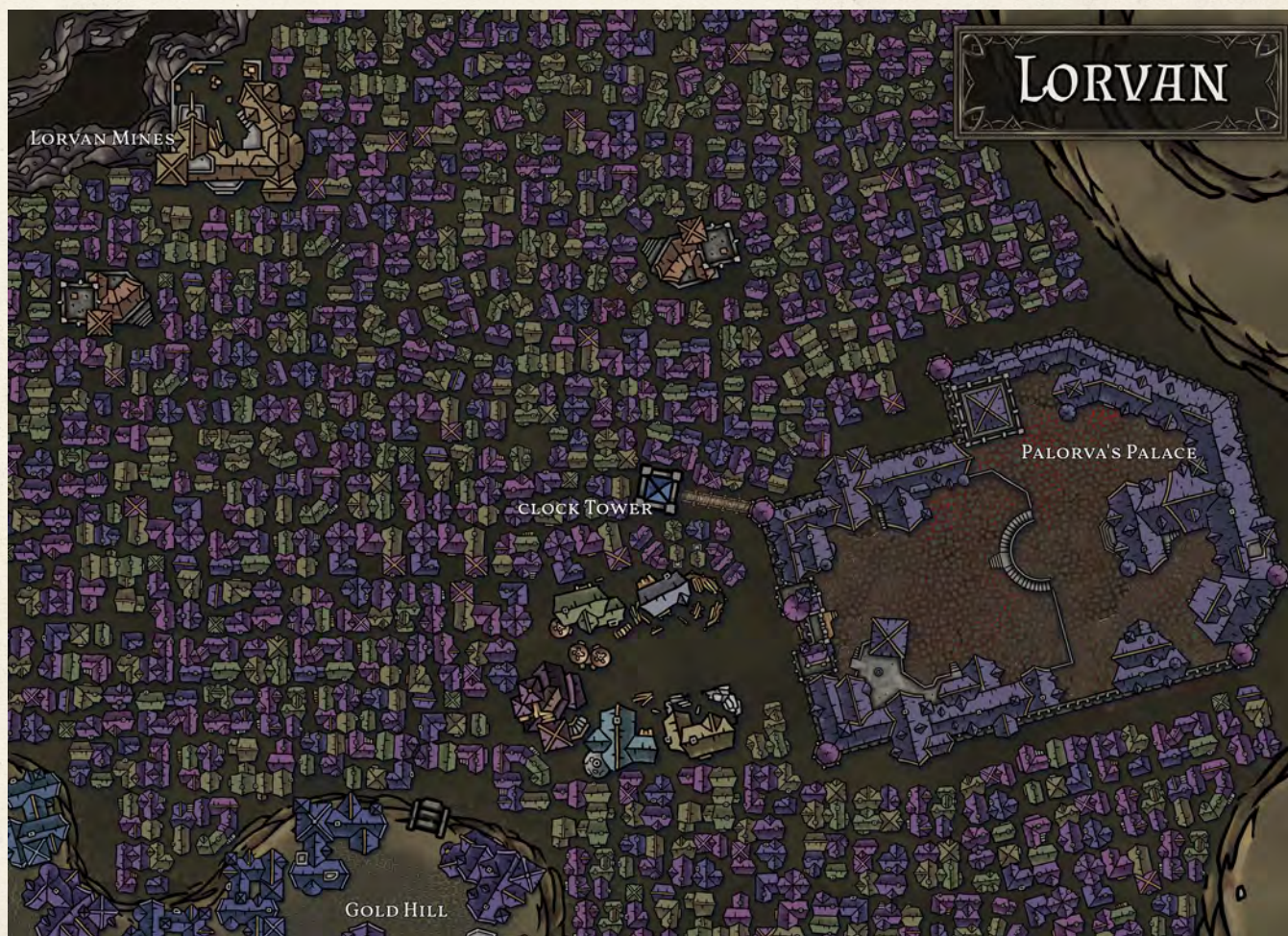
d8	Disease
1	Anthrax
2	Bubonic Plague
3	Influenza
4	Leprosy
5	Rabies
6	Scarlet Fever
7	Scarlet Fever
8	Tuberculosis

Unless the heroes learn of this plan and find, kill, and disinfect every rat within the first 24 hours that they are loose in the city, the diseases lead to outbreaks as described in their individual entries in *HGtVH*.

If the heroes become bogged down in tending these diseases, there is a very high chance that Palorva leaves for Vadreheim before the heroes can stop her, possibly triggering the Vampiric Apocalypse (see Appendix C).

## THE CONTINUING NARRATIVE

If you wish to skip the Jack the Ripper arc or utilize it at a different point in your campaign, skip to chapter 8, which continues with the primary adventure arcs of Part Three.





# CHAPTER 7: JACK THE RIPPER

Once the heroes begin exploring Lorvan, they come across the first grizzly signs of murder after 1d4 days. Because Palorva's Molars do an exemplary job hiding the bodies murdered by the Fangs, seeing a brutal murder scene is quite jarring on city streets that are typically clean of corpses. Any commoners that the heroes talk with will express their fear of a serial killer that they have begun referring to as "Jack the Ripper." Palorva has seemed uninterested in acknowledging the problem, so the citizens of Lorvan beseech the heroes to find and deal with the killer.

## ADVENTURE OVERVIEW

Keep the following details in mind while running this adventure. This information is presented in reverse chronological order so that you can guide the heroes to the desired conclusion as appropriate.

## DRAMATIS PERSONAE

**Jack the Ripper**, a collective pseudonym used by the oligarchy of Lorvan in general and by William von Moriarty in particular.

**William von Moriarty**, a sadistic and psychopathic murderer who loves showing off his pure genius.

**Ormond**, a golem detective that solicits the heroes' help stopping Jack the Ripper.

## THE SHOWDOWN

The heroes will ultimately need to confront Moriarty in his subterranean lair, where they find dozens of effigies that suggest he has been committing these murders for many, many years and has only recently been discovered. While battling Moriarty, the heroes must contend with a maze of portals, dead ends, and simulacra that make it difficult for them to pin down the real killer.

## THE BALL

At the ball, the heroes may speak with the various oligarchs and slowly piece together a startling fact: Virtually all of the oligarchs are guilty of the murders. They use the name "Jack the Ripper" as a collective pseudonym. One person is still most culpable: Moriarty, who has been posing as a vampire emissary from Palorva's Palace, has been manipulating these oligarchs into committing these murders simply for his own sadistic pleasure. Once the heroes figure this out and dispel Moriarty's disguise, he teleports to his underground lair.

## THE LEAGUE OF IMMORTALITY

Most oligarchs in Lorvan are members of the League of Immortality. This is a cult that was started by William von Moriarty as a method of controlling the other oligarchs. Moriarty, posing as a vampire, promised the oligarchs the only thing that money could not buy: Immortality. He would turn them into vampires if, and only if, they proved their worth by conducting grizzly ritual murders under the shared moniker of Jack the Ripper.

Because Palorva herself is the premier of Kess, several oligarchs actually are vampires or dhampir, and so Moriarty's promise seems to hold real merit. In truth, Moriarty is just a human fraudster with a ring that disguises him - both magically and nonmagically - to appear as a vampire. He cannot actually make good on his promise, but the oligarchs are gullible or bored enough that they continue to commit these murders anyway.

## MURDER INVESTIGATION

Moriarty is extremely deliberate when committing murders or when manipulating the other nobles into committing murders on his behalf. The murder victims always have their jaws removed in a grizzly ritual that prevents their spirits from communicating with anyone via any magical ability that might allow heroes to speak with the dead.

Two symbols are also drawn on the victims: One that wards off undead (preventing the Molars from dragging their corpses into the catacombs), and one that scours the living with necrotic bursts if they get too close. Given how difficult it is to search the bodies for clues, most commoners have given up hope of ever resolving these murders.



The heroes may be able to gather enough clues to attend the Ball at Basker Manor; if they do not, then the golem named Ormond may help them head in the right direction.

## A MURDER MOST FOUL

The heroes may come across several murder scenes while exploring the city and witness the first murder scene 1d4 days after they arrive in Lorvan. Whenever they come across one, roll 1d6 to determine the number of victims. Then, for each victim, roll on the table below to determine their lineage.

2d10	Lineage
2	Trollkin
3	Elf
4-5	Dwarf
6-7	Halfling
8-14	Human
15-16	Hondu
17-18	Kettek
19	Kleppin
20	Urkou

All of the victims are clearly commoners. They are covered in blood, each of their jaws have been removed, and they have suffered one additional mutilation; for each victim, roll on the following table to determine the nature of their mutilation.

1d6	Mutilation
1	Victim is missing its head entirely.
2	Victim is missing its left arm.
3	Victim is missing its right arm.
4	Victim is missing its left leg.
5	Victim is missing its right leg.
6	Victim is missing its torso; its limbs and head are still there.

## GATHERING CLUES

The heroes may attempt to communicate with the corpses if they have powers that allow them to do so. Unfortunately, because of the ritual that involved removing the victim's jaw, the victim's spirit cannot intelligibly communicate with the hero and can only make vague moaning sounds.

## CULTIC WARDS

Each corpse also has two runes carved or branded onto its flesh, or drawn on the ground in its blood and viscera.

The first of these runes repels undead. If any creature with the undead tag comes within 5 feet of these corpses, they are violently thrown 10 feet away if embodied and dispelled if incorporeal. For this reason, heroes find it impossible to glean any information from spirits by asking them yes-no questions and having the spirit moan or remain silent; as soon as the spirit is summoned, it moans briefly and then vanishes.

The second of these runes causes the corpse itself to explode in violent necrotic energy when disturbed. When a hero touches a corpse with this marking, that hero and each creature within a 10 feet radius of the corpse must make a DC 20 Constitution check, taking 4d10 necrotic damage on a failure and ½ as much on a success.

## HIGH-LEVEL DETECTIVES

While the runes and removed jawbones account for most spells and abilities that might allow the heroes to magically solve the mystery, there is always the chance that the heroes will find a creative way to gather information prematurely. In this event, they might seek out Moriarty and confront him directly before going to the ball. Allow them to do this; upon killing Moriarty, they think that they have solved the murders, but unfortunately the murders continue as the entire oligarchic class is in on it. They will still need to go to another noble ball and solve the puzzle as described in the Ball at Basker Manor section in order to permanently put the problem to a rest, if that is their goal.

## THE PRIVATE EYE

At a time of your choosing or 2d4 days after they witness the first murder, they are approached by a private investigator named Ormond.

**Read Aloud:** A stocky clay golem wearing a long, dusty trench coat and a plaid brown deerstalker hat. A monocle is fitted over his left eye. The golem stands just under six feet tall and has broad features. He fixes you all with a knowing look and a grim smile. "I had hoped I would find the newcomers," he rumbles. "There is a matter of grave import - a murder most foul - and I request your assistance in solving the case."

The golem introduces himself as Ormond, a private detective that has worked cases for the common folk of Lorvan for his entire life. Under Palorva's rule, he receives no commissions for solving cases and only receives his monthly allowance, same as anyone else. Even so, he continues his investigations due to his insatiable curiosity, his love of the hunt, and his desire to make the city safer for



the other destitute commoners in whatever way he can.

Ormond informs the heroes that rumor has spread of a commoner being murdered in the luxurious Gold Hill, a gated neighborhood in which the oligarchs often gather to hold balls. Commoners are not allowed in the hill unless as servants to one of the oligarchs, so a corpse showing up on the streets here has led to wild speculations about Jack the Ripper potentially threatening the nobles now. Yes, Jack the Ripper has always been a threat to the common folk, but now that the nobles are worried, they might start taking their fear out on the commoners themselves if Jack the Ripper is not stopped.

Ormond himself is a well-known and greatly disdained figure among the oligarchs due to his propensity to accuse them of white-collar crimes against the layfolk. Ormond hopes that the heroes might attend a masquerade ball that is being held at the Basker house in two days' time. They might pose as servants or out-of-town nobles; Ormond hopes that they can ask around and get to the bottom of the murder.

Ormond himself tells the heroes his suspicions: Jack the Ripper must actually be one of the nobles, given where this most recent murder occurred. The heroes should keep their wits about them and be ready for anything.

## WHAT ACTUALLY HAPPENED

Ormond is partially correct, but the actual state of affairs regarding this murder is a bit more twisted. The heroes may or may not ever get to the root of this mystery, but knowing the truth of the matter will help you roleplay the nobles at the ball accordingly.

The commoner, a human woman named Talia, was having a protracted affair with the oligarch named Xavier von Watson.

One fateful night, as she was sneaking out of the Gold Hill, a group of oligarchs noticed her. Most oligarchs in recent years have only had any meaningful interactions with commoners in the context of murdering them, as is necessitated by their involvement in the League of Immortality. When they saw Talia walking by herself, they assumed that it was a serendipitous gift: The perfect opportunity to perform another ritual murder on behalf of the League's shadowy leader.

Xavier von Watson, the only notable oligarch who is neither part of the League nor aware of its existence, found her body the next morning and anonymously sent word to Ormond to investigate.

# THE BALL AT BASKER MANOR

The Basker Manor is holding a grand masquerade ball for all oligarchs to attend. The oligarchs themselves and all of their servants must come masqued; the unveiling will occur at the stroke of midnight. Even though every ball attendee, whether oligarch or servant, is expected to wear a mask, it is implicitly expected that servants will wear less elaborate masks and more common outfits so that their status is still clearly delineated. Regardless, this offers the heroes a measure of cover to infiltrate the ball and try to gather more information by interrogating the nobles.

## BASKER MANOR FLOOR PLAN

The Ball of the Baskers occupies the entire ground floor and a portion of the second floor. The heroes may travel freely between any of the locations in the manor, but if they are found in any of the basement areas or private areas on the third floor, they are asked to return to the main ball area. They are not forcibly threatened or detained, however.

## GROUND FLOOR

### 1. Gaming Den

A den where partygoers can relax, smoke cigars, drink whiskey and wine, and play various taproom games like billiards or darts. A stairway connects this floor to the library on the second floor. A hearth on the far side of the room offers dim illumination.

Doorways connect the gaming den to the dining hall and the interior courtyard.

### 2. Dining Hall

This cozy, intimate dining hall houses five round tables that each accommodate six chairs, or seven in a pinch. Crackling fireplaces keep the dining hall brightly lit and quite warm.

Doorways connect the dining hall to the gaming den and the grand foyer.

### 3. Interior Courtyard

This stone courtyard contains several small fountains with stone statues in their center. It contains no vegetation, but nonetheless offers an outdoors atmosphere in which nobles can mingle. It connects to the gaming den, grand foyer, and grand ballroom.

### 4. Grand Foyer

The grand foyer has several fireplaces that offer bright illumination to the foyer's ground floor. Leather couches and chairs are arranged around each of these fireplaces. The foyer includes a central staircase that sweeps up to the second floor.

Doorways connect the grand foyer to the dining hall, the grand ballroom, the interior courtyard, and the entry courtyard.



## 5. Grand Ballroom

The grand ballroom is primarily a wide open space for dancing with an elevated platform from which bands can perform on the far side. Standing cocktail tables ring the central dancing area. It is brightly illuminated by a large crystal chandelier fitted with magical candles.

A narrow stone stairway offers access to the ballroom balcony on the second floor. Doorways connect the grand ballroom to the interior courtyard and the grand foyer.

## 6. Entry Courtyard

The entry courtyard is clearly demarcated by a thick hedge perimeter and a stone arch through which guests must pass. The front doorway from the courtyard enters into the grand foyer.

# BASEMENT

The basement is accessible via hidden wall panels that open to reveal narrow descending staircases into the relevant areas. These panels can be spotted with DC 10 Wisdom (Perception) checks. They are not intended to be secret, but to be unobtrusive enough to allow the nobles to enjoy their time without constantly seeing servant areas.

## 1. Wine Cellar

The wine cellar is under the gaming den, containing barrels of aged wine and spirits. It has a stairway connecting to the gaming den and a doorway connecting to the kitchens.

## 2. Kitchens

The kitchens are underneath the grand dining room and are well equipped to create many delectable dishes. A staircase connects it to the kitchen, and doorways connect it to the wine cellar and the food storage area.

## 3. Food Storage Area

Adjacent to the kitchen, a storage space underneath the grand foyer stocks various foodstuffs.

Doorways connect this area to the kitchens and the grounds maintenance warehouse.

## 4. Grounds Maintenance Warehouse

The grounds maintenance warehouse contains hedge clippers, feather dusters, alchemical cleaning materials, and similar items.

The warehouse connects to the interior courtyard via a staircase and has doorways to the food storage area and the servants' quarters.

## 5. Servants' quarters

The servants' quarters are underneath the grand ballroom. They include several small rooms with bunk beds and foot lockers. The hallway in the center of the servants' quarters connects to the grounds maintenance warehouse.

# SECOND FLOOR

## 1. Personal Library

The library contains a variety of history books, books of poetry, and books concerning the study of mundane fauna, particularly canines. It also contains a series of curtained study booths where nobles can have private dealings.

The library has a descending staircase that connects with the gaming den. Doorways connect the library to the upper grand foyer.

## 2. Upper Grand Foyer

The upper grand foyer is an interior balcony that overlooks the ground floor grand foyer. It is dimly lit given that the illumination from the hearths does not fully reach the balcony.

The upper grand foyer has doorways connecting to the personal library, the upper grand ballroom, and outdoors balconies overlooking both the interior courtyard and the entry courtyard.

## 3. Upper Grand Ballroom

The upper grand ballroom is a balcony that overlooks the ground floor grand ballroom. It connects to the ground floor via a stone staircase and has a doorway connecting to the upper grand foyer.

# THIRD FLOOR

The third floor is accessible from the grand foyer's stairway. One half of the third floor contains guest bedrooms, and the other half contains the personal bedchambers of the Basker noble family.

# ATTENDANTS TO THE MASQUERADE

The heroes may speak with any person attending the ball. Five in particular will give them notable leads that they may use to piece together the full picture of what is happening. Those five are listed in detail in the section below. If the heroes approach any other noble or servant, use the following tables to generate the NPC's name and how much information they are willing to divulge.



## NOBLE

The heroes may talk to any of the masqueraded nobles, which are easy to identify given their ostentatious garb and dramatic masks. Roll on the tables below to assign the noble a name and costume.

1d20	First Name	1d20	Surname
1	Lavro	1	von Stone
2	Mira	2	von Blackwell
3	Isaak	3	von Dunland
4	Tanka	4	von Robespereaux
5	Cheslav	5	von Cromlaud
6	Lilia	6	von Pierreux
7	Maxim	7	von Bureschov
8	Fenya	8	von Nikitov
9	Erik	9	von Rembrandt
10	Vera	10	von Tikhonov
11	Milo	11	von Makarov
12	Izabella	12	von Reginald
13	Artemiy	13	von Sherlock
14	Verka	14	von Ilyich
15	Vitomir	15	von Tarasov
16	Janna	16*	von Basker
17	Dmitri	17*	von Mycroft
18	Svetlana	18*	von Doyle
19	Kazimir	19*	von Adler
20	Rosland	20*	von Lestrade
1d20	Apparel		

1	Opulent red suit or dress with golden ornamentation; black mask with black sequins and black feathers
2	Dramatic blue suit or dress with golden ornamentation; white mask with white pearls and white feathers
3	Crisp green suit or dress with golden ornamentation; white mask with black sequins and peacock feathers
4	Lavish black suit or dress with golden ornamentation; black mask with black sequins and black feathers
5	Opulent white suit or dress with golden ornamentation; white mask with white pearls and white feathers

6	Dramatic red suit or dress with silver ornamentation; white mask with black sequins and peacock feathers
7	Crisp blue suit or dress with silver ornamentation; gold-thread mask with black sequins
8	Lavish green suit or dress with silver ornamentation; black mask with black sequins and white feathers
9	Delectable black suit or dress with silver ornamentation; white mask with white pearls and black feathers
10	Elegant white suit or dress with silver ornamentation; white mask with black sequins and peacock feathers
11	Fine red suit or dress with blue ornamentation; gold-thread mask with black sequins
12	Ostentatious blue suit or dress with white ornamentation; black mask with black sequins and white feathers
13	Lavish green suit or dress with black ornamentation; white mask with white pearls and black feathers
14	Delectable black suit or dress with red ornamentation; white mask with black sequins and peacock feathers
15	Elegant white suit or dress with green ornamentation; black mask with black sequins and white feathers
16	Fine red suit or dress elegant for its lack of ornamentation; white mask with white pearls and black feathers
17	Ostentatious blue suit or dress elegant for its lack of ornamentation; gold-thread mask with black sequins
18	Opulent green suit or dress elegant for its lack of ornamentation; gold-thread mask with black sequins
19	Decadent black suit or dress elegant for its lack of ornamentation; gold-thread mask with black sequins
20	Magnificent white suit or elegant for its lack of ornamentation; white mask with black sequins and peacock feathers



2d20	Lineage
2-3	Dhampir
4-5	Fiendblood
6-7	Trollkin
8-9	Elf
10-12	Dwarf
13-15	Halfling
16-25	Human
26-28	Hondu
29-31	Kettek
32-33	Kleppin
34-35	Urkou
36-40	Vampire; roll again for base lineage, rerolling on rolls of 2-3 and 36-40

The noble is willing to divulge some very basic information based on the heroes' collective persuasion efforts. One or more heroes may make a Charisma check. Take the average of these rolls, then subtract 1 from the DC for each hero beyond the first that contributed. Consult the following table to determine what the noble is willing to say.

If you rolled 16-20 on the NPC's identity, then they are a member of one of the major families that the heroes may gain additional information from. Roll on the Major Information table in this case.

DC	Information
8 or less	"Stop harassing me!" The noble calls for two <b>guards</b> to remove heroes. The heroes may resist, but it causes a scene and increases all future DCs in this encounter by +6.
9-13	"I'm just here for a good time. Let's not talk business tonight."
14-18	"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*." *Roll 1d8, rerolling a result of 8: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arthur von Basker</li> <li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li> <li>3. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>4. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>5. Scarlett von Lestrade</li> <li>6. William von Moriarty</li> <li>7. Xavier von Watson</li> </ol>
19-24	The noble gives the heroes one Clue (see the next section).
25 or more	The noble gives the heroes a randomly determined Secret. Roll 1d6 to determine which major noble's secret this noble reveals (find their secret in their individual entries in the Major Nobles section): <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arthur von Basker</li> <li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li> <li>3. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>4. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>5. Scarlett von Lestrade</li> <li>6. William von Moriarty</li> </ol>





DC	Major Information
10 or less	"Stop harassing me!" The noble calls for two <b>Guards</b> to remove heroes. The heroes may resist, but it causes a scene and increases all future DCs in this encounter by +6.
11-16	"I'm just here for a good time. Let's not talk business tonight."
17-24	"Lady Scarlett von Lestrade has been meeting with lord Arthur von Basker about that topic. Go speak with them."
25 or more	The heroes learn a Secret (see the Major Nobles section).

Any of these conversations may lead to confrontation. The oligarchs have the stats of **nobles**. If the heroes physically attack any of the nobles, then two **guards** attempt to intervene. This is not dangerous for the heroes, but damages their reputation at the ball.

## SERVANT

The heroes can easily determine which partygoers are servants given their much less expensive clothing and simpler masks. Roll on the following tables to assign the servant a name and costume.

1d20	Name
1	John
2	Genine
3	James
4	Jacqueline
5	Charles
6	Charlotte
7	Smythe
8	Sandra
9	Thomas
10	Thalia
11	Ivan
12	Evelyn
13	Marcus
14	Margaret
15	Anton
16	Tanya
17	Leon
18	Lenka
19	Igor
20	Stella

1d8	Apparel
1	Crisp black uniform, unadorned black eye mask
2	Crisp gray uniform, black mask with slight crow's nose
3	Crisp brown uniform, black mask with black feathers
4	Shabby black uniform, black mask with slight crow's nose
5	Shabby gray uniform, black mask with black feathers
6	Shabby brown uniform, unadorned black eye mask
7	Crisp black uniform, black mask with black feathers
8	Shabby black uniform, unadorned black eye mask

2d10	Lineage
2	Trollkin
3	Elf
4-5	Dwarf
6-7	Halfling
8-14	Human
15-16	Hondu
17-18	Kettek
19	Kleppin
20	Urkou





The servant is willing to divulge some very basic information based on the heroes' collective persuasion efforts. One or more heroes may make a Charisma check. Take the average of these rolls, then subtract 1 from the DC for each hero beyond the first that contributed. Consult the following table to determine what the servant is willing to say.

DC	Information
10 or less	"I am not at liberty to discuss the dealings of any oligarch. Any business you have should be taken up with them directly."
11-20	"I know that the oligarchs love their coded games. If you say the right code phrase to the right major noble in the right room, they will divulge a trusted secret to you. If you wish to arrange a meeting with a noble for a specific time and place tonight, simply say the word and I will deliver them an anonymous message."
21-30	Gain the information from 11-20. Additionally:  "I don't have any useful information myself; I'm just a lowly servant. But I believe [oligarch]* might be the right person to ask."  *Roll 1d8, rerolling a result of 8:  1. Arthur von Basker 2. Gregory von Mycroft 3. Antoine von Doyle 4. Ilyana von Alder 5. Scarlett von Lestrade 6. William von Moriarty 7. Xavier von Watson
31 or more	Gain the information from 11-20. Additionally, instead of directing them to talk to another noble, roll on the Clues table (see the next section).

## CLUES

When the heroes talk to a minor noble or servant, they might be given a clue. When this happens, roll on the table below to determine what clue they gain. Reroll whenever you roll a clue that the heroes already know.

When rolling on this table, roll 1d6 if they are getting the clue from a servant. Roll 1d10 if they are getting a clue from a noble. If they are getting a clue from a major noble, see the noble's individual writeup in the Major Nobles section.

1dX	Clue
1	Von Mycroft's and von Moriarty's codes pertain to animals or music. Meet Basker in the courtyard.
2	A type of metal is mentioned in the codes that should be said in the library, ballroom, and dining hall.
3	Von Lestrade and von Adler both use "elegant" or a derivative of that word in their code, and their meeting places are both indoors on the ground floor.
4	One of the two codes related to things in the ballroom should be used with Gregory von Mycroft; the other in the dining hall.
5	A noble whose surname ends in R uses the code "Did you know spiders eat their young?"
6	Regarding von Moriarty and von Lestrade, one is outdoors and the other's code is "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly."
7	The code "Palorva's tax policy is ironclad elegance" is to be used in the ballroom.
8	Scarlett von Lestrade's code is "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly."
9	Arthur von Basker does not want to meet indoors. Antoine von Doyle does not want to meet on the first floor.
10	Use the "My, how the frogs croak!" code on the balcony.



## MAJOR NOBLES

The following oligarchs are willing to talk business instead of sticking to pleasantries, and as such the heroes may be able to glean some information from them.

The heroes may learn a Secret by talking to any of the nobles below or by gaining major information from certain nobles in the Attendants to the Masquerade section.

When the heroes speak with any of these nobles, they are willing to divulge some potentially useful information based on the heroes' collective persuasion efforts. One or more heroes may make a Charisma check. Take the average of these rolls, then subtract 1 from the DC for each hero beyond the first that contributed. Consult the following table each NPC's subsection to determine what the lord or lady in question is willing to say.

Furthermore, if the heroes confront the right noble in the correct room of the manor and say the correct passphrase, the noble will divulge their Secret, which is written individually after each noble's Charisma DC table.

### LORD ARTHUR VON BASKER

Lord Arthur von Basker is a large, grizzled hondu with gray fur. He sports a creamy white suit with brass buttons and filigree. His snout protrudes from a cream-colored mask that matches his suit and has with black feathers pluming out from the top. He is a gruff, no-nonsense noble with risk-averse nature and a sense of tradition and gravitas about his daily activities.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Gregory von Mycroft</li> <li>2. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>3. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>4. Scarlett von Lestrade</li> <li>5. William von Moriarty</li> <li>6. Xavier von Watson</li> </ol>
13-27	A type of metal is mentioned in the codes that should be said in the library, ballroom, and dining hall.
28 or higher	A type of metal is mentioned in the codes that should be said in the library, ballroom, and dining hall. Gold corresponds to the library.

When the heroes approach Arthur in the interior courtyard and use the code phrase "Did you know spiders eat their young?", Arthur divulges the following secret.

**Secret:** The ringleader of the League of Immortality uses a magical disguise of some kind.

### LORD GREGORY VON MYCROFT

Lord Gregory von Mycroft is a bald, dark-skinned human with a thick black mustache. He is wearing a crisp red suit with black cloth buttons and beads. He is also wearing a marble-white mask that is otherwise unadorned. He is witty, has a dry sense of humor, and believes himself to be the only noble that really has anything worth saying.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arthur von Basker</li> <li>2. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>3. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>4. Scarlett von Lestrade</li> <li>5. William von Moriarty</li> <li>6. Xavier von Watson</li> </ol>
13-27	Von Lestrade and von Adler both use "elegant" or a derivative of that word in their code, and their meeting places are both indoors on the ground floor.
28 or higher	Von Lestrade and von Adler both use "elegant" or a derivative of that word in their code. Meet von Lestrade in the dining hall and meet von Adler indoors on the ground floor.

When the heroes approach Gregory in the gaming den and use the code phrase "The band's music is so elegant tonight," Gregory divulges the following secret.

**Secret:** They say the ringleader of the League of Immortality is said to be wearing white tonight.



## LADY ANTOINE VON DOYLE

Lady Antoine von Doyle is a light-skinned human with graying brunette hair done up in tresses. She glides around the room in a stunning red dress with silver flower patterning. A black mask with huge peacock plumage compliments her outfit. She has a superficial, chatty personality that she uses to disarm people. She is truly a cunning politician and chooses all of her words carefully to position herself for the greatest gain.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Arthur von Basker</li><li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li><li>3. Ilyana von Alder</li><li>4. Scarlett von Lestrade</li><li>5. William von Moriarty</li><li>6. Xavier von Watson</li></ol>
13-27	<p>Von Mycroft's and von Moriarty's codes pertain to animals or music. Meet Basker in the courtyard.</p>
28 or higher	<p>Von Mycroft's and von Moriarty's codes pertain to animals or music. Meet Basker in the courtyard. Moriarty wants to meet somewhere on the second floor.</p> <p>When the heroes approach Antoine in the library and use the code phrase "Been meaning to get a gold tooth", Antoine divulges the following secret.</p> <p><b>Secret:</b> The anonymous leader of the League has promised the oligarchs that those who prove themselves worthy will be turned into vampires, thereby becoming immortal.</p>

## LADY ILYANA VON ADLER

Lady Ilyana von Adler is a calico kettek who wears a striking white dress elegant for its lack of any ornamentation whatsoever. A gold-thread mask with black sequins compliments Ilyana's appearance. She often picks petty arguments just to stir the pot. She is primarily concerned with her own comfort and does not care much about who might get hurt from her decisions.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Arthur von Basker</li><li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li><li>3. Antoine von Doyle</li><li>4. Scarlett von Lestrade</li><li>5. William von Moriarty</li><li>6. Xavier von Watson</li></ol>
13-27	<p>One of the two codes related to things in the ballroom should be used with Gregory von Mycroft; the other in the dining hall.</p>
28 or higher	<p>One of the two codes related to things in the ballroom should be used with Gregory von Mycroft; the other in the dining hall with Scarlett von Lestrade.</p> <p>When the heroes approach Ilyana in the ballroom and use the code phrase "Palorva's tax policy is ironclad elegance", Ilyana divulges the following secret.</p> <p><b>Secret:</b> The leader of the League is undoubtedly one of the seven major nobles.</p>





## LADY SCARLETT VON LESTRADE

Lady Scarlett von Lestrade is a vampire, formerly a human, wearing a sleek red silk dress with black lace that resembles spiderwebs. She has a cruel, derisive personality and clearly believes herself to be above the common rabble that is the other oligarchs.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arthur von Basker</li> <li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li> <li>3. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>4. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>5. William von Moriarty</li> <li>6. Xavier von Watson</li> </ol>
13-27	<p>Arthur von Basker does not want to meet indoors. Antoine von Doyle does not want to meet on the first floor.</p>
28 or higher	<p>Arthur von Basker does not want to meet indoors. Antoine von Doyle wants to meet in the Library.</p> <p>When the heroes approach Scarlett in the dining hall and use the code phrase "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly", Scarlett divulges the following secret.</p> <p><b>Secret:</b> Nobody knows the ringleader's identity, but by his voice at League meetings, he is surely male.</p>



## LORD WILLIAM VON MORIARTY

Dressed in a magnificent white suit that fits his form perfectly, Lord William von Moriarty's appearance is completed with a white mask that is as unadorned as his clothing. Moriarty is just a human, but he appears to be a vampire with sleek black hair and a thin mustache. Moriarty is witty and loves some good bantering. He believes that he is the smartest person in the room, if not the whole city (objectively, he is usually correct). He loves nothing more than finding ways to flaunt his intelligence so flagrantly that it is offensive, yet everyone around him is always too stupid to recognize how far ahead of them he is.

DC	Information
12 or lower	<p>"I would rather not discuss that, but between us, talk to [oligarch]*."</p> <p>*Roll 1d6:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Arthur von Basker</li> <li>2. Gregory von Mycroft</li> <li>3. Antoine von Doyle</li> <li>4. Ilyana von Alder</li> <li>5. Scarlett von Lestrade</li> <li>6. Xavier von Watson</li> </ol>
13-27	<p>Regarding von Moriarty himself and von Lestrade, one is outdoors and the other's code is "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly."</p>
28 or higher	<p>Regarding von Moriarty himself and von Lestrade, one is outdoors and the other's code is "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly."</p> <p>Scarlett von Lestrade's code is "The silver chandelier sparkles elegantly."</p> <p>When the heroes approach William on the balcony overlooking the interior courtyard and use the code phrase "My, how the frogs croak!", William divulges the following secret.</p> <p><b>Secret:</b> They say the ringleader of the League of Immortality is a vampire... but he is certainly a fraud.</p>



## LORD XAVIER VON WATSON

Lord Xavier von Watson sports a white coat and trousers complimented by a red vest and red mask with white feathered plumage. His dramatic appearance overstates his personality; Watson is a rather soft-spoken individual who believes that the oligarchy should do more for the impoverished common folk of Lorvan. He tries, and often fails, to crack witty jokes.

Lord Xavier is the only prominent noble who is unaware of the League of Immortality. He has no idea that all of his colleagues are members of a cult.

## ACCUSATION

Once the heroes determine that Moriarty is the primary perpetrator, they may confront him privately or make a spectacle of the affair. They may also attempt to blame everyone at the party for their shared crimes. Whatever the case, once Moriarty feels that he has been found out, he will launch into a maniacal monologue. Alternatively, if the heroes accuse the wrong noble, Moriarty's pride is so affronted that he strikes up his monologue anyway, first commenting that the heroes were too stupid to realize it was him all along.

**Read Aloud:** *Moriarty strides into the center of the gathering, wearing the attention of everyone in the room as naturally as one might wear a tailored suit. He sneers. "Yes, I am the ringleader of your little League. How daft you are, the lot of you! It was me all along and none of you figured it out! And - yes - I am not a vampire." He removes one of his rings, and his appearance fades from that of a vampire to that of a normal brown-haired human. "How pitifully easy it was to pull the wool over your eyes. Even the vampires bought my intentionally mediocre act. I'm nothing more than a human! An incredibly brilliant human with an intellect that outmatches all of yours combined, but still a mere mortal! Oh, how mind-numbingly easy it was to turn you all into a literal murder cult. I did not think it would last, but you indulged my bloody fancies for nigh on a decade before these bumbling adventurers finally saw fit to expose me! Ha! My identity is revealed, but it matters not, for your identities are revealed as well - a room of the greatest ignoramus oligarchs from here to hell and back. Oh, how dull an unenlightened life must be - you are no better than cattle chewing their own cud! But, alas, it is time for me to make my leave. So long, suckers!"*

After Moriarty finishes his monologue, he taps his cane on a floor stone, wood panel, or some other fixture that could justifiably expose a hidden passage. Genius that he is, he planned out his contingencies so thoroughly that he knew exactly where he would need to stand while delivering his monologue in order to escape immediately after. He disappears down this passage into an expansive cavern. Proceed to the Liar's Lair.

## YOU ARE ALL GUILTY!

When the heroes learn that almost every member of the oligarchy is part of the League of Immortality and has blood on their hands, they may choose to slaughter the entire caste. This will not be difficult; the oligarchs have the stats of **nobles** and there are only eight **guards** on the premises. Any vampire nobles attending the ball have the stats of nobles with a randomly determined vampire template added.

However, if the heroes do this, then Palorva immediately retaliates by burning down a large neighborhood of commoners. She then installs **vampire reavers** and **erinyeses** as the replacement oligarchs overseeing the various neighborhoods of Lorvan. The heroes would be wise to think through their actions before murdering all of the oligarchs, even if such an action might be morally justified.

## THE LIAR'S LAIR

When the heroes descend into Moriarty's lair, they enter into a death trap. This lair is specially designed to split heroes up and force them to fight on their own.

## MORIARTY'S TACTICS

Moriarty is not interested in killing the party quickly, but in making them suffer. By splitting the heroes up, Moriarty approaches them each individually and tries to get them as close to dying as possible without reducing them to 0 hit points outright. While attacking heroes isolated from the rest of the party, Moriarty will inform them (falsely) that all of their party has already died and that they are the only ones left. In short, he tries to crush their spirits before taking their lives.

All good things come to an end, however. Jack will eventually grow tired of toying with the heroes, and then he will try to kill them. Once he reduces a hero to 0 hit points, he stands around to gloat while they bleed out, hitting them again if they use any self-healing.

As much as possible, Moriarty remains extremely mobile during this combat. He utilizes his Effigy Apparition ability at least once per round, and uses it more if able. By remaining hypermobile, Moriarty can strike each hero individually and then retreat before retaliation is forthcoming.

## META CRUELTY

If your table enjoys a meta gameplay experience, consider taunting your players by mentioning that Moriarty is only CR 9. This should be a piece of cake.



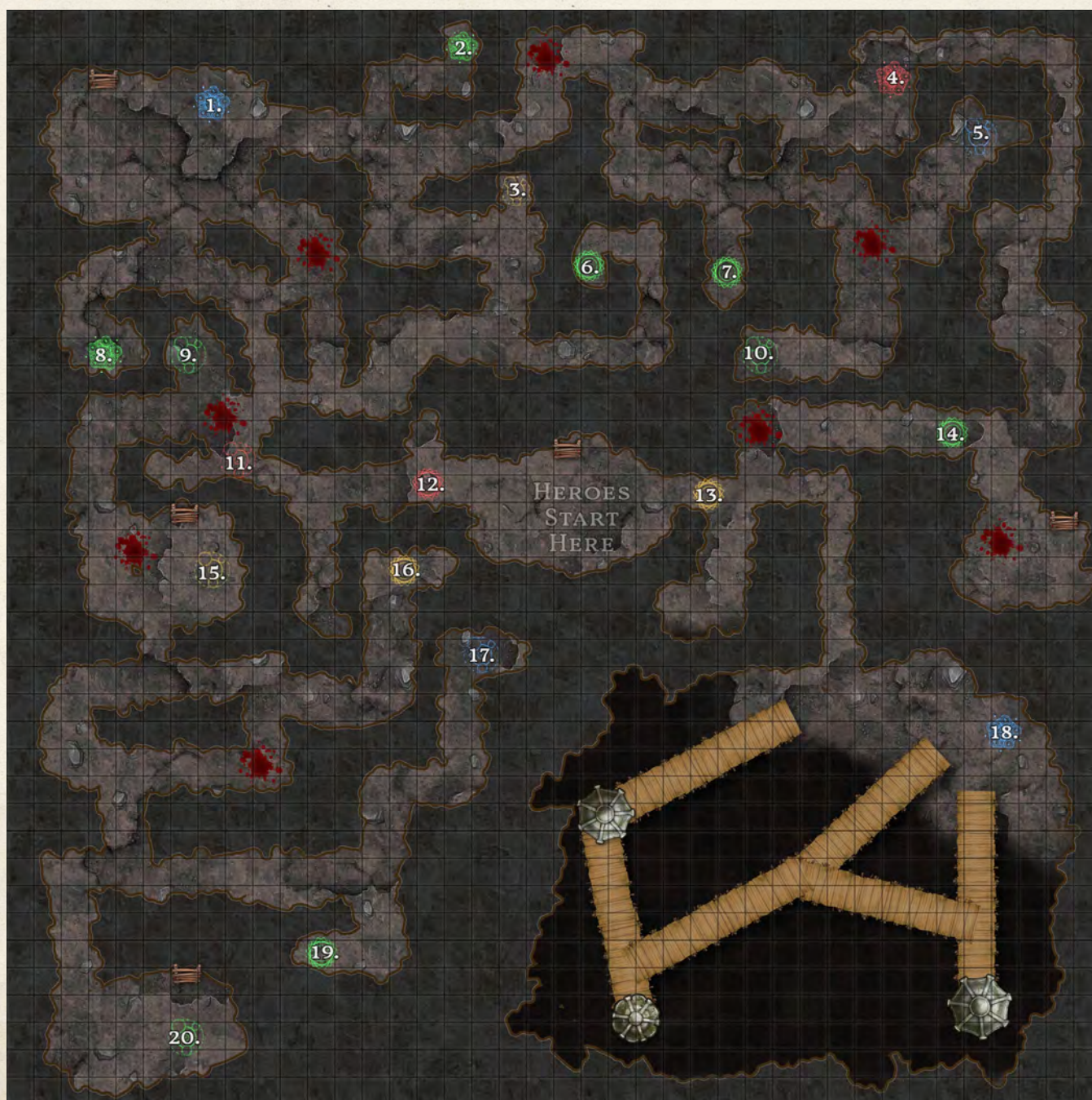
## TELEPORTATION TRAPS

These teleportation traps are key to Moriarty's combat strategy. He utilizes these traps to split the heroes up, then corners the heroes with his effigies. The teleportation traps are clearly drawn on the numbered battle map for your ease of reference, but use the unnumbered battle map for the heroes so that the players cannot see these circles.

Throughout Moriarty's lair, teleportation traps are drawn on the ground. These traps are rune circles created with powerful magic that is immune to being detected magically. A creature may spot the runes on the ground with a successful DC 36 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check that takes a bonus action.

When a creature enters a space with runes on it, the creature must immediately make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a hit, roll 1d6; the hero is instantaneously teleported to the corresponding circle (if you roll the circle they are currently on, add +1 to the roll). When a creature is unwillingly teleported in this way, they cannot activate the portal in which they appear after teleporting. They must find a new portal if they wish to attempt teleporting again.

A creature possessing the Effigy's Servo or Moriarty's Cane may choose to automatically be hit or missed and may choose, if hit, which circle they teleport to.





## EFFIGIES

When Moriarty enters his lair at the beginning of combat, he instantaneously awakens a number of effigies equal to the number of heroes +1.

These effigies may start combat on any blood splatter on the battle map. When choosing where the effigies begin combat, do not simply place them all closest to the heroes. Remember that the heroes will probably be teleported to random areas throughout the lair, so the effigies should be fairly spread out to cover all possible bases.

These effigies are extremely healthy, but not particularly deadly, monsters that act as Moriarty's eyes and ears. He may utilize his Effigy Apparition ability to trade places with any of these effigies while they and he are both inside his lair, which is how he moves around the lair so quickly.

Each effigy is a stitched together monster made from several victims; one person's torso, another's leg, and so forth. Heroes that fight these effigies may realize that they are amalgams of Moriarty's previous murder victims.

## EFFIGY

*Large construct, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 147 (14d10+84)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	10 (+0)	22 (+6)	1 (-5)	15 (+2)	6 (-2)

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed

**Senses** passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +2

## FEATURES

**Constructed Nature.** The Effigy does not need to eat, drink, sleep, or breathe.

**Effigy's Servo.** The Effigy possesses a servo inside its torso allowing it to utilize teleportation traps effectively. Once the Effigy is killed, a creature may remove the servo and utilize it.

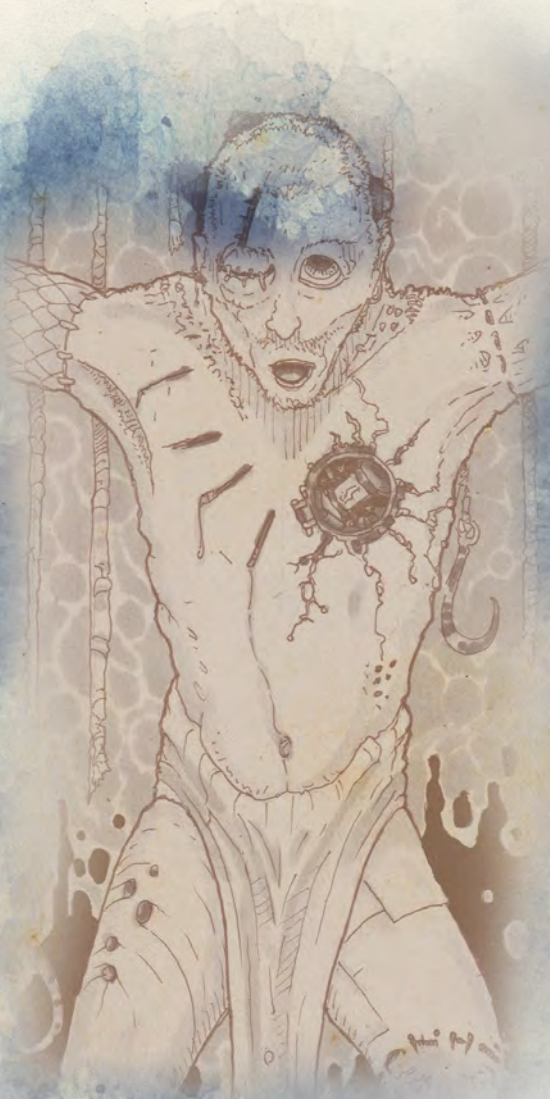
**Engage.** When a creature starts its turn within 10 feet. of the Effigy, it must make a DC 10 Intelligence saving throw. On a failed save, it cannot willingly move farther away from the Effigy.

## ACTIONS

**Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) bludgeoning damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, its speed becomes 0 feet. until the start of its next turn.

## PARTY ADVANCEMENT

After defeating Jack the Ripper, the heroes level up.





# CHAPTER 8: ASCENDANCY OF DARKNESS

This chapter picks up from the end of Chapter 6, continuing the last adventure arc of this campaign. Heroes are intended to be level 17 at this point, given that it is expected that they dealt with Jack the Ripper during the second arc of this adventure.

## ARC 3: CASTLES AND CATACOMBS

The heroes will need to find a way into Palorva's Palace in order to unearth the details of her plan. If they scout out her palace ahead of time, they will quickly determine that the palace is incredibly well-guarded both by powerful fiends and by strong magical wards. The heroes may attempt to overcome these challenges or may look for an alternative method to enter the palace, which may lead them to discover the catacombs.

## PALACE GUARDS AND WARDS

When the heroes approach the palace, they see a number of powerful guards keeping watch. The exact number of guards depends on whether the heroes are being watched by the Incisors or not.

If the heroes make no effort to hide, then do not ask for the following rolls; they automatically achieve the lowest possible result. If the heroes are attempting to approach the palace covertly, they must each make a Dexterity (Stealth) check. Take the average of the party's total. Then decrease their average by 2 for every side quest that heroes have completed for Incisors and by 1 for every meaningful conversation that the heroes have had with an Incisor in the past 72 hours. Consult the following table to determine how many guards are currently staffing the entry gate.

DC	Active Guards
14 or lower	2 Balors, 2 Ice Devils, 2 Bone Devils
15-18	2 Balors, 2 Bone Devils
19-27	2 Balors, 2 Bone Devils
28 or higher	3 Balors

In addition to these guards, the gateway is magically locked. A *knock* spell cast at 8th level or higher will unlock it. The walls are magically enchanted to prevent creatures outside of the palace from teleporting into it, but creatures may teleport out of the palace.

The walls are also magically enchanted with glyphs that cast the *fireball* spell at any creature that flies over the walls into the palace. The save DC is 14. These glyphs do not target creatures flying out of the palace.

If a hero attempts to fly or otherwise maneuver over the walls without climbing the walls directly, then they are attacked by 1d4 *fireballs* with a +6 bonus to their save DC. This attack recurs for every turn that the hero begins in the air above Palorva's Palace.

Heroes that attempt to climb the walls draw attention to themselves and are attacked by the guards.

When the guards attack the heroes, one of them bellows and uses a sonorous stone, a magic item that enables it to use the *thaumaturgy* cantrip. After 1d4 rounds, the following reinforcements show up at the end of each initiative count for the rest of the combat.

1d6	Reinforcements
1	1d4 Kamelot knights
2	1d4 knights
3	1d4 berserkers
4	1d4 bandit captains
5	1d4 spineclots
6	1d4 imps





# THE CATACOMBS

Bone catacombs stretch for miles beneath the city of Lorvan. The heroes may explore the catacombs, which will allow them to access the cellars beneath Palorva's Palace.

## CATACOMBS FEATURES

Unless noted otherwise in a specific section, assume that the following regional features are true of the catacombs.

The catacombs are dark.

Catacombs tunnels are cramped and are no more than 5 feet across and 6 feet high. Chambers and points of interest are slightly larger, with 8 foot ceilings.

The walls, floors, and ceilings are all made of compressed humanoid bones. When the heroes first realize this, they gain +2 Fear. After exploring the catacombs in their entirety, they gain +2 more Fear as they realize how many people must have died given the sheer number of bones.

The heroes occasionally cross small underground streams. These streams are entirely filled with blood.

### FLYING SKULLS

The catacombs are home to a unique creature: flying skulls. Flying skulls have the stats of **reaper bats**, but they are undead humanoids instead of beasts. Flying skulls use psionic and occult magic to communicate with one another and chatter their teeth together rather than squeaking when using Squeaking Summons.

## THE CATACOMB MAZE

The sprawling catacombs are easy to become lost in. Rather than mapping the entire tangle of tunnels and chambers in the catacombs, use the following tables to randomly generate the areas that the heroes find next when they are exploring new passages.

If they backtrack in search of a specific location, one or more heroes may make an Intelligence or Wisdom check to recall their trail. If multiple heroes make this check, take the average of their result and reduce the DC by 1 for each hero beyond the first. On a DC of 20, the heroes may find the room they were looking for without any trouble. On a DC of 14, they find the room they were looking for after first taking one wrong turn (and rolling on the following tables as though discovering a new room).

## TUNNELS

The tunnels between points of interest are 2d12x10 feet long and contain hostile creatures. Roll on the following table to determine the creatures.

### 1d6 Hostile Creatures

1	1d4 skeletons
2	1d4 flying skulls
3	1d2 skeletons
4	1d2 flying skulls
5	1 skeleton
6	1 flying skull

## CHAMBERS

When the heroes reach the end of a tunnel, it opens into a chamber. Roll on the following table to determine the nature of the chamber. For every three chambers that the heroes explore, add a cumulative +1 bonus to future rolls on this table. Reset this number to +0 each time the heroes find a significant catacombs point.

### 1d8 Chamber

1-2	Crossroads
3	Major Crossroads
4-5	Blood River
6	Pit
7	Major Combat
8+	Significant Catacombs Point

**Crossroads.** The heroes come to a fork in the tunnels. They may backtrack or pick from two new branching paths.

**Major Crossroads.** The heroes come to a fork in the tunnels. They may backtrack or pick from three new branching paths.

**Blood River.** The heroes come to a chamber that is bifurcated by a river of blood and 1d4 **skeletons** crawl out of the blood to attack the heroes. They may then backtrack or pick from two new branching paths.

**Pit.** The heroes come to a chamber that has a deep black pit in its center. The pit is 15 ft wide. They may then backtrack or pick from two new branching paths if they find a way across the pit. Falling down the pit deals 20d6 bludgeoning damage and reveals a new pathway for the heroes to explore, but a **m'l'ykkri lumberer** is waiting for them at the bottom of the pit.



**Major Combat.** The heroes enter a chamber with two new branching paths. However, in the middle of the chamber, there are creatures that could pose a serious threat and immediately attack the heroes. Roll on the table below to determine what the creature is.

#### 1d4 Hostile Creatures

- |   |                  |
|---|------------------|
| 1 | 4 bearded devils |
| 2 | 3 ghosts         |
| 3 | 2 hezrou         |
| 4 | 1 bone devil     |

**Significant Catacombs Point.** The heroes find the next significant catacombs point (listed in the next section). Reroll if the heroes have already found a significant catacombs point but have not overcome it.

## SIGNIFICANT CATACOMBS POINTS

When the heroes find a significant catacombs point when exploring a randomly determined chamber, they find the following points in sequence. They may not advance to each sequential point until they have first overcome the challenge in their current significant point.

## SKELETON KEY

The heroes find themselves in a semicircular chamber with a large iron doorway inset in the bone walls. The doorway has two large depressions that look like oversized skeletal claws.

The heroes must find and kill the scarlet **vrock**, then bring its claws back and place them in the depressions. Doing so unlocks the door. The door can also be unlocked with a *knock* spell at 8th level or higher.

After the heroes first find this chamber, the next time they explore a chamber with a Blood River or Major Combat, they find the scarlet vrock. This creature has the stats of a normal vrock. It starts combat with 2d6 **minotaur skeletons** backing it up.

Once the heroes advance through the Skeleton Key door, they may continue exploring the catacombs until they find the Door of Surrender.

## DOOR OF SURRENDER

The hallway ends abruptly with a blood-red stone door blocking the heroes' path. A cryptic inscription on the door can be deciphered with a DC 10 Intelligence (Arcana) or Intelligence (History) check: The first creature that opens this door will be instantaneously slain and resurrected as an autonomous vampire.

A living hero may willingly choose to open the door; if they do, they lose one talent of their choice that they gained as a result of leveling up. They then gain the Vampire Entry talent. If no heroes are willing or able to do this, then they must backtrack.

If the heroes are still in touch with Edgar Hawthorne, he is willing to join them and sacrifice himself to open this door on the condition that the heroes immediately slay him afterwards. Hawthorne does not fight back in this event.

Once the heroes advance through the Door of Surrender, they may continue exploring the catacombs until they find the Blackwater Bridge.

## BLACKWATER BRIDGE

The heroes advance into a chamber with a wide chasm running through its center. A bridge that appears to be made of femurs strung together by humanoid sinew spans a river of churning black water some 30 ft below.

When a hero starts their turn on the bridge, they must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall off into the water, as the bridge actively shudders and tries to throw them.

A living creature that starts its turn in the water takes 2d10 necrotic damage.

Once at least one hero has fallen in the water or successfully crossed the bridge, a **bone devil** peels itself out from the far wall and attacks the heroes. Three undead **giant crocodiles** lurk in the water and attack when the bone devil attacks.

Once the heroes manage to cross the Blackwater Bridge, they may continue exploring the catacombs. After one more chamber, the heroes emerge in the storage cellars of Palorva's Palace.



## PALACE GROUNDS

Once the heroes emerge in Palorva's Palace, they may explore the grounds so long as they keep a low profile. Every 30 minutes, the heroes must each make DC 18 Dexterity (Stealth) checks. On a failure, nearby guards take notice. Roll on the following table to determine which guards the heroes must face.

1d6	Guards
1	5 bearded devils
2	3 bearded devils
3	2 bearded devils
4	8 vampire spawn
5	6 vampire spawn
6	4 vampire spawn

If the guards begin to suspect that they are outmatched, they will call for backup. At the end of each round, roll on the following table to determine the guards' reinforcements.

1d4	Reinforcements
3	1d4 knights
4	1d4 bandit captains
5	1d4 spineclots
6	1d4 imps

As is true of the city itself, the palace grounds are typically brightly lit by lamp posts sporting "light bulbs" from the glowing forests of Yodvan. Under the black skies of Kess, Palorva's Palace glitters in the harsh false light of these lamps, showcasing both her elegance and her cruelty.

## BARRACKS

Three large, long buildings in the palace grounds contain the barracks where Palorva keeps the contingents of her standing army that are between deployments. Avoiding being spotted in the barracks is very difficult and requires DC 22 Dexterity (Stealth) checks. On a failure, nearby off-duty soldiers take notice. Roll on the following table to determine which soldiers the heroes must face.

1d4	Hostile Creatures
3	1d4 Kamelot knights
4	1d4 knights
5	1d4 berserkers
6	1d4 imps

## CLOCK TOWER

The clock tower is a wondrous feat of engineering and artistic prowess. It looms several stories taller than every other building in Lorvan, including Palorva's Palace. The clock tower is where the heroes will first confront Palorva in a series of climactic combat encounters. See Arc 4: The Bell Tolls for more information.

## DINING HALL

Accessible from the north and south wings of the palace and from the grand ball courtyard, the dining hall is a grand but lightly furnished hall that can seat up to sixty at a time. Palorva rarely utilizes the dining hall given that most of her guests are vampires and do not actually eat.

A large stairwell on the far end of the dining hall ascends to Palorva's throne room. The same stairwell descends to the kitchens, which connect to both the dungeons and the storage cellars.

## DUNGEON

The dungeon is situated directly between the house of pleasures and the sausage factory. The cells are magically locked and require a *knock* spell to unlock the cells.

Various humanoids are inhumanely crowded into the cells. Many of them seem to be intoxicated. If the heroes talk to them, they learn that the prisoners are given various intoxicants to change the flavor of their blood before they are fed upon.

If the heroes release the prisoners, then they attempt to escape but are slaughtered by the guards patrolling the main gate to Palorva's Palace. The prisoners that attempt to escape through the catacombs become lost and eventually die of starvation or are murdered by skeletons.

## GRAND BALL COURTYARD

A massive stone courtyard occupies much of the real estate on the palace grounds. Accessible from the ground floor of the southern wing, the northern wing, and from the main gateway, the grand ball courtyard is frequently outfitted to celebrate different events or accomplishments. Palorva throws lavish parties here that often involve feeding on the servants, but humanoid guests are exempt from being fed on without first giving their consent.

In the center of the courtyard, an enormous stone fountain rises about 20 feet into the air. Blood spouts from this fountain and cascades down its tiers before pooling in its basin. The blood comes from the sausage factory, and tap pipes in certain bedchambers allow vampiric guests to always drink their fill.



## GUEST QUARTERS

The south wing of the first, second, third, and fourth floors of Palorva's Palace each contain eight bedchambers.

Each of the bedchambers on the first and second floors vary slightly in dimensions but are all furnished similarly. They include one to two comfortable, medium-sized beds, a washbasin, a writing desk, and a wardrobe. They are decorated with red carpets, black bedsheets and blankets, and dark, polished woodwork. The rooms themselves are dark unless the heroes provide illumination.

The bedchambers on the third and fourth floors are outfitted with vampires in mind. Each room contains three luxurious padded coffins with interior inserts where a vampire can place their ancestral soil. These rooms are also outfitted with tap pipes that draw blood from the blood fountain in the grand ball courtyard, ensuring that the vampires occupying these rooms will never go thirsty.

Each time the heroes enter a bedchamber, there is a chance that it is occupied. Have each hero roll an unmodified d20; use the highest d20 roll to determine the room's occupants, if any.

DC	Occupants
1-2	Shadowcroft vampire
3-5	Vampire reaver
6-8	Vampspider
9-11	Vampire
12-14	Vampire courtier
15-20	Unoccupied

Any occupied room has the vampire's personal belongings in the room as well. The heroes may each gain 1,000 sc or an uncommon magic item for every creature that they defeat in one of these rooms.

## HOUSE OF PLEASURES

The house of pleasures is a subterranean two-floor series of suites. Each room is decorated around a different theme: flaying, disemboweling, puncturing, and so forth. Palorva and her most esteemed guests make use of these rooms to entertain themselves by torturing the prisoners in the adjacent dungeon or to take their fill of sanguine carnal pleasures. Palorva often spends time here with her harem, a rotating collection of a dozen or so humanoids that she has enthralled. Most members of her harem survive for an average of one month.

## LIBRARY

The ground floor and second floor of the northern wing of the palace are a grand library. Palorva has spent years collecting a wealth of intelligence in this library and takes some measure of personal pride in it. Heroes may find any information regarding well-documented historical events from anywhere on Ancerra up to 100 years ago, and anywhere in Norspina within the past 100 years.

A small, shadowed stairway on the second floor leads up to Palorva's suite.

## OUTBUILDINGS

The outbuildings contain a series of small apartment-style housing units for groundskeepers, cooks, cleaning staff, and the like. These staff are not fond of Palorva and the heroes may hide here long enough to take a long rest. These buildings count as a Haven.

## PALORVA'S SUITE

Palorva's suite occupies the third and fourth floors of the northern wing of the palace.

The third floor is accessible via the staircase on the library's second floor and connects to the portal tower via a narrow hall. The third floor is an oversized study with a variety of desks and bookshelves where Palorva keeps her personal research.

Heroes that explore this room can find various diagrams, maps, anatomical books, and religious texts. They may piece together Palorva's plans, but sorting through her notes takes a number of hours based on the heroes' Intelligence rolls. Take the average of each hero's roll and lower the DC by 1 per additional hero beyond the first that participates.

For each hour that it takes the heroes, they must make Dexterity (Stealth) checks to avoid being found by the guards of the palace grounds.

DC	Time
14 or lower	4 hours
15-18	3 hours
19-27	2 hours
28 or higher	1 hour



After the determined time, the heroes may learn the following:

- Palorva intends to resurrect Dracula.
- She plans on activating Ancerra's core to gain enough power to do so.
- She believes she can activate Ancerra's core from the lost city of Vadreheim.
- Vadreheim is where Dracula reset Ancerra's timeline twice in the past, creating Heaven and Hell.
- Vadreheim is the ancient remains of an Avadri city long since reduced to ruin. It is built around Ancerra's magnetic north pole.

Her bedchambers are on the fourth floor, containing an elegant oversized coffin filled with ancestral soil and a selection of plush beds that Palorva rotates through as she sees fit.

## PORTAL TOWER

Connected to the throne room via a narrow stairwell on the portal tower's southern side and to Palorva's personal suite through a hall on the west, the portal tower is a stone tower that ascends 40 feet above the rest of the palace. In its top floor, two doorways contain portals: One to Heaven and one to Hell. Both are constantly active from this side, but can only be activated from the other side if a creature is wearing Palorva's signet ring.

## SAUSAGE FACTORY

The sausage factory is where prisoners are taken once they are no longer useful. It includes rows of meat hooks and a couple large meat grinders that pulverize the flesh until unrecognizable.

When becoming prepped for the machines, prisoners are first drained of all their blood. This blood is placed into circulation in the blood fountain. Then their bones are removed and disposed of in the catacombs. Finally, everything that remains - all meat and organs - is ground up into mush and deposited into sausage links.

### WILLFUL IGNORANCE

The people of Lorvan might know, deep down, that the sausage that is a staple of their diet is actually their former neighbors. But ignorance is bliss, and most prefer not to think too hard about where their meals come from.

## STORAGE CELLARS

The storage cellars connect to the kitchens beneath the dining hall. They also connect to the catacombs and are likely where the heroes first emerge in Palorva's Palace.

## THRONE ROOM

Creatures may access Palorva's throne room by ascending the grand stairwell at the far end of the dining hall. The throne room has a 40 feet tall vaulted ceiling and overlooks the grand ball courtyard. Palorva's throne, on the southern end of the hall, is entirely made of humanoid bones and gilded in gold.

A narrow stairwell on the north side of the throne room leads to the portal tower.

### PARTY ADVANCEMENT

After the heroes successfully explore Palorva's Palace and take a long rest, the heroes level up. They should be level 18 at this point. Note that they do not gain the benefits of this level up until they take a long rest, so if they immediately fight Palorva, this level up is delayed.





## ARC 4: THE BELL TOLLS

When the heroes advance to confront Palorva in the bell tower, she is in the middle of activating a massive clockwork device that will open a portal to Vadreheim.

When the heroes confront her, the portal is 60 seconds from activating. On Initiative count 0 each round, every cog on the battle map rotates. The direction and speed of rotation is written on the reference map below.

On Initiative count 0 when the sixth round is over, the portal opens. Any creature within 10 feet of the portal is teleported to a random point one half day's journey away from Vadreheim. The portal remains open for 60 seconds.

If the heroes manage to kill Palorva before she goes through the portal, then her mist returns to her palace or to another patch of ancestral soil in Kess. Palorva has placed dozens of her own ancestral soil patches throughout Lorvan and the countryside around the city.

Palorva will attempt to return to the clock tower, but if the heroes best her again, then she will travel to Vadreheim overland.

### PARTY ADVANCEMENT

After Palorva escapes to Vadreheim, the heroes level up. They should be level 19 at this point.

## ARC 5: VADREHEIM

After Palorva leaves Lorvan via the clock tower, the heroes may arrive at Vadreheim in a number of different ways. Heroes that were close enough to her portal at the time of its activation may be teleported to Vadreheim themselves, potentially splitting the party.

Heroes that did not get teleported to Vadreheim should be able to deduce where the portal leads if they have already explored Palorva's Palace and found her plans. By now, the party may have access to magic items or abilities that allow them to teleport great distances. If they do not have access to such abilities, then they may reach Vadreheim using any of the following methods.

### OVERLAND TRAVEL

Traveling to Vadreheim without the aid of magic is a deadly journey. The heroes may traverse Kess, Bishal, Noord, and even Yodvan without a terrible amount of difficulty by now, but sailing from Yodvan to Vadreheim is not for the faint of heart.

The heroes will be assailed by multiple **abyssal lurkers** and scouring blizzards as they sail. It takes a minimum of 4 days for the heroes to make this voyage unless they find a way to use magic to enhance their vessel's speed.







## OCEAN BLIZZARD

When a blizzard smashes into their vessel, each hero must make a DC 16 + 1d6 Constitution saving throw to weather the storm. On a success, heroes wearing winter clothing are unaffected. Other heroes gain 2 levels of exhaustion. On a failure, heroes wearing winter clothing gain 3 levels of exhaustion. Heroes not wearing winter clothing also suffer 10d10 cold damage.

Additionally, each hero must make an Intelligence check. No more than two heroes may instead make a Charisma check. Take the average of each hero's roll. On a DC of 16 or higher, their ship remains intact. Otherwise, their ship suffers 1 duress. When their ship suffers 3 duress, it wrecks and sinks. 2d4 **abyssal lurkers** attack the heroes as they are stranded in the ocean.

The heroes will also need to find a way to travel at an incredibly accelerated rate. Canonically, Palorva attempts to activate Ancerra's core 2 days after she leaves the clock tower. In order to allow the heroes a slight chance at intervening if they are traveling overland, you may decide for this timeline to be slowed. Palorva attempts to activate Ancerra's core, at the latest, 14 days after she leaves the clock tower.

## PLANAR TRAVEL

If the heroes are capable of planar travel, they may head to Hell, Heaven, or another plane to speed their journey. For every four days that pass in Heaven or Hell, only one day passes in Ancerra, so they can move at effectively four times their normal speed.

Traveling to or from Heaven or Hell allows the heroes to leave or enter Ancerra at exactly the same point that they enter or leave the other plane. Traveling to or from other planes of existence, such as the Everwolds, does not come with this guarantee. Heroes that attempt to planeshift from another plane directly to Vadreheim may find that they are a number of miles off of their target, as specified by each magical ability they might use.



## REACTIVATE THE CLOCK TOWER

Heroes with sufficient expertise may be able to reactivate the clock tower. One or more heroes may each make three skill checks when attempting this, using Intelligence skills as desired. Take the average of each hero's three rolls and consult the following table to determine the outcome.

DC	Outcome
12 or less	The clock tower does not reactivate. Each hero in the clock tower takes 8d8 lightning damage.
13-15	The clock tower successfully teleports the heroes to the mountains outside of Vadreheim. They are one day's journey away. However, they take 8d8 lightning damage and Palorva becomes aware of their presence.
16-21	The clock tower successfully teleports the heroes to the mountains outside of Vadreheim. They are half a day's journey away. However, they take 4d8 lightning damage.
22 or more	The clock tower successfully teleports the heroes to the mountains outside of Vadreheim. They are half a day's journey away.



## EXPLORING VADREHEIM

The heroes are on borrowed time while exploring Vadreheim, but even so, they may be overtaken by awe at the city's strange architecture.

Spikes and spires as wide as whole palaces twist into the skies. They are damaged, allowing the heroes to see sparks and cables inside these enormous towers. The snow and ice obscures much, but here and there the heroes find large buildings that appear made out of sheet metal, much like the material coating the front of a heater shield. How advanced the ancient Avadri must have been to sculpt such wondrous buildings! The near-constant aurora lights in the sky add to the otherworldly feel of Vadreheim.

### EXTREME COLD

Vadreheim being on the north pole, the heroes must contend with extreme cold.

Each hero must make a Constitution saving throw against a DC of 8 + triple the number of days the heroes have been in Vadreheim. On a hit, a hero gains 1 level of exhaustion. If a hero is wearing winter clothing, they gain advantage on this saving throw.

As the heroes explore the city, they experience 1d4-1 random combat encounters. Any time they take a short rest, roll again for random encounters. Any time they attempt to take a long rest, roll 1d4 for random encounters; on a roll of 4, they must face a random encounter halfway through their attempts to take a long rest.

Creatures on the following table are considered constructs and appear to be made of futuristic, intricate metal engineering. They gain resistance to lightning and psychic damage.

1d6	Hostile Creatures
1	3 wyverns, 2 xorn
2	3 wyverns, 2 chimerae
3	2 wyverns, 2 owlbears
4	1 purple worm, 2 owlbears
5	2 giant apes, 2 tyrannosaurus rexes
6	2 iron golems



## AVADRIUM ARTIFACTS

Each hero may also find an avadrium artifact after their first combat encounter. You may roll randomly, select one of the following options, or have your players select options from the following tables.

### 1d4 Avadrium Artifact

- 1 Wondrous item
- 2 Armor
- 3-4 Weapon

## WONDROUS ITEM

### 1d8 Item

- 1-4 *Tome of clear thought*
- 5-7 *Tome of understanding*
- 8 *Tome of leadership and influence*

## ARMOR

### 1d8 Armor

- 1-4 *Armor of resistance*
- 5-7 *Robe of scintillating colors*
- 8 *Robe of stars*

Feel free to alter the armor that a hero receives to better suit their build. For example, you may use leather-and-steel as the base for *iron maiden's plate* if the hero uses medium armor.

## WEAPON

### 1d10 Weapon

- 1-4 Custom (see below)
- 5-7 *Frost brand*
- 8-9 *Javelin of lightning*
- 10 *Dancing sword*

## CUSTOM WEAPON

Choose any weapon to use as the base for this custom weapon. This weapon is considered avadrium and is a +3 weapon. Then roll twice on the following table to add additional modifications to this weapon.

### 1d10 Weapon Modifications

- 1-4 Roll twice on the Utilities table
- 5-7 Roll on the Improved Form table
- 8-9 Roll on the Magic Conduit table
- 10 Choose any above result

## UTILITIES TABLE

### 1d12 Utility

- 1 You may spend your bonus action to cause your weapon to shed bright light for 20 feet and dim light for 20 feet.
- 2 While wielding the weapon, reduce psychic damage you take by 2.
- 3 While wielding the weapon, reduce lightning damage you take by 2.
- 4 While wielding the weapon, reduce thunder damage you take by 2.
- 5 While wielding the weapon, gain advantage on saving throws against becoming frightened.
- 6 While wielding the weapon, gain advantage on saving throws against becoming charmed.
- 7 While wielding the weapon, gain advantage on saving throws against becoming poisoned.
- 8 You may spend your action to cause the weapon to morph into a helmet. You may breathe air and water while wearing this helmet. You may spend 1 minute to turn the helmet back into the weapon.
- 9 Each time you take a long rest, the weapon magically produces 10 pitons and 50 feet of rope.
- 10 The weapon senses avadri.\*
- 11 The weapon senses fiends.\*
- 12 The weapon senses celestials.\*

\*When a creature with the noted tag is within 1 mile of you, the weapon glows faintly in a color of your choice. When a creature with that tag is within 500 ft of you, the weapon's glow intensifies. This glow is not sufficient to illuminate an area.



## IMPROVED FORM TABLE

1d12	Improved Form
1	The weapon gains +5 foot reach, or +50 foot range if ranged.
2	The weapon grants you +2 AC.
3	The weapon scores a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20.
4	The weapon deals an extra 1d6 lightning damage on hits.
5	The weapon deals an extra 1d6 psychic damage on hits.
6	The weapon deals an extra 1d6 thunder damage on hits.
7	The weapon deals an extra 1d6 fire damage on hits.
8	The weapon deals an extra 1d6 radiant damage on hits.
9	On a critical hit, the creature is blinded until the end of its next turn.
10	On a critical hit, regain 1d10 hit points.
11	On a critical hit, your speed increases by 10 feet until the end of your next turn.
12	On a critical hit, the creature is deafened and frightened until the end of its next turn.

## MAGIC CONDUIT TABLE

The weapon can cast the following magic innately. All magic cast in this way is considered psionic. Use your magic ability score; if you do not have one, use Intelligence or Charisma (your choice) when calculating your spellcasting ability. Add your weapon's attack modifier to your magic attribute when casting these spells.

1d8	Magic Conduit
1	(At Will) <i>message</i> (3/Day) <i>blur, misty step</i> (1/Day) <i>cone of cold</i>
2	(At Will) <i>fog cloud, jump</i> (3/Day) <i>darkness, levitate</i> (1/Day) <i>lightning bolt</i>
3	(At Will) <i>mage hand</i> (3/Day) <i>detect thoughts, counterspell</i> (1/Day) <i>enlarge/reduce</i>
4	(At Will) <i>misty step</i> (3/Day) <i>shield</i> (1/Day) <i>fly</i>
5	(At Will) <i>sacred flame, thaumaturgy</i> (3/Day) <i>guiding bolt</i> (1/Day) <i>mass cure wounds</i>
6	(At Will) <i>burning hands</i> (3/Day) <i>flaming sphere</i> (1/Day) <i>haste</i>
7	(At Will) <i>blindness/deafness</i> (3/Day) <i>darkness</i> (1/Day) <i>fear</i>
8	(At Will) <i>misty step</i> (3/Day) <i>mirror image</i> (1/Day) <i>gate</i>



## BATTLE AT THE CORE GATE

After the heroes descend into the ruins of Vadreheim, they find Palorva trying to operate a massive gyroscopic device. This device, the Core Gate, offers a direct conduit to Ancerra's core. If activated and left to run for one minute, then Palorva believes that enough power would be generated to resurrect Dracula.

In reality, because the core has already been activated twice within the past hundred years (in the creation of Hell and Heaven), this would not work. The duress that the core has experienced from two consecutive activations has rendered it incapable of powering such immense magic. Activating the Core Gate would cause Ancerra's core to overload the Core Gate, causing a detonation with a blast radius of several dozen miles.

As the heroes fight Palorva, she may use one of her actions that she could use to move to activate the Core Gate. A hero may use a bonus action to deactivate it. Any creature must be within 5 feet of the Core Gate's control panels to activate or deactivate it in this way.

Any creature that starts its turn within 10 feet of one of the Avadrium coils on the map must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw, taking 4d8 lightning damage on a failure.

Once Palorva starts her turn with fewer than 100 hit points, another villain intervenes.

*Read Aloud:* Enraged, Palorva claws her hair out and glares around at the lot of you. "Why won't you all just die?!" she screams. "I have to bring him back - he has to return!"

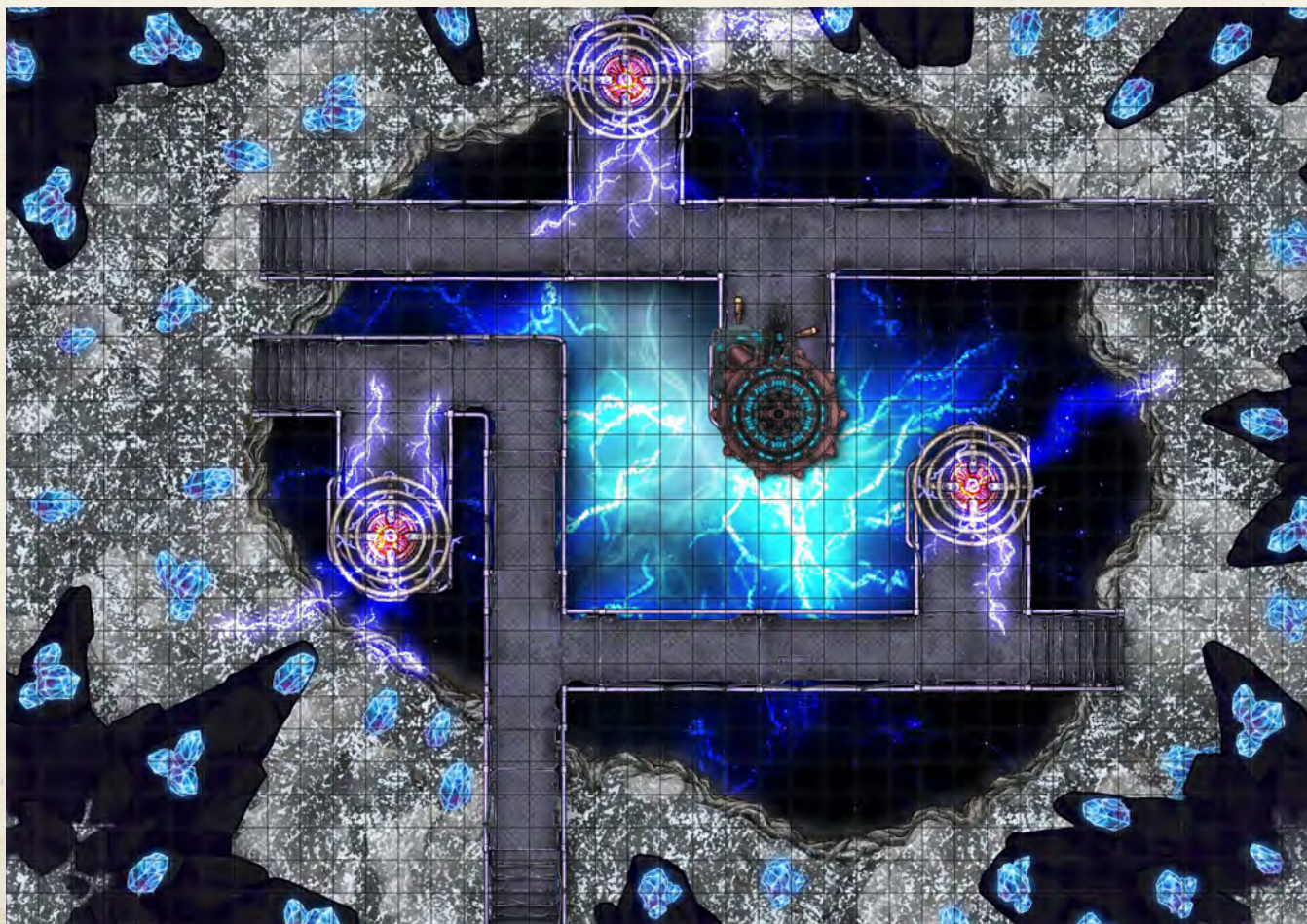
A harsh, resonant voice echoes through the chamber. "I am perhaps not the one you seek, child, but I believe I can help you." A shadow falls over the chamber as Death materializes next to Palorva. "Dracula's first ritual to create the Branded gave him sufficient power to create his new strain of vampirism. Should we conduct another similar ritual, I believe that his resurrection can be achieved. Accompany me to the place of his death, the monument of his glory... and, should we have our way, the location of his rebirth."

Palorva readily agrees to Death's proposal. Death enfolds Palorva within his dark cloak and they vanish, teleporting to Dracula's Castle.

Heroes may attempt to negate their teleportation. Death may cast *counterspell* at 9th level to counteract this.

### PARTY ADVANCEMENT

After defeating Palorva at Vadreheim, the heroes level up. They should now be level 20.





## ARC 6: GODS REBORN

The heroes will easily determine that Death was referring to Dracula's Castle. They may travel overland, use teleportation magic, or travel via other planes of existence to reach Dracula's Castle; the process is the same as it was for them to reach Vadreheim.

### THE CLASH OF GODS

Once the heroes reach Dracula's Castle, they see Palorva and Death preparing a new ritual to brand more souls with endless suffering. Palorva and Death are standing in the Field of Bones in the castle grounds when the heroes arrive and are already in the middle of a dark ritual.

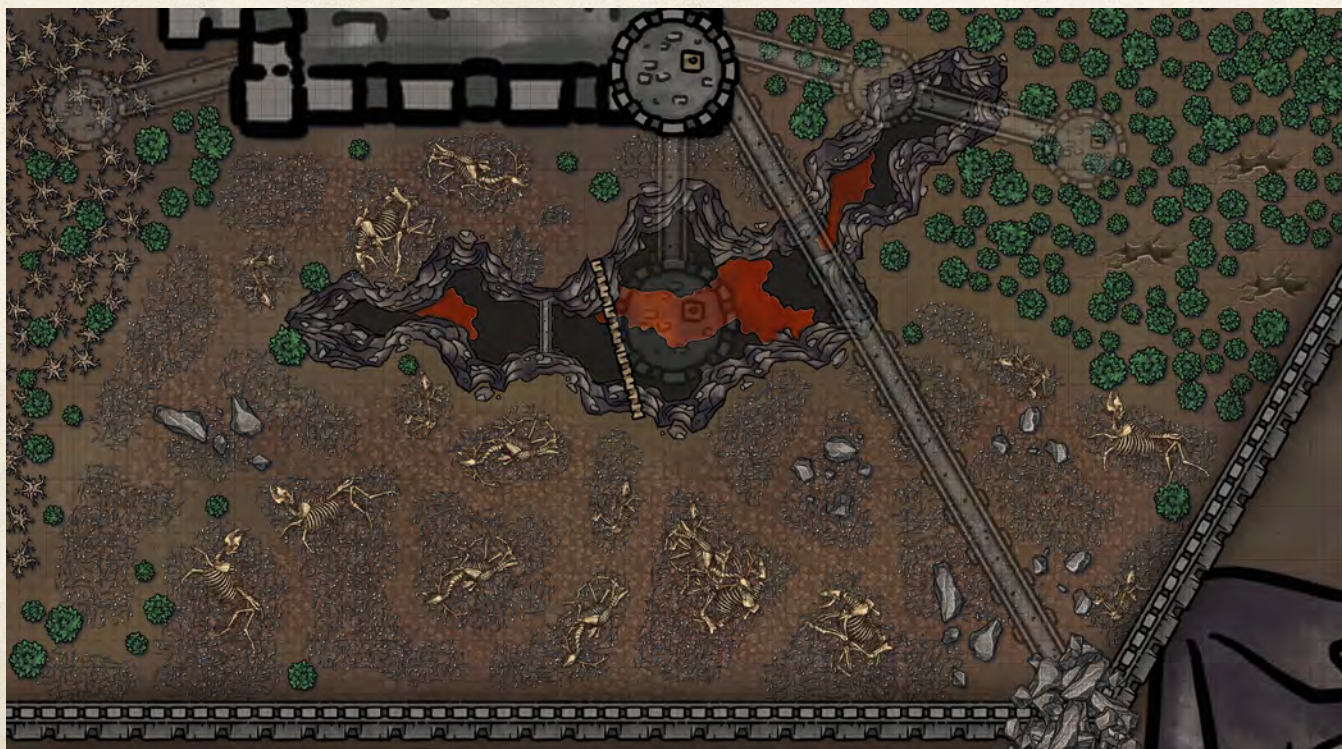
When Palorva and Death see the heroes approach, read the following.

**Read Aloud:** *Palorva stares you down with ice-cold fury. "Leave me be," she roars. "Leave me be to recover what is mine!"*

*Death manipulates a swirling mass of purple and black energy. "You may have interrupted our ritual," Death growls. "But there are other uses for this magic." With a flick of its wrist, Death then sends the energy to one side. It smashes into the Tower of Bones, which absorbs the energy. The tower, partially constructed out of the skeleton of a dead dragon, begins to shake and crack apart. The dragon's eye sockets flicker with violet light. Breaking out from the stones that once entombed it, the dragon spreads its skeletal wings and emits a hollow, horrid roar.*

The heroes must fight Palorva, Death, and the Undead Dragon simultaneously. Death loses its Mythic trait during this combat. The combined ML of these three villains is 94. If your party has six heroes, this is only slightly above half the total party level, but if you have only four heroes then this is well beyond the typical deadly encounter. Given that your heroes are level 20, they are capable of some extremely powerful maneuvers and may be well equipped for this fight. You know your table best, so adjust the encounter difficulty up or down to suit your table's size and power level using these suggestions.

Encounter Difficulty	Adjustment
Much Easier	Death or the Undead Dragon loses its Legendary Actions.  Each of the three villains lose 80 maximum hit points.
Easier	Each of the three villains lose 80 maximum hit points.
Harder	On Initiative count 0, all spineclots take their turns. Then add 1d4 <b>spineclots</b> to combat.
Much Harder	Add any number of sanguine flames or vampire courtiers to combat as appropriate for your party's power level.
Much Harder	The Undead Dragon's Undead Progeny action is Recharge 6 instead of 1/Day.





# UNDEAD DRAGON

*Gargantuan undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 22 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 420 (24d20+168)

**Speed** 60 ft., Fly 80 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
24 (+7)	20 (+5)	25 (+7)	11 (+0)	21 (+5)	22 (+6)

**Saving Throws** Str +13, Dex +11, Con +13, Int +7, Wis +12, Cha +12

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, non-silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** fire, necrotic, poison, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** truesight 60 ft., passive Perception 15

**Languages** All

**Challenge** 20 (25,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +6

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When the Undead Dragon fails a saving throw, it may choose to succeed instead.

**Limited Magic Immunity.** The Undead Dragon is immune to spells cast at 3rd level or lower.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The dragon can use its Frightful Presence. It then makes three attacks: one with its bite and two with its claws.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 18 (2d10+7) piercing damage plus 14 (4d6) necrotic damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d6+7) slashing damage.

**Tail.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, reach 20 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d8+7) bludgeoning damage.

**Frightful Presence.** Each creature of the dragon's choice that is within 120 feet of the dragon and aware of it must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened for 1 minute. A creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success. If a creature's saving throw is successful or the effect ends for it, the creature is immune to the dragon's Frightful Presence for the next 24 hours.

**Fire Breath (Recharge 5–6).** The dragon exhales fire in a 1200-foot cone. Each creature in that area must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 42 (12d6) fire damage and 42 (12d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

**Undead Progeny (1/Day).** The dragon summons 2 (1d4) undead **wyverns** that roll their own initiative and follow the dragon's unspoken commands.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The dragon can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The dragon regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Detect.** The dragon makes a Wisdom (Perception) check.

**Tail Attack.** The dragon makes a tail attack.

**Wing Attack (Costs 2 Actions).** The dragon beats its wings. Each creature within 15 feet of the dragon must succeed on a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw or take 14 (2d6+7) bludgeoning damage and be knocked prone. The dragon can then fly up to half its flying speed.

If the heroes lose, then Palorva and Death go on to resurrect Dracula. Together, the three are unopposed and destroy Ancerra again. Because the planet's core is incapable of producing powerful magic again so soon, Dracula's efforts to reset the timeline again fail, and Ancerra is lost forever. If the heroes win, then Palorva is unable to resurrect Dracula. Upon slaying Palorva, Death, and the skeletal dragon, there are no more cosmic threats to Norspina at this time. Any heroes that survived this encounter may go on to retire or to oversee the slow restabilization of the various nations ravaged by Palorva's mad schemes.

## WHAT WAS THE VEIL OF THE ETERNAL NIGHT?

If you wish, offer this to the players as a satisfying way to tie some of the campaign's visual motifs together. The veil of the eternal night might have been in reference to the physical shadows that Dracula cast over Derk and that Palorva cast over Kess. But a veil is also something that obscures or holds back. It is thin and liable to break, but if it holds, then it prevents other images from being realized. One could say that the party themselves were the veil, holding back the eternal night that would have resulted from Palorva successfully resurrecting Dracula and plunging the world into a path of utter annihilation.

*This concludes Daughter of the Shadows.*



# APPENDIX A: NPCs

The following NPCs are major characters in *Daughter of the Shadows*. Some are major villains, some recurring allies, and some simply background figures important enough for you to have easy access to as you run the campaign.

Palorva is listed first as she is the driving force of the campaign. Additional NPCs are listed alphabetically following Palorva.

## PALORVA

The daughter of Dracula himself, Palorva is as competent and dangerous as her father, but in quite different ways. Where Dracula is brutal, Palorva is cruel. She prefers the deep pain of the knife so slow that its victim has forgotten it was being stabbed by the time the blade pierces their heart.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Palorva places great value in personal gain, a trait she learned from her father.
- Palorva is ruthlessly pragmatic.
- She is utterly logical, but capable of performing as though she is experiencing intense emotion.
- She cares nothing of loyalty and will betray people at a moment's notice if it suits her needs.
- Palorva does not care about tradition, but will uphold it if beneficial to her plans.
- Palorva balances caution and risk evenly, applying both when she believes it most suitable.

### DRIVES:

- **Power.** Driven by a mix of seeking revenge, living up to her father's legacy, and a deep need for raw conquest, Palorva intends to rule over all Ancerra - and the planes beyond.

## APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY

Palorva physically takes after both of her parents. She has the dark, sultry eyes and demeanor of her father, along with his powerful, physically imposing build. Her hair and facial structure more closely resemble her mother's, though her hair is quite a bit lighter than Theresa's was.

Palorva is quite skilled at maintaining a chameleonic personality, morphing her demeanor to best suit her needs in a given moment. When she has no need for pretenses, she is quite cruel, verbally cutting down anyone at every opportunity. Unless the situation calls for a different approach, Palorva tends to be very dismissive of anyone that she cannot get anything from or manipulate in some way.

## MOTIVATIONS AND GOALS

Palorva is most directly motivated by cruelty. She believes that the cosmos has been against her and her father from the beginning, and responds to this belief by doing everything in her power to sow despair and pain.

Her favorite game to that end is the slow corruption of the people around her. Tovarianism promotes the idea that one must always leave the world better than they found it; Palorva, in response, goes out of her way to leave other people worse than they were before meeting her.

Palorva loves nothing more than turning a priest into a hypocrite whose personality is antithetical to everything that they once professed. Doing so often takes many years, but Palorva savors every second of it. She similarly enjoys bringing a banker to personal financial ruin or turning a medical practitioner into a serial killer.

## BACKSTORY

Palorva Amadeus was born to Pietro and Theresa shortly after Pietro found what seemed to be a successful cure to Theresa's illness. Both parents adored Palorva. As Theresa's cure morphed into a curse of its own, she and Pietro worried that she might lose control and hurt Palorva, so Pietro set out again in search of a way to fix Theresa's bloodthirsty tendencies. Luckily, Theresa's love for her daughter was stronger than her cravings, and she never hurt Palorva. In Palorva's fuzzy memories of her early childhood, Theresa was always a kind and attentive mother; Palorva never realized what her mother was going through until Palorva's father later explained it to her.

## THE WITCH'S DAUGHTER

When Palorva was five years old, Theresa destroyed a butcher's shop in the town of Helsing. Ashamed that her blood cravings took over her, Theresa tried to make amends, but it was no use. She was arrested and scheduled to be tried for witchcraft by the local church of Tovare, which was run by the fanatical dwarven woman named Maribel.



While Pietro was away and Theresa imprisoned, Palorva was kept in an empty office in the church. She was fed only twice per day and was left in solitary confinement aside from frequent visits from Maribel. The elderly priestess was trying to assess whether Palorva herself was tainted by the sins of her mother. Palorva, for the first and last time in her life, was manipulated into a strained confession of guilt and did not realize it until after it had happened. Palorva simply wanted to stand up for her mother; she did not realize until after the fact that Maribel would use Palorva's defense of Theresa as grounds to condemn Palorva herself.

## DAUGHTER OF THE SHADOWS

Pietro returned to the town of Helsing in time to witness Theresa crucified and burned. He was unable to save her, but was able to rescue Palorva moments before Maribel would have slit her throat.

Pietro then returned to his family's estate in Icepoint. He held a wake for his slaughtered wife, drawing in every prominent noble throughout Derk, then he massacred them in a terrible occult ritual. From that moment forward, he was known as Dracula, or the Dark One's Song.

Palorva relished the death of the nobility that had so mistreated her mother, but she also wondered if perhaps their brutal murder was a fate too kind for so evil a coalition. Palorva considered how, if she had gotten her own way, she might have slowly tortured each one to the point of insanity. She would not have accomplished this in a torture dungeon; that was too obvious and too direct. Rather, she would have manipulated each noble until they committed some grave sin, such as hurting their own family members or passing a law that caused tremendous suffering. In short, Palorva began to deeply contemplate how to kill someone's soul, rather than their body.

## RAISED ON THE RUN

As powerful as Dracula was, he did not have an army or the logistical support he needed to run a kingdom. As the few nobles that did not attend Dracula's dirge struggled to rebuild Derk, Dracula and Palorva went on the run. They traveled from haven to haven across Norspina and looked for allies that they might leverage into helping conquer Derk, first by taking vengeance against the town of Helsing for the way it butchered Theresa.

The process of assembling allies throughout Ancerra took many years. As Palorva came of age she was trained by her father and other tutors skilled in the disciplines of military tactics, political maneuvering, court decorum, and magical arts.

## THE CONQUEST OF ANCERRA

As Dracula's allies prepared to invade Derk, Palorva's twenty-first birthday approached. At her request, Dracula agreed to turn her and declare the invasion of Derk both on her birthday. Dracula's and Palorva's army crashed into Derk and obliterated the feeble resistance mounted against their invasion.

In the town of Helsing, Palorva and Dracula corralled all the townsfolk into the church of Tovare where Theresa was condemned. Dracula gloated to Maribel while Palorva slowly and systematically butchered each person cowering in the church. Then they crucified Maribel upside-down.

After conquering Derk, Dracula and Palorva turned their attention to the rest of Ancerra. With the combined powers of Derk, Noord, and Bishal at their disposal, Dracula and Palorva expanded at a steady pace. All nations fell before their dark armies.

Dracula opened the floodgates from Inferno, and he and Palorva took their crusade into the cosmos itself, slaughtering gods and eventually defeating the Celestial Council with the help of the exiles and fiend lords of Inferno.

Dracula approached Palorva and told her of a new plan that he had set his mind upon. By working with Death, he would reset the cosmic timeline and rescue Theresa. Palorva insisted that she be a part of it, so that she would retain all memories of what had already transpired.

## ABANDONMENT

They proceeded with the plan, turning their previous reality into the plane of Hell. Their plan seemed as though it would work: In the town of Helsing, Dracula found Theresa as he had expected. However, in this new reality, she had already fallen in love with Joana Harker.

Dracula himself was heartbroken and retreated to live alone in the mountains between Helsing and Monsylvania. Palorva, also devastated, instead began to scheme her revenge against Joana. She spent time in the town of Helsing, spying on Joana and Theresa. In this time, she overheard them discussing how they wished to adopt a child. This prospect angered Palorva beyond measure, leading her to feel utterly abandoned by her own mother.

Over the course of months, Palorva hardened Dracula's heart against Joana. She easily convinced him that Joana was the reason that Theresa would not give him a chance, and went so far as to suggest that Joana had used enchantment magic to entrap Theresa in a relationship that she did not truly choose for herself.



Palorva's careful whispers provoked Dracula to wrathful action. He slaughtered several city watchmen in Helsing, then drew forth fiends from Hell and bound them to the corpses, creating the first hellspawn. With his new demonic strike force, he assaulted Helsing and attacked Joana. Joana managed to escape, and Theresa was the only person in Helsing to go completely unscathed.

Tragically, Theresa being spared led Maribel and the church of Tovare to condemn Theresa as a witch. She was, again, crucified and immolated.

## THE DESTRUCTION OF TOVARE

Devastated that the same tragedy befell Theresa a second time, Dracula and Palorva began their conquest of Ancerra once more. This time, Palorva had plans of her own. Simply unleashing Inferno and killing Tovare was not cruel enough for what Tovare and her followers had done to Palorva and her father. No, she needed to completely destroy Tovare from within.

While Dracula led his conquest of Ancerra for a second time, Palorva approached the Celestial Council. Over the course of years, she convinced them that Dracula's conquest posed a grave threat and that he would one day unleash the fiends of Inferno. When Dracula did exactly as Palorva warned, the Celestial Council sprang into action. They raised one of their angels, Azrael, into higher standing and gave him dozens of boons to increase his power. With Azrael leading the charge, the celestials launched a brutal raid on Inferno, destroying the fiend lords and killing several exiles.

The process demonstrated to the celestials how easy it would be for them to simply rule the cosmos with an iron hand. As the celestials turned into brutal cosmic dictators, the process drove Tovare virtually insane. She collapsed in on herself, aggrieved beyond measure that the gods of goodness and purity had become so monstrous.

Dracula and Palorva reset the world once more after killing Tovare for a second time.

## THE PREMIER OF LORVAN

Resetting the world for a second time came with unexpected consequences. The sheer power unleashed throughout the cosmos acted as a sort of magnet, drawing the plane of Shadowcroft from a different reality into Ancerra. The plane became overlaid on top of Norspina, and thousands of monsters crossed over the permeable border between the two realities.

Dracula also found new allies in Shadowcroft, most notably Lilith and Pendragon. While these alliances proved politically expedient, they also led to complications, as Lilith and her army were a powerful force that could potentially rival Dracula's own army if they ever were to turn on one another.

To counteract Lilith's potential power, Dracula established Palorva as the premier of Kess. Formerly known as Kessuvia, Palorva renamed her capital city to Lorvan. Now, in her current reality, Palorva rules Lorvan and controls the mines of Kess, a valuable resource for both material wealth and magical artifacts. She has also expanded her influence to cover all of Norspina. While Lilith and Morgana are both powerful players in the region, Palorva's careful political moves keep them from making serious challenges against her authority, for the most part.





## PALORVA, DAUGHTER OF THE SHADOWS

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (+3 studded leather)

**Hit Points** 340 (40d8+160)

**Speed** 30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Fly 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	24 (+7)

**Saving Throws** Dex +12, Con +11, Int +13, Wis +11, Cha +14

**Skills** Arcana +13, Deception +21, History +13, Insight +18, Intimidation +21, Persuasion +21, Stealth +18

**Damage Resistances** psychic; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, non-silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** magical darkvision 300 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** All

**Challenge** 21 (33,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +7

### FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Palorva fails a saving throw, she may choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Palorva has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Vampiric Heir.** Palorva applies the Draculean Vampirism template.

**Intuitive Archmage.** Palorva is a 20th-level spellcaster and can cast the following spells. She may concentrate on two spells at once, and failing any concentration check ends both spells. Charisma is her spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 22, +14 on spell attack rolls):

- At will: *arcane lock*, *darkness*, *fog cloud*, *hideous laughter*, *knock*, *misty step*, *ray of frost* (4d8)
- 3/Day each: *blood blade*, *blood pool*, *bone spear*, *death ward*, *dessicate*, *dispel magic*, *sanguine snare*, *vampiric touch*



- 1/Day each: *cone of cold*, *finger of death*, *incendiary cloud*, *lobotomize*, *power word kill*, *gate*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Palorva can make five claw, bite, heirloom rapier, or verbal dagger attacks, only one of which can be a bite attack. In place of her bite attack, she may use Charm or Frighten. She may replace one of her claw attacks with an at will spell.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) slashing damage, and Palorva can grapple the target (escape DC 20).

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Palorva, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 5 (1d6+2) piercing damage plus 21 (6d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Palorva regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Palorva's control.

**Heirloom Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +13 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8+6) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold plus 3 (1d6) necrotic.

**Verbal Dagger.** One target creature within 30 feet of Palorva must make a DC 22 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes Xd6 psychic damage, where X equals the amount of Fear above its Fear Threshold. If it does not have any Fear above its Fear Threshold, it gains 1d6 Fear.

**Charm.** Palorva targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see Palorva, the target must succeed on a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Palorva. The charmed target regards Palorva as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Palorva's control, it takes Palorva's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Palorva's bite attack.

Each time Palorva or Palorva's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Palorva is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

**Frighten (Recharge 4-6).** Each creature within a 20 foot radius of Palorva must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened of Palorva until the end of Palorva's next turn on a failed save.

**Creatures of the Night (Recharge 4-6).** Palorva magically calls 5 (2d4) fiends of CR 2 or lower (typically hellspawn, imps, or spineclots). The called creatures arrive in 1d4 rounds, acting as allies of Palorva and obeying her spoken commands. The fiends remain for 1 hour, until Palorva dies, or until she dismisses them as a bonus action.

**Savage (Recharge 4-6).** One creature within 5 feet of Palorva must make a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw. The creature takes 21 (6d6) slashing damage and 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failed save, and half as much on a successful one. Palorva regains hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt in this way.

## REACTIONS

**Counterspell (Recharge 5-6).** Palorva uses her reaction to cast *counterspell*.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Palorva can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Palorva regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Move.** Palorva moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Unarmed Strike.** Palorva makes one Claw attack.

**Spell (Costs 2 Actions).** Palorva casts one of her spells.

**Shapechanger (Costs 2 Actions).** Palorva assumes the form of a **young silver dragon**. She retains her current hit points, AC, saving throws, resistances, immunities, and legendary actions, but otherwise uses the features and actions of the Wyvern. She may revert to her normal form by spending a bonus action.



# ALGERNIS FYLAXOS

Algernis Fylaxos is a human man in his thirties, standing at 6'2" with dark skin and a nicely trimmed afro. He has dark brown eyes that almost appear black, but have a certain sparkle to them. He typically wears a warm yellow blouse with a black waistcoat and matching black bottoms, and keeps a silver pocket watch in the pocket of his waistcoat. When he is not working, he likes to accessorize with various rings and a set of earrings.

Algernis is known as a very kind, but somewhat eccentric man. He is very goal-oriented and often finds it difficult to focus on anything other than whatever his current obsession is. For that reason he struggles to find friends, especially because most people find him overzealous when it comes to his work, which is what his life revolves around. While he is not anti-social, he prefers working alone as he often feels like others cannot keep up with him. Some refer to Algernis as a genius, others would rather class him as a mad man, but everyone agrees that without his work, there would be little of him left.

## TROUBLED HOMETOWN

Algernis grew up in a small town in Noord, where he lived with his parents and three siblings, two older and one younger. For as long as Algernis could remember, the town was not exactly a safe place to live. It was situated near a forest where various dangerous creatures resided, and while the locals knew how to deal with most of them, it was not unusual for someone to go missing or turn up dead. Most people would consider moving elsewhere, but to those who were born and raised in the village, it was home.

When Algernis reached his early 20s, new problems arose in the town. When the moon became full, a wolf-like creature would visit the town and cause destruction. Shortly after, two of these creatures showed up. Then four. Then seven. Lycanthropy had started to spread among the villagers and no one was willing to confess to being infected. Tensions rose and fingers were pointed to anyone who displayed unusual behavior in the eyes of the public. What was once a town fostered by community was now an individualist society where everyone had to watch their back.

## FAMILY SECRET

While the ongoing issues in the town were concerning, Algernis and his family decided to focus their energy on their work instead. They all lived and worked at the same family farm and had no time to partake in the drama. Unfortunately for them, things soon took a turn for the worse. After having gone to bed one night, Algernis woke up to the screams of his sister, whom he shared a room with.

Algernis watched as her body contorted into painful positions and listened to a mixture of agonized screams and cracking bones. He then stood face to face with a creature he did not recognise before it lunged at him in an attempt to attack him. Having heard the screams, his parents burst into the room and managed to save him just in time. Not wanting to kill their daughter, they then locked her into the room and waited until morning came. From that point on the whole family worked hard to keep this a secret, scared of what might happen if the townsfolk found out.

They managed to keep it up for a couple of months before the secret was revealed and an angry mob showed up at their house. It would be a night Algernis would never forget, as he watched his sister getting dragged out of the house, whereupon she was tied to a pole and then burned at the stake. It was a traumatic event for all family members involved, and enough of a reason to pack up and leave.

## THE START OF AN OBSESSION

After having settled elsewhere, the family tried to move on with their lives, but things were no longer the same. Conversations at the dinner table died out quickly and it became taboo to speak about "the event". The family had grown cold and distant as everyone found their own ways to cope with the trauma. For Algernis, his trauma sparked an obsession. In an attempt to rationalize what had happened, he wanted to learn all there was about lycanthropes. If he could figure out how it worked and where it came from, he could perhaps piece together how his sister could have been saved.

This obsession quickly branched out into any field of interest that was adjacent to the main question he had, which eventually led him to study medicine in a bigger city at the age of twenty-seven. With vampires running rampant, Algernis's focus shifted to include the undead in his studies. By then the question he had asked himself for years transformed into a goal: he was completely dedicated to finding a cure for both Lycanthropy and Vampirism. While most people would suggest putting the cursed to a more permanent rest, Algernis firmly clings to the belief that these people can and should be saved.

## NEW FINDINGS

As time went on, Algernis started to connect certain dots. He has collected a vast array of blood samples from the living, the dead, and the undead. Comparing how they react to certain chemicals and mixtures, he found something that could potentially suppress certain tendencies the cursed may have. By mixing the energy from Sylvan with specific alchemical ingredients and storing them into a silver orb, Algernis created what he refers to as a Moonstone Pendant. While he has yet to test it, his hypothesis is that this item would help suppress involuntary transformations in lycanthropes and reduce the harmful effect of sunlight on vampires, as well as suppressing their blood lust.





## COLLABORATION

Not too long ago a man by the name of Laucian Virir reached out to Algernis, wishing to compare research notes. At first, Laucian posed himself as a healer with an interest in curing Vampirism on behalf of his clients, but eventually he confessed to needing the cure for himself. To Algernis the idea of working with an actual vampire was exciting and meant that it would be easier to test his theories. Laucian's research included information Algernis did not yet possess, and the two come together once a week to work alongside each other and expand their research.

Algernis finds the collaboration fruitful, though has become rather impatient. Laucian's desire to only meet once a week irritates Algernis, who, unlike Laucian, does not have a busy clinic to look after. Wanting to get a move on, he occasionally visits Laucian at his house when he has a breakthrough or a theory he would like opinions on, and he has helped himself to the samples at Laucian's clinic various times, something Laucian does not appreciate.

## MAGIC ITEM: MOONSTONE PENDANT

*Wondrous Item, Pendant, Rare (requires attunement)*

Created by researcher Algernis Fylaxos, this elegant silver orb attached to a dark iron chain contains a mixture of wolfsbane, garlic, and magical energy derived from Sylvan. Combined, this concoction creates a powerful suppressant that can be used by both lycanthropes and vampires alike.

**Lycanthropes.** While wearing this pendant, involuntary transformations can be more easily suppressed. When affected by such a transformation, make a DC 10 Constitution check. On a success, the transformation is suppressed. The pendant can be used in this way seven times before it needs to recharge, which can be done by leaving it exposed to bright moonlight for a night.

**Vampires.** While wearing this pendant, sunlight becomes more tolerable and bloodlust can be more easily suppressed. When affected by negative effects inflicted by not using Crimson Drink, make a DC 10 Constitution check. On a success, the wearer is able to extend the usual 7-day period by one more day. The pendant can be used in this way seven times before it needs to recharge, which can be done by leaving it exposed to bright sunlight for a day. Alternatively, three charges can be used at once to allow a vampire to go out in the sun for 1 hour, or 3 hours if all charges are used.

## DEATH

A vicious fiend lord originally from the plane of Inferno, Death took notice of the prodigious occultist Pietro Amadeus when the human used occult magic to suspend another human in an artificial coma, preventing her from wasting away from illness.

Death continued to watch Pietro for some years, and when Pietro took on the moniker of Dracula and began attempting much more powerful occult rituals, Death approached Dracula. The two struck a mutually beneficial deal. Dracula's actions would lead to Death consuming the Essence of countless individuals throughout multiple timelines. As such, Death was only too happy to contribute immense power to Dracula's rituals, ensuring their success.

The concept of death has frightened and fascinated humanoids for countless generations. Death's appearance is approximated in many mortal depictions of the concept. Death typically wears black, tattered robes with a deep cowl, the robes hanging limp like the dead or blowing in an otherworldly wind. Death's face is simply that of a skull with burning purple pupils peering out of the otherwise empty eye sockets.

Death's personality is essentially optimistic and patient. Death knows that virtually every person will die at one point, so Death will always get its due. Death is also ambitious and conniving, carefully making deals and offering slivers of its power to humanoids, such as Pietro, that show great potential for causing death and suffering writ large.





# DEATH

*Huge undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 170 (20d12+80)

**Speed** 30 ft., Fly 30 ft

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	11 (+0)	22 (+6)	22 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Con +11, Int +11

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical, non-silvered weapons

**Damage Immunities** psychic, necrotic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** truesight 600 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +5

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Death fails a saving throw, it may choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Death has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Don't Fear The Reaper.** When Death attacks a single creature, it gains a +X bonus to its attack roll, where X is the number of death saving throws that the creature has failed in the past minute.

**Your Time Has Come.** When Death hits a creature that has less than one half its maximum hit points, that creature fails a death saving throw. It remains conscious so long as it has hit points, but once it reaches 0 hit points, this failure counts towards its three potential failures. If this causes a creature to automatically fail three death saving throws upon reaching 0 hit points, then the creature instantaneously dies. A creature resets these failed death saving throws after taking a short or long rest.

**Harvest Time.** When a creature dies within 30 feet of Death, Death regains hit points equal to double the creature's character levels or quadruple its CR.

**Soul Ward.** Death gains +1 AC and +1 to every saving throw for every failed death saving throw that creatures within 30 feet of it have accrued.

**Withering Aura.** When a creature starts its turn within 30 feet of Death, it must make a DC 19 Constitution saving throw, taking 7 (2d6) necrotic damage on a failure and half as much on a success.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Death can make three Scythe or Gaze of Doom attacks.

**Scythe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 20 ft, one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d10+5) slashing damage, 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target fails one death saving throw (as described in the Your Time has Come feature).

**Gaze of Doom.** *Ranged Spell Attack:* +11 to hit, range 30/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 28 (8d6) necrotic damage.

**Soulmark.** Death designates a creature within 60 feet of it as Soulmarked. That creature has disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn if it has failed one or more death saving throws.

**Reaper's Due.** Each creature in a 20 foot radius must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 16 (2d10+5) slashing damage, 14 (4d6) necrotic damage, and the target fails one death saving throw (as described in the Your Time has Come feature). On a success, a creature takes the necrotic damage but suffers no other effects.

**Consume Essence.** Death regains 10 hit points for each creature that has taken necrotic damage within 30 feet of it since the start of its last turn.

**Doom Scythe (Recharge 6).** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 20 feet, one target. *Hit:* The target fails two death saving throws (as described in the Your Time has Come feature).

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Death can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Death regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Shadow Step.** Death moves up to its speed, becoming ethereal for the extent of the movement and ignoring any walls or obstructions.

**Scythe.** Death makes a Scythe attack. If it hits, the creature takes damage but does not fail a death saving throw.

**A Taste of Death (Costs 2 Actions).** Death summons 1d4 Skeletons. They appear in any unoccupied space within 60 feet of it, obey Death's mental commands, and take their turns immediately after Death in Initiative.



# DEMETRIUS

Demetrius is the only surviving vampire of his kind, a vampire of mingled blood. When he was transformed into a vampire, he was suffused with both Ancerran and Draculean strains of blood; this gives him a highly unique power set. Coupled with the fact that he also has innate psionic abilities, Demetrius's vampirism expresses itself not in a thirst for blood, but in a thirst for Essence itself.

Demetrius, having been resurrected by Palorva, serves her by employing his unique skills as a psion to locate and eliminate potential political or military threats to Palorva's conquest. Demetrius is a highly competent detective and assassin. He often spends days or even weeks casing a target before ambushing them, and he has never failed to eliminate his marks... sometimes devouring several in one night with a carefully executed attack.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Originally a noble and now an assassin, Demetrius is a proponent of change over tradition.
- Demetrius is in it for himself. He is greatly concerned with personal gain.

### DRIVES:

- **Prestige.** By serving Palorva, Demetrius intends to elevate his own status.

## BACKSTORY

Raised in Apakku, the Living City, Demetrius was the only child of Earl Cornelius Rezal. His childhood was typical of a minor noble in a large city: Demetrius was well-educated and well provided for. He never knew his mother and observers often assumed that he was lonely due to his lack of siblings, but in truth Demetrius was quite content to brood in the quiet depths of his manor in solitude. He had a warm, caring relationship with his father, who privately worried about Demetrius's antisocial tendencies, but did what he could to support the boy.

## DEPARTURE

When he came of age, Demetrius took his leave of Apakku. He had his father's blessing on condition that he would return after five years of exploring the world on his own, whereupon Cornelius would abdicate and Demetrius would become the next Earl Rezal. Demetrius agreed and set out for a life of adventure, quickly discovering that he had latent psionic abilities.

## THE DIARY

In his travels, Demetrius came across a woman named Anette, who in truth was Palorva in disguise. Palorva quickly took on Demetrius as one of her playthings: As a listless noble with a dedication to his father and no other deeply held convictions, it would be easy for Palorva to destroy Demetrius.

She quietly researched his heritage and tracked down his mother's diary, which she planted in the ruins of a keep that she knew Demetrius would soon explore.

When he found his mother's diary, Demetrius began to learn of his mother's abilities as a psion, as well as her history with Demetrius's father. The two loved one another a great deal but fought often, his mother called to a life of adventure and his father called to political responsibilities in Apakku.

As he spent time adventuring and poring over this diary, he also grew closer to "Anette," who encouraged him to follow his dreams and who gradually became increasingly critical of Cornelius. Anette expressed to Demetrius that it was unfair for Cornelius to place expectations on Demetrius that Demetrius himself did not opt into, and nobility is the greatest form of imprisonment, for no one born into nobility has any choice in the matter.

As they grew closer, Anette finally revealed her true identity to Demetrius. Although he was at first mortified that she had lied to him, he quickly became intrigued despite himself. It seemed to him that a partnership with a vampire could lead him to a hitherto unimagined understanding of psionics.

## PROOF OF LOYALTY

After spending these formative years under Palorva's subtle influence, Demetrius's thoughts became so warped that he was willing to do anything to prove his loyalty to her... including filicide. He returned to Apakku five years after departing, as he had promised. However, rather than reuniting with his father, he murdered his father and fled the city once again to rejoin Palorva.

## TAINTED BLOOD

After proving his loyalty to her, Palorva quickly lost interest in Demetrius. However, she still saw use for him as a psion. For some time, in the laboratory deep in the Mad Forest, Doctor Shelley had been conducting experiments at Palorva's direction, trying to create a synthesis of blood that combined multiple strains of vampirism.

Mixing blood from Ancerran vampires and from Palorva herself resulted in a strain that kills any normal person who consumes it. Having seen failure on that front, Palorva next turned to casters. Arcane, divine, primal, and even occult casters met the same grizzly end, their bodies melting and decomposing at an accelerated rate. Finally, Palorva decided to try psions.



## THE THREE

Demetrius was one of nine such psionic test subjects. Only three survived: Demetrius and two others. This success rate was infinitely higher than previous efforts, perhaps due to a psion's inherent ability to control their own body and prevent the tainted vampirism from causing rapid-onset decay.

Given that they were transformed by Palorva's blood, they were sired to her, compelled to obey her commands.

For nearly a decade, Palorva sent these three vampires on missions to defeat possible rivals to herself, or to Dracula. By destabilizing neighboring kingdoms and governments, Demetrius and his two allies made it trivially easy for Dracula to conquer Bishal and Noord.

But even with psionic powers to control the vampirism's immediate side effects, Demetrius's two companions did not endure. One of the three went mad after seven years and stepped directly into sunlight to end the voices. Another completely reverted to a bestial creature akin to a m'l'ykkri, and Demetrius had to put her down.

## DEMETRIUS ON THE COURT

Finally, as the last psionic vampire, Demetrius seems to have conquered the curse of the taint, making him the only vampire known to Palorva or Dracula who possesses two blood strains. His unique abilities make him a valuable asset, and he earned a seat as a member of Dracula's Court. He now serves Palorva with a fervent loyalty.

## ESSENCE VAMPIRISM

One unexpected side effect of Demetrius's unique blend of abilities is the way that he sustains himself. Unlike a typical vampire, Demetrius feasts on Essence rather than blood. He must feed frequently in order to maintain his vigor, and the longer that he goes without feeding on Essence, the more bestial he becomes, leaning more into the feral nature of ancient Ancerran vampirism than the cunning, calculating demeanor that most modern vampires - and especially those of Dracula's bloodline - possess.

## ROLE IN THE COURT

Demetrius serves as the eyes and ears of Palorva, but she also commands him to serve Dracula loyally. Demetrius serves as a skillful detective, informant, and assassin when the need arises. He works closely with Faust and the network of criminals and gangs throughout Norspina; if any mob boss ever thinks about stepping out of line, rumors of a vampire that drains your very soul often gives them pause.

## DEMETRIUS IN COMBAT

Demetrius is a cunning, careful adversary. He studies his prey, sometimes for weeks, before confronting them in battle. When he fights, he first suits up in heavy armor. He strikes hard, fights with no honor, and is not easily baited into making foolish or rash decisions. He has a nearly perfect track record as an assassin for Palorva, but he is only deployed when Palorva feels that the situation is severe enough to warrant Demetrius's special gifts.





# DEMETRIUS

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 18 (psionic plate mail armor)

**Hit Points** 130 (20d8+40)

**Speed** 30 ft., Climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
12 (+1)	20 (+5)	14 (+2)	20 (+5)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)

**Saving Throws** Dex. +9, Int +9, Wis +7, Cha +6

**Skills** Insight +7, Investigation +9, Perception +7, Stealth +9

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 12 (8,400 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

## FEATURES

**Draculean Sire.** Demetrius follows the Draculean vampire template.

**Essence Thirst.** Demetrius can only consume Essence, or a person's soul, for sustenance. For every 3 days that he does not use Essence Feast, he loses 20 current and maximum hit points. After using Essence Feast at least once per day for a week, his current and maximum hit points reset to normal.

**Tingling Fear.** Any sentient creature within 1 mile of Demetrius that cannot see Demetrius has a distinct sense of unease, as though they are being watched.

**Alter Ego.** When Demetrius has had his maximum hit points reduced due to his Essence Thirst, or when he has fewer than one half his maximum hit points, he undergoes a physical change, becoming more gaunt and beastlike in nature as his Ancerran strain of vampirism takes over. While in this form, he deals 9 (2d8) additional necrotic damage on all attack rolls, cannot cast spells, has advantage on attack rolls, and attack rolls against him also have advantage.

**Psion.** Demetrius is a psion and can cast the following spells. Intelligence is his spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 17, +9 on spell attack rolls):

- Cantrips (at will): eldritch blast, message
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *hunter's mark*, *longstrider*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blur*, *hold person*, *misty step*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *haste*, *gaseous form*

## LOOT DROP

When the heroes defeat Demetrius, they gain the following loot.

**Psionic Plate Mail Armor.** Base: Plate Mail. This armor is plate mail, but uses Intelligence instead of Strength for the Strength minimum, does not reduce your speed, and does not impose a Dexterity maximum. It is a rare magical item and requires attunement.

**Soulcage.** A small cage with concentrated Essence inside. A creature may drink this for 1 bonus action to regain a 1st level spell slot.

- 4th level (2 slots): *arcane eye*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Demetrius can make three attacks. He can replace two of these attacks with a spell.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target that Demetrius has grappled. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. Demetrius regains hit points equal to the amount of necrotic damage he dealt in this way.

**Essence Feast.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) psychic damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. Demetrius regains a 1st level spell slot. If he crit with this attack, then the target creature is cursed. While cursed in this way, it can attune to one fewer magic items than it could previously, as some of its soul is consumed by Demetrius. This curse can be removed with greater restoration or more powerful magic.

**Rapier.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) piercing damage.

**Terrifying Gaze (Recharge 5-6).** One creature within 30 feet of Demetrius must make a DC 17 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, it is frightened of Demetrius and suffers the effects of the enemies abound spell for 1 minute. It can repeat this saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effects on a success. On a successful initial save, it suffers the effects until the end of its next turn.

**Ethereal Form (1/Rest).** Demetrius can cast the ethereality spell on himself.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Demetrius can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Demetrius regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Move.** Demetrius moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Bite (Costs 2 Actions).** Demetrius makes one bite attack.

**Aura of Fear (Costs 3 Actions).** Until the start of Demetrius's next turn, when a creature starts its turn within 15 feet of Demetrius or moves within 15 feet of Demetrius, it must make a DC 17 Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened of Demetrius on a failed save.



# EDGAR HAWTHORNE

Edgar Hawthorne is a withered, sour-tempered old man. He was once a duke commonly accepted as the third-most-powerful noble in all of Derk. However, after Dracula's rise to power, Hawthorne was reduced to little more than a fugitive and an informant.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Hawthorne is incredibly cautious to the point of paranoia. This can make it difficult to find him or convince him of a person's good intentions.
- Edgar Hawthorne maintains a careful, logical approach to his research, his plans, and his evasive maneuvers.

### DRIVES:

- **Revenge.** Hawthorne was heartened by Dracula's death, but believes that Norspina will not truly be free until Palorva is also slain.

## APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY

A haggard old human whose face is creased by grief and whose back is hunched by hopelessness, Edgar Hawthorne often dresses in tattered, drab clothing and supports himself with a gnarled ebony cane. Hawthorne's personality is similar to his appearance: depressed and pessimistic. The only motivation that keeps Edgar from giving into his despair entirely is the prospect of revenge. The possibility that he could play some small part in defeating Palorva is enough fire to fuel him into action, so even as worn down as he is, Hawthorne continues to look for clues and work with adventurers to take her down.

## MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Edgar Hawthorne has spent years traveling throughout Norspina and gathering intelligence on Palorva's potential weaknesses and her personal backstory. Hawthorne's primary goal is to find adventurers capable of taking on Palorva and the other powerful villains in Norspina. Hawthorne will cooperate with any adventurers readily, offering them whatever information he can in hopes that they will be able to bring about Palorva's demise.

## BACKSTORY

Edgar Hawthorne was one of the most powerful nobles in Derk. As Duke of Monsylvania, Hawthorne was responsible for the management of the majority of Derk's western and southwestern region. The Duke of Whitebreak, and of course King Dekland IV, were the only two figures in Derkese politics that clearly outranked the Hawthorne house.

Hawthorne took his political stature with both great pride and with a sense of sober responsibility. Under his leadership, his regions of Derk saw both prosperity and safety.

## THE BISHALIAN WAR

The safety enjoyed by Hawthorne's constituents came to an end when Bishalian horse lords attacked Derk, starting with Hawthorne's territory. The war was brutal and came as an utter surprise, but thanks to the tactical cunning and fearless leadership of a young, obscure noble named Pietro Amadeus, the Bishalian invasion ended up an utter failure and they retreated. While the towns and villages under Hawthorne's supervision lost many lives and had a great amount of rebuilding to do, their fate was certainly improved by Pietro's leadership.

Edith Hawthorne, Edgar's daughter, courted Pietro for some time, but Pietro ultimately spurned her for a peasant girl. Edgar Hawthorne was frustrated over this, both for his daughter's feelings and for Pietro's political malpractice, but did not hold a deep grudge against the younger nobleman.

## PIETRO'S SOLILOQUY

Hawthorne's relationship to Pietro dramatically changed when Pietro's wife, the peasant girl named Theresa, died. Pietro called upon all of his political acquaintances to attend a wake; both Hawthorne and his daughter Edith attended. Pietro declared that he would henceforth be known as Dracula - the Song of the Dark One - and he invoked a terrible occult ritual that killed dozens of attendants. Edith was among those slaughtered.

Hawthorne himself barely managed to escape. He went into hiding, constantly on the run from Dracula's various lieutenants that were tasked with cleaning up any loose ends from the ritual.

## COLLECTING THE FACTS

Hawthorne remained on the run for years, and eventually as he went without incident, he felt that Dracula's assassins had given up on finding him. Hawthorne began collecting every scrap of knowledge that he could dig up about Dracula, vampirism, and Pietro's past.

He was gladdened to eventually reconnect with Abraham van Helsing and Joana Harker, both of whom also narrowly survived Dracula's massacre. While the three rarely risked meeting together for fear of being spotted, they often communicated via coded correspondence.

Hawthorne sought out anyone who had interacted with Pietro, which proved difficult as the most prominent folk whom he had interacted with were the same nobles that he had already massacred. Even so, Hawthorne managed to track down innkeepers, carriage drivers, and even managed to glean some information from soldiers conscripted into Dracula's army.



One fact, one meeting, one story at a time, Hawthorne collected a holistic profile of Pietro's rise to power. He identified the Amadeus estate in Icepoint and the town of Helsing as two major locations in Pietro's past. Each undoubtedly offered great insights into the character of Dracula and led to the ultimate demise of Dracula. With the rise of Parlova Hawthorne has now trained his ire on her.

## EVYNA STONELEAF

Evyna Stoneleaf, the duchess of Ice Coast, is a major political figure in Derk. As Dekland VI becomes increasingly unstable, clearly a puppet for the real regime, Evyna becomes an increasingly influential leader in Derk as the duchess of the most important duchy in the kingdom.

When the heroes meet Evyna, she is in the pocket of the Cult of Lilith, but over the course of their interactions with her, they may be able to turn her to their side.

### PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE

Duchess Stoneleaf is a middle-aged mountain elf. She has dark brown skin, slate gray hair, stern features, and golden-green eyes. Stoneleaf is a skilled politician. She is hospitable and diplomatic, ensuring that any visitors feel welcome and provided for. She is cautious and hesitates to make any binding agreements without first having a period of lengthy deliberation.

### VALUES AND DRIVES

Stoneleaf is security-oriented and risk averse. This has led her to gradually become entangled in the Cult of Lilith, though she wishes to free herself from the cult's strings and return to a position of true power. Her other driving value is her desire to serve the greater good. This altruistic feature may lead her to siding with the heroes if they can help free her from the cult's grasp.

### MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Duchess Stoneleaf is motivated above all to keep her family safe. The Cult of Lilith has used this to blackmail her into letting them run rampant in Derk. If the heroes can help secure the safety of Stoneleaf's family, she can help them stamp out most of the cult across the country.

### BACKSTORY

Evyna of House Stoneleaf was born and raised in the Derkese nobility. She understands Derk's economic and political situation intimately, though her decades in high society can cause her to be out of touch with common folk. Evyna's parents saw their longevity as a strength: They would be able to shape the policies of Derk on a long-term basis, keeping an even hand on economic growth.

This came to a bloody end when both lord and lady Stoneleaf were murdered at the Amadeus Estate as Dracula rose to power.

Evyna was devastated but saw the wisdom of her parents' long-term approach to governance. She became subservient to Dracula in order to survive, but worked against him in whatever way she felt she could.

She spent the decade after his death rebuilding Derk and the duchy of Ice Coast into a region in which people could live safely, even if the plant and animal life remained withered and blighted. She hopes that over the coming generation she will be able to restore the environment to what it was before Dracula's rise.

However, in the past three years, the Cult of Lilith posed a new challenge for her. It did not take long for members of the cult to establish contact with her. Via a series of anonymous letters, she corresponded with the cultists and assured them that she would leave them to tend their religious practices without interference. Evyna thought that this would cause the least disruption in her duchy, but when the cultists made clear that they were aware of the location of all of Evyna's extended family, she realized that she was in over her head with them.

## THE FATHER OF MERCIES

The Father of Mercies is the archpriest of Tovare in Forsten. Based in Wolden, he stewards a grand temple to the celestials and holds regular masses with his congregants. His real name is Benedict Sundry, but most simply call him "Father."

### PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE

The Father of Mercies is a human in his mid-sixties. Although there are plenty of signs of his age, he walks with a straight back and a firm gait. It is clear that he once knew his way around a sword; vestiges of his youthful muscularity have not entirely abandoned him. His face is deeply creased from age and experience, and his hazel eyes seem to hold a deep, intuitive understanding. He has a horseshoe of white hair around his otherwise bald head and maintains a well-groomed, short white beard.

### VALUES AND QUIRKS

The Father of Mercies is a firm believer in tradition. Ritual, ceremony, and rite exist to offer social cohesion to the generations. He understands that traditions change and evolve over time, but believes that they must be carefully tended instead of brushed to the wayside. Of secondary importance, he places great stock in rational thought. The enlightened mind is capable of remarkable things.

Father refers to himself in the first person plural. If he is ever asked about this, he explains that he is the spokesperson of the people: The people of Wolden, the people of Forsten, and the people of the Church. He prefers to think of himself not as an individual, but the representative of a collective.



## MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Above all, the Father of Mercies seeks to keep the masses in line. They are one, for they are many, and they will yield to the Father's commands.

## BACKSTORY

In his youth, Benedict Sundry intended to use his theological training to be a voice of unity and reconciliation. In the war-torn state of Forsten, he sought to bring people together and repair the fractious society that had torn itself apart.

Palorva latched onto Benedict Sundry as a delicious candidate to slowly corrupt into the antithesis of what he once stood for. Over many years, he did gradually reunite large swathes of Forsten and became the archpriest of the nation. However, he united much of Forsten by gradually embracing militaristic rhetoric and demagoguing certain rebel groups. Thanks to Palorva's subtle touch, Benedict morphed from being a voice of reconciliation to a voice of authoritarianism.

Benedict's greatest fall came about when the Cult of Lilith started gaining popularity. Rather than fighting to maintain control of his own original religious beliefs, Benedict embraced the cultural movement of the moment and propelled himself to the top of the cult, becoming the archpriest of both the Church of Tovare in Forsten and the Cult of Lilith. Lilith and Palorva were equally delighted by this turn of events. Palorva took it all a step farther: She facilitated a bond between the Father of Mercies and the demon that originally turned Lilith into a vampire. This demon has been known by many names: The Eightfold Principality, the False Ka-Tet, the Sullen Bond, the Gaol of Regretful Flesh, Gomorrah's Heritor, the One Who is Many, the Great Hunger.

To Palorva's sheer delight, she had so corrupted Benedict that not only was he the leader of a cult now, but the very demon who gave Lilith her power was now her chief servant by becoming bonded to Benedict himself.

## LEGION

To call Legion a demon would be to call a city a man, to call a flock a blackbird. And yet, despite its multitudes, it acts with one mind and one will. A surging mass of disparate flesh bonded in a grotesque mockery of intimacy, Legion looms over the world of mortals and sees naught but a banquet of suffering laid before them.

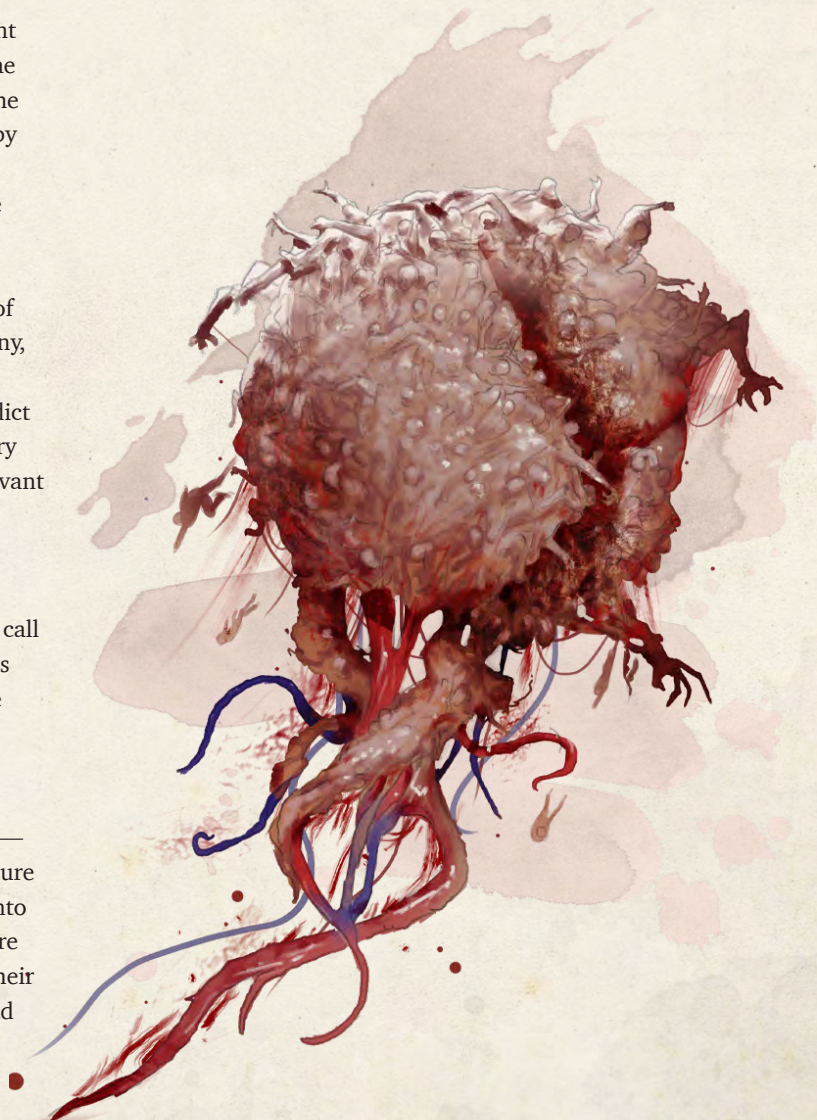
Legion is a myriadaemon, the first and last of its kind — according to it, anyway. It is attested in the occult literature far, far back in Shadowcroft's history, but most seekers into the occult who actually have encounters with the creature do not escape its grasp long enough to make record of their interactions. As such, most accounts are second-hand and woefully incomplete.

One work by a supposed survivor of several encounters with Legion states that the creature seeks to one day transfigure itself into pandaemonium, to draw all demonkind into itself and to truly become all demons. If this is true, it is a testament to the creature's madness and ego, as such a quest is doomed to failure for countless reasons.

Thanks to Palorva, Legion is bonded to the soul of Benedict Sundry, the Father of Mercies, and is not a corporeal entity at present. When the heroes finally defeat Benedict, Legion explodes forth from his body to draw even more masses of flesh into itself, relishing the return of its corporeal state.

## FIGHTING LEGION

After the heroes defeat the Father of Mercies, they will need to defeat Legion in two forms. Legion's first form, "Legion, the Many," is a mass of bodies that have been smashed together to form an enormous ball of people. As the heroes damage it, these bodies will fall as zombies and other undead that immediately join the fight against the heroes. When the heroes finally defeat Legion the Many, they must fight "Legion, Pandaemonium" alongside any of Legion's spawn that the heroes have not yet dealt with.





# LEGION, THE MANY

*Gargantuan fiend, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 700 (20d20+140)

**Speed** 5 ft., Fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	10 (+0)	24 (+7)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

**Saving Throws** Con +12

**Damage Vulnerabilities** acid

**Damage Resistances** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** truesight 90 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +5

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** When Legion fails on a saving throw, it may choose to succeed instead.

**Immutable Form.** Legion's form cannot be changed against its will.

**Corpse Rain.** At the start of each of Legion's turns, it drops 2 (1d4) **zombies**, which appear in unoccupied spaces adjacent to Legion or underneath Legion if it is more than 5 feet off the ground. The zombies roll their own Initiative and follows Legion's mental commands.

**Wandering Eye.** Legion's primary eye stalk pokes out of the mounds of bodies at varying intervals to make its Radiant Glare attack. A creature may choose to attack the eye specifically. The eye's AC is 27, but the creature ignores Legion's damage resistances and Damage Threshold feature, and Legion's Spawn ability does not trigger on a hit.

**Arterial Spurt.** When Legion starts its turn and has less than half its maximum hit points, it creates a 5 foot radius pool of blood anywhere within 60 feet of it. This blood pool deals 7 (2d6) acid damage to any creature that enters it or starts their turn in it for the next 10 minutes, whereupon the blood dries.

**Spawn.** Whenever Legion loses hit points, it spawns a corpse that appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to Legion or underneath Legion if it is more than 5 feet off the ground. It rolls its own Initiative and follows Legion's mental commands. The corpse's stats are determined by rolling on the table below.

## 1d10 Spawn

1 Zombie

2 Ghoul

3 Minotaur Skeleton

4 M'lykkri Fleshling

**Phalanx of the Legion.** When Legion is first reduced to one half their maximum hit points, and when Legion dies, it spawns a **m'lykkri flesh swarm** that appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to Legion or underneath Legion if it is more than 5 ft off the ground. It rolls its own Initiative and follows Legion's mental commands.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Legion may make three tentacle, radiant glare, or squeeze attacks.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage. If the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone or grappled (Legion's choice). Legion may grapple up to one creature at a time in this way.

**Radiant Glare.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) radiant damage.

**Squeeze.** Legion deals 18 (4d6+4) bludgeoning damage to a target that it has grappled.

**Psychic Scream (Recharge 6).** Each hostile creature in a 60 ft radius from Legion must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 33 (6d10) psychic damage and has disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes ½ damage and suffers no additional effect.

**Fling.** Legion hurls a target that it has grappled up to 120 feet away. The creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure and half as much on a successful one. Either way, the creature falls prone. If Legion throws the grappled target at another creature, then the second creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking half the damage that the initial target took on a failure and taking no damage on a success.

**Champion of the Legion (Recharge 6).** Legion takes 44 (8d10) damage and, instead of using its normal Spawn ability, spawns a **m'lykkri lumberer** that appears in an unoccupied space adjacent to Legion or underneath Legion if it is more than 5 feet off the ground. It rolls its own Initiative and follows Legion's mental commands.

## REACTIONS

**Grab.** When a creature attempts to move out of reach of Legion's tentacle attack, if Legion is not currently Grappling a creature, it may use its reaction to make a Tentacle attack.



## LEGION, PANDAEMONIUM

*Gargantuan fiend, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 290 (20d20+80)

**Speed** 30 ft., Climb 30 ft., Fly 15 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	19 (+4)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	22 (+6)

**Saving Throws** Dex +11, Wis +10

**Damage Vulnerabilities** acid

**Damage Immunities** psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** truesight 90 ft., passive Perception 14

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 15 (13,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +5

### FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** When Legion fails on a saving throw, it may choose to succeed instead.

**Immutable Form.** Legion's form cannot be changed against its will.

**Magic Resistance.** Legion has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Screaming Aura.** If a creature ends its turn within 30 feet of Legion, it must make a DC 19 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, it takes 16 (3d10) psychic damage and has disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes half damage and suffers no additional effect.

**Arterial Spurt.** When Legion starts its turn and has less than half its maximum hit points, it creates a 5 foot radius pool of blood anywhere within 60 ft of it. This blood pool deals 7 (2d6) acid damage to any creature that enters it or starts their turn in it for the next 10 minutes, whereupon the blood dries.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Legion may make three tentacle, radiant glare, or squeeze attacks.

**Tentacle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 40 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d6+4) bludgeoning damage.

If the target is Large or smaller, it is knocked prone or grappled (Legion's choice). Legion may grapple up to one creature at a time in this way.

**Radiant Glare.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 14 (4d6) radiant damage.

**Squeeze.** Legion deals 18 (4d6+4) bludgeoning damage to a target that it has grappled.

**Psychic Scream (Recharge 4-6).** Each hostile creature in a 60 foot radius from Legion must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 33 (6d10) psychic damage and has disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes ½ damage and suffers no additional effect.

**Fling.** Legion hurls a target that it has grappled up to 120 feet away. The creature must make a DC 18 Constitution saving throw 42 (12d6) bludgeoning damage on a failure and half as much on a successful one. Either way, the creature falls prone. If Legion throws the grappled target at another creature, then the second creature must make a DC 18 Dexterity saving throw, taking half the damage that the initial target took on a failure and taking no damage on a success.

**Enrage (Recharge 4-6).** Each creature that Legion spawned in its previous form that can hear Legion and is within 60 feet of Legion may use their reaction to make an attack.

### REACTIONS

**Grab.** When a creature attempts to move out of reach of Legion's tentacle attack, if Legion is not currently Grappling a creature, it may use its reaction to make a Tentacle attack.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Legion can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Legion regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn.

**Squeeze.** Legion can use its Squeeze attack.

**Fling.** Legion can use its Fling attack.

**Repulsing Scream (Costs 3 Actions).** Each hostile creature in a 60 foot radius from Legion must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 44 (4d10) psychic damage, is flung 30 feet, knocked prone, and has disadvantage on saving throws until the end of its next turn. On a success, a creature takes ½ damage and suffers no additional effect.



# FAUST

Sometimes gambling pays off. Faust was first a street thief, then a remarkably lucky gambler, then a crime lord, and finally a member of Dracula's personal council. Faust lives life fast and loose, taking dangerous gambles that thus far have paid off. Having been resurrected by Palorva, he serves her by controlling the criminal underworld across Norspina, and he has developed occult magic by gambling his soul against power offered by various fiend lords from Hell and Inferno.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- A cunning gambler, Faust is quite pragmatic.
- Faust is entirely concerned with his own personal gain.

### DRIVES:

- **Freedom.** Thanks to his alliance with Palorva, Faust has the power and influence to do whatever he wishes.

## BACKSTORY

Faust was born and raised by the cold back alleys of Kess in the city of Gemscourge. As an orphan in the lawless, chaotic mining scene bordering the Great Chasm, Faust learned to survive by wit, grit, and luck.

Faust became a skilled pickpocket and cutpurse. He primarily stole coins and food at first. As a young teen, he dug up all the money he had stolen over the past few years and used it to rent a small apartment. This came with additional expenses and lifestyle changes that forced Faust to begin stealing at an exorbitant rate, and even as competent a thief as he was, he felt that he could not keep up this pace. He needed to find another way to earn an income.

## A GAMBLER IS BORN

Faust took his earnings to one of the many gambling dens in Gemscourge. By betting on dice games of pure chance, Faust had a lucky break, winning back his wagers a hundredfold.

The exhilarating success immediately hooked him, and Faust began to amass tremendous wealth. After a time, Faust fell in with the criminal underworld; he needed debt collectors to help him enforce payment of his winnings, and he was making enough income that he could easily pay dues to a local gang for their help.

## FRIENDS IN LOW PLACES

As Faust naturally became more entrenched in professional crime, he gradually expanded his network and his influence. Money talks, Faust found, and he used it to great effect. He became well-known and well-respected throughout the criminal underworld in both Kess and Derk.

## A DEADLY HEIST

One of Faust's connections began assembling a team for a heist of tremendous risk and little to no reward. Dracula, a terrifying warlord, was in the process of conquering Norspina, the region of the north that included Derk, Kess, and several other nations. Faust's acquaintance in the criminal world wanted to steal a personal effect off of Dracula's body when he next passed through Kess.

The plan was reckless, foolhardy, and had no true potential to reward the thieves. But the sheer audacity of it enraptured Faust, and he agreed to help.

As soon as the party of six thieves got in place, everything went horribly wrong. Faust, having been tasked with talking to the dark warlord while Faust's friend picked his pockets, strode up to Dracula to strike up conversation. Dracula immediately scented this for what it was, and quickly spotted each of Faust's allies that were hiding or loitering in the nearby crowd to perform their part of the heist.

"Whose idea was this?" Dracula demanded.

Faust was a thief of honor, and although the heist was not originally his idea, he hoped that by claiming responsibility he could give his companions a chance to escape. When he said that it was his idea, Dracula laughed, clapped Faust on the back, and applauded his brazenness. Dracula then killed each of Faust's partners on the spot.

## A SHOCKING PROMOTION

Dracula then appointed Faust to his council, assigning him the task of controlling the various gangs and crime lords throughout Norspina. In essence, Faust became the Duke of Crime.

Faust knew that he was completely out of his depth in Dracula's Court, but also saw the tremendous possibilities if he could secure Dracula's confidence. He decided to go all in on the prospect. His loyalty was greatly rewarded: Dracula helped Faust learn occult magic, and Faust began gambling with his very soul as he borrowed power from fiends and other creatures of hell.

## FAUST ON THE COURT

On Dracula's Court, Faust served as a duke or viscount might in noble society, serving as a middle man between the king and the lower nobility. However, Faust's "lower nobility" were the various crime lords, drug rings, and local gangs throughout the cities of Norspina. Faust was already relatively well-known in this occupational sphere, so while many of his connections were surprised to suddenly be reporting to Faust, they saw the prudence of accepting his leadership. The alternative was destruction by Dracula's hand.



In his interactions with the other members of Palorva's Court, Faust is very guarded and pragmatic. He believes that Palorva is even more competent than Dracula, even if she lacks in raw power, and he serves her faithfully. He carefully watches the other members of the court to tease out any ongoing tensions and mistrust between the court's other members. As much as he is able, he also studies them to determine if the other members of the court have any notable weaknesses or traits that Faust might turn to blackmail if the need arises.

## OCCULT ABILITIES

As Faust cultivated his occult power, he saturated his favorite pair of dice in unholy energy. Using his dice as the focus for his spellcasting, Faust's magic is uniquely unpredictable.

### FAUST

*Medium human, chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (studded leather armor)

**Hit Points** 110 (17d8+34)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	16 (+3)	15 (+2)	18 (+6)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Int +8, Wis +9, Cha +8

**Skills** Deception +8, Perception +9

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 19

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Dwarvish

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

### FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Faust fails a saving throw, he may roll 2d6. On a roll of 6-8, he succeeds the saving throw instead. On a roll of 2 or 12, he succeeds the saving throw, does not expend a use of his Legendary Resistance, and regains one use of his Legendary Resistance if he had fewer than three.

**Magic Resistance.** Faust has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Hellcrafter (2d6/Day).** By spending 1 minute touching his dice to a corpse, Faust can create a Hellspawn, using the stat block of any Hellspawn creature.

**Superior Concentration.** Faust may concentrate on up to two spells at once.

He has also developed the ability to create hellspawn, drawing fiend spirits from Hell and imbuing them into fresh corpses to create monstrous creatures that serve his commands.

## FAUST IN COMBAT

Faust alone is not the strongest combatant. He can be quite unpredictable given the nature of his occult powers and his addiction to gambling in all things, including unorthodox combat strategies. Given that he is not a particularly powerful combatant on his own, he always tries not to get into a fight unless he has a platoon of hellspawn to back him up.

**Occult Spellcaster.** Faust is an 11th-level spellcaster. He can cast the following spells and cantrips. His spellcasting is wildly unpredictable, so when making a spell attack roll he rolls 1d20 + 2d6. His spell save DC is 8 + 2d6.

- Cantrips (at will): *eldritch blast*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*
- 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *hellish rebuke*, *hex*, *witch bolt*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *cloud of daggers*, *enthrall*, *flaming sphere*, *mirror image*, *misty step*, *ray of enfeeblement*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *fireball*, *tongues*, *vampiric touch*
- 4th level (2 slots): *blight*, *dimension door*, *wall of fire*
- 5th level (2 slots): *screaming*
- 6th level (1 slot): *eyebite*, *true seeing*

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Faust can make two attacks, one or both of which can be replaced by cantrips.

**Cultist's Cane.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6+3) bludgeoning damage plus 7 (2d6) necrotic damage. Faust regains hit points equal to the necrotic damage dealt.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Faust can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Faust regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Quick Strike.** Faust may make an attack with his Cultist's Cane or with a cantrip.

**Spell (Costs 2 Actions).** Faust may cast one of his spells.

**Gambler's Reward (Costs 2 Actions).** Faust can roll 2d6 and subtract the lower from the higher. He regains an expended spell slot of that level.



# ICHABOD

Ichabod's rise to power came on the heels of tragedy. A human from Shadowcroft, Ichabod was raised by a family of peasants in the misty woods of eastern Avalon. When he was in his teens, he took violently ill. His mother and siblings set out to Kamelot in search of medicine while his father stayed behind to care for Ichabod as best as he was able. Tragically, on the return trip from Kamelot, Ichabod's family was overtaken and cut down by the dullahan. When Ichabod's father found out, he was broken-hearted. Ichabod, on the other hand, snapped in fury. Despite his illness, he ventured into the woods intent on murdering the dullahan that senselessly slaughtered his family.

When the dullahan found Ichabod, they were amused at his feeble attempts to take them on, but they were impressed by Ichabod's spirit. They abducted him and took him before Gan Ceann, the first dullahan. They tortured Ichabod for weeks, driving him utterly insane. Finally, once Ichabod was beyond any coherent thought, Gan Ceann murdered him and revived him as a new dullahan. Ichabod's feverish craving for revenge morphed into a generalized need for violence. He became the most ruthless and bloodthirsty dullahan in Avalon; even seasoned monster hunters and valiant knights whisper of Ichabod in hushed, fearful tones.

## FIGHTING ICHABOD

Ichabod uses tactics typical of most Dullahan. He will only attack his victims in the wilderness and only when it is dark, whether by nighttime or under heavily clouded skies. He tries to remain highly mobile, using at least two move actions on each turn when possible to run into melee, attack, and then retreat. Utilizing fog, tree cover, and other natural phenomena, Ichabod tries to stay out of sight while fighting the heroes. He will target whichever hero looks like they have the lowest defenses first. Ichabod uses the stats of a **dullahan soulhunter** and rides a **unicorn**.





# JACK THE RIPPER

"Jack the Ripper" is a collective pseudonym used by the extremely wealthy and extremely corrupt oligarchs of Lorvan who murder commoners for fun in their spare time. These oligarchs are each members of the League of Immortality, a cult that was started by William von Moriarty as a method of controlling the other oligarchs.

Moriarty, posing as a vampire, promised the oligarchs the only thing that money could not buy: Immortality. He would turn them into vampires if, and only if, they proved their worth by conducting grizzly ritual murders under the shared moniker of Jack the Ripper.

Because Palorva herself is the premier of Kess, several oligarchs actually are vampires or dhampir, and so Moriarty's promise seems to hold real merit. In truth, Moriarty is just a human fraudster with a ring that disguises him - both magically and nonmagically - to appear as a vampire. He cannot actually make good on his promise, but the oligarchs are gullible or bored enough that they continue to commit these murders anyway.

The alluring promise and the mystique of being part of an elite club was more than enough to entice nearly every oligarch in Lorvan. The ripper murders became rampant, commonplace occurrences throughout the streets of Lorvan.

## THE MAN BEHIND THE MYSTIQUE

There is nothing special about William von Moriarty beyond his extremely keen intellect. He is simply a human with almost supernatural powers of cunning and strategy. Early in his career, he found three magic items - two rings and a cane - which he used to augment his intelligence and propel himself to the great prestige that he now enjoys. Von Moriarty adores seeing other people trying and failing to figure out his plans, but his pride is also his downfall. Over the years, he became bored with the fact that he was too brilliant for anyone to catch, and he wanted people to recognize him for the genius that he was. This ultimately leads him to make a public outburst when the heroes begin looking into the ripper murders. After a ruthlessly derisive monologue, von Moriarty retreats to his lair where he battles the heroes.

## FIGHTING MORIARTY

Moriarty is not interested in killing the party quickly, but in making them suffer. By splitting the heroes up, Moriarty approaches them each individually and tries to get them as close to dying as possible without reducing them to 0 hit points outright. While attacking heroes isolated from the rest of the party, Moriarty will inform them (falsely) that all of their party has already died and that they are the only ones left. In short, he tries to crush their spirits before taking their lives. All good things come to an end, however.

Jack will eventually grow tired of toying with the heroes, and then he will try to kill them. Once he reduces a hero to 0 hit points, he stands around to gloat while they bleed out, hitting them again if they use any self-healing.

As much as possible, Moriarty remains extremely mobile during this combat. He utilizes his Effigy Apparition ability at least once per round, and uses it more if able. By remaining hypermobile, Moriarty can strike each hero individually and then retreat before retaliation is forthcoming.

## META CRUELTY

If your table enjoys a meta gameplay experience, consider taunting your players by mentioning that Moriarty is only CR 9. This should be a piece of cake.

After the heroes defeat Moriarty, they may gain his magic items (listed after his stats).





## "JACK THE RIPPER"

Medium human, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 14 (+2 studded leather)

**Hit Points** 108 (24d8)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	26 (+8)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)

**Saving Throws** Dex +7, Int +13, Wis +9

**Skills** Arcana +16, Deception +7, History +16, Insight +12, Nature +12, Perception +12, Religion +12

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** passive Perception 22

**Languages** All

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

### FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (2/Day).** When Jack fails a saving throw, he may choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Jack has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Sneak Attack.** When Jack has advantage against a target, he deals 21 (6d6) additional damage on a hit.

**Gloat.** Jack has advantage against a target if that target cannot see any of its allies.

**Effigy's Servo.** Jack's cane possesses a servo inside its head allowing Jack to utilize teleportation traps effectively.

## MAGIC ITEMS

William von Moriarty has three magic items on his person.

### RING OF MASKING

*Wondrous Item, Ring, Rare (requires attunement)*

By spending a bonus action, you place an illusion on yourself or a creature or an object you touch, causing divining spells to reveal false information about it. This illusion is maintained indefinitely without any effort from you, but you may only maintain one illusion at a time. You may end your illusion for one bonus action, and it ends automatically if you start a new illusion. When you activate this item, choose one of the following effects.

### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Jack can make three weapon attacks, one of which can be replaced with the Effigy Apparition ability.

**Knife.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4+2) piercing damage.

**Cane.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +0 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 3 (1d6) nonlethal bludgeoning damage. If a creature is reduced to 0 hit points from this attack, they fall unconscious and are stable.

**Effigy Apparition.** Jack and any Effigy in his lair each teleport, swapping places.

**Poison.** Jack coats a knife with poison. The next time he hits with a knife attack, it deals an additional 10 (3d6) poison damage. This ability cannot stack with itself.

**Gas Bomb (1/Round).** Jack chooses a point within 30 feet of him. Each creature in a 10 feet radius from that point must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is blinded until the end of its next turn. On a successful save, Jack is considered heavily obscured until the start of the creature's next turn.

### REACTIONS

**Retreat.** When a creature misses Jack with an attack, Jack may make one Knife attack then move up to his speed.

### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Jack can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Jack regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Knife.** Jack makes a knife attack.

**Effigy Apparition.** Jack uses his Effigy Apparition ability.

**Poison.** Jack uses his Poison ability.

**False Aura.** You change the way the target appears to spells and magical effects. You can make a nonmagical object appear magical, a magical object appear nonmagical, or change the object's magical aura so that it appears to belong to a specific function of magic that you choose. When you use this effect on an object, you can designate a number of creatures up to your Intelligence modifier (min 1) that can see through this ruse.

**Mask.** You change the way the target appears to spells and magical effects that detect creature types. You choose a creature type; other spells and magical effects treat the target as if it were a creature of that type.



## RING OF SHROUDING

*Wondrous Item, Ring, Rare (requires attunement)*

While wearing this ring, you may cast the *shroud* psionic spell on yourself at will.

## RIPPER'S CANE

*Weapon, Cane, Very Rare (requires attunement)*

This cane has the stats of a club. It has 6 charges and regains 1d4 charges at dawn each day. You may spend its charges in any of the following ways.

**Rune of Recall (1 charge).** As an action, create an invisible rune on a 5 ft square area of ground that you tap. This rune lasts for 24 hours, then disintegrates.

**Recall (1 charge).** For As an action, you may teleport to any rune of your choice within 1 mile of you that you have created with the Rune of Recall ability.

**Remove (1 charge).** As an action, make a melee attack with this cane. If you hit a target Large or smaller creature, the creature must make an Intelligence saving throw against a DC of 8 + your proficiency bonus + your Intelligence modifier. If you hit, they are forcibly teleported to any rune of your choice within 1 mile of you that you have created with the Rune of Recall ability.

## JOANA HARKER

A grim, determined vampire hunter, Joana Harker is one of three individuals that survived Dracula's massacre of the Derkese nobility. Now she travels Norspina looking for allies in her crusade against Palorva and will go to nearly any lengths in order to get any edge against the dark lord.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Joana is determined to serve the greater good by defeating Palorva.
- She is quite loyal to her allies.
- Joana has buried her emotions under layers of logic and carefully thinks through each move before she makes it.

### DRIVES:

- **Independence.** Joana longs for a Norspina independent from Palorva.

## APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY

Joana Harker is relatively short and slight, and monsters often underestimate her to their peril. She is very strong and nimble and is a remarkably skilled hunter. Joana typically keeps her hair around shoulder-length, held back by a hat or a ponytail. She usually has a no-nonsense expression and her dark eyes look haunted.

Joana is not a very outgoing person, and has a no-nonsense way of handling herself. She always gets right to the point when speaking with her allies, eschewing pleasantries entirely in favor of talking more business. She hates talking about herself and her personal life unless it directly pertains to past stories of taking down Dracula, or current plans to defeat Palorva.

## MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Joana is driven both by a need for revenge and by a sense of closure. She feels responsible for Dracula's rise to power: If she had not helped Pietro search for a way to cure Theresa's disease, perhaps none of this would have happened. Even though she helped defeat Dracula, it does not change the facts: Palorva now controls Norspina, and intends to conquer Ancerra. Joana will do anything in her power to recruit heroes to her cause and to stop Dracula's daughter once and for all.

## BACKSTORY

The daughter of Baron Jonathan Harker, Joana grew up with one foot in court politics and one in a life training for adventures. The Harker family, close friends of the Helsing family, have historically been trained as monster hunters and rangers. Joana herself was no exception, and - as was famously the case of Harkers - vastly preferred adventuring to governing. Even so, she took her gubernatorial responsibilities seriously, if unenthusiastically.

## HUNTING VAMPIRES

Joana metaphorically cut her teeth on stray m'l'ykkri in the Haunted Forest, and even braved the Mad Forest from time to time. She also traveled in the arctic wastes north of Bishal for a time, crossing blades with vampire reavers from Noord on more than one occasion. Although she often had to retreat, she once managed to kill six Noordan vampires that were hunting her as a cohesive team.

## PIETRO AMADEUS

In her mid-twenties, Joana agreed to travel with Pietro Amadeus, who was himself looking for experience hunting vampires. Joana had heard of Pietro, of course, as he was the topic of courtly gossip for several years prior to him reaching out to her. What she saw matched the rumors in some ways, but not in others. Yes, Pietro was a charming noble. But while Joana had been led to expect someone who was darkly handsome and an accomplished courtier, both refined and elegant in countenance and appearance, Pietro defied this expectation. He was a gaunt, sullen individual prone to intense brooding and occasional angry outbursts. His sunken, tight features and his nervous ticks suggested heavy drug use, and his devotion to finding a cure for his beloved Theresa was so intense that it seemed almost maniacal.



And yet, despite or perhaps because of this intensity, Joana found herself quietly harboring feelings for Pietro as they journeyed across Norspina together. She was well aware of his history with Edith Hawthorne and other ladies of noble blood, as his propensity to court them for show with no real intent to wed them had been well established at this point. Even though Joana knew that Pietro was seeking a cure for his beloved, a mere commoner, she found herself allured by his dark fixation. He was utterly, savagely committed to the person whom he loved. Joana held her infatuation quietly and never informed Pietro of her feelings.

## THRALL

The darkest point in their travels came when Pietro and Joana met the reclusive vampire named Nandor Vladislov. Nandor outmaneuvered them and kept Pietro and Joana as prisoners for many weeks. During this time, Joana initially sought ways to escape Nandor's grip, but Nandor eventually forced Joana to drink a few drops of his blood. This resulted in Joana becoming Nandor's thrall; despite herself, she was no longer interested in escaping. She would simply do whatever Nandor suggested. Pietro, for his part, befriended Nandor and eventually convinced him to release both Pietro and Joana.

Although Joana's commitment to Nandor faded a week after they departed, her shame and conflict over the experience never did. It still haunts her to this day. It is an event about which she never talks willingly, and it is a formative event in her life that she cites in general terms when explaining why there can never be such a thing as a "good" vampire.

## THERESA'S WAKE

Joana's quest with Pietro did not result in Theresa permanently recovering. When Pietro summoned all of his noble acquaintances to Theresa's wake, Joana attended, along with her entire family. Joana felt that something was wrong, and she anticipated Pietro's trap moments before he enacted it.

Along with Edgar Hawthorne and Abraham van Helsing, Joana was one of only three survivors. Barely escaping the occult ritual that Pietro - now Dracula - cast, Joana fled into hiding.

## TO DEFEAT THE DAUGHTER

After Dracula finally fell, Joana knew that her work was not over. She turned her attention to undermining and finding ways to take out Palorva, Dracula's daughter.

# LANCERIC

A celestial being of great and terrible power, Lanceric was created when a despairing human entered into an agreement with Dracula. In exchange for being granted revenge against those who wronged him, the new angelic being swore allegiance to Dracula for all eternity. Now a key figure in Palorva's ongoing conquest of Ancerra, he serves as both a frontline general and as an interim governor.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Lanceric has a strict code of honor, even if this code has been warped and twisted in service to Dracula and his daughter.
- Lanceric is very loyal to Dracula and Palorva out of a deep-seated respect.

### DRIVES:

- **Recognition.** Lanceric wishes to be recognized as one of the greatest celestials and greatest supporters of Palorva.

## BACKSTORY

Merrick was born a human male in the city-state of Husk. From a young age, he loved listening to the tales of traveling troubadours and aspired to be a great adventurer himself one day. When he came of age, he set out to pursue such a lifestyle. He became involved in smuggling deals with the Sandsnakes, a criminal group operating out of Nalathesh. After having a falling out with them, he then joined an adventuring party working for Godking Neferu.

Merrick faithfully served Godking Neferu for many years until he stumbled upon a terrible secret and discovered that "Neferu" was really a moniker passed down from one generation to the next, and the current Neferu was not only a normal mortal, but also possessed no real magical abilities. To make matters worse, Merrick discovered that the current Neferu had a bloodthirsty streak, and was using Merrick and his compatriots as pawns to enforce his brutal agenda.

Before Merrick could expose the truth, his adventuring party turned on him and handed him over to Neferu, who imprisoned him. Merrick spent months brutally tortured and left to molder in a prison cell deep below Neferu's palace.

## DARK SAVIOR

After spending months in the dungeon, Merrick had given up hope. There was no justice for him; all he had done since swearing fealty to Neferu was for the good of Nalathesh, a kingdom he had grown to view as his home. All of his personal sacrifice, every time he risked his life, it would all be forgotten.



However, one fateful night, a contingent of guards awakened him from his sleep and told him he was to be transferred. They led him out of the dungeon and placed him in a locked cage in the back of a covered wagon.

Merrick traveled in this way for what must have been at least two weeks before he was finally allowed out of the cage. When he was, the guards led him to a small private dining hall. When Merrick saw his reflection in his golden plate, he wept: His torture had left him utterly unrecognizable.

An imposing, gracious, and mesmerizing host consoled Merrick, ensured that he was well fed, and introduced himself as Dracula. Dracula explained that he had been watching Merrick for some time, and was impressed both with Merrick's career as an adventurer and with his ability to withstand horrendous torture.

He had a proposition for Merrick: If Merrick would undergo a ritual to gain tremendous power and pledge fealty to Dracula, Dracula would offer Merrick revenge against Neferu's court. Merrick agreed, changing his life forever.

## THE ANGEL OF DEATH

Merrick accompanied Dracula back to Derk and ventured into the laboratory deep within the Mad Forest. Within these chambers, Doctor Frankenstein and Professor Shelley operated on Merrick. The scientists took the corpse of an angel that Dracula had killed, and transplanted its organs into Merrick and its two pairs of wings onto his back.

By bathing him in radiant energy and electrocution, and with Dracula casting powerful occult augmentations on Merrick, the scientists completed the ritual. The process completely changed Merrick, and he only retained trace memories of his life before the ritual. As he was reborn, Dracula gave him the name Lanceric, which means the Conquering Light.

Lanceric's new form is beautiful and angelic, with porcelain skin and golden filigree. He looks the part of an angel, but underneath his fine exterior, there is a twisted, smoldering entity that can only be described as a monster. When Lanceric is damaged, his marbled skin chips, revealing the monster within. Lanceric's two pairs of wings are lined with eyes, and he has five additional eyes on his face: one in his forehead and two on each cheek. All of his eyes have golden or silver irises, and his wings are like those of a magnificent eagle, snowy white feathers tinged in gold.

## DIVINE CONQUEROR

Dracula was true to his word, delivering Lanceric back to Nalathesh to destroy Neferu and his court. Lanceric did exactly that with much alacrity. Thereafter, he continued to serve Dracula, both as a general for Dracula's armies and as a proxy ruler when needed, overseeing rebellious cities that Dracula had conquered.

In this role, Lanceric maintained order until a more permanent puppet ruler could be established, a ruler that would respect Dracula's authority unquestioningly.

## LANCERIC ON THE COURT

When he is not leading military operations or overseeing a newly conquered city, Lanceric often spends time in Palorva's Palace. He is an esteemed member of Palorva's Court and his opinions hold great clout. Squick Cravenhide easily manipulates Lanceric, as Lanceric completely underestimates the little gretchling. Lanceric views Faust as the closest member of the court to Lanceric's equal. He does not have a great deal of interest in Yuriko or Demetrius, given that their skill sets as assassins typically do not put them on the same assignments as Lanceric. Lanceric avoids Lilith as much as possible, correctly recognizing her as Palorva's near-equal and preferring to interact with Palorva directly or with the other courtiers.

## A GILDED HEART

Dracula understood that creating a new angel could prove a dangerous prospect, so he took steps to ensure Lanceric's undying loyalty to him. During the operation, Frankenstein removed Lanceric's still-beating heart, and Dracula coated it in enchanted gold. Whomever possesses Lanceric's heart may assume direct control of Lanceric's actions at any point. Furthermore, if Lanceric dies, a creature can bring Lanceric back to life over the course of one month by continuously charging the heart with radiant energy and lightning. Staking Lanceric's heart permanently kills him.

### THE GILDED HEART

Lanceric's gilded heart is in the study in Palorva's Palace.

## THE GOLDEN SENTINELS

When Lanceric received his new powers by accepting the organs of an angel, one such power allowed him to extend angelic protection to certain creatures that he marks. These creatures are known as the Golden Sentinels.

Any humanoid creature is capable of receiving this mark. A creature marked as a member of the Golden Sentinels has a permanent golden handprint on their face, the magical touch of Lanceric.

Creatures with this mark reduce radiant damage by 5. Vampires with this mark take half damage from exposure to sunlight.

Lanceric may mark one creature per month in this way.

At the beginning of *Daughter of the Shadows*, Lanceric has 8 members in the Golden Sentinels: four Paladins and four Rangers that also have Draculean Vampirism. While Lanceric will expand his "legion" as quickly as possible, these members of the legion typically serve as honor guards for members of Palorva's Court.



# LANCERIC IN COMBAT

Lanceric has never been one to shy away from combat. He will attack the heroes directly when confronted. At first, he flies out of their reach, targeting them with his eye rays. Once he is reduced to one half his maximum hit points, he will engage in melee combat, making use of his auras to damage and hinder the party members.

## LANCERIC

*Medium celestial, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d8+64)

**Speed** 30 ft., Fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	13 (+1)	20 (+5)	10 (+0)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +10, Wis +8

**Skills** Athletics +10, Perception +8

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** radiant

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Celestial

**Challenge** 11 (7,200 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +5

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Lanceric fails on a saving throw, he may choose to succeed instead.

**Aura of Radiance.** While Lanceric has more than one half his maximum hit points, he reduces all damage he takes by 2. When he has fewer than one half his maximum hit points, he deals +2 damage on all of his attacks. Holy Transformation. When Lanceric has fewer than one half his maximum hit points, his appearance changes as described in "Lanceric in Combat." He becomes Large and his Fly speed doubles. He uses Constitution, instead of Charisma, when casting spells (increasing his attack rolls and save DC each by 1).

**Divine Spells.** Lanceric is an innate spellcaster and can cast the following spells innately. His spellcasting modifier is Charisma (+9 on spell attack rolls, spell save DC 17) or Constitution if he has fewer than one half his maximum hit

While he does not have maximum hit points, but still has more than one half his maximum hit points, Lanceric's skin has chips and cracks that reveal dark, smoky flames coming from within him. Once he is reduced to one half his maximum hit points, Lanceric's outer form explodes, and he turns into a ball of dark red flames surrounded by blinding golden wings. Rather than looking humanoid, while he has one half his maximum hit points or less, Lanceric simply looks like gyroscopic concentric circles whirling around the inner flames. These circles are bright white light from which golden wings emerge.

points (+10 on spell attack rolls, spell save DC 18).

**At Will:** *bane, command, guiding bolt, healing word, spiritual weapon*

**3/Rest each:** *clairvoyance, daylight, dispel magic, spirit guardians, guardian of faith*

**1/Rest each:** *destructive wave, hallow, harm*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Lanceric can make four Eye Beam or Radiant Cut attacks. He may replace one of these attacks with an at-will spell.

**Eye Beam.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, range 200 ft., one target. *Hit:* 11 (2d10) radiant damage.

**Radiant Cut.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d10 + 5) radiant damage.

**Angelic Power (Recharge 5-6).** Each creature within 30 feet of Lanceric must make a Constitution saving throw. The DC is 19, or 20 if Lanceric has less than one half his maximum hit points. On a failed save, a creature takes 28 (8d6) radiant damage and is blinded until the end of their next turn. On a successful save, a creature takes half as much damage and is not blinded.

## REACTIONS

Lanceric can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lanceric regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Move.** Lanceric moves up to his speed. Any creature that hits him with an opportunity attack as a result of this movement takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.

**Suffer Not the Feeble.** Lanceric designates a target creature within 60 feet of him. The first attack that Lanceric makes on his turn must target that creature and has advantage.

**Divine Surge (Costs 2 Actions).** Lanceric casts one of his divine spells and regains 10 hit points.



# LAUCIAN VIRIR

Laucian Virir is a forest elf turned vampire, standing at 5'7" with pale skin and long dark brown hair tied back into an intricate braid. Behind his frameless glasses, a pair of hazel eyes watches the world with a sense of curiosity and a hint of wariness. He generally wears relatively simplistic clothes underneath a long black coat that seems just one size too large. He is rarely seen without it.

Most people know Laucian as an introvert who opens up the moment trust is established. Said trust is not easy to come by, as Laucian is notably wary of strangers, though he would not shun them if they needed his help. Once a friendship forms, the wariness Laucian usually displays melts away completely and becomes more trusting.

Laucian has his heart in the right place and is incredibly passionate about his topics of interest. When something involves his personal goals or people he cares for, he is known to become impulsive and reckless, especially if there is an air of danger around the situation.

## FOREST BORN

Laucian was born into a tribe of forest elves, located in Northwest Bishal. It is a tribe that relies heavily on community and is often wary of outsiders. Because of this, Laucian lived a somewhat secluded life where the only people he interacted with were those of his own tribe. Regardless, his upbringing was relatively normal. He was educated in everything that was relevant to the tribe, ranging from knowledge about nature to knowing how to fight and hunt. Laucian was not much of a gifted fighter however, and instead took an interest in two things: entomology and medicine. As much as he appreciated and wanted to preserve the beauty of the billions of insects this world is home to, he also started to experiment with the medicinal properties he claimed some of them possess. Over the course of a century, he filled five notebooks with information and facts about, and the special use of various insects.

## GIFTED HEALER

Not only did Laucian prove himself as being knowledgeable on medicine and insects, he also became known as a very gifted healer. He knows how to manipulate magic that the planet provides into revitalizing energy, combined with nonmagical elements gathered from his surroundings. His tribe appreciated his efforts immensely, yet their appreciation was not enough for Laucian. After a century of being with his tribe, he was ready to see the world and learn even more. And so, he said his goodbyes and went wherever the stars led him for yet another century. In this time he met with other skilled healers and studied under them for years at a time, learning more about localized practices and becoming privy to knowledge that was only to be passed down orally, from teacher to student.





His travels took him to every corner of the continent, led by his curiosity which occasionally put him in dangerous situations. Regardless, he treasured every moment and documented his journeys and findings in another series of notebooks.

## LILITH

The first vampire of Shadowcroft, Lilith is a fiendish creature with an all-consuming desire to conquer and eat. The strength of her desire is held in check by a supernatural cunning, and she never takes risks without first carefully calculating the potential benefits. Lilith is a careful planner and a ruthlessly effective schemer, but all of it is to achieve the simple end goal of devouring all things.

### PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE

In both her personality and her appearance, Lilith is something of a chameleon. She magically changes her appearance to better blend in with the population of her current residence, and she is similarly skilled at adopting new personalities and behaviors quite quickly.

When she has no need to embody a different persona, Lilith's true personality is one of utter pragmatism. She cares nothing for the opinions of those beneath her and cares about the opinions of other powerful individuals only insofar as she can twist those views to suit her own needs. At her core, she is undiplomatic and brutal; however, she usually takes a much more tactful approach in her dealings with others as she finds she can use people more effectively if they view her as an ally.

In her true form, Lilith is a large, demonic creature that has the approximate body shape and appearance of a twelve-foot-tall human woman, although she also has black, leathery bat wings and dramatic, bullish horns. She has ashy skin, golden eyes, black hair, and sharp, angular facial features.

When she is not in her true form, her preferred disguise is that of a forest elf. As in her true form, she has similarly dramatic facial features, striking black hair, and golden eyes. She usually changes her skin tone most dramatically, taking on an olive complexion.

### MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Lilith's motivation is a simple, primal need to conquer. As the first vampire in Shadowcroft, her first objective was to dominate that plane of existence before expanding to conquer other lands. Although she arrived on Ancerra before she was able to complete her conquest of Shadowcroft, she does not see this as a setback, but as an opportunity.





## BACKSTORY

### THE LEGEND

The story of Lilith is something of a faerie tale that parents tell their children in Shadowcroft to keep them from straying outdoors at night. Legend has it that a young human girl named Lilith was playing in the forest outside her village after the sun had set. When she saw what looked like a loose line of fireflies, she followed them to see where they might lead.

She came to a deep hole, and before she could turn around, a great wind sucked her in. She plummeted through the vast abyss and into the realms of darkness and flame, wherein a demon referred to by most as “the Great Hunger” consumed her soul from the inside out, leaving her body roughly intact but transforming it into its new demonic form, making her the first vampire.

### HUNGER

Whatever the truth of Lilith’s origin, once she descended upon the northwestern shores of Blackcliff, she quickly turned the land into a slaughterhouse. She drank every last drop of blood from thousands of victims. She turned dozens of powerful individuals into more vampires, that they might join in the great feast. Her goal was simple: dominate and consume.

After dominating Blackcliff, she experienced great success in Avalon by seducing Pendragon and turning him into her familiar. Before she had an opportunity to further her campaign of conquest, Dracula’s cosmic machinations pulled Shadowcroft to intersect with Norspina.

## A VILE ALLIANCE

Dracula and Lilith quickly met one another and assessed that they would be stronger as allies than rivals. Both extremely powerful vampires, and both first of their respective lines, their decision to forge an alliance ensured that they could focus on conquest rather than becoming mired in an endless war of attrition against one another.

### LILITH IN COMBAT

When the heroes confront Lilith in her dark keep in Shadowcroft, they will have to contend with her and with the malevolent hunger of the keep itself. On Initiative count 20, the keep performs one of the following actions. It cannot perform the same action on two consecutive turns.

**Essence Funnel.** Target creature in the keep must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 11 (2d10) psychic damage, and Lilith regains SP equal to the damage dealt.

**Feed on Fear.** Target creature in the keep must make a DC 20 Charisma check. On a failure, the creature gains 1 Fear, then Lilith regains a number of hit points equal to 5 x the target creature’s Fear.

**Madness of the Legion.** Each creature in the keep hostile to Lilith must make a DC 20 Constitution saving throw. On a failure, a creature cannot move until the end of its next turn unless they take the dash action.

**Legionnaires.** 7 (2d6) Hellspawn of a randomly determined ML appear in an unoccupied space within 60 feet of Lilith. They take their turn on Initiative count 10.





# LILITH

*Large undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (+1 studded leather)

**Hit Points** 170 (20d8+80)

**Speed** 40 ft., Climb 40 ft., Fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	22 (+6)	20 (+5)	24 (+7)	18 (+4)	25 (+7)

**Saving Throws** Dex +12, Con +11, Int +13, Wis +10, Cha +13

**Skills** Deception +19, History +14, Insight +16, Intimidation +19, Stealth +18

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 13

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 20 (25,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +6

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When the vampire fails a saving throw, it may choose to succeed instead.

**Vampirism.** Lilith uses the Croftian vampire template.

**Limited Magic Immunity.** Lilith is immune to spells cast using spell slots of 3rd level or lower.

**Carnal Revel.** When Lilith has less than half her maximum hit points, she may make one additional claw attack on each of her turns and has advantage on all claw attacks.

**Second Wind (1/Day).** The first time that Lilith is reduced to half her maximum hit points, all of her rechargeable abilities immediately recharge.

**Occultist.** Lilith is a 20th-level spellcaster and can cast the following spells. Charisma is its spellcasting modifier (spell save DC 21, +13 on spell attack rolls):

- Cantrips (at will): *fire bolt* (4d10), *friends*, *mage hand*, *message*, *spare the dying*, *thaumaturgy*, *vicious mockery* (4d4)
- 1st level (4 slots): *burning hands*, *detect magic*, *dissonant whispers*, *fog cloud*, *identify*, *witch bolt*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *blindness/deafness*, *cloud of daggers*, *detect thoughts*, *misty step*, *zone of truth*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *bestow curse*, *counterspell*, *fireball*, *tongues*, *vampiric touch*
- 4th level (3 slots): *blight*, *blood blade*, *bone spear*, *compulsion*, *emesis*, *locate creature*, *sanguine snare*
- 5th level (2 slots): *dream*, *hold monster*, *screaming*
- 6th level (2 slots): *mass suggestion*, *true seeing*
- 7th level (1 slot): *finger of death*, *lobotomize*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*
- 9th level (1 slot): *psychic scream*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Lilith can make five attacks, one of which can be a bite. In place of her bite, she may use Charm or Frighten or cast a spell using a 3rd level or lower spell slot.

**Unarmed Strike. Melee Weapon Attack:** +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d8+6) bludgeoning damage, and Lilith can grapple the target (escape DC 20).

**Bite. Melee Weapon Attack:** +12 to hit, reach 5 ft., one willing creature, or a creature that is grappled by Lilith, incapacitated, or restrained. *Hit:* 9 (1d6+6) piercing damage plus 27 (8d6) necrotic damage. The target's hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the necrotic damage taken, and Lilith regains hit points equal to that amount. The reduction lasts until the target finishes a long rest. The target dies if this effect reduces its hit point maximum to 0. A humanoid slain in this way and then buried in the ground rises the following night as a vampire spawn under Lilith's control.

**Charm.** Lilith targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet of her. If the target can see her, the target must succeed on a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by her. The charmed target regards Lilith as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Lilith's control, it takes Lilith's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Lilith's bite attack. Each time Lilith or Lilith's companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Lilith is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

**Frighten.** Each creature within a 20 foot radius of Lilith must make a DC 21 Wisdom saving throw, becoming frightened of Lilith until the end of Lilith's next turn on a failed save.

**Children of the Hells (1/Day).** Lilith magically calls 5 (2d4) fiends of CR 2 or lower. The called creatures arrive immediately in empty spaces within 60 ft of Lilith. They obey her spoken commands.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Lilith can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Lilith regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

**Move.** Lilith moves up to her speed.

**Unarmed Strike.** Lilith makes one unarmed strike.

**Spell (Costs 2 Actions).** Lilith casts a cantrip, 1st-level, 2nd-level, or 3rd level spell.

**Shadow Torrent (Costs 3 Actions).** Each hostile creature within a 20 ft radius of Lilith must make a DC 21 Constitution saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (6d8) necrotic damage and cannot regain hit points until the end of their next turn.



# LORVAN CITIZENS

## TIKOR FAMILY

### HANK TIKOR

Hank is a human man in his late fifties, with dark brown skin, dark curls and deep brown eyes. Growing up, Hank was the only deaf child in his family, which often made him feel left out. Now, he has a family full of people like him, who understand and support him. He is known as someone who tries to make the best of every situation and uses humor to lighten the mood. He and most of his family are farmers by trade, a tough profession to have under the current rule as food is often taken from them without payment.

### NELLIE TIKOR

Nellie is a human woman in her late fifties, with pale skin, light brown hair and hazel eyes. Hank being deaf has never been an issue for her, and she made sure to provide a supportive home for him and their deaf children. Despite her caring and supportive nature, she can be quite stern and has a sixth sense for lies.

### LOVI TIKOR

Nellie's and Hank's oldest child, now in their mid thirties. They have brown skin with short, dark brown curls, brown eyes and a small birthmark on their nose. They are also fully deaf, and are married to their partner Jami, with whom they have two children. Lovi is calm in nature and incredibly creative, though reluctant to share their work with anyone other than Jami.

### JAMI TIKOR (FORMERLY HOMAR)

A human man with a trace of elven lineage, with tanned skin, green eyes and salt-and-pepper hair. He is in his late thirties and is married to Lovi, with whom he has two children. Jami is rather introverted, but not shy, and shares Lovi's passion for the arts.

### MESSE TIKOR

Lovi and Jami's first child, currently eight years old. He is hard of hearing, and while he primarily uses sign language, he also knows how to speak verbally. Messe is inquisitive and playful.

### VEENA TIKOR

Lovi and Jami's second child, currently six years old. She was born hearing, but in the recent year it appears she has experienced some hearing loss. She is a calm child, and often shy.

## LAMORE NOMANI (FORMERLY TIKOR)

Nellie and Hank's second child. She has brown skin with long wavy brown hair and hazel eyes. Currently she is in her early thirties and is married to Berkan Nomani with whom she has one child. Lamore spends most of her time reading and has many different interests, though not always enough time to pursue them. She is clever and a good problem solver.

### LIKO TIKOR

Nellie and Hank's third child. He has lighter brown skin with light brown curls and brown eyes. Liko is known for his endless energy and humor, though often uses the latter to cope when times are dire. He's currently in his late twenties and has no desire to date or get married, saying it's simply not for him.

### LEMARO TIKOR

Nellie and Hank's youngest child. He is in his mid-twenties, has brown skin with dark curls and hazel eyes, and he is almost fully deaf, though used to be able to hear when he was really young. Lemaro is usually quite a serious person and tends to be very pessimistic, fueled by his depression. His family often checks in with him to make sure he will not spiral.

## SIDE QUESTS

**Find missing pet:** Lovi and Jami's cat is missing. They would like help finding her.

**Replace broken doll:** Veena's favorite doll is broken. Grandmother Nellie would like help finding a replacement.

## NOMANI FAMILY

### KIERAN NOMANI

Kieran is a human man in his early sixties with pale skin, red hair, blue eyes and freckles all over his face. He comes from a lineage of silversmiths and still practices this profession. He is known as a serious man and has a lot of passion for his job. He is married to Menda, whom he met when he was in his early twenties.

### MENDA NOMANI

Menda is a human woman in her late fifties, with light skin, blonde hair that is now partly gray, and light green eyes. She is married to Kieran, with whom she has two children. When their children became adults, Menda joined Kieran in the family business and learned how to work silver. She is known as wise, though a true realist.



## BERKAN NOMANI

Kieran and Menda's oldest son, now in his mid thirties. Berkan has light skin with strawberry blonde hair and blue eyes. He is married to Lamore and is the father of Nissa. Berkan works for his father in the family business and takes this job seriously. Outside of work, he is more relaxed and easygoing.

## LAMORE NOMANI (FORMERLY TIKORI)

Berkan's wife and mother to Nissa. She has brown skin with long wavy brown hair and hazel eyes. Currently she is in her early thirties and spends most of her time reading and has many different interests, though not always enough time to pursue them.

## NISSA NOMANI

Nissa is the only child of Berkan and Lamore. She is currently twelve years old and has light brown skin with red hair and hazel eyes. She has a bright personality, though is prone to overthinking.

## JUNTUR NOMANI

Kieran and Menda's second and youngest son, now in his late twenties. Juntur has light skin with blonde hair and light green eyes. Just like his brother, he works for his father as a silversmith. He is a hopeless romantic, though has yet to find a partner. He hopes to one day escape Lorvan and build a new life somewhere less bleak.

## SIDE QUESTS

**Find a thief:** Someone has stolen a custom made silver ring from the workshop. Kieran would like for it to be retrieved.

**Hide evidence:** Juntur has done something minor that is against the law and needs help hiding the evidence.

## HOMAR FAMILY

### AMADI HOMAR

Amadi is a human woman with a trace of elven lineage, with tanned skin, hazel eyes and brown hair. She is in her late thirties and is the oldest of the Homar siblings. Together with Jami she took care of her younger siblings after both her parents died in her late teens. Amadi has a caring personality, though tends to struggle to look after herself properly. She always puts others before herself.

### JAMI TIKOR (FORMERLY HOMAR)

Jami is a human man with a trace of elven lineage, with tanned skin, green eyes and salt-and-pepper hair. He is in his late thirties and is married to Lovi Tikor, with whom he has two children. Jami is rather introverted, but not shy, and has a passion for the arts.

## MERIAN HOMAR

Having a similar appearance to her siblings, Merian stands out by wearing unique handcrafted jewelry, made from whatever material is at her disposal. She is currently in her late twenties, the same age as her triplet sisters Lysani and Uliv, and she is recently married to Niko.

## NIKO HOMAR

Niko is a dwarven woman with pitch black hair, pale skin and cold blue eyes. She suffers from amnesia and does not remember how she ended up in Lorvan. While searching for answers, she met Merian and fell in love, eventually marrying her.

## LYSANI HOMAR

Lysani is the second triplet in the Homar family. She is kind, humble and tends to talk in a softer voice. When she was younger she had an accident that left her with a permanent leg injury, and she has been using a cane ever since. Merian decorated the cane with intricate wood carvings.

## ULIV MAKAY

Uliv is the youngest triplet in the Homar family. She is rebellious and bubbly, in spite of the environment she lives in. She tends to try and bend the rules and see what she can get away with. She is married to her husband Redee, is the mother of Julie and is currently expecting a second child.

## REDEE MAKAY

Redee is a human man in his mid twenties with pale skin, light brown curls and green eyes. He has a small scar on his cheek which he claims is from an animal attack in his youth. He met Uliv during a very dark period in his life, and she has helped him see the world from a different and brighter perspective.

## JULIE MAKAY

Julie is the three-year-old daughter of Uliv and Redee. She has her mother's complexion and her father's curls, and she's often loud, adventurous and a tad stubborn.

## KOSTER FAMILY

### NEESE KOSTER

Neese is a human woman in her early seventies. She has short gray hair, pale skin and blue eyes and is the oldest member of the Koster family. She was once married to a man she lovingly referred to as "my Bear", but he unfortunately passed away a couple of years ago. Neese finds it hard to sit still and is often seen working on some kind of project.



## HENRIETTA KOSTER

Younger sister of Neese and older sister of Vince. Henrietta is a human woman in her early seventies with long gray hair, pale skin and blue eyes. She has never been married nor has kids, which is a conscious choice she made. She is something of a hermit but isn't afraid of strangers.

## VINCE KOSTER

Youngest Koster sibling, human, in his late sixties. Vince has pale skin, short gray hair, a pair of round black-rimmed glasses and blue eyes. He was once married to a woman named Winnie, but they divorced over three decades ago as she had changed her mind on wanting kids, clashing with Vince's desire to be a father. He has not found anyone else since, but did adopt two children at the age of fifty-five. Being a single father at his age is hard, but he loves his children more than anything.

## MARGRET KOSTER

Adopted daughter of Vince, currently twenty years old. Margret is a female dwarf with tanned skin, long dark brown hair and a bunch of freckles underneath green eyes. She lives with her father still, though hopes to become more independent soon. She is trying to work on her confidence, which is not as strong as she would like it to be.

## BERNIE KOSTER

Adopted son of Vince and younger brother of Margret, currently seventeen years old. Bernie is a male dwarf with tanned skin, medium-length brown hair and green eyes. Just like his sister he lives with his father, though has no intention of moving out any time soon. He is very close to his father and he has aspirations to become a writer, though knows he would have to leave Lorvan to pursue that dream.

## SIDE QUESTS

**Acquire forbidden book:** Bernie knows of a banned fiction book that he would really like to read. He knows where banned books are kept but does not have the skills to retrieve it himself.

## HEARTMOORE FAMILY

### THOMAS HEARTMOORE

Thomas is a human male in his late forties with light skin, brown hair and blue eyes. He is married to Nora and has four kids with her. The whole Heartmoore family is fiercely loyal to Palorva and her cause, and all family members except for young Kiara are part of the secret police. He is a true rule follower and rarely shows remorse.

## NORA HEARTMOORE

Nora is a human female in her mid-forties with long ginger hair, pale skin and brown eyes. Just like her husband, she is a member of the Incisors. Nora is strict and disciplined and encourages her children to be the same. Their family operates more like a military unit at times instead of a regular household.

## GINA HEARTMOORE

Gina is the oldest Heartmoore child, aged twenty-four. She is just as indoctrinated as her parents and was eager to join the Fangs when she was old enough. She is always very alert and works hard to keep Lorvan the way Parlova likes it.

## COLTON HEARTMOORE

Colton is the second Heartmoore child, aged twenty-one. He joined the Incisors because his parents wanted him to join but otherwise feels indifferent about it. Usually he works alongside Gina when it comes to gathering intel, though he is not as dedicated as she is.

## RYDER HEARTMOORE

Ryder is eighteen, making him the third Heartmore child. He has only just joined the Fangs and is eager to prove himself. He believes in the doctrine that his parents drilled into him from a young age and enjoys serving Parlova.

## KIARA HEARTMOORE

Kiara is the youngest Heartmore child, currently aged thirteen. She is too young to join the secret police, but she also is not sure if she wants to. She has not told anyone in her family that she is having doubts, afraid of their reaction. For now, she plays along as to not get in trouble.

## SIDE QUESTS

Find traitors. An informant turned their back on the secret police and fled. The Heartmoore family believes they are still in the city and wants them turned in.

## OGGLE FAMILY

### YORRI OGGLE

Yorri is a male dwarf with light brown skin, long dark hair, and dark brown monolid eyes. He runs a clothing repair shop with his wife Fida, whom he has thirteen kids with, making the Oogle family the biggest one in the city. Yorri is a kind and patient man, though also fiercely protective of his family. Currently, he and his wife are saving up money to move somewhere less dangerous, with more freedom.



## FIDA OGGLE

Fida is a female dwarf with brown skin, dark hair and dark eyes. She runs a clothing repair shop with her husband and some of her older kids, though mostly she spends time looking after her many children. Fida has always wanted a big family and refused to let her living conditions interfere with that dream. Fida is known to be gentle, though will not hesitate to raise her voice when needed.

## THE OGGLE KIDS

Yorri and Fida have a total of thirteen children. Deva is the oldest, currently twenty-six years old, and Delene is the youngest, only two years old. The oldest three children, Deva, Dorian and Dinashi help their parents around the shop. They have also all moved out of the family home and live together elsewhere. The full list of names includes:

- Deva Oggle
- Dorian Oggle
- Dinashi Oggle
- Damarian Oggle
- Dalar Oggle
- Dolvi Oggle
- Deesh Oggle
- Duvri Oggle
- Dimma Oggle
- Disja Oggle
- Dumala Oggle
- Davi Oggle
- Delene Oggle

## SIDE QUESTS

**Lost and found:** Over the past four months it has happened three times that people did not come back to retrieve their fixed clothing. The Oggle family would like help tracing the owners of a coat, a shirt, and a cloak so the items no longer take up space in the shop.

## LEVISHO FAMILY

### SALLY LEVISHO

Sally is a female human in her late thirties with dark skin, long black dreadlocks and dark brown eyes. She has a quite muscular frame and a bright smile. She runs a butcher shop that has been in the family for generations. Together with her younger sister Olivia, she is raising a couple of orphans, all of whom they have adopted. Neither Sally nor Olivia see Lorvan as a place to find love, and so they decided to band together and offer any existing love they have to children who need it.

## OLIVIA LEVISHO

Olivia is a female human in her mid-thirties, with dark skin, a short black afro and dark brown eyes. She has a gap between her teeth that she rather adores, and a dimple in her chin. Having lost her parents when she was just a teenager, she knows what it is like to be an orphan. When Sally suggested taking a few in, she did not hesitate to say yes. She considers it the best decision she has ever made.

## JESINA LEVISHO

Jesina is a female human, fourteen years old. She has pale blonde hair and an almost white complexion with colorless eyes. She wears thick glasses and feels most comfortable wearing light dresses. She has a curious personality, though finds it hard to get over her anxiety when it comes to trying something new.

## HAMISH LEVISHO

Hamish is a male halfling, fourteen years old. He has light brown skin with brown curls and green eyes. He is just a month younger than Jesina and quite a bit shorter, but loves to pretend he is older and wiser regardless. He is protective over his siblings, though his words are often braver than his actions.

## NICOLETTE LEVISHO

Nicolette is a female halfling, nine years old. She has pale skin with long mousy brown hair and hazel borderline gray eyes. She has a personality that is almost too large for her size and a voice that demands to be heard. Where Jesina and Hamish might hesitate, Nicolette certainly will not.

## AAVIA LEVISHO

Aavia is a female human, five years old. She has dark skin with loose black curls and deep brown eyes. She smiles a lot and rarely cries, even when one would expect her to. In general, she is the most well behaved child of the four, though her parents wonder how long that will last.

## SIDE QUESTS

**Repairs:** A small storm has broken two windows and damaged a wall. The Levisho's would like assistance fixing this.



## FIG FAMILY

### GERALD FIG

Gerald is a male halfling in his mid-forties with dark hair that is graying at the side, slightly tanned skin and dark blue eyes. He works as a woodworker and has worked for the same shop his entire life. While Gerald is generally a nice man, he has a temper that not everyone knows how to deal with. Fortunately, his wife Maja does know and knows exactly how to calm him down again. Oftentimes he expresses his gratitude for her understanding and patience, and he frequently brings her small gifts.

### MAJA FIG

Maja is a female halfling in her late thirties with light skin, wavy blonde hair and warm brown eyes. She works as a midwife in town and has helped many children into this world. She is the Oggle family's personal midwife and has been there for the births of most of their kids. The Oggle kids and Maja's own kids often spend time together. Maja has a strong personality and a kind heart. She knows what she wants and does not back down easily, but relents when it would be wiser to do so.

### NOORI FIG

Noori is a fifteen-year-old female halfling with light skin, dark wavy hair and brown eyes. She wants to become a midwife like her mother and has accompanied her a couple of times to assist. Noori is clever, level-headed and always eager to learn.

### ELISE FIG

Elise is a ten-year-old female halfling with light skin, blonde hair and brown eyes. She is often described as shy and anxious, though does have a similar temper to her father when things upset her. The switch in personality can be night and day and often catches people off guard. She is very close to her father in particular and wants to learn a craft just like he has, though has not yet figured out what material she would like to work with.

### KONAR FIG

Konar is Gerald's twin brother. He and his son Jesse had to leave their home and asked Gerald and his family for help. They were offered shelter in return for help around the house. Konar helps with the cooking and cleaning and is currently looking for a job to cover the extra costs. Personality wise, Konar is a bit more relaxed and easygoing compared to Gerald, with less of a temper.

## JESSE FIG

Jesse is a seventeen-year-old male halfling with pale skin, dark hair and blue eyes. Ever since he lost his home, he's become very reserved and does not like to speak to many people. A lot of times he is away from home and comes back late without giving an explanation about where he went. He feels lost and is looking for a purpose.

## ELMORE FAMILY

### LEORA FALLON

Leora Fallon is a female human in her late twenties, with olive skin, medium brown hair and green eyes. She is married to Ylva and has two children with her. Leora met Ylva because she was part of the secret police and was sent to investigate and arrest her. However Ylva managed to impress Leora with her charm and Leora decided not to arrest her, fabricating a lie. Shortly after, the two began dating. Ylva already had two young children from a previous relationship that had failed. Leora quickly grew close to these children and they began to see her as a second mother. Recently however, Leora's deception has been discovered and she has left the secret police, now in hiding together with Ylva and her kids. They are looking to escape Lorvan unseen, hoping to find refuge elsewhere.

### YLVA ELMORE

Ylva Elmore is a female human in her late twenties, with pale skin, strawberry blonde hair and blue eyes. She has two sons from a previous relationship, where her partner left her for someone else. Ylva struggled taking care of the children on her own, so when Leora came into her life and they started dating, she was very grateful for the extra set of hands. Ylva never liked that Leora was part of the secret police and asked her many times to quit, saying they could start over elsewhere. Now, they are forced to do just that, risking their lives for their love.

### IGOR ELMORE

Igor is a six-year-old male human with pale skin, curly blonde hair and blue eyes. He is very sweet, though at times clingy. He has a habit to put all kinds of things in his mouth and is a prime example of a sensory seeking child, something that has put him in danger a couple of times. The current state of affairs confuses him, and he is often scared.

### ANDREAS ELMORE

Andreas is a four-year-old male human with pale skin, curly blonde hair and blue eyes, looking very similar to his older brother. Andreas is often quiet, but when he does make noise he likes to sing. However, while on the run, he has stopped singing out of fear. He does not know what is going on, but he knows when he should be quiet.



## SIDE QUESTS

**Escape the city:** Leora and Ylva need help to get their family safely out of the city. They might ask the heroes for help.

### KASPER OMERO

Kasper Omero is a 38-year-old male human with light skin, long brown hair kept in a ponytail, brown eyes and square glasses. He typically wears a simple white shirt with brown pants, simple boots and a white apron. Most people know him to be a very civil man with good manners and a friendly face. He knows many people around town by name and remembers personal details about most of them. He is the owner of a very well-loved bakery in Lorvan, which is where he can be found most days of the week. Kasper prides himself in being a hard and passionate worker, though with how much Palorva taxes him, it is not always as rewarding as he would like it to be. There are days where he struggles to put food on his own table.

### BREAD MAIL

Kasper is part of a secret resistance network in Lorvan, which seeks to undermine Palorva's reign and keep crucial information out of the hands of the secret police. Kasper contributes by hiding cryptic messages inside the bread he bakes, handing those loaves to the right people. So far the secret police has not caught onto this scheme, and Kasper is incredibly careful about who gets these messages. He is a clever man and has an incredibly strong poker face behind his usual friendly smile.

His biggest ally is Maggie Crister, who delivers the loaves for him. She is also the one gathering most of the information Kasper spreads around. Together with a couple of others around Lorvan, they hope to create an alliance network strong enough to overthrow Palorva.

### SIDE QUEST

**Bread delivery:** Maggie is sick today and cannot deliver any bread. The heroes are asked to step in.

### EFFI AVORI

Effi Avori is a 27-year-old female trollkin with dull green skin, long messy black hair and gray eyes. She has an athletic build and tends to wear dark clothes that are form-fitting, but cover most of her skin. Her troubling past has shaped her to be aloof and hyper-independent, having once stated that she would rather step on glass than trust a stranger. Starting her life in an orphanage as the only one of her kind caused her to feel disconnected from those around her, and whenever she did find a connection, it often proved to be problematic. A lonely, loveless existence is her reality, one she has learned to accept.

## FINDING A PURPOSE

Due to circumstances beyond her control, Effi ended up on the street at the age of 26. Survival became her main priority and theft was her only option, still refusing to seek help from strangers. While she proved to be relatively skilled at robbing people of their hard-earned goods, she was not clever enough to stay off the radar entirely. Seeing a vulnerable person they could exploit, two members of the secret police approached her with an offer. She was to work for them in exchange for a roof above her head and a full stomach every day.

Knowing the power Palorva holds, and having heard stories of those that chose to decline her wishes, Effi reluctantly accepted the offer. It was a reluctance that would soon turn into gratitude, however, as she quickly found that the job came with a sense of power she had not experienced before. She had finally become part of something and had been given a purpose. Now, her efforts are appreciated and such sentiment is openly expressed to her, which only encourages her to continue to work hard. She feels no remorse for those executed as a result of her findings, believing they only have themselves to blame for defying the rules. She makes it a sport to hunt down and bring in as many people as she can, it being a twisted coping mechanism to deal with her upbringing. The more people she outs as traitors, the more her distrust in strangers grows. To her, this job has only proven that which she already knew: you can only ever rely on yourself.

### KEVLAN HODANI

Kevlan Hodani is a 112-year-old male dwarf with pale skin, a mop of messy red hair, bright green eyes and a long, well-kempt beard. Most days he can be seen wearing typical farmer's clothes, and he usually carries a handkerchief with him. Born and raised in the capital city, Kevlan is currently the oldest inhabitant, as most of those he grew up with have long fled the city once Palorva's reign took full effect. While Kevlan has considered this path before, he has never once taken a step forward to follow it. Lorvan is his home, and he hopes to see a day where his city, as well as his country, is freed from the grasp of Dracula's daughter. Until that day, he tries to keep his head down and his hope alive, difficult as that may be at times. So far he has managed to avoid the grasp of despair by remaining calm and kind at all times, passing himself off as a humble farmer.

### BOOK COLLECTOR

While Kevlan tries to keep his head down, he certainly has not obeyed all the rules. In a hidden room underneath his house, he keeps an archive of books and scripts that contain information about Kess before Palorva's reign, as there have been many attempts to erase the country's history. Kevlan considers it his personal duty to protect this knowledge and keep it out of the blood-stained hands of the oppressors.



He has not trusted anyone with this secret, not even his fellow resistance members, nor his best friend Maggie.

## SIDE QUEST

**Short deadline:** Kevlan's farm hand has broken his arm and is unable to work the land. Kevlan needs help harvesting crops before Palorva's minions come and collect the food. If he does not deliver, he could be in serious trouble.

## MAGGIE CRISTER

Maggie Crister is a 71-year-old female human, with dark skin, short gray hair and bright blue eyes. She handmakes most of her patchwork dresses, using scrap fabrics that people gift her. Being the age she is, many people in her direct community respect her. She is known as a never-ending source of wisdom, helping people overcome the many hardships this country's rulers present its inhabitants with. Maggie lives a healthy life, or as healthy as one can live their life when their options are limited. Her age does not slow her down and she is often seen walking across the city with little difficulty.

## TAKING A STAND

Slowly reaching the end of her life, Maggie concluded that it was time to pave a happier path for future generations. She began building a resistance network around the city, gathering brave individuals eager to bring an end to Palorva's tyranny. The network's main objective is to gather knowledge about Palorva and her inner circle, finding their weak points and exploiting them. In addition, the network is used as a communication tool to aid the citizens of Lorvan, spreading tips and tricks on how to most effectively break the rules, how to find help in times of need, and other useful information that might ease one's daily struggles. Maggie is fully dedicated to this cause and is willing to die in order to protect it.

## LENNI MOVARO

Lenni Movaro is a 46-year-old female human with tanned skin, short black hair, dark monolid eyes and a variety of different facial piercings. She wears dark fabrics with subtle hints of red and is usually seen wearing a long cloak. She was still young when Palorva took over Kess and thus barely remembers a time where life has not been cruel to her in some shape or form. A once cheerful child grew pessimistic, until eventually the pessimism took the shape of spite. She became tough to crack, yet a sly expression etched itself onto her face like it was made for her all along. She was not going to let Palorva have all of the fun by herself.

## MISERY PAYS

Innovative and cunning as Lenni is, she found a way to slip between the cracks of tyranny and profit off of the misery without said tyrant noticing. With her mother having worked for an apothecary in her youth, Lenni had just enough knowledge of medicine to be able to create a concoction of herbs strong enough to soothe any misery one might experience. She then sold this concoction to the many desolate people Palorva's reign had produced, and got them hooked on it. Those addicted know better than to run their mouths about Lenni's business, knowing that it would mean the end of their supply. Still, Lenni has to watch her back at all times. She knows that one slip of the tongue could mean the end of her monopoly, and more importantly, her life.

## KORI BASLAN

Kori Baslan is a 57-year-old non-binary elf with brown skin, long white hair kept in a braid, purple eyes, and a prosthetic wooden hand. They wear a simple blue tunic with a white undershirt, brown trousers and black boots. They survive by running errands for all kinds of people, which has them on their feet most of the day. It is not the kind of job they would have wanted, but the only one they know how to do. When talking to customers, Kori puts on a nice and polite front, but when their back is turned away they are frequently exasperated. Life in Lorvan has worn them down and they are desperately looking for a way out.

## A TRAGIC PUSH

Most of their life, Kori has tried to stay out of politics. It was not something they were interested in, nor did they feel like they could make a change. That was until two years ago, when their parents were being accused of breaking the law. Secret police invaded Kori's home, killed their parents in front of their eyes and then cut off Kori's hand as a warning. It was a traumatic experience they do not like to bring up in conversation. From there, their sentiment towards politics changed, and when they learned of the resistance network they immediately joined. They see it as their ticket out of Kess, their one chance to leave all the horrors behind and start fresh.

## SIDE QUEST

**Miscalculation:** Kori has miscalculated and taken on two jobs that start at the same time. Wanting to keep both customers happy, they ask the heroes if they can execute one of the jobs on their behalf. They will get the payment Kori is supposed to receive.



## TIMOTHY ALDER

Timothy Alder is a 44-year-old male halfling with light skin, receding blonde hair and blue eyes. He wears typical commoner clothing to help him blend into the crowd while he spies on his fellow citizens. Timothy is a miserable individual, incapable of empathy or any kind of positive emotion. He has given his life to Dracula's daughter in an act of self-preservation, but in the process he lost his sense of self. The passing of time has worn him down, and the atrocities he has witnessed and been complicit in now leave him completely cold.

## A NOSE FOR BETRAYAL

Timothy is one of the more experienced secret police members, having gained a higher rank and the respect that comes with it. Many secret agents who are there against their will have been blackmailed by Timothy. Not only that, Timothy frequently tests the loyalty of his colleagues. Quite a few heads have rolled because Timothy pointed a finger at them.

## REGINA VALKER

Regina Valker is a 64-year-old female human with pale skin, short gray hair and hazel eyes. She wears a white blouse with billowing sleeves and a corset, a long black shirt and heeled black boots. When Regina was in her early twenties, she began a career as a bookkeeper for various city officials, a job she truly did enjoy. Unfortunately this enjoyment was short-lived. Palorva took the reins and forced Regina to become a tax collector instead. Her once kind personality has now been warped into that of an irritable old woman with no passion left in her bones.

## A LONELY EXISTENCE

Tax collectors are never popular and Regina certainly is no exception. Any attempts she has made in the past to form connections failed when the time came for her to knock on people's doors. Regina quickly discovered Palorva's greed, and while at first people understood the sentiment of not shooting the messenger, metaphorical crossbows were raised anyway once there was little left to give. Now, she has given up on finding companionship and keeps to herself.

## BORIS "BOBBY" TOSK

Boris "Bobby" Tosk is an 82-year-old human male with pale skin, blue eyes and just a few hairs clinging to his scalp. He wears a green shirt that has clearly seen better days, comfortable brown pants and a pair of well-loved sandals. He is blind in one eye and uses a cane when he walks. Many people around the city know Boris well. He is a sight for sore eyes to many and a beloved member of the community. Boris rarely gives his opinion about things and encourages people to think for themselves. He is known for his calm nature, to the point where no one has ever seen him angry.

## SOCIAL BUTTERFLY

Boris is a true people person. It is hard to find him at his home, as most days he is having tea or dinner over at someone else's. Seeing what Palorva has done to his city and his people has saddened him greatly. He considers it his job to tell people tales of what life was like before her tyranny swept across the nation, and every day he checks in with those he knows to be struggling the most. Boris cares for his people, and his people care for him in return.

## SIDE QUEST

**Check-in:** A member of the community has not been heard from in a while. Boris asks the heroes to go to their house and investigate.

## ILYANA SALAZAR

Ilyana Salazar is a 25-year-old human woman with light skin, medium length blonde hair and green eyes. She wears a wine red shirt with brown pants, simple shoes and a long black trench coat. Ilyana comes from a humble upbringing, sharing her childhood home with her parents and younger brother. From a young age, compliance has been instilled in her as a much needed survival instinct. She has always kept her head down and her voice quiet, careful not to make any waves.

## BLACKMAIL

Her brother, on the other hand, is quite vocal about his discontent, and this has led to Ilyana receiving blackmail from Timothy Alder. In the letter, handed to her by a stranger, it stated that she could either join the secret police, or watch her brother get arrested and executed. The choice was a reluctant, but easy one. It has been three months since she has joined and every day is harder than the last. She loathes the job and frustratingly cannot tell anyone about her struggles. The only source of relief has been Boris Tosk, the community's beloved elder, who has checked in with her multiple times after noticing a change in her behavior. While Ilyana cannot tell him the true reason for this change, he has been offering a listening ear for whatever other troubles plague her mind.



## UBRIK VORONOV

Ubrik Voronov is a 75-year-old male dwarf with brown skin, long dark brown hair, a short beard, and brown eyes. His clothes are practical and comfortable, in neutral tones. He wears a belt with several potion bottles hanging off of it, as well as other medical tools and pouches. People naturally feel comfortable around Ubrik, who has quite a reassuring energy about him. He is known to be level-headed, knowledgeable, and is especially great with children.

### TRAINED HEALER

Ubrik comes from a long line of healers and started his education when he was only twelve years old. His methods include natural medicine such as herbal potions, as well as magical healing. While his predecessors all had an innate source of magic to tap from, Ubrik never developed his ability, instead having to rely on spellbooks and scrolls. It is a flaw he has learned to accept and overcome. Ubrik is an essential part of the community, having injured and sick residents over at his home daily. Work never stops for him, but he considers it a worthy profession and carries a sense of responsibility and duty with him.

## MORGANA

The mistress of tarot, keeper of the Shadowcroft Arcanum, Morgana is a powerful arch-witch hailing from the plane of Shadowcroft. Raised in the courts of Kamelot and educated by forbidden texts, Morgana blends her intimate understanding of magic with the cunning of a skilled politician.

Although she was once a trusted advisor to Pendragon, they long ago had a falling out. Pendragon was slain shortly before Dracula twelve years ago, taking care of one of Morgana's problems. Now she intends to become empress of both Shadowcroft and Ancerra by any means necessary.

### VALUES, DRIVES, AND QUIRKS

To determine Morgana's values, drives, and quirks each time she meets with the heroes, shuffle a tarot deck's Major Arcanas. The top card determines her values, drives, and quirks.

#### 1. THE MAGICIAN

**Values:**

- Disloyal.
- Risky.
- Pragmatic.

**Drives:**

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

**Quirks:**

- Claims (falsely) to be able to see the future.

#### 2. THE PRIESTESS

**Values:**

- Cautious.
- Logical.
- Disloyal.

**Drives:**

- **Legacy.** Morgana intends to cement her name in both Shadowcroft's and Ancerra's world history.

**Quirks:**

- Endlessly fascinated with the interconnected workings of the universe, Morgana will share her latest theories with anyone who will listen.

#### 3. THE MOTHER

**Values:**

- Pragmatic.
- Loyal.
- Traditional.

**Drives:**

- **Knowledge.** Morgana believes that acquiring enough knowledge of the world will provide her with the means to rule it.

**Quirks:**

- Endlessly fascinated with the interconnected workings of the universe, Morgana will share her latest theories with anyone who will listen.

#### 4. THE EMPEROR

**Values:**

- Risky.
- Personal Gain.
- Pragmatic.

**Drives:**

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

**Quirks:**

- Morgana is physically incapable of making eye contact, instead looking slightly past someone.

#### 5. THE PROPHET

**Values:**

- Greater Good.
- Risky.
- Change.

**Drives:**

- **Escape.** Morgana is looking for a way to escape mortality and transcend to godhood.

**Quirks:**

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.



## 6. THE LOVERS

### Values:

- Risky.
- Honorable.
- Traditional.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is extremely superstitious, knocking on wood, throwing salt over her shoulder, and some wildly outlandish practices.

## 7. THE CHARIOT

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Risky.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Exploration.** Morgana wishes to explore the entirety of her domain, both Shadowcroft and Ancerra.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 8. JUSTICAR

### Values:

- Logical.
- Disloyal.
- Cautious.

### Drives:

- **Ambition.** Morgana intends to rule Shadowcroft, Ancerra, and the whole cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 9. THE HERMIT

### Values:

- Cautious.
- Traditional.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Recognition.** Morgana knows that she is destined to rule, but wishes for all to recognize this.

### Quirks:

- Morgana often makes dramatic exits, then returns because she forgot something.

## 10. THE WHEEL

### Values:

- Risky.
- Logic.
- Greater Good.

### Drives:

- **Legacy.** Morgana intends to cement her name in both Shadowcroft's and Ancerra's world history.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is extremely superstitious, knocking on wood, throwing salt over her shoulder, and some wildly outlandish practices.

## 11. VIOLENCE

### Values:

- Disloyal.
- Emotional.
- Risky.

### Drives:

- **Justice.** The cosmos is full of crimes and imbalances, and Morgana intends to right these wrongs.

### Quirks:

- Morgana can be found often loudly talking to herself, at times with her own reflection.

## 12. THE HANGED MAN

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Change.
- Personal Gain.

### Drives:

- **Protection.** Morgana believes the world to be under grave threat and sees herself as its protector.

### Quirks:

- Morgana refuses to sit on anything other than the ground.

## 13. DEATH

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Cautious.
- Disloyal.

### Drives:

- **Conquest.** Morgana believes it to be her birthright: She will one day rule as she is destined to do.

### Quirks:

- Morgana has an explosively negative emotional reaction to dairy.



## 14. TEMPERANCE

### Values:

- Logical.
- Cautious.
- Traditional.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana swears she once dated a ghost and still consults it for advice. Heroes that can sense undead know this to be untrue.

## 15. THE DEVIL

### Values:

- Logical.
- Personal Gain.
- Risky.

### Drives:

- **Revenge.** Morgana feels that she was robbed of her birthright to rule the cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana often makes dramatic exits, then returns because she forgot something.

## 16. THE HOUSE OF GOD

### Values:

- Cautious.
- Traditional.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Ambition.** Morgana intends to rule Shadowcroft, Ancerra, and the whole cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana always refers to herself in the third person.

## 17. THE STAR

### Values:

- Risky.
- Loyal.
- Honorable.

### Drives:

- **Exploration.** Morgana wishes to explore the entirety of her domain, both Shadowcroft and Ancerra.

### Quirks:

- Claims (falsely) to be able to see the future.

## 18. THE MOON

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Change.
- Pragmatism.

### Drives:

- **Power.** Morgana seeks to exert sheer power over Norspina.

### Quirks:

- Morgana believes that the moon Scarlan is haunted.

## 19. THE SUN

### Values:

- Greater Good.
- Loyal.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Escape.** Morgana is looking for a way to escape mortality and transcend to godhood.

### Quirks:

- Morgana has an explosively negative emotional reaction to dairy.

## 20. JUDGMENT

### Values:

- Disloyal.
- Cautious.
- Logical.

### Drives:

- **Conquest.** Morgana believes it to be her birthright: She will one day rule as she is destined to do.

### Quirks:

- Morgana is physically incapable of making eye contact, instead looking slightly past someone.

## 21. CREATION

### Values:

- Risky.
- Honorable.
- Change.

### Drives:

- **Duty.** Morgana believes it to be her duty to rule the cosmos with a firm and just hand.

### Quirks:

- Morgana insists on being paid in small or valueless objects, such as acorns or pocket lint.



## 22. THE ORPHAN

### Values:

- Emotional.
- Personal Gain.
- Change.

### Drives:

- **Revenge.** Morgana feels that she was robbed of her birthright to rule the cosmos.

### Quirks:

- Morgana insists on being paid in small or valueless objects, such as acorns or pocket lint.

## PERSONALITY AND APPEARANCE

Morgana was raised as a court noble. She is highly competent at hiding her true motives or current emotional response to a situation. She is willing to use any method at her disposal to achieve an end goal that she has her mind set on, but she is also deliberative and is willing to suffer a setback to an immediate goal if it makes an important long-term objective more likely. Depending on the situation and what might garner the best results, Morgana often plays the role of commandeering questgiver, flirtatious courtier, or blackmailing crime lord.

Morgana is a thin, courtly human woman of average height with pale skin, scarlet hair, and dark eyes. She usually wears elegant dresses that often have protective magic sewn into the fabric.

She can summon forth forbidden magic from the lost libraries of Mithaven at will, altering her appearance in a few key ways. She grows larger, looming twelve feet high, and dark, ravenlike wings sprout from her upper back.

In both her normal form and her empowered form, Morgana typically keeps at least one tarot deck on hand at all times.

## MOTIVATION AND GOALS

Morgana is deeply jaded and has two simple goals: Defeat her enemies and become the benevolent dictator of Avalon. She sees Palorva and Lilith as an existential threat, not just to Avalon but to the whole cosmos. Once Lilith and Palorva are defeated, Morgana intends to assume rulership first of Avalon, then of the whole of Shadowcroft, and then perhaps of Ancerra too. Under her totalitarian beneficence, she is certain that she can restore prosperity and peace to the land.

## BACKSTORY

Morgana was born into a family of lesser nobles in the kingdom of Avalon. While she was well looked after in her early childhood, her first formative memory was the destruction of her family's town at the hands of wyvern-riding black knights. By sheer luck, she was the only survivor.

She set out to Pendragon's capital city, Kamelot, and sought shelter in his court. Constantine Pendragon, along with his wife Lunette, readily took in Morgana. She was raised as one of their own, alongside their son, Uther. While Uther studied and trained to eventually become the next king, Morgana was tutored in the ways of magic by Constantine Pendragon's advisor, a mysterious wizard named Merlin.

## EDUCATION

During her time growing up in the court, Morgana witnessed many types of corruption and nepotism. She held quiet misgivings about this, but never spoke out against it. In a way, she was a beneficiary of favoritism herself, trained by the greatest wizard in the land. Yet she always wondered if there was a way for a great leader to be above corruption, and worried that perhaps the only way was for the leader to rule with tyrannical discipline.

In her studies with Merlin, Morgana took to magic with intuitive ease, and by the time she was a teen, she was Merlin's equal. Merlin, in an effort to continue her education, suggested that she delve deep into the lost libraries of Mithaven, an ancient city that had long since fallen into ruin. Morgana set out for Mithaven at once.

## SHADOWCROFT ARCANUM

The forbidden knowledge that Morgana discovered in Mithaven revolutionized her understanding of magic. Morgana became deeply attuned to the workings of the plane of Shadowcroft and transcribed what became known as the Shadowcroft Arcanum: a 78-card tarot deck that mediums could use to predict the future or offer advice to those who sought it. In the deepest recesses of the lost libraries of Mithaven, Morgana became the Mistress of Tarot. Although she did not create tarot herself, she mastered it on a level that none before or since can claim to have even approached.

## ADVISOR TO Uther

When she returned to Kamelot, Constantine Pendragon had passed on in his old age, and his son, Uther, took the throne. After Merlin vanished in an arcane catastrophe in his laboratory, Morgana took over as Uther's personal advisor and arcanist. From the first day of the arrangement, Uther pressured his adopted sister to perform a tarot reading for him, and Morgana continually refused, assuring him that he did not want to tempt fate by doing so.

## THE BEGINNING OF THE END

After months of resisting, Morgana finally gave into Uther's demands and performed a reading for him. This was the only time that Morgana ever lied when telling a recipient what the cards foretold. She could not bring herself to tell Uther the truth: His own pride and personal desires would destroy first his marriage, then his kingdom, and finally his sanity.



And yet, it was perhaps Morgana's own deception that started Pendragon's tragedy. Because she lied to him and told him that the kingdom of Avalon would reach greatness never before seen under his leadership, Uther often cited Morgana's prophecy as justification for taking great risks.

After his first few economic and military ventures led to times of great difficulty in Avalon, Uther confronted Morgana. Unwilling to admit that she lied, Morgana doubled down on Uther's destiny to become great. Uther took this as reassurance that these trials were something of a crucible for him, and both he and his kingdom would come out stronger for it. Uther's wife, Igrayne, cautioned him against any rash action, but Uther ignored her, suggesting that she should be supportive as Morgana was.

In fact, Igrayne's constant level-headedness and Morgana's own inability to admit that she lied eventually led Uther to develop feelings for his adopted sister. Morgana rejected these advances, reminding Uther that Igrayne was pregnant with Uther's first child. Unable to deter him, Morgana eventually left Camelot.

## IN EXILE

While in her self-imposed exile, Morgana traveled the kingdom of Avalon and the other realms of Shadowcroft. She went on many adventures, spread her knowledge of tarot among other witches, druids, and soothsayers, and carefully studied the systems of power in other nations throughout the plane. Her observations led her to conclude what she suspected as a teenage student: a leader that seeks advice from members of a counsel might make more informed decisions, but also opens themselves up to corruption and political machinations. The only way to be truly free from corruption is to rule as a tyrant god would, detached from their subjects and in disdain of any outside counsel.

## LILITH

When Morgana finally returned to Camelot, Queen Igrayne was nowhere to be found. Uther had taken on another advisor and lover, Lilian. Morgana quickly saw through Lilian's disguise: This was Lilith, the mother of vampires in Shadowcroft. Although Morgana tried to convince Uther, he rejected her as delusional and reminded her that she abandoned him; why should he trust her now?

No matter what Morgana did, Lilith's grip on Uther was too strong. He passed increasingly draconian edicts and the kingdom of Avalon was plunged into suffering. Morgana went into hiding, hoping that she would one day find allies that might help her repair the damage done to her kingdom.

## THE MELDING

When Dracula meddled in powers of cosmic proportions, he drew the entire plane of Shadowcroft to Ancerra. Camelot became the primary point of contact between the two planes, with Pendragon's castle phasing in and out of existence in Ancerra at different points across Norspina.

Lilith and Dracula met and formed an alliance, sealing Avalon's fate.

Over the past twelve years, Shadowcroft being melded with Norspina has become an everyday reality. The teleporting city of Camelot is a central hub that wealthy individuals use to quickly travel across central Norspina.

## BATTLING MORGANA

Morgana is a terrifying foe. She is cunning, very intelligent, and utterly ruthless. She will manipulate her arcanas to directly counter the heroes' abilities and will use her Warp Space reaction to keep melee fighters at a distance. She is able to magically spy on the heroes while in her mansion, so she is aware of any abilities that the heroes use while exploring the lair.

## MINOR ARCANAS

When Morgana flips over a new Minor Arcanas card, it changes her mechanics in some small way. Consult the following table to see how her stats change.

In each case, the numeric value of the card revealed equals X in the listed effect. Face cards all have a numeric value of 12. Aces have a numeric value of 13.

Suit	Effect
Cups	Regain X Hit Points when drawn
Pentagrams	Morgana gains +X to saving throws against spells and other magical effects.
Swords	+X when dealing slashing damage
Wands	Morgana reduces damage from spells and other magical effects by X.

## MAJOR ARCANAS

When Morgana flips over a new Major Arcanas card, it changes her mechanics in some notable way. Consult the following list to see how her stats change or if she gains a new ability. These abilities immediately end when the card is discarded.

## CHARIOT

Morgana's walking speed doubles and she cannot be attacked reactively.

## CREATION

Morgana summons a Clay Golem that obeys her unspoken commands.

## DEATH

Magical darkness extends from Morgana in a 30 ft radius sphere. She can see unimpeded in this darkness.



## DEVIL

Morgana is no longer immune to being charmed or frightened. However, she can cast one 1st or 2nd-level spell on each of her turns as a free action, without expending a spell slot.

## EMPEROR

Morgana gains +2 Charisma and deals an additional 4 psychic damage on all her attacks.

## HANGED MAN

Morgana becomes undead. She cannot be poisoned or stunned while undead.

## HERMIT

Morgana regains an expended use of her Legendary Resistance.

## HOUSE OF GOD

Morgana automatically casts *magic circle*, ignoring the normal casting time and materials. The spell immediately ends when this card is discarded.

## JUDGMENT

Morgana gains a special attack that she can make on each of her turns in place of a Black Blade attack.

**Judge.** *Ranged Magical Weapon:* +14 to hit, range 60 ft., one target. **Hit:** Xd10 cold damage, where X equals 1 + double the number of Psyche Talents the target creature has.

## JUSTICAR

When a creature hits Morgana, she may choose for it to become a crit instead. If she does, the creature takes 7 (2d6) psychic damage and gains Fear equal to the damage it took.

## LOVERS

At the start of each of her turns while active, Morgana chooses a creature to be her Soul Mate. Whenever Morgana takes damage, if the Soul Mate is within 120 ft of Morgana, then Morgana the creature must make a DC 22 Charisma save. On a fail, Morgana takes half damage and her Soul Mate takes the rest of the damage.

## MAGICIAN

Morgana becomes proficient in all saving throws.

## MOON

Morgana turns into an **Adult Silver Dragon** (MM p. 117). She gains all of its stats except for its Intelligence, Wisdom, and Charisma, her current hit points, and her damage and condition immunities, which she retains. She also retains her Minor and Major Arcanas abilities.

## MOTHER

When another creature within 60 ft of Morgana uses a spell to restore hit points, Morgana also regains that much hit points.

## ORPHAN

Morgana gains the following attack, which she can use in place of a Black Blade attack.

**Bewitch.** A creature within 60 ft of Morgana must make a DC 22 Intelligence saving throw. On a fail, the creature is charmed by Morgana until the end of its next turn. If the creature failed by 7 or more, the creature will actively attack any other creature threatening Morgana.

## PRIESTESS

Each time Morgana shuffles her Minor Arcanas deck, all creatures within 120 ft of her gain 1d6 Fear.

## PROPHET

Morgana gains the following reaction.

**Portent.** When a creature rolls a d20 to attack Morgana, after the die was cast, she can force the creature to reroll the attack, taking the lower result.

## STAR

Morgana gains an additional ability that she can use in place of one of her Black Blade attacks.

**Guiding Star.** A creature concentrating on a spell within 60 ft of Morgana must make a DC 22 WIS saving throw. On a failure, the creature loses concentration on its spells.

## SUN

Morgana gains the *sacred flame* cantrip.

## TEMPERANCE

Morgana may choose to ignore any condition inflicted on her.

## VIOLENCE

Morgana deals an additional 10 damage with her attacks and takes 5 additional damage from attacks.

## WHEEL

When Morgana damages a creature that has at least 1 Psyche Talent, that creature takes an additional 4 (1d8) radiant damage and is also frightened of Morgana until the end of its next turn.



# MORGANA

Medium humanoid, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 20 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 484 (52d8+260)

**Speed** 40 ft., Fly 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	19 (+4)	20 (+5)	23 (+6)	23 (+6)	24 (+7)

**Saving Throws** Wisdom +13, Charisma +14

**Skills** Arcana +20, Deception +14, Insight +13, Perception +13, Persuasion +21, Religion +13

**Damage Immunities** cantrips

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened, paralyzed, petrified

**Senses** darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 23

**Languages** All, Telepathy 60 ft.

**Challenge** 22

**Proficiency Bonus** +7

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Morgana fails a saving throw, she may choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Morgana has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Immutable.** Morgana's form cannot be changed against her will.

**Minor Arcanas.** Each time Morgana starts her turn, she automatically discards her current Minor Arcana and flips over 1, 2, or 3 Minor Arcana cards from her tarot deck (choosing whether she draws the card or flips over another card each time). If there are none left, shuffle the discard pile. This affects her stats as noted in the Minor Arcanas section above.

**Arcane Antibodies.** When Morgana takes damage from a spell, she regains one expended spell slot of a level less than the level of the spell that damaged her.

**Gemini Tarot.** When Morgana has less than one half her maximum Hit Points, she may have two Major Arcanas simultaneously in effect. When discarding a card due to her Major Arcana action or due to her current hit points healing over half her maximum, she may choose which card to discard.

**Spellcaster.** Morgana is a 20th-level spellcaster. Charisma is her spellcasting modifier (save DC 22, +14 on spell attack rolls). She can cast the following spells, ignoring any material components.

- Cantrips (at will): *chill touch* (4d8), *eldritch blast* (4 beams), *fire bolt* (4d10), *mage hand*, *mending*, *ray of frost* (4d8), *thaumaturgy*
- 1st level (4 slots): *bane*, *charm person*, *comprehend languages*, *detect magic*, *disguise self*, *hideous laughter*, *shield*, *thunderwave*
- 2nd level (3 slots): *arcanist's magic aura*, *blur*, *mirror image*, *misty step*, *moonbeam*
- 3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fireball*, *lightning bolt*, *vampiric touch*
- 4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye*, *confusion*, *death ward*, *dimension door*, *freedom of movement*, *wall of fire*
- 5th level (2 slots): *dream*, *hold monster*, *screaming teleportation circle*
- 6th level (2 slots): *chain lightning*, *true seeing*
- 7th level (1 slot): *lobotomize*, *prismatic spray*, *reverse gravity*
- 8th level (1 slot): *mind blank*
- 9th level (1 slot): *weird*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Morgana may use her Major Arcanas ability. Then she may make four attacks with her Black Blade. She may replace any number of these attacks with casting a spell of 2nd level or lower.

**Major Arcanas.** Morgana can discard her current Major Arcana card and draw a new Major Arcana card (if there are none left, shuffle the discard pile). This affects her stats as noted in the Major Arcanas section above.

**Black Blade.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8+4) slashing damage plus 11 (2d10) cold damage plus 13 (2d12) necrotic damage.

## REACTIONS

**Warp Space.** When a creature moves within 10 ft of Morgana, she may reactively teleport it up to 20 ft in a direction of her choice.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Morgana can take 3 Legendary Actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Spent legendary actions are regained at the start of each turn.

**Lesser Magic.** Morgana casts a cantrip or 1st-level spell.

**Minor Arcanas.** Morgana uses her Minor Arcanas ability.

**Major Arcanas (2 Actions).** Morgana uses her Major Arcanas action.

**Arcane Wellspring (2 actions).** Morgana rolls 1d10 and regains a spell slot equal to the number rolled (10 = no spell slots regained).



# NANDOR VLADISLOV

Nandor Vladislov is a vampire that lives alone in the mountains of Noord. He kept Pietro Amadeus and Joana Harker as guests for some time during their adventures before Pietro became Dracula. Life before Dracula, and life under Palorva's reign, is much the same for Nandor. His lifestyle as a hermit is largely unaffected by who rules which nation.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Nandor is a deeply emotional vampire who often does not think his decisions through.
- This leads him to take wild risks frequently.

### DRIVES:

- **Survival.** Nandor primarily wants to survive in solitude. If left in peace in the mountains of Noord, he poses little threat to anyone.

## APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY

Nandor appears to be a human in his mid-fifties. He has wild, unkempt black hair and exclusively wears fine noble clothing, even though he has not been involved in any court or politics of any kind for over three hundred years.

Nandor's time in solitude, living alone in the mountains of Noord, has made him extremely eccentric. His personality flips rapidly between nonsensical, jovial, and menacing.

## MOTIVATIONS AND GOALS

In his current life of relative solitude, Nandor has little in the way of goals. He simply lives one year at a time, capturing stray adventurers, befriendng and drinking from them for a time, and then turning them loose to go on their merry way, or killing them if he dislikes them. Nandor is fairly content under Palorva's empire, but does not wish to get involved in international politics.

## BACKSTORY

Nandor Vladislov's backstory is largely irrelevant, and he has told so many stories about his past that he no longer even remembers what is true and what is a fabrication that he made up for the purpose of entertainment. As he is around eight hundred years old, he could have had an incredibly storied life even without any elaboration. As it is, Nandor makes up any tale that he thinks might entertain, or at least provoke a reaction from, his current company. He often asks his guests about their adventures, then proceeds to tell stories about his own adventures that are extremely similar, but slightly more exaggerated.

## PARANOIA

A strange, fiendish entity from Shadowcroft, Paranoia is the incarnation of suspicion, fear, and irrationality. They hide their face behind a plague mask that seems to be made of humanoid leather. The unnerving mask notwithstanding, Paranoia is a fairly unassuming figure. They typically wear ragged green or black robes and stand just under 5 ft tall. Paranoia is soft-spoken but contrarian, often egging on the underdog in a verbal confrontation and trying to drive wedges between friends.

After Dracula's fall, Lilith approached Paranoia and brought them into contact with Palorva. Palorva, well aware that Lilith might try to undermine her, began seeing enemies everywhere. She concluded that this was because of Paranoia's presence, so she sent Paranoia as an ambassador to Morgana. Morgana, in an effort to keep her enemies close, took Paranoia on as an advisor, which ultimately led to her demise as she became more and more unhinged.





## FIGHTING PARANOIA

### REGIONAL EFFECTS

The heroes may notice that other humanoids nearby begin acting differently as well. In a five mile radius from Paranoia, humanoids act with greater fear and suspicion in all of their interpersonal interactions. This may manifest itself in the form of an unreasonable merchant, an aggressive city guard, or a former ally who now is unwilling to work with the heroes. This effect may give the heroes a clue that something is off, and may open additional room for discussion wherein you may drive wedges between the heroes.

### PREYING ON CONFLICT

When Paranoia is within five miles of the heroes, they begin sowing discord among them by her very proximity. Whenever the heroes are uncertain about a course of action - especially if there is disagreement between them - add more uncertainty to the situation by playing up whichever side appears to be less popular among your players. Narratively, this represents Paranoia's influence on them even when she is not actively present.

### METAGAME PARANOIA

If you wish, consider using metagame tricks to increase the paranoia that your players experience themselves. Set up a battle map that you end up not using. Ask for Wisdom checks or Initiative rolls, say "Interesting" or something else vaguely cryptic while pretending to make notes behind a GM screen, and use other real-world devices to make the players feel ill at ease.

## PARANOIA'S TACTICS

Paranoia fights on the cautious side, targeting heroes with lower defenses and trying to stay out of melee combat with heavy hitters. Paranoia is at their strongest when the heroes are already suspicious of one another. Paranoia tries to quickly enchant the strongest melee fighters and turn them against the party's casters and healers.





# PARANOIA

Medium undead, chaotic evil

**Armor Class** 15

**Hit Points** 150 (20d8+60)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	18 (+4)	20 (+5)

**Saving Throws** Dex +10, Wis +9, Cha +10

**Skills** Deception +10, Intimidation +10, Perception +9, Stealth +10

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, psychic

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** truesight 30 ft., passive Perception 19

**Languages** All

**Challenge** 16 (15,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +5

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** When Paranoia fails a saving throw, they may choose to succeed instead.

**Magic Resistance.** Paranoia has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Meat Shield.** While possessing a target, any damage dealt to the possessed body deals half damage to Paranoia. When the body loses half of the hit points it had at the time of being possessed, the possession immediately ends and Paranoia is pushed to an unoccupied space within 5ft of the possessed creature. Furthermore, while possessing a target, Paranoia regains 5 (1d10) hit points at the start of each of her turns.

**Psion.** Paranoia can cast the following spells using Charisma (+10 on spell attack rolls, spell save DC 18).

- (At Will) *blur*, *charm person*, *detect thoughts*, *misty step*
- (3/Rest) *dominate person*, *fear*
- (1/Rest) *lobotomize*

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Paranoia can make four Throttle or Seed of Doubt attacks. Paranoia may replace one of these attacks with an at-will spell.

**Throttle.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d8+5) necrotic plus 9 (2d8) psychic damage, and the creature must make a DC 18 Intelligence saving throw. On a failure, it gains 2 Fear.

**Seed of Doubt.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, range 90 ft., one target. *Hit:* Target creature cannot receive healing, buffs, the Help action, or other benefits from their allies until after the end of the creature's next turn.

**Horrifying Visage.** One creature within 30 feet of Paranoia must make a DC 18 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, the creature takes 22 (5d8) psychic damage and is frightened of Paranoia for one minute. The creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

**Possess.** Paranoia enters the space of a target creature within 5 feet of them and that creature must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, Paranoia takes control of the target's body. At the start of each of the target's turns while possessed, it must repeat this saving throw. If it succeeds, then the target may act of its own accord. If it fails, then the target must act in a fashion of Paranoia's choosing.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Paranoia can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Paranoia regains spent legendary actions at the start of their turn.

**Stalk.** Paranoia may move up to their speed then make a Throttle attack.

**Ghostly Wail (Costs 2 Actions).** Each creature within 30 ft radius of Paranoia must make a DC 18 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, a creature takes 22 (5d8) psychic damage and is frightened until the end of their next turn. On a success, a creature takes half damage and is not frightened.

**Unnerve (Costs 2 Actions).** One creature within 90 feet of Paranoia must make a DC 18 Sanity saving throw. On a failure, the creature gains a randomly determined condition until the end of their next turn.

### 1d6 Condition

1. Blinded
2. Deafened
3. Frightened
4. Poisoned
5. Paralyzed
6. Stunned



# THE RINGMASTER

*There once was a master of a ring, she liked to dance and she liked to sing. She wished for wealth and she wished for fame, and told three fiends her soul was to claim. But when they found out she had oversold, they sought her out on her pile of gold. One took her life and one took her soul, one undid her death and made her tall. They said "you've made your bed and thus, from this day on you will work for us."*

In Shadowcroft, the story of the Ringmaster has been used as a cautionary tale about greed for centuries, but few who have actually encountered her lived to tell the story. The Ringmaster was once an ordinary woman leading a traveling circus. Obsessed with getting more visitors and gaining fame, she promised her soul to three different hellish entities in exchange for these things, deals that none of the fiends knew had been made with others. So, when the time came for the fiends to collect their part of the deal, they found themselves surprised to know they had been tricked. They banded together and killed the Ringmaster, turning her into a tall undead clown-like creature with sharp teeth and spindly limbs. They bound her to them and sent her back out into the world to collect souls.

There are not many details known about The Ringmaster, though one survivor noted that she is terrifyingly charismatic and kept referring to the party as her audience, almost as if she is perpetually stuck in her role. Aside from the unsettling nursery rhyme, there is one more tale that gets passed around: if you hear the faint notes of carnival music drift on the wind, it is too late to run.





# THE RINGMASTER

*Large undead, chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 19 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 210 (20d10+100)

**Speed** 45 ft., Climb 35 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	22 (+6)

**Saving Throws** Dex +12, Con +11, Int +13, Wis +11, Cha +14

**Skills** Deception +12, Intimidation +12, Performance +12, Persuasion +12

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Damage Immunities** necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** magical darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** All

**Challenge** 18 (20,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +6

## FEATURES

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If the Ringmaster fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**High Jumper.** The Ringmaster can jump up to her movement speed, either vertically or horizontally.

**False Face.** The Ringmaster can change her shape at will into that of a normal looking ringmaster. She keeps her stats, but then goes from Large to Medium, and loses 5 feet of movement.

**Spider Crawl.** With her climbing speed, the Ringmaster can crawl onto vertical surfaces or even crawl upside down.

**Soul Sucker.** When a creature drops to 0 hit points within 30 feet of the Ringmaster, they suffer a 1d4+1 penalty to death saves while they are unconscious. When they die within the same range of the Ringmaster, the Ringmaster consumes their soul. They cannot be resurrected afterwards.

**Regeneration.** The Ringmaster regains 10 hit points at the start of her turn if she has at least 1 hit point.

If the Ringmaster takes radiant damage, this trait doesn't function at the start of the Ringmaster's next turn.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The Ringmaster makes three Fire Whip attacks, or one Fire Whip attack and one Applause attack.

**Fire Whip.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, reach 15 ft, one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage.

**Applause.** The Ringmaster forces a creature within 30 feet to mindlessly applaud. The creature must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failure, they take 33 (6d10) psychic damage and become incapacitated until the end of their next turn. On a success, they take half damage and are not incapacitated.

**Forced Laughter.** The Ringmaster decides all creatures within 30 feet of her are to be her audience and forces them to laugh. Creatures within range must make a DC 20 Charisma saving throw. On a failed save, a creature takes 27 (6d8) psychic damage and has disadvantage on all attacks, skill checks and saving throws until the end of their next turn.

**Puppeteer (Recharge 6).** The Ringmaster attempts to take over a creature's body and use them for her own gain. One creature within 30 feet of the Ringmaster must make a DC 20 Wisdom saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) necrotic damage on a failure or half damage on a success. On a failure, they become charmed and must then spend their turns attacking their allies. They can repeat this saving throw at the end of their turn. On a success, the effect ends.

## REACTIONS

The Ringmaster can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. The Ringmaster regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Move.** The Ringmaster moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Fire Whip.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +11 to hit, Range 15 ft, one target. *Hit:* 14 (2d8+5) bludgeoning damage and 7 (2d6) fire damage.



# SQUICK CRAVENHIDE

Squick is but a humble gretchling who manages Dracula's Court with shocking efficiency. Having been resurrected, he is Palorva's chief administrator, and his greatest responsibility is weeding out any disloyalty among Palorva's allies, informants, or connections.

While he is remarkably skilled at doing so, he maintains the demeanor of an annoyingly obsequious scribe and suffers a great deal of physical abuse at the hands of Palorva and the other powerful members of his inner circle. Squick endures this abuse, knowing that it makes him appear weak and unthreatening; he then utilizes this appearance to cunningly manipulate other courtiers and ensure that no one ever becomes too powerful or too disloyal.

Palorva, for her part, finds Squick annoying but indispensable, and so Squick's position as one of Palorva's most trusted courtiers is secure.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Squick is very cautious and makes sure that his plans are always optimized for Palorva's best interests.
- Squick tends to be very cautious, only taking calculated risks when the reward is undeniably worth the uncertainty.

### DRIVES:

- **Ambition.** Squick is content being an advisor to the most powerful warlord in Ancerra. This proximity to power allows him unchecked influence.

## BACKSTORY

Squick grew up part of a nomadic clan of gretchlings. They survived by their wits and their sheer determination, scavenging and repairing discarded objects whenever they could so that they could trade or sell them later on.

Squick himself was always the most cunning of his kin and had a gift for acquiring information and using it to profit himself. By the time he was an adult he had an oddly expansive understanding of the local geopolitical situation and its major players.

When Dracula first came to power, he often traveled incognito in order to gain intelligence and find potential allies. After meeting the stranger on the road a couple times, Squick deduced his identity. The next time Dracula came across Squick's family, Squick slipped him a sealed letter and told the man, "My lord gets the first one free." Inside was a list of influential citizens of Derk conspiring against Dracula.

Dracula came to Squick that evening and told him that he would investigate the names, but if Squick was lying, his punishment would be public, agonizing, and longer than he could imagine. And yet, each name that Squick listed was in fact a person who was, in some way, conspiring against Dracula.

Once the lord was satisfied, he brought the gretchling with him to work at the castle as a butler, tasked with secretly weeding out disloyalty in the servants. He also gave his new servant the name, Cravenhide, ensuring that no one in the castle would consider him a credible threat.

Squick played the role with exemplary skill, assuming the identity of a self-important, cowardly blowhard. When Dracula was present, Squick would play the role of a sniveling lackey.

He made himself the laughingstock of the court, a pathetic and unassuming individual. Under that cover he watched and listened, occasionally setting members of Dracula's castle against each other to weaken their positions or reveal their disloyalty.

Squick found that he was a competent administrator, which led to Dracula promoting him to seneschal, the head of the inner circle, now with access to the most dangerous people in his lord's employ.

Since then, he has been playing court games at an exceedingly high level, suffering ridicule and occasional physical abuse from the very people who he is manipulating and spying on, all while managing his lord's secret network of spies and informants. Squick's loyalty to Palorva is genuine, but everyone else is a tool or a target.

## SQUICK ON THE COURT

Squick spends most of his time in Palorva's Palace, dealing with powerful members of her court, collecting information from his spy network, or sending word to his enforcers throughout Palorva's empire to meddle in local affairs. Squick's interactions with other court members typically involve him chasing after them in the halls, running to keep up with them given his smaller stature, and rattling off information at them at an annoying clip. Buried within these interactions, Squick seeds rumors that keep the members of the court at odds with one another so that they never form enough camaraderie to pose any threat to Palorva.

Squick's opinions of and relationship with the other prominent court members are listed below.

## DEMETRIUS

If there is a member of the court that is the closest to Squick's genuine friend, it is Demetrius. As both a skilled assassin and a competent detective and informant, Demetrius's skill set perfectly complements Squick's own. Squick often utilizes Demetrius to travel to various major cities and conduct reconnaissance on potential threats to Palorva's totalitarian reign.



## FAUST

Since Faust was resurrected as a member of Palorva's Court, Squick has made peace with Faust. They often collaborate to accomplish elaborate schemes.

## LANCERIC

One of Palorva's most successful generals and proxy governors, Lanceric typically looks down on Squick as insignificant by comparison. Squick encourages this misconception and uses their perceived power disparity to keep Lanceric positioned where he will be most beneficial for Dracula.

## LILITH

Lilith gives Squick the greatest cause for alarm. As the first of her line of vampirism, she sees herself as equal to Palorva. As cunning and insightful as she is, Squick has to be very careful and deliberate around her, and generally bides his time rather than attempting to manipulate her as she might see through such a ploy.

## YURIKO

Yuriko is the most direct, most forceful assassin in Dracula's Court. Squick does not spend much time trying to manipulate her, given that she is easy to point in a direction without much goading. He utilizes her when eliminating threats to Dracula that arise from outside of Dracula's castle, but otherwise leaves her be.

## SQUICK IN COMBAT

When Squick gets into direct combat with the heroes, he relies on the other members of the court to do the heavy fighting. Squick lurks in the back ranks, using his magic items and other trickery to contribute to the battle.





# SQUICK CRAVENHIDE

Small humanoid, neutral evil

Armor Class 18 (predictive)

Hit Points 102 (12d6+60)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	16 (+3)	20 (+5)	20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)

**Saving Throws** Dex +6, Con +8, Int +8, Wis +5, Cha +7

**Skills** Deception +7, History +11, Insight +8, Investigation +8, Perception +8, Stealth +6

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** magical darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 18

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Elvish

**Challenge** 6 (2,300 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +3

## FEATURES

**Predictive.** Squick may add his Intelligence modifier to his Armor Class.

**Legendary Resistance (5/Day).** When Squick fails a saving throw, he may choose to succeed instead.

**Leap.** Squick's horizontal and vertical jump distance is equal to his speed.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Squick can make two Knife attacks. He may use Intelligence instead of Dexterity when calculating attack and damage. He may then make a third Knife attack or use one of his other actions.

**Knife.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 7 (1d4+5) piercing damage.

**Flashbang.** Each creature in a 10 feet radius of Squick must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, a creature is blinded until the start of their next turn. Squick teleports up to half his speed.

**Magic Item.** Squick may use one of his magic items he has on hand.

**Consume Magic.** Squick may eat one of the magic items he has on hand, regaining 15 (1d10+10) hit points. If it still had any charges remaining, he instead regains 31 (2d10+20) hit points.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Squick can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Squick regains spent legendary actions at the start of his turn.

**Move.** Squick moves up to his speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Flashbang (Costs 2 Actions).** Squick uses his Flashbang action.

**Consume Legacy Artifact.** In response to being reduced to 0 hit points, Squick may make a +8 attack with advantage against a creature within 5 feet of him. On a hit, Squick eats one legacy artifact that the target creature is holding. Squick regains all of his hit points.

## SQUICK'S MAGIC ITEMS

Squick always has the following magic items on his person.

**Gas Vial (2x).** Squick consumes a gas vial, turning into mist until the start of his next turn. While in his gaseous form, he takes half damage whenever he takes physical damage, he has a fly speed equal to his walking speed, and he can move through any opening at least 1 inch wide.

**Missile Wand (4 charges).** Squick may spend 1 charge to cast *magic missile*.

He also has three of the following magic items on his person (roll 3 times, rerolling duplicates). He is attuned to any items that require it.

1d8	Item
1	Wind Fan
2	Dancing Shortsword (Dancing Sword, but the stats of a Shortsword)
3	+1 Wand of the War Mage
4	Armor of Fire Resistance
5	Boots of Elvenkind
6	Ring of Mind Shielding
7	Chime of Opening
8	Ring of Protection

## LOOT

If the heroes defeat Squick, they gain any of the magic items that he had on his person and had not eaten.



# VIKTOR SHELLEY

Originally a human and now a golem, Viktor Shelley was an esteemed professor at the University of Craniadt, where he created the first ever golem several hundred years ago.

## APPEARANCE AND PERSONALITY

Although originally human, Viktor Shelley is now a clay golem. His skin resembles layers of baked sediment, and little grains of sand often trickle off of his face like sweat. He maintains a wardrobe typical to that of a professor of the sciences. He has a white lab coat, thick safety gloves, and a variety of shirts and trousers that are neat without being fancy.

Shelley no longer has much of a personality. He has recovered from his time as Dracula's familiar, but is still rather quiet. He primarily answers questions with simple "yes" or "no" responses and otherwise sulks.

## BACKSTORY

A human that grew up in Lentira while it was still a part of Kendaria, Viktor Shelley was always fascinated by the cycle of life and death. He was one of the first professors to become tenured at the University of Craniadt when it was founded, and Shelley spent his early career trying to determine whether life could be artificially created, and actually managed to create the first golem.

Shelley immediately published his findings, thrilled to contribute to the creation of life and scientific advancement. As Shelley grew older, he grew more ambitious, wondering what new scientific miracles he might discover if he could live beyond the confines of his human body.

## SELF-ACTUALIZATION

He took a personal leave of absence from Craniadt for some time, vigorously - fanatically, his friends would have said - pursuing various ways that he might extend his own life. If creating the first golem was Shelley's first magnum opus, this was his second: He trapped his own consciousness outside of his body and transferred it into the constructed body of a new golem. His original physical form died immediately thereafter, but Viktor Shelley's consciousness and personality lived on in a new golem's body.

In his new body, Professor Shelley returned to Craniadt and resumed his professorial responsibilities. The years began to blend together for him. Monarchs rose and fell. Kendaria underwent a series of wars that resulted in the creation of two new nations, and the University of Craniadt was now technically in the nation of Constel.

World affairs meant little to Shelley. He was content to teach his eager students and undergo his own research. As a talented artificer, he invented a series of devices ranging from wildly impractical to extremely useful.

## PRODIGIOUS PROTEGE

But Shelley gradually grew bored with the monotony of one year after another. Bored, that is, until a prodigious new student walked into his lecture hall. When Viktor Shelley met Marias Frankenstein, he knew that he wanted to mentor the bright young student. Frankenstein, eager to learn, gladly accepted Shelley's offer. Together, the two developed a variety of new pseudo-medicinal drugs that they tested on themselves and on anyone that they could convince to take the chance.

Together, Shelley and Frankenstein pursued all manner of obscene experiments whenever they had the chance. They usually conducted these experiments in the basement of Shelley's home outside of Lentira, as if anyone else saw what they were doing they would likely be tried and executed for crimes against sentience.

Shelley was often startled by Frankenstein's innovative ideas. Early in their time together, they captured a merchant from Nevna and transferred his consciousness into a dog's body. Shelley was proud to say that they had successfully transferred consciousness from one living body into another, but a small part of him was also greatly disturbed at what they had done. Nonetheless, his curiosity was stronger than his scruples, and so he continued to experiment with Frankenstein.



## A FATEFUL ALLIANCE

While Frankenstein charged full-tilt ahead, Shelley was more pragmatic and did his best to ensure that their activities did not get found out. As careful he was, Shelley and his apprentice were eventually caught. Or rather, when they captured a young nobleman named Pietro Amadeus, he quickly turned the tables on them and offered them a deal as his personal scientists. Pietro's ideas were fascinating and strange, such as taking blood from a m'l'ykkri to create an antidote to disease. Shelley was enraptured with the idea of working for a noble as it would further allow them to work with impunity. They released Pietro and agreed to work with him. He would go on to provide them with a laboratory and a reliable supply of test subjects if they would also prioritize any experiments that Peidro needed to be conducted.

The two scientists successfully synthesized a potion that cured Pietro's wife, Theresa. Their working relationship seemed quite promising.

## THE DARK DEED

After getting them situated in their new laboratory, Pietro approached Frankenstein and Shelley with his second project: Creating a strain of vampirism more pure than the vampirism seen thus far in Ancerra.

Doing so would require taking the blood of vampires and augmenting it with powerful occult and arcane magic. Creating a surge of magic powerful enough to permanently alter vampire blood in this way would necessitate a terrible ritual, but Pietro promised that he would provide that himself so long as the scientists could work with what he gave them.

Through a series of occult magical gambits taken by Pietro, a terrible massacre that he committed to draw enough occult energy to start the process, and a stunningly successful performance by Frankenstein and Shelley, the three created a new strain of vampirism. Pietro subsequently became Dracula, the first of the new line.

## TRAPPED IN A NIGHTMARE

Pietro's first two experiments were fulfilled with exemplary results. Pietro - or rather, Dracula - fed both Frankenstein and Shelley drops of his blood for several weeks until they became his familiars.

Now, Professor Shelley wants more than anything to live a quiet life. He is still haunted by constant nightmares of his past crimes.

## YURIKO

A vicious fighter that leads a pack of ravenous werewolves, Yuriko is widely feared as Palorva's merciless executioner. After being raised in a bloodthirsty cult and eventually snapping, Yuriko came under Dracula's care. He raised her as his hard, cruel, and opportunistic attack dog.

Yuriko, for her part, is unbreakably devoted to Palorva, as she resurrected Yuriko. Even if her methods were cruel and self-serving, Yuriko sees Palorva as her surrogate mother and is loyal to Palorva unto death. Yuriko will readily disembowel anyone who challenges Palorva, and Palorva keeps her on a close metaphorical leash, only releasing her to execute or hunt down a victim when they have truly transgressed against Palorva's will.

## VALUES AND DRIVES

### VALUES:

- Yuriko sees herself as an agent of change. With few aspirations of her own, she is happy to topple the status quo.
- Yuriko honors the strength of her team, but cares little of those outside her own pack.

### DRIVES:

- **Survival.** Thanks to Palorva, Yuriko has a third lease on life. She intends to make the most of it.

## BACKSTORY

Yuriko was born into a religious cult in a remote region in southern Kandiff, though her family heritage is originally from Sozein. Her cult impressed upon her from a very young age the importance of stripping all that is unholy from oneself, typically through flagellation. Purifying one's body and soul through physical pain enables the practitioners - so the cult leaders say - to transcend the fickle desires of the world and know peace.

## ISOLATION

For Yuriko's part, she never found peace as a child, though by the time she was thirteen her nerve damage was so great that she became permanently unable to feel pain.

On one fateful day, her family felt that Yuriko was not taking her responsibilities seriously enough. This reflected poorly on her family's standing in the cult, and so severe punishment was in order: Yuriko was to be locked in isolation for days on end in a dark room. She had no light and no sound, forced to deal only with her thoughts.

During this time, a flame ignited inside her. An unquenchable red rage.



## AFTERMATH

Two days later, vampires descended on the community, drawn by the scent of fresh blood. They found Yuriko alone in the courtyard, surrounded by a pool of blood and the corpses of her family and her entire cult.

## A NEW FAMILY

It took very little time before Dracula heard of Yuriko, and he quickly adopted her into his court. He raised her as one might raise a niece or granddaughter, familiarly close but always favoring his own daughter, Palorva, over Yuriko.

Dracula also pushed Yuriko to be the best that she possibly could be, resulting in Yuriko becoming incredibly athletic and a vicious fighter.

Yuriko speaks very little and her response to most provocations is violence, unless Dracula is in the room and seems to wish for diplomacy. While she speaks little, she seems to be content within Dracula's orbit, and is technically a member of his court even if she voices her opinion only rarely.

## DUELING LOYALTIES

Dracula had planned on turning Yuriko into a vampire when she came of age, but another vampire beat him to it. Lilith, one of Dracula's trusted partners from Shadowcroft, turned Yuriko into a vampire shortly before Dracula had a chance to. Given that Yuriko is sired to Lilith, she is compelled to obey Lilith's commands, but her emotional loyalty lies with Dracula. Lilith has not forced Yuriko's hand yet, so she has not had to reconcile this tension, but it often plagues her thoughts.

## RESURRECTED BY PALORVA

When Palorva resurrected Yuriko, Yuriko's bond to Lilith was broken. Yuriko redoubled her loyalty to Dracula's heir, serving her with ardent zeal.

## YURIKO ON THE COURT

While in Palorva's Palace, Yuriko usually has little interest in the inner workings of the court. She often lurks in the council chambers, occasionally weighing in with one or two words but usually letting the others do the talking. During these meetings, she often studies other members of the court for any sign of disloyalty to Palorva. If she senses even the faintest sign of such insubordination, she will bring this information to Palorva, eager to destroy the offending court member unless Palorva talks her down.

Yuriko's willingness to speak against anyone in the court is an open secret. While Yuriko herself has no political aspirations, she does a shockingly effective job of keeping schemers like Faust and Squick in check due to her single-minded dedication to Palorva.

Of course, Yuriko's preferred position is out in the real world, hunting down those who have transgressed against Palorva. When Squick, Faust, or one of the other court members take issue with a political official or military leader in Norspina, Palorva often gives them permission to set Yuriko loose on them.

## YURIKO IN COMBAT

Yuriko sees combat as a way to prove her fealty to Palorva. She fights with vicious recklessness, feeling that throwing herself into harm's way proves her loyalty.





# YURIKO

Medium undead, neutral evil

**Armor Class** 15 (wolfpelt cloak)

**Hit Points** 136 (16d8+64)

**Speed** 40 ft., Climb 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+5)	15 (+2)	18 (+4)	10 (+0)	8 (-1)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Str +9, Dex +6, Con +7, Wis +3

**Skills** Insight +7, Perception +7, Stealth +10

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks

**Damage Immunities** necrotic

**Damage Vulnerabilities** silvered weapons

**Condition Immunities** charmed, frightened

**Senses** darkvision 120 ft., magical darkvision 30 ft., passive Perception 17

**Languages** Common, Infernal, Sylvan

**Challenge** 9 (5,000 XP)

**Proficiency Bonus** +4

## FEATURES

**Croftian Vampirism.** Yuriko uses the Croftian vampire template.

**Pack Leader.** Yuriko uses her Charisma, rather than her Wisdom, when making skill checks that would typically rely on Wisdom.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Yuriko can make three attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target that Yuriko has grappled. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage plus 10 (3d6) necrotic damage. Yuriko regains hit points equal to the amount of necrotic damage he dealt in this way.

**Magic Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d6 + 6) magical slashing damage.

**Javelin.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +9 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6+5) piercing damage.

**Charm.** Yuriko targets one humanoid she can see within 30 feet. of her. If the target can see Yuriko, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw against this magic or be charmed by Yuriko. The charmed target regards Yuriko as a trusted friend to be heeded and protected. Although the target isn't under Yuriko's control, it takes Yuriko's requests or actions in the most favorable way it can, and it is a willing target for Yuriko's bite attack. Each time Yuriko or her companions do anything harmful to the target, it can repeat the saving throw, ending the effect on itself on a success. Otherwise, the effect lasts 24 hours or until Yuriko is destroyed, is on a different plane of existence than the target, or takes a bonus action to end the effect.

**Guttural Roar (Recharge 5-6).** Each creature within a 20 foot radius of Yuriko must make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw or become frightened of Yuriko until the end of its next turn. While frightened in this way, a creature cannot add a bonus die to any of its d20 rolls (such as from bardic inspiration or the bless spell).

**Pack Commander (Recharge 5-6).** Up to three wolves or werewolves within 60 feet of Yuriko gain +1d6 to their attack and damage rolls until the start of Yuriko's next turn.

## REACTIONS

Yuriko can take 3 legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time and only at the end of another creature's turn. Yuriko regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn.

**Move.** Yuriko moves up to her speed without provoking opportunity attacks.

**Bite (Costs 2 Actions).** Yuriko makes one bite attack.

**Splitting Howl (Costs 2 Actions).** Each hostile creature within 20 feet of Yuriko that is concentrating on a spell must make a DC 15 concentration check, losing concentration on a failed save.

**Coordinating Howl (Costs 3 Actions).** Yuriko summons 1d4 + 1 **dire wolves**, which appear in unoccupied spaces within 60 ft. of her.



# APPENDIX B: TIMELINE

## NOTE ON CONTINUITY

A notable feature of Dracula's reign includes the creation of alternate realities by "resetting" the timeline of Ancerra to key points. Because of this, drawing out a linear timeline of the events of *Soliloquy of Annihilation* proves quite difficult. Pietro Amadeus was born in 770 PT.

## TIMELINE

This timeline is presented with year marks in reference to Pietro Amadeus's birth.

**Year 0:** Pietro Amadeus is born to Vladimir and Anastasia Amadeus.

**Year 18:** Pietro goes on his first trip to the town of Helsing; meets Theresa.

**Year 20:** Pietro becomes a national hero when he repels the Bishalian invasion of Derk.

**Year 21:** Theresa takes ill.

Pietro befriends Priestess Maribel and pursues religious studies in the church of Tovare.

Pietro stabilizes Theresa enough to travel, and departs with Joana Harker.

**Year 22:** Pietro and Joana return from their trip. Pietro meets the mad scientists.

Theresa fully recovers thanks to Pietro's treatment regimen.

**Year 23:** Pietro and Theresa have Palorva, their daughter. Theresa struggles with insatiable hunger due to her treatment plan.

**Year 28:** Pietro sets out to find another cure for Theresa. Theresa has her bloodthirsty incident at the market and is incarcerated.

Theresa is condemned and executed just before Pietro can save her.

Pietro saves Palorva and leaves town with her.

Pietro holds a wake for his wife and massacres the nobility. He takes the name Dracula.

**Year 29:** The mad scientists perfect Draculean vampirism. Dracula becomes a vampire.

Dracula and Palorva depart from Derk and search for allies across Norspina.

Palorva grows up in exile over her childhood and young adulthood.

**Year 44:** Dracula and the newly vampiric Palorva return to Derk as conquerors and take over Norspina.

Dracula and Palorva proceed to conquer Ancerra.

**Year 60:** Dracula resets the timeline, creating the demiplane of Hell and returning to the time where he first met Theresa. Theresa in the new timeline is already courting Joana.

Dracula becomes a recluse while Palorva remains involved in regional politics.

**Year 63:** Palorva convinces Dracula to attack Joana; the attack results in Maribel blaming Theresa for the destruction of the town and kills Theresa.

Palorva and Dracula launch another war on Ancerra, leading to the creation of the demiplane of Heaven.

**Year 78:** Dracula resets the timeline. He meets Theresa again, and successfully courts her.

**Year 79:** Theresa takes ill.

Dracula looks for a cure.

**Year 80:** Dracula returns from looking for a cure, restoring Theresa.

**Year 81:** Theresa relapses and Dracula looks for another cure.

**Year 82:** Theresa has her incident in the butcher's. She is tried, convicted, and executed right before Dracula can intervene.

Dracula leaves and reestablishes alliances with his contacts across Norspina.

**Year 90:** Dracula reconquers Derk.

**Year 92:** This marks the beginning of *Soliloquy of Annihilation*.

**Year 93:** The heroes confront Dracula in his castle.

**Year 94:** Lilith declares herself queen of Avalon. Palorva does not object, knowing that ruling a kingdom in another plane will occupy much of her rival's time.

**Year 99:** Palorva traps and murders the majority of vampire hunters across Norspina in a careful ploy to gather them in Noord.

**Year 105:** This marks the beginning of *Daughter of the Shadows*.

## ON THE ANCERRAN GRAND TIMELINE

- In actual calendar years on the Ancerran timeline:
- Year 0 is 740 PT.
- Years 18 through 77 are not reflected in the standard timeline due to the time resets.
- Year 78 is 758 PT.
- Year 92 is 772 PT.
- Year 105 is 785 PT.



# APPENDIX C: VAMPIRISM QUICK REFERENCE

**V**ampires cannot be observed by secondary means due to the abuse that their souls have undergone. Mirrors, reflections in water, and the like do not reveal a vampire's presence. At times, people find that they have trouble talking about vampires if the vampires themselves are not present. Artists that attempt to depict vampires often have to go through several canvases or sculptures before arriving at a satisfactory rendition.

## VAMPIRE TEMPLATE

To turn any creature into a vampire, apply the following template.

### FIRST,

- Increase its Charisma by 2.
- It gains a climb speed equal to its walking speed.
- It gains immunity to necrotic and poison damage.
- It gains immunity to the charmed and frightened conditions.

If a stat block references the Vampirism Template in its features section, then skip this step and apply only the second and third steps.

### SECOND,

It gains a Forbiddance feature (choose Ancerran, Croftian, or Draculean).

**Ancerran Forbiddance.** The Vampire must observe certain restrictions:

- If the Vampire starts its turn in direct sunlight, it takes 33 (6d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire starts its turn in running water, it takes 11 (2d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire takes radiant damage, it loses its Regenerate ability on its next turn.
- If the Vampire consumes garlic or uses Bite on a creature that ate garlic within the last 8 hours, it takes 5 (1d10) toxic damage and is poisoned for 1 minute.

**Croftian Forbiddance.** The Vampire must observe certain restrictions:

- If the Vampire starts its turn in direct sunlight, it takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire starts its turn in running water, it takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire takes radiant damage, it loses its Regenerate ability on its next turn.

- If the Vampire consumes garlic or uses Blood Drain on a creature that ate garlic within the last 8 hours, it takes 5 (1d10) toxic damage and is poisoned for 30 seconds.
- The Vampire gains Vulnerable silvered weapons.

**Draculean Forbiddance.** The Vampire must observe certain restrictions:

- The Vampire cannot enter a private resilience without a written or verbal invitation.
- If the Vampire starts its turn in direct sunlight, it takes 22 (4d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire starts its turn in running water, it takes 5 (1d10) radiant damage.
- If the Vampire takes radiant damage, it loses its Regenerate ability on its next turn.
- If the Vampire consumes garlic or uses Bite on a creature that ate garlic within the last 8 hours, it takes 5 (1d10) toxic damage and is poisoned for 30 seconds.

### THIRD,

It gains the following features.

**Crimson Thirst.** Vampires can only consume blood for sustenance. For every 3 days that they do not use Bite, they lose 20 current and maximum hit points. After using Bite at least once per day for a week, their current and maximum hit points reset to normal.

**Shadowy.** If the Vampire moves and does not enter bright light during its movement, it cannot be attacked reactively.

**Turn Immunity.** The Vampire is immune to effects that turn undead.

**Regenerate.** The Vampire regains 10 hit points at the start of each of its turns.

**Vampiric Curse.** Any living humanoid who takes damage from a Vampire's Bite three times within 1 day becomes infected with Vampirism.

**Unholy Resurrection.** If the Vampire dies at nighttime, it turns into a fine mist and floats back to its ancestral soil at a rate of 60 ft on each of its turns. If it does not reach its soil by dawn, then it dies permanently. If it reaches its soil before dawn, it solidifies back into its vampiric form but is still dead. It reawakens at full health at dusk that evening. A Vampire that dies during the daytime turns into mist in this way at dusk the following evening, where it tries to return to its ancestral soil. When a Vampire is dead and in solid form, it can be staked through the heart to permanently kill it.



# APPENDIX D: VAMPIRIC APOCALYPSE

Canonically, these events do not occur on the official Ancerran timeline. However, depending on your party's actions, you may choose to utilize any of the below hypothetical situations as Palorva rampages across Norspina unchecked.

## AVADRIUM EXPLOSION

If Palorva is not thwarted at Vadreheim, or if the heroes fail to stop her at Dracula's Castle, then apocalyptic events ensue.

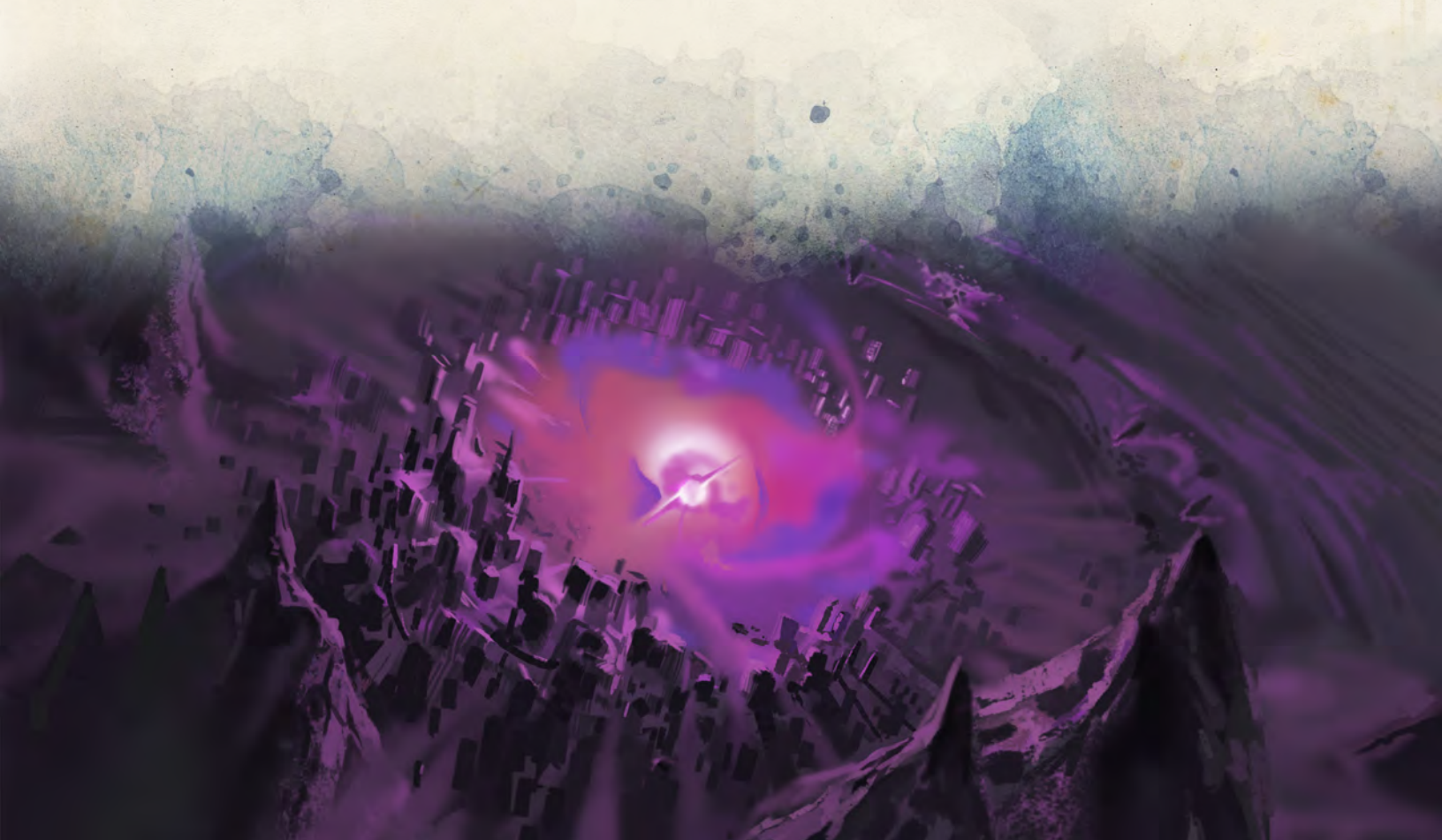
If Palorva is not stopped at Vadreheim, she activates the Core Gate. Death appears and whisks her away before she becomes caught in the ensuing explosion. The explosion emanating from the Core Gate instantaneously vaporizes everything in a four dozen mile radius and spews radiation into the air for hundreds of miles. The explosion causes massive tsunamis. These tsunamis destroy the entirety of Yodvan and the complete northern coastline of Ancerra, leveling any city on the northern coast.

## THE DARK ONE'S RETURN

If Palorva is not stopped at Dracula's Castle, then she successfully resurrects Dracula. Together, they launch an attack on Ancerra. Their army consists of a virtually limitless number of humanoids, vampires, fiends, and undead. Both Palorva and Dracula take special interest in hunting down the heroes and killing them.

## THE END OF THE WORLD

A couple decades later, Dracula returns to Vadreheim (or the smoldering remains of Vadreheim as the case may be) to attempt to reset the timeline again and resurrect Theresa. Ancerra's core is incapable of undergoing this ritual again, and Dracula's efforts cause the core to explode and rip Ancerra apart, ending all life on the planet.





YODVAN

Europe (North)

Glowing Forest

Phalanx

Elfreath Bastion

Shattered Bay

Dryell

NOORD

Symant-Nur

BISHAL

The Riverflow

Standing Stone

Capsanbed

BETAAL

The Living City

KANDIF

LESMISHAN

Lemishan

KESS

Cap-Pig

Lerron

Kamlet

Broken Shield

Udden

FORSTEN

CONSTEL

Entira

Dracula's Castle

Mad Forest

Laboratory

Refect

Isopoint

Kayre Inn

Whitbreak

N

N O R S P I N H