

THE IRON BASTION

RISE OF THE BLOOD WATCH

A FORGOTTEN REALMS ADVENTURE

Fight against an ancient evil in this adventure
for the world's greatest roleplaying game



THE IRON BASTION

PART ONE: RISE OF THE BLOOD WATCH

A *Sundered Realms* adventure optimized for four to five 1st level characters



By RICH LESCOUFLAIR



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS, D&D, Wizards of the Coast, Forgotten Realms, the dragon ampersand, Player's Handbook, Monster Manual, Dungeon Master's Guide, D&D Adventurers League, all other Wizards of the Coast product names, and their respective logos are trademarks of Wizards of the Coast in the USA and other countries. All characters and their distinctive likenesses are property of Wizards of the Coast. This material is protected under the copyright laws of the United States of America. Any reproduction or unauthorized use of the material or artwork contained herein is prohibited without the express written permission of Wizards of the Coast.

©2016 Wizards of the Coast LLC, PO Box 707, Renton, WA 98057-0707, USA. Manufactured by Hasbro SA, Rue Emile-Boéchat 31, 2800 Delémont, CH. Represented by Hasbro Europe, 4 The Square, Stockley Park, Uxbridge, Middlesex, UB11 1ET, UK.

CREDITS

Writing and Layout: *Rich Lescouflair*

Story Contributions: *Angie Calvacca, Beth Rimmels, Frederick Lopez, Nicholas Miraglia, Peter Lee, Todd Marks*

Cover Art: [Kostic Dusan](#)

Interior Artists: *Storn Cook, [Kostic Dusan](#), [Eleonora Konnova](#), [Larissa Kulik](#)*

Cartography and Character Art: *Rich Lescouflair*

Editorial Assistance: *Brian Dalrymple, Louis Porter Jr.*

Published By: [Castle Skydawn Design](#)

FOREWORD

Welcome to the *Sundered Realms*!. This started out as a much smaller project. I was looking for something new that hadn't been done yet for the Forgotten Realms. Low and behold, I discovered there's a couple of entire continents that still have dust on them. Hence, the project that has taken far longer than I anticipated.

Thankfully I have a lot of wonderful people who wanted to help and I have friends that I play with that have seeded tons of new ideas. I even dug up some stuff a friend and I put together over 20 years ago. Over the last few months, I've met so many faces, all with fantastic advice that I've come to take to heart.

With all that in mind, I wanted to do my best to make this as high grade as possible. The amount of fun I'm having with this is the same amount of fun that I want for the players who play this. I'm hoping to turn the lands of Revonar and Dari Sinora into something other players want to use to develop their own stories and ideas, much like the Living Campaigns of old.

If anyone has any questions, please feel free to leave comments and opinions. They are more than welcome.

Enjoy!

– Rich Lescouflair

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
RUNNING THE ADVENTURE.....	3
ADVENTURE BACKGROUND.....	3
THE CONTINENT OF ANCHOROME.....	4
OPTIONAL RULE: SANITY.....	5
CHAPTER ONE: THE BANDIT'S BLADE.....	7
THE BANDIT HIDEOUT.....	8
REWARDS.....	14
CHAPTER TWO: TURMOIL IN KESSEL.....	15
KESSEL MAP LOCATIONS.....	17
KESSEL QUEST LOG.....	24
CHAPTER TWO EVENTS.....	31
CHAPTER THREE: HOUSE OF THE FALLEN KNIGHT.....	37
ENDING THE ADVENTURE.....	42
APPENDIX A: ENCOUNTERS.....	43
APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS AND SPELLS.....	50
APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND OPTIONS.....	52



ON THE COVER

The legendary Korendai of old seeks to mercilessly stalk the souls of the innocent before engulfing them within its fiery jaws of madness.

INTRODUCTION

The Iron Bastion is the first of three major story arcs for the Sundered Realms setting. Characters start at 1st level. They should be approximately 7th to 8th level by the end of this group of adventures.

This adventure is optimized for four to five characters. If there are more or less players in the group, the encounters should be easily adjustable to accommodate party size.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

The adventure begins in Kessel, a large town on the Western Peninsula of Revonar, nestled between the Empyrean Forest and the Gandri River. The adventure will expand to Kessel's surrounding areas, revealing new regions that set up the advance into the next adventure.

The appendices will provide you with all of the additional backgrounds, monsters, and NPCs that are required to run the adventure. If you are ever in doubt about a particular detail, feel free to make it up! The game is all about having fun while immersing the players into the world. Just have fun, and keep the story moving.

SUNDERED REALMS PLAYER'S GUIDE

It is highly recommended that you download the free ***Sundered Realms Player's Guide*** from the Dungeon Master's Guild website. It contains many character options tailored specifically for this setting. It also provides a setting map and an overview of the lands and major events of both Revonar and the realm of Dari Sinora. It will help greatly in understanding the events in this adventure.

The free download of the guide can be found here:
<http://www.dmsguild.com/product/175120/>

INTERWEAVING THE CHARACTERS

Every great hero deserves a great story and every epic tale is lush with realms of mystery and tales of wonder. Part of the Dungeon Master's job is to create a rich environment that is both intriguing and fun for both the players and the DM.

As the Dungeon Master, you assume the role of NPCs, monsters, villains, everyone but the player characters. During the adventure, you may see some guidelines on how to roleplay a few of these characters.

In addition, there will be many areas where ideas will be provided for **Interweaving**. These plot hooks are setting specific, and can be used to immerse the characters' existing background stories into the game while still running the overall adventure. After all, a grand adventure is far more interesting if the characters' personal goals and interests are at stake!

Please note: Any or all of these options are merely tools to help you. You may make use of any of them, or just as well leave them out entirely. Always remember that you are the final arbiter on how the story goes.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

In addition to this module, resources will also be made available online over time, including full color maps and bonus materials. There will also be news and updates

on the next arcs of adventure - *Fane of the Immortals* and *Serenade of Shadows*.

The bonus materials will be available at the [Sundered Realms Resources](#) page at the Castle Skydawn website.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Over a century has passed since the Mithrendai were defeated and sealed away in the Maw of Oblivion.

This, however, did not completely stop evil forces from attempting to harness the destructive force that once threatened to devour the world.

Nearly fifteen years ago, a great evil emerged from the Empyrean Forest in an area corrupted by the Lash. Starting out as a few attacks from human and goblin plunderers, they soon evolved into raids from large bands of gnolls, orcs, ogres, and hobgoblins. These beasts were tainted by an unexplained force of darkness that dwelled deep within the forest, which rewarded them with strange, unearthly powers. The town of Kessel was merely a small village then, surrounded by a few settler camps, but nothing more.

Slowly the dark forces grew until they soon threatened all of the settlements in the area and eventually the elves of Silfast. At the edge of the forest, a dark structure sprouted from the earth, a tower made of an inky black stone from which the corrupted spirits emanated. Evil men and women of all races flocked to the tower, soon forming a twisted army along with their monstrous allies. The good people of the land were victims of robbery, pillaging, and sometimes far worse. Some were taken back to the tower as a sacrifice to the darkness within.

The leaders of the dark army became used to operating unchecked amongst the populace, unaware that the people of the region were slowly banding together in an eventual attempt to take back their homeland. When a group of powerful heroes rallied the forces of Silfast, Kaskaval, and the surrounding settlements, they stormed the black tower.

The battle fought was both grand and terrible. Men and women, good and evil, perished in the days long conflict. At the end, a noble brass dragon sacrificed himself to open the final path of attack. The spirits were destroyed and their tower crumbled to ash. The most powerful of Silfast's mages and priests sanctified the area, forging a structure made almost entirely of an extremely rare meteoric iron to block any link to the spirit realm.

The land quickly returned toward a peaceful and prosperous path. A bond had developed amongst the people from their shared victory over darkness. Silfast began trading with outsiders and Kaskaval's leaders found new allies. Both Kessel and Brun grew in wealth and resources.

But then, a few months ago, bands of monsters and bandits began to appear more frequently within the region. Operating under a strange banner, they mark the coming of new threats to the land, and the need for new heroes to face them.

INTERWEAVING: BACKGROUNDS

Several background options available in the appendix will be brought up during the adventure path to provide further insight and options to the players.



THE CONTINENT OF ANCHOROME

Anchorome (pronounced *An-KO-ruh-may*) is the continent west of Faerun. It is divided into multiple regions including Revonar, Maztica, and the Poscadar tribal lands.

Revonar is a vast region filled with various cultures and peoples of all types. Its history is rich, yet still contains millennia that are shrouded in mystery and speculation. It is believed that the Aearee, the first races, originated here, migrating elsewhere after a time of great change.

Today it is a land of discovery and opportunity, much of it still unexplored. Off the coast to the west is the land of Dari Sinora. Recent events over the past century have joined the fates of both Sinora and Revonar. Noble peoples, fearless explorers, and valiant heroes old and new, endeavor to breathe new life into the ravaged landscape.

A BRIEF GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Mithrendai - Beings of entropy spawned from a single deity of unfathomable destruction. More regarding the Mithrendai can be found in the *Sundered Realms Player's Guide*.

Niralene - A realm of spirits closely tied to the mortal world. Its force resides in each of the elements that exists within all things. Many believe the Niralene to be a part of the Weave of Magic.

Lash - The mark of chaos left over the land after the war against the Mithrendai. It covers much of northern

Revonar and across the ocean to Sinora.

Eluria - Another name for the moon, as well as the goddess who resides in it. Also as Selune in Faerun.

Shattering - Known on Faerun as the Spellplague, it was the destruction of the magical weave which pulled Anchorome into the elemental void, starting the war against the Mithrendai.

Sinora - The more commonly used name for Dari Sinora, the large island west of Anchorome.

Skyreaches - Also known as "earthmotes", these are pieces of land that float in the sky above the continents. Their size ranges from a few feet to a few miles.

KESSEL AND THE EMPYREAN FOREST

Kessel is an independent town north of the kingdom of Feras and east of the port town of Kaskaval. It neighbors a few other villages and settlements, as well as the elven city of Silfast. The town has become a central meeting place for dignitaries and nobles of different lands to make trade, bargain, and peace negotiations.

The Empyrean Forest is the largest in Revonar, home to many elven and sylvan communities. Most of the forest has been left untouched, its natural beauty preserved and staunchly defended by the elves and the forest dwellers.

The entire region has a strong connection to both the Niralene and the corruption of the Lash. The conflict between these two opposing forces can sometimes cause strange magical events within the region.

OPTIONAL RULE: SANITY

Encounters with areas and beings that have been intensely corrupted by the Lash can cause lasting effects on the mind and spirit. Dark energies invade the mind, whispering deranged thoughts and pulling the soul ever closer to oblivion. The whispers, the fear, and the feeling of utter helplessness can affect the minds of even the most steadfast of heroes.

THE LASH AND CORRUPTION LEVEL

At the end of the war against the Mithrendai, the enemy unleashed a wave of corruption over the land in a final act of desperation before their demise. This wave, known today as the Lash, still marks the land in the spirit realm. It can only be viewed with magical sight or enchantments such as a *Detect Magic* spell.

Though invisible in the mortal realm, the mark of corruption it carries bleeds through the fabric of reality. Over many years, mystics and scholars have attempted to measure the exact location of the Lash as well as the spread of its corruption. They have been able to pinpoint the areas where it is the strongest, but the far-reaching effects over the land are still as of yet indeterminable.

In the many areas where the entropic corruption bleeds through, the energies will affect anything it comes into contact with in various ways. In game terms, each area affected by the Lash has a Corruption level from 1 to 8. The highest levels usually tend to be around the actual location of the Lash itself. A level of 1 is very common. Most do not surpass a level of 3. Very few areas (usually a couple of miles in radius) have been tainted to a level of 6 to 8. These areas are called Lash Scars. The area is usually devoid of life and cause dangerous side effects to those who tread there.

SANITY CHECKS

Each character starts with Sanity Points equal to 8 + their proficiency score plus the highest of either their Wisdom, Intelligence, or Charisma bonus. There will be situations during the adventure where players will need to make a Sanity check versus a difficulty based on the level of corruption. The rules for this roll is as follows:

Sanity Check = d20 + Proficiency bonus + Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma bonus (whichever is highest)

Sanity save DC = 10 + Corruption Level

On a failed save, the character loses a point of Sanity and incurs one of the side effects listed on the following table. They last until the character takes a short rest.

If the character reaches half their Sanity (rounded down), they must instead roll on the Long-Term Madness table (DMG, pg. 260), which must be recovered with a long rest. Once a character reaches zero Sanity, they suffer Indefinite Madness, following the same rules for healing as in the DMG (pg. 260).

RECOVERING SANITY

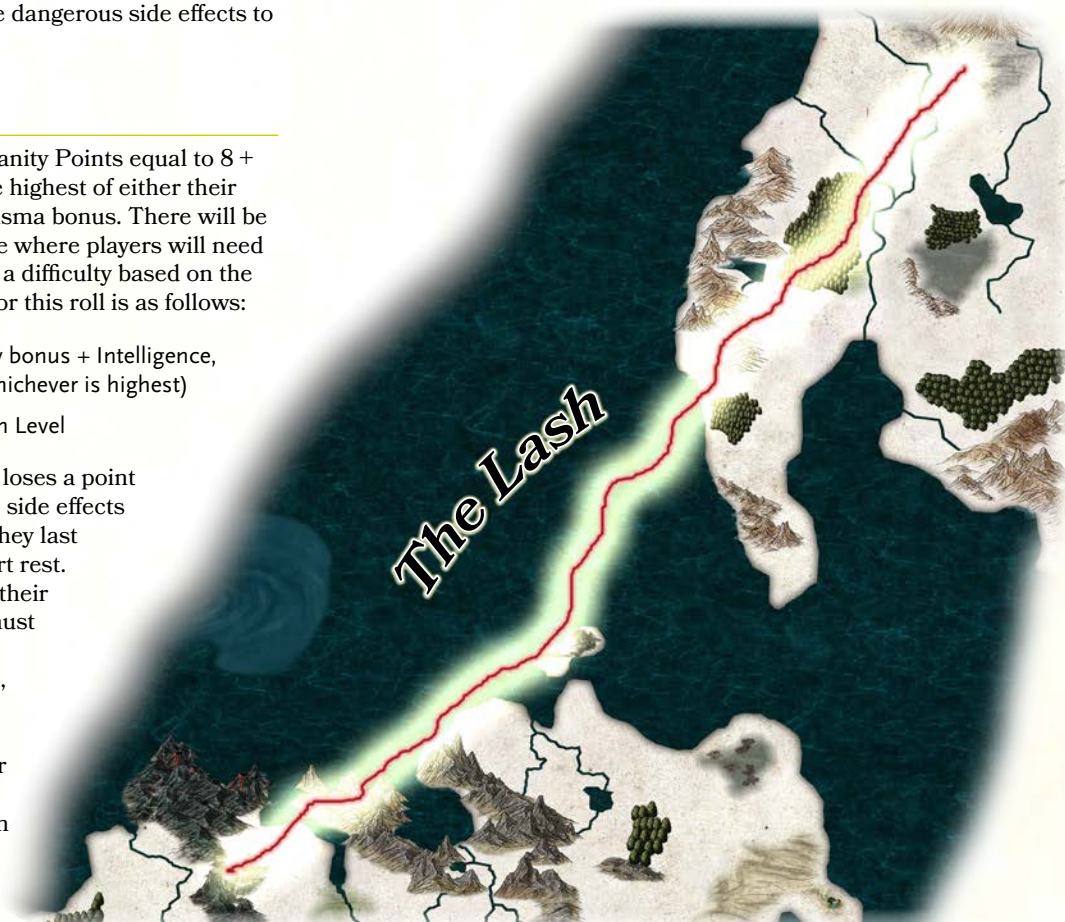
Sanity can only be recovered by taking a long rest. Each long rest allows the character to recover 1d4 plus their proficiency score, up to their maximum Sanity level.

Sanity checks are required when:

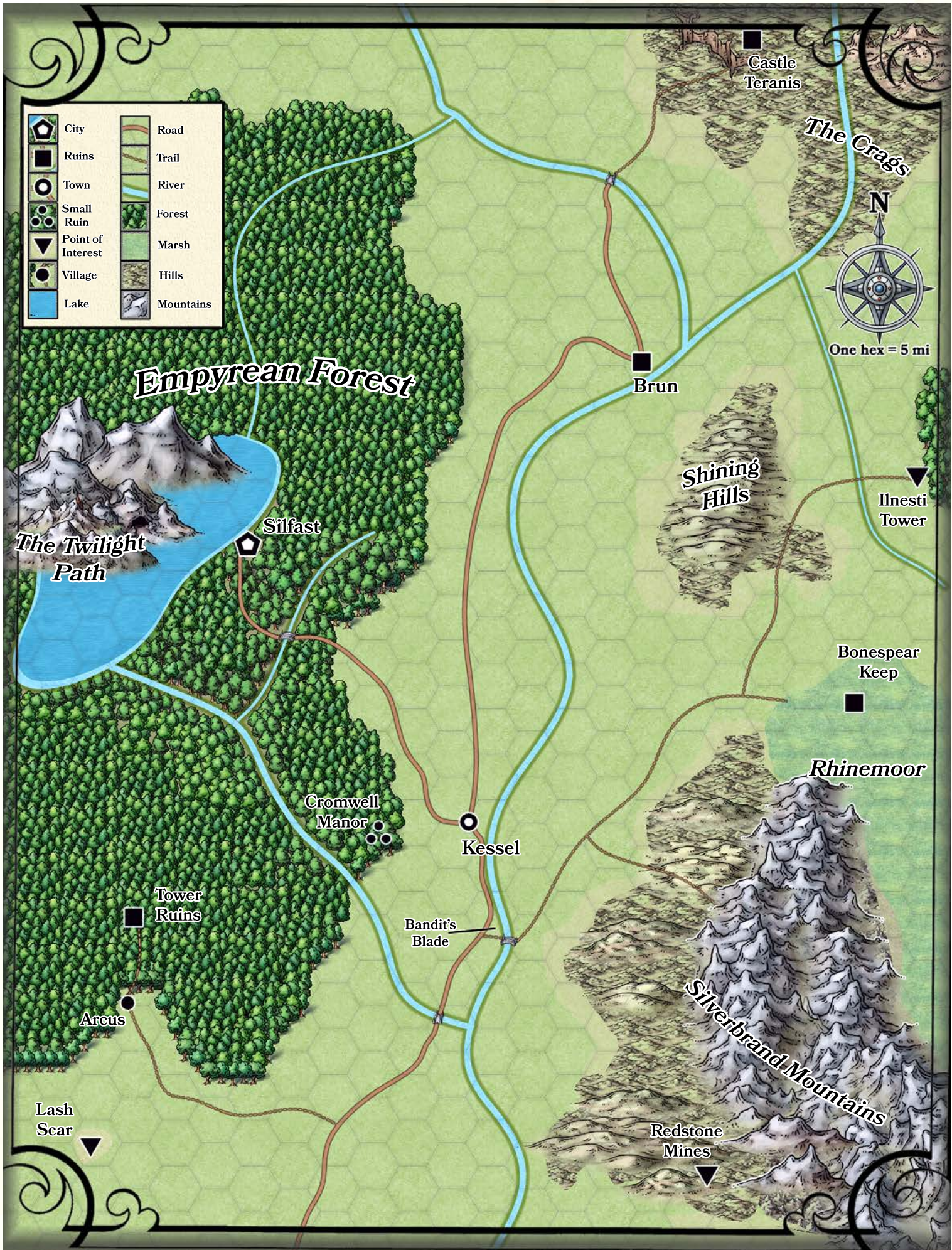
- First entering a corrupted area
- Whenever an ally reaches to 0 hp in a corrupted area
- Initial physical contact with a corrupted item
- Casting any detection spell within a corrupted area
- On first sight of a corrupted creature (or group).
- Upon first taking damage from a corrupted creature in each encounter
- Special attacks such as Chaos Whip (see appendix)

SANITY LOSS

d20	Effect
1-5	You hear constant whispers distracting your attention. Suffer -3 to all Initiative rolls.
6-10	Your inner fears cause you to take every step cautiously. Reduce your movement to 1/2 (rounded up).
11-13	You see random visions of death and decay. Disadvantage on all Wis and Int based checks.
14-16	You focus on talking back to the voices in your head. Disadvantage on all saving throws.
17-19	Everyone around you looks corrupted. When attacking, make a Sanity check or attack the nearest ally instead of an enemy.
20	The corruption drains you to the point of weariness. You suffer one point of exhaustion.



	City		Road
	Ruins		Trail
	Town		River
	Small Ruin		Forest
	Point of Interest		Marsh
	Village		Hills
	Lake		Mountains



CHAPTER ONE: THE BANDIT'S BLADE

In this first section of the adventure, the player characters' journey to Kessel is cut short when their rendezvous is ambushed by bandits. This sets up the initial encounter with the cultists they will be facing throughout the adventure.

ADVENTURE HOOK: THE FERAS SENTINELS

The kingdom of Feras, the elves of Silfast, and the warrior priests of Kaskaval have formed an alliance called the Sentinels of the Dawn. They are divided into three groups: Sentinels of the Sun (Feras), the Moon (Silfast), and the Stars (Kaskaval).

The player characters begin their journey as recruits for the Sentinels of the Sun. They travel north from the kingdom of Feras to meet with their recruiter, a knight named Bolus Sulder. Read the following opening text to the players:

A crisp autumn breeze blows past as you and your companions near the end of a week long journey. You have ridden up the Empyrean Coast, then through the pass to the main road along the river bank leading to Kessel. Your horses are tired, your clothing is worn, and you are low on coin.

Thankfully, your destination is not far. Your group travels to a camp of recruits for the Sentinels of the Sun. You are to meet with a commander there named Bolus Sulder. Whether you go to join their ranks or merely just to stop at a waypoint toward your next journey, you are determined to strive forward and forge your own destiny. As you ride alongside the steep bank, you can see the smoke of the campfires off in the distance.

If this is a new group of players, before beginning the adventure, please have them introduce themselves and their characters. They should be encouraged to discuss a group dynamic. Do any of the characters know each other? If so, then for how long? Are there any connections between their backgrounds?

There may be alternate reasons why they've taken this quest other than payment. Some suggestions would be:

- They are traveling with the recruits for protection or escort.
- Personal reasons related to alignment or background.
- One or more of the players could be originally from the town of Kessel and returning (see the "Kessel Origin" background in the Appendix).

RIDING HORSES

The players have three horses which they have been using for travel up to this point. At least one horse will most likely be shared with an average sized group. Do not worry about animal handling rolls for now, unless the player decides to ride their mount into the next combat.

BANDIT ATTACK

Unfortunately, the camp the players are riding to has been overrun by bandits. They sent a scouting group along the river to eliminate any travelers heading toward the camp. They intend to ambush the player characters.

Three **bandits** and one **scout** have taken position behind the large rocks near the edge of the river bank. The scout will position himself to attack first once the party is within 60 feet. Have the scout make his Dexterity (Stealth) check. Any player whose passive Wisdom (Perception) score is less than the scout's stealth roll is surprised when combat starts. After the scout fires, the bandits will reveal themselves and attack.

DEVELOPMENTS AND TREASURE

The attackers will all fight to the death. Unless the players remained on their horses throughout the encounter, the horses run off into the wilderness.

If the players capture one of the bandits, they can gain information from their captive with a successful DC 13 Charisma (Intimidation) check (see "What the Bandits Know" sidebar on pg. 8).

The enemy carries a total of 8 gp and 25 sp.

THE SENTINELS CAMP

Once the encounter is over, have each player make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check. A successful roll will reveal that by now, the smoke coming from the distant campsite far too large to come from simple campfires. It takes 15 minutes to reach the campsite, or half as much if they run. Read the following once the players make it to the campsite:

When the campsite comes within view, it is accompanied by a horrific scene. The bodies of at least a dozen recruits are strewn about the campsite, bloodied with wounds from blades and arrows. The large tent in the center of the camp had been set ablaze, now a smoking husk in the center of the area.

Interweaving Suggestion: If any of the characters are from Kessel, they may recognize an old friend, or perhaps even a family member amongst the dead. This can even apply to other characters as well if you wish, most likely those with a Soldier or Acolyte background.

Read the following once the players inspect the area more closely:

The bodies have all been stripped of money and valuables and the supplies have been looted. There are several odd scorch marks along the grass and dirt where some of the dead lay. An eerie silence has settled over the area. A strange, unfamiliar scent accompanies the smell of blood and death.

THE LONE SURVIVOR

Once the players investigate the large tent, they immediately spot movement underneath the rubble. If they investigate, they will find a battered and wounded halfling. He is barely conscious. A successful DC 11 Wisdom (Medicine) check will reveal that he is not mortally wounded, but likely has been poisoned. The players may use this roll to bandage him up as well.

The halfling introduces himself as Danno Grayfoot. He tells the players that a group of over a dozen bandits stormed the camp in a surprise attack. Most of the recruits fell in the first moments. They took a few survivors, including Commander Sulder and a priestess named Alisa. He doesn't know much beyond that, except he overheard one of the attackers mention heading back to the "Bandit's Blade".

Quest: Find the Antidote - Danno is under the effects of a potent form of poison the bandits used to weaken their victims. He is certain if there is an antidote, it can be found within the bandit hideout. The halfling is too weak to fight or to make it all the way to Kessel, but he will volunteer to help the players track the bandits to their location. He will also reward the players with 50 gp if they can find the antidote and escort him to Kessel.

THE BANDIT HIDEOUT

Locating the bandits' trail will require a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Tracking) roll. If the player's choose to accept Danno's offer, they will be able to follow the trail without needing to roll. The tracks lead southwest off the main road to a small clearing about a mile north of the trail leading to the bridge crossing.



MOVING ON

The players may choose to continue on to Kessel instead of facing the bandits. In that case, skip over to Chapter Two, "Turmoil in Kessel". There, they will be met at the entrance by a patrol of guards led by their captain, Rygan. As the town has been under recent attack from raiders and monsters, Rygan will not let the players pass without someone to vouch for them, as they may themselves be the enemy. This should prompt the players to proceed toward the hideout.

The players will have a few moments to survey the area once they reach the complex.

A faded path leads to a clearing in the brush near the edge of the river. A crude wooden wall surrounds few small houses and what appear to be the ruins of an old church. Any markings identifying its deity has long since faded away. The brush provides you with very limited cover, leaving you with only a little time to plan your approach.

After two minutes, have the players make a DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check to see if they are able to spot the approaching patrol of a **scout** and a **thug**. If they fail, the enemy will surprise them and attack immediately. If successful, they may attempt to hide with a DC 10 Dexterity (Stealth) roll. They may choose to surprise them or let them pass.

If the enemy is defeated and the players choose to keep one alive, they may convince one of them to provide them with information with a successful DC 12 Charisma (Intimidation) or Charisma (Persuasion) roll.

TREASURE

The thugs each have 20 sp on them.

INTERROGATING THE BANDITS

A successfully questioned or charmed bandit will provide the following information:

- Their group is a mercenary band led by a warrior named Alkenar.
- The abandoned church they operate from was nicknamed the "Bandit's Blade".
- They were hired to destroy the Sentinels campsite and abduct some of the recruits, particularly a noble priestess.
- Alkenar has recently been seen meeting with a group of mysterious robed figures, presumably their current employer. They spend a lot of time in the catacombs.
- The robed figures wield strange powers that make the bandit crew nervous. They have recently started to avoid the church, where most of the acolytes dwell.

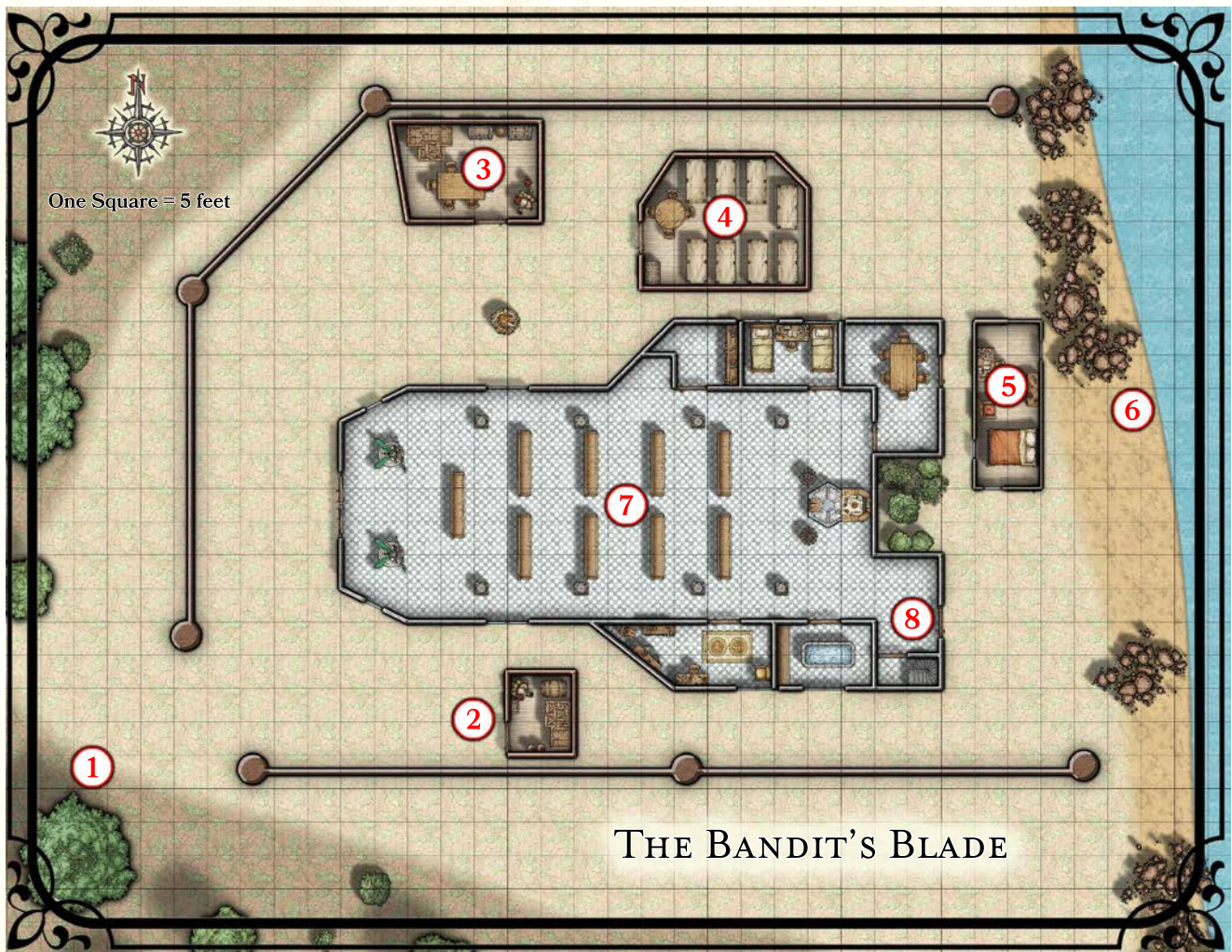
ASSAULT ON THE BANDIT'S BLADE

The players will now have to decide how to proceed. If they brought Danno with them, he will remain here, as he is too weak to fight. With most of the camp on alert, make all Dexterity (Stealth) checks at DC 13,

WANDERING ENCOUNTERS

This entire area within the wooden barricade has a number of bandits and humanoids that wander the area. After the characters leave any numbered area on the map, roll 1d10. On a roll of 1, they have a chance encounter. Roll another d10 and consult the table below.

d10	Encounter
1-2	1d4 bandits
3-4	1d4 bandits, 1 scout
5-6	1d4 cultists, 1 thug
7-8	1d4 goblins, 1 worg
9-10	2 acolytes, 1 gnoll



1. WARNING BELLS

Positioned between the line of trees to the northwest and southeast of the entrance are thin strings with small bells attached to the ends. The strings are only a few inches off the ground. If unnoticed, anyone approaching the camp in any direction aside from the visible entrance, the nearby bandits (Area #3) will be alerted to their presence.

The crude alarm can be detected with a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. A DC 13 Dexterity check using thieves' tools is required to disarm them without making a sound.

2. SOUTH BUILDING

This building contains mostly provisions, foodstuffs, and wine. If the players did already deal with the outside patrol, this is where they return on their route.

TREASURE

There are more than enough supplies in the house for at least a day's travel for up to six people, as well as a jug of fine wine worth 20 gp.

3. NORTH BUILDING

This building is a storage house for supplies. The door to this building is locked. There is a **hobgoblin** and 2 **bandits** at the campfire in front of the building.

DEVELOPMENTS

A DC 11 Dexterity check with thieves tools is required to unlock the door.

If the heroes first listen at the door and make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they can hear voices inside. If not, and they attempt to unlock the door, they will be surprised by the enemy. Two of the bandits will hide behind the crates before the characters enter.

The enemy carries 10 ep and 42 sp. The supply crates in this building all bear the brand of the Ebonshield Traders. If nothing is taken, the location of these supplies can be used to complete a quest in Chapter 2. The crates have two of each Simple Melee and Simple Ranged weapons (see PHB pg. 149), 3 shortswords, 2 suits of leather armor, and materials for two *Explorer's Packs*.

Note: Please take into account the party's lifting and carrying capacity as noted in the PHB. The best the players should hope for here is to obtain adventuring gear to use for the journey ahead.

4. BARRACKS

Two **bandits** are in this building playing cards.

This building is filled with old sleeping cots. A large wooden table takes up the west corner, filled with recently used eating utensils and a set of playing cards. An old trunk is pushed up against the southwest corner.

TREASURE

The bandits carry a total of 20 gp. The old chest contains mostly sets of old clothing and belts. Any player that makes an extra effort to dig through the clothing pile will find a bag wrapped inside one of the robes. The bag contains 2 azurites worth 10 gp each.

5. ALKENAR'S HOUSE

Unless the heroes approach this building using stealth, they will be spotted by the patrol at the river bank (see #6 below). Both doors are locked (DC 12 to pick.)

Much of this longhouse is a collection of furniture likely taken from various locales. There is a fine double bed, a couple of mismatched chairs, an oak desk, and a cherrywood armoire and a large chest in the corner. There is a pile of papers covering the top of the desk.

DEVELOPMENTS

The papers on top of the desk are notes and maps of the surrounding region. A few areas are circled (Kessel, the village of Arcus, and the Redstone Mines) but there does not appear to be any reasoning behind them. The desk is locked, requiring a DC 13 check to open.

Inside the desk is a carved statuette of the goddess Vala (worth 15 gp), a few outlines detailing crew formations, and a letter written on expensive velum. The letter reads:

Alkenar,
The map is marked with the location of Rygen's camp. You may deal with any resistance as you see fit, so long as the leader and Alisa Tristane are both captured and brought to us. Make sure there are no survivors.
This is your final task. Accomplish this, and we can discuss further terms.

Galek

The armoire has some fine clothing inside, as well as a pair of small keys hanging from a hook inside the door. These keys will open the private room in the catacombs below the church. The chest nearby contains 4 daggers, a chain shirt, leather armor, and a mace engraved with the symbol of the goddess Astrine. These belong to the prisoners in Room #13 in the catacombs below.

6. PATROL

Two **bandits** and a **wolf** patrol this area. They will attack anyone approaching the longhouse (Area #5). They carry nothing of value.

7. THE OLD CHURCH

The moment any of the heroes enter this building, they will experience a sense of the corruption from below. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will identify this as the effects of the Lash.

Ancient carvings decorate the wooden doors of this timeworn building. Ornate pillars decorate the center path of pews leading to a stone carved pedestal and altar in the front. Two massive statues of warriors with gleaming emerald wings stand guard at the entrance. Even in its crumbling state, the church still retains a bit of its splendor from days gone by.

You cannot help, however, but feel as if there is something off about the place. An unexplainable chill passes through you as you gaze about the place. The eerie silence is only disturbed by a muffled whisper over your shoulder, from which there appears to be no source. Something is gravely wrong with this place.

DEVELOPMENTS

There are three entrances: the double doors to the west and the two rear doors in the northeast and southeast. The building is mostly devoid of any activity. The majority of the occupants are in the catacombs below, the entrance to which is the stairs in Area #8.

If the players investigate the statues, a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Religion) check will reveal this church to have once belonged to worshipers of Vala, the goddess of victory. The side rooms contain mostly worn furniture and books that have seen the passage of many years. The drawer in the desk in the southwest chamber nearly falls apart when opened. Inside is an old holy symbol made of silver dressed with an emerald. On the back is inscribed the word "Galesong". It is worth 20 gp but can also be turned in for a quest reward in Kessel (Chapter 2).

The altar appears to be the most well maintained part of the building. Though the tapestries are worn, it appears as if much of the dust and dirt has been cleaned off. Sitting atop the altar is a small box made of mahogany. A spiraled symbol made of bronze metal is embedded into the top of the wood. Emphasize to the players that the odd feeling they sensed when they entered the building increases exponentially when they approach the altar. Strange voices, something out of the corner of their eye, a sudden numbness in the body, or any similar experience is allowed.

Small Box: Any character that touches the box hears an inhuman scream coming from within their own head. If you are using the optional Sanity rules on pg. 5, have the player save versus a **Corruption Level of 2** (DC 12). If the box is opened, two **void phantoms** are released. The shadowy horrors bear the visage of the priests that were once the caretakers of these halls. Their eerie scream and aura of oblivion will prompt Sanity checks from the entire party. The phantoms will attack immediately and fight until they are defeated, at which point they will fade into nothing. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will identify their connection to the Lash, but nothing more.

8. SPIRAL STAIRCASE

Behind this locked door is a set of spiral stairs leading down into the catacombs below. The feeling of corruption is stronger here, but will not require checks yet.

9. CATACOMBS ENTRANCE

From here forward, the entire area has been corrupted by the presence of the dark acolytes in room # 14. A Sanity check should be made here at **Corruption Level 2**.

A wave of illness washes over you as you reach the bottom of the staircase. Shadows loom at you in every direction, prompting extra effort from you and your companions to remain focused. The whispers have grown even louder.

The chamber here has seen better days. An old table sits against the west wall. Chunks of dirt and debris have fallen from the ceiling overhead. A faded tapestry hangs on the south wall depicting an armor clad female holding her weapon aloft in the light of the sun.

DEVELOPMENTS

The small room beyond the southeast door is used for storage. A few crates here contain various statuettes, candlesticks, and small paintings. Their overall value is 70 gp. The room behind the tapestry can be detected with a passive Perception score of 12 or higher. There large chest contains some old worn robes and clothing.

Trapped Chest: The small chest is a rusty locked coffer with a poison needle trap. Both the latch and trap are very old, so only a successful DC 11 Intelligence (Investigation) roll will spot the trap. A DC 13 Dexterity roll with thieves' tools will disarm and open the chest. If the trap is tripped, the player suffers 1 point of piercing damage and 1d6 (3) poison damage.

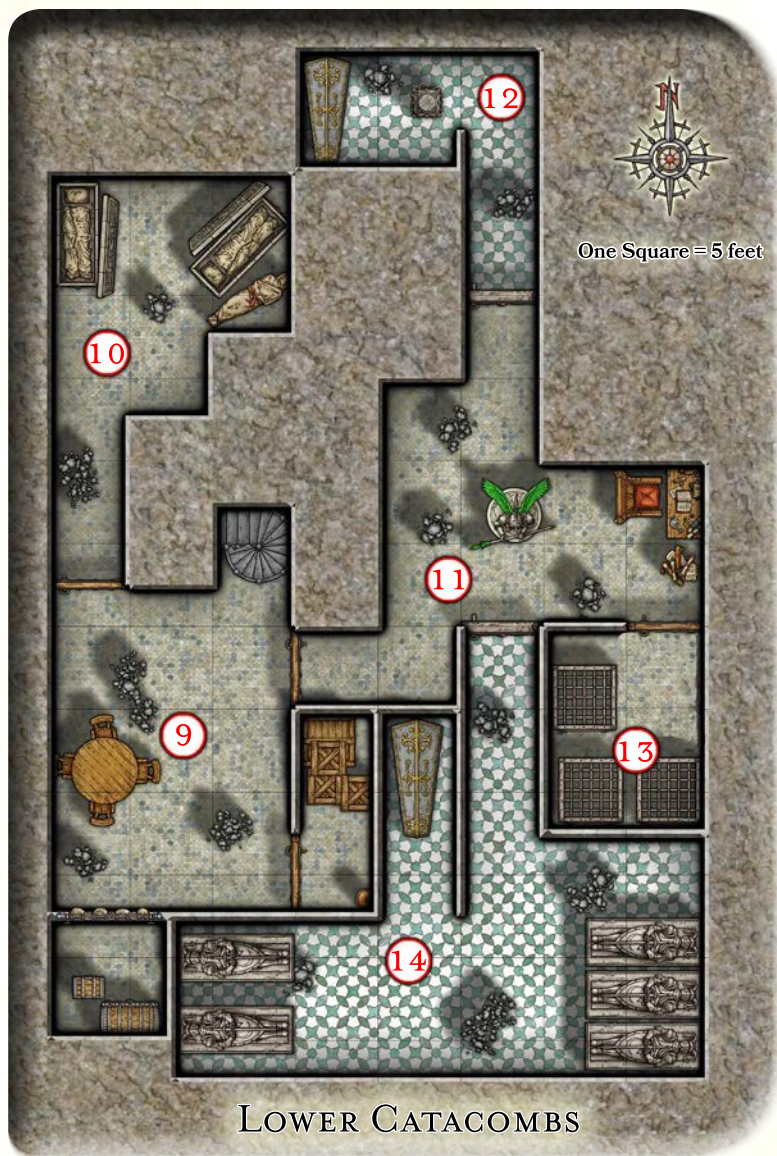
Inside are a couple of bags containing 10 gp, 10 ep, 32 sp, and a set of blue quartz crystals worth 20 gp.

Describing Corruption: If you're using the optional Sanity rules, going forward, the visual effects of corruption will be left up to you. It effects each character differently. Perhaps one player will experience a traumatic flashback from his background. Another might see everything in a mute gray, while their companion sees their own face on a corrupted creature. The use and level are completely your choice. Remember to just have fun with it and make sure your players are doing the same.

10. WESTERN CRYPT

The sarcophagi in this room have been disturbed. The body of a half-orc bandit is lying face down in the rubble near the door.

If any of the heroes approach within 5 feet of any of the sarcophagi, three **void phantoms** will crawl out from them and attack. There is nothing else of value in this room. If the players search the coffins, they will find a fine dagger worth 10 gp.



11. CENTRAL HALL

This room is the crossroads between the northern and southern crypts. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) roll will reveal that this hall is well traveled and recently so.

This room is well lit with a couple of burning torches on the sconces and a lit candle atop the desk against the east wall. A huge statue of a winged knight takes up the center of the room. Two large stone doors mark exits to the north and south, both inlaid with very old writing. A wooden door on the east end of the south wall is fastened with a padlock over the handle.

DEVELOPMENTS

The north door is unlocked, leading to the northern crypt. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will translate the ancient tongue inscribed into the door. It reads, "Lord Lirund Grayspear".

Southern crypt door: The south stone door can be read with the same check. It reads, "Eternal Triumph of the Faithful". Directly beneath the inscription is an indecipherable rune. A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will link it to the corruption within these halls. Any contact with the door will prompt Sanity roll for the area (Corruption Lvl 2). The door cannot be opened by normal means. They will need to rescue Alisa Tristane in Room #13, and give her the stone symbol found on the desk.

Alkenar's Desk: A dusty tome and a few writing tools are on top of the desk. It appears to be a ledger of goods acquired during raids. A fist-sized rock sits next to the ledger. If examined with a DC 15 Wisdom (Religion) check, the symbol carved into the side of the smooth white rock is that of Astrine, goddess of wisdom and purity. The drawer is locked. If the heroes obtained the pair of keys from the longhouse upstairs, one of them will open the desk drawer. The other is for the padlock on the wooden door to Room #13 nearby.

A successful DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools will open the drawer, however, any attempt to open it without the key will activate the fail safe nearby. The statue will turn toward the desk and fire a set of sharp spikes from its mouth. Anyone within 5 feet of the desk must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 1d6 piercing damage. The desk contains a bag of gems worth 50 gp. There is also a *potion of healing* and a vial of a purple hued liquid. It is labeled "antivenom". If the players accepted Danno's "Find the Antidote" quest, this is what needs to fully recover.

12. LIRUND GRAYSPEAR'S TOMB

Much of this chamber appears to have remained untouched over the years. The small path leads north to an decorative pillar, beyond which lies a resplendent coffin in the west alcove. A dull, low moan seems to fade in and out around you. You cannot seem to place the source.

DEVELOPMENTS

The body of Lirund Grayspear, paladin of Vala rests here. Unfortunately, the corruption of these halls has dragged his soul out from its eternal rest in Ysgard. Lirund is now a **tainted specter**. He will fly out from his coffin and attack as soon as any hero moves past the pillar. Use the same stats as the Monster Manual, except make a Sanity check upon first sight and for each hero that receives damage from him for the first time. Corruption Level is 2.

After Lirund is defeated, his spirit retains his original form and speaks to the heroes:

A white aura surrounds the specter whose form shifts to a ghostly visage of a human warrior wearing a full suit of silvery plate armor.

"Hold!" he shouts while shifting back to hover over his coffin. "Forgive me, valiant ones. I could not control the mad rage that had taken my soul. Thank you for freeing me from its grasp."

Lirund explains how his soul was forced back here from Ysgard, a side effect of the unholy corruption. He soul is

unable to return until his resting place is cleansed.

Quest: Cleansing the Catacombs - Lirund makes the heroes an offer. If they will find the source of the corruption and destroy it, Lirund will tell them of the treasure that is hidden in the catacombs. If they accept, he will also bestow the blessings of Vala upon them. The blessing grants each player character the effect of an "Aid" spell for as long as they remain in the catacombs, as well as granting them advantage on Sanity checks. In addition, Lirund will heal the heroes of their wounds.

Completing the quest requires the destruction of the void stone carried by the dark acolyte in Room #14. Once this is complete, they may return to Lirund for their reward. He will tell them of a hidden niche in the wall behind his coffin. Inside is a chest filled with gems worth 100 gp, a finely crafted shield (25 gp if sold), and *Faesever*, a magical longsword forged of a rare meteoric iron. The niche can only be revealed by Lirund.

13. THE SPIRIT CAGE

Three large cages take up most of this chamber, each one containing prisoners. In the center of the room is a three foot pedestal forged of a black metal. A bright red orb sits atop the pedestal, pulsating with an eerie blood red light. A dark tendril reaches out from the orb into one of the cages, piercing the body of a large, fair-haired man inside. He appears to be suffering so much that he cannot even bring himself to cry out.

DEVELOPMENTS

The fair-haired man is **Commander Bolus Sulder**. His soul is being absorbed into the pedestal to power the ritual circle in Room #14. In the neighboring cage, a dark haired woman is bound and gagged. She is **Alisa Tristane**, a priestess of Astrine. She cries out as best she can through her gag as soon as she sees the party.

The orb can be destroyed by weapon or by magic. It is AC 13 and has 12 hit points. It has a **Corruption Level of 3**. Any physical contact with it (including melee weapons) will invoke a Sanity check. Once the orb is destroyed, Bolus collapses onto the floor, motionless.

The cages are sturdy, but can be opened with a successful DC 13 Dexterity check with thieves' tools. They can also be broken. They have an AC of 12 and 11 hp. If the heroes found Alkenar's keys in Area #5, the key that opens this room's door will also open the cages.

MEETING THE PRISONERS

Sadly, there is nothing the heroes can do for Commander Bolus. Though free of the orb, it was too much for his body. He lies dead next to a traumatized dwarf. Alisa will attempt to heal him but to no avail. The dwarf is **Engosh**, a braumeister from Kessel. The third cell has two prisoners as well. They are **Ziegart** and **Zera**, two half-elven siblings that were to be Sentinel recruits. The siblings are unconscious but can be awakened easily.

Alisa will attempt to speak to the closest player. She will immediately thank them for their efforts and will help any way she can. She believes she knows who is responsible for all of this. If the players don't treat her rudely, and if asked, she can provide the following:



ALISA



ZIEGART



ZERA



ENGOSH

- There is a group of cultists that have been operating secretly within the Empyrean Forest. They are able to harness the power of the Lash to their own ends.
- The corruption in the catacombs is caused by magic wielded by one of the cult's acolytes.
- The cult harvests the life source of individuals to power their summoning rituals. She does not know their method of choosing.
- Alisa's father is Garrus Tristane, General of the Sentinels of the Sun. He is currently in Kessel.

Ziegart's sister, Zera is suffering from an acute form of madness. Her brother wishes to get her to town as soon as possible. He volunteers to take her and Engosh to safety. He will not leave her side until she is well.

Zera is currently helpless and Engosh is far too traumatized over the loss of his friend to provide anything useful. More will be revealed on them in Chapter 2.

ROLEPLAYING THE NPCs

NPC personalities can add flavor to any scenario. Wearing a few hats can be tough, but can also be fun for all involved.

- **Alisa** is friendly, well mannered, but blunt when necessary. She has a kind heart and sometimes forgets her noble upbringing. She detests evil and corruption of any form. She is Lawful Good.
- **Ziegart** has a playful side about him. He takes little seriously and often jabs fun even in dire peril. He is only serious when it comes to protecting his sister. He is Chaotic Neutral.
- **Zera** is the more pragmatic of the siblings, but she is also amiable and very charismatic. Currently, though, she is in a near catatonic state. She will appear again in Chapter 2 if she survives. She is Chaotic Good.
- **Engosh** at first glance is a grumbly old dwarf. Give him a mug of ale and he's your best friend. Not much of a fighter, he was merely there to support Bolus' recruits. More on him in Chapter 2. He is Neutral Good.

Interweaving: Depending on background, any one of the players could very well know both Alisa and Engosh. Perhaps they grew up around Alisa's family when they were children. They could have trained together if they are of the same faith. Engosh could be a friend of the family, or a dwarf character's fellow clansman. Ziegart and Zera have their own origins, and should not be connected to the party.

The Next Step: Alisa will volunteer to help hunt down and defeat the enemy if supplied with some gear. If the party found the equipment in Area #5, the chain shirt and the mace belong to her if they choose. The daggers and leather armor belong to Ziegart and Zera. Engosh is no fighter and will not accompany the heroes into danger.

Ziegart vows to keep his sister and the braumeister safe ("with this mighty quill I just found on the desk", he jokes). Only a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check will convince Ziegart to leave them here to help the heroes. The DC drops to 14 if they give him his daggers and mention the safe room in #12.

14. GRAND CRYPT

This door is sealed by the powerful sigil placed upon it. Alisa will tell the party she can remove it with her ritual stone. If the players did not yet find it (the desk in Room #11), she will describe it to them. Once obtained, she will cast the cleansing ritual. Other clerics of Astrine in the party can both assist and learn the ritual if they choose.

Once cast, the ritual stone shatters and the rune vanishes. There are no other locks on the door. The source of the corruption is in here. Entering this room immediately requires a Sanity check. **The Corruption Level here is 3.** The scene below unfolds when the party reaches the end of the hallway:

Gritting your teeth, you move toward the main section of the tomb. The corruption here is strong, stinging your innards and causing your senses to occasionally dim. In the center of the chamber, a shard of black crystal floats a few feet from the ground. It is surrounded by four figures in embroidered robes each chanting eerily. A tall, red haired human wearing dark leather armor stands a few feet away. Within moments, the chanting stops, much to the surprise of the red-haired man.

"What is the matter?" he asks. "Why are you stopping?"

"The ritual cannot be completed without the sacrifice," one of the acolytes responds before turning to him. "You have failed, Alkenar! The priestess was to be prepared for the summoning. The master will not be pleased."

Alkenar scoffs at the acolyte. "I've done my part, priest!" he growls. "My people have them held exactly as you have instructed. Come, I will show you myself!"

DEVELOPMENTS

The party must contend with two **acolytes**, the **dark cleric**, and **Alkenar** himself. The party may choose to act before the entire scene plays out. If this is the case, there is a chance the players may surprise them. If the entire scene plays out, Alkenar and his allies will head toward the hallway, alerted that something is amiss. Refer to the appendix for tactics and abilities.

Use Alisa as if she were a player character. She will



fight valiantly, but will not unnecessarily sacrifice herself in any way. She is a chosen of her goddess. If she is brought below zero hit points, she will be knocked unconscious without the need to make a death save.

The Truth About Ziegart: If Ziegart accompanied the party here, he does not receive the same blessing and can be killed normally. However, if Ziegart is brought below half his hit points, he will stay out of the way as best as possible, attacking from range. Ziegart has already been turned by the dark cult, and is a spy for them.

Due to recent events, he will do his best to portray himself as an ally to the player characters until he can plan his next move. This won't be until the next chapter. Unless detected somehow by magical means, it should be highly unlikely the party would suspect this.

The Void Stone: The stone is the source of the dark acolyte's chaos whip. Destroying the stone will eliminate his ability to cast this, as well as give him a disadvantage on all spell attacks and saves. Once this happens, he will attempt to flee. The stone is AC 14 and has 12 hit points.

If Alkenar is captured and questioned instead of killed, he will provide the following information with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) or Charisma (Intimidation) check:

- The cultists have a large military force hidden somewhere in the nearby forest. Their leader is a zealous warrior-priest who commands dark, powerful magics.
- Alkenar was approached by a drow priest named Galek with promise of power and riches, as well as the ability to operate freely throughout the region.
- He does not know much about the ritual, save that its

completion would have ensured his crew's induction into the cult army. The life force of others must be sacrificed to power the ritual.

- The cult has spies operating in the town of Kessel. They have been observing the members of the town council. He does not know what they have planned.

REWARDS

Along with his gear, Alkenar carries a pouch with 20 gp inside. His fine dagger is worth 15 gp. The dark acolyte wears a runed black metal bracer with a ruby inlay. Though it can be sold for 10 gp, it can also be used to start a separate quest once the party reaches the town hall in Kessel. The party earns the following experience awards:

- 200 XP for defeating Alkenar and the dark acolyte.
- 50 XP if they complete Lirund Grayspear's quest.
- 50 XP for rescuing the prisoners and escort them safely out of the complex.
- 25 XP if they bring the antidote to Danno.

At this point, the party should be well into 2nd level and ready to head toward Kessel. The NPCs will accompany the party on the journey should they choose, or travel on their own if need be.

Alisa will graciously thank the party for their efforts. If there are any potential recruits for the Sentinels of the Sun, she will tell them that she will put in a good word for them to her father, the Sentinels' general.

When the party has rested and is ready to move on, continue to Chapter 2.

CHAPTER TWO: TURMOIL IN KESSEL

Kessel, called by many the “Jewel of the Empyrean Forest”, has become a symbol of peace for the people of Revonar within recent years. A few years after the War of the Lash, the kingdom of Feras was merely a settlement while explorers constantly ventured north in search of allies and resources. The first encounter between the southern explorers and the fey of the Empyrean Forest was not a friendly one. The forest was severely tainted by the mystical Lash, many of its creatures dying or twisted by the spreading corruption.

The elves of Silfast banded together with the dwarves and gnomes of Vatunrond Mountains to the west to stop the decay of their land and save the Feyblood from a dire fate, but it was not enough. It was only with the help of the humans and twilight elves from the southern island that the forest had been saved and much of the corruption held in check. The explorers settled in regions nearby, establishing the cities of Kaskval and Brun, and the then small trading village of Kessel. Though the danger was over, the relations between the natives of the Empyrean and the new settlers remained strained until a little over a decade ago. The recent defeat of the dark army in the Battle of the Ashen Glade had strengthened the bonds between the inhabitants of the forest and its surroundings (see “Adventure Background” on pg. 3.).

Within the last few months, the peace within the lands has been tested by constant attacks from bandits, orcs, and strange creatures that have swarmed the settlements en masse. Most recently, Kessel has been infiltrated by spies and saboteurs, looking to sow chaos and dissent amongst the populace. The town's new mayor, Aston Kelbor, has sent a call for heroes to investigate and defend the peoples from the growing force of evil that continues to threaten the peace and prosperity of his citizens.

A FATEFUL HOMECOMING

By the next day from when they leave the Sentinels Camp, the party should finally arrive in Kessel.

The moonlight breaks through the canopy of clouds, its silvery rays mingling with the calming breeze blowing from the east. After a long and tiring journey, your eyes can finally see the hints of building spires and chimney rooftops beyond the hilly terrain. You briefly hear Alisa whisper a small prayer of thanks to her goddess as you make the final stretch toward Kessel. Whether you are a stranger to this area or you are returning to a familiar sight, there are a myriad of different emotions shared between you and your companions. What you encountered not far from here can only be a troubling sign of things to come.

Interweaving Suggestion: So long as it does not interfere with their background, or there is no character with any of the optional ones provided, choose two or three players. Depending alignment and background, either Alisa, Ziegart, or Zera will attempt to develop a closer bond or friendship with one of them over time. This can begin as early as during the journey to Kessel. It could be a different player or players for each NPC. This will give the players a bit more personal investment should the need arise.

This could be easily done in Alisa's case, since many of the optional backgrounds provide a familiar connection. Zera would more likely befriend a rogue or someone from a not-so-noble background. While Ziegart's intention is to eventually betray the party, the outcome of this could change depending on how any of the players interact with him. This will be revisited later in the chapter.

THE GUARD PATROL

Once the party reaches the tree line, they will be stopped by a patrol of four guards on horseback. The guard in the lead shouts “Hold! Please identify yourselves!” If the party journeyed here without rescuing Alisa from the Bandit's Blade, they will be turned away immediately (see “Moving On” on pg. 8).



Otherwise, Alisa will identify herself as well as vouch for the party. At this point, the players should be able to open up a dialogue with the guards before continuing on into the city. See the "What The Guards Know" sidebar below for more information on current events in Kessel. If any of the guards are informed of the attack on the camp or the events at the Bandit's Blade, they advise the players to speak with Captain Rygen as soon as possible. He can be found in the Sentinel's building (refer to #13 on the map).

SEPARATE WAYS

Alisa and Engosh both bid the party farewell for now. Alisa plans to report to her father in the morning and suggests the party find lodgings for the night. She can be found again tomorrow at the Temple of Astrine (#4). Engosh can be found at his shop in the smithy (#5). Ziegart and Zera are both headed to the Inn (#2).

During this chapter, the players are free to wander the town of Kessel and meet with the various people of the town. Refer to the "Town Locations" section for the corresponding areas on the map legend. Many of the locations are not available until the morning, however. The only locations the players can visit at this time are:

- **Inn of the Golden Maiden (#2)** - The party should head here to find lodgings and food.
- **Ironborn Tavern (#5)** - The smithy isn't open at night, but the tavern will be serving drinks until the late hour.
- **Ebonshield Trader (#10)** - Open late if the party needs to resupply. They can also trade in a quest here if they found the cache of supplies at the Bandit's Blade.

TALKING WITH THE GUARDS

The guard patrols in Kessel will freely provide the following information to the players;

- The town has been subject to many attempted raids recently by a group of bandits and beasts operating from somewhere nearby.
- A few dignitaries from other lands have come here to prepare for the annual Twilight Festival, celebrating the autumnal season. Most of them are staying in the Inn of the Golden Maiden.
- Many new recruits should be arriving within the next few days to join the ranks of the Sentinels of the Dawn. The Sentinel's commanders have assembled at the training compound on the west side of town.
- Travel and trade have been more scarce since the recent increase in bandit attacks. Caravans have been regularly raided and the roads have grown dangerous. This has made it more difficult for the town to provide goods and services.

KESSEL ORIGINS

Depending on the optional bonds provided in the adventure, there may be some characters that are from Kessel. Each of the areas on the map that match one of the bonds will be covered in the entry for that area. Regardless of background, there should be no player that currently resides or has a home within the town.

EVENTS IN KESSEL

It is very important that this entire section be read in its entirety before proceeding to the map locations on pg. 17.

After the first night in Kessel, the major events that follow are dependant on which paths that players take while in town. Otherwise, the players may take as little or as much time as they need to explore, train, and build rapport with the townspeople. There are three mandatory events that will occur within the chapter once certain conditions are met:

A Bloody Betrayal - This event takes place during the "Double Agents" quest and attend the Sentinels gathering in Town Hall (#1).

Maiden's Ambush - This will happen the same night as when the players turn in the "Bad Seed" quest obtained from Janus at Starwind Manor (#9).

Return of the Beast - Following the events of "Maiden's Ambush", this event takes place upon the party's return from the town of Arcus after they complete the "Sign of the Goddess" quest. Completion of this event will take them directly into Chapter Three.

MOVING THINGS ALONG

Each of the major events are dependent on each other in order for them to occur. As long as these remain consistent, the party is free to choose their own path there.

Allow the players to take their time completing any or all of the available side quests, but feel free to push them along if they get stuck or are taking an unusually long time. If you feel the players need a bit of a push, refer to the first part of "A Bloody Betrayal" for advice on putting the party back on the path. By the time the players reach the end of this chapter, they should be well into level 3.

A SUPPORTING CAST

There are many personalities in Kessel for the players to interact with. There are also important NPCs that are integral to the storyline and the events within the adventure. There will be times where they will join the party on a quest and will be involved in the major events to come. Much like in Chapter One, they will be specific to each scenario.

In this adventure, good roleplaying can be just as important as good dice rolling. Just remember to relax and have fun when running each NPC. Making it enjoyable for both yourself and your players is far more important than perfecting your acting talents. Let the players build their own bonds with the NPCs which will make your work easier.

NPCs IN THE PARTY

There will be many times when an NPC may join the party automatically, or the players decide to have one join. Here are some tips for running NPCs in this adventure:

- Though certain NPCs are integral to the story, they are only there to carry the story. They are not the protagonists. It is up to the players to make all the important decisions that face them.
- NPCs will never deliberately put themselves in harm's way unless there is a good reason to do so.



- Read the traits and roleplaying tips for each NPC. It is likely they will not treat all the characters the same way, which may create some either some fun friction or friendly banter with the other party members. Reward the players for playing along. Remember, this is a roleplaying game.
- There are certain scenarios where an NPC needs to survive in order for the story to progress. That does not mean they need to be at the forefront of every battle. Keep their actions simple. They are there to provide support.
- Always remember that the NPCs have their own lives, and will be sure to voice an opinion if the party members actions conflict with their needs and goals.

KESSEL MAP LOCATIONS

Each of these can be explored in whichever order the players desire. When they first arrive, however, the likely destination will be the Inn of the Golden Maiden (#2). During the day, the players may choose to split up to cover more ground. Do your best to balance out the time for each player.

There are many buildings that are unmarked on the map. Feel free to use any of these for background development, homebrew side quests, NPCs, or anything else you would like to add your own flavor to the area.

The following entries provide detail on the specific locations in town.

1. TOWN HALL

The town hall is one of the newer buildings in town. Thick stone walls of dwarven fashion are dressed with wide elegant front columns of elven design, complete with the decorative windows and banners found in many of the buildings in Feras. It is a testament to the unity of the people within the region. A bustle of workers move about the area mounting decorations for the upcoming festival. A large wooden sign hangs from the side of the main entrance that reads "ADVENTURERS NEEDED! Reward for brave souls to face the bandit horde. Inquire within."

The players will receive a friendly greeting by the staff before they enter. The main hall's interior is currently filled with ladders, ropes, and workers putting up frames and banners for the upcoming festival. To the rear is the mayor's chambers and the meeting hall. The mayor is not in, but if the players inquire about the sign outside to anyone, they will be directed to the assistant's chambers in the east.

The mayor's deputy assistant is Bainton Stonebeard. He is a dwarf in his middling years who was voted in to assist the new mayor in his day to day tasks. He has a very stern ethic, but is very good at his job. He introduces himself to the players with a polite greeting. The mayor is currently very busy, so visitors have been left to him.

Quest: Raiders in Redstone - If the players inquire about the sign outside, Bainton will explain that a recent scouting party was sent out a few days ago to investigate the continuing raids against the town. One survivor returned, reporting that his companions tracked the raiders south, but were overrun near the entrance to the Redstone Mines. Bainton is offering 100 gp to anyone willing to venture to the mine and deal with the raiders. If the party accepts, refer to the quest log on pg. 27).

Quest: Double Agents - The mayor has reason to believe that one of the three commanders of the Sentinels of the Dawn is a traitor and may actually be organizing the different forces threatening the town. Bainton will pay 300 gp to the party if they use their influence with the Sentinels uncover the traitor and report to Mayor Kelbor back here at the hall.

2. INN OF THE GOLDEN MAIDEN

Though the building has seen better days, this large building shows far more of its charm than it does its age. A sweet, melodious tune comes from within the common room. There are very few empty tables here, the room full of locals, many of which glance in your direction as you enter. A skilled minstrel plays her lute by the hearth in the corner of the room.

The innkeeper is a lean, balding human named Olgen. If the characters introduce themselves to him or any of the servants, they will soon be recognized as the party who just rescued Lady Tristane from the bandits. Out of thanks, Olgen will offer them a meal and drink on the house, since he's known Alisa since birth. Depending on background, Olgen will most likely recognize one or more of the players as well.

Lodgings - 5 sp per night for a common room, 1 gp for a large room, and 2 gp for the large group room.

The Rumor Mill - Just as with every good drinking hall, the common room of the Golden Maiden is filled with locals willing to share the town rumors and gossip. Players making an effort to talk to the locals can obtain the following useful information:

- Matron Yolande, head of the Temple of Astrine, left town weeks ago to deal with some type of emergency. She hasn't been seen or heard from since. Her acolytes may know more. (The temple can be found at Area #4).
- Starwind Keep on the border of Feras was sacked and burned a few days ago. The Lord and Lady were both slain and their children are missing. A member of their guard is here in Kessel searching for their whereabouts. He's taken refuge in the old Sironan family home. (Area #9).
- The new mayor, Aston Kelbor, has had his hands full dealing with the constant raids threatening the

townsfolk. He is looking to hire local adventurers to deal with the problem (See Area #1).

- Milus, the archdruid, has been investigating the increasing effects of the Lash amongst the townsfolk and surrounding area. He thinks it may have some connection to the rise in bandit attacks. (Milus is in Area #12).
- A rather uncouth group of guards have been causing just as much unrest as they do keeping the peace. Guard Captain Salas has had his hands too full with the bandit and monster attacks to deal with the situation. The unruly guards usually spend their evenings at the Ironborn Tavern (Area #5).
- Strange things are afoot at the Danlin Home (Area #8). Robed figures have been seen in and out of the house and some of the locals have heard strange noises at night. It is home to Eliza & Delios Danlin, a noble couple originally from Kaskaval, but they haven't been seen for weeks now.
- Elenora Straeden, a widow whose husband perished in the Battle of the Ashen Glade, is searching for her missing daughter who disappeared a day ago. (She can be found at her farm in Area #7).

In addition, rumors from the "Talking with the Guards" sidebar on pg. 16 are also available. The party should be able to follow any of these leads after the first night's stay.

3. KESSEL MARKETPLACE

A collection of tents, stands, and small buildings make up the majority of wide, circular area. Lively music can be heard being played from the northeast. Near the center, long steps lead up to an unused wooden stage. There are a variety of people here, from traders to travelers to locals, all sampling the various goods and services.

The market is open from sunrise to sunset. Merchants from every region come here to trade. Where Skycrest has a large trading ward within its city walls, this small marketplace is where many come to trade amongst different races and cultures for goods that may not be found elsewhere.

The players can find any equipment or service that is available in the Player's Handbook or Sundered Realms Player's Guide. Any exotic weapons or firearms may also be found here, as well as a couple of uncommon magical items per the DM's discretion.

Most of the traders here are fair, selling at normal cost. If the players wish to make a deal, they may be able to get a 10% discount with a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check.

FORTUNE OF THE FATED

Anyone making a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will overhear various rumors about a self-proclaimed mystic who has been swindling people of their coin. If the party asks, they will be directed to a tent on the east side of the marketplace.

The tent is owned by Lorca the Seer, a mystic from Kaskaval. She offers to read the fortunes of anyone in

the party that passes her by. She only charges 3 sp for a reading. If immediately accused of being a fraud, she will claim that the customers were just unhappy with the truth, and will even offer a reading for free.

If any of the players accept, or they just pay the 3 sp, Lorca will escort them into the tent and begin the reading. The DM may choose any divining method - crystal ball, pool of water, bones, or if you have the *Tarokka Cards* from the *Curse of Strahd* series, those will work just as well. During the reading, Lorca will state obvious facts about the player. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that she seems to be guessing more than anything else. If confronted, or if the players attempt to leave, Lorca will shout, "But wait!", and reach out toward the player. Before anyone can react, read the following:

The light within the tent seems to dim to a dull mute gray the moment Lorca touches you. As time slows to an agonizing crawl, Lorca's eyes turn a stark, milky white. Her face wears a look of utter shock and terror as familiar whispers creep into the air. The moment ends when Lorca releases you and falls to the floor next to her table. She stares back at you frightfully, as if she'd seen something truly horrifying.

Lorca will insist the players leave her tent immediately. If pressed about what she saw, she will describe a shadowy flame hurling outward from a black tower and engulfing all that exists. Before the party leaves, she will tell them, "Betrayal, corruption, death.... a dark destiny awaits you all. Whatever you do, do not follow the jeweled path, or all will be lost!" She has nothing else to say to the party and insists they leave.

Lorca's vision is of the Path of Glory at the center of the Iron Bastion (which the players will reach in Module #3). If the party seeks out Lorca again later on, she and her tent will be gone.

THE SILVER HILT

The largest stand in the marketplace is right next to a small stage on the west end of the circle, where a minstrel's tune echoes through the area. It bears a large sign that reads "The Silver Hilt - Exotic Weapons and Crafts". This shop is owned by Danvos Renlok, a portly, unkempt dwarven trader along with his partner, Trink, a tall but clumsy half-orc. This detestable duo sells any weapon available, but at a 20% markup. They will also buy back items at 20% their base value. It requires a successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) check to haggle any item down to regular price.

Danvos will take great interest in the party if they visit his tent. While Trink bumbles about, Danvos will attempt to ask the players personal questions about themselves and their companions in the guise of small talk and negotiation. In truth, Danvos is a spy for the dark cult, and Trink is a cult assassin. Trink will attempt to steal from one of the players, searching specifically for their room key at the inn. Have each person make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) roll. Any success will reveal Trink's movements to the group.

If confronted, they will attack immediately. Use the stats for a **spy** for Trink, and a **cult detractor** for Danvos. If one

of them is defeated, and the other is down to at least half their hp, Ziegart will rush in to the "rescue" (even if he wasn't with the party), and attack until both the spies are dead. Though neither spy would not give him up in either case, Ziegart does not want to risk the party learning his true identity by questioning other cult members.

REWARDS

The arriving town guard will not allow the players to loot the shop, but a pouch of gems worth 35 gp can be taken from Danvos' belt.

In addition, if they search further, they will notice that Trink's cloak is reversible. The inside is lined with red silk, and bears the crest of the Sentinels of the Dawn. If any of the guards are asked about this, they are directed to speak with the mayor in Area #1.

4. TEMPLE OF ASTRINE

A grand structure made of polished white stone stands alone in a clearing next to a small collection of trees. Decorative columns with silver inlay mark the entrance, bearing the symbol of Astrine, the goddess of wisdom and purity, carved into its front.

This is one of the newer buildings in town, raised by a joint effort in honor of Lady Annabelle, a noble priestess who perished during the Battle of the Ashen Glade.

Currently, the temple's grand halls are mostly empty, save for a few of the faithful performing basic maintenance on the altar and statue of Astrine. The players will be greeted by the acolyte, Merrill. If asked about the state of the temple, he will somberly tell the players that things have been rather subdued since the disappearance of Matron Yolande nearly a month ago. The only two prominent members are the Vicar Remjen and Lady Alisa Tristane, who can both be found in the east meeting hall.

Quest: Missing Matron - If the players head to the east hall, they will find Alisa and Vicar Remjen discussing the fate of Matron Yolande. Alisa will introduce you to the Vicar as her rescuers, upon which the Vicar will extend his utmost gratitude. He will also humbly request that you assist with the search of their missing Matron. In return, he will reward the players with 100 gp. The matron herself will also be able to grant a special blessing from the temple to defend against the corruption of the Lash.

If the players accept, Remjen will tell them the Matron was last seen heading north on the road toward the elven city of Silfast. Refer to the quest log on pg. 27.

5. IRONBORN TAVERN & SMITHY

The smithy is open from sunrise till late after sunset, but the tavern is closed until late afternoon.

Two buildings made of a stone and hard oak stand on either side of the street. A deep red glow comes from the open arch of the smaller northern building. The much larger building to the south bears a large metalbound wooden sign that reads "Tavern of the Ironborn".

The smithy is run by Jald Ironborn, a dwarven master smith. He sells any type of weapons and armor normally available, and can customize metal items (such as engraving or decoration) upon request. Prices for such depend on materials and subject to DM's discretion.

Quest: The Ironborn Tavern - If asked about his tavern across the street, Jarl will tell the players that a group of rowdy customers and several members of the local guard have been harassing the locals and overtaking the tavern floor in the evening hours. The guard captain has been regularly unavailable to deal with the situation. Jarl will also make sure to let the party know that there's just something "off" about everyone there when it happens. The other guards just seem to avoid the place.

If the players offer to investigate, Jarl will offer a 10% discount for his goods and services if the players can resolve his situation.

INVESTIGATING THE TAVERN

If the players arrive at the tavern from the late afternoon onward, they will see a gathering of six **guards** outside the entrance. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal the guards to be acting strangely as they accost one of the locals passing them on the street. Though seemingly keeping the peace, the passing townsman is roughly handled and scurries away in fear. One of the guards throws a rock in the man's direction while the others laugh.

The guards are immediately hostile when approached, shouting rude, angry comments and demanding the party lay their weapons down onto the ground. Any attempt to parlay with the guards will only seem to anger them more, with another warning to leave or lay down arms. If anyone speaking with the guards can make a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, will reveal the guards to be acting erratic and seem just as confused as angry. Upon a second attempt to speak with the guards, they will attack. Read the following after the encounter:

Loud, raucous voices can be heard over the chords of a lute playing a melodious tune from within. There appears to be no reaction to the commotion going on outside. For some reason, you feel a chill as you approach the entrance, your instincts telling you to stay away.

The tavern floor is a wide open area, about 50 feet square with a long bar opposite the entrance and a small stage is against the wall to the right. The only other door leading to the office next to the bar.

As soon as the players enter, have them make a DC 13 Sanity check. This entire building has a **Corruption Level of 3**. The locals within the establishment seem wild eyed, shouting random chants and cheers as they periodically punch, scratch or throw things at each other. The smell of dried blood fills the room, amid some other foul odors. Upon the stage is an elven minstrel, dressed in fancy silk garments and playing a lute made of a polished dark wood. A player making a successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will notice Engosh the Braumeister near the corner of the bar. He is avoiding the crowd and carefully points toward the minstrel when he makes eye contact with anyone in the party.

Every two minutes the players spend inside the tavern will prompt another DC 13 Sanity check. If the players approach the stage, the minstrel will warn the party to leave or perish. If the players continue their approach or attack, the crowd will instantly become violent, lashing out wildly at each other and the party in a massive brawl.

The Tavern Brawl - The minstrel is actually a **dark enchanter**. At the beginning of combat, the lute will crack open and two **void phantoms** will stream out of the opening. Each round, the players must make a successful DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 3 (1d6) points of bludgeoning damage from the random brawlers. The minstrel and phantoms will attack until defeated or killed, upon which the rest of the tavern will come to their senses and stop attacking. If captured, the minstrel will speak only in Abyssal, spouting curses at the party. He will not give any information to the players.

The tavern folk will be confused and disoriented, but will thank the party for freeing them from the minstrel's hold. Engosh will be extremely grateful, and offer the players a free meal and drink anytime they visit. Even if the players haven't received the quest from Jarl Ironborn in the smithy, they can still receive the discount he promises once they inform him the tavern is safe.

REWARDS

The minstrel carries a pouch containing 78 ep and 36 gp, as well as a *bag of holding* containing 50 gp worth of ritual spell components.

6. BODINA'S HERB SHOP

Herbalist Bodina is a halfling woman of middling years who makes a variety of healing herbs and salves. She is also a procurer or rare trinkets, as shown by her small collection of ancient necklaces, stones, and various antiques she has on display behind her counter.

The majority of the medicines and herbs Bodina sells can be bought in bundles valued at 20 gp each, and will each provide an advantage to any Wisdom (Medicine) rolls used to stabilize a character at zero hit points. She also sells a jar of *Keoghtom's Ointment* for 250 gp. The jar contains three applications. Bodina is friendly, but shrewd, and a retired adventurer. Any attempt to steal from her will require both a Dexterity (Stealth) and Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check at a DC 18. If discovered, the offending player will be forced to pay a 50 gp fine to the local guard and receive a disadvantage to all Charisma checks when dealing with the townsfolk.

THE GALESONG AMULET

Bodina will ask the players if they've come across any interesting collectibles or artifacts. If they found the holy symbol in The Old Church (Area #7 in Chapter 1), and show it to Bodina, she will be delighted and offer the players 40 gp to purchase it. Alternatively, if they pay her 100 gp and give her three days, she says she can revive the old magic that lay within the amulet, forging it into an *amulet of purity*.

Either way, award the party 50 XP if they give the holy symbol to her. If the party is short on funds, she will also agree to be paid for the amulet once the work is finished.

7. STRAEDEN'S FARM

Elenora Straeden is a half-elven widow in her late 30's. She is well respected amongst the townsfolk and is also a member of the town council. She knows much of what happens within Kessel. She is friendly, and will gladly share information with the players, including any rumors the party could gather from anywhere else in town.

Quest: The Wayward Daughter - Elenora was widowed during the Battle of the Ashen Glade. Though the current rumor is that her daughter, Nandy "has gone missing", Elenora fears that she may have willingly joined the dark cult that has been making their mark in the area. Nandy has always been a handful, and in recent years acting strangely and sneaking away from home. Elenora found a curved knife in her room with strange markings along the blade. If the players ask to see it, a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will confirm these are the sigils of the dark cult. She will gladly offer the party a reward of 75 gp for any information they can find on her daughter, plus an additional 100 gp if they locate and return her daughter. Nandy's fate is discovered in Area #5 of Cromwell Manor in Chapter 3.

8. DANLIN HOME

You can't help but feel a sense of apprehension as you approach this large house, which appears to have fallen into disarray. Dim candlelight can be seen through some of the larger windows. You see a shadowy figure moving across the grand hall from within the house.

This home has been overtaken by a group of four **cultists**, two **acolytes**, and a **dark cleric**. They have been recruiting and operating on behalf of the dark cult for the past three weeks. The front door is locked and trapped, requiring a successful DC 13 check with Thieves' Tools to disarm and open. Upon failure, the stone overhang will collapse upon the doorway, alerting the cultists inside. Each person within a 15 ft radius from the door must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 7 (2d6) points of damage. The party may also opt to enter via any of the windows. They are also locked, but not trapped, requiring the same difficulty to pick open.

Have the players make a DC 12 Sanity check upon entering the home. The entire house has a **Corruption Level of 2**. The party may resolve the encounter as they see fit. The cult members operate primarily out of the 40' square main hall, leaving the remainder of the house unattended. They will attack the party as soon as they are made aware of their presence.

Any cult members left alive can be questioned with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion or Intimidation) check. The dark cleric is actually Delios Danlin, the owner of the home. His wife, Eliza was given to the cult as a sacrifice to the dark god weeks before.

REWARDS

The house had long been stripped of valuables, but if the party chooses to search the house, a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Investigation) check will reveal a hidden trapdoor in the back room. It leads to a cellar containing a collection of fine wines valued at 50 gp.

8. STARWIND MANOR

This grand house sits in a clearing near the grove, surrounded by small gardens and lush greenery. The banners alongside the main door bear the standard of the noble Sironan family, a silvery sun surrounded by stars over a black and blue background.

This well kept manor is currently resided by Kerid Gelter, a sergeant in the Sironan family guard. He will greet the players politely but with caution. He will only allow the party entry if they mention the rumors of the Starwind Keep massacre. Also, if any of the players have the *Family Guard* bond (see **Appendix C**), he will recognize them and invite them in right away. Until now, he believes himself to be the only survivor of the attack.

If asked, Captain Gelter will tell the players what he knows. The attack on Starwind Keep was swift and brutal, with Lord Tyrus and Lady Kara assassinated before the attack even began, presumably by a traitor within the halls. Gelter was escorting a local emissary back to the nearby town. By the time he returned, everyone was already dead or gone. Since then, a group of black armored soldiers have been hunting any remaining member of the Sironan family or those that served them. It took him two weeks to reach Kessel in the hopes his Lord's children would be here.

Quest: Hunted Siblings - Gelter is in need of urgent assistance. Though Lord and Lady Sironan are dead, their two children, Janus and Cassandra, are both still alive. Gelter tells the players of an old house at the base of the Shining Hills that the Sironans used as a hideaway when they resided in Kessel. The sergeant offers the players 30 gp to investigate the area, and another 50 gp if they return with any information regarding Janus or Cassandra's whereabouts. He must remain here in case either of the siblings return.

This quest leads to one of the three major events that occur in Kessel before the players can move on to the next chapter.

10. EBONSHIELD TRADER

This building was once a trader's post established when the town was merely a collection of camps. The proprietor, Frida Kalsdottir, is a stunning half-giant, standing slightly over eight feet tall. Though intimidating by sheer physical stature, she is extremely friendly and has a sharp witted sense of humor.

The players can find any items and equipment normally available. In addition, Frida will also trade for gems, jewelry, and artwork at cost. She does not haggle and will not pay any more or less than what something is worth.

Stolen Crates - If the players mention the stolen goods found at the Bandit's Blade (Building #3), Frida will graciously thank the party for the information. Her caravan containing those goods was ambushed by bandits a week ago. Award the party 50 XP. Frida will offer them 30 gp for the location of the stolen crates.. In addition, if the party did not loot the crates, Frida will offer any her goods available at a 10% discount starting the following day and going forward.

11. LILIA'S HOME

Lilia Vinesong is an Earthborn Feyblood who works as an assistant to the druid Milus, and is also a minstrel in the evenings at the Inn of the Golden Maiden. She is a family friend of the Sironan and Tristane families. Her home will become a possible place of refuge during the major quest, "*Maiden's Ambush*". Refer to the major event on pg XX for more detail.

INTERWEAVING: LILIA'S STORY

Lilia will play more of an important role as the story progresses. The more cordial the party is with her, the easier it will be for the players to progress and survive into the next section of the adventure series.

If you choose, depending on character background, it is likely that any of the players already know Lilia, or even have a personal tie with her:

- One or more of the PCs may have trained with Lilia under Milus' tutelage ("Protector of the Earth" bond)
- Lilia may have grown up as a close family friend ("Native" or "Family Ward" bond)
- She may have been a PCs childhood sweetheart, bringing an unexpected reunion ("Native", "Family Ward", or perhaps "Noble Guard" bond).
- Lilia has travelled briefly with Keritrina the Sage before, and may also have met one of the PCs during that time ("Sinoran" bond).

If the players visit Lilia's home at any point before the "*Maiden's Ambush*" event, she will not be home. If you wish to establish her earlier on in the chapter, the party may encounter her at the Inn (#2) during the evening, or at the Shrine of Elysia (#12) during the day.

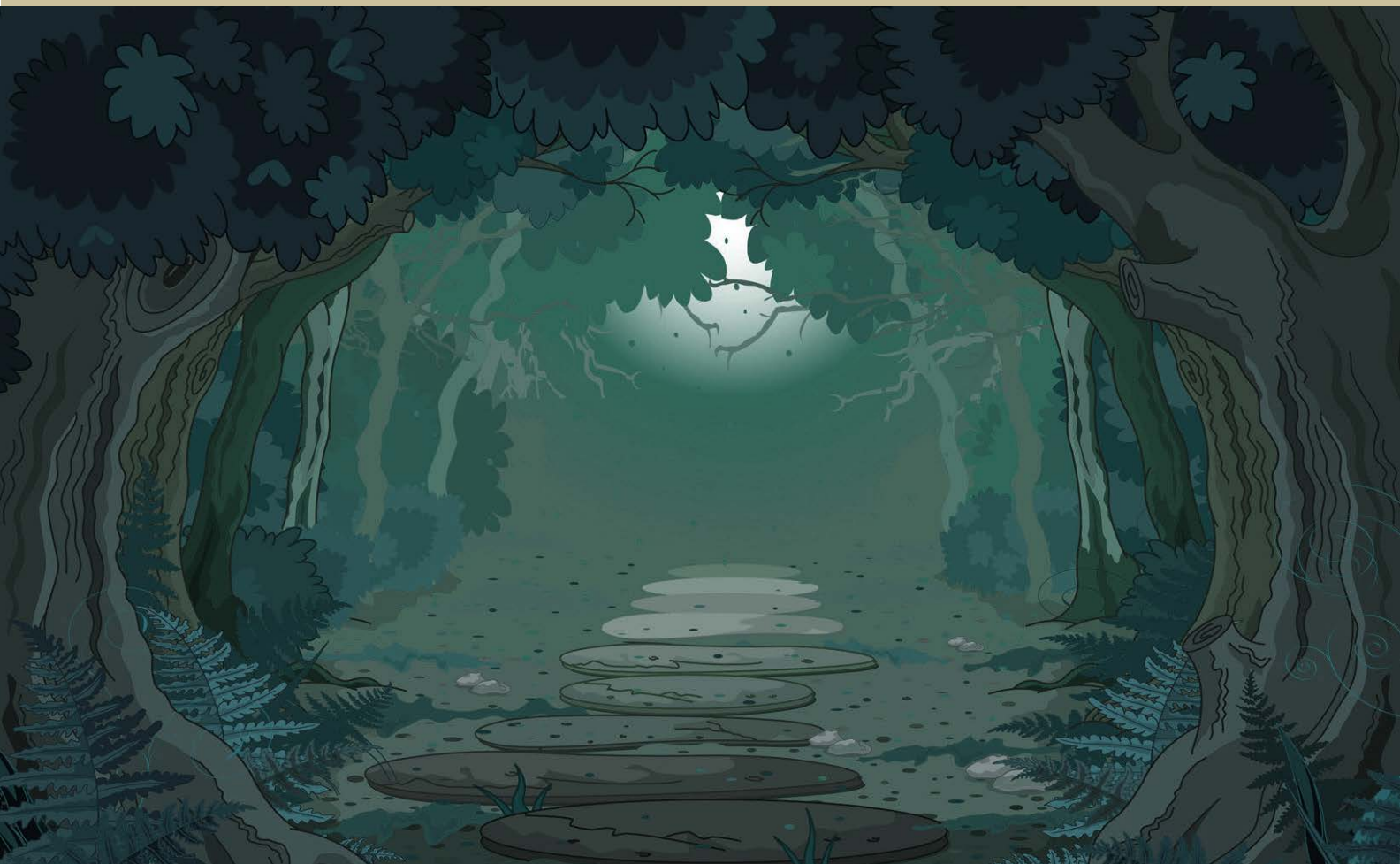
12. SHRINE OF ELYSIA

The path to this area shifts into a stone walkway leading into a wooded area. The coming autumn seems to have no effect on the thick grove of trees surrounding the path. The grove itself seems to be surrounded by its own light, shedding a peaceful, silvery glow cast by the blanket of leaves. At the end of the path, a wooden house sits near the stream, in front of which stands a massive tree atop a mound of raised earth.

This grove is the home of Milus, the grand druid of the region. It is also a place of worship to Elysia, goddess of the moon and stars. Milus is a moon elf (also known as silver elves) from Silfast. He tends to both the grove and the sacred tree at its core. The tree is blessed with the power of Elysia, feeding life into the trees and waters, as well as empowering the druid's magic.

PCs with the background bond "Protector of the Earth" will have trained here and are familiar with the grounds. Either way, Milus greets the party as if a long lost friend. He is familiar with the party's deeds thus far and will welcome the players so long as they do not disturb or damage the natural surroundings.

Quest: The Scar of Dalvan - A young druid named Veene was tasked to guard a sacred dwelling south of the village of Arcus. Milus had recently learned that the land around the entire area had grown tainted and devoid of life. The area is avoided by travelers and explorers alike, and no one has heard from Veene or her companions in almost a month.



Milus fears the area may have been significantly corrupted by the Lash.. The druid offers the party a 100 gp reward if they can investigate the area and discover the nature of the corruption, as well as the whereabouts of Veene and her guardians.

13. SENTINELS OF THE DAWN

In stark contrast to the natural beauty of the grove, this building is an amalgam of man-made fortifications. The structure is comprised of gray and black stone, dark woods, and dressings of iron and steel. The rear of the building boasts two small towers at the corners, both reaching thirty feet above the roof of the main area. A large sign outside bears the standard of the Sentinels of the Dawn, a black shield emblazoned with a crescent moon within a sun, surrounded by a circle of stars.

The Sentinels of the Dawn use this building as both their primary meeting hall and training hall for new recruits. Captain Rygen can be found here wandering the main hall. He will be cordial to the party, but will also rush to ask them of the fates of Bolus Sulder and the events at the Bandit's Blade. Once he learns the fate of the recruits, he will thank the players and praise them for their efforts.

If any of the players still wish to be inducted into the Sentinels of the Sun, Rygen will bring any recruits before Lord Garrus Tristane. If the players ask Rygen for information regarding the "Double Agents" quest, he will publicly defend Lord Garrus' involvements in any wrongdoings, but will later approach them in private. If any PCs have the "Sentinel" bond, Rygen will answer any questions they may have (see the quest log on pg. 26).

ORDER STRUCTURE

The Sentinels of the Dawn are actually three separate forces from different lands that defend the region:

- *Order of the Sun* - Kingdom of Feras, led by Lord Garrus Tristane.
- *Order of the Moon* - Silfast and the Empyrean, led by Ambassador Forlem Brightbreeze.
- *Order of the Stars* - Kaskaval and the Coast, led by Mistress Hanna Alkandri

There is a fourth order within the Sentinels called the *Blood Watch* - an elite squad of Sentinels specially trained to deal with areas and creatures corrupted by the Lash. Any players who can make a successful DC16 Intelligence (Arcana) check will have knowledge of the Blood Watch, as they often reclusive and not well known in the order. The Sentinels Hall is overseen by Captain Rygen, who resides in the west tower, and Master Ashe, a powerful elementalist residing in the east tower.

Becoming a Sentinel - Due to the party's exploits, including rescuing his daughter, Lord Garrus will have no reservations toward inducting any of the players into the Sentinels of the Sun. Each player inducted will receive a tabard bearing the Sentinel's standard, a golden sun set atop a blue shield. Sentinels of the Dawn are detailed in the upcoming *Sundered Realms Campaign Guide*.

For the purposes of this adventure, any members of the Sentinels will receive a +2 to any Charisma (Persuasion) checks when dealing with any of Kessel's townsfolk. Currently, the players may only opt to join the Order of the Sun. The other two orders have much different requirements and recruiting tactics.

Sadly, the players are amongst only a few inductees, many having perished during the bandit attack. Feel free to embellish the ceremony however you like. If the party rescued Janus Sironan, he will be here for the ceremony.

CAPTAIN RYGEN AND MASTER ASHE

Both high ranking officers in the Sentinels, they are both heroes of the Battle of the Ashen Glade. Secretly, they are also the commanders of the elite Blood Watch. If you choose to open the players to any side quests associated with the Sentinels of the Sun, the majority of these will most likely be provided by these two commanders. They are also happy to assist with any training the players may need, as well as be able to provide them with any of the setting background information about the region that can be found at the beginning of the chapter.

14. TREE OF MEMORIES

Within a secluded area on the south end of town, a tree with sets of sparkling leaves sits at the edge of a small copse. Not far away, the two streams that run through the town merge with the clear waters of the Gandri River.

This particular tree is also the home of Casalia, a fey spirit of the earth (known to Spirit Shamans as a "pygmys"). The nearby area of water is the residence of Peado, a spirit of water (or "undina"). Each year for a single day during the Autumnal Equinox, people come to the tree to relive past events and renew memories that have faded into the distant past of their lives.

Casalia will grant someone who touches her tree a single silver-lined leaf. Only one leaf will ever be given to a person at a time during the festival. Once a leaf has been received, it can be tossed into the waters of the Gandri River, where it will dissolve into a pure essence of the Weave. Peado will then grant the giver a vision of their past, experienced exactly as they had once lived through it in perfect detail. Though it lasts a few seconds in real time, the memory itself can be up to an hour's worth of time.

Each memory granted also comes with any physical, emotional, or mental experience that goes along with such a memory. If any memories are of events that were physically or mentally traumatic and stressful, the person reliving the event must make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw or immediately suffer one point of exhaustion. This is the only conditional effect. Reliving memories will never cause the loss of hit points or cause a person to acquire any additional conditions.

After the experience, the memory will remain fresh in the person's mind, as if they had just experienced it in real life. No one else is able to experience that person's requested memory. This can be used as a tool for the Dungeon Master to provide insight into backgrounds, events, or side quests. It can also allow players to explore their own characters in more detail.

CHAPTER TWO QUEST LOG

The following entries will detail each quest players can acquire in Kessel, as well as some new quests that follow. These will be listed in alphabetical order. Each quest entry will also have NPCs available to join the party.

BAD SEED

Available NPCs: Janus, Zera

This quest is acquired after the event "A Bloody Betrayal". Kassie tells the party where they can stop the Blood Watch corruption affecting the Sentinel commanders. They must cast the *Seed of the Maker* back into its source - a pit of corruption beneath the ruins of Bonespear Keep, which is located in the moors northeast of Kessel. Read the following when the party first arrives.

This mossy, wet area appears to be devoid of inhabitants. Remnants of tall walls and battlements litter the area in random patterns making up what is left of Bonespear Keep. Toward the east, stone railings mark a set of worn steps covered in soot and moss. There is a haze about the area as dark whispers echo from below. You can't help but feel as if something down there is calling to you, inviting you into join the ranks of the damned within its depths.

Much of the area beneath the ruins has a **Corruption Level of 3** (Sanity save DC 13). A tribe of lizardfolk have made this area their lair, led by a shaman who wields the energies of the pit. Treat each of the lizardfolk as a Lash corrupted creature. Refer to the map below for encounters. Because they are carrying the Seed, they are at a disadvantage to all Sanity checks until they can destroy it in Area #7.

1. OLD STORAGE ROOM

Three **lizardfolk** are in this room guarding the crates of supplies against the east wall. They will attack any non-lizardfolk immediately, growling in a fit of madness.

REWARDS

The crates contain supplies and treasure gathered as offerings to the spirit of corruption in the pit. Though most of it is worthless, a total of 75 gp of gems and jewelry can be found amongst the crates.

2. DINING AREA

A broken longtable and chairs are scattered about this dark room with an old rusty stove in the corner. A single **lizardfolk** and two **giant lizards** make their lair here. There is nothing of value in this room.

3. SUNKEN BARRACKS

The floor in the center of this chamber sinks further down, filled with a viscous pool of sludge and grimy water. Old, dingy cots line the walls. An **ochre jelly** resides inside the pool of water.

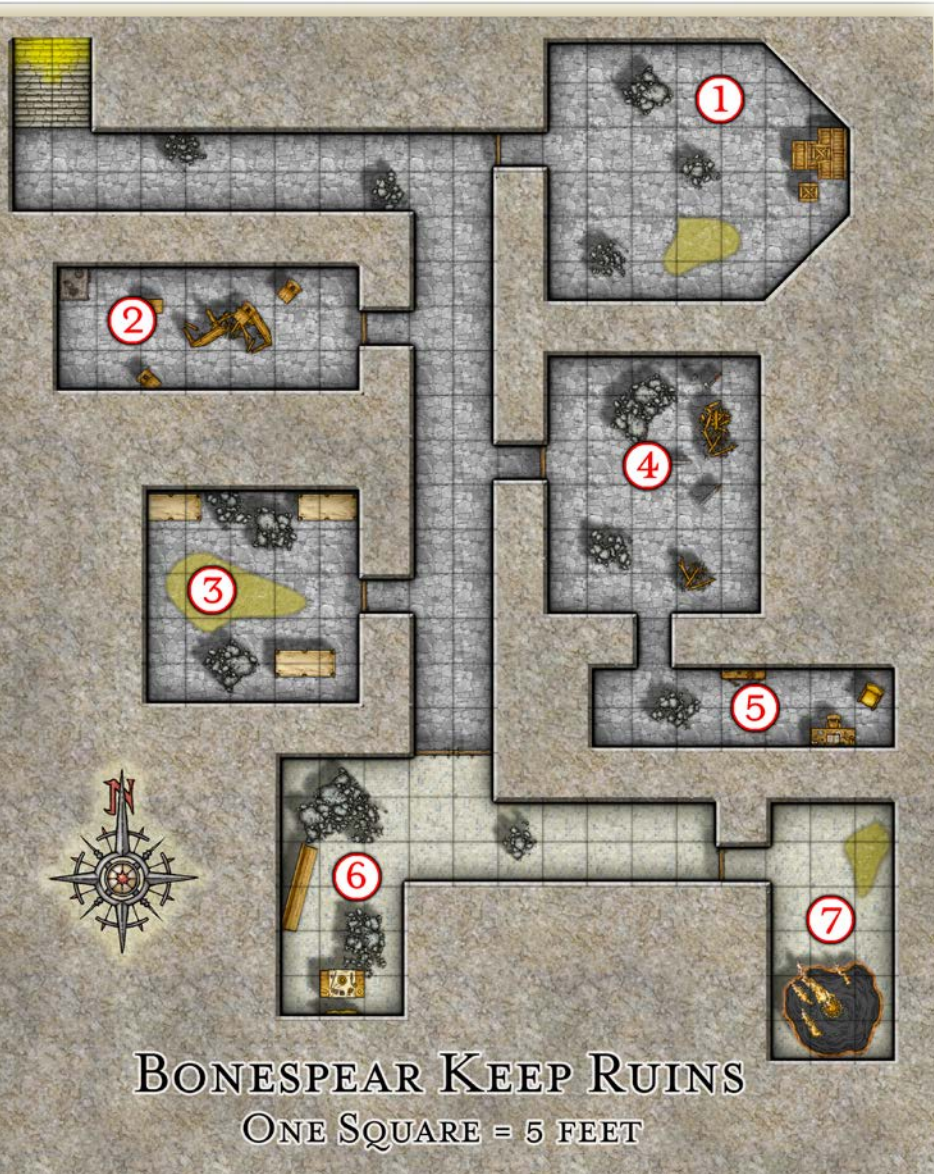
REWARDS

If the party searches the room and succeeds on a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) roll, they will find a pair of *bracers of defense* beneath the sludge.

4. LOWER CHAMBERS

The door to this chamber is locked, requiring a DC 14 Dexterity check to pick open. This room is littered with bones, debris, and old rusty weapons. It looks as if a battle had been fought in here ages ago.

As soon as any character walks 10 feet past the entrance, a trap is triggered unless detected with a DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. Those that fail must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or take 7 (2d6) damage from a portion of the ceiling collapsing. Triggering the trap will also cause the specters in Room #5 to immediately attack the closest target in this room.



5. PRIVATE STUDY

This room has a rotted bookshelf, an old desk, and a couple of chairs in the corners. The former master and his apprentice occupy this study in the form of two **tainted specters**. They will not appear unless the party investigates the desk or they trigger the trap in Room #4.

All of the books and papers are extremely damaged from both age and moisture. The desk drawer, however, contains a stone statuette of a winged angel on a circular stand holding a sword made of lightning. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Religion) check will reveal this to be Talthus, the light of courage (another form of Torm in Faerun). The idol can be used to activate the desecrated altar in Room #6.

REWARDS

A scroll case inside the desk contains a scroll of *hold person* and *misty step*.

6. SHRINE OF THE BRAVE

This area appears to have once been a small worshipping hall. In addition to the decay and fallen debris, this hall appears to have been ransacked and defiled. Tapestries that once hung from the wall have been ripped into pieces. The benches have been smashed or overturned. The altar in the south stands crooked to one side atop a broken dais. Any surface that may have borne markings have been defaced and stained in blood.

If any of the players investigate the altar, have them make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check. On a success, they will notice a circular indentation beneath the bloody cloth atop the altar. Letters from the old common tongue are carved around the indentation in a half circle. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will translate the script to read: "The Courageous One stands vigilant". The idol found in the desk in Room #5 will fit into the circular indentation perfectly.

Placing the idol here and reciting the phrase inscribed atop the altar will cause the area to glow under a soft, golden light. They feel more at ease and further protected against the dark whispers of oblivion around them. Until they leave the ruins, the players will be under the effects of a *bless* spell. The light of Talthus will also negate the disadvantage the players have on Sanity checks.

7. PIT OF CORRUPTION

The whispers grow into moans of pain and anguish as you enter this hall. The floor and walls are lined with a sickly green sludge. A misty haze washes out much of the light here. On the south end of the room, a flaming crystal spire rises out from a bubbling pool of thick, inky blackness. Trails of flame lap at the pool's surface.

This room is **Corruption Level 4**. Characters must immediately make a Sanity check upon entering this area. A **lizardfolk shaman** is here next to the pit. He

will summon two **skeletons** as soon as he is aware of the party's presence. The skeletons will rise out from the bubbling pool. They count as corrupted creatures with the "Entropic" trait (see trait description in Appendix A).

The Void Spire and the Pit - The crystal spire is the source of the corruptive force in this area. While active, it grants the shaman the ability to cast *chaos whip* as a cantrip, and *coil of chaos* as a 3rd level spell. The spire rises 6 feet out of the pool. It has an AC of 13 and 30 hp.

Anyone who walks into the pit will sink 3 feet down and feel as if being grasped by dozens of hands beneath the surface. They will only be able to move at a rate of 5 feet per round and will suffer 3 (1d6) points of fire damage at the beginning of each turn inside the pit. If anyone throws the Seed of the Maker into the pit, it will float in the water until the spire is destroyed or the shaman is defeated.

REWARDS

The shaman carries a pouch of gems worth 168 gp. In a separate pouch is a *potion of greater healing* and a *gem of brightness*.

COMPLETING THE QUEST

Once the shaman is defeated, the spire will crumble (if not already destroyed). When the seed is cast into the pit, it will immediately dissolve, extinguishing the flames and turning the pit into a sheet of hardened black clay.

Award an additional 150 XP to the party for finishing the quest. Janus, Kassie, and Alisa will invite the party to a night of celebration at the Inn of the Golden Maiden. Regardless of events, the party will be fully healed of their wounds and will be able to rest for the night. The major event "Maiden's Ambush" will take place the same night.

DOUBLE AGENTS

Available NPCs: Alisa, Janus, Kassie, Zera, Ziegart

Players may acquire this quest from Bainton Stonebeard at the Mayor's Hall (Area #1). The players must attempt to uncover the conspiracy within the Sentinels of the Dawn by investigating the commanders.

There are a few different ways the players may choose to go about gathering information. So long as the party does not resort to forceful interrogation, they should be able to gather information with successful DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion), Wisdom (insight), and Intelligence (Investigation) checks. With each success, the players will pick up one of the following rumors:

- All three of the Sentinel commanders will be in Kessel within the next day in preparation for the Twilight Festival. It is one of the few rare occasions all three of the commanders will be in one place.
- Garrus Tristane, the Sun commander, is a native of Kessel and has more influence here than the other commanders. This has sometimes created points of contention and suspicion amongst other members of the order.
- The Moon commander, Ambassador Forlem, has his own personal guard outside of the Sentinels. They accompany him to most places and are often unfriendly to strangers.
- The Stars commander, Mistress Hanna, is also one of the Shadow Sisters of Kaskaval, rumored to wield a mysterious spirit magic that hails from dark origins. She is as dangerous as she is brilliant.

- Each branch of the Sentinels, although part of one order, still has ties to the region they serve. It may only be a matter of time before one branch puts the needs of their kingdom before their oath to protect all of Revonar.
- There is a fourth branch of the Sentinels of the Dawn. They are an elite squad called the Blood Watch. Their purpose is to hunt down creatures and artifacts corrupted by the Lash. They are somewhat reclusive and their members are mostly recruited from Sentinels of the other three branches.

GETTING AT THE TRUTH

Though many of the rumors the players gather will have some truth to them, most of them are also full of additional fluff that promotes suspicion. This is done on purpose.

The true manipulator behind the scenes is the person who hired the party, Bainton himself. He has been sowing dissent within the Sentinels for the past year, and has been in league with the dark cult for just as long. He plans on using the players as pawns, and has convinced Rygen and Ashe to recruit the players into helping the Blood Watch. He plans to kill all of the commanders at once and use the Watch to do it. His plan will take effect during the event "A Bloody Betrayal".

HELPING THE WATCH

If the players completed the "Hunted Siblings" quest, Rygen will approach the party during their investigation when they are alone or out of earshot. This can also take place if the players visit the Sentinels Hall in Kessel (Area #13). He will reveal himself as one of the two leaders of the Blood Watch and has reason to believe that members of the Sentinels are in league with the dark cult. He invites them into his office in Sentinels Hall's west tower where they can speak in private. If they agree, Master Ashe will also be there when they arrive.

Rygen looks you all over then looks at Ashe, who gives him a reassuring nod.

"My friends," Rygen begins in greeting, "it seems you are amongst the very few that we can trust in these dark times. You are not the only ones who fear that something is suspect within the ranks of the Sentinels of the Dawn. We have held our own suspicions for months now. Ashe and I are the leaders of an elite force within the Sentinels. We call ourselves the Blood Watch. Due to your heroic efforts against the corruption of the Lash, we would like to ask for your help to rid the Sentinels of the evils that may have tainted its ranks. The three commanders will be at the Mayor's Hall tomorrow. We are certain that it is during that gathering that the traitor will strike. If we are successful, we will gladly induct you into the Watch. You can be a force of light to banish the darkness that threatens all of Revonar. So, brave souls, what say you?"

If Janus or Alisa are there, they will agree to help and encourage the players to do the same. Ziegart and Zera will not immediately involve themselves in such grand affairs, but can be convinced by any players that have

developed a friendship with them. The players will have until tomorrow at noon to take care of any dealings they may have before the arrival of the Sentinel commanders. Any players who are newly inducted Sun Sentinels will be called upon by Lord Tristane to attend the meeting in either case. When the players are ready, continue to "A Bloody Betrayal" on pg. 31.

HUNTED SIBLINGS

Available NPCs: Janus and Kassie (automatic)

This quest is obtained from Gelver at Starwind Manor in Kessel (Area #9). With the directions provided, the party should have no trouble locating the old Sironan house at the base of the Shining Hills.

From a distance you spot the old house Gelver had told you about. It's a large, sturdy wood cabin that even at this distance you can tell it has seen better days. A trail of smoke rises above the house - a sign that someone may already be here. As you approach, the smoke becomes thick and black, clearly not from a chimney or even a campfire. The back of the house is ablaze. You see a number of figures moving through the smoke. Two figures head toward you on horseback. One is a heavily armored man and riding on the back, a woman wearing gold-trimmed silk robes. A mass of cloaked figures emerge on either sides of the house while sinister creatures give chase atop the backs of large, menacing wolf steeds.

The two riding toward the party are **Janus and Cassandra Sironan**. They are being pursued by four **bandits**, two **goblins** on wolf mounts, and Rolg, a **hobgoblin** mounted on his pet **worg**.

DEVELOPMENTS

It will take a round for the siblings and the players to reach each other, which is the same time it will take for the Rolg and the goblins to catch up to the them. The bandits will remain within short range of their crossbows for the first two rounds, but will act accordingly afterward depending on the situation.

Assuming the players move to act, once the siblings reach them, Cassandra will dismount and begin casting spells. Janus will turn to engage the goblinoids. The enemies will fight until defeated.

THE SIRONAN SIBLINGS

After the battle, Janus will graciously bow and thank the players for their aid. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot the clasp on Janus' cloak bearing the symbol of the Order of Infinity. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana) check will reveal the embroidery on Cassandra's robes as the markings of the Senrith wizards of Dari Sinora (a description of these groups are in the *Sundered Realms Player's Guide*).

Players with the "Native", "Family Ward", or "Noble Guard" bonds will be receive warm embraces from the siblings, who most likely lived with them at their father's keep or knew them when they were children.

Janus will ask if he and his sister can ride back to town with them. If the players mention their quest from Gelver, the siblings will be relieved to hear of his survival. Assuming the players treat the siblings cordially, Janus will share their tale with the party. Starwind Keep was attacked from within before the dark army stormed the defenses from the outside. A man named Lucian Cromwell, who was like a brother to Janus' father, Lord Tyrus, hatched a plot to betray their friendship. He murdered both Tyrus and his wife, Lady Kara. Lucian was jealous of Tyrus' title and position, and even moreso of his marriage to Kara, whom Lucian had been enamored with since they were all young. Kassandra and Janus were both away training, reuniting at Starwind Keep only to find it destroyed.

It is not known when Lucian had thrown in with these dark cultists. Janus only knows that since then, their assassins have been tirelessly hunting the siblings. The two have been on the run for weeks, slowly gathering whatever information they could on what happened to their parents. Janus has sworn an oath to avenge his parents and personally deliver Lucian to his maker.

ROLEPLAYING JANUS AND KASSANDRA

Though the two are extremely close, the siblings are far apart in personality. They both grew up in Kessel and are childhood friends of Alisa Tristane and her sisters, in addition to any likely PCs. Janus is stern and serious, almost forcibly so, trying his best to live up to the noble upbringing and knight's code that his father exemplified. The armor Janus wears is all that remains of his father. A proud and loyal friend, Janus is Neutral Good.

Kassandra (or Kassie to her friends) is Janus' elder by two years. She has been away from home for almost four years studying the magical arts at the Senrith Academy. She dislikes the formalities and stuffy attitudes of nobles and knights alike, often making fun of her little brother for taking it so seriously. She has a very sharp wit and a sense of humor that can often get her in trouble. So long as people accept her carefree attitude, she makes very fast friends. She is Chaotic Good.

REWARDS

Once the party returns to Starwind Manor, Gelver will reward the party with 80 gp.. The siblings will also become available to the players as optional NPC companions for their remaining quests.

MISSING MATRON

Available NPCs: Alisa, Janus, Kassie

Players gain this quest from Vicar Remjen at the Temple of Astrine (Area #4). Matron Yolande is currently hiding in the town of Arcus, under the guise of a local tavernkeeper. The quest will automatically complete during the "Sign of the Goddess" quest. Please refer to the quest log on pg. 30.

Note: Players should pick up this quest early on during their first exploration of Kessel. Once the players go through the event "Maiden's Ambush", this quest will become unavailable.

RAIDERS IN REDSTONE

Available NPCs: Ziegart, Zera

Bainton Stonebeard gives this quest at Kessel's Town Hall (Area #1). Redstone was originally a Volkundir settlement named Raudrskere, loosely translated as "red stone" or "red rock". They named it for the layers of reddish brown stone that made up the hilly foundation of this area. Their home was destroyed during the War of the Lash during a battle between the Korendai and the great red wyrm, Takarmivel. Settlers rediscovered this region and began mining the sturdy red rocks beneath the surface. For a time it was shared between Feras and the dwarves of the Silverbrand Mountains. Much of the ore and stones from the mine had been traded for to help fortify the cities of Skarastrond and Kaskaval.

Fifteen years ago during the first appearance of the dark army, the dwarves and miners grew sick. Many of them perished from Lash corruption while others fell to each others' madness. Though the corruption was cleansed the following year, the Silverbrand dwarves had started mining elsewhere and Redstone was abandoned.

A group of orcs from the Grey Fist tribe settled here recently. Their leader, Grunk Blacktooth, made a deal with one of the dark cult's clerics in exchange for more power to crush his enemies. Groups of cultists and humanoid raiders will sometimes come to this camp to rest or plan their next attack against the town.





JANUS AND KASSANDRA

THE REDSTONE MINES

The land around the mines is a very rocky, hilly terrain. Two **orcs** guard the outside entrance. If the players decide to use the terrain to their advantage, they can surprise the orcs with successful DC 12 Dexterity (Stealth) checks. They may then continue into the mines.

The air grows stale as you make your way down the narrow, partially collapsed passage. Branches running off to other directions have either been sealed or caved in long ago. A faint sour smell fills the air as the path begins to taper off, leading into a small cavern.

A trip wire has been set along the entrance to the first 30 foot wide cavern. It requires a DC 11 Wisdom (Perception) check to spot, and a DC 14 Dexterity check with thieves' tools to disarm safely. Triggering the trap will drop a 15 foot wide net over the entrance area, requiring a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw to avoid. Those that fail are restrained until freed. The net has an AC of 10 and 15 hp. The trap belongs to a small group seven **kobolds**. Their leader, Puleek, came here seeking a scale from the great red wyrm. They were swiftly subjugated by Grunk and his dark power, forced to do his bidding or suffer the pain of oblivion. The kobolds are hidden behind the fallen rocks and will make themselves known as soon as they encounter the trap, regardless of whether or not it's triggered.

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) check will reveal that the kobolds, though armed, are not immediately attacking. Puleek speaks very broken common and will warn the players to leave these caves. If the players speak with Puleek and make a successful DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check, they will learn of the kobolds' story. Puleek will strike a bargain with the party. They will help ambush the orcs if the players let them leave once the orcs are no longer a threat. If the players agree, the kobolds will let them pass without conflict.

Past the kobolds is another path that slopes downward spanning 50 feet before it opens into a larger circular cavern roughly 50 feet by 40 feet wide.. Four **orcs** are here, as well as Grunk Blacktooth, an **orc** with 25 hp and is considered a Lash corrupted creature with a **Corruption Level of 2**.

DEVELOPMENTS

If the players have an agreement with Puleek, once the party is at the cavern entrance, the kobolds will trigger a ceiling collapse causing 4 points of damage to each orc. In addition, they will have a -2 penalty to initiative if the players attack them the next round.

REWARDS

The orcs store their ill-gotten gains in the back of this cavern. Amongst the collection of chests and crates, the party will find 238 cp, 184 sp, 99 ep, 28 gp, and 4 pp. There's also a set of gem encrusted goblets worth 150 gp and a *ring of jumping*. Grunk carries a +1 greataxe called *Dig* (see Appendix B).

In addition to the XP for defeated enemies, award the party 175 XP if they struck a bargain with Puleek, who lefave with his brothers after causing the ceiling collapse.

SCAR OF DALVAN

Available NPCs: Alisa

Grand Druid Milus gives the party this quest at the Shrine of Elysia in Kessel (Area #12). The players will notice as they travel off the road toward the area of the sacred dwelling, the land slowly begins to change up until they reach a mile out from their destination, where it takes an even more drastic shift.

The last vestiges of life disappear from the earth as you travel on. What started out as vast plains is now a layer of dead and cracked earth riddled with blasted pits and pockets of thick gray ash. Your skin crawls as you push onward into the wasteland. Ahead of you, a mound of charcoal colored earth is surrounded by an army of dead trees, their branches holding the remains of hanging corpses. An opening is carved out of the mound from which you see a dim blood red glow. The shape and size of the area shifts and warps within your vision, while whispers of dread and sorrow eat away at your mind. You can hardly tell if anything you're looking at is really here.

Scholars and sages refer to this area as a *Lash Scar*. It has been tainted by Lash corruption to a level to where only the foolish or suicidal would venture for a prolonged period of time. These regions are few and extremely rare. They are prime examples of the side effects of the Mithrendai's power from well over a century ago. There used to be a small copse of trees here, surrounding a small burrow that formerly housed a Feyblood clan and their dryad kin. The gray mound is all that remains. The feyblood, druids, and all that traveled within this area have gone mad, killing either themselves or each other.

When the players are within 50 feet of the mound, have them make a DC 16 Sanity check. This area is

Corruption Level 6. It is highly likely the players will suffer bouts of madness, so describe the corruption accordingly. If you're not using the Sanity rules, have each player roll a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, they will suffer Long-term Madness for the next 24 hours. The party may continue into the mound after the check.

The mound descends into the earth, leading to a small underground cave. At the center, a swarm of black branches and reddish brown vines twist up from the ground into the ceiling. Buried within the branches are the dried husks of many dryads, their faces twisted in horror. In the center, a red glow surrounds the barely visible body of a woman within, a mass of dark hair covering most of her face. She opens her eyes to gaze upon you, her pupils made of inky black pools. "So," she says, her voice echoed by a whisper, "more have come to serve Dalvan."

From this point forward, unless in combat, every player must make a Sanity check every two minutes. It should become clear to the players that spending too long within the scar will cause them to fall into permanent insanity.

DEALING WITH DALVAN

Dalvan is actually Veene, Milus' druid apprentice. Her soul was driven mad by the corruption that has consumed this area. Any character attempting to approach her will be unable come closer than 20 feet. Any attempt to attack Dalvan will seemingly be absorbed by the shield of branches around her. When speaking to the party, she switches between a flowing mysterious speech to flat out rage aimed seemingly at no one in particular. Dalvan thinks the players are here to provide her with service. If no one in the party responds, she asks again if they are ready to grant her a favor.

Show of Force - If the players insist on not speaking with her, Dalvan will launch twelve **twig blights** from her branches. Run the battle as normal, but have them make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw at the end of each round. Characters with resistance to charm gain advantage to this roll. Upon success, they will realize the twig blights are not real. Any damage sustained during the combat is being done by the players to each other. Once the bout of madness has subsided, Dalvan asks for her favor again.

Dalvan's Favor - If the players decide to speak with Dalvan, she will tell them she heard the party would be coming here, but will not say from who. She will promise to share important information of what they face, as well as answers to any questions they have if first they grant her one favor. She was told of a relic called a *charm of pure spirit* and wants the players to bring her one. It is made by crafting a piece of jewelry made from fine silver, then enchanting it with a blessing from the goddess Astrine. She will not answer why she needs one, but insists that is the only way she will provide any information. If asked about Veene, she responds with "Never heard of her! But if you check the trees outside, there's all sorts hanging around over there!" followed with disturbingly creepy laughter. A closer examination of the trees will indeed reveal a number of elves, humans, and feyblood in robes very similar to those worn by Milus and those of his order.

THE CHARM OF PURE SPIRIT

To craft the charm, the players will have to return to Kessel. Only two crafters are skilled enough to create the item they need for the enchantment. Jarl Ironborn (Area #5) will gladly do it for 20 gp. If they completed the "Ironborn Tavern" quest, he will do it for 10 gp. If instead the players visit Bodina (Area #6), she will do it for 10 gp but asks the players when they return to the Lash scar to gather a piece of bark from a tainted tree to bring back to her. If they brought her the *Galesong Amulet* from the Bandit's Blade, she will waive the 10 gp fee.

Vicar Remjen from the Temple of Astrine can perform a ritual with Alisa's aid to temporarily imbue the charm with Astrine's blessing. It takes one hour to cast and will only last 48 hours.

WHAT DALVAN KNOWS

Once the party returns, Dalvan will allow the player with the charm to approach and place it in her withered hand. She will then answer any of the party's questions. Use the following list as a reference for what Dalvan may share.

- The corruption here began a month ago. Veene and her companions tried to cleanse it but instead went mad.
- Veene encased herself within this mound to prevent her companions from killing her. Her frail mind was consumed by madness. She seeks to free herself and was told by a "visitor" that the charm would do just that.
- Areas with strong connection to the Fey or blessed by the gods are resistant to the Lash, but become doubly corrupted once they fall. All sacred grounds are at risk.
- The dark cult and their minions all operate under one banner, but no one outside the cult truly knows who leads them.
- Various groups of cultists and bandits began gathering around the bastion of iron deep within the Empyrean Forest, performing dark rituals, then often disappearing without a trace (information about the Iron Bastion is in the "Adventure Background").
- Those afflicted by the corruption can hear the maddening whispers more clearly. One word is often mentioned between them: "Galroth"

Once the players are ready to leave, or before they go completely mad, Dalvan uses the charm, revealing Veene's true form. She tells the party it was the Matron Yolande who visited her before them. Yolande asked her to tell you to be vigilant in the face of darkness. She is counting on them. Veene then thanks them for freeing her, releasing the light from the charm and her lifeless body collapses inside the wooden cage.

REWARDS

Award the party 350 XP. Add an optional 75 XP bonus if the party delivers Veene's remains to Milus or attempts to put her body to rest. If the players mention the name "Galroth", there will not be anyone who has heard of the name nor of its connection with the cult.

SIGN OF THE GODDESS

Available NPCs: Janus, Kassie

The party receives this quest following the major event "Maiden's Ambush". The players follow a message to Alisa from Matron Yolande, asking her to come to the Gold Oak Tavern in the village of Arcus.

DM's Note: If the players are not close to 3rd level, they may wish to finish any outstanding quests remaining, as this adventure leads into the last event before Chapter 3.

A VILLAGE IN SHADOW

Arcus has often been considered the "unofficial" crossroads between Feras and the surrounding areas. It has a reputation for housing more disreputable merchants, traders and crafters. The local thieves' guild is also said to operate out of a few businesses here. Thus, without more prominent support, Arcus' streets are somewhat filthy and many of the buildings are in a state of disrepair.

However, even with it's level of ill-repute, the village does see a fair amount of commerce. It is also one of the major stops for travelers heading into the Emphyrean Forest from the west.

GETTING THE PLAYERS UP TO SPEED

There is no map available for Arcus, which will not become a prominent location until Module #2. The town has a smithy, a small marketplace, an underground marketplace (run by the local thieves' guild), and an inn.

By the time the players return to Arcus, they should be at least 3rd level (or close to 3rd for more than 4-5 characters). If they are not, feel free to introduce any side quests here or any available outside of Kessel before they return. Otherwise, the players may find it difficult to complete the "Return of the Beast" event as well as most of Chapter Three.

THE GOLD OAK TAVERN

The tavern is one of the first buildings on the village's main path after arriving in town. As soon as the players see the building's sign, have them make a DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check. Upon success, they will notice a **terra assassin** perched atop the roof of the opposite building. If the players call them out, or they move to engage, the assassin will flee. If the players fail their Perception roll, the players will be surprised during the later encounter. If they stop the assassin from fleeing, resolve the encounter as normal.

Once inside, the tavern will be mostly empty aside from a handful of locals and two others. One, a serving lady will be making the rounds from table to table. The other is the tavernkeeper, at the bar, an aging human wearing a dirty apron. If the players take a table or explore the room, the server approaches them and recommends they get a drink at the bar. Once they reach the bar, the tavernkeeper says "Ah, my delivery crew! Follow me." If the players are hesitant, the tavernkeeper will play along with his story telling the players the "goods they came here for" are down below in the cellar. Once the players agree to follow along, they will be led down the steps near the rear door.

DEVELOPMENTS

The tavernkeeper is actually Matron Yolande, the elegant, stoic head cleric of the Temple of Astrine. She has a powerful spell cast over her which she will dismiss once they reach the cellar floor. Also down here is Lilia (Area #11 in Kessel), and a young dwarf who introduces himself as Dorim Frothbeard. They are all part of an undercover group investigating the involvement of Arcus with the dark cult and its minions.

Yolande will be saddened to hear of Alisa's abduction. She tells the party that the local merchants and thieves guilds have been taken over by cultists and run by a group of assassins loyal to the dark cult. They have been helping the cultists and bandits acquire goods and recruit more to their cause (this will be covered in Module #2). While Yolande and her group are here working to take down this assassins guild, she needs the players help to stop what is about to happen.

"Something dark will soon be unleashed upon us", Yolande begins warily. "Many servants of the dark cult have been seen gathering around the Iron Bastion, somehow able to draw power from the tower of corruption sealed within. They have the ability to appear and disappear at a whim, and we have not yet been able to figure out how. But, since you've uncovered the true nature of the Blood Watch, there has been a rise in ritual activity around the Bastion. Like a cornered animal, these disciples of evil are ready to lash out. A malicious band such as this do not forgive nor do they forget. Your friend, Alisa is one of Astrine's chosen. Great power resides within her and she is surely to be used as an unwilling participant in their grand scheme. Whatever they are planning, I'm certain that Kessel is their target. We must prepare you for what is to come, my fellow comrades."

Yolande will grant each of the players the *Blessing of Astrine*, which grants a +1 to Sanity checks and allows them to recover Sanity and Madness with a short rest. She will heal any wounds the players currently have. Lilia will give the party a jar of *Keoghtom's Ointment*. Yolande will discuss whatever the players wish, but she will not reveal much regarding the operation happening here in Arcus. She will also at a certain point stress that they keep the order here a secret, and recommends they return to Kessel as soon as possible.

When the party leaves and are a good distance away from the tavern, they are ambushed by four **terra assassins** that will rise up out of the dirt path using their *earth step* ability. If the players did not notice the assassin outside the tavern when they first arrived, they will be at a disadvantage to their initiative rolls. No guard or militia will interfere and the streets will clear out as soon as the fight begins. If the party returns to the tavern, they will see Yolande and her companions back in their disguises.

REWARDS

In addition to XP for combat, award the party an additional 650 XP for completing the quest. The assassins carry a total of 122 sp, 85 ep, and 38 gp. One of them also carries a *dagger of long shadow*.

CHAPTER TWO EVENTS

The three major events listed here happen at different times in the chapter. Event #1 can happen whenever the "Double Agents" quest is completed. Events #2 and #3 happen almost in sequence, with corresponding quests in between. Event #3 is designed under the assumption the players have already reached 3rd level.

CUTSCENE ROLEPLAY

Some events within the adventure will have a long description or text to read, as well as events in which the players may want to take immediate reaction. Play it as you like, so long as you stick to the major events that unfold. Feel free to let players interrupt a description with a valid question, or have an NPC randomly interact with them. The events involve a lot of different personas. If you'd rather keep things simple, just ask your players to keep their actions in check until you are done with any descriptions or incidents you need to resolve. As long everyone agrees on a pace and standard for story events, you should have few difficulties.

A BLOODY BETRAYAL

This occurs once the players either attend or take part of the meeting between the commanders of the Sentinels of the Dawn. The Kessel Town Hall will be fully decorated, ready for the Twilight Festival coming within the next couple of days. A long, stone table sits in the center of the main hall with a detailed map of Revonar from Runegar to the kingdom of Feras lay on top. Mayor Aston is here along with Bainton Stonebeard.

Garrus Tristane will be the first to arrive if the players did not arrive with him as Sentinels. He is a broad shouldered human knight in middling years with a thick mane of dark red hair to match his beard. Janus will also be with him either way. Kassie, Ziegart, and Zera choose

to not attend if possible, Kassie muttering something about not wanting to take part in "stuffy knight's crap". Second to arrive is Mistress Hanna Alkandri, a skyborn Feyblood. She is tan skinned with long silver hair, wearing a flowing gown slit in the rear for her pair of small, translucent blue-green wings. Within the next 15 minutes, Ambassador Forlem arrives. He is a tall, muscled eladrin with platinum blonde hair and a suit of mithril plate armor. He is escorted by four elven knights in elven gear. After Forlem's arrival, Rygen and Ashe enter with a group of eight Blood Watch sentinels. After all are present, the mayor commences the meeting.

All exchange greetings to their allies old and new.

The Sentinel commanders each greet you personally, surprisingly treating you with as much cordiality and warmth as any of their own. After the pleasantries, the mayor begins his speech. "Welcome, Sentinels of the Dawn and esteemed colleagues. Today marks another year where we shall join forces in stamping out the darkness, corruption, and evil that plagues our beautiful lands and noble peoples." He then looks around the room and his expression takes a more serious tone. "This town faces constant assaults from a league of heinous beings. They have tortured our citizens, destroyed our homes, and robbed us not only of our wealth, but of much of our hope as well. You, my friends, are here to ensure this will no longer stand."

Many in the room exchange glances, nodding in agreement and muttering statements of "here, here" and "for the good".

At this point, have each player make a DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check. Any succeeding on the roll will notice



the mayor's stance shift slightly as he stares nervously around the room. They will also notice Captain Rygen nod at the mayor's glance and move his hand slightly closer to the handle of his sword.

"Unfortunately," Mayor Aston continues, "this expulsion of evil must begin here and now. For one amongst you, milords, is a traitor."

Gasps fill the chamber as Ashe draws a dark iron rod from the folds of his cloak and says "Firbra". A long pause and silence fills the room as everyone stares at the commanders while they stare at each other. Soon afterward, an aura of shadow surrounds Bainton Stonebeard. Bainton's poise tenses as all eyes fall on him.

"Bainton..." Rygen says, his voice trailing off in shock. Then he turns his head toward his soldiers. "Blood Watch! Arrest the mayor's deputy."

Have each player make a DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check as the Blood Watch draw their blades. A success will spot a slight smile on Bainton's face as the Watch soldiers instead turn toward Ambassador Forlem. Something is wrong. Success on the Insight check will also allow the player a single action.

Any move made to defend the elven ambassador will prevent his immediate assassination., which may help the players down the road. Any attack, spell, or otherwise against Bainton will cause him to dissipate into a cloud of swirling dark mists. If no actions are taken toward him, he still does so at the end of the players' actions. There is no way to stop Bainton from taking this form, as it is integral to the flow of the adventure (see the "Cutsene Roleplay" sidebar above).

As the cloud of darkness covers the room, all except the Blood Watch are caught in a storm of slow, terrible madness. The **Corruption Level in the room rises to 3**. Have each player make a DC 13 Sanity Check.

Time seems to slow to a crawl within the cloud of corruption. It takes an eternity to move while you watch Rygen, Ashe, and the Sentinel commanders drop to their knees, fighting off some form of curse or sickness. The Blood Watch sentinels turn their blades toward each of the commanders. Mistress Hanna holds her right arm and opens her hand, revealing a symbol of three interlocking triangles tattooed on her palm. The symbol glows a bright, letting loose a shower of silvery beams, one striking you and each of your companions. As the light pours into you, you feel as if a thousand weights are being lifted off of you. You are free to act. What do you do?

FACING THE BLOOD WATCH

The players and any NPCs are left to face six **blood watch sentinels**. So long as the players engage them in the first round, the sentinels will turn their attention away from killing the commanders. After the first round, Bainton will reform himself into a **dark ripper**. Unfortunately, the commanders are unable to help during this encounter.

Once the encounter is over, the swirling chaos will disappear. However, the Sentinel commanders will still appear extremely sick and unresponsive. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot dark lines crawling over parts of their arms and necks. A *detect magic* spell or ability will show the veins of corruption within their bodies. Any attempts to cure them will have no effect, but a DC 15 Intelligence (Medicine) check will bring them to consciousness. Kassie will arrive shortly afterward with Grand Druid Milus and Lilia. Kassie will tell the party that the entire troop of the Blood Watch stormed out of Sentinel Keep, killing anyone in their path. They rode out of Kessel via the west road. Milus requests aid in bringing the commanders to the grove immediately. If any party members attempt to pursue or track the Blood Watch out of Kessel, they will find multiple fresh tracks that inexplicably stop less than a mile out of town.

BAINTON'S SECRET

Milus will revive the commanders if the party hasn't already. Mistress Hanna will tell the party she senses the corruption coming from the area of Bainton's desk. The desk is locked, but can be opened with a successful DC 14 Dexterity check or a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. Inside, they will find a small journal and a sphere made of a coarse black stone. Whoever touches the stone must make a DC 14 Sanity check. The journal is written in dwarven and details Bainton's adventuring days with his companions. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Investigation) check will find mention of the stone in the journal. Kassie will locate it if the attempt is not made or is unsuccessful.

According to the journal, the stone is called the *Seed of the Maker* and was found when Bainton and his friends destroyed a being of chaos that resided in Bonespear Keep. He kept it for over 15 years to study the properties of corrupted artifacts. Kassie has a theory that the seed had been inert this entire time, and with the recent return of the dark cult, the power inside the seed was re-awakened. It is likely Bainton used the artifact to curse the commanders while they were all gathered. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check will confirm the same suspicion. Mistress Hanna's enchantment that was used during the battle is keeping the party from falling to the corruption, but it is a temporary measure. Once Hanna's strength fails, the party will fall under the effects of the curse.

Quest: Bad Seed - Milus (or anyone under his tutelage) will know that a Lash artifact this powerful is an extension of a powerful source of corruption. According to Bainton's journal, the seed was taken from a pit of entropic corruption deep beneath the halls of Bonespear Keep. Milus asks the party to carry the seed to back to Bonespear Keep, cast it into the corrupted pit and destroy the source. He warns that while they carry the artifact, they will be more susceptible to the whispers and madness of the Lash. Kassie will remain to help Milus and Lilia care for the commanders. It is a no-brainer for the players to accept. Be sure to warn them that if they refuse, they will eventually fall victim to the corruption and either perish, or worse, become like Dalvan (see the "Scar of Dalvan" quest).

MAIDEN'S AMBUSH

This major event will set the tone for the rest of the adventure. The following night after the completion of the "Bad Seed" quest, the Twilight Festival will begin. After everyone retires for the night, the dark cultists will stage an attack on Kessel. Their goal is to kill the players, who are now a primary concern for the cultists, and to abduct Alisa Tristane in order to continue the dark rituals that had begun in the Bandit's Blade.

THE TWILIGHT FESTIVAL

The beginning of this event provides a much needed respite for the players. The town will be filled with people of all races and walks of life. Colorful banners will decorate each building and music will echo throughout the streets, celebrating the coming of Autumn. Many will also be lined up at the Tree of Memories (Area#14). You may roleplay the event as little or as much as you like until you are ready to move on.

By the late evening, the players will be invited to Janus, Kassie, and Alisa invite the players to a night of drinks and comradery at the Inn of the Golden Maiden. Ziegart and Zera will also gladly accept the invitation. This is a great opportunity for the players to develop their characters by interacting with each other and also with the NPCs. Refer to the sidebar on pg. 13, pg. 27 for the siblings, and most importantly, if they are being used, the player bonds in *Appendix C*. Particularly important is the interaction between the players and Ziegart and Zera, both of which will be covered later.

NIGHT OF CHAOS

After a long celebration, the NPCs will retire for the evening. Janus, Kassie, and Alisa will leave the inn while Ziegart and Zera have their own room upstairs. The attack will begin in the middle of the night.

Grant the players the benefit of a long rest before the encounter begins if they haven't gotten one already. A group of four **drow** and a **spy** have set fire to the upper level of the inn. The drow will then position themselves outside of the bedroom(s) while the spy covers the stairs. Any players, whether asleep or awake, can make a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check to smell the smoke. If any of the players are on watch for the night, they can hear the enemy position themselves in the hallway with a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check. If so, they will not be surprised when they exit their room. All other players entering the hall will be surprised in the first round of combat. If any players do not awaken after the first round, they are startled awake by a scream coming from downstairs. The enemy will fight until defeated.

MANAGING FLUID ENCOUNTERS

There are some encounters that require modification depending on the situation. A player may decide to not rest at the inn, or stay up for the night, or invite an NPC to accompany them. If this is the case, you can alter the challenge of the encounter by adjusting the number of enemies. You could even move some to wherever the player(s) choose to be at that time. Just make sure the players aren't in a situation where they are too overwhelmed.

Unfortunately, there is nothing the players can do to stop the fire. By the time the encounter is over, much of the upper level is ablaze. They will still have a few rounds to retrieve their equipment, but not much more.

ZIEGART'S LAST STAND

As soon as anyone makes it to the lower level of the inn, they find Ziegart in the midst of a gruesome scene. **The Corruption Level in this area is 3.**

Smoke fills the rear of the common room as you make your way in. The bodies of several patrons and the serving girl lay over the floor and tables, decorating them with streaks of blood. Near the small stage, Ziegart holds Zera by a twisted arm, facing her out in front of him with his dagger pressed firmly against her throat. "Brother, please don't!" Zera pleads with tears streaming down her face.

Ziegart turns toward you, his eyes glazed over with an inky blackness. "Stay back or watch her die!" he shouts threateningly. The smoke, the smell of death, and the screams coming from the streets outside all fail at overshadowing the next few seconds that may spell out Zera's fate. What do you do?

The conclusion of this scene is dependant on the level of comradery any of the players may have garnered with either Ziegart or Zera. If there was little interaction with them or they were treated poorly by everyone, there is



nothing the players can do to save Zera. In the end, use your judgement as the DM to decide based on how your players have interacted with the NPCs.

Any immediate act of aggression toward Ziegart will cause him to kill Zera. In this case, continue on to *Traitor's End* below. She will also be killed if the players take too long (at least three rounds) to act. Any player with favorable rapport with Ziegart can attempt to talk him down. If so, have them make a DC 13 Charisma (Persuasion) check. One of two following events occur:

1) If the players do not have any rapport with Zera, she elbows her brother and escapes his grasp while he is distracted. She flees the inn at first opportunity

or

2) If the players have good rapport with Zera, she will elbow Ziegart while he is distracted, loosen the hidden blade around her wrist, and stab her brother. Ziegart will die in his sister's arms.

Traitor's End - If Ziegart is still alive after dealing with Zera, three **void phantoms** will rise from beneath the floor and attack. If Ziegart is left alive to be questioned at the end of the encounter, he will only speak the words, "Oblivion comes for all the children of false gods." His life force will then fall lifeless, the spark of corruption fading from his eyes.

Ziegart carries a pouch with 55 sp, 41 ep, and 23 gp. His other pouch contains a *potion of healing* and a vial of *serpent venom* (DMG, pg. 258). He also carries a bone scroll case sealed with an *arcane lock* spell. See "Picking up the Pieces" below for details on the scroll case.

FACE OF THE ENEMY

When the players leave the inn, they will immediately see an explosion of fire down the road near the Temple of Astrine (Area #4). A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check will also reveal the sounds of battle cries and clashes of steel coming from that direction but too faint to identify. Only when the party is within view of the temple's entrance will they be able to see the charred corpses of at least a dozen town guards scattered about the area. Janus is near the main entrance, charging headfirst at Lord **Lucian Cromwell**, the man who killed his parents. Refer to his stats in Appendix A for description of his appearance.

DEVELOPMENTS

Lord Cromwell is deviously cunning, but also enjoys taunting his foes with his a condescending tone. On each of his turns, he will spitefully insult the party for how weak they are or brag about destroying the Sironan home.

Though it is unlikely the party will defeat Lucian here, they will only need to do some damage to him in order to end the encounter. As soon as Lucian takes more than 20 hp of damage, he will scowl at the players and disappear in a cloud of dark shadows. After Lucian disappears, Janus will tell the players he tried his best to make it inside the temple to save Alisa, but wasn't strong enough to face Lucian alone. If the players investigate the temple, they will find Vicar Remjen and several acolytes unconscious in the hall, but no sign of Alisa.

PICKING UP THE PIECES

The commotion will awaken many of the townsfolk who will rush to assist with fighting the fire at the inn. Milus and Ashe will use their magic to help as well. The fire will have claimed much of the inn, including the entirety of the upper level. Garrus Tristane will gather a force of sentinels to spread out of town in search of his daughter.

Zera, if she survived, will be visibly disturbed by Ziegart's betrayal. She will mention that he had been acting strangely, but she had assumed it was due to being tortured by the cultists at the Bandit's Blade. Now that she knows her brother had been planning this from the start, she feels more than foolish. The players may react to Zera with either distrust or encouragement. If they provide the latter, she will continue to be available to accompany the players. If not, or they accuse her of being in league with Ziegart, she will go her own way.

Ziegart's Letters - If the players haven't recovered the bone scroll case from Ziegart, it will be recovered by Zera if she is alive, or by Kassie otherwise. The scroll case can be opened with a *knock* spell. If the players do not have one, Kassie will be able to do it. The case contains two letters. The first one is a small rolled up piece of vellum with a note scrawled onto it:

Our timeline has advanced. We must strike during the night of the festival. Make sure they all pay for their insolence in the face of the dark god. Fulfill your duty, Ziegart. If your sister will not join our cause, she must share the same fate as those who dare defy us.

- Lucian

The second letter was marked with a wax seal bearing the symbol of a glowing slender hand with a dragon's head marked onto the palm, the symbol of Astrine. The seal appears to have been broken:

Dearest Alisa,
I am sorry to contact you in this way, but too many eyes are upon us. The danger is far greater than I had imagined. My departure was necessary as I no longer know who to trust. You must come meet me at the place where you received your first sign from the Goddess. Please make haste.

- Y

Quest: Sign of the Goddess - Both Remjen and Lord Garrus can confirm that the letter to Alisa is in Matron Yolande's handwriting. It was most likely intercepted by Ziegart before Alisa could read it. They can also confirm that the first time Alisa felt the call from Astrine was at the Gold Oak Tavern in the village of Arcus, where she was able to heal a sick patron. Garrus will ask the players to investigate Yolande's whereabouts. If the players are on the quest "Missing Matron", they will be prompted to follow this lead. If not, Remjen will offer them the quest.

RETURN OF THE BEAST

While the players are journeying back from Arcus, the dark cult complete their first ritual and summon Varastalio, a brass dragon that was an ally of the elves during the Battle of the Ashen Glade years ago. His sacrifice had revealed the demigod that was the source of the dark cult's power and left him open to attack. Now, Varastalio has been revived and corrupted into a Korendai, a frightening creation that hasn't been seen in over a thousand years.

Once the party is within a mile or so from Kessel, they will see the massive form of the Korendai coming directly from the west.

A looming shadow blankets the entire area before you spot it - a massive creature bolting across the sky. Wisps of dark flames appear to be lapping about the draconic figure, its entire body forged of spiked metallic scales with powerful wings spanning thirty feet across. An all too familiar yet unnerving chill creeps over you as the beast soars past you heading directly toward Kessel. A trail of shadow follows in its wake, almost as if tearing through the sky itself, an army of doom filled whispers echoing from the gaping trail. Though you have felt the corruption of the Lash before, this is different. Where the spread of corruption has its limit, this monstrosity bears something far more powerful and infinitely more terrifying. It will not be long before it unleashes its darkness upon Kessel.

Since no one has seen a Korendai in a millennia, a successful DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana) check is required to identify it. When the party reaches Kessel, the attack is fully underway.

Several homes have lay in pieces along the roads. A large scorch mark spans the southern road leading to the Town Hall, much of which is engulfed in flames. The beast unleashes a column of flame near the grove as it faces off against the Milus and the Sentinel commanders. Another smaller creature, similar to its counterpart at the grove, lands at the main road of the town near Astrine's temple. Small wisps of living shadow appear to be spawning from the smaller beast's hide, spreading corruption throughout the streets. Many of the townsfolk run in every direction, screaming in either madness or terror as the creature mercilessly cuts through any who cross its path.

WRATH OF THE KORENDAI

This area is **Corruption Level 4**. Sentinel commanders, Rygen, Ashe, Engosh, and Milus are all fighting **Varastalio**. Meanwhile, a **corrupted wyrmling** runs amok in the area between the Golden Maiden inn and Astrine's temple. If the party moves to engage the larger dragon, Rygen will shout "We'll manage this! Protect the people from that void spawn!"

If there are any NPCs in the party, you may adjust the encounter by having a few of the shadows (three at

most) turn into **void phantoms**. After the wyrmling is defeated, the party may choose to go back to the grove to fight the Korendai. Any space within 20 feet of the dragon is **Corruption Level 8**. Varastalio will have 100 hp remaining and will take 30 hp per round from blows given by the rest of the NPCs. His breath weapon is on recharge. After the beast has fallen, any characters who perished will be revived by Milus and Mistress Hanna.

DM's Note: Do not award XP for Varastalio.

THE EMPYREAN COUNCIL

After the battle, Milus asks everyone to meet in the center of the grove. The blessed tree will recover any Sanity the players have lost. Once gathered, Milus will tell the participants in the Battle of the Ashen Glade formed a council after the Iron Bastion was built. They exist only to preserve the balance in the land and ward off corruption where it breeds. The council members are:

- The Sentinels - Garrus, Forlem, and Hanna
- Grand Druid Milus
- Captain Rygen
- Master Ashe
- Mayor Aston
- Engosh and Jarl Ironborn
- Lilia Vinesong
- Matron Yolande
- Tyrus and Kara Sironan (now deceased)

Interweaving Suggestion: If there are any players from Kessel, you may include one of their parents or relatives as current or former members as well.

Milus will explain the grave severity of a Korendai once again appearing within this world. They could not return without a Mithrendai to corrupt them (refer to the Sundered Realms Player's Guide for information regarding these creatures, and the beginning of this chapter for info on the Battle of the Ashen Glade). It appears the dark cult have a way to counter the holy magic placed around the Iron Bastion, which places all of Revonar and perhaps all the Realms in jeopardy.

Quest: The Beautiful Oblivion - Milus believes that Alisa is being used as an unfortunate tool to break the blessings upon the Iron Bastion. However, it is unlikely the dark army would bring her to the Bastion itself. It will not be long before a wave of dark creatures storm Kessel. Mistress Hanna has enchanted a small stone that resonates with the corruption of the Korendai that attacked. It should lead to the place where the powerful ritual had been cast.

While the council prepares to face what is to come, they ask the party to follow the enchantment to the source of dark ritual and destroy it. Alisa will most likely be there as well. In addition, they will offer a 500 gp reward.

REWARDS

- Award an additional 750 XP for defeating Varastalio and completing the chapter.
- Award 300 XP if the players saved Zera.
- Award 250 XP if Ambassdor Forlem survived the Blood Watch ambush.
- Award an optional 200-300 XP for good roleplay or interaction (DM's discretion).
- Award each player a point of Inspiration.

When the players are ready, continue to Chapter Three.



CHAPTER THREE: HOUSE OF THE FALLEN KNIGHT

The enchanted stone provided by Mistress Hanna will lead the party west into the Empyrean Forest, to eventually arrive at the former house of Lucian Cromwell, the leader of the bands that have been raiding the town and the true commander of the now infamous Blood Watch. The mansion had been abandoned for almost a decade, not long after the Battle of the Ashen Glade. Since Lucian had been promoted, he had built his own keep in Feras to the south where he presumably resided until his army invaded the Sironan family's home. Lucian has actually been in league with the dark cult and their leader, Galek, for months now. He has been promoting the return of their army, starting with the Blood Watch that he has been manipulating behind the scenes for some time now. The addition of Alkenar and his bandit troupe would have been a useful addition to Lucian's forces. This is one of many reasons why the players have earned a great deal of ire from the former lord.

INTO THE FOREST

The Empyrean Forest is the largest forest in Revonar, rivaling the size of the High Forest near Faerun's Sword Coast. It is also strongly tied to the Feywild and the Elemental Planes. This link to such powerful forces of creation is the reason why the forest has not fallen to the corruption of the Lash, which tears directly through the heart of this region. Random encounters are not necessary, but if you choose to use them, you may use the *Sylvan Forest Encounters* table on pg. 87 of the DMG.

Cromwell Manor is built atop a large hill a few miles west of the forest's border. It is approximately a half day's ride from Kessel. When the party arrives, they will instantly sense the Lash's corruption in the air.

The forest's trail opens into a spacious clearing. A stream branching off from the Twilight River runs alongside a large hill, atop which sits the remains of a once beautiful mansion. Long years of neglect and intrusions by unwanted guests have turned the house into a collection of broken walls covered with debris from the collapsed roof. A faded red banner with a golden lion crest stands at the top of the hill. Most noticeable, however, is the dark clouds which seem to gather around this area, echoing the dread felt from the random whispers in the air softly calling at your soul to embrace the darkness within. Mistress Hanna's stone crumbles in your hand, signalling your arrival. Whatever power used to summon the Korendai back into this realm is sure to be found here.

Refer to the map on the next page for locations in this area. The stairs to the mansion itself are blocked by debris, but there is a cave entrance leading to the dungeons below.

THE SIRONAN SIBLINGS

Due to their connection to both Alisa and to Lucian Cromwell, Janus and Kassie will request to accompany the party. This is not a requirement, but will assist the party in the encounters to come. If the players insist on going it alone, the Sironans will be visibly disappointed, but will not argue. If you choose, you may also wish to adjust the encounters as well to account for their absence. If this is the case, they will reunite with the party near the end of the adventure.

1. FOREST CLEARING

This is the entry point into this area. Until the party reaches the upper level of the mansion, the area will be **Corruption Level 3** for Sanity checks. Two **gnoll pack lord** and two **gnolls** patrol the path between here and the Main Entrance (Area #3). Anyone in the party can spot the patrol with a Passive Perception of 12 or higher.

2. GROUNDSKEEPER'S CABIN

This small house is nestled between thick patches of bushes and briars.

This old cabin looks like it may have been used to house servants or a groundskeeper. The walls are now mostly surrounded by an overgrown thicket of large branches and shrubbery. The back of the house is completely enveloped in foliage.

The mass of shrubs behind the house is the breeding ground for 12 **twig blights**. If the party disturbs anything inside the house, unless being carefully quiet, the blights will attack, coming in waves of three from the door and three from the southwest wall each round for two rounds.

If the players investigate the beds, they will find a small coffer beneath the bed on the right. It contains 142 sp.

3. MAIN ENTRANCE

These stairs lead up to an inset stone path that ramps up to the double door entrance of the mansion. The pathway, however, is blocked by debris that is far too heavy to be moved, requiring the players to use the entrance path beneath the hill to the west.

4. SIDE CAVERN

Aside from a large pile of stone debris, this room is otherwise empty. If the debris is significantly moved or disturbed, it will cause a collapse of more debris from above. If so, each player must make a DC 14 Dexterity saving throw or suffer 7 (2d6) bludgeoning damage. This will also put the enemies in Area #6 and #7 on alert.

Beneath the debris is the corpse of a dead warrior clutching onto a *shield* +1 bearing the Cromwell crest.



5. DEFILED POOL

This cave is guarded by an **ochre jelly** who dwells near the western entrance. It will attempt to surprise the party unless they enter from the other side of the room.

A huge fetid pool takes up most of this damp chamber, filled with a multitude of fungi and slimy patches. Tiny wisps of shadow emanate from the stagnant waters, which appears to be visibly disturbed by something stirring beneath the surface.

DEVELOPMENTS

Gytha, a silver dragonborn paladin dwells beneath the waters and will rise if anyone comes close to the surface. She will call for peace if attacked, but will fully defend herself if the party insists on pressing their attacks. Once conflict has subsided, she pleads for the party's help. She is visibly weak and speaks with a strained voice, interrupted by fits of spasms and random wheezes. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check will reveal dark blotches of warped scales in spots along her arms and legs. They are similar to the dark metallic scales possessed by the dragons that attacked Kessel.

Quest: The Blessed Hammer - Gytha was captured by the dark cult a few days ago. She believes they are using their ritual magic to convert her into one of their twisted soldiers. She is physically incapable of leaving the pool. Though it causes her mental anguish, it is also

sustaining her life. Taking her away from the pool for more than three rounds will kill her. It is taking all her will to prevent herself from succumbing to the madness of oblivion.

She believes her hammer, her connection to the god, Tyr, is being used to corrupt her soul. Gytha asks the party to stop the cultists from desecrating her spirit and return her weapon to her. She should then be able to leave this place. She has nothing to offer the party.

Completing the Quest - Should the party return with the hammer, it will be too late to save Gytha. Tortured by her transformation into a Korendai. She will move toward the party once they return. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Insight) check will note that her growls and screams are not ones of violence, but of pain, as she is fighting off what she has become.

The party may still choose to try to convince Gytha to resist the corruption. If so, have each player attempting to make a DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) roll. Give them advantage to the roll if they also offer her the hammer. If successful, Gytha will have enough strength to tell the party, "Please, use my tools to bring justice to the world... in the name of..... Tyr.....". She will die soon after. If they fail their roll, or attack, resolve the battle as normal.

Rewards and Treasure - Award the party 500 XP if they resolve the quest without fighting Gytha. Her hammer is Ijos, a *warhammer* +2 that, with a bonus action, be commanded to shed bright light for 10 feet and dim light for an additional 10 feet. Another bonus action is required to extinguish the light. In addition, Gytha also wears a suit of *mithral chain mail*.

6. THE CRYPT OF CHAOS

This large chamber is a ritual site for a **dark cleric** and three **cultists**. They will attack as soon as they are aware of the party's presence (and will be on alert if the party set off the collapse in Area #4). A round after the fight begins, three begins, two **void phantoms** will rise from the western sarcophagi.

This massive cavern is supported by two natural columns on either side. Sarcophagi line the walls of this room, with a shrine to Tyr on the opposite wall that has been defiled with twisted carvings along its surface. Ritual markings decorate the walls and floors of the entire room.

Rewards and Treasure - The dark cleric carries a key which opens the double doors at Area #8. A holy symbol worth 15 gp can be found on the altar. The majority of the sarcophagi contain long dead corpses of the Cromwell family. In the two southern coffins, the players may find a set of jewelry worth 150 gp, and a *necklace of adaptation*.

7. TWILIGHT SANCTUARY

A shimmering glow surrounds the entrance to this area. This is the dwelling of Vedian, a twilight elf who was once the guardian of these caverns. The corruption level here is non-existent. The crystal clear pool of water is a portal between this room and his home within the Twilight Path, deep beneath the forest. He will ask that the party leave immediately, lest they bring the spread of corruption into his home. If the players react peacefully, Vedian will introduce himself and allow them to rest here.

If the players accept, Vedian will be able to cast an enchantment that will link the cavern to his realm, where time passes much, much slower. The party will gain the benefit of a long rest plus recover all of their Sanity and hp. It will seem like eight hours to the party, but only one hour will pass. The elf will only offer this once.

In addition, Vedian can also provide the players with information about the area if they choose to speak with him or ask him what he knows:

- The manor was built decades ago when Eric Cromwell married Ilsana, a shadow elf of the forest. The house was constructed as a bridge between the human lands and the elves of the Twilight Path.
- There are two doors that lead into the passages beneath the house. The northern one is warded with a powerful spell.
- Vedian suspects that the cult is using the powerful weave around the manor as a catalyst to perform their rituals.
- Due to recent events, many of the enchantments protecting the home were weakened, leaving it vulnerable to the dark army.
- After the Battle of the Ashen Glade, Lucian Cromwell left the home to those servants who lived within it while he left for Feras.
- The cult would need a being blessed with holy power to break past the first seal.
- The dark cult has killed everyone in the home over the past year. Vedian has been able to protect the portal to the Twiligh Path until the corruption upon the manor is vanquished.

- The Iron Bastion has five seals, four of them representing the forces of creation, and one to ward against the effects of the Lash. If the first seal was broken, the cult may channel power from the dark tower within to revive creatures of chaos.

Once the party has rested, Vedian will leave through the portal and will not return until the manor is cleansed. If the party attacks him, he will use the portal immediately and will never be seen again.

8. SOUTH DOORWAY

This stone double door leads into the dungeons beneath the manor. A poison needle trap is built into the door, requiring a DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check to notice. A DC 15 Dexterity check is required to disarm the trap, which will trigger if the roll is failed. If the trap is triggered, the player will suffer 10 (3d6) points of poison damage and must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or be considered poisoned for the next hour.

The trap and lock can be bypassed with the key found on the dark cleric in Room #6.

9. NORTH ENTRANCE

Two **carriion crawlers** live beneath the piles of debris, feasting on the remains of the bodies of the house caretakers. Always hungry for more, they will attack anyone who passes through the room. Treat them as having the *Entropic* creature property.

This large room was once dressed with fine furnishings and decor. Now all that remains is debris. The bones of several corpses can be seen in the corner. The walls and floors are smeared with streaks of dried blood.

DEVELOPMENTS

The door against the east wall is locked, with two suits of armor on display on either side of the entry path. The door is warded with a magical trap, requiring a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check to notice. If the party learned of the trap from Vedian in Room #7, they can gain advantage to the roll.

The door is locked, requiring a DC 14 Dexterity check to pick open. Anyone attempting to open the door will trigger the trap. A wave of fire will come from both suits of armor, engulfing everyone within 10 feet of the door. All within the area of effect will suffer 16 (3d10) fire damage, half damage with a DC 14 Dexterity save. The trap can be disarmed by activating the rune on the west wall (marked with the "T"). Anyone who successfully made the Arcana check above can also activate the rune.

10. ENTRY HALL

Beginning with this room, this entire area is **Corruption Level 4**. This room is empty, save for two braziers casting an strange greenish glow. Tapesties hang on the wall depicting scenes of human armies alongside the fey, battling against creatures of darkness. Both taprestries appear to have been slashed and vandalized.

11. PASSAGEWAY

Two **blood watch vanguards** patrol these halls. If confronted, they will call out to the dark enchanter in Room #12., who will appear on the following round.

Rewards and Treasure - The vanguards carry a total of 27 gp, 80 sp, and 95 cp. The enchanter carries a pouch of gems worth 30 gp and also carries a *wand of the warmage +1*.

The storage room to the south contain crates and barrels of foodstuffs and provisions, all fresh.

The storage room to the west is locked, requiring a DC 14 Dexterity check to open. There is a chest here containing Blood Watch cloaks, two sets of fine clothing, and a *potion of greater healing*. The trap door leads down into a wine cellar. A couple of bottles of fine wine worth 20 gp each can be found here.

12. LABORATORY

This room is a research lab run by a **dark enchanter**. She will be here unless the guards call out to her from Area #11. Several books and documents of research regarding the Lash and the effects of corruption are laid out on the desk. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) roll will find scrolls for *gust of wind* and *lightning bolt*.

The chest in the room is locked and trapped with a poisoned blade that will pop out of the side of the chest if triggered. The trap will do 5 (1d10) slashing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or suffer an additional 5 (1d10) poison damage. A DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check will spot the trap and a DC 14 Dexterity check will disarm and unlock the chest. Inside the chest is a collection of spell components worth about 50 gp and a *potion of vitality*.

13. PIT TRAP

The area in front of the south door leading into Area #16 has a pressure plate opening into a spiked pit below. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check is required to notice the area around the floor. A DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check is required to spot the pressure plate itself. If the trap is triggered, any character in that space will fall into the pit, taking 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage and 4 (1d8) piercing damage. This will also alert Xavroth in Area #16 that someone is nearby, but he will not move to investigate.

14. PRISONS

This room is guarded by an **orog** guard and two **orcs**, all wearing the red cloaks of the Blood Watch. Treat them all as having the *Entropic* creature property.

This dingy room has a couple of chairs near the door and a collection of bags and crates scattered about the place. Two barred prison cells can be seen opposite the door.

Both cells are empty, but a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check will discover signs of a recent prisoner in the southern cell. A DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) check will further discover strands of dark hair and ripped fabric that suggests the prisoner might be Alisa.

The crates contain mostly old, musty clothing and rusty trinkets. One of the chests on the north wall has Alisa's armor, mace, and personal items easily identifiable by anyone in the party.

15. SHRINE OF THE VOID

Xavroth, a powerful zealot of the dark cult is at this shrine performing the ritual of shadow that has been calling the twisted beings of the void back into this world.

This long chamber is decorated in carvings and tapestries depicting horrible acts of death, torture, and destruction by evil hordes and creatures of shadow. Four large stone columns support the corners, dressed in runes of a reddish metal that twists through the stone like veins of blood. A mutilated corpse lies atop a sacrificial stone altar decorated in similar fashion. Beyond a four foot brazier lit with green flames stands a 10 foot tall statue of a demonic humanoid with red scaly skin and long clawed fingers tapering from its outstretched arms. The air here is putrid and the constant subtle whispers of doom have grown into a choir of echoes mimicing the ritual chants used by the dark cult.

DEVELOPMENTS

The demon statue is that of Golmorgon, a monstrous demigod that was sealed within the Iron Bastion nearly a century ago. **Alisa Tristane** is unconscious atop the outstretched arms of the demigod's statue. She is under a trance and cannot be revived until Xavroth is defeated.

If the party set off the pit trap in Area #13, Xavroth will not be surprised, even if the players attempted to enter the room with stealth. As soon as combat begins, he will summon a **skeleton** from the brazier. For the next two rounds, he will summon another skeleton using a bonus action for a total of four skeletons. All of these have the *Entropic* creature property.

The brazier is the source of Xavroth's entropy magic. The players may just guess this or it can be inferred with a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. It has an AC of 11 and 25 hp. Once destroyed, Xavroth will lose the ability to summon skeletons and cast any spells that provoke Sanity checks.

RECOVERING ALISA

After Xavroth falls, Alisa will awaken from her trance. She graciously thanks the players for coming to her aid, describing her experience as a maddening nightmare from which she could not wake. If not done so already, she will quickly prompt the destruction of both the brazier and the altar of sacrifice.

She will also tell the party that though she was being used to break through the seal on the Bastion, the source of power for the dark ritual is a fist-sized crystal orb carried by Lucian Cromwell himself. Alisa knows that they must work together and defeat him if they are to see an end to this madness.

This is also a prime opportunity for roleplay between the players and NPCs. Award inspiration if you like for quality interactions and roleplay as well. If Kassie is

present, she'll joke at Alisa about pulling off her "damsel in distress routine", pointing out that Alisa was usually the one doing the rescuing when they were kids.

Treasure - Xavroth carries a pouch with 36 gp. He also carries a *potion of fire breath* and a scroll case containing the spells *mass healing word* and *lesser restoration*.

The large trunk in the room outside contains mostly materials and tools for worship, as well as rituals scrawled onto scattered parchment. All of these are illegible to most.

There are two chests next to the shrine. The northern chest contains a fine collection of goblets and gold trinkets worth about 100 gp total. The chest to the south is locked requiring a DC 14 Dexterity check to open. Inside is a collection of gems and jewelry worth 280 gp. In addition, if the players search thoroughly and make a successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check, they will locate a false bottom inside the chest. Underneath is a set of *bracers of archery*.

16. STRATEGY ROOM

The door to this room is sealed with ritual magic and can only be broken if the players defeat Xavroth in Area #15. This small meeting and strategy room has a large table filled with maps, documents, and plans, as well as equipment for Lucian's personal guard. If the documents are examined, they will find maps of both Revonar and Dari Sinora, marked with attack routes to various locations including Kessel, Arcus, Kaskaval, the city of Valis in Feras, and by sea from Revonar's border to Daruchim in northern Sinora. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check will reveal the attacks to be marked in some type of timed pattern, but there is no way of determining the order.

There are also records here of each member of the Emyrean Council, and a list containing the names of each of the players and NPCs. (**DM's Note:** If you choose, you may include some background detail on the players in the notes to generate a little paranoia as to how closely they have been watched).

Aside from these, the rest of the room is filled with various pieces of tools and equipment, much of which can be found in the *Player's Handbook*. Some simple and a few martial weapons are also here, along with any suit of armor that is less than 200 gp in value.

17. DUNGEON ENTRANCE

This area and Area #18 are **Corruption Level 4**. If any players make a successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check, they can hear Lucian's voice from outside. This is the last opportunity the players will have to prepare before the final conflict outside. So long as the party does not make too much noise inside this room, they should not be noticed immediately.

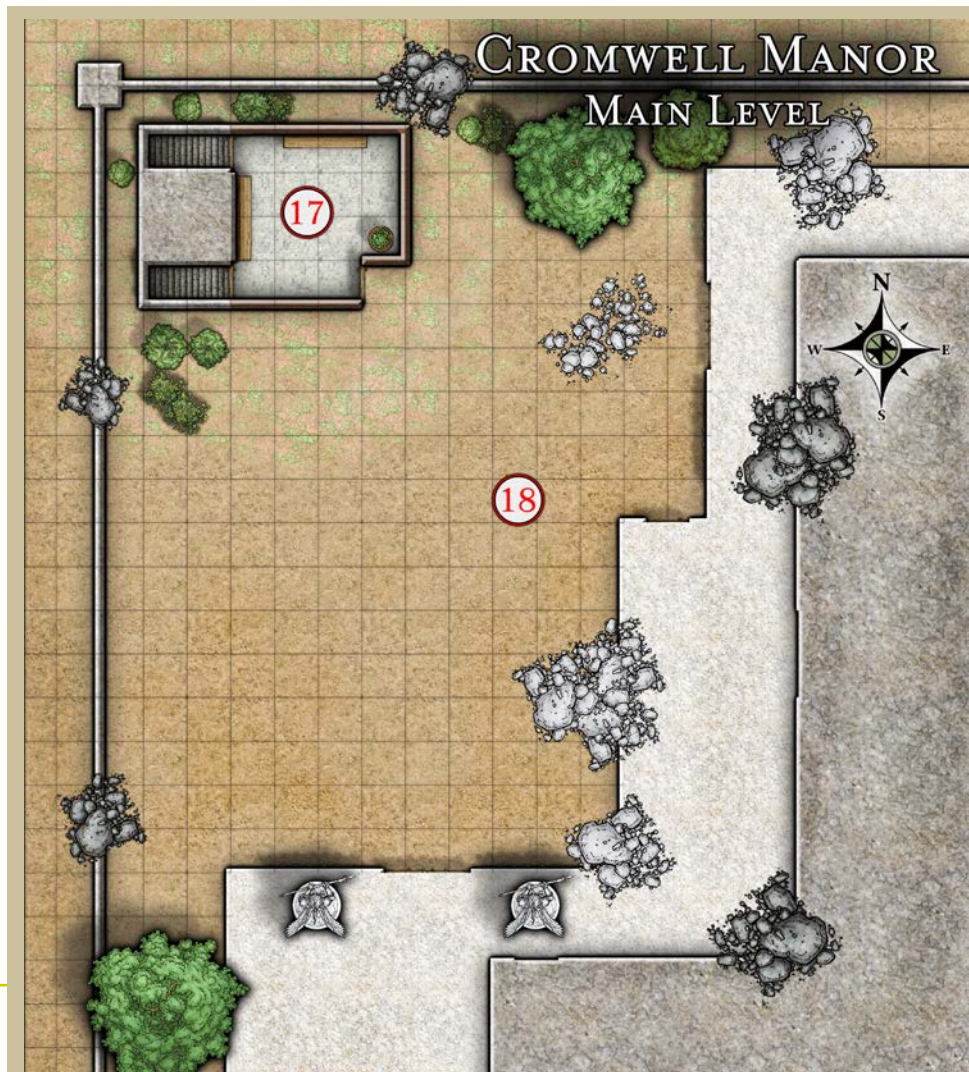
THE FINAL CONFLICT

The battle with Lucian is difficult, and will likely require all of the players and NPCs together. If the players have been managing alone, Janus and Kassie will arrive from a break in the outer wall when the conflict begins. Alisa will have her spells prepared. Also remember the players should still have the Blessing of Astrine granted to them by Matron Yolande. Remember though that in the end, the players are your protagonists. Lucian's defeat should be just as important to them as it is to everyone else. Give the players a chance to prepare before moving forward.

18. REAR COURTYARD

Lucian Cromwell is accompanied by **Olari Redhand**, a half-orc, and **Pelmir**, a wizard of the Blood Watch. They are meeting with the drow priest Galek, who will not remain once the battle starts.

The rear courtyard of the manor is overgrown with dead patches of grass and weathered settlement from the hilltop. Parts of the outer wall around the manor and the main structure itself have fallen into large sections of rubble. Lucian stands in the middle of the courtyard. A tall, lean half-orc stands to one side of him while an elf in long red robes stands at the other. All three face a drow, his features hidden behind much of his veluminous black cloak. They appear to be in a tense discussion.



If the players listen at the door before stepping out, or open the door carefully, they can witness the conversation between Lucian and Galek. The players may choose to interrupt at any time. By the end of the scene, Galek will become aware of the party's presence and leave.

"I have the situation under control, Galek", Lucian says testily. "Go back into your hole with the rest of your ilk."

Galek scoffs back, showing no sign of fear toward the three. "Captain Marra seems to think otherwise", the drow responds. "Alkenar and Ziegart were both failures and the Empyrean Council yet lives. It seems as if your forces have been bested by a band of children."

"You know nothing!" Lucian responds angrily. "They are mere remnants of days long gone. They survive only by the grace of their heritage. Even now, the daughter of Tristane is under my ---"

"It appears you may not be as in control as you would assume, Lord Cromwell," Galek cuts in. "We will pursue our own plans." A cloud of inky blackness surrounds the drow as he finishes his sentence, then he vanishes. Lucian and his companions turn to look about the area in confusion. What do you do?

DEVELOPMENTS

The players must defeat Lucian's Passive Perception of 15 in order to gain surprise on the enemy. If the players wait until after Galek vanishes, they will be unable to gain surprise round. Pelmir will remain as far away from the group as possible,

unleashing his area of effect spells at first opportunity. Olari will use

her earth step ability to enter the fray, while Lucian will either cast or enter melee, releasing his void orb as his bonus action.

THE VOID ORB

Once Lucian releases the orb, it floats six feet into the air and sheds a sickly purple radiance. The appearance of Corruption is heightened by the orb's power, periodically making the faces or shapes of the enemies appear twisted or more monstrous. All the while, dark shadows encompass

the area, all eerily chanting for the coming of the "Beautiful Oblivion".

At the end of the first round, have each player make a DC 14 Wisdom saving throw. Each player that fails will suffer 3 (1d6) points of psychic damage and will be at a disadvantage on their next Sanity check. This will happen again every three rounds until the orb is destroyed. The void orb has an AC of 13 and 40 hp.

ENDING THE BATTLE

Olari and Pelmir will fight to the death. If the party decides to keep Lucian alive, he will fall to his knees, feigning defeat. A player making a DC 13 Wisdom (Insight) check will notice Janus doing everything in his power to keep from striking the former lord down in anger. The moment someone attempts to speak to Lucian, he will quickly rise to his feet, eyes burning with a fiery aura. Any player can move to kill Lucian. Depending on their background, each may have their own reasons for doing so.

If no one immediately reacts, Janus will move forward, but not before Kassie places a fire bolt directly into Lucian's face, killing him instantly. Regardless of the outcome, Lucian's body will disintegrate upon death. The siblings will share an obvious look of mixed emotions after Lucian is finally gone.

REWARDS

Lucian wears an adamantine scale mail. Pelmir carries a wide array of spell components worth 100 gp, as well as a silver staff worth 50 gp. Olari carries a sentient shortsword +2 named Ellsif (see Appendix B). The rest of the mansion is nothing but ruin and has long since been looted by Lucian's band of raiders.

The following is also awarded to the party:

- Award 700 XP for completing the adventure.
- Award an additional 100 XP if the party successfully disarmed the magical trap in Area #9.
- Award an additional 150 XP if the void stone was destroyed before Lucian was defeated.
- Award 100 XP if the party accepted and completed the quest without demanding reward or payment.
- Award an optional 100-200 XP for good roleplay and character interaction.

ENDING THE ADVENTURE

With Lucian defeated and the void orb destroyed, the Blood Watch will scatter, but they will reform within the next few days under a new leader, Captain Marra. This will begin the storyline for the next adventure.

In the meantime, the party will be welcomed as heroes once they return to Kessel. The raids against the town will subside briefly, but not entirely. The party has not seen the last of the Blood Watch. They will soon learn that Lucian's plan was only a fraction of what awaits the people of the Empyrean. A sickness will spread amongst the populace in the west, threatening to spread across the land. The players will discover the true nature of the enemy, one that marks both their past and the fate of their future.

To be continued in **The Iron Bastion: Part Two - The Fortress of Eternal Night.**



APPENDIX A: ENCOUNTERS AND PERSONALITIES

ALKENAR

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 39 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	17 (+3)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)

Skills Acrobatics +5, Intimidation +2, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Agile. Alkenar has advantage on all saving throws versus missile attacks and spells.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Alkenar makes two melee weapon attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

BLOOD WATCH SENTINEL

Medium Humanoid, any evil

Armor Class 14 (ring mail)

Hit Points 13 (3d8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Skills Athletics +5, Intimidation +3

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

ACTIONS

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

Shortbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 80/320 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 +1) piercing damage.

BLOOD WATCH VANGUARD

Medium Humanoid, any evil

Armor Class 13 (leather armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +4, Stealth +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of its turns, the vanguard can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The vanguard makes two melee weapon attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Hand Crossbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/120 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

CULT DETRACTOR

Medium Humanoid, lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 33 (6d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

Skills Deception +5, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. The detractor is a 1st level spellcaster. Charisma is used for spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): resistance, sacred flame, *chaos whip* (see Appendix B)

1st level (3 slots): bane, command, inflict wounds

Longsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) slashing damage.

CORRUPTED WYRMLING

Large Beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 17 (natural armor)

Hit Points 60 (8d10+16)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	15 (+2)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Skills Perception +4

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic

Senses darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 14

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Entropic. The first time a player is damaged by the wyrmling's attack, they must make a Sanity check using the area's Corruption Level for the DC.

ACTIONS

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d10 + 4) piercing damage.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5-6). The wyrmling uses one of the following breath weapons:

Fire Breath. The wyrmling exhales fire in a 20-foot line that is 5 feet high. Each creature in that area must make a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw, taking 22 (4d10) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Sleep Breath. The wyrmling exhales sleep gas in a 15-foot cone. Each creature in that area must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or fall unconscious for 1 minute. This effect ends for a creature if the creature takes damage or someone uses an action to wake it.

DARK CLERIC

Medium Humanoid (any race), lawful evil

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 17 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)

Skills Perception +4, Religion +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Dark Devotion. The dark cleric has advantage on saving throws against being charmed or frightened.

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. The dark cleric is a 3rd level spellcaster. Wisdom is used for spellcasting ability (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): poison spray, resistance, *chaos whip* (see Appendix B)

1st level (4 slots): bane, healing word, inflict wounds, protection from good

2nd level (2 slots): blindness/deafness, hold person

Rapier. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target.

Hit: 5 (1d8 + 1) piercing damage.

DARK ENCHANTER

Medium Humanoid (any race), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)

Hit Points 39 (6d8+12)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Investigation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Grim Harvest. Once per turn when the enchanter kills one or more creatures with a spell of 1st level or higher, he regains hit points equal to twice the spell's level.

Spellcasting. The dark enchanter is a 6th level spellcaster. Intelligence is used for spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): chill touch, minor illusion, prestidigitation, *chaos whip* (see Appendix B)

1st level (4 slots): false life, mage armor, magic missile, ray of sickness

2nd level (3 slots): crown of madness, levitate, misty step

3rd level (3 slots): animate dead, *coil of entropy*, vampiric touch

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

DARK RIPPER

Large Humanoid, chaotic evil

Armor Class 16 (natural armor)

Hit Points 27 (5d8+5)

Speed 30 ft., fly 60 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	13 (+1)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	12 (+1)

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Skills Stealth +4, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Abyssal

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Entropic. The first time a player is damaged by the ripper's attack, they must make a Sanity check using the area's Corruption Level for the DC.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The ripper makes two attacks with its claws.

Claws. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

LUCIAN CROMWELL

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 16 (scale mail)

Hit Points 52 (7d10+14)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	15 (+2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)

Saves Constitution +4, Wisdom +2

Skills Intimidation +5, Deception +5, Persuasion +5

Senses passive Perception 10

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Abyssal

Challenge 3 (700 XP)

Spellcasting. Lucian is a 5th level spellcaster. Charisma is used for spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): blade ward, light, mending, *chaos whip* (see Appendix B)

1st level (4 slots): command, healing word, shield

2nd level (3 slots): blindness/deafness, prayer of healing, shatter

3rd level (3 slots): bestow curse, *coil of entropy*, speak with dead

Dark Oath. When Lucian uses his action to cast a cantrip, he can also take a bonus action to make one weapon attack.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lucian makes two melee weapon attacks.

Glaive. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 8 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Lucian is a tall, lean man with young, attractive features, long black hair, and hazel eyes. He is far older than he appears, most likely due to the grace of his oath to the beings of darkness that he serves. He takes pride in both his appearance and his practice, and shows no fear in the face of the enemy.

OLARI REDHAND

Medium Humanoid (half-orc), chaotic evil

Armor Class 15 (studded leather)

Hit Points 58 (9d8+18)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	13 (+1)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)

Saves Dexterity +5, Wisdom +4

Skills Acrobatics +5, Athletics +3, Deception +2, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages Common, Goblin, Orcish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Poison Strike (1x/day). When Olari hits with a melee attack, she may use this ability to deal an additional 4(1d8) poison damage. The target must also make a DC 12 Constitution saving throw or be poisoned for one minute.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Lucian makes two melee weapon attacks, one with each scimitar, or two ranged weapon attacks.

Scimitar. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d4 + 3) piercing damage.

PELMIR

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral evil

Armor Class 11 (14 with mage armor)

Hit Points 44 (8d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
8 (-1)	13 (+1)	11 (+1)	18 (+4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Skills Arcana +5, Insight +3, Perception +3

Senses passive Perception 13

Languages Common, Elvish, Orcish

Challenge 2 (450 XP)

Spellcasting. Pelmir is a 6th level spellcaster. Intelligence is used for spellcasting ability (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): fire bolt, light, mage hand, shocking grasp

1st level (4 slots): burning hands, mage armor, magic missile, witch bolt

2nd level (3 slots): cloud of daggers, invisibility, misty step

3rd level (3 slots): counterspell, fireball

ACTIONS

Dagger. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 3 (1d4 + 1) piercing damage.

TAINTED SPECTER

Medium Undead, chaotic evil

Armor Class 12

Hit Points 22 (5d8)

Speed 0 ft., fly 50 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
1 (-5)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Damage Resistances acid, cold, fire, lightning, thunder; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons.

Damage Immunities necrotic, poison

Condition Immunities charmed, exhaustion, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained, unconscious.

Senses darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 10

Languages None

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Incorporeal Movement. The specter can move through other creatures and objects as if they were difficult terrain. It takes 5 (1d10) force damage if it ends its turn inside an object.

Entropic. The first time a player is damaged by the specter, they must make a Sanity check using the area's Corruption Level for the DC (2 in this adventure).

ACTIONS

Soul Drain. *Melee Spell Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one creature. Hit: 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. The target must make a Death save as if they were reduced to zero hit points (PHB, pg. 197). The target dies if they fail three consecutive death saves. If the target succeeds in their save, the counter resets to zero.

TERRA ASSASSIN

Medium Humanoid (any), chaotic evil

Armor Class 13 (leather)

Hit Points 16 (3d8+3)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	15 (+2)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	11 (+0)

Skills Acrobatics +4, Perception +4, Stealth +4, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common

Challenge 1/2 (100 XP)

Earth Step (3x/day). Instead of a move action, as long as they are standing on a surface made of rock, stone, or dirt, the assassin can meld into the ground and move to a location to reappear up to 20 feet away.

Sneak Attack. The assassin deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally

of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. The assassin makes two melee or two ranged attacks.

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

VARASTALIO

Gargantuan Beast, chaotic evil

Armor Class 19 (natural armor)

Hit Points 264 (8d10+16)

Speed 40 ft., fly 80 ft., swim 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
27 (+8)	11 (+0)	25 (+6)	17 (+3)	14 (+2)	18 (+4)

Saves Con +12, Dex +6, Wis +8, Cha +10

Skills Perception +14, Stealth +6

Damage Immunities fire, necrotic

Senses blindsight 60 ft, darkvision 120 ft, passive Perception 24

Languages Abyssal, Draconic

Challenge 20 (25,000 XP)

Entropic. The first time a player is damaged by the Varastalio's attacks, they must make a Sanity check using the area's Corruption Level for the DC.

Legendary Resistance (3x/day). If Varastalio fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.

ACTIONS

Multiattack. Varastalio can use his Chaos Aura. He then makes three attacks, one with his bite and two with claws.

Bite. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 19 (2d10 + 8) piercing damage.

Claw. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +14 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 15 (2d6 + 8) piercing damage.

Chaos Aura. Each creature within a 50 ft radius of Varastalio must succeed on a DC 16 Sanity check or lose two points of Sanity instead of the normal one. They must also roll twice on the Sanity Loss table and take the higher of the two rolls.

Breath Weapons (Recharge 5-6). The wyrmling uses one of the following breath weapons:

Fire Breath. The wyrmling exhales fire in a 90-foot line that is 10 feet high. Each creature in that area must make a DC 21 Dexterity saving throw, taking 56 (16d6) fire damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

VOID PHANTOM

Medium Fiend, neutral evil

Armor Class 10

Hit Points 22 (4d8+4)

Speed 30 ft., fly 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
6 (-2)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)	10 (+0)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)

Skills Perception +2

Condition Immunities exhaustion, frightened, grappled, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, prone, restrained

Senses passive Perception 12

Languages None

Challenge 1/4 (50 XP)

Amorphous. The phantom can move through a space as narrow as 1 inch wide without squeezing.

Entropic. The first time a player is damaged by the phantom's claw attack, they must make a Sanity check using the area's Corruption Level for the DC (2 in this adventure).

ACTIONS

Claws. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d6 + 2) slashing damage. On a hit, target must make a DC 10 Constitution saving throw or take an addl 2 points of necrotic damage. Resistances do not affect this damage.

ZIEGART (CORRUPTED)

Medium Humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 16 (studded leather)

Hit Points 26 (4d8+8)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saves Dexterity +6, Wisdom +3

Skills Deception +4, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Challenge 1 (200 XP)

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Ziegart can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack. The assassin deals an extra 7 (2d6) damage when it hits a target with a weapon attack and has advantage on the attack roll, or when the target is within 5 feet of an ally of the spy that isn't incapacitated and the spy doesn't have disadvantage on the attack roll.

ACTIONS

Rapier. Melee Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d8 + 5) piercing damage.

Dagger. Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack: +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 + 4) piercing dmg.

CHAPTER 1 AND 2 NPCs

ALISA TRISTANE

Medium Humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 14 (chain shirt) or 11 if unarmored

Hit Points 17 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Perception +5, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish

Character Level Cleric, 2

Astrine's Blessing. If Alisa is brought down below zero hit points, she does not need to make a death saving throw.

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. Wisdom is used for Alisa's spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): light (domain), resistance, sacred flame
1st level (3 slots): bless, cure wounds, healing word, guiding bolt (Light Domain)

Mace. Melee Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

JANUS SIRONAN

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (half-plate)

Hit Points 22 (2d10+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Strength +5, Con +5

Skills Athletics +5, Insight +3, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Character Level Fighter, 2

Second Wind. On his turn, Janus can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+2 hit points once per long rest (PHB pg.72).

ACTIONS

Greatsword. Melee Weapon Attack: +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow. Ranged Weapon Attack: +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

KASSANDRA SIRONAN

Medium Humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 12 (15 with mage armor)

Hit Points 17 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Int +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Investigation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Draconic

Character Level Wizard, 2

Arcane Recovery. Once per day after a short rest, Cassandra may recover a 1st level spell slot.

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. Intelligence is used for Kassie's spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): *force bolt*, mage hand, prestidigitation
1st level (3 slots): chromatic orb, mage armor, magic missile, sleep

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 +2) piercing damage.

ZIEGART

Medium Humanoid (half-elf), chaotic neutral

Armor Class 15 (leather) or 14 if unarmored

Hit Points 18 (2d8+4)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
11 (+0)	19 (+4)	15 (+2)	9 (-1)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +6, Int +1

Skills Deception +4, Stealth +6

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish

Character Level Rogue, 2

Cunning Action. On each of his turns, Ziegart can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack. Ziegart does 2d6 damage with his sneak attack bonus action. (PHB pg. 96).

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d4 +4) piercing damage.

ZERA

Medium Humanoid (half-elf), chaotic good

Armor Class 15 (leather) or 14 if unarmored

Hit Points 17 (2d8+2)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
10 (+0)	17 (+3)	12 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	15 (+2)

Saving Throws Dex +5, Int +2

Skills Acrobatics +5, Perception +4, Persuasion +4, Stealth +5

Senses passive Perception 14

Languages Common, Elvish

Character Level Rogue, 2

Cunning Action. On each of her turns, Zera can use a bonus action to take the Dash, Disengage, or Hide action.

Sneak Attack. Zera does 2d6 damage with her sneak attack bonus action. (PHB pg. 96).

ACTIONS

Shortsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

CHAPTER 3 NPCs

ALISA TRISTANE

Medium Humanoid (human), lawful good

Armor Class 16 (chain mail)

Hit Points 26 (3d8+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
14 (+2)	12 (+1)	15 (+2)	10 (+0)	17 (+3)	16 (+3)

Saving Throws Wis +5, Cha +5

Skills Perception +5, Religion +5

Senses passive Perception 15

Languages Common, Elvish

Character Level Cleric, 3

Astrine's Blessing. If Alisa is brought down below zero hit points, she does not need to make a death saving throw.

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. Wisdom is used for Alisa's spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): light, resistance, sacred flame
1st lvl (4 slots): bless, cure wounds, heal word, guiding bolt
2nd lvl (3 slots): aid, prayer of healing, flaming sphere, scorching ray.

Mace. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) bludgeoning damage.

JANUS SIRONAN

Medium Humanoid (human), neutral good

Armor Class 16 (half-plate)

Hit Points 34 (3d10+9)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	12 (+1)	16 (+3)	10 (+0)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)

Saving Throws Strength +5, Con +5

Skills Athletics +5, Insight +3, Survival +4

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common

Character Level Fighter, 3

Second Wind. On his turn, Janus can use a bonus action to regain 1d10+2 hit points once per long rest (PHB pg.72).

Improved Critical. Janus' weapon attacks score a critical hit on a natural 19 or 20.

ACTIONS

Greatsword. *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 5 ft., one target. Hit: 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

Longbow. *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +3 to hit, range 150/600 ft., one target. Hit: 6 (1d8 + 2) piercing damage.

KASSANDRA SIRONAN

Medium Humanoid (human), chaotic good

Armor Class 13 (16 with mage armor)

Hit Points 21 (3d6+6)

Speed 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)	17 (+3)	13 (+1)	11 (+0)

Saving Throws Wis +3, Int +5

Skills Arcana +5, History +5, Investigation +5

Senses passive Perception 11

Languages Common, Elvish, Dwarvish, Draconic

Character Level Wizard, 3

Arcane Recovery. Once per day after a short rest, Cassandra may recover a 1st level spell slot.

ACTIONS

Spellcasting. Intelligence is used for Kassie's spellcasting ability (spell save DC 13, +5 to hit with spell attacks)

Cantrips (at will): *force bolt*, mage hand, prestidigitation
1st level (4 slots): chromatic orb, disguise self, mage armor, magic missile, sleep,
2nd level (3 slots): misty step, scorching ray, web

Dagger. *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. Hit: 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.



APPENDIX B: MAGIC ITEMS AND SPELLS

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

DAGGER OF LONG SHADOW

Weapon (dagger), uncommon (requires attunement)

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon.

As a bonus action, you may activate the magical effect on this weapon, extending the range of existing shadows surrounding you. You and any creature within 5 feet of you gains a +1 to all Dexterity (Stealth) checks made in dim light or outside at night. This effect does not work in complete darkness.

ELLSIF

Weapon (shortsword), rare (requires attunement by a creature of non-evil alignment)

This blade once belonged to Keldri, a Volkundir heroine who was said to be blessed by the god of battles. The soul of Keldri's sister, Ellsif resides in the blade, also a warrior who perished at the hands of an orc warchief.

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. On a roll of a natural 20, the sword also deals an additional 7 points of lightning damage.

Sentience. *Ellsif* is a neutral good weapon with an Intelligence of 11 and a Wisdom of 14. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 60 feet.

The sword can read and understand Common and can communicate telepathically but only with its user.



ELLSIF



FAESEVER

FAESEVER

Weapon (longsword), uncommon (requires attunement)

This +1 longsword was crafted centuries ago by a Volkundir master smith. It was created for Jarl Gunnald Gaerspir (known today as Gunnald Greyspear). It was later passed down to his grandson Lirund. The blade was buried with Lirund after he died fighting the undead horde of the Felrin Shar.

Faesever is forged from a rare black iron ore that was found in a crater within the Aeonus Mountains. Any creature classified as fey, fiend, or undead will take an additional +2 damage when struck by Faesever. The sword also bypasses any resistances or immunities to damage these creatures have versus its weapon type.

Against any other creatures the sword still functions as a +1 magical weapon.

NEW MAGIC SPELLS

CHAOS WHIP

Evocation cantrip

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (any item with a Corruption Level of 1 or greater)

Duration: Instantaneous

You summon a long shadowy tendril that extends from around your wrist and lashes out toward a creature within range.

Make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d6 necrotic damage and must make a Sanity check versus the DC of the material item's Corruption Level. On a failed save, the target suffers Sanity Loss (see pg. 5)

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 when you reach 5th level (2d6), 11th level (3d6), and 17th level (4d6).

DM's Note: This spell will only be used if the optional Sanity rules from this adventure are being used.

FORCE BOLT

Evocation cantrip

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 80 feet

Components: V, S, M

Duration: Instantaneous

You hurl a bolt of magical force at a creature within range.

Make a melee spell attack against the target. On a hit, the target takes 1d8 force damage and must make a Constitution saving throw or be pushed back 5 feet.

This spell's damage increases by 1d8 when you reach 5th level (2d8), 11th level (3d8), and 17th level (4d8).

COIL OF ENTROPY

3rd level evocation

Casting time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, S, M (any item with a Corruption Level of 1 or greater)

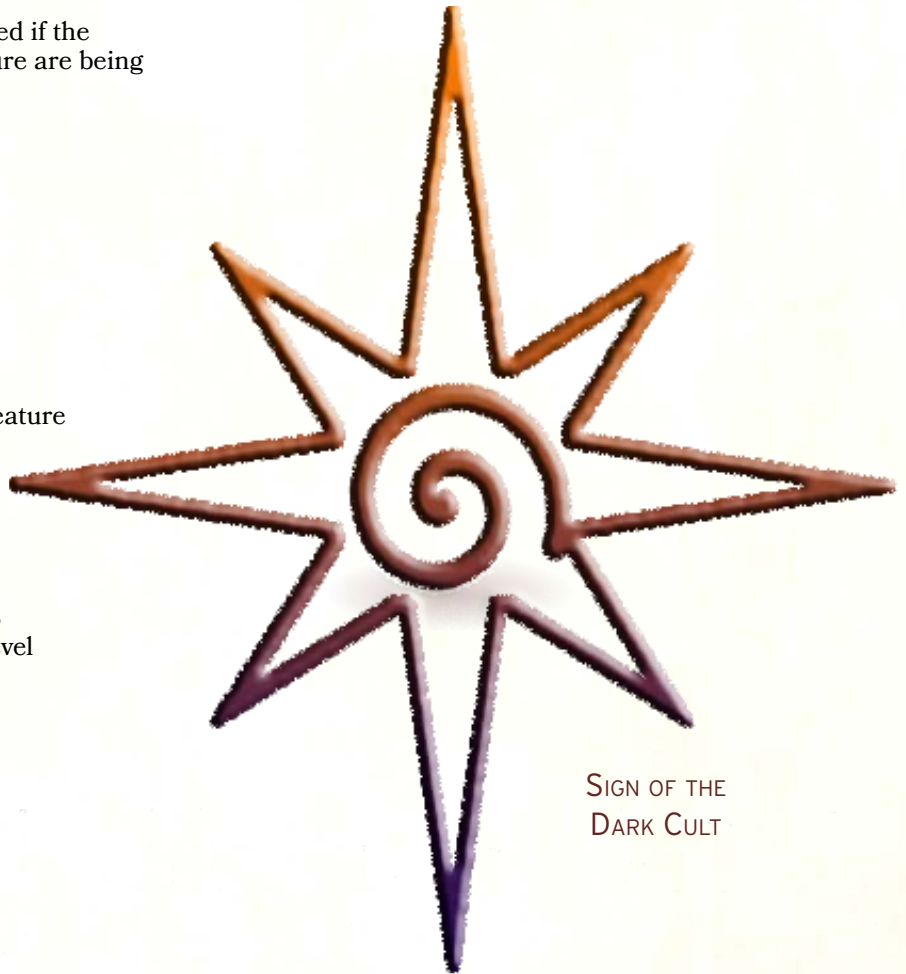
Duration: Concentration, up to 1 minute

When you cast this spell, a sinuous coil of darkness spirals out from the ground in a 10-foot radius from the target area. All who come into contact with the coil will feel the icy lash of oblivion ripping into their soul.

All targets caught with the area must succeed on a Dexterity saving throw or take 3d6 necrotic damage and suffer Sanity Loss.

This spell's damage increases by 1d6 for each spell slot above the 3rd.

DM's Note: This spell will only be used if the optional Sanity rules from this adventure are being used.



SIGN OF THE
DARK CULT

APPENDIX C: BACKGROUND OPTIONS

This section provides alternate background features and options that are strongly connected to the NPCs, themes, and settings that are introduced in this adventure.

SUBSTITUTE FEATURES

OPTIONAL FEATURE: FRIEND OF THE FEY

You are no stranger to the wilderness, particularly the reclusive homes of the faerie. You either grew up in or had spent much of your time living or working with the Seelie Fey. You are able to identify markings and places in the forest that may be dwellings of the fey or have a connection to the Feywild.

While you are in any wilderness, you can find a fey or elemental-kin to help you find a sufficient amount of safe food and water for you and a number of companions equal to your level. There needs to be an adequate supply of food and water available in the area. You can also find enough shelter to sustain you from extreme heat or cold for one additional hour.

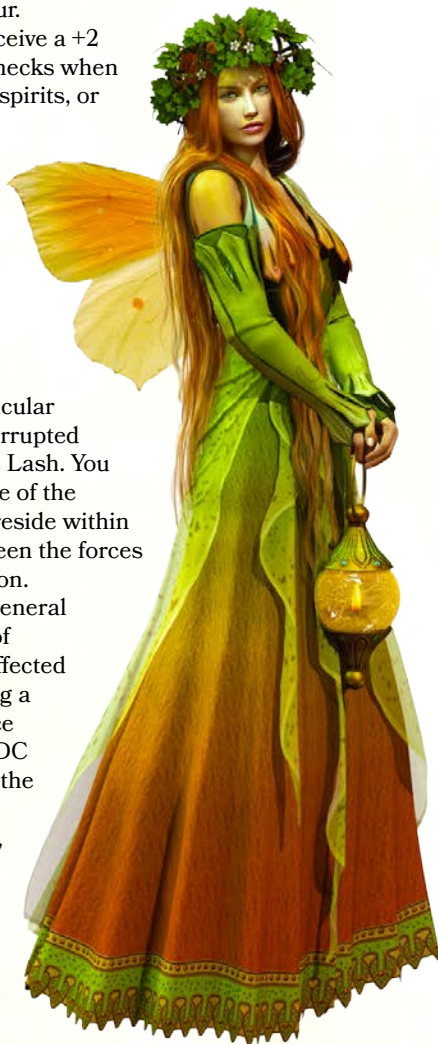
Additionally, you receive a +2 bonus to Charisma checks when dealing with any fey, spirits, or elemental-kin.

OPTIONAL FEATURE: STARES INTO THE VOID

You were born and raised, or have spent years studying a particular area that has been corrupted by the energies of the Lash. You understand the nature of the entropic beings that reside within and the conflict between the forces of creation and oblivion.

You can sense the general direction of sources of corruption in areas affected by the Lash by making a successful Intelligence (Arcana) check. The DC for this check is 10 + the Corruption Level of the area. Additionally, you gain advantage on all Sanity checks involving entering a corrupted area or coming into physical contact with a Lash corrupted item.

It should be no surprise that characters who have this feature tend to have interesting, somewhat quirky personalities.



SUBSTITUTE BONDS

This table provides alternative bonds players may choose for their characters instead of the bonds that come with their backgrounds.

SUBSTITUTE BONDS

d10	Effect
1	<i>Sentinel: You are an apprentice of Captain Rygen and Master Ashe of the Sentinels of the Dawn. You are one of their top students. They have groomed you to become a member of the order.</i>
2	<i>Protector of the Earth: Your teacher has sent you to seek the tutelage of Milus, the archdruid of the sacred grove in Kessel. Your goal is to study the increase in the number of areas affected by the Lash.</i>
3	<i>Emissary: You are a traveler from the kingdom of Feras. You were sent by your father (or mentor) as a representative from the village of Varis to join the Sentinels.</i>
4	<i>Native: You were born and raised in Kessel. You ran away from home when you were very young to get away from your life there and start anew. You are returning home at the request of your childhood friend, Elie Tristane.</i>
5	<i>Family Ward: You are a ward of the Tristane family. Your guardian is Lord Garrus Tristane. Your father sent you to train under Captain Rygen in Feras. Your surrogate sisters, Alisa and Elie are both returning home as well to meet with you and celebrate Alisa's promotion.</i>
6	<i>Noble Guard: You fought under the banner of the Sironan family. While you were away, Starwind Keep was sacked and burned. The Lord and Lady were both slain. You are headed to Kessel to inform their family.</i>
7	<i>Rogue's Banner: You travel to Kessel in search of your brother, Jorm, who went missing in this area. The last thing you heard was that he had run afoul of the notorious Black Hand thieves' guild.</i>
8	<i>Brun Survivor: You are from the town of Brun, north of the Empyrean Forest. You were forced to leave a year ago when your home was destroyed by a dragon attack. You wish to join the Sentinels in an effort to find a place for yourself.</i>
9	<i>Sinoran: You were born and raised on the island of Dari Sinora. You are a student of Keritrina, the Sage of the Sundered Realms. She sent you here on a journey of discovery.</i>
10	<i>Wayfarer: You are a traveler from a far away land. You somehow fell into a portal in the Feywild, transferring you to this extremely strange and distant place. You are determined to return home someday.</i>



NEXT: FORTRESS OF ETERNAL NIGHT

The story continues as the players investigate the growing plague that has passed beyond Kaskaval into the free lands of the Emyrean, as well as its connection to the now growing forces of the Blood Watch that continue to threaten the countryside.

Meanwhile, an ancient secret, revealed to a chosen few, threatens to spark the flames of war between the three nations, and cast a shadow upon the destinies of our heroes.

To be continued in Part Two of **The Iron Bastion**.