

In a Manor of Seeking

A One-Round Dungeons & Dragons® Living Greyhawk™
Bandit Kingdoms Adventure

Version 1.0

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Where have the residents of Groucester gone? Can That Which Slept be stopped? Ever since the negative energy burst almost destroyed High Lady Xavendra's city, these are the questions that need to be answered. Luckily, you are just the person to find out, or so someone claims. Are they right? A one-round Bandit Kingdoms winter adventure set in Rookroost, the Fellreev Forest, the Deadlands, and Groucester for characters level 4-12 (APLs 6-10). PCs from Fellreev-based meta-orgs, the Hallorn Fencing Academy, bards interested in the Old Lore, and druids of the Old Faith are encouraged to play this event together. PCs from Northern Alliance-based meta-orgs, Death Cultists and members of the Circle of Crimson Stone are encouraged to play this event together.

Resources for this adventure include *Frostburn* [Baur, Jacobs, Strayton], *Iuz the Evil* [Carl Sargent], and *The Living Greyhawk Gazetteer* [Holian, Mona, Reynolds, Weining].

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Jonathan Tweet, Monte Cook, Skip Williams, Richard Baker, and Peter Adkison.

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For questions specific to this document, please e-mail your triad point of contact (POC) at contact.bdk@iuzlg.com; for LIVING GREYHAWK campaign questions email rpgahq@wizards.com.

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This adventure retires from RPGA-sanctioned play on December 31, 2008.

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PLAYERS READ NO FARTHER

If you are planning on playing this adventure, stop reading now. The rest of the information in this adventure is for the DM only. If you read farther than this section, you'll know too much about its challenges, which kills the fun. Also, if you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, reading beyond this point makes you ineligible to do so.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

To get the most out of this adventure, you need copies of the following D&D rule books: *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and the *Monster Manual*.

Throughout this adventure, text in ***bold italics*** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information on nonplayer characters (NPCs) and monsters appear in abbreviated form in the adventure text. Refer to Appendix 1 for full information on NPCs and monsters. For your convenience, Appendix 1 is split by APL.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a RPGA session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of an RPGA-sanctioned event, complete and turn in

this sheet to your senior GM directly after play. You'll also find a LIVING GREYHAWK adventure record (AR). You need one copy of this for each participating player.

AVERAGE PARTY LEVEL (APL)

See Chapter One of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook* for details on APLs. If the APL of your group is an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

LIVING GREYHAWK adventures are designed for APL 2 and higher. Four or five 1st-level characters may find the challenge of an APL 2 adventure difficult. Suggest the following to these groups to help increase their chances of success:

1. Enlist a sixth player.
2. Advise characters to buy riding dogs to help protect them and fight for them.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard Metaregional adventure, set in Iuz's Border States. Characters native to that metaregion pay 1 Time Unit per round; all other characters pay 2 Time Units per round.

More information about Lifestyle and Upkeep can be found in the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

Groucester is a town cut off as a result of the massive shadow-negative energy burst unleashed by That Which Slept late in 596 CY. As adventurers, mercenaries, civilians, and Iuzians watched in horror, a roiling black wave of crackling negative energy rolled out of the Bluff Hills towards the city. Despite the best efforts of some of the Combination's bravest heroes, and a ritual performed by the Death Cultists in an effort to blunt the force of the blast, much of the Bluff Hills was decimated. In one instant, all living creatures unlucky enough to be in the 75-mile radius area without protection such as *death ward* were killed.

Just before the deadly wave reached Groucester, the entire city was enveloped in a dome of blindingly white light. The Knight's Herald, a powerful and intelligent blade of Good from the Outer Planes, and formerly the sword of Arryn Alcor (himself a former paladin before being tricked into becoming Xavendra's Death Knight general), allowed itself to be destroyed in a ritual conducted by Dimrite priests of Pholtus. This ritual released a burst of positive energy that completely protected the city of Groucester from the negative energy that decimated the surrounding lands, saving thousands of lives (and destroying a few dozen minor undead in the process). Unfortunately, the protection did not extend beyond Groucester's walls, leaving the city stranded at the edge of the Deadlands.

Since the blast, those who could flee Groucester magically did so. The Dimrites returned to Dimre, their temporary truce with Xavendra at an end. Truly they walked hand-in-hand with the darkness to better see the light, and many of them now pray to the Blinding Light with a renewed faith.

The cowed and cloaked Death Cultists left as well, presumably returning to Hallorn to continue their studies and machinations. Some were comforted by the fact that the worshippers of the Reaper fear something, even if it is He of Eternal Darkness (Tharizdun).

Various adventurers fled the city, taking with them their comrades and fallen allies, fearful that Xavendra somehow planned to double-cross them now that they had served their purpose. Several brave adventurers, those who had delved deep into That Which Slept's very lair, returned with the bodies of two adventurers found within. Surely the two females, one a hin and the other a high-elf, had not been foolish enough to venture into That Which Slept's lair on their own?

Several months have passed now since the blast, and several factions in the Combination need to know what is happening inside Groucester. The High Lady and her vampire consort, Veth, have not been seen much at all since the attack. The living population of the city seems to be falling in number but the undead population is not rising. What is happening to the citizens of Groucester? What is Xavendra up to? Can That Which Slept be stopped?

These are the questions that various factions need answered and so they have contacted their agents to arrange for an adventuring party to travel through the Deadlands to Groucester and into High Lady Xavendra's manor itself.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

Introduction: There are multiple introductions included in this event to cover a wide variety of PC meta-org affiliations. Use the PC's most important affiliation to determine which introduction to use for that PC.

Encounter One: The PCs arrive at the edge of the Deadlands. Once beyond the demarcation line, they encounter some warped ogres.

Encounter Two: The PCs arrive in Groucester to find the town nearly empty and devoid of the living. Xavendra's manor is oddly quiet, decrepit, and seemingly unguarded.

Encounter Three: The PCs explore Xavendra's manor.

Encounter Four: Veth makes a surprise appearance just as the PCs are leaving.

Conclusion: The PCs return to either the Fellreev or Rookroost to report their findings and collect their rewards.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

- Find out if any PC is *Wanted by the Church of Iuz* and, if so, whether the PC intends to make a Disguise check (the PC may NOT take 20 on this). If anyone has a Wanted! score of Malcontent or higher, be sure to make an ominous "hmmmmm" noise, and roll a few d20s behind a screen. Cackle evilly for effect.
- Unless otherwise specified, during the nights the sky will be relatively free of cloud cover and the moons will provide enough light to give the equivalent of one-hundred-twenty (120) feet of shadowy illumination as the light reflects off the snow covered lands. The daytime cloud cover is sufficient enough to remove the danger of snow blindness.
- Ask each player if his/her character belongs to any BK meta-orgs and, if so, which one(s). If the PC does not belong to any, ask the player with which meta-org the PC has the most Influence Points. *Have the players write this information on slips of paper to maintain in-character secrecy.*
- Remind the players that it is winter. Their PCs will need protection from the cold weather.

This event includes multiple introductions and sub-introductions in order to enhance player immersion based on each PC's meta-org affiliations. The first three sub-introductions (Mysta, Viola, Savant Granoc) are set in the city of Rookroost and all occur at roughly the same time. Thus, each PC may experience only one of these introductions.

The fourth and fifth sub-introductions (Breeanna and Oytens) ONLY occur for tables whose MAJORITY consists of PCs who are members of Fellreev based meta-organizations (including Friends of the Fanlareshen Elves), students of the Hallorn Fencing Academy, bards of the Old Lore, or Druids of the Old Faith. These also occur at the same time as the previous sub-introductions. Breeanna will brief members of the Fellreev-based meta-orgs and her fencing students while Oytens will recruit all others.

Because of the different introductions, it is important to remind the players before you start that they might not want to play a Fellreev-based PC at a table that will be starting with the Rookroost introductions. The same is true for a player of a Northern Alliance/Rookroost PC at a table that is starting in the Fellreev.

Below is a list of meta-orgs and how they affect the PCs' starting introductions.

ROOKROOST INTRODUCTION

- PCs with close ties to the Rookroost Thieves Guild, Moskol's Legion, Morannon Keep, or Gonagin halflings start with Mysta.
- PCs with close ties to the Northern Alliance (including the Dirty Dog Tavern), the Red Planks, Wanted PCs with no other affiliations, and all other PCs with

affiliations not otherwise addressed begin play with Viola.

- PCs with close ties to the Death Cultists or the Circle of Crimson Stone begin with Savant Granoc.

FELLREEV INTRODUCTION

- Tables of PCs with close ties to the Fellreev Factions (Dazark orcs, Defenders of the Greenkeep, Fanlareshen elves, Fellreev Druids, or members of Fort Hendricks) or the Hallorn Fencing Academy begin play with Breeanna.
- Non-Fellreev based PCs at tables that start in the Fellreev, especially bards interested in the Old Lore tradition and Druids of the Old Faith, begin play with Oytens.

Various favors or influence points from previous adventures may have some impact during this event. Details are provided in the various introductions.

REGIONAL WARNING

Please remember that things are different in the Bandit Kingdoms; heroes can be made, bought or sold, all in the same day and all depending on the situation and the price. The question isn't 'What is the right thing to do?' in a given situation, but rather 'What will be the ramifications of any decisions I make? Whose bad side do I not want to be on?', and 'When will I need to call in a favor?' Remember, everything is negotiable, and some things are more negotiable than others.

ROOKROOST INTRODUCTION

Note: Use this introduction for parties that start in Rookroost.

It is late winter and wet snows have blanketed the city on a hill. As a result, fewer demons have been seen in the city, although Iuzian patrols still wander the streets, cold-impervious undead at their heels. In addition, the ruthless back-alley fighting so common in recent months has slowed, as even the various factions of the city do not like being miserably cold and wet.

A curfew has been ordered by High Lord Tadorinal to help protect the fragile peace. Anyone caught out after nine bells at night is likely to be "recruited" into the High Lord's winter work gangs (possibly post-humously). The threat of having to clean Rookroost's sewers in sub-freezing temperatures is apparently quite the deterrent, as the city's streets are mostly empty at night.

Here and there, wild dogs can be found in back alleys licking up pools of melted red snow. A few starving street-urchins hunt the dogs for food, armed only with crude slings, spears, or broken

daggers. Warily, they try to avoid the Iuzians, ruffians, and do-gooder adventurers as they try to survive the harsh winter. Rumor has it that they serve as lookouts for various factions of the Rookroost Thieves Guild.

All in all, the city is at much at peace as it ever is.

As the PCs start this adventure, they are separated unless they played their most recent adventure together. Quickly find out where each PC would be in the city (non-locals should probably get a room at the Dirty Dog Tavern, where the hearth is warm and the ale warmer). PCs who own property in Rookroost are of course welcome to start the adventure in their homes. Be sure to adapt read-aloud text as necessary to allow for the PCs' various starting locations.

Regardless of where the PCs are in the city, someone either finds them or gets them a message that requests a meeting. The details are explained in the sub-introductions below. For PCs who get the same sub-introduction, regardless of the meta-org affiliation that got them there, assume that they arrive for the meeting at the same time.

Development: Once you have the players started on prepping their PC's spells, ordering pizza, etc., take them out individually or in groups based on which sub-introduction they are experiencing (be sure to have a d20 handy). Do not spend more than 5 to 10 minutes with each group or player, but spend enough time to cover his or her specific sub-introduction.

Once you have covered each PC's introduction, it is up to the PCs to find each other. If necessary, be sure to suggest the Dirty Dog Tavern as a good place to find other experienced adventurers and to gather information.

Appendix Three contains a list of things that the PCs can learn if they spend 1d4+1 hours wandering around Rookroost, or spending time in any local tavern, gathering information. If the PCs choose to look for information on Rookroost's mostly empty streets, add 10 to the DCs. If the PCs choose to gather information in the Dirty Dog Tavern, which is currently hosting quite a few well-traveled adventurers, subtract 5 from the DC. For every 10 gp that the PCs spend, they gain a +1 bonus to their check (to a max of +10).

MYSTA

PCs with close ties to the Rookroost Thieves Guild, Moskol's Legion, Morannon Keep, or Gonagin halflings start with Mysta.

If only one PC plays this introduction, then the only other occupant of the private room will be Mysta. Please alter the text below to reflect the situation and the PC's (or PCs') meta-org affiliations (for instance, a Gonagin PC's note would have been signed with a stylized "M" for Mysta, while a member of Moskol's Legion would have been signed with an "O" and the holy symbol of Trithereon for Otolle).

Several days ago, you received a message from your organization asking for your help with matters concerning the recent catastrophe in the Bluff Hills. The note said to come to the Drunken Dragon tavern in Rookroost on this date just after sundown and ask the barkeep for a glass of Groucester Black. So here you are, standing just outside the famous tavern. It's awfully quiet in there.

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves to each other. Try to encourage discretion. If the PCs are overly chatty while standing outside the tavern, have a street urchin poke his head around a corner and stare at them, as if committing the PCs' appearances to memory.

An "X" has been drawn on the door with charcoal. A DC 10 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that this is a common sign for "closed" used to tell illiterate people when businesses are not open.

Allow the PC(s) to make any preparations that seem reasonable. They can find an alley to duck into nearby to cast spells out of sight (don't let them go crazy with this. After one or two, have an Iuzian patrol wander nearby). Remind them that it is miserably cold outside.

Members of the Rookroost Thieves Guild will know that the guild uses the Drunken Dragon as "neutral ground" for sensitive meetings with non-members as they trust the owner to be discreet, plus they can run off the locals when they must.

Once the PCs are ready to enter, continue:

As you open the door, you are hit by a comforting wave of warm air. The inn's large hearth is blazing merrily. A long bar extends along the wall to your left, and a bald, muscular, middle-aged man stands behind it. The tavern appears to be completely empty. Must have something to do with the curfew.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local – Iuz's Border States) check will reveal that the tavern should be packed, curfew or no curfew. A DC 35 check will reveal that the tavern has some vague affiliation with the Rookroost Thieves Guild.

The barkeep is wearing a ring of mind shielding (a loan from the RTG to protect their interests in case a wandering Iuzian gets nosy). Attempts to detect his alignment, read his thoughts, etc., do not work.

The barkeep is not interested in making small talk at all. He's getting paid to empty out his tavern and host a meeting by one of Rookroost's most prominent, and powerful, citizens. He will not even reveal anything to members of the RTG, even a Training Master (he recognizes Training Masters on sight unless they are heavily disguised).

As you enter, the barkeep motions for you to do so quickly, clearly not wanting the snow to come blowing into his tavern.

Once you've shaken the snow off your cloaks, the barkeep asks, "What'll it be?"

Allow the PC(s) to respond as they see fit. Any chitchat is ignored. Any request for a drink other than Groucester Black is served at normal prices.

Once the PC(s) orders Groucester Black, continue with the following:

With a nod, the barkeep says, "Second floor. Third door on the left."

Allow the PC to make any reasonable preparations that they feel necessary. However, the barkeep will not tolerate any spell casting in his tavern unless the PC is a member of the RTG. If a PC ignores his warnings about casting spells in his tavern, after the adventure is over he will sell the PC out to the local Iuzians. As a result, that PC earns an "Asking for Trouble" WCI plot-point (see the BKMKG). Be sure to note this on that PC's AR.

If the PCs are extremely paranoid, the barkeep will tell them that a friend waits for them within.

Once the PC opens the door, continue with the following:

The door swings open to reveal a lavish tavern room containing a long table of heavy oak. Carafes and glasses of dark red wine are placed on its top. Fine chairs sit invitingly empty.

If any PC has a *see invisibility* spell active, he may make a DC 28 CL check to overcome the effect of the *nondetection* spell active on the invisible Mista Gonagin, who is seated on top of the table.

Once the PC has dared to sample the wine or take a seat in one of the chairs, continue with the following:

"You are here," a disembodied voice, probably female, possibly not human, says, "because you can be trusted . . . at least on some level. Those I represent have a task for you."

Suddenly, a female hin with curly, dark hair appears seated cross-legged in the middle of the table. She wears fine dark leathers that serve to accent her pale complexion and the richness of her purple chemise.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that this is Mista Gonagin, matriarch of the Gonagin halfings and a powerful practitioner of the arcane arts. She is a rumored member of the Rookroost Thieves Guild (RTG members know this to be true). She is a known friend of Baron Ulik the Unpredictable (Defenders of Morannon Keep know this automatically).

In addition, members of Moskol's Legion will know that Mista's lifeless body was transported to Morannon Keep by none other than Otolle himself. Rumor has it that a dwarven member of the Legion recovered her body from That Which Slept's very lair during a raid designed to stop the blast that created the Deadlands.

"Unless you have been on another plane for the past few weeks," she says, "you know that recently

something bad happened in the Bluff Hills. Something very bad.

But since it is likely you don't know the whole story, I will tell you some of what I know. That thrice-damned creature, 'That Which Slept', has taken up residence in the Bluff Hills, and she doesn't want any neighbors. She used the powers granted to her by 'He of Eternal Darkness' to set off a huge burst of negative energy, intending to kill everyone and everything for hundreds of miles in every direction. And she came very close to doing just that."

Mysta pauses, placing the twisted black horn on the table at her side and lifting a glass to her lips as a haunted look comes into her eyes.

"My friend Breeanna and I knew the beast had to be stopped, and we grew impatient waiting for others who should have helped us in the effort. We went to her lair alone, and our bones would be bleaching there if a gang of brave and foolish doublins had not come to try what we had already failed. But even they had to flee before the might and cunning of that creature.

Because adventurers like you fought and died defending the Dimrites and their ritual of opposition, thousands of innocent lives were saved. That is a fine thing. Even if most of them are doublins.

But word has reached us that the city of Groucester is now a ghost town, even more than it was when Xavendra kept her undead walking the streets. The survivors have disappeared and no one knows why. That's what we want you to find out. Also, we need you to search Xavendra's manor for information about That Which Slept. I have seen that unspeakable beast up close, and if there is a way to destroy it, we need to know."

With a look of slight annoyance, she reaches up to adjust the strap of the great black horn, which has somehow appeared hanging from her neck.

Following are the answers to questions PCs will likely ask. For anything else, consult the adventure background and create an answer, or use the tried-and-true "I don't know."

You want us to search Xavendra's manor?
"Are you deaf?"

Are there any undead left in Groucester?
"The positive energy released by the Dimrite ritual decimated all of the lesser undead creatures, mostly the mindless ones. Some of the more troublesome types, especially the incorporeal ones, are still there."

Did High Lady Xavendra survive the ritual?
"There are reports that she was seen in the city not long after the blast, rallying her citizens and trying to restore order. No one has seen her since people

started disappearing. What makes you think she wouldn't have survived the ritual?"

Did Veth survive the ritual?
"He is with Xavendra, wherever she goes, so yes."

What's in it for me?
"Other than saving the world? Let's see if you survive first before I have to come up with a suitable reward."

Surely you don't expect me (us) to do this alone (by ourselves)?
"It shouldn't be too hard to find other adventurers in this city. I suggest looking in the Dirty Dog Tavern for others foolish or brave enough to go to Groucester. Be wary of sharing anything that you learn with them."

Can you offer us any aid?
Removing a silver ring from her finger, Mysta offers it. "This is a useful trinket. It makes you invisible. I expect it to be returned."

She will offer the ring of invisibility to a Gonagin first, then any other halfling, then any RTG member, then to any gnome, then to any rogue, in that order of priority.

How do we contact you when the mission is complete?
"Come back here and reserve this room. I will know when you have returned."

Mysta Gonagin: female halfling; Cha 10 (+4 on Cha checks to dwarves, +2 to gnomes & Halflings, -2 to all others due to belt of dwarvenkind).

VIOLA

PCs with close ties to the Northern Alliance (including the Dirty Dog Tavern), the Red Planks, Wanted PCs with no other affiliations, and all other PCs with affiliations not otherwise addressed (including out of region PCs) start with Viola.

If only one PC plays this introduction, the only occupant of the private room will be Viola. Please alter the text below to reflect the situation.

It is a good night to be in out of the cold and snow, and you find yourself in the surprisingly nice Dirty Dog Tavern in the Free City of Rookroost. A few feet away, a fire burns away in the hearth, keeping the chill at bay.

A few other tables are occupied this evening. Most of those around you appear to be well-traveled and well-armed. Some flirt with the beautiful high-elf serving wench, while others merely mind their own business and keep to themselves. A burly half-orc, dressed in rags and with a tankard of kragg in his hands, keeps an eye out for trouble.

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves at this point, assuming there is more than one, and assuming they did not arrive together. If the players make little effort to role-play, then assume that their PCs are sitting at different tables. That will make things that much easier for Viola later.

A DC 15 Knowledge (local – IBS) check will reveal that the tavern should be packed, curfew or no curfew. A DC 20 check will reveal that this place is rumored to be a safe haven for adventurers of an anti-Iuzian mindset (Barflies of the Dirty Dog Tavern know this to be true).

The door opens, revealing a hooded, cloaked figure, probably a human female, whose form is obscured by billowing snow. A black-pommeled greatsword rests across her back.

As she enters, the huge mountain of a half-orc bouncer rises from his stool and growls, "Come in 'r get out! You lettin' in da -"

Whatever else he was going to say is cutoff when the stranger lowers her hood, revealing that she is a beautiful black-haired woman with pouting lips, mesmerizing green eyes, pale skin, and a stern countenance.

A stupid look washes over the bouncer's face as he stares at the woman. He then looks to where you are sitting and nods as the woman approaches your table.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check will reveal that the woman is Viola, who is actually a vampire known to serve High Lady Xavendra and her consort, Veth. Former Citizens of the Northern Alliance and current residents of Rookroost or Groucester will know this automatically. PCs that played BDK6-01 *That Which Slept* should recognize her. However, if asked for her name, she will use, "Olyvia."

A DC 15 Sense Motive check will reveal that Gummy is now under the influence of some sort of enchantment. Gummy has been *dominated* by Viola and ordered not to let the PCs leave the tavern. He is not much of a grappler, so he will just attempt to pummel recalcitrant PCs into submission (doing non-lethal damage) while blocking the front door. The back door to the jakes and stable is being guarded by an ogre barbarian and three ogres (see MM pg 198), who are standing outside ready to brain anyone attempting to flee from Viola.

Allow the PC(s) one round of actions to respond as they see fit. This is NOT meant to be a combat encounter, even if there are six 12th-level PCs in the tavern. However, if the PCs do anything combat-oriented (including movement and especially casting a spell), go to initiative and see Development below. Viola will order Gummy to attack anyone who tries to cast spells such as *protection from evil* or *magic circle against evil*.

If the PCs do not flee, Viola will approach each one individually (starting with the PC that has the highest WCI score, if she recognizes them), pretending to be

gathering information (feel free to have her share a few rumors with them), while attempting to *dominate* them.

It should be noted that at no time will Sylvia approach the PCs while Viola is at their table. Sylvia cannot risk getting the vampire's attention, lest the vampire try to *dominate* her (which Sylvia could likely resist, which would be a dead give-away that the tavern wench is more than she appears to be). This is also why she cannot offer any aid or warning to PCs who have earned her favor (BDKA 3-01 *You've Got Missive*).

Viola's goal is to get the *dominated* PC or PCs up to a room so that she can further discuss what she wants with them. Once a PC is *dominated*, she orders them to go to a room at the end of the second floor's hall.

Toubleshooting: This encounter might prove problematic. Some PCs might never fail the Will saves incurred by her domination attempts. Some might be somehow immune to enchantments. Some might successfully flee. You, the judge, will need to adjudicate the situation to the best of your abilities. Perhaps Viola will need to summon the ogres to subdue the PC (she's already *dominated* most of the patrons during a previous visit, so feel free to toss some NPCs from DMG pg 112 at the PCs to help subdue them. Several of the half-orc Bbn5s and one of the Bbn10s should help do the trick), or maybe she will need to threaten to kill a dozen innocents if the PC does not obey, etc. She is chaotic and evil; she will do whatever it takes to get her way.

However, she will NOT fight to the death. She will flee if she must. In this case, the PCs in the tavern might have to wait for PCs from another introduction to find them.

Once all of the PCs have been dominated, or have agreed to go to her room with her, continue with the following:

This well-appointed room contains a long table carved of heavy oak. Carafes and glasses of darkest red wine are placed on its top. The lamps in several sconces have been turned quite low, providing lighting that is dim but adequate. The room is very cold, and you see that is because a window has been left open.

Several heavy chairs surround the table. The beautiful woman moves to sit at the far end of the table, facing the door, the open window at her back. Without noticing her lips move, you hear her command, "Sit!"

Once you are seated, she says, "You may speak. Feel free to partake of the food. I have no use for it." Sharp fangs glint in the flickering light when she speaks.

Below is a list of expected questions that the PCs might ask of her, and her responses. If they ask something outside this scope, give an answer based on what you think she would know of the event background, recent events in the Combination, and what you know about her

as an NPC. If in doubt, have her command the PC's to silence and have her tell them what to do (you have got them dominated, so feel free to use that).

"What are we doing here?"

"You are here because you are here. Out of all the fools in this city, perhaps you are the most expendable."

"What need have you of us, m'lady?"

"Although I would prefer to keep you ignorant, perhaps it would be best to explain the situation, so that you can properly attend to what I have in store for you."

"That Which Slept has taken up residence in the Bluff Hills. She used her powers to set off a huge burst of negative energy, intending to kill every living creature for miles in every direction. And she very nearly succeeded."

"Due to certain . . . politics, I chose to leave High Lady Xavendra's service. I now answer directly to High Lord Tadorinal. Word has reached us that the city of Groucester is now deserted. The survivors have disappeared, and no one knows why. We want you to find out where they have all gone. We know for a fact that she has not turned them into undead."

In order to do so, I command you to go to Groucester as quickly as possible, infiltrate the High Lady's manor and search it for information. Bring back anything portable that might be remotely valuable as quickly as possible. We are especially interested in the High Lady's notes or diary, if such can be found. Use whatever means necessary to ensure the success of your mission, but do not delay. Return to me regardless of failure or success."

A note about *dominate*: Just because she is ordering them on this mission does NOT mean that the PCs get a new save with the DC lowered by 2. Adventurers break into houses frequently, especially those belonging to Iuzians, so performing this task, with proper planning and equipment, should not be "against their nature." However, if a PC has an excellent role-playing reason why it would be, such as being a cleric of a lawful god opposed to thieves, feel free to allow them another save.

In addition, the *dominate* effect will run out in 12 days, a fact she is well aware of. However, PCs should only know this if they make a DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check to know that a vampire can *dominate* with its gaze. It requires a DC 25 to ascertain that this power lasts for 12 days.

Twelve days is probably not enough time for lower level parties to get to Groucester and back via traditional mounts, thus Viola will provide tireless mounts (animated horse skeletons). Viola will just have to hope that the PC(s) report back to her or get to Groucester within the first 12 days (several times per day, she will link into a *dominated* PC's senses).

"How do you know that the people haven't all just been turned into undead?"

"We have our ways."

"Are there any undead left in Groucester?"

"The positive energy released by the Dimrite ritual decimated all of the lesser undead creatures, mostly the mindless ones. Almost all of my more powerful siblings, so to speak, especially the incorporeal ones, are still there."

"When was the High Lady last seen?"

"There are reports that she was seen in the city not long after the blast, rallying her citizens and trying to restore order. No one has seen her since people started disappearing."

"Did Veth survive the ritual?"

"He is with Xavendra, wherever she goes, so yes." Here, her voice is tinged with an odd mixture of relief and regret.

"What can you tell us about Xavendra's manor and its defenses?"

"She is sure to have changed them since my departure. However, 'ware the ghost."

"Also, the most likely location for her journals is in her laboratory in the basement. It can be reached via a secret door located in the sitting room."

"Would you mind paying me?"

"What type of undead would you like for me to turn you into? I can research the magicks necessary while you are gone."

"In addition, should you please me, I will put in a good word for you with the High Lord."

"Surely you don't expect me (us) to do this alone (by ourselves)?" (assuming the whole party does not play this introduction)

"It should not be too hard to find other adventurers in this city. I suggest you look in the common room of this very tavern, after I have departed, for others foolish or brave enough to go to Groucester. However, do not share with them what you have learned here today."

"Can you offer me any aid?"

"Would that I had the time necessary to find more competent fools. Alas, I do not. Here," she says, as she withdraws a flask from a pocket.

"Use this to strike the ghost. Coat your weapon with it immediately before attacking."

Viola provides one flask of ghostoil, regardless of the number of PCs in the room.

How do we contact you when the mission is complete?

"Come back here and reserve this room. I will know when you have returned."

Development: If any of the PCs attempt to flee, cast a spell, attack, etc., Viola will attempt to *dominate* them and order them to “stop”, “sit down”, etc. For now, she merely wants to talk to (and *dominate*) the PC(s). Remember, she can use her *dominate* ability once per round, so she will try and try again while talking to a PC until successful.

If the PCs are posing a serious threat to her, she will fight back with all of her might and will summon the ogres and her swarms of bats (1d4+1 bat swarms previously summoned via her *children of the night* ability) to the fight. She has little patience for insolence, so she will seek to kill any PC who attacks her. PCs that surrender must voluntarily allow themselves to be dominated.

Gummy the Bouncer: male half-orc. See BK Mercs document if his statistics are needed.

Viola: female human vampire Clr10/Contemplative2. Cha 20; 24 HD for the purposes of turning. *Dominate* (Su): Will DC 21.

SAVANT GRANOC

PCs with close ties to the Death Cultists or the Circle of Crimson Stone begin with Savant Granoc.

Please alter the text below to reflect the situation. If only one PC plays this introduction, the only occupant of the private room will be the NPC with whom the PC should speak.

Several weeks ago, you received a message from a member of your organization, asking for your help with matters concerning the recent catastrophe in the area of the Bluff Hills. The note said to come to this warehouse in Rookroost, on this date at this time, and inquire about a shipment of Groucester Black, a wine made from the dark purple grapes grown in the hills near there. So here you are, standing just outside the warehouse, in the dark and snowy streets of Rookroost. The place seems deserted.

Members of the Death Cultists and the Circle of Crimson Stone will know that this location is one that sometimes plays host to the Circle's after hours activities.

Allow the PCs to introduce themselves at this point, assuming there is more than one, and assuming they did not arrive together.

Once the PCs are ready to enter, continue:

A young, rat-faced man is still at work in the warehouse, despite the hour. He sizes you up with a glance, then stops his work and asks, “What can I do for you?”

The young man's name is Jak. Once the PC(s) mention Groucester Black, continue with the following:

Nodding, he remarks, “Yeah, we got some of that stuff sittin’ right here.” He knocks on the top of a stack of wooden crates.

“I’m gonna have to check the order before I can give it to you, though.”

He walks into an office in one corner, closing the door behind him.

After a few moments, a tall figure in heavy robes of the deepest black velvet appears from the labyrinth of crates near the back of the warehouse. His face is hidden within his cowl, but you can see an amulet bearing the sign of the scythe displayed upon his chest. In addition, some sort of crest is sewn onto his robes.

The stench of the graveyard wafts from his form.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that the amulet is an unholy symbol of Nerull.

The crest depicts the following: A bone laid diagonally from upper-left to lower-right with a shepherd's crook crossing it laid diagonally from lower-left to upper-right, forming four compartments, one each at the top, bottom, left, and right. One rust-red teardrop is located in the bottom and left compartments. Members of the Death Cultists will know that this denotes his rank as “Savant of Shepherds.”

“You are here because you can be trusted, at least on some level, and because those I represent have a task for you.”

The man lifts back the folds of his velvet cowl, revealing a youthful face marked by ritual scarring and intense blue eyes.

A DC 25 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that this Savant Granoc, a young priest rumored to be rising through the ranks of the Death Cultists. It is also rumored that he is involved in staging the illegal arena fights, which often occur in Rookroost after dark (Members of the Death Cultists and the Circle of Crimson Stone know this automatically).

“Death waits for no man, so let me be brief. That Which Slept is a danger to every creature in this region, both the living and the dead. Some fools hope to tame the beast, but my masters know this to be impossible. After all, it was my predecessors who imprisoned her ages ago. Despite what some may think, death is no friend to entropy, for without life, there can be no death.

“Controlling her is impossible because she is, in some way, a part of ‘He of Eternal Darkness’. Luckily, we do not seek to control her. My masters seek to put her back in her cage. To do this, we must learn more about her current powers.

“This is where you come in. High Lady Xavendra has been seeking to learn as much of the creature as possible, ever since That Which Slept tore the roof off her manor and made off with the Shadowstaff.

We require the High Lady's notes, to compare them to our ancient texts and to determine the High Lady's motives as regards the great beast. Such notes are surely kept in Xavendra's manor. Bring them to me, and my masters will use them to further their understanding of That Which Slept so that they may once again bind her away from our world."

Following are the answers to questions PCs will likely ask. For anything else, consult the adventure background and create an answer, or use the tried-and-true "I don't know."

What kind of undead are left in Groucester?

"The positive energy released by the Dimrite ritual decimated all of the lesser undead creatures, mostly the mindless ones. Some of the more troublesome types, especially the incorporeal ones, are still there."

Did High Lady Xavendra survive the ritual?

"Why wouldn't she?"

Did Veth survive the ritual?

"He is with Xavendra, wherever she goes, so yes."

What's in it for me?

"I am sure those whom I represent would be most grateful for any information you could provide."

Surely you don't expect me (us) to do this alone (by ourselves)?

"It shouldn't be too hard to find other adventurers in the city. I am sure there are those who would come to your aid in this endeavor. Try the local taverns."

"Beware of strangers. Use them as you will, but do not trust them nor mention for whom you work."

Can you offer us any aid?

"I have only this wand. It may prove useful on your journey. Beware, for it does not have many uses left."

Granoc will give the PCs one wand of false life (5 charges). If they think to ask, he tells them it has less than 10 charges left.

How do we contact you when the mission is complete?

"Come back to this place. I will be informed when you have returned."

Development: If, for some reason, the PCs decide to attack Savant Granoc, a greater shadow and six shadows (its spawn) move out of various crates to attack them. Granoc will withdraw a scroll of word of recall and attempt to use it during his first actions (DC 12 caster level check), leaving the PCs to their fate. Members of the

Circle of Crimson Stone and the Death Cultists are expelled from their respective organizations.

Savant Granoc: male human Clr9 (Nerull); (Knowledge [religion] +13); Wis 18, Cha 14.

FELLREEV INTRODUCTION

Note: Use this introduction for parties that start in the Fellreev.

Winter in the Combination has fallen suddenly. Snow already chokes most of the roads, and peasants, orcs, and demons alike huddle around fires to stay alive.

That must be why so many people have congregated in the ruins of Sable Watch. The Fellreev's mighty boughs protect the ruined village from the worst of the winter weather, blocking the wind and snow, and there's plenty of lumber around for hearths and rebuilding. The new arrivals don't waste any time claiming a site and building a crude lean-to for the night.

The sound of saws sawing and axes chopping accentuates the singing of an attractive flan female. She sits on a huge tree stump, a lyre in her lap as she sings a song of renewal and hope, the cold air making the song's notes tight and piercing. Her music appears to be helping the townsfolk keep a steady pace and rhythm as they work at their various tasks while taking their mind off their recent troubles.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check will reveal that she is Oytens, Bard of the Rovers. PCs who played BDK5-01 The Body or BDK 5-01 Leather Bound Tome will recognize her.

Her perform check is a 31. She is inspiring the town's folk to work faster and harder as they build their shelters for the night.

She is currently too busy to speak with the PCs.

One other sound rings throughout the village: that of swordplay. Your gaze moves to an area at the edge of the village where a half-dozen human teenagers, four boys and two girls, practice their blade work under the watchful gaze of a female high-elf. Clad in a mithral shirt, several rapiers are sheathed on her hips and back. A pendant hangs around her neck, depicting nine swords, points out in a burst.

As she moves about the practicing youths, she gives words of praise to some while others she stops and repositions, showing them a better way to cut, thrust, parry, or riposte.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check will reveal that the elf is Breeanna Windstrider, Mistress of the Hallorn Fencing Academy. Members of Clan Fanlareshen, the Hallorn Fencing Academy, the Red Planks, Defenders of

Morannon Keep, or Barflies of the Dirty Dog Tavern will know this automatically.

Members of the Fanlareshen Elves will know that Breeanna's lifeless body was transported to the priests of the Oaken Copse by Trailblazer Kinlorde. According to Kinlorde's report, her body was found in That Which Slept's very lair during a raid designed to stop the blast that created the Deadlands.

A DC 15 Knowledge (religion) check will reveal the pendant to be a holy symbol of Kelanen, the Prince of Swords.

For PCs who get the same sub-introduction, regardless of the meta-org affiliation that got them there, assume that they arrive for the meeting at the same time.

Development: Once you have the players started on prepping their PC's spells, ordering pizza, etc., take them out individually or in groups based on which sub-introduction they are experiencing (be sure to have a d20 handy). Do not spend more than 5 to 10 minutes with each group or player, but spend enough time to cover his or her specific sub-introduction.

Appendix Three contains a list of things that the PCs can learn if they spend 1d4+1 hours wandering around gathering information. Sable Watch does not yet boast a tavern.

BREEANNA

PCs with close ties to the Fellreev Factions (Dazark orcs, Defenders of the Greenkeep, Fanlareshen elves, Fellreev Druids, or members of Fort Hendricks), or the Hallorn Fencing Academy, begin play with Breeanna.

Please alter the text below to reflect the situation and the PC's (or PCs') meta-org affiliations (for instance, a member of the Hallorn Fencing Academy's note would have been stamped with the symbol of Kelanen). If only one PC plays this introduction, then the only other occupants of the clearing will be Breeanna and Brighthorn.

Several weeks ago, you received a message from your organization asking for your help with matters concerning the recent catastrophe in the Bluff Hills. The note said to come to Sable Watch in the northern Fellreev and to find the Shrine of the Blade.

The elf's gaze drifts your way and she gives you a nod before turning to her pupils and clapping her hands loudly. The three pairs of sparring partners cease their practice and turn to face the elf. She then dismisses each pupil individually after giving them a last bit of advice. Once the last has turned to go, she turns to face you.

"Greetings," she says. "I am Breeanna. Please, follow me so that we may talk where there are fewer ears about."

With quick and sure strides, she leads you past the village's perimeter, roughly a hundred yards deeper into the forest. As you enter a small clearing, you spy a wondrous being: a white horse-like creature, fully eighteen hands tall at the withers, stands calmly eyeing you, a golden horn protruding from its forehead. Breeanna moves to stand beside the creature before turning to face you.

A DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) check identifies the creature as a unicorn (the DC has been lowered from 14 because unicorns are creatures of myth and legend and are easily identifiable).

Brighthorn is using his *detect evil* ability to examine the PC(s). Should anything suspicious arise, he will boldly question the PC about the evil aura. In addition, Breeanna and the PC(s) are standing within the area of his *magic circle against evil*.

"Let me cut right to the chase. As you are probably aware, the Bluff Hills are now controlled by That Which Slept. But since it is likely you don't know the whole story, I will tell you some of what I know.

Several years ago, a band of foolish adventurers were tricked into freeing an ancient evil by Baron Horace of Wormhall. Trapped millennia ago by mighty magicks, That Which Slept waited for her chance to be free. When it came, she did not hesitate.

She has since carved herself a lair deep in the Bluff Hills. A servant of 'He of Eternal Darkness', she used her vast and terrible powers to set off a huge burst of negative energy, intending to kill everyone and everything for hundreds of miles in every direction. And she came very close to doing just that."

She pauses, a haunted look in her eye.

"My friend Mysta and I died trying to stop her. Foolishly, we entered her lair by ourselves, over-confident in our abilities or under-confident in our friends'. Regardless, in we went. We did not get far.

"I awoke in this forest with Fanlareshen priests chanting over my revived body only because of the brave actions of Trailblazer Kinlorde and his friends.

"Because adventurers like you fought and died defending the Dimrites and their ritual of light, thousands of innocent lives were saved despite the failure Mysta and I suffered.

"Word has recently reached us that the city of Groucester is a ghost town, but not in the literal sense. Oh, there are still undead there, many survived the positive energy unleashed by the Dimrites, but the mortal survivors have disappeared and no one knows why.

"We need to know what Xavendra is up to. Where have all the people gone, and what has she learned about That Which Slept? I have seen the creature up close. It must be stopped! You must

infiltrate Xavendra's manor and find out what she knows!"

Following are the answers to questions PCs will likely ask. For anything else, consult the adventure background and create an answer, or use the tried-and-true "I don't know."

What kind of undead are left in Groucester?

"The positive energy released by the Dimrite ritual decimated all of the lesser undead creatures, mostly the mindless ones. Some of the more troublesome types, especially the incorporeal ones, are still there. I know for a fact that a ghost used to guard the manor."

Who told you about the ghost?

"A Gonagin who infiltrated the manor a year or so ago fought a ghost while there. 'Course, it could have just been after him. Sven has a way of attracting unwanted attention to himself..."

Did High Lady Xavendra survive the ritual?

"Why wouldn't she have?"

Did Veth survive the ritual?

"He is with Xavendra, wherever she goes, so yes."

What's in it for me?

"I have a vast network of connections, I'm sure I can come up with something."

Surely you don't expect me (us) to do this alone (by ourselves)?

"It shouldn't be too hard to find other adventurers in the village. I believe that Oytens was talking to several earlier."

Can you offer us any aid?

"Although I am loathe to part with it, I will lend you Ringwurtha'lagil," she says as she unbuckles a scabbard.

"That loosely translates as 'cold death blade' in Common. I expect it back."

Ringwurtha'lagil is a +1 ghost touch cold iron rapier. It shimmers with a ghostly green light when unsheathed.

How do we contact you when the mission is complete?

"Come back to Sable Watch. I will know when you have returned."

How did you die?

"Mysta and I had entered That Which Slept's lair when we were confronted by a being of tremendous chaos and power. I believe Mysta called it an 'aspect' of 'He of Eternal Darkness' himself. Mysta's most potent spell, some sort of acidic rays, merely bounced off it and struck me as I moved to flank it."

How was your body recovered?

"A brave elf, Kinlorde the Trailblazer, and his comrades found my body alongside Mysta's as they moved into That Which Slept's lair. Through their heroics, and the grace of Rillifane, I was rescued and returned to life."

May I touch your unicorn?

She laughs. "Brighthorn is as much mine as the trees of this forest are mine. You should probably ask him."

(To Brighthorn) May I touch you?

(If the petitioner is a Good-aligned female, who does not radiate as evil in any manner, Brighthorn will allow her to approach and touch him. Female humans, elves, and half-elves will be allowed to touch his horn)

Breeanna Windstrider: female high-elf
(Knowledge [religion] +14); Cha 12.

Brighthorn Longshanks: male unicorn
(Diplomacy +14, Intimidate +14); Cha 30.

OYTENS

Non-Fellreev based PCs at tables that start in the Fellreev, especially bards interested in the Old Lore tradition and Druids of the Old Faith, begin play with Oytens.

Please alter the text below to reflect the situation and the PC's (or PCs') meta-org affiliations.

After several minutes of singing, the bard's voice fades into the cold air, her last note hanging like an icicle, sharp and clear.

Her song over, she begins to wander the crowd.

Oytens wanders the town, greeting its new arrivals. She is particularly looking for a new cleric to take over leadership of the town's spiritual needs. Should a cleric of a Flan god agree to settle down in Sable Watch, please email the Triad the player's name and contact information. Advise the player that accepting the position requires the PC to retire as an NPC under the Triad's control.

Several weeks ago, you received a message from your organization asking for your help with matters concerning the recent catastrophe in the Bluff Hills. The note said to come to Sable Watch in the northern Fellreev and to find The Voice of the North.

Allow the PCs to approach Oytens on their own. Once they have introduced themselves to her and explained that they were sent to find her, she leads them to the village's outskirts, into a small, abandoned church of Pelor.

Continue with the following:

"Thank you for coming on such short notice. Forces are in play even as we speak, so I fear I must be brief."

As you are probably aware, the Bluff Hills are now controlled by That Which Slept. But since it is likely you don't know the whole story, I will tell you some of what I know.

Several years ago, I was inadvertently responsible for aiding Baron Horrace of Wormhall in tricking a band of adventurers into freeing an ancient evil. Trapped millennia ago by mighty Ur-Flan magicks, That Which Slept waited for her chance to be free. When it came, she did not hesitate.

A servant of 'He of Eternal Darkness', she used her vast and terrible powers to set off a huge burst of negative energy in the Bluff Hills, intending to kill everyone and everything for hundreds of miles in every direction. And she very nearly did just that."

"Because adventurers like you fought and died defending the Dimrites and their ritual of light, thousands of innocent lives were saved.

"Now, word has recently reached me that the city of Groucester is deserted. Oh, there are still undead there; many survived the positive energy unleashed by the Dimrites. But the mortal survivors have disappeared and no one knows why. Where have all the people gone, and what has Xavendra learned about That Which Slept?"

"I need to relay this information to people who might be able to bind That Which Slept away from this plane. You must infiltrate Xavendra's manor and find out what she knows!"

Following are the answers to questions PCs will likely ask. For anything else, consult the adventure background and create an answer, or use the tried-and-true "I don't know."

What kind of undead are left in Groucester?

"The positive energy released by the Dimrite ritual decimated all of the lesser undead creatures, mostly the mindless ones. Some of the more troublesome types, especially the incorporeal ones, are still there."

Did High Lady Xavendra survive the ritual?

"Why wouldn't she have?"

Did Veth survive the ritual?

"He is with Xavendra, wherever she goes, so yes."

What's in it for me?

"You mean being a hero and saving the planet aren't enough motivations? Fine, mercenary, I'm sure I will come up with a suitable reward."

Surely you don't expect me (us) to do this alone (by ourselves)?

"It shouldn't be too hard to find other adventurers in the village. I believe that Breeanna was talking to several earlier."

Can you offer us any aid?

"Where you are going, you will need this more than I," she says as she hands you a golden brooch shaped like a lion's head. "It will help protect you from the fear that Xavendra's minions like to inspire."

The brooch is a badge of valor. She will hand it to the PC who seems the most scared of entering Xavendra's manor.

How do we contact you when the mission is complete?

"Come back to Sable Watch. I will know when you have returned."

Oytens, Bard of the Old Lore: Female human Brd12; Cha 22; Knowledge (all) +8, Perform (sing) +21.

1: THE DEADLANDS

If the PCs came from the Fellreev, they will have noticed that the town of Synford was completely deserted, all items of any value long since looted.

There are seven to twelve inches of snow covering the ground. Small and medium creatures must pay 2 squares of movement to enter each square. The DC of Tumble checks increases by 2. Large creatures are unaffected.

Advise the PCs that walking for miles in the snow would be very slow and that perhaps they should purchase large-sized mounts and a wagon for speedier transportation. These items are available in either Sable Watch or Rookroost at the standard prices.

The daytime (6am to 6pm) temperature range outside the Deadlands is Cold (0 to 40 degrees F). Unprotected characters must make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d6 points of non-lethal damage. Characters wearing a cold weather outfit or with resist cold 5, nonarctic animals with fur, creatures native to a cold environment, or creatures warded by *endure elements* are protected.

The nighttime (6pm to 6am) temperature range outside the Deadlands is Severe Cold (-20 to 0 degrees F). Unprotected characters must make a Fortitude save every 10 minutes (DC 15, +1 per previous check), taking 1d6 points of nonlethal damage on each failed save. A partially protected character need only check once per hour. Characters wearing a cold weather outfit AND fur clothing, or with resist cold 5, arctic animals with fur, creatures native to arctic terrain, or creatures warded by *endure elements*, are considered protected.

Remember, any creature that suffers damage from a cold environment is beset by frostbite and fatigued (DMG pg. 302). A DC 15 (DC 18 if still exposed to the cold) Heal check can cure frostbite, removing the fatigue. Using a fire for warmth lowers the DC by 2.

Read the following text just before the PCs cross into the Deadlands:

Several days have passed since you left <Sable Watch or Rookroost> behind. Snow has blanketed the land, but not so much that horses have a problem moving through it.

It is not difficult to tell where the effect of the blast ended; there is, literally, a line beyond which nothing lives. The blackened and twisted trees that dot the barren, snow-covered landscape still stand, but they are clearly dead. Snow mounds cover dead animals that lie untouched where they fell, as there are no scavengers left to disturb them. Everywhere there is stillness and the stench of death, muted because the cold seems to have forestalled the process of decay. The air seems hazy, making your vision just a bit unfocused in the distance, and a sickly, unnatural mist fills the low places. If possible, it seems even colder now.

Be sure to ask if the PCs are going to travel during the day or during the night. Do not press them to upgrade their cold protections. Let them figure it out on their own after they have to make their first saving throw or suffer cold damage.

The daytime temperature in the Deadlands is Severe Cold (see above).

At night, the temperature drops to Extreme Cold (-50 to -20 degrees F). Unprotected characters take 1d6 points of cold damage per 10 minutes (no save). In addition, an unprotected character must make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or take 1d4 points of nonlethal damage. Those wearing metal armor or coming into contact with very cold metal are affected as if by a *chill metal* spell. A partially protected character takes damage and makes saving throws once per hour instead of once per ten minutes. A creature must be protected by *endure elements*, or have cold resist 5, to be considered protected. A creature protected against Severe Cold (see above) only is considered partially protected for Extreme Cold. A creature protected against Cold weather only is considered unprotected against Extreme Cold.

Special: As the PCs cross into the Deadlands, they (and their animal companions, familiars, and mounts) must make a DC 34 Fortitude save or suffer one negative level (do NOT tell them the DC). As the first PC crosses the boundary, have them roll their save as you advise them of the temperature drop. This should scare the other PCs into burning resources in an attempt to avoid suffering the negative level loss and colder temperature. That is fine.

A DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) or (arcana) check will allow a PC to recall that negative levels usually become permanent after 24 hours. The level loss does indeed become permanent if the PC stays in the Deadlands for 24 cumulative hours (no save). Once an affected creature leaves the Deadlands, it takes one day

for any non-permanent level loss to go away. Spells such as *death ward* protect against this effect ONLY for their duration. Thus, a protected creature that enters the Deadlands will have to make their save once their protection's duration ends.

For every 24 hours spent consecutively in the Deadlands, the PCs have to save again or suffer one additional negative level. As soon as a PC leaves the Deadlands or enters Groucester, this "clock" stops, although the PC will still suffer any effects already accrued. Leaving the area and re-entering within 24 hours DOES NOT impose another negative level on a PC.

Flying above the Deadlands does not negate this as the blast tainted a spherical area. However, burrowing ten-feet or more below ground does offer protection from the negative energy drain as long as the burrow does not open up into the Deadlands (i.e., the effect is a spread). Thus, it is possible to create a tunnel from the edge of the Deadlands all the way to Groucester to avoid the effect. If the PCs are this innovative, they will miss the half-farspawn encounter and you will need to adjust Encounter 2 appropriately. Award the full discretionary role-playing xp award if the PCs utilize this tactic.

Creatures created by Tharizdun's followers, such as the half-farspawn ogres, are immune to this effect.

For each negative level a character receives, they suffer the following penalties (PHB pg. 310):

- -1 penalty on all attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks (including Initiative).
- - 5 hit point penalty. These cannot be cured until the negative level is removed; this lowers the maximum hit point total of the character.
- -1 penalty to effective level (for level-based effects).
- Lose one spell or spell slot from the highest level spell level castable.

The distance from the edge of the Deadlands to Groucester varies depending on whether the PCs are coming from Sable Watch or from Rookroost. From Sable Watch, the distance is approximately twelve (12) miles. From Rookroost, the distance is approximately thirty (30) miles, meaning that the PCs might need to force march to arrive in Groucester before the negative level becomes permanent.

Once the PCs are half-way to Groucester, they will be beset by monsters. Be sure to keep track of time to determine whether any of the PCs long-duration buffs have expired.

Note: If the PCs use magic to bypass the Deadlands, such as teleport, simply move this encounter to Groucester's streets as the monsters have infiltrated the ruined town and are on a scouting mission.

Creatures: Wandering the Deadlands, looking for food to eat or intruders to kill, is a variety of Far Realm spawned creatures, summoned here during That Which Slept's ritual. Several of those have since mated with

creatures native to the area and have created half-farspawn offspring.

Have the players give you a marching order. The terrain, other than the snow, will not affect movement. Feel free to dot the landscape with sparse amounts of typical trees. Remember, characters gain a +1 bonus on melee attacks against foes downhill from them. Draw your battlemat in such a manner so that the PCs start with the high ground (i.e. they are descending towards Groucester and the monsters). Keep the slopes gentle.

Unless the PCs are moving exceptionally quietly, the monsters will hear them from quite a distance away (190 ft. at APL 6, 230 ft. at APLs 8 and 10). To determine who wins surprise, ask the PCs for Listen checks (DC 22 at APL 6, DC 28 at APLs 8 and 10). Success indicates that the PCs have heard the creatures at a distance of 190 ft. away (or 230 ft. for APLs 8 and 10). If any PC succeeds exactly, then both the PC and the monsters get a surprise round. If the PC beats the check by at least one, then only they gain a surprise round. In addition, for each point by which a PC succeeds, the encounter start distance should be pushed back by 10 feet. If none of the PCs succeed, then just the monsters get a surprise round.

The maximum range for a Spot check to detect other creatures is 110 feet because of the gentle slopes here at the edge of the Bluff Hills; therefore, neither side will be able to see the other until they are within 110 feet of each other (unless someone is flying).

Once the PCs can see the monsters, read them the following:

Like something out of a nightmare, a large, writhing, grotesque, purple-tentacled mass moves toward your group. The tentacles, each as large as your leg but longer, push it across the snowy ground with surprising speed. As it rushes towards you, it screams something in a booming, guttural voice despite the fact that you cannot see its mouth.

A DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check will identify the creatures as being some sort of half-farspawn, but not that they are part-ogre. Oddly enough, the creatures will shout out curses, threats and devotions to Tharizdun in Giant during the fight.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Half-Farspawn Amorphous Ogre (3): hp 39 each; Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Half-Farspawn Amorphous Raging Ogre Bbn4: hp 114; Appendix 2.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Half-Farspawn Amorphous Raging Ogre Bbn4 (2): hp 114 each; Appendix 3.

The EL of the encounter has been raised by 1 to account for the cold environment and for the negative level loss PCs are probably enduring.

When the creatures die, they resume ogre form, albeit with deformities such as extra eyes, vestigial limbs, tentacles for hair, etc.

Tactics: Once the monsters are aware of the PCs, they will use their spell-like abilities to protect themselves. They will also try using their *touch of idiocy* ability and holding the charge until they hit a PC (possibly using their *truestrike* ability to ensure that they hit a heavily armored BDF). They will then seek to approach the PCs as quickly as possible, seeking to prevent any from getting airborne. In melee, they will attack the closest PC unless they are unable to damage them, at which point they will seek to engage another, lighter armored, PC. They only power attack if they are not having problems hitting their foes.

The half-farspawn are agents of entropy who do not fear death. They fight until they are slain.

Half-farspawn template note: Acid resistance 10 replaced with cold resistance 10 to better reflect Tharizdun's portfolio. See *Lords of Madness* p151.

Treasure: Each creature is wearing a purple unholy symbol of Tharizdun. These are valueless as treasure as no one in his or her right mind would seek to purchase such a symbol, fearful of drawing the attention of 'He of Eternal Darkness'. The symbol DOES NOT protect against the negative level loss effect of the Deadlands.

Development: Remember, the PCs will still want to get out of the Deadlands before 24 hours have passed. The rest of the trip to Groucester is uneventful (other than the PCs seeing a half-farspawn jackrabbit [it's got great big fangs] eating a dead bird here and there).

2: WHERE IS EVERYONE?

As you crest a hill, the town of Groucester comes into view. The holes in its walls, remnants of the most recent attack by That Which Slept's minions, allow you to see into the empty streets themselves. If anything is moving, it is invisible and/or incorporeal.

Allow the PCs to prepare. There are plenty of holes in the walls big enough to guide their horses through. If the PCs swing by the gates, they will see that they are not guarded.

Once the PCs have dared to enter the city, continue with the following:

The only things moving on the streets of Groucester are the snow blown by the wind and an occasional door, left open by someone who departed in a rush, creaking in that same wind. It appears as if everyone

is gone, their homes left empty and unguarded. Not even the sound of a dog barking or a horse neighing disturbs the stillness.

This encounter is designed to allow PCs to wander Groucester freely. Please see Appendix Four for details on Groucester. All residences and businesses not detailed in Appendix 4 are essentially barren and empty of anything of major worth (although it is conceivable that if the PCs spent an entire day picking over the town, they could find enough treasure to reach the gold cap. However, this haul would require several wagons to transport). Feel free to describe homes that have tables set for dinner, the food rotten and uneaten, and stables that are devoid of animals or feed.

Please play up the fact that EVERYONE is gone. This should be very eerie, with the PCs paranoid about being attacked by undead at every moment. Have doors open and close on their own, eerie screams ring through the streets, etc. Feel free to make random players roll a d20 now and again. Jot down the result and murmur ominously. If they roll a natural 1, laugh evilly.

It is possible that the PCs are feeling rushed due to the negative level loss they fear will become permanent. Do NOT advise them that this is no longer a worry once they are inside Groucester's walls. However, they still suffer its effects until 24 hours have passed since they suffered the negative level.

After the PCs have wandered the city a bit, but before they go to Xavendra's manor, have them encounter the urchin.

Lunging out from behind the half-open door of the next building, a small figure dressed in rags runs directly at (random PC).

Allow the PCs to react, and if any of them attack the urchin, he will run, screaming, "No! No!"

If PCs do not show hostility, Roarke will grab the randomly determined PC around the legs and babble, "They will come for us next, we have to go go go go go!"

Creatures: Roarke is one of the few who have not been swept up by the press gangs due to his speed and wits. He has survived alone in Groucester ever since his family was taken (he found the *goggles of lifesight* in an empty house and they have helped him to stay alive). He is slowly going crazy from fear and paranoia, and he desperately wants to be rescued. Unless the PCs are openly displaying any holy symbols of either Iuz or Nerull, he will eventually approach them, seeking rescue and transportation to Rookroost (where he thinks he has some distant relatives). Try to give him a rough, uneducated accent and manner of speaking.

When asked where everyone went, Roarke can only manage a few sputtered descriptions of big, fat demons rounding everyone up and teleporting away with them. A

DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals these to be demodands.

In addition, Roarke has managed to scavenge one item of value during his time roaming the city. He will gladly sell this to the PCs, as he knows that he will be able to use the money to live comfortably in Rookroost while he seeks to join the Rookroost Thieves Guild.

Roarke the Urchin: male human (teenager) rog2; N; Cha 12. *Possessions:* mwk dagger, leather armor, cold weather gear (rags), *goggles of lifesight*^{LM}.

Treasure: See Appendix 4 for items they can find in the city if they search hard enough.

All APLs: Loot 0 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 545 gp; *ghostoil* (4 gp), *lyre of the restful soul* (250 gp), *nycoptic manuscripts* (208 gp), *phylactery of faithfulness* (83 gp); Total 545 gp.

In addition, the PCs may purchase Roarke's goggles for 2,000 gp. See Appendix 2 for details on the item.

Taking or stealing the goggles is a Chaotic act that must be noted on the PC's AR. Leaving the urchin to eventually die in Groucester is a non-Good act that must be noted on the PCs' ARs.

Development: Once the PCs are ready to explore Xavendra's manor, continue to Encounter 3.

3: HIDE AND SEEK

You stand before the imposing manor house that serves as the High Lady's residence. Parts of the roof and walls are shrouded by makeshift scaffolds, obviously under repair from some sort of recent damage, except that no workers are present. In fact, it seems that the entire area is deserted.

See DM Maps for a map of Xavendra's manor. Feel free to add some minor flavor details as the PCs explore the empty and silent house.

The outer stone wall is a foot thick. Wooden walls, floors, and ceilings are six inches thick. Unless otherwise noted, the ceilings are all 12 feet high.

Wooden Doors: 1 in. thick; hardness 5; hp 10; AC 5; Break DC 18.

Note: The entire first floor area of the manor is protected by an *unhallow* spell (caster level 20) that affects all creatures. A *life ward* spell (caster level 20, see Appendix 2) is tied to the *unhallow*. As each PC enters the manor, give them a DC 18 Will save to shrug off the *life ward*. Spell resistance applies as normal as well. Failure means that the PC cannot benefit from positive energy effects. If a PC leaves the house and re-enters, they will have to make another save.

Syrinda, naturally, is protected by the *life ward* spell as long as she is in the house and on the prime material

plane. She will become aware of the PCs as soon as they enter the manor as she is watching from the ethereal plane. She initiates her attack once the PCs enter Room 4 (Trophy Room).

ROOM 1 (MAIN ENTRANCE)

The archway surrounding the main entrance to the manor is a work of art unto itself: it is formed by two statues of men clad only in loincloths, whose muscles seem to ripple as they strain to hold aloft the massive skull adorning the lintel. The skull is less imposing than it probably once was, since someone has smashed away all details of its face. The massive oaken doors, featuring the High Lady's coat-of-arms, may only be approached by stepping through the rubble left from this recent act of vandalism.

The doors are neither locked nor trapped.

ROOM 2 (FOYER)

As soon as you enter the room, you see that the front door is flanked by two iron maidens. More disturbingly, two zombies are caged within the torture devices. They struggle futilely to get free, eager to eat your brains.

The wide foyer features a floor of glossy black tiles offset by narrow strips of blood-red stone. Doorways framed by heavy crimson curtains open to the right and left, while closed double doors are centered on the far wall. Another pair of iron maidens, these also containing zombies, stand on either side of it.

A smaller door is in the far left corner. A pair of polished wooden staircases rise to the gallery above, their graceful beauty marred by the loss of the finials that once must have capped their handrails.

The ceiling is 22 feet high. The small door opens to a closet. Several human skeletons stand quietly. Several appear to be wearing jackets left here by previous guests.

The skull-shaped finials have been chopped away and moved to the Trophy Room (Room 4). If PCs go upstairs, they find the entire floor empty except for construction materials. The majority of the roof was ripped away in the attack by That Which Slept, and the sort of workmanship the High Lady demands for her residence does not make for quick repairs. A balcony looks down into the Grand Ballroom.

ROOM 3 (SITTING ROOM)

The doorway leads to a sizeable chamber appointed with comfortable furniture. The heavy velvet curtains are closed over the windows. There are two empty spaces on the walls, where you think tapestries or portraits might once have hung, and marks on the rug indicate that a heavy piece of

furniture the size of a large chair is now missing from its position near the hearth.

PCs have little way of knowing that Xavendra's favorite chair and her portrait are missing; however, any PC inspecting the hearth may make a DC 20 Search check to find portions of a burned and shredded tapestry there. If any PC examines the less charred portions, they may make a DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) Check to determine that the tapestry featured a scene set somewhere along the Road of Skulls.

There are two doors in this room; one leads to the Grand Ballroom (Room 6) and the other to a small antechamber for servants. A secret door in the west wall leads to the Servants' Passage (Room 5). From the antechamber, servants may access this room, the Grand Ballroom, or (through another secret door) the Servants' Passage.

ROOM 4 (TROPHY ROOM)

This room has obviously been stripped of most of its contents. Several shelves and hooks indicate where trophies and memorabilia were once displayed.

In the far corner, a darkly beautiful greatsword rests in its stand, point down. Its pommel is a silver grinning skull, and the black blade has runes etched into it. There appears to be a plaque at the base of the stand.

One wall features a ceremonial collection of fifteen greataxes hanging in a blades outward circular pattern. All but one of the axes have silver heads. A small plaque is affixed to the wall in the center of the display.

The words on the greatsword's plaque have been scratched out completely. The runes etched into the blade are actually Abyssal words that read as: "To my loyal servant, High Lady Xavendra. Congratulations on your recent victories. Use this sword in good health! Iuz." **If ANY PC grabs this weapon, see the Cursed Sword of Xavendra on the Optional AR.**

The words on the plaque in the middle of the silver greataxe display read as follows: "To Xavendra from your loyal servant, Torrock." The non-silver greataxe has an adamantine blade.

A DC 15 Search check reveals some interesting nameplates left near the places where other items were once displayed: "A Gift from Arryn Alcor" reads the plate beneath a set of hooks meant to display a sword. Another reads, "To m'lady Xavendra, your loyal knight, Major Blain," before a spot where a lance was once mounted. Finally, a very rough plaque, apparently carved out of a barstool by a dull knife, reads, "Eh, here. Blackjack." The shape of a sap can be made out on the shelf where Blackjack's plaque rests.

One display shelf is empty except for four polished wooden skulls. Their rough bottoms do not allow them to sit upright, so they lie in disarray. PCs may easily

recognize these as being made of the same wood as the railings from the foyer staircases.

Creatures: The sole guardian of Xavendra's manor is currently the ghost of Syrinda, former mercenary of the Northern Alliance. She died during the Battle of Shadows and Light. For her service, Veth raised her as a ghost, destined to always protect High Lady Xavendra's manor.

Ever since the PCs entered the manor, Syrinda has been watching them from the ethereal plane, studying their weapons, armor, mannerisms, etc., and formulating her tactics. She will manifest on the second floor after she has cast all of her buff spells (assume that if the PCs take anytime at all examining the manor, that she has them pre-cast as per her stats), directly above the Trophy Room. From there, she will move down through the floor in an effort to surprise the PCs.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Syrinda: hp 54; Appendix 1.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Syrinda: hp 80 plus 8 temporary; Appendix 1.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Syrinda: hp 100 plus 10 temporary; Appendix 1.

Note: Syrinda is protected from positive energy, including turning, by the *life ward* tied to the *unhallow*.

APLs 8 and 10, Syrinda has previously cast a *desecrate* spell (no altar) in the room. Her stats are already modified to include the spell's combat benefits. Remember, Charisma checks made during a turn attempt suffer a -3 penalty when made in a *desecrated* area.

The EL has been raised by one to account for the amount of buff spells previously cast by the ghost and to take into account the *life ward* and *unhallow* effects. The EL was then lowered by to take into account the fact that the PCs are likely to be forewarned about the threat of an incorporeal undead guarding the manor in addition to the fact that each NPC in the introduction offers them something can aid in their upcoming fight against it.

Tactics: Syrinda is a very sound tactician. She will first seek to split the party by using her *frightful moan* ability during the surprise round. Do not forget her *frightful presence* power, which each PC must save against as soon as they first see her.

On the following round, she will use her *telekinesis* ability to launch as many of the axes as possible (one per caster level) at any obvious arcane spellcaster PC (she knows about the life ward, so she really only fears ghost touch weapons and force effects). These are silver greataxes, so subtract 1 from the damage of each hit (to a minimum of 1) and remember that she CAN score a critical hit with them on a natural 20.

On rounds subsequent to that, she will seek to kill any arcane spellcasters as quickly as possible via *sound*

bursts, *spiritual weapons*, *telekinesis*, etc. If attacked by a ghost touch weapon, she will attempt to kill that PC first. If a chance presents itself to kill a worshipper of Lydia or Pelor, she will take it, preferably with a *death knell* (PCs protected by *delay death* can be killed in this manner).

If severely wounded, Syrinda will retreat to heal herself via her *inflict* spells before returning to the fight. If the PCs are heavily buffed, she will wait for their buffs to run out before returning. She will chase them around the manor until destroyed or until the PCs flee the manor.

Treasure:

APLs 6 and 8: Loot 485 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 693 gp; +1 ghost touch scythe (693 gp); Total 1,178 gp.

APL 10: Loot 485 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 2,164 gp; +1 ghost touch scythe (693 gp); +1 ghost touch full plate (1,471 gp); Total 2,649 gp.

ROOM 5 (SERVANTS' PASSAGE)

This narrow passage leads from the kitchen to – nowhere. It stops at a dead end, and you see no reason for its existence.

A DC 22 Search check (in the proper locations) will reveal secret doors leading to each of the various chambers on the ground floor. Servants used these passages to move through the house, providing the almost invisible service demanded by High Lady Xavendra.

In the southwest corner of the manor is a spiral staircase that descends to the basement level (Encounter 4). It is separated from the servant's passage by a wooden wall. A secret door (DC 30 Search) just east of the stairs opens into the Sitting Room.

ROOM 6 (GRAND BALLROOM)

The majestic sweep of this cavernous hall has been marred by the destruction of the central chandelier, once the showpiece of the chamber. The shattered shards of hundreds of crystal skulls lie strewn across the center of the room, intermixed with tiles from the floor's intricate mosaic. Someone has taken some pains to destroy the image that once was depicted there.

PCs that examine the broken tiles from the floor find that the majority of them are bone-white in color, while a few others are black or silver.

ROOM 7 (DINING ROOM)

The dining room boasts six heavy mahogany tables for guests and a massive "high table" set upon a dais at the north end of the room. Thick draperies of deepest crimson shroud the windows of the room, and the chandeliers hang dark and cold.

If PCs search the area of the high table, it will be obvious that the back of the High Lady's chair has been damaged, as though pieces of it have been chopped away. A DC 20 Search check will reveal a damaged wooden skull under one of the nearest guest tables. The other skull, having been hurled against the wall, is nothing more than shards of wood in the northeast corner.

ROOMS 8 & 10 (SERVANTS' QUARTERS)

This room once housed the servants in the High Lady's household. Now only their simple beds, missing their mattresses, remain in the room.

The servants' belongings were carefully packed and removed. Nothing has been vandalized here; however, the west wall shows signs of recent repairs (Seems That Which Slept has a long tail).

ROOM 9 (WORK AREA & MESS HALL)

This area serves as a work area and dining hall for the household servants. Several tables and chairs stand unused, and a series of long, empty shelves lines the east wall. Several doors and hallways adjoin this area, and a small spiral staircase rises from the northeast corner.

Doors and hallways lead to the Servants' Passage (Room 5), the Grand Ballroom (Room 6), the Servants' Quarters (Rooms 8 & 10), the Kitchen (Room 11), Cold Storage (Room 12) and Dry Storage (Room 13). The contents of this room were carefully packed and removed. Nothing has been vandalized here.

ROOM 11 (KITCHEN)

This room is the kitchen, but it is obviously no longer in use. All cooking and serving utensils have been removed. The ovens are cold and the woodbox is empty.

The contents of the kitchen were carefully packed and removed. Nothing has been vandalized here.

ROOM 12 (COLD STORAGE ROOM)

This room has been enchanted so that it is permanently cold. Empty hooks hang from the ceiling, and frost glistens on the tops of empty shelves. A ten-foot deep pit sits empty in the middle of the room.

The foodstuffs here were carefully packed and removed. Nothing has been vandalized here.

ROOM 13 (STORAGE ROOM)

A masterwork harpsichord rests in this storage room, its beautifully carved lid gathering dust.

Nothing has been vandalized here. A wide secret door in the south wall allows access to the Grand Ballroom (Room 6).

ROOM 14 (WATER ROOM)

These beautiful fountains still work, although beautiful is a relative term. On a basin in the middle of each fountain is a figure carved out of red marble. One fountain's shape resembles that of a beautiful, six-armed woman with a snake-like tail. The other is shaped like a beautiful, winged, fanged human woman. You notice that the face of each statue is the same.

The waters of each stir as if alive.

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that the face is Xavendra's, mounted on a demon's body (marilith and succubus, respectively).

Water mephits have taken up residence in the fountains (MM pg 185; AL NE). However, they remain hidden in the water unless the PCs desecrate the fountain. They care not if the other fountain, or the elemental pool, is disturbed.

ROOM 15 (ELEMENTAL'S POOL)

A shallow pool of crystal clear water rests in this room. Its water moves as if alive.

The water is four feet deep. A medium water elemental (MM pg 98; AL NE) guards the pool. It only attacks if someone other than High Lady Xavendra or Veth enters the pool or if anyone desecrates the pool.

ROOM 16 (BACK DOOR)

This door allows access from the kitchen to the rear garden. A path paved with smooth stones leads to the yard of the carriage house

To the east, huge gouges of earth have been dug out of the ground.

The door is not locked or trapped. A DC 15 Survival check will reveal that the gouges appear to be colossal sized dragon footprints.

4: INTERVIEW WITH A . . .

The entire basement area, except for the bottom of the stairs and the ten feet directly in front of the dimensional portal, is protected by an *unhallow* effect with a *dimensional anchor* tied to it that affects all creatures. As a result, positive energy effects work in the basement's area.

STAIRS AND PASSAGE

The stairs spiral downwards 20 feet before opening into a narrow passage. It appears to travel 60 feet before ending in an ornately decorated stone door.

Along each side of the passage are several archways, each presumably leading into a separate room.

The passage actually extends to the northeast at a 45-degree angle to the manor, thus placing the main lab directly below the Grand Ballroom.

Each side of the passage has two archways leading from it, each of which opens up into a large square room (30 ft. x 30 ft.). These rooms were used by Xavendra to entertain various types of guests.

The first one on the left opens into a reception room, appointed comfortably for demons (chairs are crafted out of bloody spiked chains; the walls, floor, and ceiling are painted with blood; paper made out of human skin, quills made out of human bones, and ink of human blood rests on a small table made out of children's skulls).

The second one on the left contains several cages. In each cage is a dead human, their necks clearly ripped apart and their tongues removed. A DC 10 Heal check reveals that they were bitten and their blood drained.

The first room to the right contains a room painted entirely black, except for the grass (now dead) floor. No torches or sconces are visible, and the room echoes like a crypt. The only decoration is an unmarked gravestone (for decoration purposes only, nothing is buried beneath it).

The final room on the right is lushly decorated with silken pillows, tapestries, and beds. The bodies of 2 alu-fiends, long since dead, lie atop one of the beds.

At the end of the passage is a stone door made out of red marble in the shape of a devil (type depends on APL). This is actually a devil that was turned to stone and then mounted with hinges and a lock to serve as a door. One of its limbs is the door handle.

Note: PCs who are cursed and cannot see devils can see this door while it is in stone form. As soon as it is animated, their curse kicks in.

The devil door is locked and trapped, but a *Nystul's magic aura* spell hides the magical auras.

Stone Devil Door: 1 ft. thick; hardness 8; hp 180; AC 5; Break DC 28.

Trap: The devil door is trapped to go off if it sees anyone about to bash it open, attempt to pick its lock, or cast a spell on it.

It first casts *dispel magic* on an unsheathed weapon which comes within 10 feet of it. It then casts *backbiter* on the weapon and *stone to flesh* on the devil, which turns it back into a living devil (the hinges and lock simply fall off).

A PC might notice the *dispel magic* if the weapon's power "turns off", such as a *flaming* weapon losing its flames.

Note: The player must have told you earlier that the PC's weapon normally glows, if magical, or it must be noted on either the PC's MIL or AR of access or purchase, for

the player to argue that that the PC would have noticed the weapon's glow disappearing.

Remember, the *dispel magic* is opposed by the weapon's caster level, which was determined at the time of its creation.

The door has a *Nystul's magic aura* cast on it to disguise its aura, meaning that the trap cannot be detected by *detect magic*. *Backbiter* is described in Appendix 2.

APL 6 (EL 8)

Dispel Magic, Heightened Backbiter and Stone to Flesh Trap: CR 8; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); no reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 30); spell effect (*dispel magic*, 11th-level wizard), spell effect (*heightened backbiter* [3rd-level], 11th-level wizard, no save [non-magical weapons] or DC 14 Will negates [magical weapons]); spell effect (*stone to flesh* cast on the hellcat statue, 11th level wizard); Search DC 29; Disable Device DC 29.

Hellcat: hp 72; see MM pg 54.

Note: The hellcat must succeed at a DC 15 Fort save to survive the *stone to flesh* spell. If it fails, such is life.

APL 8 (EL 10)

Greater Dispel Magic, Heightened Backbiter and Stone to Flesh Trap: CR 10; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); no reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 35); spell effect (*greater dispel magic*, 11th-level wizard), spell effect (*heightened backbiter* [4th-level], 11th-level wizard, no save [non-magical weapons] or DC 16 Will negates [magical weapons]), spell effect (*stone to flesh* cast on the bone devil statue, 11th level wizard); Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Bone devil: hp 110; see MM pg 52.

Note: The bone devil must succeed at a DC 15 Fort save to survive the *stone to flesh* spell. If it fails, such is life.

APL 10 (EL 12)

Greater Dispel Magic, Heightened Backbiter, Stone to Flesh and Circle of Death Trap: CR 12; magic device; visual trigger (*true seeing*); no reset; hidden lock bypass (Search DC 25, Open Lock DC 40); spell effect (*greater dispel magic*, 11th-level wizard), spell effect (*heightened backbiter* [6th-level], 11th-level wizard, no save [non-magical weapons] or DC 19 Will negates [magical weapons]), spell effect (*stone to flesh* cast on the barbed devil statue, 11th level wizard); spell effect (*circle of death*, 11th-level wizard, Fort 19 negates), Search DC 31; Disable Device DC 31.

Barbed devil: hp 144; see MM pg 51.

Note: The barbed devil must succeed at a DC 15 Fort save to survive the *stone to flesh* spell. If it fails, such is life.

Tactics: At all APLs, the devil fights to the death, free at last from its stony prison.

Development: Once past the devil door, the PCs can enter the Main Lab.

MAIN LAB

Beyond the devil door is a red-marble-floored room 30 foot in radius. The floor is covered with words etched into the stone in some strange language or languages. A large archway interrupts the wall across the room from the door. Light scintillates where a door should be, flashing through the range of the spectrum in a dizzying display of power.

In the middle of the room rests a large worktable of blood-red marble. Notes litter its surface.

Scattered around the edges of the room are a variety of torture devices, all currently empty. Dark stains mar the floor around each device.

Next to the portal is a pair of altars shaped like coffins. The sign of the scythe is prominently displayed on each one.

The words scribed into the floor are a mixture of abyssal and infernal. They do not form sentences, but rather phrases that are rather arcane and obscure. If the players ask, toss out words like, “darkness”, “demon”, “devil”, “horned”, “dragon”, “death”, “devotion”, “eternal”, etc.

The portal leads to another plane and can only be activated by either Veth or Xavendra. The proper examination of the portal will reveal that it leads to the plane of Carceri.

The altars ARE coffins.

Allow the PCs to wander around and look at the notes for a bit before having Veth arrive. Do NOT let them destroy the coffins (i.e., as soon as they start to try to do so, Veth arrives).

The notes are mostly disjointed and would take days to sort through (they appear to be written in some sort of code, a mixture of Abyssal and Common), but several key words or phrases jump out when read by someone who can read both languages. See Player’s Handout 1.

Creatures: Once the PCs have read and gathered the notes, and are about to either leave, tinker with the portal, or muck with the altar/coffins, Veth arrives suddenly through the portal.

If the PCs thought to block the portal with a wall of some kind, it is disintegrated when the portal opens (a function built in to prevent it from being blocked). Continue with the following:

Suddenly, the scintillating portal turns a solid rust red, and a well-dressed figure steps smoothly out of the portal, a hulking creature at his side. The creature is as big as an ogre, vaguely humanoid in

shape. Hideous scales sheathe its body. Huge wings and a snaking tail twitch as it stares at you.

Clearly an elf, the man is wearing clothes of the finest silk with gold threads, a style that was in fashion hundreds of years ago. A thin shirt of mail protects his torso and the sign of the scythe hands from around his neck. His form is blurred just a touch.

Neither he nor the demon at his side appear to be surprised by your presence. As the monster growls at you, obviously eager to tear you limb from limb, the elf calmly says, “If it is information you seek, it is information you shall have.”

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that this is Veth the Vampire, consort to High Lady Xavendra. A DC 25 Knowledge (the planes) check reveals that the creature is a horned devil. A DC 10 Knowledge (arcana) or Spellcraft check reveals that the blurring comes from the fact that he is protected by more than one abjuration spell. It has no mechanical effect.

Veth was alerted that the heroes were in the lab by a ward placed on the portal (the ward activated as soon as the PCs either entered the room or as soon as the devil statue animated). Because of this, he has had time to prepare to greet them.

While Veth and the demodand could quite easily destroy the PCs, the vampire has something else in mind. Events have been put into motion, for good or ill, and it is time to play the next hand that has been dealt. Despite being none too happy that the heroes have made it this far into Xavendra’s manor, Veth has decided to share some information with them, so that they may spread it around the Combination.

Keep in mind that every round, while he talks to the PCs, Veth is trying to *dominate* one of them. His ultimate goal would be to *dominate* every single PC without them even realizing that they have been dominated until it is too late. He doesn’t intend to harm the PCs unless they attack; he simply wants them to stay long enough to learn what he needs to tell them.

Following are the answers to questions PCs will likely ask. For anything else, consult the adventure background and create an answer, or use the tried-and-true “I don’t know.”

You monster, where has everyone gone?

“Fools. Do you really think that we could feed the people now that the Bluff Hills are dead? We relocated them, for their own protection.”

Where did you relocate them to?

“If you can figure out where this portal goes, then you will have your answer.”

Who’s side are you really on?

“As always, I serve the Reaper and Hierarch Xavendra.”

Hierarch Xavendra?

"Yes, Hierarch. Let that sink in."

A DC 10 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that "Hierarch" is a title reserved for leaders of the Horned Society, a group of Nerullites and devil worshippers opposed to the Old One. Their capital, Molag, was captured during the Wars, their leaders slain by the Bonehearts.

Why are there two coffins in here?

"You figure it out."

Will Xavendra be mad if I keep this sword?

"Consider it a gift. She no longer has use for it."

Can That Which Slept be stopped or imprisoned?

"Yes, but it will take some time until we are ready to attempt the ritual."

We?

"The Horned Society."

Why is Viola working for Tadorinal now?

"Jealousy is an ugly emotion that not even undead can escape."

You just want to control That Which Slept and kill everyone!

"She cannot be controlled. She is a part of 'He of Eternal Darkness', perhaps the most powerful part ever unleashed on Oerth. Nor can she be destroyed, as she is entropy itself given form by a god's dreams."

Dahlvier once told me she was not always so. She used to be a mortal dragon, but something happened. He would not elaborate."

A DC 20 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that Dahlvier is the name of a lich who used to control Dahlvier County (now home to Molaho Khem). Dahlvier is rumored to have locked himself away from Oerth with the mystical city of Dar'kesh Anam (Nerull's Bane).

Why are you telling us this instead of killing us?

"Because it suits my purpose that you spread word to the various factions of the Combination that there is a chance That Which Slept can be placed back in her shackles before it is too late."

As I see it, the people of this realm have two options: continue with their miserable lives, bowing and scraping before your petty warlords, missing kings, and insane Bonehearts, and wait for That Which Slept to kill them and everyone they love, or they can lend their strength to the Horned Society and help us bind the dragon away."

Only through direction and strength of purpose will we be able to combine our efforts to throw out the minions of the Old One and perform the rituals necessary to imprison That Which Slept. This is why I will let you live and leave here alive, as a sign of good faith that we mean you no harm, despite any past grievances."

I'll even allow you to take those old notes of m'lady's. They should prove our intentions to those you serve."

One last thing. Tell that fool, Baron Kerzinen, that unless he wants his precious city destroyed by That Which Slept, he should leave us to our research."

Kerzinen?

"You know him now as High Lord Tadorinal. Before that, he was Lord Marshal Arus Mortoth. Before that he was General Pernevi."

A DC 15 Knowledge (local – IBS) check reveals that Mortoth and Pernevi were previous rulers of Rookroost, each having died in an assassination attempt and replaced by their killer.

Veth: male high-elf vampire. Cha 22; 22 HD for the purposes of turning. Dominate (Su): Will DC 23.

Horned devil: hp 195; MM pg 55.

Development: Should the PCs attack, Veth watches as the horned devil kills them all. Should Veth be attacked, he will merely laugh and retreat back through the portal.

Once the PCs have learned all they can, Veth lets them leave. He arranges for Syrinda to leave them alone, if she is still about.

Note: The heroes must choose to whom they will report this information. Each PC may choose to report to one NPC from the Introduction. The choice will determine which Conclusion they receive. Assume that each NPC in the conclusions can relay information to the organizations for which they recruited.

A PC may choose to report the information to a different NPC than the one who recruited them. A PC may even report to an NPC from a different starting location if they have an in-character reason for doing so. Do Not tell the players this. They must think outside the box sometimes.

For instance, a Dazark Orc PC that was forced to start the event in Rookroost may ask to provide the information to Dazark Orcs. In this event, they find Breeanna in Sable Watch, who rewards them appropriately if they return with useful information.

CONCLUSION MYSTA

As instructed, you make your way back to Rookroost and arrange to reserve the private meeting room at the Drunken Dragon tavern. When the barkeep lets you in, you find that it is occupied."

"What do you have to tell me?" asks Mysta, from her seat at the head of the table."

When the PCs give their report, Mysta will express thanks in behalf of those she represents and offers PCs the rewards they have earned.

At the door, the small Hin turns back to you, the haunted expression once more in her eyes. She produces a small pouch of coin and tosses it onto the table.

"That is to be used only for drinking," she states, "and each drink must include a toast to Stonebasher Ironfist and Atlatl, who lie in the cold dark tomb that was meant for Breeanna and me."

Twisting the ring you recently returned to her, she disappears before walking out and closing the door.

PCs that opt for the Halfling Rogue Substitution level option will be trained by Mysta herself.

CONCLUSION VIOLA

As instructed, you make your way back to Rookroost and arrange to reserve the private meeting room at the Dirty Dog tavern. When the barkeep lets you in, you find that it is occupied.

"What news?" asks the mysterious woman, from her seat at the head of the table.

When the PCs give their report, Viola will express her surprise at the level of success the PCs achieved. She then puts in a good word for the PCs with High Lord Tadorinal.

CONCLUSION GRANOC

As instructed, you make your way back to Rookroost and find the warehouse where your first meeting took place. You do not have to wait long before Savant Granoc appears, asking, "What news?"

When the PCs give their report, Granoc will express thanks in behalf of those he represents and offer PCs the rewards they have earned.

CONCLUSION BREEANNA

As instructed, you make your way back to Sable Watch and find the elven sword-mistress. The information you relay to her startles her into speechlessness.

Breeanna then offers the PCs the access and training earned. PCs that opt for the Elf Ranger Substitution level option will be trained by Breeanna herself.

CONCLUSION OYTENS

As instructed, you make your way back to Sable Watch and find the Voice of the North, Oytens the Bard. The information you relay to her startles her into speechlessness.

Oytens then offers the PCs the access and training earned. PCs that opt to take levels in Seeker of the Song will be trained by Oytens herself.

CONCLUSION (OTHER)

If the PCs decide not to give the information to any of the NPCs from their Introductions, they may instead choose to give it to a Bandit Kingdoms meta-organization. Doing so earns them one influence point with that organization. Note the organization's name in the space made available on the AR. In this event, the PC should not receive any other favors from the AR.

If the PCs were unable to learn anything useful, they do not earn any favors, even if they report back to the NPCs and tell them, "Sorry, we weren't able to learn anything useful."

ALLOCATION OF SPECIAL AR ITEMS

Each PC can earn only ONE of the following favors, and they must have reported to the appropriate NPC at the end of the adventure in order to receive it.

Note: A PC need not have been recruited by that NPC. For instance, a PC that was recruited by Viola but who reports to Mysta earns Mysta's favor. However, if a PC has the enmity of that NPC, they cannot earn their favor. Instead, this favor cancels out that enmity.

Favor of the Mistress of the Hallorn Fencing Academy: This is only earned by PCs who returned successfully with information (and returned the sword Breeanna loaned them, if applicable).

Favor of Mysta Gonagin: This is only earned by PCs who returned successfully with information (and returned the ring Mysta loaned them, if applicable).

Favor of the Death Cultists: This is only earned by PCs who returned successfully with information.

Favor of Oytens the Bard: This is only earned by PCs who returned successfully with information (and returned the badge Oytens loaned them, if applicable).

Favor of Viola: This is only earned by PCs who returned successfully with information.

EXPERIENCE POINT SUMMARY

To award experience for this adventure, add up the values for the objectives accomplished. Then assign the experience award. Award the total value (objectives plus roleplaying) to each character.

1: The Deadlands

Defeat the half-farspawn	
APL 6	240 XP
APL 8	300 XP
APL 10	360 XP

2: Where is Everyone?

Agree to guide Roarke to safety

All APLs 45 XP

3: Hide and Seek

Defeat Syrinda

APL 6 240 XP

APL 8 300 XP

APL 10 360 XP

Defeat the devil door

APL 6 240 XP

APL 8 300 XP

APL 10 360 XP

Story Award

Learned of Xavendra's plans:

APL 6 90 XP

APL 8 135 XP

APL 10 180 XP

Discretionary roleplaying award

All APLs 45 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 6 900 XP

APL 8 1,125 XP

APL 10 1,350 XP

TREASURE SUMMARY

During an adventure, characters encounter treasure, usually finding it in the possession of their foes. Every encounter that features treasure has a "treasure" section within the encounter description, giving information about the loot, coins, and magic items that make up the encounter's treasure.

The loot total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if the foes are plundered of all their earthly possessions. Looting the bodies takes at least 10 minutes per every 5 enemies, and if the characters cannot take the time to loot the bodies, they do not gain this gold. If you feel it is reasonable that characters can go back to loot the bodies, and those bodies are there (i.e., not carted off by dungeon scavengers, removed from the scene by the local watch, and so on), characters may return to retrieve loot. If the characters do not loot the body, the gold piece value for the loot is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

The coin total is the number of gold pieces each character gains if they take the coin available. A normal adventuring party can usually gather this wealth in a round or so. If for some reason, they pass up this treasure, the coin total is subtracted from the encounter totals given below.

Next, the magic items are listed. Magic item treasure is the hardest to adjudicate, because they are varied and because characters may want to use them during the

adventure. Many times characters must cast *identify*, *analyze dweomer* or similar spell to determine what the item does and how to activate it. Other times they may attempt to use the item blindly. If the magic item is consumable (a potion, scroll, magic bolts, etc.) and the item is used before the end of the adventure, its total is subtracted from the adventure totals below.

Once you have subtracted the value for unclaimed treasure from each encounter add it up and that is the number of gold pieces a characters total and coin value increase at the end of the adventure. Write the total in the GP Gained field of the adventure certificate.

Loot = Looted gear from enemy; Coin = Coin, Gems, Jewelry, and other valuables; Magic = Magic Items.

2: Where is everyone?

All APLs: Loot 0 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 545 gp; *ghostoil* (4 gp), *lyre of the restless soul* (250 gp), *nycoptic manuscripts* (208 gp), *phylactery of faithfulness* (83 gp); Total 545 gp.

3: Hide and Seek

APLs 6 and 8: Loot 485 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 693 gp; +1 *ghost touch scythe* (693 gp); Total 1,178 gp.

APL 10: Loot 485 gp; Coin 0 gp; Magic 2,164 gp; +1 *ghost touch scythe* (693 gp); +1 *ghost touch full-plate* (1,471 gp); Total 2,649 gp.

Total Possible Treasure

APL 6: 1,723 gp

APL 8: 1,723 gp

APL 10: 3,194 gp

Treasure Cap

APL 6: 900 gp

APL 8: 1,300 gp

APL 10: 2,300 gp

ADVENTURE RECORD ITEMS

Favor of the Mistress of the Hallorn Fencing Academy: Gain a +2 Great Renown Bonus to Leadership when recruiting a Fanlareshen Elf cohort and Regional access to: +1 *ghost touch cold iron rapier* (10,340 gp), *mithral shirt*, *rogue blade*^{MIC}; *knight's move*^{SPC}, *righteous fury*^{SPC}. Elven PCs gain access to the Elf Ranger Substitution Level options (RW). Good-aligned female human, half-elf, or elven PCs may request a Special Mission to gain access to a unicorn cohort.

Favor of Mysta Gonagin: Gain a +2 Great Renown bonus to Leadership when recruiting a Gonagin hin cohort and Regional access to: *elixir of hiding*, *elixir of sneaking*, *ring of invisibility*, *deadly precision weapon upgrade*^{MIC}; *acid sheath*^{SPC}, *antimagic ray*^{SPC}, *caltrops*^{SPC}, *distracting ray*^{SPC}, *ray of clumsiness*^{SPC}, *ray of deflection*^{SPC}, *ray of dizziness*^{SPC}. Hin PCs gain access to the Halfling Rogue Substitution Level options (RW).

Favor of the Death Cultists: Gain Regional access to: *shadow veil*^{LM}, *sword of life stealing*, *wand of false life*, *weakening weapon upgrade*^{MIC}; *death armor*^{SPC}, *greater disrupt undead*^{SPC}, *lifeward*^{SPC}, *night's caress*^{SPC}, *shroud of undeath*^{SPC}, *spirit worm*^{SPC}, *summon undead* I-V^{SPC}. In addition, members of the Circle of Crimson Stone gain access to the Fighter Alternate Class Feature "Elusive Attack" (PHB2).

Favor of Oytens the Bard: Gain a +2 Great Renown bonus to Leadership when recruiting a straight-classed Flan bard or druid (Old Faith) cohort and Regional access to: *badge of valor*^{CAd}, *druid's vestments*, *horn of blasting*, *pipes of sounding*, *song blade*^{AEG}; *dirge*^{SPC}, *fugue*^{SPC}, *insidious rhythm*^{SPC}, *love's lament*^{SPC}, *mass reflective disguise*^{SPC}, *reflective disguise*^{SPC}, *songbird*^{SPC}. This PC has met the special requirement for Seeker of the Song^{CAr}.

Favor of Viola: Remove 2 Insurgent level or lower WCI points or 1 Seditious point. Gain Regional access to: *nine lives stealer*, *mask of the skull*, *enervating and vampiric weapon upgrades*^{MIC}; *blood to water*^{SPC}, *living undeath*^{SPC}, *skull watch*^{SPC}, *summon babau demon*^{SPC}, *summon undead* I-V^{SPC}. Upon retirement, PC may take levels in Death's Chosen^{LM}, dedicated to Viola.

Influence Point with []: _____

ITEM ACCESS

APLs 6 and 8:

- +1 ghost touch scythe (Adventure; DMG; 8,318 gp)
- Adamantine greataxe (Adventure; DMG; 3,020 gp)
- BK Regional Map (Regional; BK website; 10 gp)
- Fancy holy text of Nerull (Adventure; A&EG)
- Ghost oil (Adventure; Libris Mortis) (Limit One)
- Goggles of lifesight (Adventure; Libris Mortis)
- Lyre of the restful soul (Adventure; Libris Mortis)
- Nycoptic manuscripts (Adventure; Libris Mortis)
- Phylactery of faithfulness (Adventure; DMG)

APL 10 (all of APLs 6-8 plus the following):

- +1 ghost touch full-plate (Adventure; DMG; 17,650 gp)

ADVENTURE RECORD ITEMS (OPTIONAL AR)

Cursed Sword of Xavendra: This magnificent, black-bladed greatsword is a work of dark beauty. The pommel is topped by a silver grinning skull and Abyssal words are acid-etched into the blade. They read, "To my loyal servant, High Lady Xavendra. Congratulations on your recent victories. Use this sword in good health! Iuz." Except as noted below, the sword functions as a -2 cursed greatsword (DMG 276), the curse activating as soon as the

weapon is picked up by an intelligent creature. The sword cannot be given away and can only be gotten rid of by means of a *wish* or *miracle*. It must remain in the character's possession at all times. Not even death removes the curse.

Iuzians that see the sword will covet it. The blade calls to them, despite magical or mundane disguises or protections. Its wielder suffers a -10 Circumstance penalty on Bluff, Disguise, Hide and Move Silently checks when opposed by divine spellcasters dedicated to Iuz.

Any Iuzian of less than Boneheart or Boneshadow status will immediately target the owner of this blade for death, risking their life to recover the blade at all costs. In the hands of a blackguard dedicated to Iuz, the blade functions as a +5 *unholy greatsword*. In the hands of all other Iuzian divine spellcasters, it functions as a +2 *greatsword*.

Should the blade be lost for any reason, the character suffers 3 negative levels until the sword is recovered or repaired. The judge of the scenario MUST contact the Bandit Kingdoms Triad (contact.bdk@iuzlg.com) to inform us that the PC has lost the cursed blade.

If a player fails to abide by these rules, please note on his/her PC's AR: "Removed from play until audited by the Bandit Kingdoms Triad", and email the player's name and RPGA number to the above address.

Strong evocation; CL 20th; Not craftable. Price n/a.

Sword lost:	AR #
Curse removed:	AR #

1: THE DEADLANDS

HALF-FARSPAWN AMORPHOUS OGRE CR 4

CE Large Outsider (native)

Init +0; **Senses** Listen +9, Spot +9; blindsight 60 ft., darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision

Aura see *Change Shape* (Su)

Languages Giant

AC 17, touch 9, flat-footed 17
(-1 size, +8 natural)

hp 39 (4 HD); **DR** 5/magic

Immune poison

Resist cold 10, electricity 10; **SR** 14

Fort +9, **Ref** +1, **Will** +3

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee 4 tentacles +9 (1d6+6)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Base Atk +3; **Grp** +13

Atk Options Power Attack, *True Strike* (Su)

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 4th):

2nd—*blur* 3/day, *touch of idiocy*

Abilities Str 23, Dex 10, Con 21, Int 6, Wis 14, Cha 9

SQ a half-farspawn's natural weapons are treated as magic weapons for the purposes of overcoming damage reduction, *change shape*

Feats Power Attack, Weapon Focus (tentacle)

Skills Concentration +9.5, Climb +13, Listen +9, Move Silently +3.5, Spot +9, Tumble +3.5.

True Strike (Su): Once per day, a half-farspawn can make a normal attack with a +20 insight bonus on a single attack roll. The half-farspawn is not affected by the miss chance that applies to attacks against a concealed target.

Change Shape (Su): As a standard action, a half-farspawn can take the form of a grotesque, tentacled mass at will. While in this form, the creature cannot be flanked and is not subject to extra damage from critical hits. Creatures native to the Material Plane takes a -1 morale penalty on attack rolls against the half-farspawn in its amorphous form.

3rd (4/day)—*bestow curse* (DC 18), *inflict serious wounds* (DC 18), *prayer* †

2nd (6/day)—*bull's strength* †, *inflict moderate wounds* (DC 17), *sound burst* (DC 17), *spiritual weapon*

1st (8/day)—*bless* †, *curse water*, *divine favor* †, *doom* (DC 16), *entropic shield* †

0 (6/day)—*create water*, *detect magic*, *detect poison*, *guidance*, *read magic*, *resistance*, *virtue*

† Already cast and calculated into Syrinda's stats

Abilities Str 14 (18), Dex 8, Con --, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 20

SQ incorporeal traits, manifestation, rejuvenation, +4 turn resistance, undead traits

Feats Blind-Fight, Combat Casting, Heavy Armor Proficiency, Skill Focus (Concentration)^B, Weapon Focus (scythe)^B

Skills Concentration +18 (+22), Hide +8, Listen +11, Search +9, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +10, Spot +11

Possessions combat gear plus (all ethereal) spell component pouch (2), silver holy symbol of Nerull, signet ring (Northern Alliance), tabard (Northern Alliance).

Frightful Moan (Su): Syrinda can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 18 Will save or become panicked for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, necromantic, mind-affecting, fear effect. A creature that successfully saves against the moan cannot be affected by Syrinda's moan for 24 hours.

Horrific Appearance (Su): Any living creature within 60 feet that views Syrinda must succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save or immediately take 1d4 points of Strength damage, 1d4 points of Dexterity damage, and 1d4 points of Constitution damage. A creature that successfully saves against this effect cannot be affected by Syrinda's horrific appearance for 24 hours.

Telekinesis (Su): Syrinda can use *telekinesis* as a standard action (caster level 12th). She must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

Turn Resistance (Ex): A ghost has +4 turn resistance.

Skills Ghosts have a +8 racial bonus on Hide, Listen, Search, and Spot checks.

3: HIDE AND SEEK

SYRINDA THE GHOST

CR 8

Female human favored soul 6 (Nerull)

CE Medium undead (augmented humanoid) (incorporeal)

Init -1; **Senses** Listen +10, Spot +10; darkvision 60 ft.

Languages Common

AC 14, touch 14, flat-footed 14
(-1 Dex, +5 deflection)

Miss Chance 20% vs. ranged

hp 54 (6 HD, 10 HD vs. turning)

Immune non-magical attack forms, mind-affecting effects (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns, and morale effects), poison, sleep effects, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects

Resist Sonic 10

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +7

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect) (6 squares)

Melee +1 *ghost touch scythe* +14 (2d4+10/x4)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +8

Special Actions frightful moan, horrific appearance, telekinesis, spells

Combat Gear +1 *ghost touch scythe*

Favored Soul Spells Known (CL 6th):

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

ITEMS

Badge of Valor (*Complete Adventurer* p 132): This golden brooch provides its wearer with a +2 morale bonus on saves against fear effects. This bonus improves to +4 on level checks made to avoid being intimidated.

The morale bonus of this badge stacks with the morale bonus granted by the paladin's aura of courage ability and the bard's inspire courage ability.

Faint enchantment; CL 4th; Craft Wondrous Item, *heroism*; Price 1,000gp.

Ghostoil (LM p 73): This clear oil has a slight tint of gray, and strange, wispy forms seem to swirl through it. When applied to a weapon, ghostoil allows it to affect incorporeal creatures normally for the next 2 rounds.

Applying ghostoil to a weapon of any size is a full-round action that provokes attacks of opportunity. One flask of ghostoil contains enough liquid to coat one weapon of Medium size or smaller. A Large weapon requires two flasks, a Huge weapon four flasks, a Gargantuan weapon eight flasks, and a Colossal weapon sixteen flasks.

Goggles of Lifesight (LM p 78): The wearer of these goggles automatically knows whether any visible creature within 30 feet is alive, dead, undead, or neither alive nor dead (such as a construct).

Moderate divination; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *true seeing*; Price 2,000gp.

Lyre of the Restful Soul (LM p 79): When played, this lyre weakens the ability of undead creatures to resist turning or rebuking. The player makes a DC 15 Perform (string instruments) check. If successful, all undead within 60 feet take a -4 penalty to turn resistance (which can lower their effective HD for turning to below their normal HD, but not lower than 1) for 10 rounds.

Moderate necromancy; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, able to turn or rebuke undead as a 10th-level cleric; Price 3,000gp; Weight 5 lb.

Nycoptic Manuscripts (LM p 79): These twin papyrus scrolls are inscribed with ancient tales and cryptic prophesies by an anonymous, almost-certainly insane author. Despite their dubious accuracy, the manuscripts contain many useful descriptions of spells from the school of necromancy, and grant the possessor a +5 competence bonus on any Knowledge (arcana) check she makes that deals with necromantic topics as long as the scrolls are in her possession and the character can take 1d4 rounds to find the proper reference.

Moderate necromancy; CL 10th; Craft Wondrous Item, Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks; Price 2,500gp; Weight 2 lb.

SPELLS

Backbiter (SpC pg. 23)

Necromancy

Level: Sor/Wiz 1

Components: V, S, F

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One weapon

Duration: 1 round/level or until discharged

Saving Throw: Will negates; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes (object)

You cast this spell on any melee weapon. The next time that weapon is used to make a melee attack, its shaft twists around so that the weapon strikes the wielder instead. The weapon hits automatically, and no attack roll is made.

The wielder gets no warning or knowledge of the spell's effect on his weapon, and although he makes the attack, the self-dealt damage can't be consciously reduced (though damage reduction applies) or changed to nonlethal damage. Once the weapon attacks its wielder (whether successfully or not), the spell is discharged.

Magic weapons targeted by this spell receive a Will save. An item in a creature's possession uses its own Will save bonus or its wielder's bonus, whichever is higher.

Focus: a dagger.

Life Ward (SpC pg. 131)

Abjuration

Level: Clr 4

Components: V, S, DF

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

A creature warded by this spell gains protection from the effects of positive energy, including magical healing. The spell can be cast upon undead to offer additional protection against the turning abilities of clerics. The subject is immune to all positive energy effects, including conjuration (healing) spells, channeled positive energy such as from the turn undead ability, or other effects that derive their power from positive energy.

This spell offers protection from the blinding effect of the Positive Energy Plane, and warded creatures gain no temporary hit points while there.

APPENDIX THREE –GATHER INFORMATION

Gather Information (DC 10+)

- “I’ve a cousin in Prince Zeech’s guard, and he says he heard that crazy Baron in Morannon tell Zeech ‘I will not marry your sister!’ right to the prince’s face! My cousin thought the Baron was a goner for sure, but Zeech just chuckled that girly laugh of his and bid the Baron ‘good day’.” (true)
- “The Rhennee and the Northern Alliance have come to some sort of strange agreement in recent months. In exchange for help evacuating people from Narleon and Senningford prior to that big boom up north, the Northern Alliance has agreed to give one family of Rhennee exclusive trading rights along the northern Artonsamay and Zumker rivers! Whatever those grinnin’ skull bastards told them to make them trust them must have worked. Odd though, all of the Rhennee barges have red-painted decks.” (true)
- “I swear by my sword that I saw Cranzer himself here in Rookroost! Tadrinal must be next on his list!” (true, but it was only some fool trying to scare Tadrinal into fleeing from Rookroost)

Gather Information (DC 15+)

- “A while back, a cousin of mine was traveling down south and he said that White Plume was smoking again! That can’t be good!”
- “I saw a huge red dragon flying in the midlands a few weeks ago! No one believes me, but I saw it! Damn thing scared me and my horse silly, even though it didn’t seem to pay us no mind.” (true)
- “I’ve heard that the crazy baron down in Redhand, Ulik I think he is called, is going to through a huge tournament this summer. Mark my words, if the Baron thinks it’s fun, you’ll want to keep your wits about you if you go.”

Gather Information (DC 20+)

- “It’s true! The water in that pond in the Tangles is fresh now! I saw that elf druid, Gerland, restocking it with fish! Still, nothing is growing on land in that forest. Damn Cranzer.”
- “I was sitting out on the porch at the Charging Boar Inn a few weeks ago, before the weather got really cold, minding my own business, enjoying my ale, when I saw something that made me soil myself: a huge green dragon came flying out of the north-west and headed for the Midlands. I swear it looked at me as it sped by! By the time I went inside to drag my buddy out to see it, it was gone. No one believes me.” (true)
- “Psst. Yeah, you! I hear that Duke Gellor is alive! ‘Course, he’s no saint. No sirree, not much better than a robber baron, but still, at least he wasn’t a demon worshipper.”

Gather Information (DC 25+)

- “Bloody hell! They fought Morginstaler? And survived?”
- “It’s boiled down to Rhaedrick and the Eye for the thieves. All the other training masters have chosen sides. I’ll tell you what, when a thieves guild war breaks out in this town, it’s time for me to get the heck up on out of here!”
- “I hear that tall giant purple guy, Mohalo Cam? Mulano Clam? Whatever, I heard he has himself a new high-priest now, none other than Tomas the Black!”

Gather Information (DC 30+)

- “Aye, I heard the dwarves talking about that fight with Morginstaler. ‘Course, you can’t believe everything they says, once they’ve been drinking and all. Still, going toe to toe with Ol’ Morgy. Bloody hell.”
- “One of my buddies saw That Which Slept when it attacked Groucester last year. He’s lucky to be alive! Anyhow, he’s a bit of a bookworm and he claims that the creature is actually a female silver dragon, despite the fact that you can see through it and its scales are black as death! He’s starkers if you ask me.” (true, his friend told him that)
- “Where do you think Cranzer would keep the Soul Gems of that missing radiant servant and King Ramiki of the the Johrase? I bet they are paperweights on his desk in his tower in Riftcrag. Heh, silver mines. There’s a sucker story for you.”

Groucester (pronounced gr-ow-ster) was the eastern watch over the Fellreev, but its High Lady, Xavendra, also looked to the Bluffs for any signs of mining activity or free bandits. That is, until That Which Slept arrived.

Now, the city is empty, its citizens dragged off to unspeakable places to serve as cheap labor.

Groucester (Former Large Town): Magical; AL CN; 0 gp limit; Assets 315,000 gp; Population 2,100 (most missing); Mixed (human [OFSb] 1,554, half-orc 210, halfling 105, humanoids 105, gnome 42, half-elf 42, elf 21, dwarf 21, vampire ?).

Authority Figures: High Lady Xavendra (female human, ruler of Groucester and former co-ruler of the Northern Alliance), Veth (male elf vampire, lieutenant to Xavendra, sire of Viola).

Others (almost all missing): mystics and followers of Iuz: [Adp6, Adp3 (2), Adp1 (10)], Ari5, Ari3 (2), Ari1 (10), Bbn11, Bbn6 (2), Bbn3 (4), Bbn1 (8), Brd4, Brd2 (2), Brd1 (4), clergy of Iuz: [Clr9, Clr5 (2), Clr3 (4), Clr1 (8)], town elders: [Com11, Com5 (2), Com3 (4)], commoners: [Com1 (1,799)], artisans and craftsmen: [Exp10, Exp5 (2), Exp3 (4), Exp1 (59)], Ftr11, Ftr6 (2), Ftr3 (4), Ftr1 (8), Iuzian scouts: [Rgr 6, Rgr3 (2), Rgr1 (4)], Rog8, Rog4 (2), Rog2 (4), Rog1 (8), Xavendra's favorites [Sor7, Sor4 (2), Sor2 (4), Sor1 (8)], War8, War4 (2), War2 (4), War1 (99), Iuzian wizards [Wiz4, Wiz2 (2), Wiz1 (4)].

High Lady Xavendra: Xavendra is a beautiful woman indeed. She stands a proud 6' in height, is slim and lithe of build, and her ivory skin is enhanced by her thick, raven-black hair and full red lips. Her grey eyes cannot conceal her coldness and hateful nature, however. She delights in the company of charismatic humans and outsiders. When angered, she is a cruel and coldly sadistic woman, enjoying suffering for its own sake as a spectacle. When bored she's even more dangerous, as she's likely to entertain herself in ingenious, and dangerous to her guests, ways.

Veth the Vampire: When sociable, Veth is congenial and chatty. As an elf, he had enjoyed a long life before becoming a vampire, and so he has a great deal of knowledge about a great many things. No one knows for sure when he was born, or when he was turned, but it seems clear that he is a very old and powerful vampire.

Always impeccably dressed in expensive clothes of silk and gold threads, he is a strikingly handsome and dangerous man. When appearing in public with High Lady Xavendra, he often acts as her servant, advisor, and consort.

Chorsat Wensai: Chorsat fled to Rookroost following the meeting at Edge Tower late in 596 CY. Chorsat now handles the daily duties of running the Temple of Iuz in Rookroost, apparently with High Lord Tadorinal's

blessing. He can often be found leading services at midnight. He is always accompanied by his devoted bodyguard (and some rumor his son), Zorsch.

Zorsch: A handsome young warrior in heavy armor, he is utterly devoted to Chorsat. Still, his heart is as black as the night, and rumors of his deeds are often enough to chill the spine. He has been known to poison his greatsword with the venom from spiders that he personally captures in the Fellreev. Chorsat often lovingly refers to him as "my devoted paladin."

Viola: Standing five-and-a-half feet tall, Viola is slight of build and very attractive. Her hair is black and her eyes are green and mesmerizing, hinting at her Rover ancestry. Viola is a very old and very wise vampire, sired by Veth long before he came to Groucester. A powerful cleric of Iuz in her own right, she enjoys the debauchery of her un-life and was utterly devoted to Veth until he scorned her recently. Viola would like nothing more than to embrace Zorsch, but Chorsat will not allow her to.

Exploring Groucester

The Red Stag Inn (Taking 20 Search time: 2 hours): A formerly popular and prosperous inn, the Red Stag lies near the outskirts of Groucester. In fact, the city's wall is a mere stone's throw away from the inn's outhouse.

Like all other buildings in Groucester, the inn now stands deserted, having been picked clean by the urchin. However, a DC 30 Search check in the kitchen will locate a hidden flask of ghostoil (see Appendix 2).

The Dancing Demon Inn (Taking 20 Search time: 2 hours): A formerly rowdy inn located off a side-street in the heart of Groucester, the Dancing Demon was popular with half-orcs and other humanoids.

Like all other buildings in Groucester, the inn now stands deserted, having been picked clean by the urchin. However, a DC 30 Search check in a storage room will locate a hidden cubicle which houses a *lyre of the restless soul* left here by Oytens many years ago.

Groucester Library and Museum (Taking 20 Search time: 4 hours): High Lady Xavendra often walked the spacious hall of the town's library when she visited. Oil paintings and other *objets d'art* taken from the sacking of the Shield Lands during the Greyhawk Wars provided a fine décor, but they are all missing now.

Like all other buildings in Groucester, the library and museum now stand deserted, having been picked clean by the urchin. However, a DC 30 Search check in the library will locate a secret room that houses a private reading room. On a table rests a set of *nycoptic manuscripts*.

Temple of Iuz (taking 20 Search time: 3 hours): Crafted out of blood-red marble mined in the Bluff Hills, the recently completed Temple of Iuz in Groucester is a stunning building capable of holding several hundred worshippers. A large statue of the Old

One, made out of the same red marble, dominates the entry foyer.

However, the temple's outer walls have since been defaced with graffiti, and a bag has been placed over the statue's head. The graffiti appears to have been written in Common and says things like, "Iuz, save us!", "Where have they all gone?", and "If you are reading this, you are already dead!"

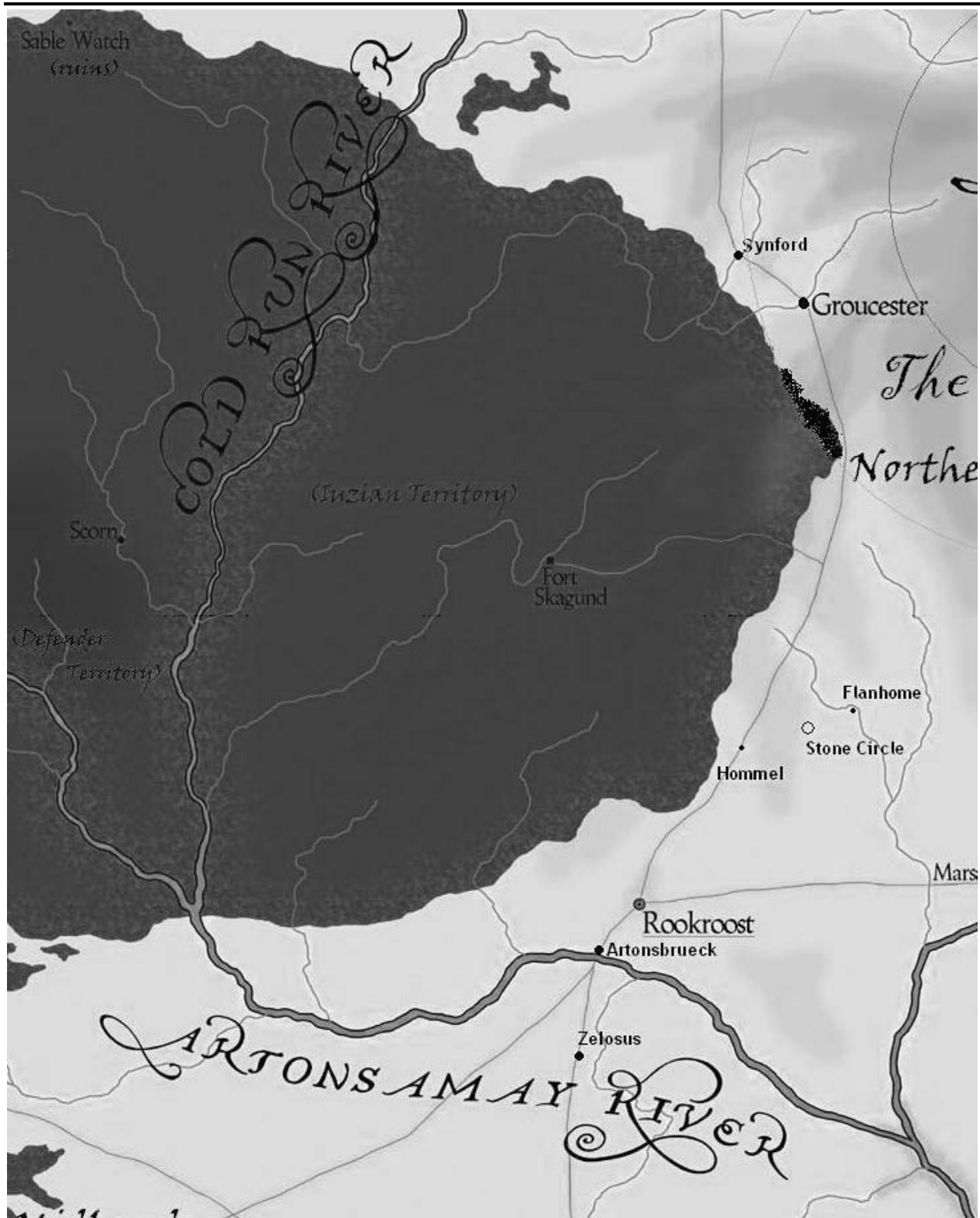
In addition, the temple's altar has been destroyed and the temple itself has been *desecrated*. A normal scythe now rests across the remains of the altar.

Should the PCs explore the Temple thoroughly, they might find a secret door which leads down to the dungeons (DC 30 Search). Other than a discarded *phylactery of faithfulness*, they will find nothing but empty cells and blood stains.

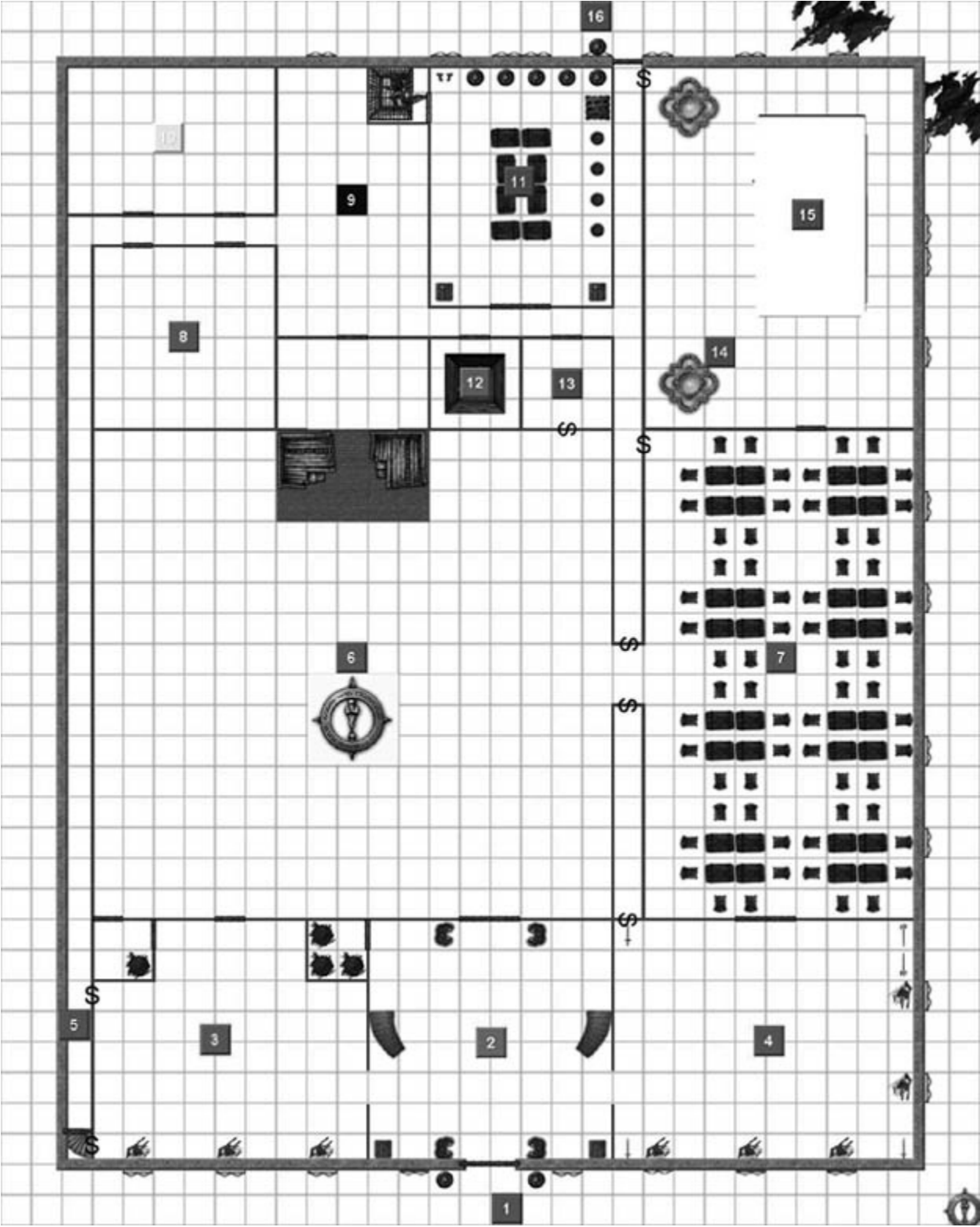
Constable's Office: Empty.

Prison: Located next to the Constable's office is the newly renovated prison. Four of the eight stained glass windows have been shattered (the ones that depicted Iuz's grinning skulls. PCs that played BDK6-01 *That Which Slept* might notice this detail). The remaining four display Xavendra's standard. The prison is otherwise empty.

(some passages quoted from *Iuz the Evil*)



HIGH LADY XAVENDRA’S MANOR



The following are the words that can be made out from a quick inspection of Xavendra's notes by someone who can read both Abyssal and Common:

Ur-Fsan

Celestian

Steelbone Meadows

Partinius?

True name?

silver

not quite shadow

chains of darkness

He of Eternal Darkness

Carceri

immortal?

how many for the ritual?

Tiamat?

Her consort?

Asmodeus?

entropy!

Shadowstaff (mine!)

aspect of darkness?

where is her power coming from?

undead or not?

Must find Dahlvier

Melahn the fool

Baron Horace... who did he serve?

surviving offspring!?