

Restoration and Empire

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

Version 1

by Creighton Broadhurst

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The forces of light have fallen and darkness seems poised to swallow the Bright Lands once again. Karistyne lies dead and the Tower of Sleep has fallen; its lady driven mad and its protective wards sundered. Much that was won by the heroic sacrifice of so many has been lost. A dark light grows in the northeast and rumors of terrible and unimaginably powerful dweomers woken from the deranged dreams of He Who Must Not Awaken spew from the Bright Lands like poison to weaken the greatest warrior. The machinations of Rary are finally laid clear and at this final time the brave and the true must step forth. A one-round Core adventure set in the Empire of the Bright Lands for characters level 9-15 (APLs 10-14). The concluding part of "Rise of the Ancients" and sequel to both "Blight on Bright Sands" and "Sins of Ages Past."

Resources for this adventure [and the authors of those works] include *Complete Arcane* [Richard Baker], *Complete Warrior* [Andy Collins, David Noonan, Ed Stark], COR5-06 *Blood on Bright Sands* [Creighton Broadhurst], COR5-09 *Gateway to Bright Sands* [Theron Martin], COR5-11 *Dark Deceit on Bright Sands* [Chris Chesher], COR5-17 *Time's Tide on Bright Sands* [Bruce Paris and James Dempsey], COR5-20 *Phantoms on Bright Sands* [Tom Kee], COR5-02 *Mines of the Eye* [Creighton Broadhurst and Paul Looby], COR6-02 *Rallying Point for the Bright Sands* [Chris Chesher and Greg Marks], COR6-09 *Beneath the Bright Sands* [Mike Hinds], COR6-13 *Tears for Bright Sands* [Theron Martin], COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness* [Creighton Broadhurst], COR6-16 *Dominion of Bright Sands* [Creighton Broadhurst and Greg Marks], COR6-02 *Pits of Azak-Zil* [Chris Chesher and Bruce Paris], COR8-05 *Pyre of the Righteous* [Theron Martin], COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber* [Bruce Paris and James Dempsey], "Denizens of the Bright Desert" [Creighton Broadhurst], "Hardby, City of the Scorned" in *Dungeon Magazine* 107 [Paul Looby], "Into the Bright Desert" in *Dungeon Magazine* 98 [Creighton Broadhurst], *Manual of the Planes* [Jeff Grubb, Bruce R. Cordell, and David Noonan], *Libris Mortis* [Andy Collins and Bruce R. Cordell], *Sandstorm* [Bruce R. Cordell, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes, JD Wiker], *Magic Item Compendium* [Andy Collins, Eytan Bernstein, Frank Brunner, Owen K.C. Stephens and John Sneed], *Savage Species* [David Eckelberry, Rich Berman, Jennifer Clarke Wilkes], *The Adventure Begins* [Roger E. Moore], *WG4 Isle of the Ape* [Gary Gygax], and *WGR3 Rary the Traitor* [Anthony Pryor].

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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RPGA® SANCTIONED PLAY

Most likely you ordered this adventure as part of an RPGA even from the RPGA website, or you received it from your senior gamemaster. To play this adventure as part of the LIVING GREYHAWK campaign—a worldwide, ongoing D&D® campaign set in the GREYHAWK setting—you must sanction it as part of an RPGA event. This event could be as elaborate as a big convention, or as simple as a group of friends meeting at the DM's house.

To sanction an RPGA event, you must be at least a HERALD-LEVEL™ gamemaster. The person who sanctions the event is called the senior gamemaster, and is in charge of making sure the event is sanctioned before play, runs smoothly on the date sanctioned, and then reported back to the RPGA in a timely manner. The person who runs the game is called the table Dungeon Master (or usually just DM). Sometimes (and almost all the time in the cases of home events) the senior gamemaster is also the table DM. You don't have to be a HERALD-LEVEL GM to run this adventure if you are not the senior GM.

By sanctioning and reporting this adventure you accomplish a couple of things. First, it is an official game, and you can use the AR to advance your LIVING GREYHAWK character. Second, players and DMs gain rewards for sanctioned RPGA play if they are members of the DUNGEONS & DRAGONS REWARDS program. Playing this adventure is worth two (2) points.

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.

LIVING GREYHAWK LEVELS OF PLAY

This adventure's challenges are proportionate to the modified average character level of participating PCs. Before play begins, calculate the Average Party Level (APL) by following the process below:

1. Determine the character level for each of the PCs. Each PC may bring one animal, plus any creatures gained from class abilities to help in combat. (PCs can bring more creatures but they cannot help in combat). If you deem that the animal bestows a significant benefit in combat add the animal's CR to the level of the PC it is accompanying for calculating APL. (Animals gained from class abilities and one standard horse, warhorse, or riding dog for a PC with Mounted Combat do not affect APL).
2. Sum the results of step 1 and divide by the number of characters playing in the adventure. Round to the nearest whole number.
3. If there are six PCs, add one to that average.

Throughout this adventure, APLs categorize the level of challenge the PCs face. APLs are given in even-numbered increments. If the APL of your group falls on an odd number, ask them before the adventure begins whether they would like to play a harder or easier adventure. Based on their choice, use either the higher or the lower adjacent APL.

Experience and Treasure: APL affects the amount of experience and gold a PC can gain at the end of the adventure. A player character more than three levels higher than the APL at which the adventure is played cannot participate. If a player character is more than two levels away from the APL at which the adventure is played, he suffers a 50% penalty to the amount of gold and XP gained in the adventure.

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.

These APL calculation rules reference version 7.0 of the *Living Greyhawk Campaign Sourcebook*. If you are playing this adventure in 2008, check the current version of the LGCS and follow any updated rules presented within.

TIME UNITS AND UPKEEP

This is a standard two-round Core adventure, set in the Empire of the Bright Lands. All characters pay 2 Time Units per round except for characters with the Bright Desert as their home region, who pay 1 TU per round.

Adventurer's Standard Upkeep costs 12 gp per time unit. Rich Upkeep costs 50 gp per time unit. Luxury Upkeep costs 100 gp per time unit. Characters that fail to pay at least Standard Upkeep retain temporary ability damage until the next adventure, must buy new spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may suffer other in-game penalties (or possibly benefits) as detailed in this adventure.

A character that does not pay for at least Standard Upkeep may avoid the above-described penalties by living off the wild. If the character possesses four or more ranks in Survival and succeeds on a DC 20 Survival check, he heals temporary ability damage as if he had Standard Upkeep, may refill spell component pouches and healer's kits, and may restock up to 20 arrows or bolts if the character has at least four ranks in Craft (bowmaking). PCs may Take 10 on this roll.

Chapters 1 and 5 of the LGCS present more information about lifestyle and upkeep.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The Bright Lands have been a place of struggle, hardship and death for centuries.

THE RISE AND FALL OF SULM

Two millennia ago, several Flan civilizations rose from barbarism in the arid grasslands that once dominated the region. The greatest of these nations was Sulm.

At first a force for good, the Sulmites delved into ancient lore and declined as a people, embracing evil and conquest. One by one, the other kingdoms fell before Sulm's might until her last rival, Itar, was defeated in a cataclysmic battle.

In turn, Sulm fell; not by the force of an external adversary but through the folly of its rulers. Sulm's last ruler, Shattados, called upon his dark gods to grant him a gift to combat the rising tide of civil unrest sweeping his conquered dominions. They granted him the *scorpion crown*.

In a single day Sulmish culture was swept aside when Shattados donned the *Scorpion Crown*, activating its fell curse. As Sulm's citizens were agonisingly transformed into the manscorpions, dune stalkers, and (a lucky few) into asheratis the very land began to sicken and die.

Within a decade, the grasslands were dead; either withered into nothingness by the unnatural heat that yet plagues the region or scoured from the Oerth by violent and prolonged storms sweeping in from the Gearnat. An insidious, unstoppable tide of sand issuing, like a cancer, from the cities and holy places of fallen Sulm finally buried the few small pockets of surviving vegetation.

Thus, Sulm passed into history, languishing all but forgotten until events in the City of Greyhawk catapulted the Bright Desert into the minds of the great and the good.

EMPIRE OF THE BRIGHT LANDS

Since the Greyhawk Wars, the Bright Lands have languished in the grip of Rary the Traitor and his infamous companion, Lord Robilar. Both gained almost unrivaled infamy when Rary sought to sabotage the Day of Great Signing by slaying the assembled ambassadors gathered to sign the Pact of Greyhawk. The archmage Tenser and Otiluke discovered their former friend's treachery and were slain. Simultaneously, Lord Robilar struck at their towers, destroying their clones and looting their treasures. However, the planned attack on the signatories of the Pact of Greyhawk had failed. Realizing this, the pair fled to the Bright Desert.

Over the next several years, Rary and Robilar brought the majority of the Bright Desert under their control. By 596 CY, only a few tribes of nomads and the stubbornly independent desert centaurs still resist Rary's rule.

BLIGHT ON BRIGHT SANDS

Ultimately, in "Bright on Bright Sands," Rary's attempt to gain the items he needed to destroy the *Scorpion Crown* failed. Bands of meddling adventurers in the employ of the paladin Karistyne, thwarted Rary's attempts to recover the items required to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. The rest of this article presents the outcome of several of the adventures in the "Blight on Bright Sands" arc. In the interests of brevity, minor campaign consequences are not listed.

In COR5-11 *Dark Deceit on Bright Sands* the PCs discovered an ancient prophecy inscribed upon a scroll crafted from the skin of a gold dragon. The scroll seemed to speak of a time when the *Scorpion Crown* would be unmade.

In COR5-17 *Time's Tide on Bright Sands* adventurers, using a portal located in the Tower of Sleep, traveled back to the last days of wicked Sulm to recover the Last Flower of Sulm. While there, they also rescued Ulma, a princess of Sulm and the keeper of the Last Flower of Sulm.

Adventurers following clues found in COR5-02 *Mines of the Eye* sought and found the forgotten road to Azak-Zil (in COR5-20 *Phantoms on Bright Sands*). Shortly afterwards (in COR6-02 *Pits of Azak-Zil*) many bands of adventurers, mercenaries and opportunists descended on the pits to gain control of the thinaun hidden therein. The undead lurking in the mines killed many of the brave and foolish and while neither side prevailed, both gained a portion of the precious metal.

During COR6-09 *Beneath the Bright Sands* adventurers recovered a scimitar of evil aspect and great power – the *Bane of Itar* – from the ruins of Sulm's fallen capital, Utaa. After retrieving the weapon, the PCs returned it to Karistyne for safekeeping.

In COR6-13 *Tears for Bright Sands* adventurers searched the sunken ruins of Sennarae, capital of Itar, Sulm's greatest enemy. There they uncovered the powerful good-aligned warhammer *Goggorddu*. After retrieving the weapon, the PCs returned it to Karistyne for safekeeping.

These two great weapons were finally destroyed deep below the festering ruins of Darkbridge Temple (COR6-16 *Dominion over Bright Sands*), denying Rary the ability to complete his ritual of unmaking. After the two weapons were destroyed, those loyal to Tenser returned to civilization to celebrate their success believing the affair over.

In the meantime, however, Rary has also been busy with political machinations. In early 597 uncertainty clouded the free city of Hardby's true allegiance. While allied with her far more prosperous neighbor since the Greyhawk Wars the failing health of its Despotrix, Ilena Norbelos, led some to believe that Hardby would soon voluntarily enter the Empire of the Bright Sands. Adventurers working for Karistyne forestalled such events, however, when they provided a potion which kept the ailing Despotrix alive long enough to participate in a crucial vote. Days later she died, and was replaced by Aleeta Norbelos a strong proponent of alliance with Greyhawk. For now, Hardby stayed beyond Rary's influence.

As soon became evident, though, thwarting the schemes of one of the Oerth's most powerful wizards is not without risk. The following year, Karistyne was kidnapped and carried away to the near-mythical City of Brass. While Rary's involvement was never proved, many observers are sure that he nefarious archmage was behind the paladin's disappearance. Her kidnapping, while ultimately thwarted, was a reminder that while Rary had been defeated, he had not been rendered powerless and that he still ruled the Bright Empire with an iron fist.

RISE OF THE ANCIENTS

His failure in "Blight on Bright Sand" does not mean Rary simply gave up. He has tried the subtle approach, trying to win the hearts and minds of his opponents, but this failed almost completely. Now, all restraint is gone. Rary will crush anyone and anything in his path.

First, those that directed his recent defeat were destroyed. While Tenser is too strong in his Fortress of Unknown Depths, Karistyne and her loyal band were a relatively easy. In COR8-05 *Pyre of the Righteous*, her castle was destroyed and its garrison all but wiped out.

Rary then (in the events immediately preceding COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber*) turned his attention to the Tower of Sleep. In an attack of near-peerless ferocity, Rary struck the tower, sundering its wards and drove its mistress mad. As the centuries old curse of the *Scorpion Crown* quested for its final victim, Rary carried away Ulma and the Last Flower of Sulm.

But the last part of his scheme remained uncompleted. With the destruction of the two weapons – the fell scimitar *Bane of Itar* and *Goggorddu* relic of Itar –

Rary needed a powerful, sentient weapon with a connection to both Sulm and Itar. Buried deep in his research notes, among the legends of the nomads, he found another way.

Thirty-eight years ago after experiencing a terrible vision, 36 powerful dervish priests of the Qolat Sisterhood performed a powerful ritual to resurrect Vathris, the fallen god of Itar, at the Plain of Spears site of his death. Although successful, their liege returned in a new, warped form. Where once he was a copper-skinned muscular man he returned terribly wounded, a grisly gash in his torso leaking black, poisonous bile. He now manifests only once or twice a year appearing at the scene of his death. For a week or so, he wanders the desert slaying all monsters and servants of evil he comes across, before collapsing and dying once more. Rary realized that the weapon that slew him and which he now carries – a wickedly barbed onyx longspear daubed in the blood of a god – combined with Vathris' mortal form – could hold the key to the *Scorpion Crown's* unmaking. The only problem was that Vathris manifests only when certain stars are in conjunction and that when he collapses, his body and the spear dissolves into nothingness. Thus, Rary has had to wait until now to capture Vathris.

DRAMATIS PERSONA

Several factions have a vest interest in Rary's machinations. This section provides a brief summary on their goals and history.

TENSER

Tenser hates Rary – the latter was, of course, responsible for his death (and the destruction of almost all his clones) at the end of the Greyhawk Wars. Thus, Tenser refuses to see any good in Rary's actions, believing that some dark, malevolent purpose must be at the heart of his plans. More details of Tenser and his beliefs appear in the Introduction.

RARY

Rary wants to unmake the *Scorpion Crown* and will stop at nothing to achieve his goal. Stymied in the "Blight on Bright Sands" he has finally decided to act personally (and decisively) himself. At the heart of Rary's actions is the belief that the *Scorpion Crown* acts as keystone or anchor linking Tharizdun to the Oerth. Unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* is the only way to sunder this link.

Rary is not stupid – indeed far from it. He knows that the crown is an artifact of Tharizdun and as such is laden with his power. Any mere mortal, even one as powerful and learned as himself, trying to gain control over it would fail and be destroyed utterly (or worse). He has absolutely no interest in the crown surviving to keep Tharizdun linked to Oerth.

While it is true that the *Scorpion Crown's* unmaking will result in his empire revering from desert to arid grasslands this is but a handy side effect of the ritual.

DARSSVOREL AND THE GURONN NUR

The great wyrm Darssvorel has been bound for many centuries in a fragment of the GuronN Nur. Originally, a child of Tiamt the deeper, far older evil of the stone has slowly corrupted him into a pawn of Tharizdun.

COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness* (the final part of “Sins of Ages Past”) presents Darssvorel’s history in more depth. In summary, however, Darssvorel was carried from the fall of an elder civilization to the arid grasslands of Sulm millennia ago. Used as the zenith stone for the great ziggurat of Unaagh he slept for many centuries before the curse of the *Scorpion Crown* awoke him. Used by the greatest mystics and sorcerers of Sulm to escape the curse through the creation of the fading land Vuthathrae he was bound to the great necropolis until adventures freed him two years ago.

Darssvorel was not alone, however. One of five stones created by the sundering of the GuronN Nur for the last decade or so, he has attempted to communicate with his brethren. The Dreaming was the result.

At the end of COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness*, Vuthathrae was destroyed and the ancient Sulm still lurking there destroyed. Now free, Darssvorel began to seek out his brethren. However, events closer to hand distracted him from this task. As a thing of Tharizdun he sensed the proximity of the *Scorpion Crown* and quickly became aware of Rary’s plan to destroy it. He acted quickly to thwart the plan, but to date his schemes have failed. As the adventure opens, he has dominated a hapless adventurer commanding him to slip into Darkbridge while battle raged outside. The rogue managed to penetrate the temple, but fell to one of the lingering traps set by the ancient Sulmites. Thus, literally within sight of his goal, Darssvorel can go no further. The arrival of the PCs, however, gives him one more chance to affect thwart Rary’s scheme.

The PCs encounter Darssvorel at some point in their exploration of the chambers below Darkbridge. Refer to encounter seven for more information.

ADVENTURE SUMMARY

In this adventure, the PCs cross the Bright Lands one final time to either help or hinder Rary in his quest: the unmaking of the *Scorpion Crown*.

The adventure begins with the PCs in the Fortress of Unknown Depths meeting with Tenser. After agreeing to aid Tenser in thwarting Rary the PCs travel to the Plain of Spears where they fight terrible swordwraiths before hearing the sounds of a titanic battle – Rary capturing Vathris.

Moving quickly to the site of battle, they encounter Jerianek Firaen a priest of Vathris and Ulgar a fallen warrior of ancient Itar.

Ulgar witnessed Rary and Vathris’ battle and describes it to the PCs as well as telling them where Rary then went.

Jerianek can provide more information about the locale, her diety, and current events. She can also provide some healing and such like if required. She is very worried about what Rary is doing to Vathris and lends the PCs a *carpet of flying* (largest size) to reach Darkbridge quickly. She then leaves to gather and consult with the faithful. Once the PCs have spoken to Jerianek and Ulgar they can proceed to Darkbridge Temple.

Reaching Darkbridge, they discover a pitched battle being fought between Rary’s yugoloth mercenaries and hordes of manscorpion trying to get into the temple. Bypass the combat, the PCs gain access to the inner temple and discover a trapdoor leading down to the lower Greater Temple.

Once in the Greater Temple they finally meet the Traitor himself and briefly speak with him before a horde of manscorpions breaches the chamber. Most attack Rary, but a few fight the PCs. After they have dispatched the manscorpions, they PCs can continue to speak with Rary and discover more of his true motivations. They can then decide whether to disrupt the ritual or not (although fighting him is almost suicidal). As the conversation draws to a close, the final guardians of Darkbridge attack in an attempt to wrest the crown from Rary. After they have been defeated, the ritual takes place (or not, if the PCs disrupt it). If they do disrupt the ritual, they had best flee swiftly. If they do not flee, Rary rewards their perspicacity.

PREPARATION FOR PLAY

This adventure, the final part of “Rise of the Ancients,” represents Rary’s final attempt to destroy the *Scorpion Crown* and to break the fell enchantment that has lain of the land and the people of Sulm for fifteen centuries. As such, the events herein are the culmination of not only “Rise of the Ancients” but also “Blight on Bright Sands.” They are also related to “Sins of Ages Past” as the matter at hand deals with Tharizdun and Sulm’s ancient origins. Thus, many favors from previous adventures come into play. A summary of which favor is relevant to which encounter appears below. Further details of how each favors affect the course of this adventure appears in the relevant encounter text.

Introduction: Honored Ally of Tenser (COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands*), Ally of Tenser (COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness*).

7: Darssvorel: Beloved of Tiamat (COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness*), Enemy of Tiamat (COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness*):

9: The Mage and the God: Honored Ally of Rary (COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands*), Karistyne’s Ashes (COR8-05 *Pyre of the Righteous*):

INTRODUCTION

The PCs have been summoned to the Fortress of Unknown Depths by Tenser, renown wizard, one-time member of the Circle of Eight and implacable foe of Rary.

When the players are ready, use the relevant introductory texts below. If you have players belonging to more than one faction, provide the introductory text privately to each group.

SERVANTS OF LIGHT

Use this introductory text for those PCs in good standing with Karistyne and Tenser. PCs in good standing with the now-slain Karitysne are welcome at Tenser's home. Read:

The Star Cross – a rare planetary conjunction – burned brightly in the night sky when you received a summons to attend the master of the Fortress of Unknown Depths. A missive from Tenser the Archmage is impossible to ignore and so several days later you arrived at Magepoint, the village servicing Tenser's mighty keep.

Tenser's message spoke of black deeds wrought among the burning dunes of the Bright Desert and of a terrible doom coming upon the Oerth.

Strange silvery golem-like creatures with eyes that shine with a lambent blue radiance greeted you at the fortress gates conveying you inside and offering exotic refreshments. After you hunger and thirst has been sated they same creatures lead you into the very centre of castle.

Once the PCs are ready, proceed to Speaking with Tenser.

SERVANTS OF DARKNESS

Use this introductory text for those PCs in good standing with Rary. Some of the PCs will likely have worked for Rary in the past and thus, if Tenser knew their true allegiance, would be unwelcome here (to say the least). Unfortunately for Tenser, some of his missives were delivered to the wrong people and so a few of Rary's followers have managed to slip into the fortress. Read:

The Star Cross – a rare planetary conjunction – burned brightly in the night sky when you received a summons to attend the master of the Fortress of Unknown Depths. A missive from Tenser the Archmage is impossible to ignore and so several days later you arrived at Magepoint, the village servicing Tenser's mighty keep.

Tenser's message spoke of terrible deeds wrought among the dunes of the Bright Desert and of a terrible doom coming upon the Oerth. Strange indeed, though, is the hand of Istus. For quite some time now you have toiled at the behest of Tenser's greatest foe, Rary, working to enable him to unmake the Scorpion Crown. Your inclusion in this group is surely a mistake, but one that might well serve your munificent master.

Strange silvery golem-like creatures with eyes that shine with a lambent blue radiance greet you at the fortress gates conveying you inside and offering exotic refreshments. After you hunger and thirst has been sated they same creatures lead you into the very centre of castle.

Once the PCs are ready, proceed to Speaking with Tenser.

MERCENARIES

Use this introductory text for those PCs that have either not played any of the previous "Blight on Bright Sands" or "Rise of the Ancients" adventures or that have no real opinion on which side should prevail in this conflict. Read:

Tenser the Archmage is renown throughout the Flanaess. Both a surpassing powerful wizard and a force for good in the world a summons from him is not lightly ignored. Thus you find yourself at the Fortress of Unknown Depths close to Greyhawk City.

Tenser's message spoke of black deeds wrought among the burning dunes of the Bright Desert and of a terrible doom coming upon the Oerth. His need is great and so he has called you to stand with his servants against the coming darkness.

Once the PCs are ready, proceed to Speaking with Tenser.

DREAMERS

Some of the PCs may have been subject to the Dreaming in an earlier core adventure. Such individuals experience a dark dream the night before they reach the Fortress of Unknown Depths. Read:

You lie naked, flat on your back on a cold, hard stone floor. Nearby, a bowl stands in front of a featureless man-statue and in the bowl lies a black crown. Power emanates from it in waves.

Figures clad in purple robes cluster around you chanting. As the chanting increases in pitch and tempo, you perceive a thin, almost imperceptible strand of darkness curling up from the crown. The strand pulses with power and slowly quests towards you. As it caresses you, a chill enters your soul. Alien thoughts of madness and destruction skitter across the surface of your brain as they seek some way into the world. Words unbidden spill from your lips, "The link must not be broken. Accept my gift Shattados and know that by donning it you will dominion over all your peoples..."

As you finish speaking, the chanting stops. A man grins cruelly as he steps forward and raises a knife high in the air. It glimmers evilly in the dim light before he stabs down at your chest. Abruptly the dream fades and you awake.

Once the PCs are ready, proceed to Speaking with Tenser.

SPEAKING WITH TENSER

The PCs will likely have many questions for Tenser.

✦ **Tenser:** LG male human wizard 22

Some likely questions and their answers appear here. Use this information to extrapolate the answers to any other questions they ask. Keep in mind that Tenser wants Rary stopped and therefore he does not intentionally mislead or deceive the PCs. As the adventure opens, the PCs are in Tenser's throne room. Read:

You stand before a great throne of lapis lazuli itself set in a massive chamber of blue stone. Upon the throne sits a man fairly radiating power – Tenser the archmage. His once dark hair, now flecked with gray, frames dark-brown eyes and a prominent, aquiline nose. He speaks:

“My friends, thank you for answering my call. The Flanaess stands in great peril and I have selected you to thwart the machinations of the perfidious Rary who once again stirs from his desert lair.

In the past few months he has wrought terrible acts. First the fair Karistyne – my loyal servant – has been slain and her castle thrown down. Then, Rary invaded the Tower of Sleep and kidnapped Ulma and the Last Flower of Sulm. I fear that these acts are but the first part of Rary's scheme to unmake the Scorpion Crown. Will you help me? Will you travel to the accursed Plain of Spears?

Once the PCs answer in the affirmative, he continues speaking. PCs refusing to help are unceremoniously thrown out of the fortress. Such PC can rejoin his companions once they leave. Use whatever mechanic is necessary to allow the PC to do this. For example, if the PCs teleport to the Plain of Spears and the thrown out PC cannot replicate this feat have an agent of Rary dwelling in Magepoint cast the spell for him.

Tenser has more information to impart. Provide the following details as Tenser converses with the PCs.

Current Quest

Why must be travel to the Plain of Spears? I need you to travel the Plain of Spears because I believe this is where Rary will be next. He is collecting things that I believe he will use to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. Find out what he is doing and, if possible, stop him (or at the very least report back to me here).

How can we get to the Plain of Spears? If you lack the means, and want me to, I can magically transport you there. Otherwise, you must journey through the blazing sands of the Bright Lands, which will take many days.

What reward do we get for stopping Rary? I do not offer tawdry rewards of gold or shiny baubles. Evil must be stopped and if you need such things you do not believe in the righteousness of the cause. You will have my thanks and the knowledge that you have stopped a great evil being wrought. Surely, this is enough?

Why have you not resurrected Karistyne? She was slain with a thinnian blade, which traps her soul within. Without that blade, I am helpless.

The Scorpion Crown

To answer questions in this section it may be wise to refer back to the “Blight on Bright Sands” section of the Adventure Background.

Rary tried to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*? Two years ago, Rary tried to gather the items needed to unmake *Scorpion Crown*. Ultimately, he was unsuccessful. I fear that he has now discovered another way to achieve his goal and that his slaying of Karistyne and kidnap of Ulma are but he first moves in his final scheme

Why is the *Scorpion Crown* so feared? My research has revealed that the *Scorpion Crown* is a thing of Tharizdun as perhaps you already know. The crown is directly responsible for the destruction of ancient Sulm and the creation of the Bight Desert. Rary must not gain control over it.

Why does Rary seek to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*? Who can know his true motivations? He would have us believe that it is for the good of the folk dwelling in the Bright Lands but I know in the very heart of my being that this cannot be. Who among you does not know of his treacherous ways? Who among you do not know the story of the Day of Great Signing?

Isn't unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* a good thing? Perhaps it would be if one pure of heart were to attempt it, but Rary is evil – evil to the core. Who is to say that he will instead of unmaking it, bind it to his will? If he were to gain complete control over the artifact, he would be surpassingly powerful. I fear that not even Mordenkainen could defeat him in battle.

But unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* would break its curse? That is true, but that would leave Rary in a vastly improved position. His “empire” would revert to grasslands and his subjects would reap the benefits. Soon his armies would emerge from the Abbor-Alz stronger and better equipped. Who knows where they would strike next!

Historical Questions

Why do you hate Rary so much? What happened on the Day of Great Signing? At the end of the Greyhawk Wars, representatives of all the nations of the Flanaess gathered to sign a great peace treaty. As the final preparations were being made, myself and Otiluke checked the hall in which the ambassadors would gather to ascertain its safety. We triggered traps left by Rary who was still in the hall. He slew us and at the same time Lord Robilar destroyed all of Otiluke's clones and all but one of mine. His duplicity revealed, he fled to the Bright Lands. The rest you know.

PREVIOUS AR ITEMS

Some AR items from previous adventures affect play here. Tenser knows that PCs with one or more of the below favors are reliable and skill opponents of evil.

Honored Ally of Tenser (COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands*): Tenser lends any PC with this AR item an obsidian steed (DMG 257), which he expects back at the end of the adventure. The obsidian steed is in all regards as that listed in the DMG except that there is no chance that the horse will deposit its rider in the lower planes.

Ally of Tenser (COR6-14 *Cloud of Darkness*): Tenser provides any character with this AR item with a single spell of any 5th-level or lower wizard spell listed in the PH not restricted by the LGCS. He does not expect the scroll to be returned.

THE FORTRESS OF UNKNOWN DEPTHS

Use the information here to describe Tenser's home.

The Fortress of Unknown Depths stands about 80-miles east of the Free City of Greyhawk amid the turbulent dark blue waters of the Nyr Dyv. Long home to Tenser the Archmage, it is a well-known, but seldom-visited place.

The fortress sits atop a low, black rock about half a mile from shore. Its pale blue battlements are dwarfed by the castle's central donjon, which soars skyward and is topped with a huge, many faceted dome that glitters under Pelor's radiance like some huge, immeasurably valuable jewel.

Connected to shore by a long, steep-sided causeway of black rock, the fortress stands in a relatively isolated position, with the village of Magepoint being the only nearby settlement of note.

Dangerous avian creatures as well as a mist dragon and other things that dwell beneath the waters of the Nyr Dyv guard the fortress against unwelcome visitors. Several powerful affects also ward the fortress. Spells such as *teleport* and the like do not function within the immediate surroundings of the Fortress of Unknown Depths. Instead, those travelling by such means are shunted away from the castle. (This could be particularly disastrous for an unprepared party appearing above the Nyr Dyv.)

MAGEPOINT

If the PCs venture into Magepoint, use this text to facilitate play.

This small, sleepy, idyllic village appears, at face value, to be an archetypal farming and fishing community. Well-tended fields and meadows surround the village proper, while many fishing boats bob at anchor along the village's dock. A coastal pathway links Magepoint with Elmshire in the west and Goldplain in the Duchy of Urnst in the east. Another pathway – really little more than an earthen track – links Magepoint with Diamond Lake.

DEVELOPMENT

When the PCs are ready, proceed to Encounter One.

Troubleshooting: If some PCs with Rary favors feels uncomfortable about helping Tenser, point out to

them that this is a perfect opportunity to spy on their master's nemesis (and to possibly stymie his meddling).

1: INTO THE BRIGHT

DM Map 1 shows the Bright Desert region.

Before the PCs can explore the Plain of Spears, they must cross the burning sands of the Bright Desert. PCs of 10th-level and above likely possess many magical means of easing this journey. If they have access to enough magics such as *endure elements* quickly skip over this encounter. While the journey takes several days (see below) they reach the site without incident. If the PCs do not have access to such resources refer to DM Aid 1: Traveling in the Bright Desert. To reach the Plain of Spears the PCs have two basic choices of route (detailed below).

THROUGH HILL AND DESERT

Traveling on foot, the PCs leave the Fortress of Unknown Depths and reach Hardby before traversing Hardby Pass. They then must strike out eastwards through the desert for around 300 miles before they reach the Plain of Spears. This will takes weeks of travel because of the circuitous route needed to avoid Bright Land garrisons and so on.

TELEPORTING AND SUCH

PCs employing this option reach the environs Plain of Spears instantaneously. Note, however, that the caster must have a clear impression of the area. The most likely way to gain this information is through various divination spells as few individuals can claim to have even visited the plains.

Tenser: If the PCs desire, Tenser uses his considerable magical powers to transport them to the edge of the Plain of Spears.

2: PLAIN OF SORROW

This encounter takes place in the Plain of Spears, site of Sulm victory over her last rival, Itar.

This is a bleak, wretched place. Countless man-tall shards of rock stand among the rubble and trash of an ancient battle. Bleached bones, shards of weapons and armor and heaps of rubble lie partially covered by sand and grit. A hot, fell wind laden with menace moans among the stones.

Although the PCs arrive around midday, they search fruitlessly until dusk. Use the information presented below to facilitate this. As dusk falls, some of the ancient warriors haunting this place fall upon them.

APL 10 (EL 10)

☛ **Swordwraiths** (3): male human swordwraith fighter 5; hp 43; Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 12)

☛ **Swordwraiths** (3): male human swordwraith fighter 7; hp 56; Appendix 1.

APL 14 (EL 14)

☛ **Swordwraiths** (3): male human swordwraith fighter 9; hp 69; Appendix 1.

Tactics: Before attacking, the swordwraiths surround the PCs using the gathering gloom as concealment. They howl out of the darkness, chopping and striking at the nearest PC. They fight intelligently and are fearless.

Turning: The many stone pillars on the battlefield may block the line of effect of a turning undead attempt. If one or more of the swordwraiths are turned, they all flee and return when able to attack as a group.

FEATURES OF THE PLAIN OF SPEARS

The Plain of Spears has the following features of note:

Desecrate: Because of the death and suffering wrought upon the Plain of Spears, the entire area is under a massive *desecrate* affect. All relevant modifiers (including the profane penalty to turn attempts) are included in the swordwraith's stat blocks. The entire area radiates faint evocation magic (DC 22 Spellcraft check in conjunction with a *detect magic* identifies the affect.)

Dust Storms: The incessant winds that batter the Plains of Spears create dust storms that blanket the area for days at a time. This bestows a -2 penalty to ranged attacks and Listen checks to all characters in the area.

Shallow Sand: Shallow sand, from which poke the ruin of the battle fought long ago, covers the ground. It costs two squares of movement to enter such a square and the DC of Tumble checks in such areas increase by two.

Rock Pillars: The rock pillars clustering thickly upon the battlefield are six-foot high. Anyone standing atop one gains the benefit of higher ground. Characters can scale the pillars with a DC 15 Climb check or vault

atop them with a DC 40 Jump check (because of the numerous other pillars, characters cannot attempt this as part of a running jump).

PLAIN OF SPEARS LORE

Characters with bardic knowledge or ranks in Knowledge (local: core), Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) know certain facts about the Plain of Spears. Natives of the Bright Lands know everything revealed by a DC 15 check. Followers of Vathris know everything revealed by a DC 20 check. When a character makes a successful skill check, he remembers the following lore, including the information gained from lower DCs

- **DC 20:** Sulm crushed their last enemy, Itar, on the Plain of Spears in a climatic battle. The demi-god Vathris, who perished in the final confrontation, stood with Itar's army on that fateful day. Enchanted war gear is still recovered from the plain by brave (or stupid) adventurers. The nomads ignore this place, believing it to be cursed. Swordwraiths and other undead, remnants of those slain during the final battle, haunt the Plain of Spears.
- **DC 25:** A wickedly evil, barbed onyx spear slew Vathris in the final battle. He is said to manifest upon the plain once or twice a year. From thence, he wanders the desert slaying any monsters or followers of evil he encounters with that self same spear.

DEVELOPMENT

After the PCs destroy the swordwraiths have them make a DC 0 Listen check. Success indicates that they hear the sounds of a titanic battle erupt far off to the east. Read:

Suddenly, from the east, a massive explosion shatters the desert air and flashes of scintillating light illuminates the horizon as a sudden gust of superheated wind washes over you. Over all rises a pain-wracked, haunted scream suddenly cut short.

The PCs have just heard the battle sounds of Rary subduing Vathris. The battle took place around five miles away to the east near Keervan's Hill. When the PCs elect to investigate, proceed to encounter three. They may use magic to speed their investigations and this is fine (but provides them with no special bonuses except that they have more time to investigate before Jerianek arrives.)

3: SHARDS OF ITAR

This encounter takes place at the foot of Keervan's Hill, the only prominent landmark on the plain. PCs that have played COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber* may have previously visited this locale; however, the area is much changed to how they remember it.

At the base of the hill, the PCs discover the site of Rary's battle with Vathris and afterwards meet Jerianek Firaen. Read:

Ahead out of the gloom of dusk, the flat plains rise steeply forming a single hill that dominates the land for miles around. Atop the hill the shattered shards of some ancient fortress thrusts through the sands.

At the hill's base, hidden deep in shadow, the man-high shards of rock littering the battlefield are scorched and melted as if some terrible fire has burned here. On the flank of the hill, many have been torn down or shattered.

Remember that the PCs heard the sounds of battle as dusk was falling. Thus, it is probably almost dark by the time the PCs arrive here.

Allow the PCs to explore the area for a few minutes, using the notes below in Area Features before introducing Jerianek Firaen.

AREA FEATURES

The general area in which Rary fought Vathris has several features of difference to the rest of the Plain of Spears. Through observations and skill checks the PCs can learn more about the area:

Broken and Shattered Rocks: The man-high stones so endemic to the battlefield have in this area been burnt and melted by some incredible force. A DC 24 Spellcraft check in conjunction with *detect magic* reveals the lingering presence of evocation and conjuration magic. The aura covers much of the surrounding area and many of the broken and damaged stones.

Black Ichor: A DC 30 Search check uncovers a small pool of thick, black ichor partially covered by wind-blown sand. The pool is still wet. If the PCs find the pool of ichor award them a +2 circumstance bonus to any subsequent tracking checks.

Vitrified Sand: The sand in the area of battle has been vitrified by intense heat. The layer of vitrified sand is about three feet deep.

Tracks: Although the near ceaseless wind has begun to cover them, a PC making a DC 20 Survival check uncovers a confused series of tracks in the area. It is evident that one lightweight humanoid walked into the area from the west. He confronted another heavier humanoid in battle. The other humanoid moved around the area more, but eventually fell a score of yards to the east. This area is also the area containing the black ichor detailed above.

The lighter set of tracks cross to the area where the other individual fell and then both set of tracks disappear

abruptly. (The tracks show the course of the battle between Rary and Vathris. Rary stayed still casting spells from behind a variety of magical protections. Vathris moved around the area before finally being felled by a *meteor swarm*. Vathris was not dead, however, and Rary briefly spoke to him before teleporting them both away to Darkbridge.)

Keervan's Hill: A PC that succeeds on a DC 25 Knowledge (local: Core), Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (history) recognizes this area as Keervan's Hill a well-known feature of the Plain of Spears. PCs that have visited this locale in COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber* gain a +4 circumstance bonus to any checks made to recognize the landmark. If the PCs decide to climb the hill, proceed to Keervan's Hill, below.

JERIANEK FIRAEN

Once the PCs have explored the area, Jerianek Firaen arrives, summoned by magical divinations and the sounds of a titanic battle. She is not immediately hostile but is on edge – she is well aware of the dangers of the area.

Jerianek Firaen: LN female human (Flan) cleric 11 (Vathris)/fighter 3; hp 97.

Appearance: Short, well muscled and of obvious Flan heritage, Jerianek radiates competence and determination.

Personality: A fanatical follower of Vathris, Jerianek venerates him in his new aspect as god of Anguish, Lost Causes, and Revenge.

Goals and Knowledge: Jerianek's immediate goal is to ascertain exactly what has occurred. She knows that Vathris manifests occasionally in the Plain of Spears and that afterwards he goes on a killing spree. The sounds of battle she recently heard are like nothing she has ever experienced before and she is concerned that something terrible has befallen her lord.

Qolat Sisterhood Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (local: core) know certain facts about the Qolat Sisterhood. Natives of the Bright Lands know everything revealed by a DC 15 check. Followers of Vathris know everything revealed by a DC 20 check. When a character makes a successful skill check, he remembers the following lore, including the information gained from lower DCs

- **DC 15:** The Qolat Sisterhood dwells in a hidden temple somewhere in the eastern Abbor-Alz.
- **DC 20:** Thirty-eight years ago after experiencing a terrible vision, 36 powerful dervish priests of the Qolat Sisterhood performed a powerful ritual to resurrect Vathris, the fallen god of Itar, at the Plain of Spears site of his death.

Vathris Lore

Characters with ranks in Knowledge (religion) know certain facts about Vathris. Natives of the Bright Lands know everything revealed by a DC 15 check. Followers of

Vathris know everything revealed by a DC 20 check. When a character makes a successful skill check, he remembers the following lore, including the information gained from lower DCs

- **DC 15:** Vathris was once the Itarian god of progress and Ingenuity before he was slain on the Plain of Spears.
- **DC 20:** Vathris recently reappeared in the Bright Lands, but in a new, warped form. Where once he was a copper-skinned muscular man he returned terribly wounded, a grisly gash in his torso leaking black, poisonous bile. He now manifests only once or twice a year appearing at the scene of his death. For a week or so, he wanders the desert slaying all monsters and servants of evil he comes across, before collapsing and dying once more.
- **DC 30:** Vathris manifested only when certain stars are in conjunction. When he collapses, his body and the spear dissolve into nothingness.

KEERVAN'S HILL

Some of the PCs may climb Keervan's Hill. If the PCs spend any time observing the hill the shade of Ulgar becomes aware of them and manifests. PCs that succeed on a DC 15 Spot check become aware of a shadowy figure standing among the ruins.

If the PCs approach him, he does not attack or retreat; instead he calmly awaits them. If they speak with him, proceed to Ulgar, below. If they do not speak to him eventually he calls out to them in his mournful voice.

The Ruins: The ruins are the remains of an ancient fortress that was already crumbling when Sulm finally crushed Itar. Much of them are buried below the sands and they contain nothing of interest. If the PCs wish to poke about the ruins, they can uncover the remains of walls, battlements, and so on.

Cliff: Several hundred yards to the west is a 200 ft. cliff that drops down into the valley below. This area (while unchanged over the millennia) contains nothing of interest.

Ulgar's Grave: Ulgar was killed during Itar's final defeat and was buried in secret atop the hill. If the PCs have played COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber* it is likely that they were present when he was killed and were the ones that buried him.

ULGAR

Ulgar is not hostile toward the PCs. Indeed, he may even recognize some of them from COR8-09 *Ruins of Slumber*. If he does so, he is incredibly confused – how can those present have survived for so long? Although he does not know the exact date, he does understand that hundreds of years have passed since his death.

🗡️ **Ulgar:** male human (Flan) ghost fighter 4: hp 32; Appendix 1.

Appearance: A translucent human of Flan descent he is young – perhaps in his mid twenties. He wears armor rent by several powerful blows.

History: Ulgar was a prince of Itar and was secretly betrothed to Ulma of Sulm (Shattados' daughter and the bearer of the Last Flower of Sulm). The two were desperately in love, but tragically never met. He fell in battle on this hill moments before the god Vathris was killed. He was buried here, but his soul has remained restless.

What He knows: Ulgar witnessed Rary battling Vathris. After a short fight, Rary finally bested, but did not destroy Vathris. As the godling lay on the sands, helpless, Rary spoke to him. While Ulgar did not hear the entire conversation – he was afraid to approach too closely – he did get a bit nearer by moving through the sand. After a time, the two seemed to reach an agreement. Rary helped Vathris to his feet and spoke of “getting to the bridge of darkness as quickly as possible.” Afterwards, he cast a spell and disappeared. (A DC 25 Knowledge [arcane], Knowledge [religion], or bardic knowledge check reveals this as a name of Darkbridge Temple).

What He Wants: Ulgar is desperate for news of Ulma and wants nothing more than to gaze upon her before going to his eternal rest. If the PCs reveal that she yet lives and promise to bring her to Keeran's Hill after they have traveled to Darkbridge, Ulgar is overjoyed. In return for their promise he provides them with a simple amulet he was carrying at the time of his death. The amulet is a single piece of beaten gold. On one side the twin heraldic devices of Itar and Sulm are engraved while the other has a simple representation of Ulma. Ulma gifted the amulet to Ulgar long ago and instantly recognizes it if the PCs reveal it.

DEVELOPMENT

Jerianek is predisposed to help the PCs. As well as providing any healing that an 11th-level cleric can provide from the PH (assuming that the PCs provide any particularly expensive components).

When she realizes the gravity of the situation, she also provides the PCs with a *carpet of flying* (largest size) so that they can reach Darkbridge quickly. The carpet can fly 12 miles per hour and it is 170 miles to Darkbridge. Thus, unless the PCs have other means of transport, it takes them roughly 14 hours to reach Darkbridge, but they can rest while on the carpet. This means they probably arrive around mid-morning.

PCs that have played COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands* have already been to Darkbridge Temple, which may allow the PCs to teleport there. While this speeds up events somewhat, they must still likely rest and recuperate before braving the terrors within the temple.

Once the PCs leave, Jerianek seeks out the other members of the Sisterhood to spread the word and to take council.

4: BRIDGE OF DARKNESS

In this encounter, the PCs reach Darkbridge Temple. As the PCs arrive at Darkbridge, a great battle rages about the ruins. Within the temple's precincts, a company of Rary's yugoloth mercenaries keeps a much larger horde of manscorpions at bay, while the archmage carries out his ritual in deep, secret caverns. When the PCs arrive, read:

The squat, festering ruins of ancient Darkbridge stand mantled in deep shadow atop a high hill at the sand-choked confluence of two ancient valleys. Directly above the temple, a great lance of darkness angles downward from the blue, cloudless sky. The shaft climbs impossibly high into the desert sky, seemingly without end.

The harsh clamor of battle echoes across the valley. A horde of creatures seethes atop the hill, trying to break through the second of three great rings of black-stoned walls. A mass of other creatures crowding the inner gateway repulses their assault. From this distance, it is impossible to identify who battles whom.

When the PCs get closer, read:

About the temple walls rages a horde of half-scorpion/half-man creatures. A mass of six-limbed insectoid horrors fills each of the temple's gateways. Behind them stand a pair of slim, dark-skinned and alien-looking creatures clutching wickedly curved longswords that hurl blasts of magic down onto the struggling scorpion creatures. Above the battlefield swoop several large, winged gargoyle-like creatures with dog-shaped heads and four arms.

The dead and the dismembered - a literal harvest of death - litter the battlefield.

None of the creatures involved in the battle are paying the remotest notice of the surrounding hills. As long as the PCs do nothing terminally stupid, they remain unnoticed by both attackers and defenders. Even if they are noticed, they are not attacked by either party as long as they do not interfere in the battle. The PCs can attempt to identify the two groups of battling creatures.

Attackers: A DC 16 Knowledge (nature) check identifies the attackers as manscorpions. Natives of the Bright Lands automatically identify these creatures.

Defenders: A DC 20 Knowledge (the planes) check identifies the bulk of the defenders as mezzoloth (*Monster Manual III* 201), the most common foot soldiers in the yugoloth armies.

A check result of DC 24 identifies the flying creatures as nycaloths (*Monster Manual III* 203), elite yugoloth cavalry.

Finally, a DC 28 identifies the slim, black-skinned creatures as ultraloths (*Monster Manual III* 204). Yugoloth are the officers in a yugoloth army and are powerful wizards as well as being skilled warriors.

All APLs

☛ **Mezzoloths** (40): hp 95; Appendix 1.

☛ **Nycaloths** (4): hp 161; Appendix 1.

☛ **Ultraloth** (8): hp 171; Appendix 1.

☛ **Manscorpions** (300): hp 53; Appendix 1.

GETTING INTO DARKBRIDGE

To continue their quest, the PCs must break into Darkbridge. However, it should be obvious, to even the densest half-orc barbarian, that it is impossible to win through by strength of arms. Luckily, at high APLs, the PCs undoubtedly have spells, magic items, or abilities that can either transport them into the temple undetected or that can disguise or hide their presence. Allow any reasonable plan to succeed. For example, the PCs could use *invisibility* before flying over, or climbing, the temple walls well away from the fighting.

Fighting Their Way In: If the PCs try to fight their way into the temple, the manscorpions do not try to stop them. Indeed, they actually part to let them through. The yugoloths, however, actively resist their assault and eventually drive off the PCs through weight of numbers. The PCs are still able to try one of the methods below.

COR6-16 Dominion of Bright Sands: PCs that have played COR6-16 *Dominion of Bright Sands* have visited likely Darkbridge before. If the PCs have access to spell such as *teleport*, they can bypass the battle and move straight to the inner temple. Assuming the PCs succeed, proceed to encounter five.

Course of the Battle: If the PCs wait to see how the battle turns out it rages for the next few hours as the dark shaft slowly probes downwards to the temple. The manscorpions are initially repulsed but regroup at the base of the hill before charging again. This time they force the yugoloth's back to the second of Darkbridge's walls. Adlib the details of the battle as you deem fit. However, at some point some of the manscorpions must break through into the chambers below the temple (see encounter eight for more details on how they try to stop Rary's ritual.)

Bright Blessing: If the PCs lack the ability to make it into the temple unseen, a sudden sandstorm fortuitously blows up from the west. The sandstorm causes confusion and chaos as the combatants strive to continue their bloody business. The sandstorm, however, does provide the PCs with concealment, which allows them to reach the temple wall without being spotted.

FEATURES OF DARKBRIDGE TEMPLE

Darkbridge Temple has the following features of note:

Black Walls: Strange mystic symbols cover the outer walls of Darkbridge. A *detect magic* spell coupled with a successful DC 25 Spellcraft check reveals that the sigils radiate overwhelming abjuration magic. The walls can be scaled with a successful DC 20 Climb check.

Lance of Darkness: Anyone watching the lance of darkness hanging in the air above the temple for more

than a minute can see that it is very slowly lengthening as it quests downwards. At its present rate of descent, it will touch the temple roof in a little less than two hours time.

Sandstorm: The sandstorm is large and powerful. It lasts for one hour, deposits six-foot of sand throughout the area, and has the following effects:

- Unprotected flames automatically smothered and unattended equipment is blown away.
- Protected flames have a 75% chance of being smothered by the sand and a 75% chance of being blown out by the wind.
- Listen checks are at -8 penalty due to the wind's howl.
- Dexterity-based skill check and any checks that rely on vision (for example, Search and Spot checks) take a -4 penalty.
- Normal ranged missile attacks are impossible.
- Small or smaller-sized creatures are blown away unless they succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save. PCs who fail their save are blown 1d4 x 10 feet away per round and suffer 1d4 points of subdual damage per 10 feet. Medium creatures are knocked prone by the force of the wind unless they succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save. Large or Huge-sized creatures are unable to move forward against the wind unless they succeed on a DC 18 Fortitude save.
- Flying creatures are treated as one size category smaller and if blown back are blown 2d6 x 10 feet and sustain a total of 2d6 points of subdual damage.
- Creatures caught out in the open without substantial cover suffer 1d3 points of subdual damage per round.
- Characters caught in the open may choke if they do not cover their noses and mouths. A sufficiently large cloth expertly worn (DC 15 Survival check) or a filter mask (*Sandstorm*) negates the effects of suffocation from the sand. An inexpertly tied cloth protects a character for 10 x creature's Constitution rounds. An unprotected character may suffocate after a number of rounds equal to double his Constitution score (DMG 304).

If the PCs use the sandstorm as concealment to get closer to the walls this is automatically successful, although you can have them make a few Fortitude saving throws and Hide checks to heighten tension, if you wish.

Lesser Shrines: The inner walls protect many lesser shrines arrayed around the main edifice

and are studded with protective towers.

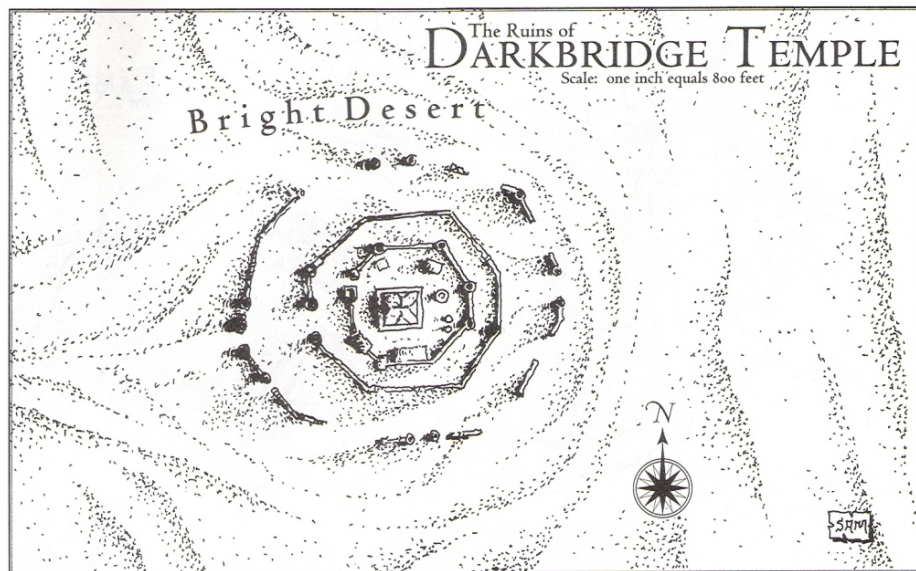
LORE

Characters with bardic knowledge or ranks in Knowledge (local: core), Knowledge (arcana), Knowledge (religion) or Knowledge (history) know certain facts about Darkbridge Temple. Natives of the Bright Lands know everything revealed by a DC 15 check. When a character makes a successful skill check, he remembers the following lore, including the information gained from lower DCs

- **DC 15:** Darkbridge is an evil place. No sane traveler comes within sight of Darkbridge Temple for fear of what lurks within.
- **DC 20:** Darkbridge was one of ancient Sulm's holiest sites. Sulm's elite gathered there to appease their forbidden gods with unspeakable dark rituals and mass sacrifice. Darkbridge is over 2,000 years old but the black stone used in its construction is in incredibly good condition. Mystic symbols in an unknown language cover the outer walls and columns of the inner temple.
- **DC 30:** Mile-deep catacombs lurk beneath the temple containing some of ancient Sulm's darkest secrets. The few adventurers who have visited the site claim that they are as frigid as the desert is hot. Strange, sounds emanate from the inner temple. Ancient legends claim that the temple is a bridge to an "unseen darkness beyond the light of reason".

DEVELOPMENT

Once the PCs get inside the temple complex they should make their way to the central building. While they can explore the many lesser shrines, they will find little of interest. While they carry out this search, the yugoloths will not discover them: they have their hands full with the attacking manscorpions.



5: WITHIN ANCIENT DARK

In this encounter, the PCs enter the central temple of Darkbridge and discover the catacombs below. Read:

This chamber is immense - easily 50 feet wide and 100 feet long. A forest of tall, slender pillars flanks a central processional. Flames of obvious magical origin leap from small iron balls suspended from the ceiling on thin iron chains.

The debris and detritus of battle is strewn across the floor. Smashed barrels, rotten bales and packets of food, a shattered wagon, and the skeletons of many animals and humans lie scattered about. Here and there, discarded coins sparkle in the shadowy light pervading the entire chamber. The huge skeleton of a titanic dragon and dull bronze shattered scales dominate the chamber.

Any character with the Chosen AR entry from COR5-17 *Time's Tide on Bright Sands* feels distinctly ill at ease entering this place. Echoes of ancient Sulm play at the limit of their senses. Shadows seem to move and they hear a faint doom-laden chanting. For the duration of the first fight they have within Darkbridge treat them as shaken (-2 penalty to attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks). This is not a fear-effect but rather a result of the distraction these visions cause.

In addition, to the remains of the dragons hoard, a DC 10 Search check discovers a trapdoor beneath the

coins and rotten grain. This secret door leads done to room 1 of the lower temple (encounter 7).

CHAMBER FEATURES

This chamber has the following features:

Othimvoar's Bones: The skeleton of Othimvoar – an old shadow dragon – dominates the chamber. The dragon obviously died a violent death – the skull has several holes in it.

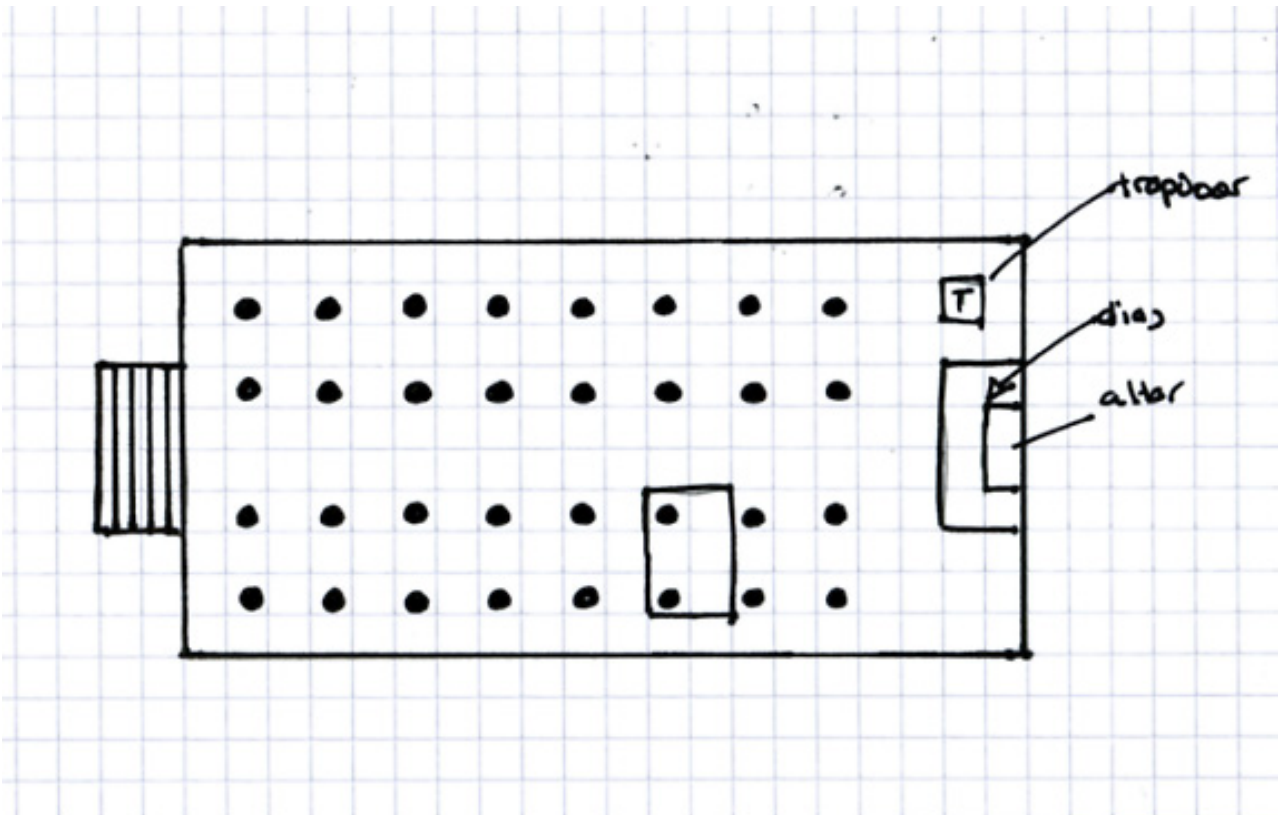
Treasure: The remains of Othimvoar's treasure lies scattered about the chamber. If the PCs spend an hour here collecting coins and other valuable items they gain the treasure listed in the Treasure Summary.

Trapdoor: An open trapdoor (DC 5 Search locates) provides access to the lower temple. Any PC that has played COR6-16 *Dominion over Bright Sands* automatically knows of the trapdoor's location.

Magical Flames: The magical flames are nothing more than *continual flames* cast upon iron balls suspended on thin metal chains. A DC 17 Spellcraft check in conjunction with a *detect magic* reveals faint evocation and a DC 22 Spellcraft check identifies the spell.

Battle Detritus: The remains of many battles fills the chamber. Ad-lib as appropriate, but the PCs find nothing of value.

Development: When the PCs move through the trapdoor, proceed to encounter six.



6: THE DEEPER DARK

Below the vast central chamber of Darkbridge Temple lurks the greater temple. PCs that have played COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands* have walked these halls before. Sketch a quick layout of the dungeons for such characters.

Darssvorel: At some point while they explore these catacombs, the PCs must discover Darssvorel and the body of his last bearer. Refer to encounter seven for more information and insert the encounter in any area you deem suitable.

1: RECEIVING ROOM

The stairs open into a room untouched by the ravages of the Bright. Chiseled of black stone with swirling violet spirals, the room emanates with a faint purple light that emerges from no obvious source. A set of brass double doors lead to the south, and a smaller single door leads east. Etched into the brass double doors of the south is an angular inverted two-step pyramid. Strange writing covers the walls as well as decorative columns that flank the larger door.

The receiving room was used by the ancient priests when dealing with minions not worthy of entering the lower halls. Despite the long period of disuse, the same magic as above keeps the room clean and in good repair.

Those PCs who have played COR5-17 *Time's Tide on Bright Sands* recognize the style of this temple to being similar to the religious iconography and overall construction of the palace in Sulm.

Spirals and Symbols: A successful DC 20 Knowledge (religion) check reveals that the spirals and the inverted step pyramid are symbols of the long forgotten deity Tharizdun (NE intermediate god of eternal darkness, decay, entropy, malign knowledge and insanity).

Writings: The writing carved into the walls and columns is the inane language of babbling that Tharizdun speaks to his chosen of Darkbridge. It is unknown to any living being from this plane. A DC 25 Decipher Script suggests there is no recognizable linguistic pattern and perhaps the writing is decorative. Any PC casting a *comprehend languages* spell and attempting to understand the writing must succeed in a DC 15 Will save or go insane from the ramble thoughts of the dark god (effect as per an *insanity* spell for one minute, though no magic is involved). This is a mind-affecting effect. If successful, the PC's sanity overcomes the writings and the *comprehend languages* ends. The PC cannot remember what the writing says, but has an aversion to trying to understand it again.

Detect Magic Results: protections on the walls floor and ceiling (overwhelming abjuration); purple ambient light (faint evocation).

2: MEDITATION CHAMBER

The walls of this small, quiet shrine are decorated with murals of otherworldly horrors. Chief among them, above the altar, is a large multifaceted crystal of ebony. Impressions of many unblinking eyes and writhing tentacles lurk just beneath the prison of black stone. Careful inspection of the mural notes a small crack near the bottom of the crystal.

This room is used for quiet contemplation on the mysteries of the dark god. Due to the horrors that are often imparted and the noise of the screams of terror that follow, the meditation table is placed far from the rest of the complex.

The temple itself is one of those few places where Tharizdun still touches Oerth, and his influence is particularly strong in this room. Anyone standing or kneeling directly before the altar may feel the dark god touch his mind. Those entering the room and standing before the altar must make a DC 20 Will save. This is a mind-affecting affect. Those who succeed feel as if something brushed across their face; like having passed through a spider's web. Those that fail are driven to their knees as He of the Eternal Darkness offers up his revelation. Read:

You stand before a great altar, sweating from the combination the heavy purple robe that you wear and the many fires that are sporadically burning throughout the room. A black statue of featureless man sits before you, the height of several normal men. Somehow you know this key and the gate. Your master will return if only you can swing wide the gate. It will take a great many sacrifices, but you see them all, and you cannot help but cackle with glee knowing that the dark entity has chosen you to aid in his return.

After several minutes of kneeling and maniacal laughter, the presence leaves the minds of those that fail their Will save and they begin to feel themselves once again. Though they are under no obligation to follow through on aiding in the return of the foul being, when alone in their thoughts, they never quite feel clean again.

3: SPAWN PIT

A great pool of darkness is centered in this high ceilinged room, as if someone had reached into the starless sky and plucked down the darkest night.

Manifestations of Tharizdun's deific desires for oblivion, the spawn of Tharizdun once swam in this pool of black liquid but are now long destroyed.

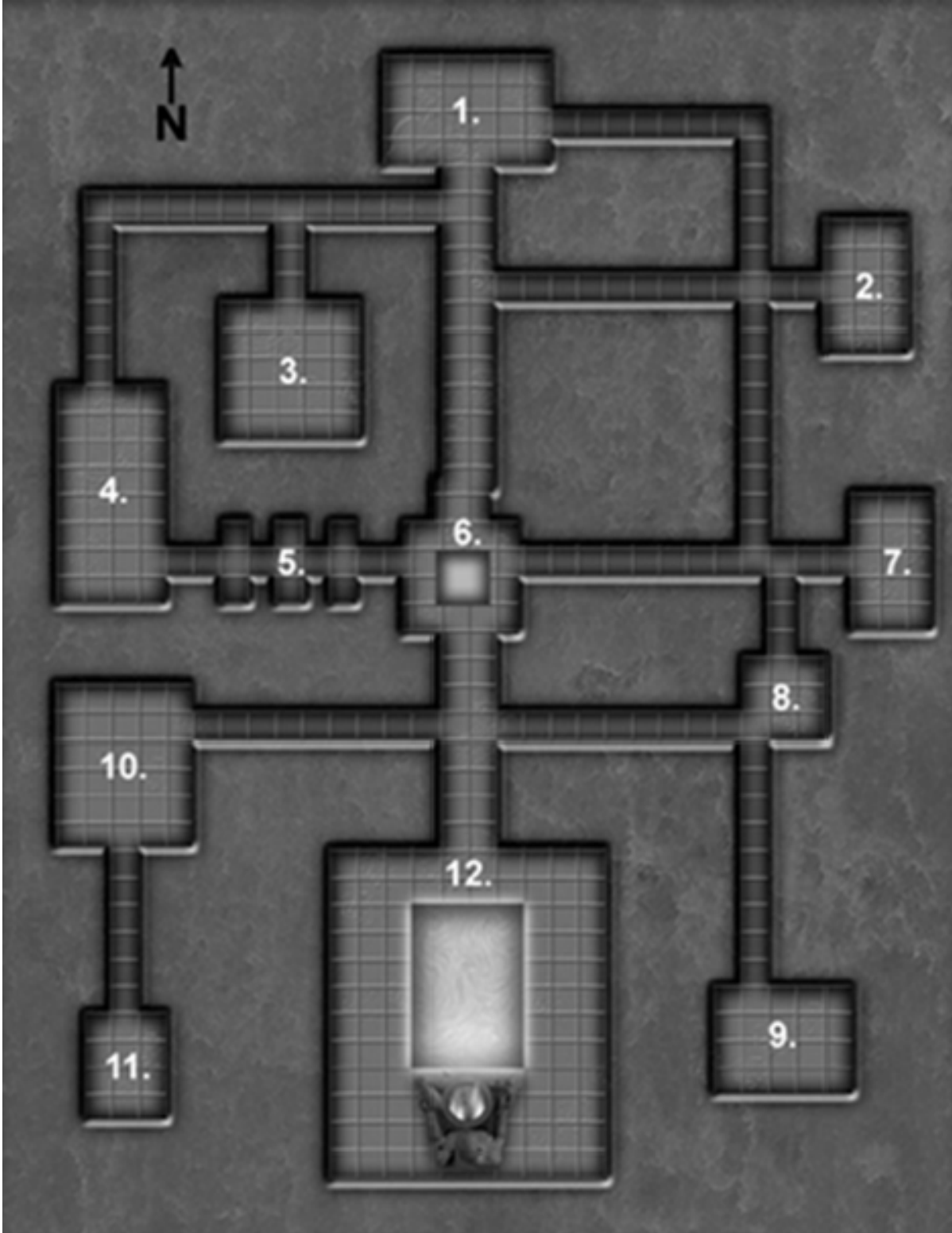
4: HALL OF HISTORY

Murals, depicting a great war, cover the walls of this great hall. In the heavens, creatures with angelic wings and glowing light do battle alongside foul

demonic creatures with claws of bone. Together they drive back a swirling darkness and force it into a yawning pit where they seal it with a great metal cover inlaid with complicated locks. At the far side, the mural shows a slim tentacle of darkness worming its way from under the locks and past the unseeing gaze of angelic and infernal guardians to a

man who holds aloft a crown decorated with the likeness of many scorpions. The darkness wraps itself around the crown and then moves inside while the man smiles with a wild, crazed look.

The walls of this room depict the great war of the gods during which Tharizdun was imprisoned. A DC 15



Knowledge (religion) check confirms the meanings of this portion of the mural.

The paintings go on to show the creation of the Scorpion Crown with the aid of the king of Sulm. (A DC 15 Knowledge (history) or bardic knowledge check confirms this). Those PCs that have played COR5-17 *Time's Tide on Bright Sands* receive a +4 circumstance bonus to this check due to their first-hand knowledge of the subject.

5: HALL OF STATUARY

Six stone statues, three to each side, flank this narrow hall. Each depicts a humanoid in heavy robes and holds their arms aloft as praising some deity. Full spiked helms cover their faces, making it impossible to identify the individuals who they represent, though each has minor differences, such as a dagger at the hip, or a jeweled amulet hanging from the neck.

The statues represent the six Doomdreamers, high priests of Tharizdun, which came together to create Darkbridge temple with the goal of bringing forth their god from his confinement. Their names are lost to time, but these statues remain.

AREA 6: OUTER FANE

The door opens onto a small room with vaulted ceilings. Two flickering torches shed an unnatural purple light upon the walls. In the center of the room is a complex statue of spiraling tentacles, all painted black. The statue takes up the majority of the room, leaving only just enough space to walk around it.

Most supplicants pass through the outer fane in order to gain access to the temple.

The Dreaming

PCs that have at least one level of sorcerer and that have played a previous adventure in the "Sins of Ages Past" or "Blight on Bright Sands" may have the Dreaming AR item. Take such PCs aside a read:

You speed through darkness. Ahead you can sense a similar power to your own. While your brethren have long been incarcerated this new power seems younger and rawer, but at the same time unknowably ancient.

Ahead a chamber rapidly comes into focus – within a cruel-faced man holds a black crown above his head. As you watch, he lowers it onto his head and somewhere deep down in the fabric of your being dark laughter echoes.

7: BARRACKS

Bunk beds and a large hearth mark this room as a barracks of some kind. Now empty, there seems little here of interest to your quest.

There is sleeping space for ten guards honored enough to watch over the lower halls. Now, there is no one left to offer a watchful eye. The beds are kept clean by the magic of the temple, but the mattresses crumble at the slightest touch.

8: GUARD POST

The door to this room is especially reinforced. Inside, a table with four chairs stands in the center of the room. Weapon racks and a small hearth with a small hanging cauldron decorate the walls.

The fortified room was a guard post for those guards on watch protecting both the temple, and any prisoners normally kept to the south. Nothing of interest remains.

AREA 9: HOLDING CELL

A slot with a sliding cover is affixed to the door to this room at eye level. Inside, a dozen sets of rusted manacles are mounted to the walls. Scattered bones lie beneath several of the manacles and dark stains litter the floor.

Sacrifices were a constant need when Darkbridge was an active temple. Slaves used for sacrifices were kept in this holding cell until such time as they could be used. Now it is empty but for a few discarded bones.

10: PRIESTS' CHAMBER

The walls of this room are a dizzying array of purple swirled with black. Three large beds stand on luxurious rugs, and mahogany wardrobes. A large mirror in a gilded frame hangs upon the south wall.

Highly favored priests of the dark one lived in this opulent chamber. There is nothing of value here.

11: HIGH PRIEST'S CHAMBER

Even more elegant than the previous chamber, this bedroom seems devoted to a single bed. The nauseating swirls of the previous room continue here, in force, evoking a sickening feeling.

The high priest's room is decorating with dizzying swirls. Anyone entering this room must succeed in a DC 8 Will save or be dazzled (-1 on attack rolls, Search checks and Spot checks) while in this room and for one minute afterwards.

DEVELOPMENT

This encounter describes areas 1-11 on the map overleaf. When the PCs reach area 12, proceed to encounter eight.

7: DARSSVOREL

PCs that have played *COR6-14 Cloud of Darkness* will have already met and interacted with Darssvorel. Darssvorel was once a blue dragon but was trapped long ago in this form. For more information on Darssvorel, his history and goals, refer to Shard of the Guron Nur below. Add the description below to the description of the area in which you place Darssvorel. Read:

The body of a desiccated human male clad in leather armor lies in the floor. One outstretched arm clutches a jaded black shard of rock almost a foot long and shot through with blue flecks.

Any PC who has played *COR6-14 Cloud of Darkness* recognizes the rock shard as Darssvorel. Once he becomes aware of the PCs he contacts them telepathically. Use the information below to roleplay Darssvorel's conversation with the PCs.

SHARD OF THE GURONN NUR

Appearance: A jagged black shard of rock shot through with blue flecks almost a foot long. It is slightly warm to the touch.

Personality: Darssvorel is vain, cunning, and territorial. As a blue dragon, he had a highly developed sense of the natural order of things and is used to being the most important being in any given locality. He is thus incredibly arrogant, although he does his best to hide this. He is unfailingly loyal to Tiamat, and will do anything in this power to reawaken the other shards. His long-term goal is to reunite the *Pentarch of Tiamat* and to re-make the *Guron Nur* itself.

History: Refer to Darssvorel and the Guron Nur on page five for more information on Darssvorel's background.

Goals: Darssvorel does not want Rary to succeed in unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* and will do anything to stop this happening. His first goal is to reach the Greater Temple. To this end he asks the PCs to carry him there. If he is given a choice, he prefers to be carried by a fighter-type – so that he might better affect them with his spells. (This could alert PCs to his duplicity – why would he contact sorcerers but desire to be carried by a fighter?) While he is carried with the party, he constantly talks about the *Scorpion Crown* and how destroying it will unleash an even more terrible curse upon the land. A PC can make a Sense Motive check against Darssvorel, but the shard gains a +5 circumstance bonus due to its lack of discernable body language.

Combat Tactics: It is likely that at some point the PCs come into conflict with him. In battle, he seeks to coerce, dominate, or charm a party member into carrying him to the Greater Temple; he does not want to fight his tools and only does so as a last resort. Darssvorel deliberately targets opponents he believes have low Will saves and telepathically orders them to carry out his will.

He is not interested in killing or wounding the PCs. To him they are insignificant tools, only barely worthy to assist him in his task of protecting the *Scorpion Crown* from destruction. The DM should determine the best way for Darssvorel to do this without forcing any dominated PCs into suicidal situations.

Note: Darssvorel's is essentially unbreakable. If he is reduced to 0 hp he is not destroyed, rather he is subdued for 1d10 days (in the same manner as a lich being destroyed but its phylactery surviving). When he is reduced to 0 hit points the shard briefly pulses with a black light.

Detect Evil Results: At all APLs, Darssvorel radiates strong evil, unless he is able to cast spells to mask his aura. See his prepared power-up suite for more details.

Detect Magic Results: At all APLs, Darssvorel radiates overwhelming magic of an indeterminable type (DC 24 Spellcraft check reveals in conjunction with *detect magic*).

DREAMING

If any PC in the group has the Dreaming AR item from an adventure in the "Sins of Ages Past" or "Blight on Bright Sands" Darssvorel is immediately aware of this fact. He contacts such PCs separately. Read:

You are of me. You are my brethren. We must stand together. You must stop him. He is mad. To unmake the Scorpion Crown is an act of hubris unrivalled. He seeks the defeat of a god!

PCs may assume that Darssvorel means that Rary seeks to destroy or defeat Vathris, but he does not. Instead, he is terrified that Tharizdun's tenuous grip upon the Oerth would be greatly weakened by the *Scorpion Crown's* destruction.

PREVIOUS AR ITEMS

Some AR items from previous adventures can affect play here:

Beloved of Tiamat (COR6-14 Cloud of Darkness): Darssvorel recognizes any PC with this AR item and plays upon their shared heritage – even revealing details of how he became trapped in the *Guron Nur* fragment. In conversation with Darssvorel, the PC gains all the bonuses and penalties listed in the item description.

Enemy of Tiamat (COR6-14 Cloud of Darkness): unless he has no choice, he shuns PCs with this AR item. In conversation with Darssvorel, the PC gains all the bonuses and penalties listed in the item description.

AREA FEATURES

As well as the features of the area in which Darssvorel is found add use the following features to facilitate play:

Dead Adventurer: The adventurer coerced by Darssvorel to carry him here is dead. The PCs can loot his body. Refer to the Treasure Summary to determine what they find.

8: GREATER TEMPLE

The Greater Temple was the centre of worship of the Slumbering One in Darkbridge. It has not been used for centuries.

A pair of great doors bars entrance to this room. Embossed upon the black metal is a great spiral, with no beginning or end, causing you to feel dizzy, as if you are being drawn inside its tendrils.

When the PCs approach within fifteen feet of the greater temple, the magic of the doors begins to play upon them.

Magic of the Doors: All who can see the doors must succeed on a DC 13 Will save. Those that succeed feel a wooziness but are unharmed. Failure indicates the target stumbles to its knees helpless with overwhelming vertigo. The feeling passes after two rounds. This is a mind-affecting effect and those with the Madness domain are immune.

BREACHING THE DOORS

Once the PCs proceed through the doors, read:

The room beyond the imposing metal doors is vast, with the ceiling of black stone more than forty feet above you. The floor glows sickly purple.

Past the strange, glowing floor sits an immense statue of a seated, cross-legged, and featureless man, his head barely below the ceiling. A great basin of purple flame flickers in his lap, within which you catch a glimpse of a black crown. Lying in front of the statue is a man with a terrible stomach wound surrounded by a pool of black ichor. He clutches a black spear. Nearby, a cage composed of glowing bars of pure force holds a huge manscorpion.

A man wearing a simple robe of Ketite cut and holding an ornately carved staff intones the last words of a spell from a scroll. Instantly, a wall of scintillating colors blocks the chamber obscuring the statue and man.

Once he has finished his spell, Rary holds his hands up in a gesture of peace – he would much rather negotiate with the intruders than waste strength destroying them. Unfortunately, moments later a horde of manscorpions breaks into the chamber intent on stopping Rary.

MANSCORPION HORDE

Crazed by battle and maddened by the proximity of Shattados and the Scorpion Crown they blindly attack. A PC making DC 0 Listen check has two rounds warning of their approach. While a veritable horde of manscorpions bursts into the chamber, most charge Rary. Only the creatures listed below fight the PCs.

APL 10 (EL 12)

➤ **Manscorpion Warrior (5):** male manscorpion barbarian 3/scout 1; hp 90; Appendix 1.

APL 12 (EL 14)

➤ **Manscorpion Warrior (5):** male manscorpion barbarian 5/scout 1; hp 111; Appendix 1.

APL 14 (EL 16)

➤ **Manscorpion Warrior (5):** male manscorpion barbarian 7/scout 1; hp 145; Appendix 1.

Tactics: The manscorpions are in a berserk rage and do not use sophisticated battle-tactics. They simply charge intent on destroying anyone standing against them. They have already drunk any relevant potions or applied any oils listed in their stat blocks and fight until killed.

RARY'S AID

Rary is not going to let this attack ruin his plans. He uses his *staff of the magi* to deal with this threat (saving his personal spells for a greater threat - the PCs may also be here to stop him).

Init: +5; **Staff of the Magi:** Each power consumes 1 charge (keep track of charges expended); *lightning bolt*, *fireball*, *ice storm*, *wall of fire* and *web*. Do not work out the game effects of these powers; simply describe the manscorpions being burnt, crushed, electrocuted and so on. Rary destroys the last manscorpion attacking him seconds after the PCs slay their last opponent.

CHAMBER'S FEATURES

The chamber has the following features of note:

Glowing Floor: The area of the floor marked upon the map emits *light* (CL 20).

Prismatic Wall: Rary has cast a *prismatic wall* (PH 264; DC 28 Spellcraft check identifies) across the chamber in front of the altar.

Glowing Cage: This is a *forcecage* (PH 233; DC 27 Spellcraft check identifies). The manscorpion within is Shattados himself. (PC that have played COR2-08 *Echo* recognizes him.) Within the cage, he is essentially helpless and is easily slain.

Statue and Basin: The basin at the feet of the statue is where the *Scorpion Crown* was forged, and it is only here where the ritual to unmake it can be successful. The flames radiate a deep chill and become soul chillingly painful up close. Anyone placing their hand within suffers 3d6 points of cold damage per round (no save) as they are painfully erased from existence.

Symbol of Stunning: Rary has inscribed a *symbol of stunning* upon the front of the man-statue. This activates if the *prismatic wall* is dispelled or if any of the normal triggers for a symbol (PH 290) occur.

DEVELOPMENT

After the battle, the PCs have the option of talking to Rary or attacking him. Proceed to encounter nine.

9: THE MAGE AND THE GOD

In this encounter, the PCs finally meet Rary, Emperor of the Bright Lands and one-time member of the Circle of Eight. They have a chance to talk with him and to find out his true motivations for destroying the *Scorpion Crown*.

If the PCs talk to Rary, proceed to Talking with the Perfidious One, below.

When or if the PCs speak with Vathris proceed to the Fallen God.

Of course, many PCs may just attack him blindly. If they opt to do so, proceed to Fighting the Perfidious One below, but make it clear to them before combat starts that this is an untiered encounter.

The man before you wears a simple tan robe and has the dark good looks of a Bakluni. Somewhere in his mid-fifties, he exudes quiet dignity and reflection. He sparkling deep green eyes betray nothing of his feelings toward you.

All APLs (EL 24)

☞ **Rary the Traitor:** male human wizard 24; hp 169; Appendix 1.

TALKING WITH THE PERFIDIOUS ONE

Rary is happy to speak with the PCs as long as doing so does not endanger the ritual. The PCs likely have many questions. Some likely questions (and their answers) appear below. Use this information as a guide, ad-libbing where necessary. If time is short, or your players do not want to roleplay this exchange, simply ask what questions they put to Rary and paraphrase the answers.

Why do you really want to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*? The *Scorpion Crown* is one of the most powerful and dangerous artifacts extant in the Flanaess today. It provides a tenuous link to He Who Slumbers and as such is a danger to every living thing upon the Oerth. Its power must be broken. Doing so will sever the Sleeping One's link to the Flanaess and sunder the curse's hold over these lands and their people. The people of Sulm will be returned to their own forms, free of the curse keeping them locked in the shapes of manscorpions. Similarly, the asherati will revert to their normal forms. Is this not a good thing?

Why should you benefit from unmaking the *Scorpion Crown*? Why should I not? Unmaking the crown is a dangerous and difficult ritual. Few alive today could even attempt it. Fewer still would be successful. I act to break its curse. Should I not be rewarded for that?

What have you done with Vathris? Nothing. Vathris is a willing participant in what must be. If you do not believe me, ask him yourself. (When the PCs speak to Vathris refer to the Fallen God section, but the PCs may struggle to break through the *prismatic wall*.)

Why did you betray the Circle of Eight on the Day of Great Signing? The weak fools sought peace when war was the only way to defeat Iuz permanently.

While they temporarily ended the pain and suffering of the civilized nations the final confrontation was but postponed. Mordenkainen is a fool – obsessed with his precious balance. Only through decisive action can peace be achieved.

Why did you kill Karistyne? She opposed me for too long. I acted for the greater good on the Flanaess. Her life – her sacrifice – is nothing compared to those that I have saved.

What has become of Ulma? She is here. She is safe.

What will you do once the *Scorpion Crown* is unmade? I shall rule my empire. There will be much to do. As the sands recede and the cursed return to their original forms I will re-forge Sulm in my own image.

I do not see Robilar here. What has become of him? “Robilar” is walking his own path, now. He was useful for a while, but now I do not need him.

FALLEN GOD

At some point in this encounter, or perhaps during encounter ten when the ancient dead of Sulm attack, the PCs may speak with Vathris.

Vathris lies near death behind the *prismatic wall*. He has sustained wounds that would kill any mortal but still clings to life. He is still able to talk and surprisingly enough is actually a willing participant in Rary's scheme. The PCs will almost certainly have questions. Those questions and their answers appear below.

Do you really agree with what Rary is doing? Yes (grudgingly). While I have no love for Rary what he is doing must be done.

Why is unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* so important? Because of what it is. The crown is not just an artifact it is of the Lord of All Evil himself. It is a physical link between himself and Oerth. As long as it – and its ilk – exists, Oerth is in danger.

Do you worry that the ritual will give Rary more power? Yes. For a mortal, he is very powerful. The Bright Desert will slowly revert to arid grasslands and those twisted into the form of manscorpions and asheratis will return to their normal forms. All this plays to him. In one strike, he gains a fertile base for his empire and a whole legion of new followers. Both grow his temporal power and increase his threat to the surrounding kingdoms.

How will Rary complete the ritual? He will take this spear (he gestures to the black spear nearby) and stab me through the heart. He will then take the spear dripping with my blood and strike the *Scorpion Crown* with it. My blood infused with the evil of the spear will sunder the crown destroying the Sleeper's link to it. As the crown is broken the green man – a spirit of nature – trapped for so long will use the last flower of Sulm as an anchor with which it can escape the crown's destruction.

Development: After a short conversation, Vathris succumbs to his wounds and falls unconscious. Such is the extent of his wounds that mortal magic has no effect on him. He does not regain consciousness.

ULMA

Initially Ulma is out of sight, huddled behind the forcecage containing her father, Shattados. While she is under no magical compulsions – Rary does not need them to keep her here – she is almost catatonic with fear. Her mind does not register exactly what is going on. Since Rary captured her she has seen him wrought unimaginably powerful magics and defeat a god!

Appearance: A young Flan woman, her porcelain skin stained with dirt and tears huddles on the floor. Her black hair tousled partially obscures a colorful tattoo decorating the right side of her face. A deep red thornless rose held by an ornate pin pierces the tumbled mass of her hair.

Personality: Normally quite plucky, her recent experiences have rocked her understanding of the world to the core. PCs must make a DC 30 Diplomacy check to coax her from her fear. Alternatively, a *calm emotions* or similar spell suffices. Rary has told her he plans to unmake the *Scorpion Crown* but she dares not believe him.

Goals: Ulma does not want Rary to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. She tries to get the PCs to stop him.

PREVIOUS AR ITEMS

Some AR items from previous adventures affect play here:

Honored Ally of Rary (COR6-16 *Dominion Over Bright Sands*): Rary has had dealings with such PCs before and trusts them to a certain degree, although he is still wary of their presence. Such PCs can pass through the *prismatic wall* without harmful effect and are immune to the *symbol of stunning*. He allows such PCs to speak with Vathris (see the Fallen God section).

Karistyne's Ashes (COR8-05 *Pyre of the Righteous*): If Rary realizes that any of the PCs carry Karistyne's ashes he offers them a deal. If they do not hinder the ritual, he will give them the thinuan blade containing the paladin's soul, which will allow them to return Karistyne to life.

FIGHTING THE PERFIDIOUS ONE

If the PCs decide to attack Rary, make it clear to them that they face an archmage of almost unparalleled might upon the face of the Oerth. Fighting Rary is an act of sheer foolishness, destined to end in the death of many of the PCs. This is an untiered encounter.

Tactics: Rary does not want to fight the PCs, but if forced to do so acts to neutralize or kill them as quickly and efficiently as possible; he is too close to his final goal now to risk defeat. Remember when running Rary that he is an incredibly powerful and intelligent spellcaster. Suggested tactics (and their effects) appear below in bullet form, but if the situation warrants it, improvise. In general he prefers to rely on his own spells instead of his magic items as his spells are far harder to resist. If the PCs surrender or call for a parley, Rary immediately honors their request, but is alert for treachery.

Normal Protective Suite: Rary cast *extended mind blank* on himself yesterday. He also cast *peripety* (Appendix 2) before travelling to Darkbridge and *extended stoneskin* before starting the ritual. These effects are included in his stat block. Effects of the spells listed below are not.

- **Round 1:** Cast *time stop* (PH 294) and use the subsequent 1d4+1 rounds to cast the following spells: Round 1: quickened *greater heroism* (+4 morale bonus on attack rolls, saves and skill checks, immunity to fear, 20 temporary hp), quickened *bear's endurance* (+2 to Fort saves, gains 28 hp) and *greater invisibility*; **Round 2:** quickened *displacement* and *protection from spells* (+8 bonus on saves against spells or spell-like abilities); **Round 3:** *project image* (off to one side away from the altar; all spell effects emanate from the image) **Round 4:** uses a scroll to summon an elder earth elemental (MM 97) with *summon monster* XI; **Round 5:** *summon monster* VIII (vrock; MM 48). The effects of these spells are not included in Rary's stat block.
- **Round 2:** Cast *power word kill* (PH 263; no save, subject dies if it has less than 100 hp) on a wizard-type opponent and then quickened *mass suggestion* (Will DC 29).
- **Round 3:** Cast *repulsion* (Will DC 29) and use a quickened *wall of force* to divide the party followed up with a quickened *charm person* (DC 24) on a character with a low Will save.
- **Round 4:** Cast *power word stun* (PH 264, no save).
- **Round 5:** Cast *power word blind* (PH 263, no save).
- **Round 6:** Cast *mass suggestion* (Will DC 29) if more than one PC is still active.
- **Variable Round:** When his summoned allies are defeated he moves closer to part of the party (to within 30 ft. if possible but away from summoned creatures) and cast *mass charm monster* (PH 209; 28 HD; Will DC 31 negates).
- **General Tactic:** Target an arcane spellcaster with *feeblemind* (DC 28 resists [additional -4 penalty for arcane spellcaster]).
- **General Tactic:** Use 2 charges from his *staff of the magi* to cast *summon monster* IX (elder air elemental).
- **Grapple Tactic:** Cast *let go of me* (Fort DC 33 halves) Appendix 2; free action) and quickened *dimension door* (or just quickened *dimension door* if badly injured).
- **Escape Tactic:** Use *greater teleport* to flee if in exceptional peril. Alternatively, he steps through the *prismatic wall* to rest and recover. If he manages this (and no one follows) he starts the ritual anyway...
- **Last Resort:** As a last resort, he breaks his *staff of the magi* causing a retributive strike. At the start of the adventure, the staff was fully charged.

CHAMBER FEATURES

See encounter eight for details of the chamber's features.

DEVELOPMENT

Once the conversation begins to wind down, the final guardians of Sulm burst into the chamber in an attempt to stop Rary.

10: THE ANCIENT DEAD

As conversation between the PCs and Rary is winding down either the PCs agree with Rary that the *Scorpion Crown* must be destroyed or they are planning a (possibly suicidal) attack upon the archmage.

However, at this juncture fate takes a turn. Ancient guardians of Sulm's holy places alerted by the sounds of battle and the nearness of the crown burst into the chamber.

A horrific nest of withered, desiccated tentacles bursts out of the floor. Behind the tentacles is a barrel-like body wrapped in centuries-old funeral dressings. Two staring orbs surmount the gargantuan form. Beyond the creature stands a desiccated human clad in wisps of burial shrouds.

During the chaos of the resulting battle, Rary's attention is distracted. At this point, the PCs could do several things:

- They could attack or defend Rary.
- They could behind the *prismatic wall* to either talk to Vathris if they have not done so already or disrupt the ritual in some way.

APL 10 (EL 14)

☛ **Anastarum:** Large manscorpion lich sorcerer 11; hp 116; Appendix 1.

☛ **Crawling Apocalypse (1):** hp 230; Appendix 1.

☛ **Mummy Warriors (20):** hp 55; MM 190.

APL 12 (EL 16)

☛ **Anastarum:** Large manscorpion lich sorcerer 13; hp 131; Appendix 1.

☛ **Advanced 24 HD Crawling Apocalypse (1):** hp 276; Appendix 1.

☛ **Mummy Warriors (20):** hp 55; MM 190.

APL 14 (EL 18)

☛ **Anastarum:** Large manscorpion lich sorcerer 15; hp 145; Appendix 1.

☛ **Advanced 28 HD Crawling Apocalypse (1):** hp 322; Appendix 1.

☛ **Mummy Warriors (20):** hp 55; MM 190.

Tactics: The guardians' actions in this encounter break down into two basic sets: the mummies attack Rary while the other combatants concentrate on eliminating the PCs before turning their attention to Rary.

Mummy Tactics: The mummies shuffle toward Rary, trying to rend him to pieces. Intent on their prey,

they ignore everyone else unless another opponent attacks them.

Crawling Apocalypse Tactics: The crawling apocalypse tries to stay between the PCs and Anastarum. If it get a chance, it tries to push opponents into the *prismatic wall*.

Anastarum's Tactics: Anastarum stays behind the crawling apocalypse and any other servitor creatures he brings to battle. He uses his various attack spells to kill or hinder opponent spellcasters.

Rary's Tactics: He uses his *staff of the magi* to deal with this threat (saving his personal spells for a greater threat - the PCs may also be here to stop him). If the PCs side with him and they are in trouble, Rary aids them directly using his staff or other magic items.

Init: +5; **Staff of the Magi:** Each power consumes 1 charge (keep track of expended charges); *lightning bolt*, *fireball*, *ice storm*, *wall of fire* and *web*. Do not bother working out the game effects of these powers – such slows down game play; simply describe the mummies being burnt, crushed, electrocuted and so on. Rary destroys the last mummy seconds before the PCs slay their last opponent.

INTERRUPTING THE RITUAL

If the PCs decide to disrupt the ritual in some way, listen to their scheme and adjudicate the results as necessary. However, reward clever play. There are many ways inventive PCs could disrupt the ritual. Examples of this appear below. First they must get behind the *prismatic wall*. Many methods can achieve this include *dimension door*, *stone shape* and so on; again reward creative play.

Kill Vathris: If the PCs kill Vathris with a weapon other than his spear his life energy is expended before it can be used in the ritual.

Steal the spear or the Last Flower of Sulm: If the PCs steal these items they had better flee quickly before Rary discovers the theft. If they give the items to Tenser this effectively puts them out of Rary's reach. If they hide them elsewhere Rary eventually finds them and complete the ritual.

Destroying the spear or the Last Flower of Sulm: Destroying the Last Flower of Sulm is simple (it is no more hardy than an ordinary flower), but this has the side effect of exposing Ulma to the full effects of the *Scorpion Crown's* curse. The spear, however, is tougher to destroy (hardness 26, hp 110).

DEVELOPMENT

At the end of this encounter, Rary is either dead, the PCs have stymied his scheme, or he is preparing to complete the unmaking ritual.

Rary Dead: If the PCs kill or drive off Rary, they have completed a feat almost unrivaled in the annals of the Flanaess. Proceed to Conclusion B.

Rary Alive: If Rary is still alive and the PCs have not disrupted his plans he now completes his final preparations for the unmaking ritual. Proceed to Encounter Eleven.

Ritual Interrupted: If the PCs disrupt the ritual so that Rary cannot complete the unmaking he is surpassingly angry. It would be in their interests to flee swiftly. He does not pursue in the immediate short-term he is too busy salvaging what he can from his defeat. Proceed to Conclusion B.

11: THE RITUAL

Run this encounter, if Rary begins the ritual to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*. At this point, while he is no less vulnerable to physical damage, he is distracted and the PCs could act quickly to stall this final ceremony. This is the PCs' final chance to stop Rary.

THE RITUAL

The ritual comprises the following stages. Do not read all this out verbatim, instead paraphrase or elaborate as the players' moods direct. If the PCs have indicated that they want him to complete the ritual, Rary drops the *prismatic wall* so that they can witness his crowning achievement.

The Last Flower

When Rary begins the ritual, read the following adjusting it to take into account any PCs' interruptions:

Rary stoops before Ulma and gently teases the deep red rose from her tousled hair. As he does, she moans in terror and reaches for him. He deftly steps back and murmurs, "Be still my child; do not resist the change."

Darkness seems to gather about the princess. Ulma begins to jerk wildly, arching her back until only her head and feet touch the floor. She screams in agony as he skin stretches and cracks. Blood splatters the surrounding floor as from her very bones the segmented form of a scorpion seems to grow. She writhes as the process continues, her arms and legs elongate as and from her back a wicked tail capped with a stinger dripping black venom

"Subdue her!" shouts Rary as he turns back to the statue.

Use the stats for a normal manscorpion presented in Appendix 1, but she has no equipment. Rary does not want Ulma dead – she is after all a royal princess of Sulm. If none of the PCs are allied to Rary or refuse to help, he uses his powerful magics to subdue her. After thus commanding the PCs, Rary places the rose in a small silver tripod and prepares for the next part of the ritual

All APLs

 **Ulma:** female manscorpion barbarian 1/scout 1; hp 53; Appendix 1.

The Death of Vathris

When Rary begins the next phase of the ritual, read the following adjusting it to take into account any PCs' interruptions:

With sure steps (and now chanting under his breath words of immeasurable power), Rary moves to Vathris' prostrate form. From the godling's, limp fingers he teases the long, barded black onyx spear. Standing astride Vathris he raises the spear high in the air and, as his chanting reaches its climax, drives the spear deep into his chest. Vathris convulses, grasps the spear's haft reflexively. His eyes flutter open and he manages a weak smile. "It is done," he whispers as his life's blood gushes from his body.

With Vathris dead, Rary proceeds to the ritual's conclusion.

Striking the Crown

Read the following adjusting it to take into account any PCs' interruptions:

Rary moves in front of the statue and raises the spear high. Vathris' blood drips into the purple flames, immediately dousing them. With a shout of triumph, Rary stabs down into the bowl, striking the Scorpion Crown.

For an instant, nothing happens. Then a deep bellow of pain fills the chamber, throwing everyone to the floor. As you watch, a nimbus of light begins to glow from the bowl. Lightning crackles about the crown and along the spear swiftly consuming both. As you watch, the nimbus of light quickly dims becoming an orb of deepest ebon. From within, an inhuman scream blasts into the chamber striking the crown, shards of which are hurled across the room.

Then, all is silence. Slowly, small motes of green light rise from the crown's shards. As they gather, they glow brighter and begin to move together, coalescing into a roughly man-shaped glowing figure around the Last Flower of Sulm. The flower begins to shrivel and die as the glow given off from the figure grows, blinding you with its intensity before abruptly disappearing.

"It is done," wheezes Rary as he slumps down, exhausted.

Rary has succeeded. He has unmade the *Scorpion Crown* and successfully brought the region's green man back to Oerth.

DEVELOPMENT

If Rary successfully completes the ritual, proceed to Conclusion A.

If the PCs reconsider and attack Rary use the statistics and tactics presented in encounter nine. If they successfully disrupt proceedings or kill him, proceed to Conclusion B.

CONCLUSION

Proceed to the relevant Conclusion.

A: THE SCORPION CROWN UNMADE

Use this conclusion, if Rary unmakes the *Scorpion Crown*. The land does not immediately return to its natural state (that of arid grasslands) and those trapped in asheratis or manscorpion form do not immediately revert to their normal forms. It takes many months even for the process to begin such is the depth and efficacy of the *Scorpion Crown's* curse.

Deafening silence fills the chamber. Then, suddenly the purple light radiating from the floor dims and them winks out. Similarly, the strange cold-flames filling the great basin in front of the statue suddenly die down and extinguish as if smothered. You sense the passing of something as the very air within the temple lightens.

Above, reaching the light of day, little has changed. The desert sands still cloy at the walls of Darkbridge but the wind that caresses your face seems lighter and cooler than any that has blown here for many centuries. While the curse's hold is now broken, it will take many years for the green man to repair the damage wrought by Tharizdun's fatal gift.

Read the following only to PCs with Dreaming AR item:

You sleep and in that sleep you dream for the last time. You are flying high above the land, so high that you can see that the Oerth is a great sphere hanging in inky darkness. As you watch, a deeper cloud of darkness moves away from Oerth. You strongly sense the great evil within that cloud and its desire to stay, but some other force pulls it away at terrifying speed. As you watch, it disappears into the darkness leaving behind naught but a scream of pure anger and rage that reverberates through your soul. For the first time in many long years you sleep peacefully.

B: THE SCORPION CROWN WHOLE

Use this conclusion, if the PCs did not allow Rary to unmake the *Scorpion Crown*.

The ritual disrupted, the Bright Desert remains unchanged, a wasteland of sand and infernal heat. The curse of the Scorpion Crown yet hovers over the region like a malign entity, trapping the unfortunate progeny of Sulm in the forms of manscorpions and asheratis.

If Rary remains alive, read the following:

You have incurred the wrath of one of the most powerful wizards of the Flanaess and no doubt he

will seek you out at some time in the future. For now, however, he has little regard for you, crouched as he is in the wreckage of his perfidious plans. Again, you have stymied his plans, but this time you sense that he cannot try again. The Flanaess is safe!

If Rary is slain during the course of this adventure, read:

You have managed a feat almost unmatched in recent history – the death of one of the most powerful wizards in the Flanaess. Your danger is not yet over, however. Rary had many powerful allies who may now seek your defeat and no doubt, he has more than one clone in readiness for such a situation.

Still, you gained everlasting fame as his slayer and now many who discounted you as inconsequential will tremble in fear of your wrath.

Read the following only to PCs with Dreaming AR item:

You sleep and in that sleep you fly high above the land, so high that you can see that the Oerth is a great sphere hanging in inky darkness. As your eyes adjust to the darkness you make out a deeper cloud of darkness hanging over the Oerth. As you watch, you realize that some force seems to be pulling it downwards almost imperceptibly towards the sunlit lands of the Flanaess. Something is terribly wrong. Soon the black cloud will reach the Oerth and when that happens, you sense that terrible things will happen. You wake with a start, covered in sweat and trembling violently. What have you done?

CAMPAIGN CONSEQUENCES

This is the concluding part of "Rise of the Ancients." As such, the outcome of this adventure has major consequences for the Bright Lands and surrounding areas.

If you play this adventure before 31 December 2008, please report the answers to the below questions to creighton@greyworks.co.uk; the fate of the Flanaess lies with you!

1. Was Rary slain?
2. Did he unmake the *Scorpion Crown*?

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.

2: Plain of Spears

Destroy the swordwraiths

APL 10	300 XP
APL 12	360 XP
APL 14	420 XP

8: Greater Temple

Slay the manscorpions

APL 10	360 XP
APL 12	420 XP
APL 14	480 XP

10: The Ancient Dead

Defeat the ancient dead of Sulm

APL 10	420 XP
APL 12	460 XP
APL 14	540 XP

Discretionary Roleplaying Award

APL 10	270 XP
APL 12	315 XP
APL 14	360 XP

Total Possible Experience

APL 10	1,350 XP
APL 12	1,575 XP
APL 14	1,800 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: Plain of Spears

APL 10: Loot 41 gp; Magic 931 gp; +1 *breastplate* (3) (337 gp [112 gp each]), +1 *falchion* (3) (594 gp [198 gp each]); Total 972 gp.

APL 12: Loot 41 gp; Magic 1,680 gp; +2 *breastplate* (3) (1,086 gp [362 gp each]), +1 *falchion* (3) (594 gp [198 gp each]); Total 1,721 gp.

APL 14: Loot 41 gp; Magic 3,180 gp; +2 *breastplate* (3) (1,086 gp [362 gp each]), +1 *human bane falchion* (3) (2,094 gp [698 gp each]); Total 3,221 gp.

8: Greater Temple

APL 10: Loot 105 gp; Magic 1,460 gp; *devastation gauntlet* (3) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *anklet of translocation* (3) (585 gp [117 gp each]), *potion of magic fang* (10) (40 gp [4 gp each]); Total 1,565 gp.

APL 12: Loot 105 gp; Magic 2,295 gp; *devastation gauntlet* (3) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *anklet of translocation* (3) (585 gp [117 gp each]), *torc of displacement* (5) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *potion of magic fang* (10) (40 gp [4 gp each]), Total 2,400 gp.

APL 14: Loot 105 gp; Magic 3,545 gp; *devastation gauntlet* (3) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *anklet of translocation* (3) (585 gp [117 gp each]), *torc of displacement* (5) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *potion of magic fang* (10) (40 gp [4 gp each]), *ring of protection +1* (5) (835 gp [167 gp each]), *cloak of resistance +1* (5) (415 gp [83 gp each]); Total 3,650 gp.

10: The Ancient Dead

APL 10: Magic: *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *gloves of arrow snaring* (333 gp), *ring of protection +2* (666 gp), *cloak of resistance +2* (333 gp); Total 1,665 gp.

APL 12: Magic: *ring of counterspells* (333 gp), *gloves of arrow snaring* (333 gp), *ring of protection +2* (666 gp), *cloak of resistance +2* (333 gp), *lesser metamagic rod of maximize* (1,167 gp); Total 2,832 gp.

APL 14: Magic: ring of counterspells (333 gp), gloves of arrow snaring (333 gp), ring of protection +2 (666 gp), cloak of resistance +2 (333 gp), lesser metamagic rod of maximize (1,167 gp), beholder crown (1,666 gp); Total 4,498 gp.

Treasure Cap

APL 10: 2,300 gp; **APL 12:** 3,300 gp; **APL 14:** 6,600 gp

Total Possible Treasure

APL 10: 4,202 gp; **APL 12:** 6,953 gp; **APL 14:** 11,369 gp

ADVENTURE RECORD ITEMS

The PCs can gain the following AR items in this adventure:

Slayer of the Traitor: Any PC that helps to kill Rary gets this AR item.

Honored of the Empire: Any PC that does actively stymie the unmaking ritual receives this AR item.

Boon Companion of Tenser: Any PC that helps to prevent Rary unmaking the *Scorpion Crown* receives this AR item.

☛ **Slayer of the Traitor:** You have killed one of the most powerful wizards to have walked the Flanaess since the fall of the Suel Imperium. Such personages do not usually permanently die at the first attempt and no doubt he has marked you for revenge.

☛ **Honored of the Empire:** Rary acknowledges your wisdom and perspicacity for aiding him in unmaking the *Scorpion Crown*. He names you “Honored of the Empire” and provides you with a sumptuous dwelling close to his tower. He pronounces you his great friends and may ask you in the future to undertake tasks he can only trust to those beyond suspicion and reproach. Finally, this AR item may unlock you a final AR.

☛ **Boon Companion of Tenser:** Tenser’s joy at your deeds knows no bounds. In recognition of your incredible feat, he opens the Fortress of Unknown Depths and the village of Magepoint to you. He assigns you quarters within the castle and provides you access to his considerable resources. Additionally, he invites you to join his fledgling organisation – the Citadel of Light –, which is dedicated to fighting evil throughout the Flanaess. Entry to this august body is by invitation only and is truly a great honor. Finally, this AR item may unlock you a final AR.

☛ **Blood of Vathris:** You were present when the god Vathris died. Such an act on his part is an example of self-sacrifice and nobility seldom seen in the Flanaess. Consequently, you may once, as an immediate action, cast *shield other* (CL 20) on a companion within range. Additionally, as a special condition of using this favour when you cast the spell, you can choose to take 50%, 75%, or 100% of such damage. Once you have made this choice, you cannot change the amount of damage you accept.

ITEM ACCESS

Note: The PCs only gain access to the items at APL 6 if they slay Rary.

APL 6:

Staff of the magi (Adventure; DMG)

Gem of seeing (Core; DMG)

Pale green ioun stone (Core; DMG)

Ring of mind shielding stone destrier (Core; DMG)

Heward’s handy haversack (Core; DMG)

Ring of wizardry IV (Core; DMG)

+1 dagger of spell storing (Core; DMG)

APL 10:

Anklet of translocation (Core; MIC)

Devastation gauntlets (Adventure; MIC)

Ring of counterspells (Any; DMG)

APL 12 (all of APL 10 plus the following):

Torc of displacement (Core; MIC)

Lesser metamagic rod of maximize (Core; DMG)

APL 14 (all of APLs 10-12 plus the following):

+1 human bane falchion (Core; DMG)

Beholder crown (Adventure; MIC)

APPENDIX 1: ALL APLS

3: SHARDS OF ITAR

ULGAR

CR 6

Male human ghost fighter 4

NG Medium undead (incorporeal)

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Common

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20 (ethereal); Combat Expertise

(+1 Dex, +8 armor, +2 shield)

AC 12, touch 12, flat-footed 11 (manifested); Combat Expertise

(+1 Dex, +1 deflection)

hp 32 (4 HD)

Miss Chance 50% incorporeal

Resist turn resistance +4

Immunities ability damage to Str, Dex, Con, ability drain, critical hits, death effects, death from massive damage, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless it also affects objects or is harmless)

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Speed fly 30 ft. (perfect)

Melee mwk longsword +9 (1d8+5/19-20) or

Ranged composite longbow +6 (1d8+3/x3)

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +7

Atk Options Mounted Combat, Quick Draw

Special Actions corrupting gaze, frightful moan, telekinesis

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con —, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 12

SQ incorporeal traits, manifestation, rejuvenation

Feats Combat Expertise, Improved Initiative, Mounted Combat, Quick Draw, Weapon Focus (longsword), Weapon Specialization (longsword)

Skills Appraise +2, Climb -3, Handle Animal +5, Hide +4, Intimidate +5, Jump -8, Listen +9, Move Silently -4, Ride +9, Search +9, Spot +9, Swim -9

Possessions *cloak of resistance* +1, composite longbow (+3 Strength bonus) with 50 arrows, masterwork full plate, masterwork longsword, heavy steel shield

Corrupting Gaze (Su) Ulgar can blast living targets with his glance up to a range of 30 feet. Creatures must succeed on a DC 13 Fortitude save or take 2d10 points of damage and 1d4 points of Charisma damage.

Frightful Moan (Su) Ulgar can emit a frightful moan as a standard action. All living creatures within a 30-foot spread must succeed on a DC 13 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 the same ghost's moan for 24 hours.

Telekinesis (Su) Ulgar can use telekinesis as a standard action (CL 12th). When he uses this power he must wait 1d4 rounds before using it again.

4: BRIDGE OF DARKNESS

MEZZOLOTH*

CR 6

*MM III 200

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, Yugoloth)

Init +5; **Senses** Listen +13, Spot +13

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 21, touch 11, flat-footed 20

(+1 Dex, +8 natural, +2 shield)

hp 95 (10 HD); **DR** 10/good

Immune acid, poison

Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 22

Fort +12, **Ref** +8, **Will** +7

Speed 40 ft. (8 squares)

Melee +1 *trident* +15/+10 (1d8+4/19-20) or 2 claws +13 each (1d4+3)

Ranged +1 *trident* +13 (1d8+4/19-20)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +13

Atk Options Power Attack

Special Actions summon yugoloth

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 10th):

At will—*cause fear* (DC 13), *darkness*, *desecrate*, *produce flame*, *see invisibility*;

2/day—*cloudkill* (DC 17), *dispel magic*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 lb or objects; CL 14th)

Abilities Str 16, Dex 12, Con 21, Int 7, Wis 10, Cha 14

Feats Improved Critical (trident), Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (trident)

Skills Hide +12, Intimidate +15, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +13, Move Silently +12, Spot +13

Possessions heavy steel shield

Summon Yugoloth (Ex) Once per day, a mezzoloth can attempt to summon another mezzoloth with a 40% chance of success.

NYCALOTH*

CR 10

*MM III 203

NE Large outsider (evil, extraplanar, Yugoloth)

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +19, Spot +19

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 33, touch 10, flat-footed 31; Mobility

(-2 size, +2 Dex, +7 armor, +16 natural)

hp 161 (14 HD); **DR** 10/good

Immune acid, poison

Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 24

Fort +16, **Ref** +11, **Will** +11

Speed 30 ft. in +2 *breastplate* (6 squares), fly 60 ft.

(good); base speed 40 ft., base fly 90 ft.; Flyby Attack

Melee +2 *greataxe* +30/+25/+20/+15 (4d6+18/x3) and 2 claws +22 each (1d8+6 plus bleeding wounds) or 4 claws +22 each (1d8+6 plus bleeding wounds)

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

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +23

Atk Options Power Attack, bleeding wounds, rake +15 (1d6+5), improved grab, liftoff

Special Actions summon yugoloth

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 14th):

At will—*deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *fear* (DC 17), *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *see invisibility*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 14, Con 25, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 16

Feats Alertness, Flyby Attack, Iron Will, Mobility^B, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (greataxe)

Skills Bluff +13, Concentration +17, Diplomacy +13, Hide +8, Intimidate +24, Jump +19, Knowledge (arcana) +11, Knowledge (the planes) +11, Listen +19, Move Silently +12, Search +11, Sense Motive +10, Spellcraft +11, Spot +19

Possessions +2 greataxe, +2 breastplate

Bleeding Wounds (Ex) A wound from a nycaloth's claw attack continues to bleed after the injury was inflicted. Each wound bleeds for 1 point of damage per round thereafter. Multiple claw wounds result in cumulative bleeding loss (two wounds deal 2 points of damage per round, and so on). The bleeding can be stopped only by a successful DC 15 Heal check or the application of any *cure* spell or other healing spell (heal, mass heal, and so on).

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, a nycaloth must hit with two claw attacks. It can then attempt to start a grapple as a free action without provoking attacks of opportunity. If it wins the grapple check, it establishes a hold and can attempt to either deal damage with its claws, rake the grappled target (see below), or use its liftoff ability (see below).

Liftoff (Ex) A nycaloth can only use this ability when airborne. A nycaloth that gets a hold on a non-flying opponent of Medium or smaller size can ascend with the grappled creature. When carrying a medium load (a creature weighing between 267 and 532 pounds), the nycaloth's fly speed drops to 60 feet and it takes a -3 penalty on Hide and Move Silently checks; these penalties worsen to -6 with a heavy load (a creature weighing between 533 and 800 pounds). A nycaloth can't carry a load of more than 800 pounds.

Rake (Ex) Attack bonus +18, damage 1d6+2. A nycaloth that gets a hold can make two rake attacks with its hind legs.

Summon Yugoloth (Ex) Once per day, a nycaloth can attempt to summon another nycaloth or 1d3 mezzoloth with a 30% chance of success.

ULTRALOTH*

CR 13

*MM III 204

NE Medium outsider (evil, extraplanar, Yugoloth)

Init +3; **Senses** Listen +20, Spot +22

Languages Abyssal, Draconic, Infernal; telepathy 100 ft.

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 171 (18 HD); **DR** 15/good

Immune acid, poison

Resist cold 10, fire 10, electricity 10; **SR** 25

Fort +16, **Ref** +14, **Will** +15

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares)

Melee +3 *longsword* +22/+17/+12/+7 (18+4/19-20)

Ranged Touch ray +22 (spell)

Base Atk +18; **Grp** +19

Atk Options Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot

Special Actions hypnotic gaze, summon yugoloth

Spell-Like Abilities (CL 18th):

At will—*deeper darkness*, *desecrate*, *disguise self*, *fear* (DC 18), *gaseous form*, *invisibility*, *prying eyes*, *ray of exhaustion*, *greater teleport* (self plus 50 pounds of objects only), *quicken scorching ray*, *scrying*, *see invisibility*, *suggestion* (DC 18), *wall of fire*

3/day—*binding* (DC 23), *enervation*, *geas/quest* (DC 21), *mass suggestion* (DC 21)

1/day—*symbol of death* (DC 22)

Abilities Str 13, Dex 16, Con 21, Int 16, Wis 15, Cha 19

Feats Combat Casting, Iron Will, Point Blank Shot, Precise Shot, Quicken Spell-Like Ability (*scorching ray*), Spell Focus (enchantment), Weapon Focus (ray)

Skills Bluff +22, Concentration +26 (+30 casting defensively), Diplomacy +23, Intimidate +27, Knowledge (arcana) +24, Knowledge (the planes) +24, Listen +20, Move Silently +21, Search +21, Sense Motive +21, Spellcraft +26, Spot +22

Possessions +3 *longsword*

Hypnotic Gaze (Su) *Hypnotic pattern* (CL 18th) with no HD limit; 30 ft. range; Will 23 negates.

Summon Yugoloth (Ex) Once per day, an ultraloth can attempt to summon 1d4 nycaloths, 1d6 mezzoloth, or another ultraloth with a 35% chance of success.

MANSCORPION WARRIOR

CR 6

Manscorpion barbarian 1/scout 1

NE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +7, Spot +1

Languages Flan

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20 (-1 size, +4 armor, +7 natural)

hp 53 (7 HD)

Fort +8, **Ref** +3, **Will** +2

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee 2 claw each +8 (1d8+5) and +6 stinger (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged javelin +3 (1d8+5)

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

Base Atk +4; **Grp** +13

Atk Options constrict 1d8+5, improved grab, poison, rage, skirmish +1d6

Combat Gear *potions of magic fang* (2)

Abilities Str 20, Dex 10, Con 14, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack

Skills Climb +9, Hide +2, Jump +21, Listen +7, Search +3, Tumble +6

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, 3 javelins

Constrict (Ex) A manscorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability the manscorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex) DC 14 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

Rage (Ex) The manscorpion has already used its rage ability today.

9: THE MAGE AND THE GOD

RARY THE TRAITOR

CR 24

Male human (Bakluni) wizard 24

NE Medium humanoid (human)

Init +5; **Senses** permanent *darkvision*, *detect magic*, *see invisibility*; Listen +3, Spot +3

Languages Abyssal, Ancient Baklunish, Ancient Suel, Common, Draconic, Infernal, permanent *comprehend languages*, *tongues*

AC 40, touch 20, flat-footed 35

(+5 Dex, +20 armor [*epic mage armor*], +5 deflection)

hp 149 (169 with *false life*) (24 HD); **DR** 10/adamantine (150 points, extended *stoneskin*)

Immune all mind-affecting and divination effects and spells (extended *mind blank*)

Resist *contingency*, 5 ranged attacks (chosen by Rary, reflected back on attacker [*peripety*]); **SR** 23

Fort +16, **Ref** +18, **Will** +24

Speed 30 ft. (6 squares), fly 40 ft. (*overland flight*)

Melee +5 *spell storing dagger* +15/+10+5 (1d4+4/19-20)

Ranged Touch ray +17 (as spell)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +11

Special Actions Multispell

Combat Gear *staff of the magi* (34 charges), *gem of seeing*, *pale green ioun stone*, *ring of mind shielding* (does not use ring slot), *stone destrier*, *wand of hold monster* (19 charges), *potion of cure serious wounds* (5), *scroll of contingency*, *scroll of greater dispel magic* (2), *scroll of greater teleport*, *scroll of limited wish* (2), *scroll of Mordenkainen's disjunction*, *scroll of prismatic sphere* and *prismatic wall*, *scroll of summon monster IX*, *scroll of time stop* and *gate*

Wizard Spells Prepared (CL 24th):

Epic (2/day)—*eclipse*, *epic mage armor*, *let go of me*, *peripety*, *Rary's meritorious animation*, *Rary's superlative draconic animator*, *spell worm*

10th—quicken *greater heroism*, *quicken mass suggestion* (DC 29)

9th—*dominate monster* (DC 32), *power word kill*, *time stop*, *quicken wall of force*, *wish*

8th—*protection from spells*, *quicken dimension door*, *mass charm monster* (DC 31), *power word stun*, *summon monster VIII*

7th—quicken *displacement*, *greater teleport*, *limited wish*, *power word blind*, *project image*, *symbol of stunning* (DC 30)

6th—quicken *bear's endurance*, *geas/quest* (DC 29), *greater dispel magic*, *mass suggestion* (DC 29), *repulsion* (DC 29), *extended wall of force*

5th—quicken *charm person* (DC 24), *dominate person* (DC 28), *feeblemind* (DC 28), *overland flight*¹, *Rary's telepathic bond*, *extended stoneskin*¹

4th—*charm monster* (DC 27), *confusion* (DC 27), *crushing despair* (DC 27), *dimension door*, *dimensional anchor*, *greater invisibility*, *illusionary wall* (DC 25), *phantasmal killer* (DC 25), *Rary's mnemonic enhancer*, *stoneskin*

3rd—*greater magic weapon*¹, *hold person* (DC 26), *major image*, *slow*, *suggestion* (DC 26), *vampiric touch*, *extended web* (DC 24)

2nd—*extended charm person*, *command undead*, *detect thoughts*, *false life*¹, *levitate*, *Tasha's hideous laughter* (DC 25), *touch of idiocy* (DC 25)

1st—*charm person* (DC 24) (2), *disguise self*, *endure elements*¹, *feather fall*, *shield*, *unseen servant*

0—*daze* (DC 23), *mending*, *message*, *prestidigitation*

† Already cast

Abilities Str 7, Dex 20, Con 16, Int 32, Wis 20, Cha 16

SQ inherent bonuses

Feats Alertness^B, Craft Magic Arms and Armor, Craft Construct, Craft Wondrous Item, Epic Spellcasting, Extend Spell, Forge Ring, Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Improved Familiar, Improved Spell Capacity, Improved Spell Penetration, Multispell, Quicken Spell, Scribe Scroll^B, Skill Focus (Spellcraft), Spell Focus (enchantment).

Skills Appraise +12 (+14 with sculptures), Concentration +31, Craft (sculpting) +21, Decipher Script +21, Diplomacy +11, Knowledge (arcana) +39, Knowledge (architecture & engineering) +17, Knowledge (geography) +17, Knowledge (history) +17, Knowledge (religion) +17, Knowledge (the planes) +17, Ride +15, Search +17 (+19 with secret doors and compartments), Spellcraft +44, Survival +11 (+13 following tracks when underground or on other planes, and when avoiding hazards or getting lost)

Possessions combat gear plus +1 dagger (+5 with *greater magic weapon*) *spell storing (greater dispel magic)*, *dagger*, cloak of resistance +4, *gloves of dexterity* +6, *headband of intellect* +6, *Heward's handy haversack*, *ring of protection* +5, *ring of wizardry IV*

Spellbook not carried

Contingency If Rary is ever affected by a hostile enchantment, alteration, curse, or petrification effect, a *break enchantment* spell activates against the effects.

Inherent Bonuses Rary has raised his stats with multiple wish spells. +3 Dexterity, +3 Constitution, +4 Intelligence, +4 Wisdom

2: PLAIN OF SORROW

SWORDWRAITH

CR 7

Male human swordwraith* fighter 5

**Fiend Folio* 174

LE Medium undead

Init +2; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +2

Languages Flan, Infernal

AC 19, touch 12, flat-footed 17; Dodge (+2 Dex, +6 armor, +1 shield)

hp 43 (5 HD); **DR** 10/magic and slashing

Immune ability damage to Str, Dex, Con, ability drain, critical hits, death effects, death from massive damage, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless it also affects objects or is harmless)

Resist positive energy effects 10, turn resistance +9

Fort +5, **Ref** +4, **Will** +2

Speed 20 ft. in +1 *breastplate* (4 squares), base speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *falchion* +10 (2d4+8/18-20 plus Strength damage)

Ranged javelin +8 (1d6+4)

Base Atk +5; **Grp** +8

Atk Options Power Attack, Strength damage

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con –, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ undead traits

Feats Dodge, Improved Turn Resistance, Positive Energy Resistance, Power Attack, Weapon Specialization, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Climb +5, Hide +3, Jump -1, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Ride +7, Spot +2

Possessions combat gear plus +1 *breastplate*, masterwork buckler, +1 *falchion*, javelin

Strength Damage (Su) Characters struck by a swordwraith's melee weapon take 1 point of Strength damage.

Base Atk +6; **Grp** +17

Atk Options constrict 1d8+7, improved grab, poison, rage 1/day (7 rounds), skirmish +1d6

Combat Gear *potions of magic fang* (2), *devastation gauntlet*, *anklet of translocation*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8
SQ trap sense +1

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +10, Hide -4, Jump +25, Listen +10, Spot +9, Tumble +7

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, 3 javelins

Constrict (Ex) A manscorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability the manscorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex) DC 16 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

When not raging, a manscorpion has the following changed statistics:

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20

hp 72

Fort +9, **Will** +3

Melee 2 claw each +11 (1d8+5) and +8 stinger (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d8+5)

Atk Options constrict 1d8+5

Grp +15

Abilities Str 20, Con 15

Skills Climb +8, Jump +23

Poison (Ex) DC 14 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

8: GREATER TEMPLE

MANSCORPION (RAGING)

CR 6

Manscorpion barbarian 3/scout 1

NE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +9, Spot +9

Languages Flan

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18; uncanny dodge (-1 size, -2 class, +4 armor, +7 natural)

hp 90 (9 HD)

Fort +11, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee 2 claw each +13 (1d8+7) and +10 stinger (1d6+3 plus poison)

Ranged javelin +5 (1d8+7)

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

10: THE ANCIENT DEAD

ANASTARUM

CR 14

Male manscorpion lich sorcerer 11

LE Large undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +22

Aura fear (DC 22, 60 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Flan, Infernal

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 29

(-1 size, +4 armor (*mage armor*), +4 shield (*shield*), +2 deflection, +8 natural)

hp 100 (116 with *false life*) (16 HD); **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic

Immune cold, electricity, polymorph, mind-affecting effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect is harmless or affects objects), death from massive damage

Resist turn resistance +4, fire (108 points; *protection from energy*)

Fort +9, **Ref** +6, **Will** +12; +2 against sleep, paralysis, and acid

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee touch +11 (1d8+5 negative energy plus paralyzing touch) or

Melee 2 claws +11 each (1d6+4) and sting + 6 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged touch +7 (as spell)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +16

Atk Options constrict, improved grab, paralyzing touch (DC 22) poison (DC 14 Fort, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con)

Combat Gear *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, *gloves of arrow snaring*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 15th):

5th (4/day)—*flaywind burst* (DC 21) *cloudkill* (DC 19)

4th (7/day)—*blast of sand* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *protection from energy*[†]

2nd (7/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *false life*[†], *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*[†], *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*[†]

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

[†] Already cast

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con —, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 19

Feats Draconic Heritage (green), Draconic Skin Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Practiced Spellcaster, Spell Focus (evocation),

Skills Bluff +7, Climb +16, Concentration +18, Hide +16, knowledge (arcana) +16, Listen +11, Move Silently+22, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +18, Spot +22

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2

Fear (Su) Creatures of less than 5 HD must succeed on a Will save or be affected as if by a fear spell (CL 11th). A creature that successfully saves against this affect cannot be affected by Anastarum's aura for 24-hours.

Paralyzing Touch (Su) Creatures that fail a DC 22 Fort save when hit with Anastarum's touch attack are permanently paralyzed.

Constrict (Ex) Anastarum deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple attack

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Anastarum must hit with a claw attack.

CRAWLING APOCALYPSE* CR 11

**Sandstorm* 143

LE Gargantuan undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +18, Spot +19

Aura despair

Languages Flan

AC 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30

(-4 size, +24 natural)

hp 230 (20 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 5/-

Resist fire (108 points; *protection from energy*)

Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect is harmless or affects objects), death from massive damage

Fort +6, **Ref** +6, **Will** +17

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles each +18 (1d8+12/19-20 plus mummy rot) and 6 arms each +13 (1d6+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacles)

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +34

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, mummy rot

Abilities Str 34, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 20, Cha 20

SQ undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Iron Will

Skills Listen +18, Spot +19

Despair (Su) At the mere sight of a crawling apocalypse, a creature must succeed on a DC 25 Will save or be paralyzed with feat for 1d4 rounds. Subsequently, the creature cannot be affected by the same crawling apocalypse's despair ability for 24-hours.

Mummy Rot (Su) Supernatural disease—tentacles, Fortitude DC 25, incubation period 1 minute, damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

Unholy Toughness (Ex) A crawling apocalypse gains bonus hit points equal to its Charisma bonus multiplied by its Hit Dice.

2: PLAIN OF SORROW

SWORDWRAITH

CR 9

Male human swordwraith* fighter 7

**Fiend Folio* 174

LE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +3

Languages Flan, Infernal

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Dodge

(+2 Dex, +7 armor, +1 shield)

hp 56 (7 HD); **DR** 10/magic and slashing

Immune ability damage to Str, Dex, Con, ability drain, critical hits, death effects, death from massive damage, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless it also affects objects or is harmless)

Resist positive energy effects 10, turn resistance +9

Fort +6, **Ref** +5, **Will** +3

Speed 20 ft. in +2 *breastplate* (4 squares), base speed 30 ft.

Melee +1 *falchion* +12/+7 (2d4+8/18-20 plus Strength damage)

Ranged javelin +10 (1d6+4)

Base Atk +7; **Grp** +10

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Power Attack, Strength damage

Abilities Str 16, Dex 14, Con –, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8

SQ undead traits

Feats Blind-Fight, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Improved Turn Resistance, Positive Energy Resistance, Power Attack, Weapon Specialization, Weapon Focus (falchion)

Skills Climb +7, Hide +3, Jump +1, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Ride +7, Spot +3

Possessions combat gear plus +2 *breastplate*, masterwork buckler, +1 *falchion*, javelin

Strength Damage (Su) Characters struck by a swordwraith's melee weapon take 1 point of Strength damage.

Ranged javelin +7 (1d8+7)

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

Base Atk +8; **Grp** +19

Atk Options constrict 1d8+7, improved grab, poison, rage 2/day (7 rounds), skirmish +1d6

Combat Gear *potions of magic fang* (2), *devastation gauntlet*, *anklet of translocation*, *torc of displacement*

Abilities Str 24, Dex 10, Con 19, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8

SQ trap sense +1

Feats Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)

Skills Climb +12, Hide –4, Jump +27, Listen +12, Spot +9, Tumble +8

Possessions combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, 3 javelins

Constrict (Ex) A manscorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability the manscorpion must hit with a claw attack.

Poison (Ex) DC 16 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

When not raging, a manscorpion has the following changed statistics:

AC 20, touch 9, flat-footed 20

hp 99

Fort +10, **Will** +3

Melee 2 claw each +13 (1d8+5) and +10 stinger (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged javelin +7 (1d8+5)

Atk Options constrict 1d8+5

Grp +17

Abilities Str 20, Con 15

Skills Climb +10, Jump +25

Poison (Ex) DC 14 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

8: GREATER TEMPLE

MANSCORPION (RAGING)

CR 8

Manscorpion barbarian 5/scout 1

NE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.;

Listen +12, Spot +9

Languages Flan

AC 18, touch 7, flat-footed 18; improved uncanny dodge (–1 size, –2 class, +4 armor, +7 natural)

hp 111 (11 HD)

Fort +12, **Ref** +4, **Will** +5

Speed 60 ft. (12 squares)

Melee 2 claw each +15 (1d8+7) and +12 stinger (1d6+3 plus poison)

10: THE ANCIENT DEAD

ANASTARUM

CR 14

Male manscorpion lich sorcerer 13

LE Large undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +22

Aura fear (DC 23, 60 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Flan, Infernal

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 29

(-1 size, +4 armor (*mage armor*), +4 shield (*shield*), +2 deflection, +8 natural)

hp 115 (131 with *false life*) (18 HD); **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic

Immune cold, electricity, polymorph, mind-affecting effects, poison, *sleep*, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect is harmless or affects objects), death from massive damage

Resist turn resistance +4, fire (120 points; *protection from energy*)

Fort +10, **Ref** +7, **Will** +13; +3 against sleep, paralysis, and acid

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee touch +12(1d8+5 negative energy plus paralyzing touch) or

Melee 2 claws +12 each (1d6+4) and sting +7 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged touch +8 (as spell)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +9; **Grp** +17

Atk Options constrict, improved grab, paralyzing touch (DC 23) poison (DC 14 Fort, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con)

Special Actions Draconic Presence

Combat Gear *lesser metamagic rod of maximise*, *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, *gloves of arrow snaring*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 17th):

6th (4/day)—*ashen union* (DC 20), *chain lightning* (DC 22)

5th (6/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 21), *flaywind burst* (DC 21) *cloudkill* (DC 19)

4th (7/day)—*blast of sand* (DC 19), *dimension door*, *displacement*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 19)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 19), *protection from energy*[†]

2nd (7/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *false life*[†], *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*[†], *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*[†]

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 14), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 16), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

[†] Already cast

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con —, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 19

Feats Draconic Heritage (green), Draconic Presence, Draconic Skin, Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Practiced Spellcaster, Spell Focus (evocation),

Skills Bluff +7, Climb +16, Concentration +20, Hide +16, knowledge (arcana) +18, Listen +11, Move

Silently+24, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +20, Spot +22

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2

Fear (Su) Creatures of less than 5 HD must succeed on a Will save or be affected as if by a fear spell (CL 13th). A creature that successfully saves against this affect cannot be affected by Anastarum's aura for 24-hours.

Paralyzing Touch (Su) Creatures that fail a DC 23 Fort save when hit with Anastarum's touch attack are permanently paralyzed.

Constrict (Ex) Anastarum deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple attack

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Anastarum must hit with a claw attack.

CRAWLING APOCALYPSE* CR 12

**Sandstorm* 143

LE Gargantuan undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +20, Spot +21

Aura despair

Languages Flan

AC 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30

(-4 size, +24 natural)

hp 276 (24 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 5/-

Resist fire (120 points; *protection from energy*), +4 turn undead

Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect is harmless or affects objects), death from massive damage

Fort +8, **Ref** +8, **Will** +19

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles each +21 (1d8+12/19-20 plus mummy rot) and 6 arms each +15 (1d6+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacles)

Base Atk +12; **Grp** +36

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, mummy rot

Abilities Str 35, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 20, Cha 20

SQ undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Turn Resistance, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Skills Listen +20, Spot +21

Despair (Su) At the mere sight of a crawling apocalypse, a creature must succeed on a DC 27 Will save or be paralyzed with feat for 1d4 rounds. Subsequently, the creature cannot be affected by the same crawling apocalypse's despair ability for 24-hours.

Mummy Rot (Su) Supernatural disease—tentacles, Fortitude DC 27, incubation period 1 minute, damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

2: PLAIN OF SORROW**SWORDWRAITH****CR 11**

Male human swordwraith* fighter 9

**Fiend Folio 174*

LE Medium undead

Init +6; **Senses** Listen +2, Spot +4**Languages** Flan, Infernal**AC** 20, touch 12, flat-footed 18; Dodge

(+2 Dex, +7 armor, +1 shield)

hp 69 (9 HD); **DR** 10/magic and slashing**Immune** ability damage to Str, Dex, Con, ability drain, critical hits, death effects, death from massive damage, disease, energy drain, exhaustion, fatigue, mind-affecting spells and abilities (charms, compulsions, phantasms, patterns and morale effects), necromancy effects, nonlethal damage, paralysis, poison, sleep, stunning, and any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless it also affects objects or is harmless)**Resist** positive energy effects 10, turn resistance +9**Fort** +7, **Ref** +6, **Will** +4**Speed** 20 ft. in +2 *breastplate* (4 squares), base speed 30 ft.**Melee** +1 *human bane falchion* +15/+10 (2d4+8/15-20 plus Strength damage)**Ranged** javelin +12 (1d6+4)**Base Atk** +9; **Grp** +12**Atk Options** Blind-Fight, Power Attack, Strength damage**Abilities** Str 17, Dex 14, Con –, Int 12, Wis 10, Cha 8**SQ** undead traits**Feats** Blind-Fight, Dodge, Greater Weapon Focus (falchion), Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Turn Resistance, Positive Energy Resistance, Power Attack, Weapon Specialization, Weapon Focus (falchion)**Skills** Climb +9, Hide +3, Jump +3, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Ride +7, Spot +4**Possessions** combat gear plus +2 *breastplate*, masterwork buckler, +1 *human bane falchion*, javelin**Strength Damage (Su)** Characters struck by a swordwraith's melee weapon take 1 point of Strength damage.

+14 stinger (1d6+3 plus poison)

Ranged javelin +9 (1d8+7)**Space** 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.**Base Atk** +10; **Grp** +21**Atk Options** constrict 1d8+7, improved grab, poison, rage 2/day (7 rounds), skirmish +1d6**Combat Gear** *potions of magic fang* (2), *devastation gauntlet*, *anklet of translocation*, *torc of displacement***Abilities** Str 24, Dex 10, Con 20, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 8**SQ** trap sense +2**Feats** Improved Critical (claw), Improved Initiative, Improved Natural Attack (claw), Multiattack, Weapon Focus (claw)**Skills** Climb +14, Hide -4, Jump +29, Listen +14, Spot +9, Tumble +9**Possessions** combat gear plus masterwork chain shirt, 3 javelins, *ring of protection* +1, *cloak of resistance* +1**Constrict (Ex)** A manscorpion deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple check.**Improved Grab (Ex)** To use this ability the manscorpion must hit with a claw attack.**Poison (Ex)** DC 17 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.

When not raging, a manscorpion has the following changed statistics:

AC 21, touch 10, flat-footed 21**hp** 129**Fort** +13, **Will** +5**Melee** 2 claw each +15 (1d8+5) and +12 stinger (1d6+2 plus poison)**Ranged** javelin +9 (1d8+5)**Atk Options** constrict 1d8+5**Grp** +19**Abilities** Str 20, Con 16**Skills** Climb +12, Jump +27**Poison (Ex)** DC 15 Fortitude save; 1d4 Con/1d4 Con.**8: GREATER TEMPLE****MANSCORPION (RAGING)****CR 10**

Manscorpion barbarian 7/scout 1

NE Large monstrous humanoid

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft., tremorsense 60 ft.; Listen +14, Spot +9**Languages** Flan**AC** 19, touch 8, flat-footed 19; improved uncanny dodge (-1 size, -2 class, +4 armor, +1 deflection, +7 natural)**hp** 145 (13 HD); **DR** 1/-**Fort** +15, **Ref** +6, **Will** +7**Speed** 60 ft. (12 squares)**Melee** 2 claw each +17 (1d8+7/19-20) and

10: THE ANCIENT DEAD

ANASTARUM

CR 16

Male manscorpion lich sorcerer 15

LE Large undead

Init +6; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +11, Spot +22

Aura fear (DC 25, 60 ft.)

Languages Abyssal, Common, Flan, Infernal

AC 29, touch 11, flat-footed 29

(-1 size, +4 armor (*mage armor*), +4 shield (*shield*), +2 deflection, +8 natural)

hp 128 (145 with *false life*) (20 HD); **DR** 15/bludgeoning and magic

Immune cold, electricity, polymorph, undead immunities

Resist turn resistance +4, fire (120 points; *protection from energy*)

Fort +11, **Ref** +8, **Will** +14; +3 against sleep, paralysis, and acid

Speed 50 ft. (10 squares)

Melee touch +13(1d8+5 negative energy plus paralyzing touch) or

Melee 2 claws +13 each (1d6+4) and sting +8 (1d6+2 plus poison)

Ranged touch +9 (as spell)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft.

Base Atk +10; **Grp** +18

Atk Options constrict, improved grab, paralyzing touch (DC 25) poison (DC 14 Fort, 1d4 Con/1d4 Con)

Special Actions Draconic Presence

Combat Gear lesser *metamagic rod of maximize*, *ring of counterspells (dispel magic)*, *gloves of arrow snaring*, *beholder crown*

Sorcerer Spells Known (CL 19th):

7th (4/day)—*prismatic spray* (DC 24), *spell turning*

6th (5/day)—*ashen union* (DC 21), *chain lightning* (DC 23), *true seeing*

5th (7/day)—*cone of cold* (DC 22), *flaywind burst* (DC 22) *cloudkill* (DC 20), *wall of force*

4th (7/day)—*blast of sand* (DC 20), *dimension door*, *displacement*, *phantasmal killer* (DC 20)

3rd (7/day)—*dispel magic*, *haste*, *lightning bolt* (DC 20), *protection from energy*[†]

2nd (7/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *false life*[†], *invisibility*, *mirror image*, *scorching ray*

1st (7/day)—*expeditious retreat*, *mage armor*[†], *magic missile*, *ray of enfeeblement*, *shield*[†]

0 (6/day)—*acid splash*, *dancing lights*, *daze* (DC 15), *detect magic*, *flare* (DC 17), *mage hand*, *message*, *prestidigitation*, *read magic*

[†] Already cast

Abilities Str 19, Dex 10, Con —, Int 15, Wis 16, Cha 20

Feats Draconic Heritage (green), Draconic Presence, Draconic Skin Greater Spell Focus (evocation), Improved Initiative, Improved Toughness, Practiced Spellcaster, Spell Focus (evocation)

Skills Bluff +7, Climb +16, Concentration +22, Hide +16, knowledge (arcana) +20, Listen +11, Move Silently+26, Search +10, Sense Motive +11, Spellcraft +22, Spot +22

Possessions combat gear plus *ring of protection* +2, *cloak of resistance* +2

Fear (Su) Creatures of less than 5 HD must succeed on a Will save or be affected as if by a fear spell (CL 15th). A creature that successfully saves against this affect cannot be affected by Anastarum's aura for 24-hours.

Paralyzing Touch (Su) Creatures that fail a DC 25 Fort save when hit with Anastarum's touch attack are permanently paralyzed.

Constrict (Ex) Anastarum deals automatic claw damage on a successful grapple attack

Improved Grab (Ex) To use this ability, Anastarum must hit with a claw attack.

CRAWLING APOCALYPSE* CR 13

**Sandstorm* 143

LE Gargantuan undead

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Listen +22, Spot +23

Aura despair

Languages Flan

AC 30, touch 6, flat-footed 30

(-4 size, +24 natural)

hp 322 (28 HD); fast healing 10; **DR** 5/-

Resist fire (120 hp; *protection from energy*), +4 turn undead

Immune mind-affecting effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, disease, death effects, critical hits, nonlethal damage, ability drain, energy drain, damage to physical ability scores, any effect that requires a Fortitude save (unless the effect is harmless or affects objects), death from massive damage

Fort +10, **Ref** +10, **Will** +21

Weakness vulnerability to fire

Speed 20 ft. (4 squares), burrow 20 ft.

Melee 2 tentacles each +24 (1d8+13/19-20 plus mummy rot) and 6 arms each +18 (1d6+6)

Space 20 ft.; **Reach** 15 ft. (25 ft. with tentacles)

Base Atk +14; **Grp** +38

Atk Options Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Trip, mummy rot

Abilities Str 36, Dex 10, Con —, Int 6, Wis 20, Cha 20

SQ undead traits, unholy toughness

Feats Ability Focus (despair), Alertness, Blind-Fight, Combat Expertise, Improved Critical (tentacle), Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Improved Turn Resistance, Iron Will, Weapon Focus (tentacles)

Skills Listen +22, Spot +23

Despair (Su) At the mere sight of a crawling apocalypse, a creature must succeed on a DC 31 Will save or be paralyzed with feat for 1d4 rounds. Subsequently, the creature cannot be affected by the same despair ability for 24-hours.

Mummy Rot (Su) Supernatural disease—tentacles, Fortitude DC 29, incubation period 1 minute, damage 1d6 Con and 1d6 Cha.

APPENDIX 2: NEW RULES ITEMS

FEATS

Draconic Heritage [Draconic]

You have greater connection with your distant draconic bloodline.

Prerequisites: Sorcerer 1st.

Benefits: Choose one dragon from the Draconic Heritage list below and gain the indicated skill as a class skill. This is your draconic heritage, which cannot be changed once the feat has been taken. Half-dragons must choose the same dragon kind as their dragon parent.

In addition, you gain a bonus on saving throws against *sleep* and *paralysis*, as well as spells and abilities with the energy type of your Draconic Heritage. This bonus is equal to the number of draconic feats you have.

Dragon

Kind	Energy Type	Skill
Black	Acid	Hide
Blue	Electricity	Listen
Green	Acid	Move Silently
Red	Fire	Intimidate
White	Cold	Balance
Brass	Fire	Gather Information
Bronze	Electricity	Survival
Copper	Acid	Hide
Gold	Fire	Heal
Silver	Cold	Disguise

Source: *Complete Arcane* 77.

Draconic Presence [Draconic]

When you use your magic, your mere presence can terrify those around you.

Prerequisite: Draconic Heritage.

Benefit: Whenever you cast an arcane spell, all opponents within 10 feet of you who have fewer Hit Dice than you become shaken for a number of rounds equal to the level of the spell you cast. The effect is negated by a Will save (DC 10 + level of the spell cast + your Cha modifier).

A successful save indicates that the opponent is immune to your draconic presence for 24 hours. This ability does not affect creatures with an Intelligence of 3 or lower or creatures that are already shaken, nor does it have any effect on dragons.

Source: *Complete Arcane* 78

Draconic Skin

Your skin takes on the sheen, luster, and hardness of your draconic parentage.

Prerequisites: Draconic Heritage.

Benefit: Your natural armor increases by 1.

Source: *Complete Arcane* 78.

Epic Spellcasting [Epic]

You can create and cast spells that transcend the most powerful existing spells.

Prerequisites: Spellcraft 24 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 24 ranks, ability to cast 9th-level arcane spells.

OR

Spellcraft 24 ranks, Knowledge (religion) 24 ranks, ability to cast 9th-level divine spells.

OR

Spellcraft 24 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 24 ranks, ability to cast 9th-level divine spells.

Benefit: You may develop and cast epic spells. If you are an arcane spellcaster, you may cast a number of epic spells per day equal to your ranks in Knowledge (arcana) divided by 10. If you are an arcane spellcaster, you may cast a number of epic spells per day equal to your ranks in Knowledge (religion) divided by 10.

Special: If you meet more than one set of prerequisites, the limit on the number of spells you may cast per day is cumulative.

Improved Toughness

You are significantly tougher than normal.

Prerequisites: Base Fortitude save bonus +2.

Benefits: You gain a number of hit points equal to your current Hit Dice. Each time you gain a HD (such as by gaining a level) you gain 1 additional hit point. If you lose a HD (such as by losing a level), you lose 1 hit point permanently.

Special: A fighter may select Improved Toughness as one of his fighter bonus feats.

Source: *Complete Warrior* 101.

Improved Turn Resistance [Monstrous]

You have a better than normal chance to resist turning.

Prerequisite: Undead type.

Benefits: You are less easily affected by clerics or paladins than you normally would be (PH 159). When resolving a turn, rebuke, command, or bolster attempt, add +4 to your character level (monster HD plus class levels) to determine your Hit Dice for turn, rebuke, command, and bolster attempts.

Source: *Libris Mortis* 27.

Multispell [Epic]

You can cast an additional quickened spell in a round.

Prerequisites: Quicken Spell, ability to cast 9th-level arcane or divine spells.

Benefits: You may cast one additional quickened spell in a round.

Special: You can gain this feat multiple times. Its effects tack.

Positive Energy Resistance [Monstrous]

You are resistant to the damage dealt by positive energy effects.

Prerequisite: undead type.

Benefit: You gain resistance 10 against positive energy effects, such as *cure* spells.

Source: *Libris Mortis* 29.

Practiced Spellcaster

Choose a spellcasting class that you possess. Your spells cast from that class are more powerful.

Prerequisite: Spellcraft 4 ranks.

Benefit: Your caster level for the chosen spellcasting class increases by 4. This benefit can't increase your caster level to higher than your Hit Dice. However, even if you can't benefit from the full bonus immediately, if you later gain Hit Dice in levels of nonspellcasting classes, you might be able to apply the rest of the bonus. For example, a human 5th-level sorcerer/3rd-level fighter who selects this feat would increase his sorcerer caster level from 5th to 8th (since he has 8 Hit Dice). If he later gained a fighter level, he would gain the remainder of the bonus and his sorcerer caster level would become 9th (since he now has 9 Hit Dice). A character with two or more spellcasting classes (such as a bard/sorcerer or a ranger/druid) must choose which class gains the feat's effect. This feat does not affect your spells per day or spells known. It increases your caster level only, which would help you penetrate spell resistance and increase the duration and other effects of your spells.

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you choose it, you must apply it to a different spellcasting class. For instance, a 4th-level cleric/5th-level wizard who had selected this feat twice would cast cleric spells as an 8th-level caster and wizard spells as a 9th-level caster.

Source: *Complete Arcane* 82.

MAGIC ITEMS

Anklet of Translocation

Price (Item Level): 1,400 gp (5th)

Body Slot: Feet

Caster Level: 7th

Aura: Moderate; (DC 18) conjuration

Activation: Swift (command)

Weight: —

A pewter chime hangs from this simple leather ankle-band.

An *anklet of translocation* allows you to make short dimensional hops. When it is activated, you can instantly teleport (with no chance of error) up to 10 feet. The new space must be within line of sight and line of effect.

You can't use the *anklet* to move into a space occupied by another creature, nor can you teleport into a solid object; if you attempt to do so, the *anklet's* activation is wasted. You can bring along objects weighing up to your maximum load, but you can't bring another creature with you.

An *anklet of translocation* functions two times per day.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, dimension door.

Cost to Create: 700 gp, 56 XP, 2 days.

Beholder Crown

Price (Item Level): 20,000 gp (15th)

Body Slot: Head

Caster Level: 13th

Aura: Strong; (DC 21) necromancy

Activation: Swift (mental)

Weight: 1 lb.

Ten metal stalks sprout from this grotesquely formed bronze crown. At the tip of each stalk, a different gem gazes like a glistening eye.

These strange crowns can shoot rays from eyelike gems, much like the attacks of their namesake. Each gem can fire a different ray a single time at a target (doing this burns out the gem). Each ray extends up to 30 feet and requires a ranged touch attack to successfully strike a target. Each ray functions as a particular spell (though the ray only affects a single target):

- *charm monster* (Will DC 17 negates)
- *charm person* (Will DC 17 negates)
- *deep slumber* (Will DC 17 negates)
- *disintegrate* (Fort DC 17 partial)
- *fear* (Will DC 17 partial)
- *finger of death* (Fort DC 17 partial)
- *flesh to stone* (Fort DC 17 negates)
- *inflict moderate wounds* (Will DC 17 half)
- *slow* (Will DC 17 negates)
- *telekinesis* (violent thrust against a target of up to 325 pounds; Will DC 17 negates)

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *charm monster*, *charm person*, *deep slumber*, *disintegrate*, *fear*, *finger of death*, *flesh to stone*, *inflict moderate wounds*, *slow*, *telekinesis*.

Cost to Create: 10,000 gp, 800 XP, 20 days.

Source: *Magic Item Compendium* 73.

Devastation Gauntlets

Price (Item Level): 2,000 gp (6th)

Body Slot: Hands

Caster Level: 5th

Aura: Faint; (DC 17) transmutation

Activation: Swift (command)

Weight: —

Stylized flames rendered in scarlet enamel encircle these steel gauntlets.

Devastation gauntlets are prized by anyone who earns gold by fighting in melee, from raging barbarians to wily swashbucklers. These gauntlets have 3 charges, which are renewed each day at dawn. Spending 1 or more charges grants you a bonus to the damage dealt by a critical hit you make in melee. You activate the gauntlets after you have confirmed a critical hit, but before damage is rolled.

1 charge: +2d6 points of damage.

2 charges: +3d6 points of damage.

3 charges: +4d6 points of damage.

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, keen edge.
Cost to Create: 1,000 gp, 80 XP, 2 days.

SPELLS

Ashen Union

Necromancy

Level: Sorcerer/wizard 6

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)

Target: One living creature

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half and Fortitude partial; see text

Spell Resistance: Yes

You drain all the moisture from the body of a living creature, dealing it 1d6 points of dehydration damage per two caster levels (maximum 10d6). A creature that makes a successful Fortitude save takes half damage. If the subject takes damage from the spell (whether its first save was successful or not) equal to more than half of its current hit points, it must make another Fortitude saving throw or die as its body expels all remaining fluid, leaving behind only a fragile husk that powders to ash at the least touch. A victim's equipment is unaffected. A creature that is affected but not slain by the spell is dehydrated (as the condition—see page xx).

Material Component: A piece of dried fruit and a pinch of dust.

Source: *Sandstorm* 110.

Blast of Sand

Conjuration (Creation) [Earth]

Level: Druid 4, Sand 4, sorcerer/wizard 4

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Range: 30 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Reflex half

Spell Resistance: No

Sand sprays from your outstretched palm with enough force to strip flesh from bone and scour surfaces. The spell deals 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d6). Do not divide damage from *sand scour* by four when applying it to objects.

Material Component: A pinch of sand.

Source: *Sandstorm* 112.

Epic Mage Armor

Conjuration (Creation) [Force]

Spellcraft DC: 46

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Touch

Target: Creature touched

Duration: 24 hours (D)

Saving Throw: Will negates (harmless)

Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

An invisible but tangible field of force surrounds the subject of *epic mage armor*, providing a +20 armor bonus to Armor Class. Unlike mundane armor, epic mage armor, entails no armor check penalty, arcane spell failure chance, or speed reduction. Because *epic mage armor* is made of force, incorporeal creatures can't bypass it the way they do normal armor.

Flaywind

Evocation [Air, Earth]

Level: Cleric 5, druid 5, Sand 5, sorcerer/wizard 5

Components: V, S, M

Casting Time: 1 round

Range: 60 ft.

Area: Cone-shaped burst

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: See text

Spell Resistance: No

This spell produces a brief windstorm (approximately 70 mph), filled with scouring, supernatural grit that literally strips flesh. In addition to the possible effects of the wind, creatures within the area of *flaywind* take 1d6 points of damage per caster level (maximum 10d6) from the scouring sands. A successful Reflex save halves this damage.

A creature within the area of *flaywind* must make a Fortitude save or experience the effects of the wind's force. A Small or smaller creature is knocked down and rolled 1d4 x 10 feet, taking 1d4 points of nonlethal damage per 10 feet. If flying, a Small or smaller creature is blown back 2d6 x 10 feet and takes 2d6 points of nonlethal damage. Medium creatures are knocked prone, or if flying are blown back 1d6 x 10 feet. Large or Huge creatures are unable to move forward against the force of the blast, or if flying are blown back 1d6 x 5 feet. Gargantuan or larger creatures can move normally within a *flaywind*. *Flaywind* can't move a creature beyond its range.

In addition to the effects noted, *flaywind* can do anything else that a windstorm-force sandstorm would be expected to do, such as briefly obscure vision, heel over a boat, or blow gases and vapors to the limit of its area.

Material Component: A pinch of sand and the wing feather of a vulture.

Source: *Sandstorm* 115.

Let Go Of Me

Transmutation

Spellcraft DC: 43

Components: None

Casting Time: 1 free action

Range: Touch

Target: One creature or force grappling you

Duration: Instantaneous

Saving Throw: Fortitude half

Spell Resistance: Yes

You radiate destruction, dealing 20d6 points of damage to any creature grappling you. The damage dealt is of no particular energy type—it is purely destructive impulse. If grappled by a magical force, such as *Bigby's grasping hand* or *Bigby's crushing hand*, the force is automatically destroyed. Being grappled is dangerous for most spellcasters, so few mind taking 10d6 points of backlash damage.

Peripety

Abjuration

Spellcraft DC: 27

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 minute

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 12 hours

Ranged attacks targeted against you rebound on the original attacker. Any time during the duration, five attacks are automatically reflected back on the original attacker; you decide which attacks before damage is rolled. The reflected attack rebounds on the attacker using the same attack roll. Once five attacks are reflected, the spell ends.



DM AID 1: TRAVELING IN THE BRIGHT DESERT

Travelers in the Bright Lands face many perils. Chief amongst these are the harsh landscape and unforgiving climate. Full rules for travel in the Bright Desert are included in the *Sandstorm* accessory. However, to facilitate play the basics of these rules are presented here.

During a typical day the desert goes through a radical series of temperature changes. During daylight hours the temperature in the desert is generally in the hot temperature band. Around midday however, and for two hours afterwards, the temperatures climbs into the severe heat temperature band. At night, the temperatures swiftly plunge into the cold temperature band. Thus, travelers must be ready to combat a number of temperature-challenges.

Most intelligent beings avoid traveling around midday and the two hours directly afterwards, breaking their journey to get into some shade.

DISTANCES AND TRAVEL TIMES

Travel through the sandy wastes of the Bright Desert is slow; the PC's speed being cut by half. Even when the PCs leave the Bright Desert and enter the Abbor-Alz they will be unable to travel any faster. This means that the PCs will inevitably spend several days traveling through the region.

The following tables list the modified movement rates of individuals and their mounts moving through the Bright Desert and the Abbor-Alz.

PC and NPC Movement Rates

	Speed		
	20 ft.	30 ft.	40 ft.
One Round			
Walk	10 ft.	15 ft.	20 ft.
Hustle	20 ft.	30 ft.	40 ft.
Run (x3)	30 ft.	45 ft.	60 ft.
Run (x4)	40 ft.	60 ft.	80 ft.
One Minute			
Walk	100 ft.	150 ft.	200 ft.
Hustle	200 ft.	300 ft.	400 ft.
Run (x3)	300 ft.	450 ft.	600 ft.
Run (x4)	400 ft.	600 ft.	800 ft.
One Hour			
Walk	1 miles	1 ½ miles	2 miles
Hustle	2 miles	3 miles	4 miles
One Day			
Walk	8 miles	12 miles	16 miles

Mount Movement Rates

	Speed			
	30 ft. ¹	40 ft. ²	50 ft. ³	60 ft. ⁴
One Round				
Walk	15 ft.	20 ft.	25 ft.	30 ft.
Hustle	30 ft.	40 ft.	50 ft.	60 ft.
Run (x3)	45 ft.	60 ft.	75 ft.	90 ft.
Run (x4)	60 ft.	80 ft.	100 ft.	120 ft.
One Minute				
Walk	150 ft.	200 ft.	250 ft.	300 ft.
Hustle	300 ft.	400 ft.	500 ft.	600 ft.

Run (x3)	450 ft.	600 ft.	750 ft.	900 ft.
Run (x4)	600 ft.	800 ft.	1,000 ft.	1,200 ft.

One Hour

Walk	1 ½ miles	2 miles	2 ½ mile	3 miles
Hustle	3 miles	4 miles	5 miles	6 miles

One Day

Walk	12 miles	16 miles	20 miles	24 miles
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1: Donkey, mule; 2: Riding dog, pony, war pony; 3: Heavy horse, heavy warhorse; 4: Light Horse, light warhorse

Getting Lost

Traveling through the trackless wastes of the desert is a challenging proposition. Not only do the PCs have to contend with the severe temperatures but they must also guard against getting lost. The chances of PCs getting lost is covered in detail in chapter 3 in the *Dungeon Master's Guide*. However, in brief:

Poor Visibility: If the PCs can see less than 60 ft. due to poor visibility (such as darkness, a sandstorm etc.) then they must make a successful DC 14 Survival check to avoid getting lost. A character with at least 5 ranks in Knowledge (geography) or Knowledge (local – Core) gains a +2 bonus to this check.

Check Frequency: Make a check every hour or portion thereof.

Effect of Being Lost: Characters lost move in a randomly determined direction. Check for the direction they move every hour. This continues until the PCs either realize they are lost or blunder into an unmistakable landmark.

Recognizing Being Lost: Once per hour of travel each character may make a DC 20 Survival check to realize they are lost. The DC of this check increases by 1 for every hour of random travel. Obviously, some circumstance may obviate this check, such as seeing a prominent landmark.

Setting A New Course: Each character may make a DC 15 +2 per hour of random travel, Survival check to determine the correct direction. Of course, characters several characters could disagree on the right direction