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# SOVEREIGN STONE™

## A TANGLED WEB



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# A TANGLED WEB

## INTRODUCTION

A nobleman's only son and heir has been kidnapped, held by an unscrupulous group of bandits whose ransom demands include a family relic long since buried in the family crypt. Unfortunately, something terrible has taken residence in the crypt, and the nobleman needs the item before it is too late to save his son. Perhaps he can enlist the aid of a group of adventurers, who have become rather famous in the area, to help save his son.

*A Tangled Web* is a Sovereign Stone d20 System adventure designed for a party of 4-6 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> level characters (though it can be modified to work for both lower and higher level parties with minimal effort). If this is the players first adventure in the world of Sovereign Stone, be sure to spend some time going over the differences between adventuring in Loerem and other d20 System campaign worlds. For those who do not own the *Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook* (and you really should, you know!) information below is provided as a guideline on modifying the adventure for other campaign settings.

## CONVERTING THE ADVENTURE

*A Tangled Web* was designed primarily for use with the *Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook*, and assumes that the Referee has access to it, in addition to the *d20 Dungeons & Dragons Core Rulebooks I-III*.

If you do not possess the *Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook* but still wish to use this adventure, it is relatively simple to adapt the adventure to another campaign. Replace Noble-classed characters with equivalent levels in Fighter or twice the equivalent levels in the Aristocrat NPC class. The Void mage should become a Wizard specialized in the use of Necromancy (with the appropriate feats to represent this). To animate the skeletons, give the Void mage a *wand of animate dead*, and the *circlet of serpents* will grant a +5 effective level to spellcasters who wear the *circlet*, when considering the effects of the spells they are casting (but not to the memorized or known spells).

## BACKGROUND

Baron Haedol is a simple man, despite his ancient and noble lineage. He and his family live outside of New Vinnengael, in their ancestral estate, where they content themselves with overseeing a modest landholding. Ten years ago, his wife passed away during childbirth, leaving him to care for their newborn son.

Haedol raised his son the best he could, aided by his friend and chamberlain, Jaryn. Between the two of them, the young boy grew up a bit wild and mischievous, but with the same good heart possessed by his father. That's why the sudden and unexpected kidnapping of young Ranulf has struck the household of Baron Haedol fairly hard.

The Haedol family is considered wealthy, but their wealth comes not from currency, instead it is tied up in land and investments throughout the kingdom. When the ransom demand came, however, the Baron was shocked to see what the bandits wanted—in addition to a relatively "paltry" sum of 1,000 argents, they also wanted the Baron to deliver an ancient family heirloom, the *circlet of the serpent*, which had been buried with the Baron's great-grandfather, a Temple Magi of some renown.

The Baron and Jaryn went to the Crypt to retrieve the heirloom, but they found the crypt had been disturbed already, the sealed doors broken open, with something dark and foul taking up residence within.

If the Baron doesn't come up with the complete ransom in time, the bandits have threatened to kill Ranulf, something the Baron could never allow. Slowly, time creeps by, and the Baron needs help to retrieve the *circlet* and his son from danger. Luckily, there just happens to be a "famous" band of heroes around who can possibly help!

## REFeree INFORMATION

Jaryn is a descendant of an illegitimate son born to the Haedol family more than five generations back. He insinuated himself into Baron Haedol's good graces when the Baron was still a young rake in the Vinnengaelean Court. Deep in his heart, he despises the good-natured Baron, for he believes he should have been the rightful heir to everything the Baron now possesses. Biding his time, Jaryn worked diligently in order to ensure he could become the Baron's "friend" and eventual chamberlain. It was Jaryn who secretly poisoned the Baron's young wife so that she would die in child labor, also hoping to kill the unborn heir as well, though he failed. Over the years, he has tried many times to "kill" young Ranulf, but somehow the child managed to find a way into Jaryn's heart, enough so that Jaryn could never really bring himself to kill the young boy. In disgust at his own soft-heartedness, Jaryn has decided that if he cannot destroy the Haedols, he will leave and go his own way—but he will not go empty handed.

For years, Jaryn has studied the manuscripts left behind by the Baron's great-grandfather in the library. Secretly, Jaryn taught himself the ways of Void magic, desiring the power it promised him. It was in those texts that Jaryn learned of the *circlet of*

*the serpent*. Said to bestow increased aptitude at spell-casting, the *circlet* is a prize many would give their lives for, if they knew of its existence. Since it had been buried with the Baron's ancestor more than a hundred years ago, Jaryn knew that his opportunity to gain something from the Haedols had finally arrived.

Stealing away one evening, Jaryn headed for the Haedol Family Crypt in order to dig up the *circlet*. Unfortunately, he discovered to his chagrin that something foul and dangerous had beat him to the prize, but had become trapped by a latent magic. His own magical talents hindered by the same magic, Jaryn just barely managed to escape with his life. Enraged by yet another setback, Jaryn decided it was time to take drastic measures. Riding out, he found a small group of bandits. Offering them a hefty sum, he enlisted them to kidnap young Ranulf and ransom the boy to the Baron. The bandits could keep whatever money they desired, but they would also ask for the *circlet*, which Jaryn would pay them another tidy sum to hand over to him. The bargain met, Jaryn aided the bandits in kidnapping Ranulf and in composing the ransom note, leaving it for the Baron to discover.

## SYNOPSIS

The adventure begins as the characters are approached by Jaryn, looking to enlist their aid in dealing with the kidnappers. They will be escorted to the Haedol Estate, where the baron will make an impassioned plea and offer a handsome reward, if the characters could retrieve the *circlet* and act with him to ensure the safe return of his son.

Once the characters have agreed to the task, they will first need to enter the Haedol Family Crypt and retrieve the *circlet* from the same room in which a skig has been trapped. With the *circlet* in hand, they can return to the Baron, escorting him to the meeting place with the bandits. Unfortunately, young Ranulf has already managed to escape the bandits on his own, getting lost in the forest. The bandits, of course, still want their payment, so they've arranged a ruse, using a decoy instead of the real boy. If the characters can uncover the ruse in time, they can track down the run-away boy and return him to his father, though Jaryn will also be waiting, and his sanity may not be able to handle yet another defeat.



## ADVENTURE START

There are a number of ways that this adventure can begin. If the characters have already adventured a time or two together, then news of their exploits can easily reach the ears of both Jaryn and Baron Haedol. Jaryn will put forth the idea of hiring a group of adventurers to retrieve the *circlet*, and the anxious Baron will readily agree. A Noble character (particularly a Vinnengaelean), may be well known as an adventurer, so the Baron may appeal to that character for assistance. Otherwise, Jaryn will approach the characters one day while they are resting up in a nearby inn or tavern.

## ALTERNATE ADVENTURE HOOK

If you are continuing this adventure immediately after *Flesh & Bone* (the introductory adventure included in the *Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook*), the easiest method of introducing the characters is to have the portal at the end of the adventure lead to an area nearby. Throw a quick, simple encounter at them (such as a lone ogre lurking at the end of the tunnel). Seeing the creature attacking a helpless group of peasants, allow the characters to easily overcome this foe. The peasants will loudly proclaim the adventurers as their saviors, the story of their exploit quickly growing larger and more unrecognizable with each telling until it seems that the heroes defeated an entire army by themselves. The Baron will be brought word of these brave heroes, sending them a request for a banquet thrown in their honor. Once the characters have been rested and fed, their praises lauded about the room, the Baron will put forth his plea for their help.

## EVENT ONE:

### MEETING WITH THE BARON

Regardless of how the characters are approached, whether through a messenger or by Jaryn directly, they will be invited to meet with the Baron at his estate that evening. The Haedol Estate is old, predating the fall of Old Vinnengael, but it has been maintained in excellent condition. More of an elaborate hunting lodge, crafted of strong granite with stained glass windows, it's set atop a small hill, where it overlooks a fragrant orchard. Slightly off to the side and the rear, there is a small, well-kept stable where the Baron keeps two horses, one for himself and one for his son. The stable is overseen by Atone, an elderly but still spry stableman (Vinnengaelean/Expert 5; Dex 15; hp 15), who will take good care of any horses placed within.

When the characters knock upon the heavy wooden door of the estate, it will be answered by a woman who introduces herself as Madge. Madge is a sweet-

facéd, elderly woman (Atone's wife, Vinnengaelean/Expert 3; Cha 16; hp 10) who will escort the character's to the Baron's study. To set the scene, read or paraphrase the following:

*You are escorted through a grand hallway, filled with relics of past barons: suits of archaic armor and shields free of dust or patina; paintings and sculptures of regal looking men, all staring down their distinctively hooked noses; banners and trophies of victories long since forgotten.*

*Pausing at the entryway of a room illuminated by a flickering hearthfire, Madge hesitates for a moment before softly calling out, "M'lord Baron? Your guests have arrived."*


*A heavy voice, rough with sorrow, answers, "Please, bring them in Madge."*

When the characters enter the room, they see Raulf the Elder, Baron Haedol (Vinnengaelean/Noble 3: See NPCs) rising from his chair, where he had been sitting and staring into the fire. His normally cheerful blue eyes are bloodshot and red, his mouse-brown hair liberally streaked with white, his handsome face wrinkled with pain and sorrow, with the distinctive Haedol nose red and veined from both crying and alcohol. His clothing is of a fine cut, but it doesn't look like he has changed or bathed in many days. It doesn't look he's slept for days either. Nevertheless, he will do his best to make the characters feel welcome, playing the perfect host and inviting the characters to join him at dinner, where he will discuss the situation with them.

When the Baron escorts the characters to the formal dining room, they will be met there by Jaryn (Vinnengaelean/Noble 1, Void Mage 2: See NPCs). Jaryn is a dapper, handsome man. Dressed elegantly, he cuts a startling contrast against the Baron, who looks a bit threadbare and beaten down. He will smilingly introduce himself to the characters, and over dinner, will be most impressed by tales of their exploits. Only after the meal is finished will Jaryn turn to the Baron (who remains sober and silent throughout dinner) and "gently" prod him into asking the characters for aid.

The Baron will reluctantly tell the characters of his son's kidnapping, and of the ransom demand found upon the boy's bed. Finally, almost at the point of tears, he will plead for assistance. He tells the characters that the *circlet* was a gift to his great-grandfather from the Revered Magus of the Temple of Magi in New Vinnengael. When his great-grandfather died, it was interred at his request, in the





family crypt, placed within the family chapel where it would serve as a symbol of the family's loyalty to Vinnengael. It has remained in the crypt for more than a hundred years, and with the interment of Ranulf's (the Elder) own father, the crypt had been sealed as a new one was constructed. The Baron will tell the characters that he and Jaryn attempted to retrieve the *circlet* themselves, but found that something had defiled the chapel, that something dark and foul trapped within the very same room where the *circlet* had been placed.

If the characters are willing to retrieve the *circlet*, and then act as escorts for the Baron (who is take the *circlet* along with the ransom demand of 1,000 argents) to a meeting place two nights hence, the Baron is more than willing to pay them an equal sum of 1,000 argents, and allow them to keep whatever treasure they may find within the defiled crypt.

## QUESTIONING THE ESTATE'S OCCUPANTS

If the characters decide to inquire about the kidnapping or the *circlet*, use the following as guidelines on what the occupants of the estate know:

**Ranulf the Elder, the Baron Haedol:** Ranulf knows only that his only, beloved son has been kidnapped, and that the *circlet* is the price for his son's freedom. He vaguely remembers being told stories as a child that the *circlet* was said to be of greater value to a mage than its apparent worth.

**Jaryn, the Chamberlain:** Jaryn, as the true culprit, knows everything that is going on, but will let little slip. During dinner, you can allow characters to make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice that he moves very gingerly, as if he had been recently wounded. Inquiring characters will be told he had hurt himself while he was trying to help the Baron retrieve the *circlet* from the crypt, returning alone after he and the Baron had found it defiled, only to be injured by the strange creature trapped in the chapel (which is partially true, he *did* go to the chapel to steal the *circlet*, but it was before he had Ranulf the Younger kidnapped, and taken the Baron to the chapel as a means of deception). Jaryn is the one who found the note, and he will tell the characters that he has heard rumors that an infamous Nimorean bandit known as Gelwyn the Sly has been operating in the area recently.

**Madge, the Housekeeper:** Madge has taken care of three generations of Haedols. Whenever she's questioned about Ranulf the Younger, she will burst into heavy sobbing, clutching her apron in her meaty fists as she wails about the shame of someone wanting to hurt such a sweet, little boy.

**Bertha, the Cook:** Bertha (Vinnengaelean/Expert 1; hp 3) is the daughter of Madge and Atone, and she knows nothing about either the kidnapping (she was in the village meeting her beau) or the *circlet*.

**Atone, the Stableman:** Atone was awake and tending the horses the night of the kidnapping. He heard the sound of strange horses, but when he went to investigate he found himself filled with an unnatural fear that drove him away. He did manage to catch sight of five dark-cloaked figures, two were carrying a small rolled up carpet, two were holding the reins of the horses, while the fifth stood apart from the others, apparently directing the efforts of the others.

## LOCATION ONE: THE HAEDOL FAMILY CRYPT

The Haedol Family Crypt is five miles away from the estate, built on the site of the original family estate (which was torn down 150 years ago in order to provide stone for the new estate). The Baron will provide directions to the crypt, but neither he nor Jaryn will go with the characters. Jaryn will say that he is still recovering from his wounds, while the Baron is too caught up in his grief to lend any proper aid.

The journey to the crypt should be relatively uneventful, though the characters should be made to feel uncomfortable. Have them roll constant Spot and Listen checks, make it seem like they are being followed (though in reality, they are not). When the characters approach the crypt, read or paraphrase the following:

*The Haedol Family Crypt has apparently fallen into a state of disrepair since it was last used. The simple entryway is a raised dais of carved marble, ten feet above the ground, and covered with a thick layer of vines. A broad stairway stands revealed leading downwards into the earth, while three cracked and weathered sculptures gaze solemnly down from above, wrapped in their own shrouds of vines and shadows.*

*At the bottom of the stairs, there once stood a door, but from the shattered stone and splintered planks of wood littering the ground, it seems as if someone, or something, has forced its way into the crypt.*

The stairway leads down into the crypt proper, where the door has indeed been shattered beyond repair, with fragments of the stone and wood littering the ground. The three statues are of a single Vinnengaelean knight—a feminine figure dressed in an elaborate suit of armor, the breastplate emblazoned with the symbol of a triangle clasped on either side by griffons (the symbol of the Vinnengaelean royal

line). The three statues have the arms raised overhead, upon their hands rests a marble slab overhang. A Knowledge (Dominion Lords or Vinnengaelean History) check at DC 15 will identify the sculpture as the legendary Dominion Lord of Ghosts.

Unless otherwise noted, the ceiling of the crypt is ten feet high. The walls, floor, and ceiling are all an off-white granite that has grayed with age and dust, cracked, and falling apart in places. For the three rooms to the east, and the three to the west, there is a 20-degree downwards inclination from the main entry hall. This has allowed some of the rooms to become filled with water, as cracks in the walls allowed groundwater to leak through.

The animated skeletons within were all created by Jaryn, using his Void magic to lend credence to his tale of a dark force inhabiting the crypt. He ordered them to remain where they were, and to attack any living creature that approached them. The cesserats in Area B, the spiders in Area C, and the Stirges in Area G were already present in the crypt.

### A. Entry Hall

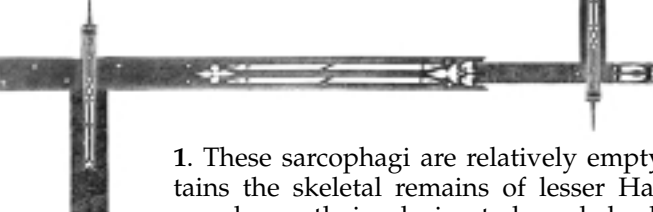
When the characters descend into the entry hall, they will find it to be a single large room stretching more than sixty feet before them. The room is extremely dark (even with the door broken, little ambient sunlight reaches down here), forcing the characters to rely on magic or torches to light their way.

Cobwebs of all shapes, sizes, and descriptions nearly coat the walls of the room and hang from the ceilings, making it extremely difficult to see clearly (vision reduced by one-half, -5 penalty on Search and Spot checks). From the water that has leaked in over the years, the crypt is humid, the air moist and cold, filled with the distinctive scent of dirt, mold, and decay.

On either side of the entry hall, between the three passages leading into side chambers off the room, there are three small sarcophagi. The sarcophagi are unopened though characters may notice that they have been disturbed recently (Spot check, DC 18 to notice trailing fingerprints left around the edges of each sarcophagus). Opening the sarcophagi is relatively simple (Strength check, DC 13), but there is danger in two of them:

### HAEDOL FAMILY CRYPT





1. These sarcophagi are relatively empty. Each contains the skeletal remains of lesser Haedol family members, their desiccated and broken bodies dressed in finery that has long since decayed. There is no jewelry or other items within these sarcophagi.

2. The skeleton within this sarcophagus has been magically animated, and will attack any living creature that opens the sarcophagi's lid (see stats for skeletons in Crypt Room D below).

3. This sarcophagus holds the skeletal remains of a large dog, resting upon a large, finely crafted shield. The dog skeleton is not animated. The shield is a masterwork tower shield emblazoned with the symbol of a rampant griffon.

## B. Rat Room

Down a slight incline lies a chamber with a single sarcophagus. The sides of the sarcophagus have cracked open, spilling out skeletal fragments across the ground. A thin layer of brackish water covers the floor, forming small, dark puddles. Hidden within the sarcophagus, a small swarm of cesserats have made a nest. They will stay within their nests unless the sarcophagus is disturbed, which will cause them to spill out and attack in a fury. Otherwise, they will remain hidden, avoiding the torchlight. If a battle occurs within the Entry Hall (Area A), there is a 50% chance that the cesserats will swarm out if they scent blood (i.e., if any of the skeletons manage to wound a character).

In the solitary sarcophagus in the room was the resting place for the Baron's great-grandfather. The body has been fouled by the cesserats, and there is no evidence of the *circlet* within. Clasped within the hands of the corpse, there's a leather-bound book. Unfortunately, most of the pages have been ruined by rot, mildew, and by the cesserats. In the center of the book, however, there are a few pages that remain relatively untouched. Any Earth mage studying the pages can make a Spellcraft check (DC 15) to discover that the pages contain enough information for the spell *chirurgeon's touch* (as Full Reference).

There is nothing else within the room.

**Cesserats** (5): CR 1/2; Small Animal; HD 1d8+2; hp 8, 7, 6, 6, 5; Init +3 (Dex); Spd 40 ft., climb 20 ft., swim 20 ft.; AC 16 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk Bite -1 melee (1d6-2, bite); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SA Swarming, disease; SQ Scent; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +0; Str 6, Dex 16, Con 14, Int 2, Wis 10, Cha 2. See Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook, page 170.

Skills and Feats: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +8.

**Swarming** (Ex): Cesserats can swarm an opponent. After one cesserat attacks an individual, each cesserat attacking the same victim receives a swarming bonus. The second cesserat receives a +1 bonus to attack and damage; the third receives a +2 bonus to attack and damage; each cesserat after the third receives a +3 bonus to attack and damage.

**Disease** (Ex): Cess blight—bite, Fortitude save (DC 18), incubation 1d4 days; damage 1d6 temporary Strength and 1d4 temporary Constitution.

## C. Room of Many Webs

More than any other room, this chamber is filled with a dense network of spider webs, so thick as to render it impossible to visually see through. The webs are a nest for all the spiders that have made the crypt their home. There are literally thousands of tiny (harmless) spiders living within the web. The web is slightly moist from the residual dampness within the crypt, so fire isn't as effective as it usually is against webs (reduce the effectiveness of fire to 25%). If the webs at the foot of the incline are disturbed in any way, the smaller spiders will scurry away.

Hidden within the webs, there are two sarcophagi. Both contain the skeletal remains of Haedol family members, though neither one has been animated. Each skeleton wears an elegantly engraved golden ring (wedding bands), worth approximately 1 orgent each.


[Optional Encounter: 3 Small Monstrous Spiders]

## D. Still Waters Run Deep

This room is filled with still, brackish water about 10 inches deep. On the far side of the room, three sarcophagi have been set close to the walls, their lids still sealed. Unfortunately, five feet into the room, there's a chasm under the water, filled with soft, silty sand. The chasm is five feet wide and ten feet deep. Any character stepping through the water is allowed a Reflex save (DC 15) to avoid falling into the chasm, leaping free just before they are drug down into the sand. Failure of the saving throw means the character has stepped into the silt, their own weight rapidly dragging them downwards. A character falling takes 1d6-2 damage (minimum of 1 point of damage), but though the silt does little to slow the character's fall, it does make it more difficult to get back out of, imposing a -5 circumstance penalty to Swim checks to get out of the chasm. Characters trapped within the chasm are in danger of drowning (see The Drowning Rule in *Core Rulebook II*).







The area before the sarcophagi is solid beneath the water, allowing characters to stand safely if they wish to open them. Each of the sarcophagi contains the remains of a Haedol family member, their flesh long since decayed into bone, covered by a thin layer of mold. In the central sarcophagi, the body has been buried in a suit of ceremonial armor (the equivalent of half-plate, though extremely gaudy), with a masterwork battle axe grasped in its skeletal hands.

### E. A Sad State of Affairs

Like Area D, the floor of this room is covered with a 10-inch deep layer of brackish, fetid water, though it doesn't have a dangerous hole in the floor. Two sarcophagi are set near the back wall, their lids still sealed and untouched. The lids are heavier than those of the other sarcophagi, requiring more effort to remove them (Strength check, DC 18). Within both sarcophagi, the skeletons have obviously been animated, their heads moving towards anyone that opens their sarcophagi, eyes blazing with Void magic, and fingers grasping to attack, but the skeletons are both too decrepit to move much. The skeleton in the northern most sarcophagi is wearing a masterwork chain shirt, and it will try and bite or claw anyone who reaches in to retrieve the armor (unless the characters smash the skeleton to bits first).

### F. Danger Beneath the Water

Like Area D, the floor in this chamber is covered by black, foul-smelling water, though it's more than two feet deep. On the far side of the room, there are four sarcophagi, all of which are lying open, the lids resting on the ground next to them. If the characters step foot into the water, four animated skeletons will all rise from the water with remarkable speed, springing to the attack.

The sarcophagi are completely empty, though each of the skeletons still wears the finery they were buried in (one is wearing a heavy gold pendant worth 2 orgent, two are wearing heavy gold wedding rings worth 95 argent each, and the last is wearing a full suit of chainmail and wielding a masterwork shortsword, giving it an AC of 18 and damage of 1d6 crit 19-20/x2, shortsword).

**Skeletons** (4): CR 1/3; Medium-sized Undead; HD 1d12, hp 10, 8, 6, 6; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk 2 Claws +0 melee (1d4, claw); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./5 ft.; SQ Undead, immunities; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feats: Improved Initiative

Undead: Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

Immunities (Ex): Skeletons have cold immunity. Because they lack flesh or internal organs, they take only half damage from piercing or slashing weapons.

### G. A Nest of Bloodsuckers

The floor of this chamber is flooded, as in Areas D—F, with almost two feet of brackish water. The lids of the two sarcophagi on the far side of the chamber have been shattered, and clearly the oldest in the entire crypt. The open sarcophagi have been converted into a nest by a small swarm of stirges, who will rise to attack any living creature entering the room (there's more than a few cessrat and rat bodies hidden beneath the brackish water).

There is nothing of value in either sarcophagi.

**Stirges** (3): CR 1/2; Tiny Beast; HD 1d10; hp 8, 6, 5; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 10 ft., fly 40 ft. (average); AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Atk Touch +6 melee (1d3-4, touch); Face/Reach 2 1/2 ft. x 2 1/2 ft.; SA Attach, blood drain; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 1, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills and Feats: Hide +14; Weapon Finesse (touch)

Attach (Ex): If a stirge hits with a touch attack, it uses its eight pincers to latch onto the opponent's body. An attached stirge has an AC of 12.

Blood Drain (Ex): A stirge drains blood, dealing 1d4 points of temporary Constitution damage each round it remains attached. Once it has drained 4 points of Constitution, it detaches and flies off to digest the meal.

### H. The Chapel

In the crypt, there is a small family chapel. An ornate set of heavy stone doors bars entry into the room. One door is carved with the common image of Mother Earth (her hair sheaves of wheat, her face painted brown, her arms painted white, and her feet black—though the paint is flaking and barely visible beneath the grime) one arm holding a fawn while the other holds a wolf pup. The other door bears the rarely scene, dread aspect of Earth—a powerful, menacing man holding an ax, with a hewn mountain behind him, and the earth splitting beneath his feet. Allow characters to make a Listen check (DC 20) in order to

hear the muffled sound of some unnatural shriek of rage coming from within the room.

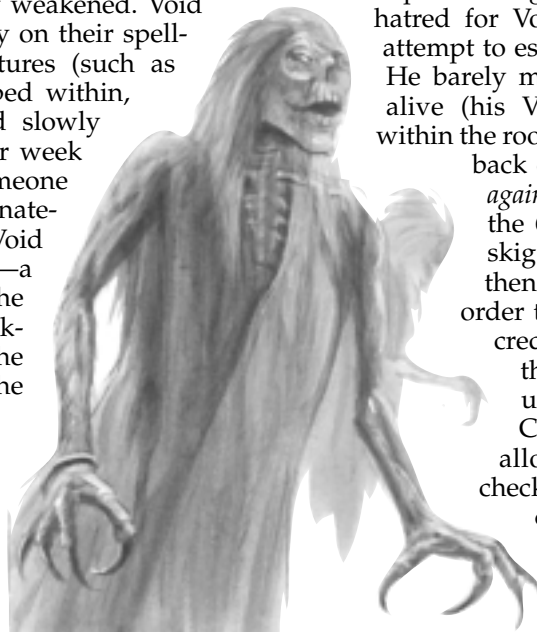
There is no lock upon the doors, and though they are heavy, the swing easily inwards. Characters succeeding at a Spot check (DC 15) will notice that there seem to be claw marks upon the inner edges of the doors, as if some powerful, clawed creature had thrown them open in a fury.

Though the chapel has also seen some devastation in the walls, floors, and ceiling, it is still possible to see the grandeur that once filled the chamber. The walls are a bas relief depicting valorous scenes from the Haedol family history, and the six pillars depict the Lord of Ghosts (the same feminine knight image in the statues above), arms upraised to support the ceiling.

On the far side of the room, there's an altar where two candle-shaped stones glow with a flickering radiance (the result of a *glowstone* spell), illuminating the chamber. Between these two candles, there lies a golden circlet, shaped to resemble a coiled cobra—the *circlet of serpents* (see sidebar). There's a hushed reverence in the chamber, almost as if the room had been blessed and consecrated, which it has. In this room, Void magic is drastically weakened. Void spellcasters suffer a—10 penalty on their spell-casting rolls, while Void creatures (such as undead) find themselves trapped within, unable to open the door, and slowly wasting away (losing 1 HD per week trapped in the room) unless someone allows them to escape. Unfortunately for the characters, one such Void creature is trapped within—a dreadful skig. When it sees the door open, it will cease its shrieking, and fight its way through the characters in order to escape the room.

**Skig:** CR 3; Large Undead; HD 5d12; hp 30; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+4 natural); Atk 2 claws +5 melee (1d6+6, claw); Face/Reach 5 ft. x 5 ft./10 ft.; SQ Undead, indestructible; SV Fort +1, Ref +3, Will +6; Str 18, Dex 10, Con –, Int 10, Wis 14, Cha 17. See Sovereign Stone Campaign Sourcebook, page 184.

Skills and Feats: Balance +5, Climb +9, Hide +4, Listen +6, Move Silently +6, Search +6, Spot +8; Lightning Reflexes, Blind-Fight



**Undead:** Immune to mind-influencing effects, poison, sleep, paralysis, stunning, and disease. Not subject to critical hits, subdual damage, ability damage, energy drain, or death from massive damage.

**Indestructible (Ex):** Skig are immortal. If “killed” they will disintegrate into dust, only to reform within 1 day's time. The only method that may be used to end a skig's unnatural existence is to carry six equal portions of the dust of the skig's corpse in six different directions, so that all six portions are no closer than 10 miles to each other. Should any two be closer than 10 miles, the reforming will occur. (Allow any characters with an appropriate Knowledge, such as Void Lore, Undead Lore, etc. a skill check at DC 15 in order to remember this detail about the skig).

The skig has not been within the room for more than a few days. Unfortunately for Jaryn, it managed to discover the crypt just days before he attempted to break in and steal the *circlet*. When he opened the chapel door, it seized the opportunity to try and escape. The skig, however, holds an unreasoning

hatred for Void mages, so it stopped in its attempt to escape long enough to attack him.

He barely managed to get out of the room alive (his Void magic severely weakened within the room, though he was able to tumble

back out of the room and cast a *ward against living dead* spell (detailed in the *Codex Mystorium*) to prevent the skig from following after him. It was then that Jaryn used his magic in order to animate the skeletons, to lend credence to his fabrication of something unholy and powerful taking up residence within the crypt.


Characters who defeat the skig are allowed a Knowledge (Arcana) check at DC 18, or Knowledge (Void) check at DC 15, to realize that skig are incapable of animating skeletons, so a Void mage must have been responsible for creating them.

Besides the *circlet* and the *glowstone*-candles, there is nothing else of value within this room.

## EVENT TWO: LEAVING THE CRYPT

Once the characters have retrieved the *circlet*, they will need to head back to the Haedol Estate to report their success to the Baron. Overjoyed, he and Jaryn will congratulate the characters, inviting them to rest





up for awhile, while they prepare to send the message to the bandits that they are ready for the exchange.

The exchange will occur early the next night, just after sundown, at the edge of the Baron's Estates. A single bandit will meet the group at the designated meeting spot, then escort them to yet another location where the exchange will occur (a ploy to discourage any possible trap on the part of the Baron). The ride from the meeting place to the exchange will take about two hours, most of which consists of riding in elaborate circles, doubling back on the trail, and other such methods used by the party's escort to discourage pursuit.

Little do the characters or the Baron realize that the bandits no longer have young Ranulf in their custody. The enterprising young lad managed to escape from the bandit camp on his own, striking off through the forest on his own, heading in the general direction he believed would lead him home. Unfortunately, he ran afoul of something unexpected in the forest. The bandits have spent the better part of the day looking for the young boy, with no success. Pressed for time, the bandits have had to come up with a new plan—they know that killing a noble of the Baron's rank and importance would be bad for their business, which left out the possibility of an ambush. Instead, they bribed a local peasant boy into acting as their surrogate. The peasant boy (a young lad named Tomas) has been dirtied up, wrapped in a heavy cloak, and bound hand and foot. Though he could never be mistaken for young Ranulf's twin, there's enough similarities that the bandits are hoping will fool the Baron long enough for them to escape with the loot.

#### LOCATION TWO: THE POINT OF EXCHANGE

The Baron, Jaryn, and the characters will arrive at the exchange point about two hours after sundown. As agreed upon, there's an equal number of bandits as there are characters (though the bandits do have one extra agent hidden up in the trees, armed with a shortbow and ready to lay down cover fire long enough for the bandits to escape). The bandits are standing at the far edge of a clearing in the forest that's roughly thirty feet wide, divided by a small stream (which is about five feet wide). The characters will be stopped at the opposite side of the clearing from the bandits, and their escort will quickly head for the opposite side. At that point, Gelwyn (see NPCs) steps forward, roughly yanking on a rope attached to a small, bound figure. Gelwyn will ask that the bag filled with money be tossed to the far side of the stream, at which time he will walk with the boy in front of him to retrieve the money. To guard against any funny business, he will warn that he has a marksman hidden in the trees (opposed

Spot check against the marksman's Hide check to verify the truth of Gelwyn's claim). Once he grabs the bag, he will back off with the rope still grasped in his hand, only releasing it when it reaches its full length (10 feet). He and his bandits will then attempt to run for it, trying to disappear into the forest.

There are a number of ways you can allow the characters to perceive the deception being played upon them. You can allow them opposed Sense Motive checks against Gelwyn's Bluff check, or you can choose to allow them a simple Sense Motive check to see if the characters notice that Gelwyn seems to be far more uncomfortable with the situation than it merits. Or, in a pinch, you can have the Baron make a Spot check (DC 15) to notice that there's definitely something wrong with his "son."

If the deception is detected before the decoy crosses the stream, Gelwyn and his men will try and escape, fighting only if they're pressed. Otherwise, the characters will have to try and chase after the bandits (who are heading for their base camp). If the characters chase after the fleeing bandits, allow them Spot and Listen checks to remain in pace with the bandits, otherwise, they will have to try tracking them back to their camp. Smart groups may go for the marksman up in the tree, who will "gladly" tell his captors the way to the camp with minimal persuasion (Intimidate check, DC 15). The marksman will try and escape before he's captured, jumping from the tree he's perched in (have him make a Jump check, DC 15 to avoid taking damage from the fall).

The Baron will be enraged by the bandit's deception, but Jaryn will calm him down, explaining that the adventurers can still save the boy by hunting down the bandits (Jaryn wants that *circlet*, and he'll try and get it either by the characters retrieving it, or by purchasing it from the bandits later, though he would prefer that the bandits be killed before they reveal who hired them for the job). The Baron, however, will be too angry to listen to Jaryn, and will head in the direction of the bandits, regardless of whether he's followed by the characters or not. Jaryn has no choice but to go along, for fear that the bandits may let something slip.

#### LOCATION THREE: THE BANDIT CAMP

The bandit camp is about two miles away from the exchange point, though traveling there takes a little while longer than normal (use Trackless Forest Terrain modifier found on page 143 of the *Core Rulebook I*). The bandits will be in a hurry to get back, break camp, and try to disappear into the forest to regroup later on. If the characters followed, they will find the camp has been set up in another clearing. There are four small tents arranged in cardinal directions around a banked campfire.

**Gelwyn, Male Nimran/Rogue 2, Stalker 2:** CR 4; Size: M; HD 2d6+2 + 2d8+4; hp 21; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 16 (+3 Studded leather, +3 Dex); Atk dagger +4 melee or +6 ranged (1d4+1 19-20/x2), shortbow +6 ranged (1d6, crit/x3), or longsword +4 melee (1d8+1, crit19-20/x2); SA: Sneak Attack +1d6; SQ Evasion; SV: Fort +4, Ref +6, Will +0; Str 13, Dex 16, Con 12, Int 13, Wis 10, Cha 15. Feats: Combat Reflexes, Exotic Weapon Proficiency, Improved Initiative, Improved Unarmed Strike, Track. Skills: Appraise +4, Bluff +7, Climb +6, Hide +10, Jump +3, Knowledge (Nature) +2, Literacy +1, Move Silently +11, Ride +5, Search +6, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +4. Possessions: Studded leather, 4 daggers, shortbow, longsword, 1,000 argents, medium horse.

**Bandits (equal to the # of adventurers in the party):**

CR 1 (Stalker 1); Size M; HD 1d8+1; hp 6; Init +2 (Dexterity); Spd 30 ft.; AC 14 (+2 Leather, +2 Dexterity); Atk +3 melee (1d8+1 crit 19-20/x2 longsword); SV Fort +2, Ref +0, Will +2; Str 12, Dex 14, Con 12, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10. Feats: Track, Weapon Focus (longsword). Skills: Hide +7, Listen +5, Move Silently +7, Spot +5, Swim +5, Wilderness Lore +5. Possessions (each): Leather armor, longsword, 5 argent.

**Bandit Marksman (1):** CR 2 (Vinnengaelean Archer 2); Size: M; HD 2d8+2; hp 15; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 feet; AC 14 (+2 Leather, +2 Dex); Atk Dagger +1 melee or +3 ranged (1d4 crit19-20/x2), 2 longbow +5 ranged (1d8 crit x3) [or 3 longbow +3 ranged], or shortsword +1 melee (1d6 crit19-20/x2); SA Primary Weapon (longbow) +2, Extra Shot (gains an additional ranged attack equal to base attack, plus may stack with Rapid Shot for a total of 3 shots per round at -2 attack each); SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 15, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 12, Cha 10. Feats: Point Blank Shot, Rapid Shot. Skills: Craft (Bow-



making) +3, Listen +2, Search +1, Spot +3, Swim +4. Possessions: Leather armor, dwarven longbow, 15 argents.

The bandits will fight like cornered rats if they are attacked at their camp. At this point, they figure it's all or nothing, and would rather die fighting than be hanged from a tree (or worse) for kidnapping and losing a baron's son. The Baron will be in the middle of the fighting, sword swinging viciously as he fights his way towards Gelwyn, roaring for information about where his son is. The truth is Gelwyn does not know, but he has realized that Jaryn is responsible for this entire mess. Gelwyn will use that information to save his own life, though the lives of his men are meaningless to him. If he's about to die (5 hp or less), he will throw down his sword and try to bargain. Unfortunately, Jaryn's lurking in the shadows, and will be ready for such a betrayal. While the fighting was going on, he hunted for the bag containing the *circlet*, discovering it in Gelwyn's saddlebag. Slipping the *circlet* out, he will place it upon his head, finally taking his "just due." Before Gelwyn can tell the Baron about Jaryn's involvement, he will cast a *despair* spell on the bandit. Gelwyn will suddenly shriek in terror, his eyes rolling back in his head, before falling unconscious (brought below 0 hp by the subdual damage inflicted by the *despair* spell) and unable to answer. You can allow the characters a Listen check (DC 18) to hear the whispery casting of the spell, but Jaryn's hidden well enough that it's difficult to pinpoint his location (Spot check, DC 20). During the confusion of Gelwyn's collapse, Jaryn will cast *pass as shadow* and disappear back into the forest, heading back for the estate so he can retrieve his spellbook and disappear "for good."

With Jaryn missing, the bandit leader unconscious, the Baron will collapse, hopeless about finding his missing child. Suddenly, there's a faint sound of someone calling for help (Listen check, DC 18 to notice the direction the cry is coming from). It's Ranulf the Younger!

**LOCATION FOUR: WEBS WITHOUT SPIDERS?**

If the characters follow the cries for help, it will lead them about a mile east of the bandit camp. The characters hear the faint cry coming from down in a gully. Characters with Wilderness Lore may make a DC check (DC 15) to notice that it appears someone had tripped and fallen over the edge. Looking below, the characters will see an elaborate tangle of thick, gooey



strands crossing over one another to create a thick web. Caught in the web, entangled by his own struggles, is a handsome, hook-nosed youngster with a large bruise on his forehead. Pale and weak, young Ranulf (Vinnengaelean/Noble 1, AC 12, hp 3, Dex 15, Cha 14) is crying for help as he's trying to fend off two ratlike creatures chattering angrily at him as they nimbly crawl upon the webbing—two weaver rats are trying to defend their web against a large, noisy intruder.

**Weaver Rats (2):** CR 1; Tiny Beast; HD 1d10+1; hp 8, 5; Init +4 (Dex); Spd 30 ft., climb 20 ft.; AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex); Atk Bite +0 melee (1d3-2 and poison, bite); Face/Reach 2 1/2 x 2 1/2/5 ft.; SA Poison, web; SQ Immunities, scent; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; Str 6, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 8. Feats: Alertness. Skills: Climb +14, Escape Artist +8, Hide +6\*, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +8\*, Spot +6. \*In their webs, weaver rats receive a +5 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks. See New Monster.

### EVENT THREE: THE SERPENT REVEALED!

Once the characters free young Ranulf, he will throw himself into his father's arms, crying and sobbing, and trying to tell his father what had happened. In the jumble of words, one name seems to pop up repeatedly—Jaryn's. Ranulf the Younger explains that he heard Jaryn bargaining with the bandits while they were kidnapping him, talking about something called the *circlet*. Jaryn, of course, is nowhere to be found—he's already headed back towards the estate, and he's got a lead of at least half an hour on them.

Luckily for the characters, Jaryn's not as savvy in the forest as they may be. If the characters race back to the estate after saving young Ranulf, they'll have a chance to face down Jaryn. Otherwise, Jaryn will be able to retrieve his spellbook and his already packed belongings, and escape justice—for now.

If the characters do get back to the Haedol Estate in time to deal with Jaryn, they will find him cloaked and ready for the road. A horse will be saddled (though Antone is nowhere to be seen) and Jaryn will be preparing to leave. The *circlet* is around his forehead, the ruby-set cobra eyes glinting even in the dim moonlight. Confronted, he will sneer at the baron and company, ordering them out of his way. If they try and stop him, Jaryn will use his magic to defend himself, first casting *repel the living* if they try and rush him, and using *despair* against anyone who seems capable of hurting him from afar. At this point, he doesn't want to kill anyone—nothing can be

proven concretely, and he doesn't want to draw the attention of the Temple of the Magi's Inquisitors upon himself. All he wants to do is get away, with "his" *circlet*. He'll try and use *pass as shadow* once again, as quickly as possible, and disappear into the forest. Only if it seems that he has no other choice will he use his Void magic to try and kill.

**Jaryn, Male Vinnengaelean/Noble 1 Void Mage 3:** CR 4; Size: M; HD 1d8+2 + 3d4+6; hp 24; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Cloth, +1 Dex) or 15 (+1 Cloth, +1 Dex, +3 *circlet*); Atk: Masterwork dagger +3 melee or +4 ranged (1d4+1 crit 19-20/x2); SA Deceptive Melee; SQ *tainted by Void*; SB +3 Void (+8 with *circlet*); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 15. Feats: Great Fortitude, Quicken Spell. Skills: Bluff +11, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Hide +4, Innuendo +7, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +8. Possessions: Spellbook (all spells below), *circlet of the serpent* (see New Magic Sidebar), masterwork dagger, quality robes, 350 argent, assorted jewelry (total value 100 argent).

Void Spells, Intimate Knowledge: *despair* (14), *repel the living* (18), *pass as shadow* (33). Quick Reference: *dissipate life* (16), *sense Void magic* (16), *shadow walk* (16), *dispel Void magic* (20\*), *ward against living dead* (31). Full Reference: *skeletal minions* (157).

### CONCLUSION

The adventure concludes when either Jaryn escapes, or the characters defeat him. If he escapes, the characters now have a reoccurring enemy that can constantly bedevil them. The Baron Haedol is more than willing to pay the adventurers a finder's fee if they will track down the traitor and return the *circlet* to him (it is a family heirloom, after all).

If the characters defeat Jaryn, then Baron Haedol will express his gratification to the heroes, handing over the money reclaimed from the bandits as well as promising to spread the word about their valorous deeds. The Baron will, of course, keep the *circlet*, and this time place it under better protection.

Regardless, *A Tangled Web* is concluded, and where the heroes go from here is up to you!

### NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

#### JARYN, LORD CHAMBERLAIN

**Male Vinnengaelean/Noble 1, Void Mage 3:** CR 4; Size: M; HD 1d8+2 + 3d4+6; hp 24; Init +1 (+1 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 12 (+1 Cloth, +1 Dex) or 15 (+1 Cloth, +1 Dex, +3 *circlet*); Atk: Masterwork dagger +3 melee or +4 ranged (1d4+1 crit 19-20/x2); SA Deceptive



Melee; SQ *tainted by Void*; SB +3 Void (+8 with *circlet*); SV Fort +5, Ref +2, Will +5; Str 10, Dex 12, Con 15, Int 17, Wis 10, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Bluff +11, Concentration +7, Diplomacy +8, Hide +4, Innuendo +7, Intimidate +9, Knowledge (Arcana) +8, Knowledge (Local) +5, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +4, Sense Motive +4, Spellcraft +8.

**Feats:** Great Fortitude, Quicken Spell.

**Possessions:** Spellbook (all spells below), *circlet of the serpent* (see New Magic Sidebar), masterwork dagger, quality robes, 350 argent, assorted jewelry (total value 100 argent).

**Void Spells, Intimate Knowledge:** *despair* (14), *repel the living* (18), *pass as shadow* (33). Quick Reference: *dissipate life* (16), *sense Void magic* (16), *shadow walk* (16), *dispel Void magic* (20\*), *ward against living dead* (31). Full Reference: *skeletal minions* (157).

**Appearance:** Well-dressed, clean-cut, and dapper, Jaryn is a handsome man in his early thirties. His dark hair is worn cut short, with faint hints of white showing at either temple. His skin is fair, causing his dark brown eyes to stand out in his face. He's always dressed at the current height of fashion, though he's far from the Vinnengaelean Court.

**Role-Playing Notes:** You are arrogant and ruthless, filled with a bitter hatred you've inherited from generations ago. You think Ranulf the Elder is a weak, pathetic man, little better than a dog, but despite yourself, you've grown too fond of Ranulf the Younger to hurt the lad. Instead, you'll content yourself with stealing the family's most treasured heirloom, the *circlet of serpents*. Seems fair to you. Now, if only you could find some patsies to do the dirty work...

## RANULF THE ELDER, THE BARON HAEDOL

Male Vinnengaelean/Noble 2 : CR 2; Size: M; HD 2d8+2; hp 16; Init +0; Spd 30 ft.; AC 15 (+5 Masterwork chain shirt); Atk Masterwork longsword +2 melee (1d8+1 19-20/x2); SA Deceptive melee; SQ Monthly Funds 25; SV Fort +1, Ref +0, Will +4; Str 11, Dex 11, Con 13, Int 10, Wis 9, Cha 15.

**Skills:** Balance +2, Diplomacy +7, Intimidate +6, Knowledge (History) +3, Knowledge (Local) +3, Knowledge (Nobility and Royalty) +5, Listen +3, Ride +4, Sense Motive +3.

**Feats:** Iron Will, Mounted Combat.

**Possessions:** Masterwork chain shirt, masterwork longsword.

**Appearance:** With a nose slightly too hooked to be considered classically pleasing, Ranulf the Elder is

still a relatively attractive man in his mid-thirties. Usually, he's cheerful and kind, which combined with his rather plain brown hair and his habit of wearing more neutral colors has earned him the rather unflattering nickname of "bulldog" at Court. Unfortunately, the loss of his son a few nights ago has done much to age him. Silver now liberally streaks his hair, his bright blue eyes are now bloodshot and red-rimmed. Even his normally tidy clothes are now wrinkled and soiled, as if he's given up caring about himself until he sees his son again.

**Role-Playing Notes:** The loss of your only, and beloved, son is the last blow. You lost your wife years ago, and he was all you truly have of her. You will pay anything, do anything, to get him back. Thankfully, you've got your trusted friend Jaryn to help you through your time of need, and these brave and noble heroes seem a gift from the gods!

## NEW MAGIC ITEM

### THE CIRCLET OF SERPENTS

**Description:** The *circlet of serpents* is a rather ornate, gaudy item. Crafted to resemble a cobra, the flared hood of its head is meant to set above the 'third eye', the cobra's own eyes inset with small rubies that flicker with radiance when the *circlet* is worn by a living creature. The golden body wraps in on itself to form the rest of the band. When placed upon the head of a living creature, the coils will open, allowing the *circlet* to slide down upon its head. Once placed on its head, the coils tighten, securing the *circlet* in place. The *circlet* can only be removed by the wearer, or upon the wearer's death.

**Powers:** While worn by a living creature (undead cannot benefit from wearing the *circlet*), the *circlet* grants the wearer a+3 deflection bonus to AC, a +4 enhancement bonus to Fortitude saves, and a +5 spellcasting bonus on spells the spellcaster is considered Advantaged in.

## CREDITS

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## NEW MONSTER

# WEAVER RAT

### Tiny Beast

**Hit Dice:** 1d10+1 (6 hp)

**Initiative:** +4 (Dex)

**Speed:** 30 ft., climb 20 ft.

**AC:** 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex)

**Attacks:** Bite +0 melee

**Damage:** Bite 1d3-2 and poison

**Face/Reach:** 2 1/2 ft. by 2 1/2 ft./5 ft.

**Special Attacks:** Poison, web

**Special Qualities:** Immunities, scent

**Saves:** Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1

**Abilities:** Str 6, Dex 18, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 8

**Skills:** Climb +14, Escape Artist +8, Hide +6\*, Jump +2, Listen +6, Move Silently +8\*, Spot +6

**Feats:** Alertness

**Climate/Terrain:** Any forest, hills, mountains, and underground

**Organization:** Solitary, family (2-12), or colony (16-32)

**Challenge Rating:** 1

**Treasure:** Standard

**Advancement Range:** 2-3 HD (Tiny); 4-6 HD (Small)

Weaver rats are rodents capable of spinning webs like spiders. Lurking in the silken strands, they wait for their prey.

Resembling a weasel or ferret, a weaver rat has a long, slender body. Two small, black eyes gaze from above an elongated muzzle. Its jaws are filled with very small, very sharp teeth. The weaver rat is covered with a light gray fur, which enables it to better blend in with many environments. To an inexperienced eye, a weaver rat easily passes for an ordinary member of the family mustelid.

Weaver rats differ from other mustelid in their ability to spit a strange mucus, which they use in much the same way spiders use webs. This viscous fluid solidifies rapidly after it leaves the weaver rat's body, becoming extremely sticky and strong. With this webbing, weaver rats create elaborate web-traps, which they use as a means of capturing their prey. Unaffected by its own mucus (or the mucus of others of its kind), and surprisingly lightweight, even for creatures of comparative size, weaver rats scurry about their webs, lying in wait for prey or repairing damage done by prey that has escaped.

Pecwae have a liking for weaver rats, and often enjoy talking to the industrious creatures. It is not uncommon to find a pecwae with a weaver rat companion perched on his shoulder as they wander a forest, looking for herbs (and tasty morsels for the rat).

### Combat

Combining the tactics of a weasel with those of a spider, weaver rats use their webs to create elaborate traps ranging from trip wires to nets hidden by a layer of leaves. Typically, weaver rats confine themselves to Small or smaller prey, but if some creature stumbles into their webs, they will not hesitate to defend their homes.

**Poison (Ex):** Bite, Fortitude save (DC 11); initial damage and secondary damage 1d3 Constitution.

**Web (Ex):** Four times per day, a weaver rat can cast a web. This is similar to an attack with a net but has a maximum range of 50 feet, with a range increment of 10 feet, and is effective against targets of Small or smaller size. The web anchors the target in place, allowing no movement.

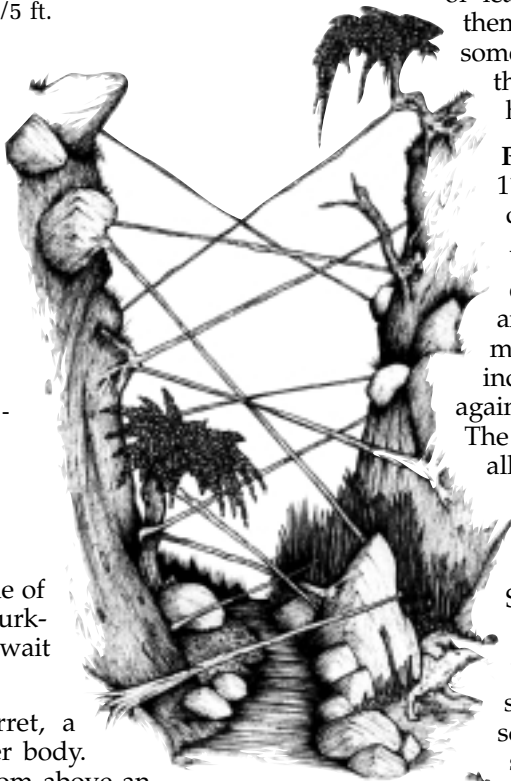
An entangled creature can escape with a successful Escape Artist check (DC 18) or burst it with a Strength check (DC 24, 4 hit points). Both are standard actions.

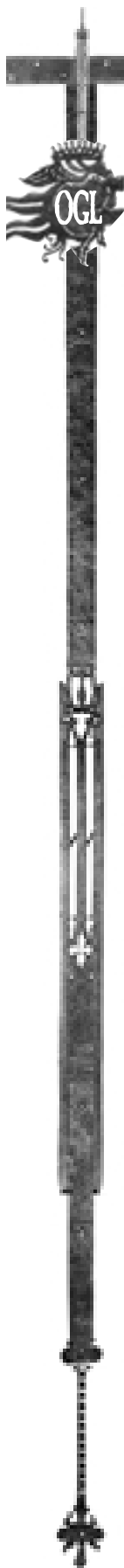
Weaver rats can also create sheets of sticky webbing from 5 to 20 feet square. They usually position these sheets to snare flying creatures, but can also try to trap prey on the ground. Approaching creatures must succeed at a Spot check (DC 20) to notice a web; otherwise they stumble into it and become trapped as though by a successful web attack. Attempts to escape or burst the webbing gain a +5 bonus if the trapped creature has something to walk on or grab while pulling free. Each 5-foot section has the hit points listed above, with a damage reduction of 5/fire.

A weaver rat can move across its own sheet web at its climb speed and can determine the exact location of any creature touching its web.

**Immunities:** Weaver rats are immune to both magical and natural poisons.

**Skills:** Weaver rats receive a +4 racial bonus to Escape Artist, Jump, and Move Silently checks. Weaver rats use their Dexterity score when determining the result of Climb checks. \*In its web, a weaver rat gains a +5 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently checks.





# SOVEREIGN STONE



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# SOVEREIGN STONE



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