

SCEPTER TOWER
OF SPELLGARD™



ADVENTURE BOOK ONE

CREDITS

Design
David Noonan, Greg A. Vaughan

Editing
Scott Fitzgerald Gray

Managing Editing
Kim Mohan

Mechanical Design and Development Manager
Andy Collins

Story Design and Development Manager
Christopher Perkins

Director of RPG R&D
Bill Slavicsek

Art Director
Kate Irwin

Graphic Designer
Emi Tanji

Cover Illustration
Steve Prescott

Interior Illustrations
Attila Adorjany, Miguel Coimbra, Warren Mahy, Jim Pavelec

Cartography
Robert Lazzaretti

Publishing Production Specialists
Angelika Lokotz, Erin Dorries

Production Manager
Cynda Callaway

Special Thanks to Brandon Daggerhart, keeper of Shadowfell

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WELCOME TO ADVENTURE!

Lady Saharel has a secret. What secret? All of them. . . .

In *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*[™], the player characters brave the dangers of a fortress of Lost Netheril. Treasures of that ancient empire are said to be hidden within, but the relics of a bygone age pale in comparison to Spellgard's greatest treasure: Lady Saharel.

Once the ruler of Spellgard, Lady Saharel exists beyond death as a kind of prophetic spirit. On those rare occasions when she appears within the ruins of Spellgard, she answers questions posed by any mortals nearby. No query is off limits. Lady Saharel can tell a seeker the location of the secret door to a dragon's lair, why his or her betrothed disappeared mysteriously last month, and what will happen if someone reconciles with estranged friends.

Although no prophecy is supposed to be able to determine the future with complete accuracy, it is said that Lady Saharel's answers have yet to be proven wrong. As a result, numerous travelers seek the rubble of Spellgard. Some come in search of assurance before making fateful decisions. Others desire an omniscient guide to acquiring wealth or power. Some come in search of answers that are far more personal: the whereabouts of a lost love, the identity of a parent, or how to find the strength to live with the choices of one's past.

Over the broken walls of Spellgard and the broken dreams of those who seek it looms the Scepter Tower. One of the few structures left standing after Spellgard's fall, the Scepter Tower has become home to a dark presence that seeks to control the power of Lady Saharel's prophecies.

WHAT YOU NEED TO PLAY

Scepter Tower of Spellgard is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] game adventure for characters of 2nd level. As the Dungeon Master, you need the *Player's Handbook*[®], the *Monster Manual*[®], and the *Dungeon Master's Guide*[®] for the game rules and statistics necessary to run this adventure for your players. *D&D[™] Dungeon Tiles* and *D&D[®] Miniatures* can also be used to enhance your play experience.

Players need only the *Player's Handbook*, which gives them information about what their characters can do.

This adventure takes place in the FORGOTTEN REALMS[®] setting, and as such it could be worked into a campaign as a sequel to the adventure presented in Chapter 1 of the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide* that unfolds in and around the town of Loudwater. Alternatively, you can play *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* as a stand-alone adventure—even one that kicks off a campaign. This booklet has instructions for modifying the adventure if it is being used to start a campaign with 1st-level characters. The *FORGOTTEN REALMS Campaign Guide* and the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* contain material that can enhance the gameplay experience, but neither of those books is essential to this adventure.

The player characters are among those who are eager to hear the prophecies of Spellgard—or at least curious enough to visit this ancient site. In this adventure, the PCs will meet other seekers after prophetic knowledge, discover what sinister forces lurk in the shadows of the Scepter Tower—and perhaps even gain an audience with Lady Saharel herself.

Defeating the challenges of the tower requires a lot of combat, so you ought to make the players aware that their characters should prepare for danger. However, a dash of social skills won't hurt their chances either. Not everyone in Spellgard is hostile, and some of its denizens can provide useful aid. Before the characters set out, give the players a chance to think about the obligatory precautions to be taken when exploring a thousand-year-old ruin. The Scepter Tower of Spellgard holds many secrets, but some are more dangerous than others.

THE FALLEN LANDS

Sages, cartographers, and explorers once wrote extensively regarding the area long known as the Fallen Lands—a last remnant of Netheril that once lay along the western edge of the desert known as Anauroch. Then the Spellplague came, thrusting this area into great upheaval and leaving much of this territory shrouded in mystery. Although the lands of the Gray Vale beyond the Graypeak Mountains, including the towns of Loudwater and Llorck, stand as an island of civilization in the vicinity, the Fallen Lands remain a forbidding place. The map on the next page, meant to be shown to players, identifies the location of the Fallen Lands and the Spellgard ruins. (A similar map, on page 11, provides more detail that players and their characters are not initially aware of.)

This area, roughly comprising the territory south of the Far Forest, north of the Graypeak Mountains, and east of the Deep Maw, is crisscrossed by ridges of low foothills, dotted with scrubby stands of pine and barren plateaus. Craters, fissures, and fault lines make navigation and orientation difficult. Sheer ridges force travelers along endless twisting paths, and the fractured topography makes good vantage points few and far between.

Rain is rare in the summer and sporadic in other seasons, but the Fallen Lands are by no means a desert. Small streams (tributaries of the Delimbiyr River) are common even in the height of summer. Winter sees a light dusting of snow but only the occasional blizzard or heavy snowfall.

The Fallen Lands, as they exist in the aftermath of the Spellplague, remain largely unexplored, but here are a few facts every traveler knows.

- ◆ Somewhere near the center of the Fallen Lands stands Stormkeep, a mysterious castle surrounded by magical squalls of electricity that never dissipate.
- ◆ Orcs and goblins live in scattered bands throughout the region. They mostly war against each other, though different tribes occasionally unite under a single

HOW TO USE THIS ADVENTURE

Scepter Tower of Spellgard is a DUNGEONS & DRAGONS adventure that takes a party of five player characters (PCs) from 2nd level to well into 4th level and perhaps as high as 5th. You can easily expand the adventure by adding your own encounters or plot hooks.

The two booklets included in this adventure are for the Dungeon Master (DM). If you're planning to experience *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* as a player, don't read any farther. *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* contains these components:

1. *Adventure Book One* (this booklet) provides the Dungeon Master with an overview of the Fallen Lands, Lady Saharel, and the ruins of Spellgard. This material includes a couple of preliminary encounters, descriptions of non-player characters (NPCs), descriptions of key locations, illustrations of places and adversaries, and a system for determining random encounters.
2. *Adventure Book Two* contains the bulk of the adventure, including many possible encounters within the Spellgard ruins. The encounters are divided into three sections: the Ramparts, the Catacombs, and the Scepter Tower.
3. A two-sided poster map. One side shows a "generic" location within the Spellgard ruins. The other side is a depiction of the Scepter Tower interior. See page 31 of this booklet for information on how to use these maps.
4. A folder to hold the booklets and the poster map.

Maps of Spellgard

This adventure includes two maps of the Spellgard ruins. The one on page 6 of this booklet is meant to be provided to the players. It shows them the surface features of the area and the locations of the Monastery of the Precipice and the Scepter Tower—all knowledge that they could obtain from a number of sources (such as one of the current residents of the monastery, who could have allowed them to copy an existing map).

The map on page 19 of this booklet, designed for the DM's use, includes much more detail, such as the locations of monsters and NPCs, that characters will discover as they explore the complex.

Other Player Handouts

The Player's Adventure Log on page 7 of this booklet is meant to be photocopied and handed out to the players in your group so they can keep track of encounters their characters experience and rewards they earn as they move through the adventure.

"The Analects of Kuryon," on page 9, is meant to be shown to players at an appropriate time when you fill them in on the background of the adventure. You should make one copy of this page for the group to share.

banner to raid over the Graypeaks and strike the frontier communities of the Gray Vale.

- ◆ Travel by day is reasonably safe, although particularly bold bandits sometimes menace travelers who don't appear capable of defending themselves.
- ◆ Some explorers speak of a site known as the Plateau of the Reverse Obelisks, which they say is safe to approach and travel through by day. In fact, the denizens of the Fallen Lands grant this area a wide berth, making it perhaps the safest part of the journey to Spellgard. However, it is unwise (if not downright foolhardy) to make camp or spend the night anywhere near this place.
- ◆ Spellgard lies atop a ridge at the eastern edge of the Fallen Lands. Its ruins are visible from miles away on a clear day.
- ◆ Spellgard was once known as Saharelgard, a great fortress of ancient Netheril. It is home to Lady Saharel, a ghost who has the gift of prophecy and insight. She speaks of the future or the past to anyone who chances upon her in the Spellgard ruins.
- ◆ At the edge of Spellgard stands the Monastery of the Precipice. Treasure-hunters and seekers after Lady Saharel congregate there.

RUMORS

Beyond the accepted facts are the following rumors that one or more of the player characters might have heard.

- ◆ The Monastery of the Precipice trades whiskey distilled on the premises for food and sundries supplied by dwarf merchants.
- ◆ Orcs are on the march across the Fallen Lands. They are set to seize Spellgard within a month, seeking weapons and magic with which they will assault the settlements of the Gray Vale.
- ◆ Three weeks ago, a widowed noble came to the Monastery of the Precipice, saying that Lady Saharel had told her where to find her lost husband's body. She was intending to hire mercenaries to retrieve it so she could give it a proper burial.
- ◆ A half-finished castle in the Fallen Lands is haunted by the ghost of the lord who died before it could be finished.
- ◆ The great treasures of Spellgard were taken from the place years ago, in the final days of Low Netheril when the fortress was sacked. However, rumors persist of undisturbed chambers there, and of ancient relics that have not seen the light of day for centuries.
- ◆ Spellgard has lain in ruins for more than a thousand years, but the castle has never been truly abandoned. A shifting population of treasure hunters and prophecy-seekers occupy the aboveground ruins, and the old tunnels beneath the site are home to kobolds and fouler creatures.
- ◆ In the middle of Spellgard is the Scepter Tower, one of the few structures of the old castle that still stands



complete. Mystery and legend surround the Scepter Tower, and it is said that no living being can pass within its walls.

- ◆ The magic of Netheril lingers within the stones of Spellgard. Before the castle fell, its arcanists focused incalculable power within the Scepter Tower, and the chambers of old Saharelgard were warded by magic locks that no one could defeat.
- ◆ Dark rumors have come down from the Monastery of the Precipice with the most recent dwarven caravans. Though the Spellgard ruins have always been a dangerous place, a dark presence is said to have established itself there in recent weeks. More than a few of the so-called seekers who look for Lady Saharel have disappeared in the ruins, never to be heard from or seen again.
- ◆ Not all who look for Lady Saharel make the Monastery of the Precipice their base of operations in Spellgard. Seeker camps dot the ruins, and some of their residents are as dangerous as any monsters roaming the Fallen Lands.

WHAT BRINGS PCs HERE?

One of the most important ways that a player can prepare for this adventure is to think about why his or her character wants to speak with Lady Saharel. All the folklore behind the ghost sorceress tells the same tale: Saharel answers any question put to her, but those who seek her often do so in vain.

Many come to Spellgard hoping to ask questions such as “How can I become wealthy?” or “How can I amass great power?” Nothing prevents these individuals from doing so. However, Lady Saharel appears so infrequently that those hoping only for material gain rarely stick it out in the ruins for long. Prophetic wisdom from Lady Saharel might indeed be a fast path to wealth and power—but only if one doesn’t consider the time and risk involved in the search for her ghostly presence. The monster-infested landscape of the Fallen Lands has a way of making other get-rich-quick schemes look more promising by comparison.

Those who make their way to the Monastery of the Precipice and persevere in their search through the ruins of Spellgard are often driven by deeper questions. If you want such goals to push the characters toward Spellgard, here are some possibilities that you can share with the players.

FAMILY

If certain elements of a character’s backstory have not been fleshed out yet, consider making that situation into a full-fledged mystery ripe for prophetic insight. Such a character might seek the answer to one or more of these questions.

- ◆ Who are my real parents?
- ◆ What happened to my missing relative?
- ◆ What is the source of the feud between two people close to me?
- ◆ How can I reconcile with a particular family member?
- ◆ Why does a particular family member behave a certain way?
- ◆ What happened to our ancestral lands?
- ◆ What is the secret that a particular family member refuses to share?

FUTURE

Every player character is an adventurer destined to become a legend—or to die in the attempt. A certain PC might wonder what path offers the best chance of an illustrious (and hopefully long) life.

- ◆ What will be the greatest obstacle to my success?
- ◆ What will happen to my archrival?
- ◆ What will be my greatest achievement?
- ◆ Will I achieve a particular goal?
- ◆ How can I find the perfect spouse?
- ◆ Will I start a family?

- ◆ How long will I live?
- ◆ How will I die?

CAREER

As characters advance in level, more and more class and feat options present themselves. Choosing the best options can be a daunting task; as such, one or more PCs might want answers to questions such as these.

- ◆ What training or vocation should I undertake?
- ◆ How do I set out to follow a particular paragon path?
- ◆ How can I convince a particular mentor to tutor me?

THE CAMPAIGN

The FORGOTTEN REALMS setting is a world of ageless intrigue and turmoil. In such a world, information is power. Even though the characters undertaking this adventure are relatively young and inexperienced, one or more of them might seek knowledge of great import.

- ◆ Where can a particular item (a sword, an ancient grimoire, and so on) be found?
- ◆ What is a particular archvillain’s greatest weakness?
- ◆ What organization or force is behind certain mysterious events?
- ◆ What is the greatest threat to a certain community?
- ◆ What will happen when a specific nonplayer character dies?
- ◆ What is the answer to a particular NPC’s riddle?
- ◆ How can I destroy a particular organization or foe?

PLAYING AGAINST THE GRAIN

A character can come to Spellgard for reasons other than seeking an audience with Lady Saharel. He might be in search of lore or treasure from one of Low Netheril’s most famous fortresses. Perhaps he is acting as a bodyguard for a friend or patron in search of prophetic guidance. He might have business—sinister or otherwise—with another seeker.

MAKE QUESTIONS KNOWN

A character might prefer to keep his planned question for Lady Saharel a secret. Certainly, over the years the monastery has played host to more than a few mysterious strangers keeping their own counsel. However, you should strongly encourage every player to reveal his or her character’s question to you. Although the PCs might be less than optimistic regarding their chances of gaining an audience with Lady Saharel, the players likely realize (because they’re engaging in this adventure) that such a meeting is well within the realm of possibility. Because a character’s question might be far-reaching—perhaps even glimpsing into the future—that character’s player will receive a more interesting answer from the Sorceress of Spellgard if you have foreknowledge of his question (and thus time to prepare an appropriate reply).

SPELLGARD



Gatehouse

To Civilization

Scepter Tower

Broken Tower

Monastery of the Precipice

0 320 feet

ADVENTURE INTRODUCTION

In *Scepter Tower of Spellgard*, the PCs (or at least some of them) arrive at the Monastery of the Precipice seeking prophetic guidance. Like other travelers to Spellgard, they wish to ask the spirit of Lady Saharel a question, receiving an oracular answer in return.

The spirit of Lady Saharel reveals herself only rarely, however, and no one knows how to entice her to appear. As a result, most prophecy-seekers end up wandering the ruins, trying to rebuild some part of Spellgard in the hope that their labors might win Saharel's favor.

The ruins of Spellgard have long been legendary for their dangers. However, just two months ago, a shadar-kai adept named Thoran seized the Scepter Tower, one of the few intact structures in the Spellgard ruins. His servants now scour the ruins in search of special alabaster pillars that can be used as focusing devices for arcane power.

Once Thoran finds eight of these pillars, he plans to ritually summon Lady Saharel and bind her to his will. With limitless prophetic guidance, he intends to carve out a fiefdom within the Fallen Lands. Left to his own devices, Thoran is just another would-be tyrant. However, access to infallible prophecy would make him a formidable threat to the prosperous lands of the Gray Vale and beyond.

Thoran uses the Scepter Tower as a base from which his lackeys search for the pillars he needs, killing and terrorizing Spellgard's seekers as they go. The tower is said to have only one entrance, which can easily withstand a direct assault from even a powerful group of intruders. However, beneath a rebuilt rampart wall taken over by a clan of wererats, the PCs discover another way in: through the catacombs beneath the Scepter Tower. The characters must battle through the undead of the catacombs and eventually ascend the tower, coming face to face with Thoran and the dark forces under his control.

If Thoran's plans are thwarted, the PCs gain an audience with Lady Saharel and the prophetic guidance they seek.

BACKGROUND

In life, Lady Saharel was known as the Sorceress of Saharelgard (Spellgard's ancient name). She survived the collapse of Netheril by becoming a lich, and for centuries thereafter she lived in the ruins of her former home. She aided Elminster of Shadowdale in his battles against Manshoon during the Time of Troubles, and answered questions on the subject of ancient Netheril for any traveler who would rebuild part of her fallen fortress.

During and after the events of the Spellplague, Lady Saharel has become more distant and more powerful. She appears only rarely, but when she does, it is for a specific purpose: to answer a single question posed by a mortal who has sought her within the Spellgard ruins.

Lady Saharel's knowledge is great. She has answered questions concerning the distant past, events of the present in far-off lands, and what the future holds. She also answers questions regarding the secret motivations of others. She is not infallible, however. The future in particular remains malleable despite prophecy's attempts to constrain it. Regardless, her answers are uncannily accurate.

Nearly forty years ago, a wanderer named Kuryon came to Spellgard in search of the treasures of Netheril. Though he had heard the local tales of Lady Saharel providing guidance to those who saw her, Kuryon had no particular interest in prophecy. However, as he was digging through the rubble one day, he turned around to find himself in Lady Saharel's ethereal presence.

It is not known what the Sorceress of Spellgard said to Kuryon, but it caused him to put away his traveler's boots for good. On the periphery of the Spellgard ruins, he built the Monastery of the Precipice—a place of rest for those who desire Lady Saharel's oracular wisdom.

Kuryon and the group of initiates who had joined him over years of construction made the monastery a center of exploration and lore. Much of that lore was eventually set down in *The Analects of Kuryon*, a slim volume that spoke of Lady Saharel's prophecies.

Copies of *The Analects of Kuryon* found their way across the north. Among those who read the work was a bitter shadar-kai exile named Thoran. Once an apprentice to a cabal of Shadowfell sages, Thoran was banished for stealing forbidden tomes in pursuit of ultimate knowledge.

In his thirst for lore, Thoran had delved deep into the secrets of Netheril, including tales in which the arcanists of Saharelgard were said to have bound and controlled arcane spirits of great power. When Thoran read the *Analects* and learned the legends of Spellgard, his twisted mind hatched a dark plan. If the restless spirit of Lady Saharel could be ritually bound, she could be forced to answer question after question, thus granting her interrogator power over past, present, and future.

After gathering a number of impressionable followers in his charismatic wake, Thoran journeyed to Spellgard two months ago. From his advanced knowledge of Saharelgard legend, he was able to find his way to the Scepter Tower by negotiating the long-lost catacombs below, disabling the magical wards that had protected the site for millennia. From the tower's heights, he now surveys the ruined fortress. His followers hunt for the alabaster pillars he needs to perform the binding ritual, capture Lady Saharel, and fuel his ambitions of conquest.

THE ANALECTS OF KURYON

The following are excerpts from the *Analects of Kuryon*, a cycle of poems regarding prophecy and the nature of the future. The work was composed by Kuryon, first master of the Monastery of the Precipice. The passages below are

those relevant to Spellgard explorers. The rest of the work consists of abstract philosophical discourse—perhaps interesting to a sage but not otherwise useful.

Analect 2: On Meeting Lady Saharel

*Amid the ancient, weathered stones,
Below the phaerimm-haunted sky;
Above the tombs of lordly bones
From Netheril and years gone by.*

*'Twas there, beneath the moonlit stair,
My future cast its shadow past
A white-robed dame with sable hair;
Transfixing stare that held me fast.*

*“Take heed, you seeker, bow your head,
For I am Lady Saharel.
I speak with living and with dead
And all your fates are mine to tell.*

*“I see the rising of the sun
On eastern seas beyond your ken;
I see that light fade into none
On western plains unwalked by men.*

*“The distant past is mine to see,
And future waves upon the shore
Once ripples on another sea
Might rise and fall like tides once more.”*

*“O palest lady! Grant me peace!
For here I am, bereft of care.
From this dark path I crave release;
From all this torment and despair.”*

*“Too well I know the words you seek,”
The lady whispered in my ear,
“Your tragedy is not unique,
Nor does it end in anguish here.*

*“For Truth itself is my sole chain,
A bond that none can ever break.
A single question born in pain
Is mine to answer for your sake.*

*“All Truth is mine to comprehend;
All futures and all pasts I see.
Against my truth none can forfend,
Yet first a task I crave of thee. . . .”*

Analect 7: The Walls of Spellgard

*No looter I, no thief of tombs
For learned men have called me sage.
And yet within these madding rooms
Perplexed was I by puzzle strange.*

*The claw within the silver seal . . .
The squares of alabaster . . .
Many trials would reveal
The pattern I must master.*

*And then, enticed by crystal glow
Ascend I did the central stair
Beyond the shim'ring curtain, so
Vexed I was by things not there.*

*Two alabaster pillars stand
A silent watch in chamber dark.
I write these words with quiv'ring hand . . .
I know just what these pillars mark.*

*A timid step will bring me near
Six holes where pillars do not dwell
So hope remains, and yet I fear
I've seen the doom of Saharel.*

Analect 12: On the Nature of the Past

*I pondered long the Lady's word;
Her vision of my truest fate.
My path, though twisted, is assured;
My search concluded, and my wait.*

*I set each stone into its place,
Casting back to ancient days.
The coldest radiance from her face
Illuminates me with its rays.*

*She hovered o'er my dusty toil,
The runes I carved into the stone.
My footsteps left within the soil
Of Netheril left long alone.*

CHARACTER HOOKS

Some characters come to Spellgard in search of treasure, but the greatest attraction of the ruins is the chance to have a question—any question—answered by Lady Saharel.

One obvious way to involve the PCs in the goings-on at Spellgard is to suggest Lady Saharel as a way to solve an unanswered mystery from a previous adventure. If the bad guy got away, the characters can use Saharel's insight to track him down. If a mysterious patron has become a little too mysterious, a prophecy from the Lady might give the characters clearer direction. Likewise, if the PCs have come into the possession of lore whose significance eludes them, Lady Saharel can grant them understanding.

WHEN THE PCs ARRIVE AT SPELLGARD

This adventure unfolds in three specific locations, but Spellgard is a big place. Though some players might be happy heading straight for the wererat-infested rampart wall, others might want to wander the ruins for a while. Random encounters with kobold bandits, dark creepers doing Thoran's errands, and other local menaces are a great way to warm up the PCs for the main adventure. Likewise, some characters will use the Monastery of the Precipice only as a safe place to sleep and regroup, even as others choose to become intimately involved in the affairs of the monastery's residents.

Ideally, two events should happen soon after the PCs arrive in Spellgard. They should approach the Scepter Tower to establish that the place is occupied and that simply walking up to the front door won't get them inside. See "The Scepter Tower" (page 34 of *Adventure Book Two*) and "T6: Main Doors and Reception Hall" (page 35 of *Adventure Book Two*) for more information. After that, the PCs should tangle with a wandering group of wererats near the ramparts.

Below are a few hooks that can help get the adventure going. See "The Monastery of the Precipice" (page 12) for information on any NPCs mentioned here.

- ◆ A resident of the monastery says she saw Lady Saharel briefly walking around the balcony near the top of the Scepter Tower.
- ◆ It is said that the Scepter Tower has not been opened since Spellgard was sacked. If ancient treasure can be found anywhere, it's likely to be in that area of the ruins.
- ◆ Seekers have reported increased bandit activity in the ruins in recent weeks. The Monastery of the Precipice was the object of a burglary less than a month ago.
- ◆ Dark creepers have been seen in the ruins in recent months, but no one knows what they are up to. Some say they have seen the creepers dragging stone columns into the Scepter Tower. (Alternatively, you could let the PCs find one of the alabaster columns Thoran needs, then have the dark creepers attempt to steal it.)

- ◆ A captured dark creeper reveals that someone named Thoran got into the Scepter Tower "from below," and that the alabaster pillars are important for some sort of binding ritual. If the PCs don't take a dark creeper captive, one of the NPCs they encounter at the monastery (probably Turnagall or Millek) might bring a hostage back to the monastery (until the head of the monastery finds out and insists that the creature be freed). Alternatively, Clewsoro's camp (page 14) might have a captive dark creeper when the PCs visit it.
- ◆ In the same way, a captured kobold could reveal that Bleak's Band (page 14) is trying to reconnect their tunnel lair with other tunnels leading to the ramparts. "Those wererats collapsed the tunnel, and now they're the only ones who can get to the old catacombs." The kobolds would like nothing better than to have another group clear out the ramparts so they don't have to.

AFTER THE ADVENTURE

Lady Saharel appears to the PCs after they defeat Thoran and disperse the alabaster pillars throughout the ruins once more. Before that happens, consider carefully how a prophetic ghost can serve your goals as DM even as it ostensibly serves the PCs. If dire prophecy is the tool you need to propel the characters toward their next adventure, this is your chance.

Even if you don't need Lady Saharel to forge a link between *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* and whatever you have planned next, her answers can give hints concerning future adventures. Because what she says is cloaked in the language of metaphor, Lady Saharel's hints can be vague or fragmentary. DUNGEONS & DRAGONS players expect a certain amount of obfuscation where prophecies are involved—it's part of the game.

STARTING CHARACTERS AT 1ST LEVEL

Although *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* is designed for 2nd-level characters, you can easily use this adventure to launch a new campaign. Have the players create 1st-level characters using the rules in the *Player's Handbook* (and possibly the *FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide*). Then tell them about the material in "What Brings PCs Here?" (page 5 of this book) and have them come up with reasons to visit Spellgard.

The following two-part scenario can be used as a Spellgard starting adventure framework for 1st-level PCs. Add treasure as appropriate for the encounters using a level 1 treasure parcel (*Dungeon Master's Guide*, page 126).

PART 1: SPELLGARD CARAVAN

The 1st-level PCs are traveling with a caravan en route to Spellgard. Even if the characters are going there for different reasons, they find themselves thrown together when they face danger on the road through the Fallen Lands.

A typical caravan heading to Spellgard consists of two wagons laden with trade goods and a dozen travelers walking alongside them (including the PCs). The caravan master, Thurr Gargengrim (see page 12), is armed, but the other travelers are effectively noncombatants.

At an appropriate time, thrust the characters into danger by having bandits (five goblin warriors, *Monster Manual* 137) try to rob the caravan at spearpoint. In the aftermath of the battle, Thurr might consult the PCs regarding security, having seen their valor firsthand.

As the caravan approaches Spellgard, it falls under attack from six stirges (*Monster Manual* 248) and later a pair of goblin warriors and a pair of goblin sharpshooters (*Monster Manual* 137). The night before the PCs arrive at the Monastery of the Precipice, four gray wolves (page 6 of *Adventure Book Two*) try to attack the caravan's horses. Award the PCs a level 1 minor quest reward when the caravan arrives safely at Spellgard.

PART 2: CONSTRUCTION WORK

Give the PCs time to rest and recuperate at the Monastery of the Precipice. While they are in the common room one night, Yannik Johastra offers them 10 gp each to help him right a fallen arch in the entry to the gatehouse (marked on the Spellgard map on page 6). Yannik has all the pieces assembled but needs additional hands to hold everything in place while he mortars it back together. "Shouldn't take more than an hour or two," he says.

The PCs arrive at the gatehouse just in time to see five kobold skirmishers (*Monster Manual* 167) steal one of the cornices Yannik has collected. The kobolds are members of Bleak's Band (see page 14). "After them!" cries Yannik, who is unarmed (and would be no good in combat even if he had a weapon).

As the PCs pursue the kobolds through the ruins, they first face the original thieves, then six kobold slinger reinforcements (*Monster Manual* 168). Try to make this a running fight by having a wounded kobold hand the cornice off to a fresh one.

Just when it looks as if the PCs are set to retrieve the cornice, have an ochre jelly (*Monster Manual* 202) appear. The ooze blocks access to the cornice as it attacks. When the PCs have defeated this menace, claimed the cornice, and returned to the gatehouse, they find Yannik threatened by five kruthik young (*Monster Manual* 170) that just happened along.

At the conclusion of this combat, Yannik pays the characters even though they have not completed any of his work: "I almost died! That's enough of an omen for me!" Award the PCs a level 1 minor quest reward for safely delivering Yannik back to the monastery.

The PCs should now have enough experience to attain 2nd level and begin the real adventure. If the characters have come up short on experience, add additional random encounters in the ruins to make up the difference (see page 18).

HIGHER-LEVEL CHARACTERS

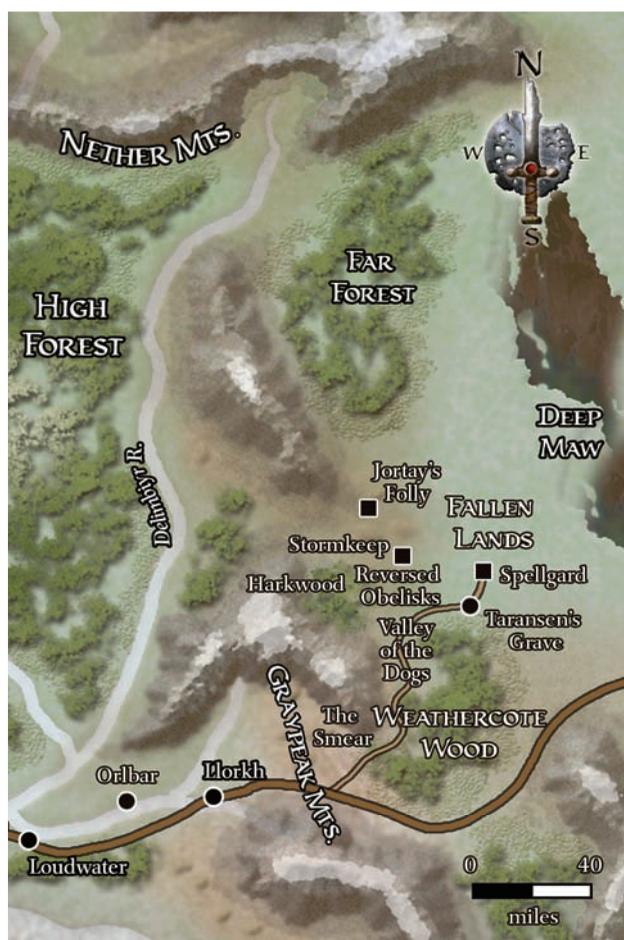
This adventure can easily be adapted for higher-level PCs by increasing the number of monsters in each encounter, or by increasing the level of those monsters. For more information, see "Advanced Encounters" in Chapter 4 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

THE FALLEN LANDS

Though this adventure takes place entirely within the crumbling walls of Spellgard, the PCs might eventually want to explore the surrounding Fallen Lands. A group of characters that spends any time in Loudwater or the other settlements of the Gray Vale (*FORGOTTEN REALMS Player's Guide* 100) is likely to cross the Fallen Lands while heading to or from Spellgard. The map that accompanies this text identifies a number of locations aside from Spellgard that you can use for additional adventuring opportunities as you see fit.

The Fallen Lands were once a region of great wealth and prosperity under the ancient empire of Netheril. After Netheril collapsed in -339 DR, the lands beneath the empire's great flying cities were destroyed. Strange beasts and unruly magical phenomena have prevented the region from being fully resettled ever since.

The following locations are a few of the features of the Fallen Lands.



The Reversed Obelisks: These nine basalt structures stand 20 feet high and balance on their points. Arcane sparks flash between them periodically, and those who camp nearby report fitful sleep and unsettling dreams. Because the obelisks sit atop a low hill, they make a useful landmark for those traversing the Fallen Lands.

Valley of the Dogs: Two tribes of hobgoblins—the Spittlemaws and the Fistclenchers—engage in perpetual war over this valley. Their feud has endured for so long that neither side can remember why the valley is so important or what circumstances led to the conflict. However, the Spittlemaws and the Fistclenchers are in full agreement that interlopers are to be captured, then questioned, then killed.

The Smear: Two meandering streams wind their way through this lowland cold marsh. A tribe of lizardfolk lives here in simple huts. Though they are wary of strangers to the point of paranoia, the lizardfolk are seldom aggressive. Faced with danger, they retreat to their village and defend it to the last.

Jortay's Folly: The foundation and ruined walls of a castle are all that remain of Lord Jortay's dream of establishing a fiefdom in the heart of the Fallen Lands. With immense wealth acquired in his youth, Jortay hired a small army of masons, carpenters, and other laborers to construct a defensible keep. However, the predations of bandits and marauding monsters killed most of his work force and scared off the rest.

Since Jortay's death a decade ago, the fortress remains unfinished but inhabited. Bandits, goblins, and other dangerous denizens of the Fallen Lands lair here.

The Harkwood: This small stand of forest is home to fey from the Shadowfell. When the moon is full at harvest time, the connection between the Shadowfell and the Harkwood grows stronger, and those who have even a drop of fey blood can pass from one realm to the other. Few get close to the Harkwood by choice, however. If fear of fey trickery is not enough, then the presence of deadly fey panthers (*Monster Manual* 213) deters most explorers.

Taransen's Grave: A dwarf champion named Taransen was buried here with great solemnity when he fell in battle three centuries ago. Every few years, members of his clan undertake the dangerous journey across the Fallen Lands to pay their respects.

Stormkeep: Dating from the days of Netheril, this structure of black obsidian stands in the center of the Fallen Lands. It has neither windows nor doors. The doorway that allows access to the interior can be opened only by stepping on the correct stone within the rubble that surrounds the fortress. Stormkeep is also known to be a locus of the crawling clouds of searing magical energy known as witchfire.

THE MONASTERY OF THE PRECIPICE

The adventurer Kuryon built the Monastery of the Precipice to minister to those coming to Spellgard in search of prophecy. His larger reason for doing so remains unknown, but Allendi (the current master of the monastery) and the other monks believe that Kuryon was instructed to build the place by Lady Saharel when he met her forty years ago.

Kuryon and those volunteers he could recruit from among the seekers of Spellgard built the monastery stone by stone from the remains of the ruined fortress. The building is a mix of military fortifications and the stonework of a bygone age.

Those who enter through the monastery's arch are made welcome by the monks reading or tending the fire in the common room. Allendi then arrives to greet visitors. He offers refreshment and asks them why they have come to Spellgard. As long as they do not appear overtly dangerous, Allendi explains that the purpose of the monastery is to "aid and comfort those who seek an answer from the Lady." He offers a quick walking tour to interested PCs.

The common room has a warm fire, a small and eclectic library, and enough tables and chairs to seat forty.

The cellar below the common room is a distillery stocked with dozens of barrels of the monastery's fine whiskey. Allendi and the other monks live in subcellar quarters below the distillery.

One wing leading from the common room contains two levels of modest apartments that the monks rent out for 1 gp per day. The other wing has a pantry and kitchen (serving porridge in the morning, stew in the evening). A cellar storeroom contains excavation and masonry equipment that the monks sell on behalf of the Gargengrim clan.

Within the monastery is a simple courtyard containing apple trees and a stone marker that reads "Kuryon." A ramshackle roof covers part of the courtyard; it is here that visitors on horseback stable their mounts.

As the PCs wander the monastery with Allendi, you can have the master introduce the other residents, who include the following individuals.

Thurr Gargengrim: For two decades, the dwarves of the Gargengrim clan have supplied the monastery with food, equipment, and sundries in exchange for a percentage of the profit for distributing the monastery's whiskey. A caravan arrives with trade goods every seven to ten days, departing a few days later stocked with well-aged casks.

Whenever a dwarven caravan is at the monastery, Thurr can be found before a roaring fire in the common room. Though happy to speak with newcomers, he believes that the notion of prophecy is a matter for "fools and those who've stared at the sun too long."

Sister Cherra: A young female human, Sister Cherra came to Spellgard from Waterdeep six years ago seeking prophetic guidance in her search for a lost brother. She never saw Lady Saharel and eventually gave up hope.

However, after finding herself moved by the plight of her fellow seekers, she joined Allendi.

Cherra oversees the operation of the monastery's distillery, though she rarely samples more than a sip herself. When not working in the cellar, she lingers in the common room, providing encouragement to weary seekers.

Brother Turnagall: This stocky, red-haired male human handles the perpetual upkeep that a building constructed of ruined masonry requires. Other seekers ask Turnagall for advice on their own reconstruction efforts, having heard that Lady Saharel is more likely to appear to those attempting to rebuild part of Spellgard.

Turnagall is away from the monastery more often than not. However, the ruins have become more dangerous of late. As a result, Turnagall travels in the company of other seekers, and he has been known to use his stonemason's hammer as a weapon when necessary.

Yannik Johastra: Yannik is a typical seeker, a minor human noble who came to Spellgard a year ago for guidance on how to reconcile a feud among his sons. The aged Yannik believes that rebuilding Spellgard is the key to inspiring Lady Saharel to appear. Though he has neither the skill nor the strength, he is often found engaged in one reconstruction effort or another.

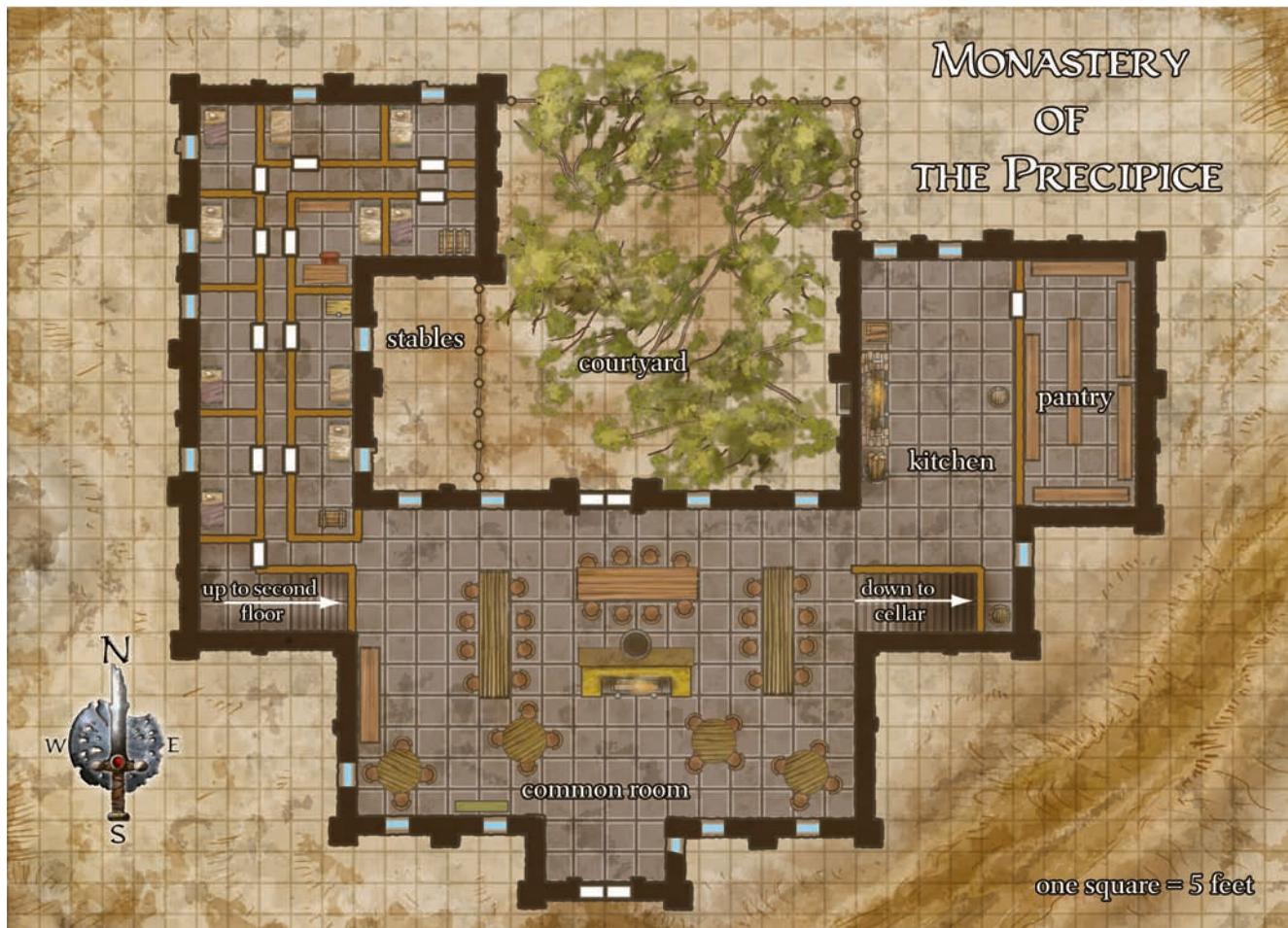
Rallio deVore: A young tiefling, Rallio has come to Spellgard hoping to lift a curse placed on his family—a

price exacted by his infernal pact. Though deVore entered into the bargain willingly, he has since realized his folly. However, he has been at the monastery for more than six months, and is beginning to despair that he will never see the Sorceress of Spellgard.

Rallio now spends more time drinking in the common room than out in the ruins. Though merely melancholy on his good days, he can turn hostile without warning.

Millek the Thrush: This young halfling is recently arrived in Spellgard, and she has but one simple question for Lady Saharel: "Tell me where a vast, unguarded treasure from long ago lies." She cares little for seekers whose questions for Lady Saharel are more personal in nature. However, Millek has noticed that those emotionally vulnerable seekers are less than attentive to their belongings and their well-being. So far, she has resisted the urge to employ her talents in con artistry and thievery against her fellow seekers. However, if a card game might brighten spirits in the common room, why, of course she would be happy to play.

Millek spends much of her time in Spellgard around the Scepter Tower, and she has observed dark creepers returning there with one of the alabaster pillars. She has hopes of waylaying a dark creeper in the ruins, then fashioning its clothing into a disguise that might grant her access to the tower and the secrets within.



RUINS OF SPELLGARD

The vast piles of rubble that comprise Spellgard today give little hint of what the fortress might have looked like in the days of Netheril. However, wide paths still connect many of the locations within the ruins, and a small number of buildings—notably the Scepter Tower—remain intact and structurally sound.

Clewsoro's Camp: More than a few seekers spurn the assistance of the Monastery of the Precipice out of distrust or greed. Kal Clewsoro is chief among these. A middle-aged male human, Clewsoro has been at Spellgard for two years. He journeys back to civilization every few weeks, returning with fresh provisions and a new crew of workers and guards.

The camp is less than welcoming of visitors—the word being synonymous with “rivals” and “thieves” in Clewsoro's mind. However, he has a keen interest in mercantile matters, and he tolerates any characters whose goals suggest a possible business deal.

Kal Clewsoro is a garrulous fellow, and his favorite topic of conversation is himself. He speaks of his years in the military and his subsequent career as a merchant prince who started as a lowly teamster. The only topic he does not discuss is what he plans to ask Lady Saharel if they meet.

Vannak's Camp: A dragonborn from a prominent clan, Vannak has come to Spellgard (with his retinue in tow) to ask Lady Saharel how he might find “the worthiest of all possible mates.” Vannak's warriors guard their master well, and his daily excursions into the ruins have the appearance of a military parade.

However, not all is well within Vannak's camp. His forces have taken casualties from wererat and kobold ambushes, and kruthiks mauled four of his guards just last week. With no sign yet of Lady Saharel, Vannak is beginning to worry.

Recently, Vannak's soldiers detained Hanna Blenn, a young female elf who claims to have met Lady Saharel just last week. Hanna is now a well-kept prisoner in Vannak's tents, the dragonborn holding her until she explains how she made Lady Saharel appear. What Vannak does not know is that Hanna is lying. Her motivations (and her real reason for being in the ruins) are left to your determination.

Scepter Tower: One of the few intact structures in Spellgard, the Scepter Tower has been locked and impervious to entry for as long as anyone can remember. Though it remains sealed, the tower has new inhabitants—the shadar-kai Thoran and his servants.

The denizens of Spellgard do not know who has taken over the Scepter Tower. Seekers have caught glimpses of dark creepers slipping in and out of the tower's main gate by night, and the wererats of the ramparts have managed to glean the name “Thoran” from skirmishes near the catacombs. Though Allendi and others have attempted to learn more, their efforts have so far proved futile. Those who

approach within 30 feet of the tower's entrance receive a barrage of stones and arrows from the battlement above for their trouble.

Darano Camp: The halflings of the Darano clan are known for their formidable stature, and their fierce warriors are as tall as some dwarves. Their reputation hides a dark secret, however—one that inspired the Daranos to come to Spellgard a year ago. Clan patriarch Ephram Darano has a specific and very secret question for Lady Saharel: How might the family break free from its hereditary curse of lycanthropy?

The Daranos set to making repairs around the fallen ramparts along the north edge of the ruin, hoping their reconstruction efforts would attract the attention of the Lady. Before any answer could come, however, on a night of the full moon, an argument broke out. A number of the Daranos took hybrid and dire rat form and slew their fellow family members in a frenzy.

The survivors, horrified by what they had done once their bloodlust had passed, gathered what valuables and weapons they could, then fled the camp in rat form. The fate of the Daranos remains a mystery to all except the survivors of the clan, and the abandoned camp is now shunned by other seekers.

Ramparts: Two dozen wererats, all members of the Darano clan, now call a reconstructed section of the Spellgard ramparts home. Under the leadership of Ephram Darano, they prey on seekers in the ruins, and have begun to tame the wild beasts of the Fallen Lands.

Though the wererats have been ensconced in the ruins for over a month now, they have only recently made their presence known. The Daranos have all but lost interest in their family's quest, focusing instead on defending their secure warren from interlopers and from Thoran's followers.

Broken Tower: A mirror image of the Scepter Tower, the Broken Tower is missing its upper four floors and most of its southern wall. It provides a measure of shelter from the elements but little real defense. If you want to expand this adventure, you can rework the Broken Tower as a parallel adventure site, stocking it with appropriate creatures, traps, and other challenges.

Bleak's Band: In Spellgard's heyday as a fortress, a network of underground tunnels connected its towers and battlements. Most of these tunnels have long since collapsed, and some of those remaining have become home to a feral colony of kobolds led by a chieftain named Bleak.

The kobolds of Bleak's Band have set up an extensive network of traps throughout their tunnel homes to deter—or, more ideally, kill—seekers and other intruders. They do not understand the significance of Lady Saharel, though they have glimpsed a white ghost wandering the ruins on occasion.

Bleak's kobolds earn their living by banditry, attacking any groups they can surprise in the ruins. The kobolds are reluctant to engage in protracted battle, however, and they

are careful to leave a clear path luring pursuers back to their well-trapped tunnels.

RIVAL ADVENTURERS

The PCs are not the only recent arrivals to Spellgard. Five adventurers calling themselves the Free Company of the Crescent have been exploring the ruins for a week, seeking treasures of a bygone age.

Feel free to let the PCs try to find common cause with these adventurers. However, though initially sociable, the members of the Free Company of the Crescent are driven by greed and self-interest. They will turn on the PCs in the hope of gaining even a small advantage in their search, possibly becoming antagonists in a common-room brawl, complicating an encounter in the ruins, or thwarting the PCs' carefully laid plans.

DEVLIN

The leader of the Free Company of the Crescent is a charismatic and unscrupulous warlord, cheerfully unable to resist the temptation to double-cross others for even momentary advantage.

Devlin	Level 3 Brute (leader)
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +1
Bloodthirsty Tactics aura 5; allies in the aura score a critical hit on a roll of 19 or 20 when they attack a bloodied enemy with a melee or ranged attack.	
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
AC 18; Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 11	
Speed 5	
⊕ Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d10+8 damage.	
⊕ Wolf Pack Tactics (standard; at will) Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 1d10+8 damage; prior to the attack, one ally can shift 1.	
⊕ Hammer and Anvil (standard; encounter) Reach 2; +6 vs. AC; 2d10+8 damage, and one ally adjacent to the target makes a melee basic attack against the target with a +2 bonus on the attack.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Bluff +8, Diplomacy +8	
Str 18 (+5)	Dex 12 (+2) Wis 10 (+1)
Con 19 (+5)	Int 9 (+0) Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment chainmail, halberd	

THE DARK-EYED ONE

His comrades don't know this eladrin mage's real name or his reasons for following Devlin. He rarely speaks out loud, though he sometimes mutters to himself. He follows Devlin's orders without question.

The Dark-Eyed One	Level 3 Controller
Medium fey humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision
HP 39; Bloodied 19	
AC 18; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 15	
Speed 6	
⊕ Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +3 vs. AC; 1d8+1 damage.	
↘ Magic Missile (standard; at will) ♦ Force Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 2d4+2 damage	
↙ Thunder Burst (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder Area burst 1 within 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d8+2 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends)	
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation The Dark-Eyed One can teleport 5 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +10, Perception +8	
Str 9 (+0)	Dex 18 (+5) Wis 15 (+3)
Con 9 (+0)	Int 19 (+5) Cha 14 (+3)
Equipment cloth armor, quarterstaff, dagger	

FARRAK AND HARRAK

Though these twins lack Devlin's social skills, they share his questionable scruples. Following the warlord has made them wealthy, but Farrak and Harrak keep a close eye on their leader. Having noted that Devlin always comes out ahead when betrayal is involved, they have no intention of being betrayed themselves.

Farrak and Harrak not only look alike, they are identical in all their characteristics. Even Devlin has a hard time telling them apart.

Farrak and Harrak	Level 3 Skirmisher
Medium natural humanoid	XP 150 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +8
HP 44; Bloodied 22	
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14	
Speed 6	
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +7 vs. AC; 1d4+7 damage.	
Combat Advantage Farrak and Harrak deal 1d6 extra damage against any target they have combat advantage against. If they're flanking with each other, they deal 2d6 extra damage.	
Blood Oath of Vengeance If either Farrak or Harrak drops to 0 hit points within sight of the other one, the conscious one takes a -2 penalty on all defenses but a +2 bonus on attack rolls and damage rolls until the end of the encounter.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Perception +8, Stealth +10	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 19 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 13 (+2) Cha 9 (+0)
Equipment leather armor, dagger	

ALLAN REDHAND

This half-elf has worked for Devlin since Devlin saved his sister's life (purely by accident, though Devlin doesn't let Allan know that). Allan is not very bright, and social interactions and intrigue try his patience. He is thus content to follow Devlin's orders and not worry about the consequences.

Allan Redhand Medium natural humanoid	Level 3 Soldier XP 150
Initiative +3 Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 44; Bloodied 22	
AC 21; Fortitude 15, Reflex 14, Will 11	
Speed 5	
Ⓣ Greatsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +12 vs. AC; 1d10+4 damage.	
Combat Challenge Whenever Allan hits with his greatsword, he marks his target until the end of his next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven, Goblin
Skills Athletics +10, Intimidate +5	
Str 19 (+5)	Dex 14 (+3) Wis 12 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 8 (+0) Cha 9 (+0)
Equipment scale armor, greatsword	

PROPHECIES

Upon the successful completion of this adventure, the PCs gain an audience with Lady Saharel. This meeting might offer great potential for your game, but the “ask me anything” nature of the Sorceress of Spellgard (and indeed of prophecies in general) can present challenges for a DM. Handling oracular events in an ongoing D&D game requires equal parts of preparation and improvisation.

Preparation: The players know that their characters are in an environment where they might have a chance to ask a question of Lady Saharel. If you can, find out what they are thinking. If you know what questions your players want to ask, you can have answers ready—answers that can easily fill in a back story or create hooks for coming adventures.

Improvisation: Players are people, after all, and even if they tell you in advance what their questions are going to be, there's no telling what might be blurted out when Lady Saharel confronts the PCs. You need to improvise quickly when this happens, coming up with a suitably dramatic response off the top of your head. However, remember to keep the Lady's prophecies shrouded in metaphor and double meaning. That way, you will have room to be creative when you figure out how to work the prophecy into your game weeks or months down the road.

HOW TO BE AN EFFECTIVE ORACLE

The following tips can help you manage the audience with Lady Saharel.

Make sure the players know the ground rules.

A close reading of the *Analects of Kuryon* (see page 9) or discussion with other seekers reveals that Lady Saharel

answers one question per person, although she entertains a second question if it proves necessary. Additional questions are ignored.

Lady Saharel is an enigmatic but powerful presence. As such, she has no tolerance for antagonistic or paradoxical questions, and such attempts at trickery result only in her fading away.

Use Lady Saharel's answers to connect characters and give them a collective goal. For example, if one PC asks about a missing brother and another asks how to acquire arcane knowledge, you can decide that the missing brother has pledged himself to a mysterious fraternity of wizards. Now both PCs have a joint quest to follow.

Embrace metaphor. If faced with an impromptu question such as “How can I overcome my greatest obstacle?” you can use metaphor to avoid forcing future adventures into a specific plot line. For example, consider the response: “You must conquer spring by mastering fall, counter summer with winter, end autumn with spring, and escape winter with a summer breeze.” With no specifics to address, you can be creative as you build season-related events, monsters, or NPCs into a future adventure.

Don't be shy about assigning a task that leads to the answer. Lady Saharel can say, “Your answer lies atop the windswept peak of Mount Teldruin,” or “Assemble the four parts of the Shield of Kendrach to achieve the protection you seek.” Either prophecy can serve as a quest or as a springboard for future adventures.

If a question cannot be answered, think of a fantastic reason why. If you find yourself truly stumped by a question, then let Lady Saharel be stumped as well. “Would that I could answer, but my voice in such matters is locked in an iron box in the heart of the City of Brass, held captive by an efreet pasha.” Let the player know that some questions are beyond the scope of the Lady's knowledge, and allow him or her to ask again.

Remember that not all questions have a single answer. As long as your answer informs the PCs, you don't need to answer the specific question fully and completely. “What is the greatest weakness of our archenemy?” might reveal any number of potential weaknesses—from a lost love to a secret passage underneath his fortress. “Greatest” is a relative term, but as long as the PCs discover a significant weakness, their needs are met.

Use “Beware!” as a dodge. If the answer the PCs receive from Lady Saharel is not what they were looking for, wrapping the prophecy in a warning can make them feel that they got their oracular money's worth. An answer as simple as “Your present path leads to what you seek, but beware the red-handed ones!” could refer to any number of possible scenarios—encounters with specific monsters, a group whose banner features a red fist, or an NPC wearing red gauntlets when the PCs first meet him.

Include specific details—and worry later about how to work them into the ongoing campaign. “Before you succeed, you must defeat the feathered one, hold a

chalice of amethyst, and sing the *Saga of Taelann* with your kinfolk” is a terrific prophecy. It’s also a fun challenge of your creative skills as you plot the campaign to make sure that prophecy is fulfilled.

Establish expectations for what oracular knowledge can deliver. Players immersed in fantasy literature know that an answer from an oracle is often cloaked in figurative language—and even a straight answer invariably leads to more questions. If a player at your table honestly expects Lady Saharel to sketch out a foolproof plan for successfully raiding a dragon’s hoard, you might need to have an out-of-character conversation to point out the potential negative effect on the campaign. The PCs should feel that they have gained valuable knowledge from their meeting with Lady Saharel. However, they should also understand that utilizing this knowledge is likely to require further effort on their part.

HOW MONSTERS REACT

The three parts of this adventure detailed in *Adventure Book Two*—the Ramparts, the Catacombs, and the Scepter Tower—show off three different approaches to monster behavior.

The wererats and their guardian creatures in the ramparts reinforce each other in an organized fashion, but they retreat in disarray if the PCs are victorious. Each encounter lists the conditions under which reinforcements arrive, where they come from, and how long it takes them to join the fray. However, if the wererats are overwhelmed, they flee the ramparts by the closest possible route, abandoning their remaining kin.

The undead denizens of the catacombs, on the other hand, fight until slain and are incapable of retreat. However, most do not chase fleeing PCs more than a few steps beyond the chambers they guard. Once the PCs figure this out, they might realize that they have a degree of control over the pacing of the adventure. As they fight their way through the catacombs, they can retreat and rest without the undead preparing for their return.

Once the PCs are inside the Scepter Tower, the rules of engagement change. Thoran’s servants are well trained in pursuit and strategic withdrawal. These encounters provide conditions for pursuit (which monsters do so and how far they give chase) and retreat (noting which monsters flee and where they go). In either case, fleeing or pursuing monsters can alert the entire tower to the presence of intruders. As long as the alert condition persists, the tower’s denizens are ready and waiting for further incursions from the PCs.

BEYOND THE SCEPTER TOWER

The alabaster columns Thoran has set up in Location T10 (see page 54 of *Adventure Book Two*) are a focus for the latent magical energy of the Scepter Tower. Eventually, they will form a prison for Lady Saharel. The PCs might encounter Thoran’s servants as they search the ruins of

Spellgard for the three pillars Thoran needs to complete his plan. These parties are marked with an asterisk on the Hostile Encounters table (page 18). A search party has a 50% chance of already possessing an alabaster column, in which case it is encountered in the process of carrying it back to the tower in haste.

PCs might also encounter Thoran’s forces from outside the tower by striding boldly up the eastern staircase leading to Location T6 (see page 48 of *Adventure Book Two*). If they do so, they receive barrage after barrage from the dark creepers in Location T12 (see the tactical encounter on page 58 of *Adventure Book Two* for details).

ALTERNATIVE: TAKING THE TOWER

The PCs most likely fight the wererats in the ramparts first, then descend into the catacombs before working their way up through the tower. However, it’s possible for them to wind up in the heart of the tower right from the start—whether on purpose or by accident.

A ruse might enable the PCs to gain access to the tower through the front doors, but it had better be a good one. A number of seekers (Clewsoro included) have tried disguises, bluffing their way in, waylaying Thoran’s search parties, and luring the dark creepers out with treasure or a captive at the base of the stairs. So far, nothing has worked.

PCs who manage to enter the tower first face a formidable challenge in Location T6. However, even if they fail, not all is lost. Captured characters are held for questioning by Thoran. While waiting for him to arrive, they are left alone in the holding cell of Location T11 while all their equipment is stored in the armory to the north. The holding cell is less than secure, however, and the guards here have their hands full with a recently captured kobold band. See pages 37 and 56 of *Adventure Book Two* for more information.

If the PCs start the adventure within the upper tower, make the following changes to the encounters in *Adventure Book Two*, adjusting overall XP accordingly. (If an encounter isn’t mentioned, it doesn’t change.) This provides an escalating sense of accomplishment as the adventure changes from an exercise in infiltration to one of escape from the Scepter Tower of Spellgard.

T1: Remove 2 ettercap fang guards and 1 deathjump spider.

T2: Remove 2 ettercap fang guards.

T3: Remove 1 gnome arcanist and 2 gnome skulls.

T5: Remove 1 human mage.

T6: Triple the number of dark creepers and double the number of ettercap fang guards. Seeing this many guards should give the PCs a strong incentive to quickly push into the tower’s lower levels, then into the catacombs to evade pursuit. If they insist on fighting to the last, their capture is all but certain (see above). Alternatively, you can have some of these guards fall back or flee to warn Thoran.

T7: Remove 4 kobold minions.

T8: Remove 1 gnome arcanist, 1 dark creeper, and 2 ettercap fang guards.

T9: If the PCs make it to this location early in the adventure, remove Thoran and place him elsewhere in the tower, holding him back for a climactic battle. If Thoran is killed too early, his plans are thwarted, potentially leaving the PCs with no overall goal. In the extreme case of the PCs clearing out the tower before moving to the catacombs and the ramparts, you might need to rework the back story on the fly, placing Thoran in the ramparts and establishing a secret alliance between him and the wererats.

T12: Remove 2 dark creepers and 1 deathjump spider.

T13: Remove 1 deathjump spider.

T14: Remove 3 dark creepers.

R1: Add 2 wererats and 2 gray wolves.

R2: Add 3 wererats.

R4: Add 1 human guard and 2 shadowhunter bats.

R5: Add 2 gravehounds.

R6: Add 3 gray wolves, chained to the west wall north of the door.

R7: Add 1 goblin hexer and 2 wererats.

R8: Add 5 wererat minions.

R9: Add 1 clay scout.

WANDERING MONSTERS

For each 20 minutes the PCs spend exploring the exterior ruins of Spellgard, or whenever they spend more than 1 hour in a single location (excluding campsites, intact buildings, and marked locations on the Spellgard map), roll to determine whether their presence triggers a random encounter.

All the creatures on the Hostile Encounters table are described in the *Monster Manual*. See “The Monastery of the Precipice” (page 12) and “Ruins of Spellgard” (page 14) for basic information about the NPCs mentioned on the Social Encounters table.

WANDERING MONSTERS

d%	Encounter
01-25	Although combat isn't a certainty, the encounter is with creatures that wish the PCs harm. Roll on the Hostile Encounters table below.
26-40	The PCs meet someone, or a group of individuals, not inclined to fight—although characters who insist on being belligerent can antagonize nearly any creature if they are persistent. Roll on the Social Encounters table below.
41-100	No encounter.

HOSTILE ENCOUNTERS

d%	Encounter
01-03	4 fire beetles and 1 fire bat
04-06	6 stirges
07-09	2 spitting drakes and 3 needlefang drake swarms
10-13	3 human guards and 9 human rabble
14-16	3 rat swarms and 2 dire rats
17-19	2 ochre jellies and 1 corruption corpse
20-22	2 deathlock wights and 2 gravehounds
23-25	4 zombies and 1 rotwing zombie
26-28	3 spiretop drakes and 2 spitting drakes
29-31	4 kruthik young and 1 kruthik adult
32-34	2 wights and 1 corruption corpse
35-37	6 hyenas
38-40	3 magma claws and 1 magma hurler
41-43	2 kobold slyblades and 2 kobold dragonshields
44-46	3 kobold slingers and 8 kobold minions
47-51	3 kobold dragonshields and 2 kobold skirmishers
52-56	3 kobold skirmishers and 3 kobold slingers
57-60	1 kobold wympriest and 4 kobold dragonshields
61-68	4 wererats
69-71	3 wererats and 1 rage drake
72-74	3 wererats and 1 dire wolf
75-80	3 wererats and 2 dire rats
81-85	4 dark creepers*
86-88	2 gnome arcanists and 2 dark creepers*
89-92	2 ettercap fang guards and 2 dark creepers*
93-97	1 human mage and 3 dark creepers*
98-100	2 ettercap fang guards and 2 deathjump spiders*

*One of Thoran's search parties; see “Beyond the Scepter Tower,” page 17.

SOCIAL ENCOUNTERS

d%	Encounter
01-05	Kal Clewsoro and 4 guards
06-15	Seekers from Clewsoro's camp
16-20	Vannak and 3 guards
21-30	Seekers from Vannak's camp
31-33	Brother Turnagall
34-36	Yannik Johastra
37-38	Rallio DeVore
39-40	Millek the Thrush
41-55	1d6 seekers from the monastery, rebuilding a section of wall
56-70	1d6 seekers from the monastery, wandering
71-80	1d4 treasure hunters from the monastery
81-85	1 seeker from the monastery, badly hurt after a battle
86-87	1 seeker from the monastery, lost
88-89	1 seeker from the monastery, leaving Spellgard after encountering Lady Saharel
90-99	1d6 corpses stripped of possessions
100	Lady Saharel, glimpsed briefly at a distance

SPELLGARD



OUTDOOR ENCOUNTER 1: KOBOLD AMBUSH

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

This is a typical encounter the PCs might have on their way between the monastery and one of the adventure sites within the Spellgard ruins. The kobolds are lying in wait for any band of explorers that comes along, so you'll read one readaloud text or the other depending on how well the PCs do on their Perception checks.

SETUP

- 1 kobold wyrmpriest (W)
- 2 kobold dragonshields (D)
- 4 kobold skirmishers (S)

Place the wyrmpriest and the two dragonshields just east of the long north-south wall that runs west of the path. Place the skirmishers just north of the east-west wall in the center ruin. The PCs start on the path due south of the square stone block.

The PCs can't see it yet, but there's a small hole (a little less than 2 feet across) in the middle of the dark rubble on the north edge of the map. Kobolds will try to flee there, as described in the tactics section, so you should be ready to place it on the map if needed.

Then have each PC attempt a Perception check.

If any characters score 19 or higher on their Perception checks, read:

You hear the faint tumble of stone on stone. Glancing to the right, you see beady, reptilian eyes peering at you through several chinks in the ruined wall ahead of you. Ambush!

Characters who scored 19 or higher can act during the surprise round.

If characters score 18 or lower on their Perception checks, read:

The ruins seem quiet today . . . almost too quiet. But then the silence is broken by high-pitched, guttural cries. Kobold ambush!

If all the characters scored 18 or lower, none of them can act during the surprise round.

Perception Check

DC 19: You see the kobold skirmishers peering at you through the ruined wall, waiting for you to strike.

DC 29: You also see an armored kobold peeking around the corner of a wall further ahead. (This is one of the dragonshields.)

Kobold Wyrmpriest (W)		Level 3 Artillery (Leader)	
Small natural humanoid		XP 150	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +4; darkvision		
HP 36; Bloodied 18			
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 15; see also <i>trap sense</i>			
Speed 6			
⚔ Spear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.			
⚡ Energy Orb (standard; at-will) ♦ Cold			
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 3 cold damage.			
⚡ Incite Faith (minor; encounter)			
Close burst 10; kobold allies in the burst gain 5 temporary hit points and shift 1 square.			
⚡ Dragon Breath (standard; encounter) ♦ Cold			
Close blast 3; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d10 + 3 cold damage. Miss: Half damage.			
Shifty (minor; at-will)			
The kobold shifts 1 square.			
Trap Sense			
The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic		
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10			
Str 9 (+0)	Dex 16 (+4)	Wis 17 (+4)	
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 12 (+2)	
Equipment hide armor, spear, bone mask			

2 Kobold Dragonshields (D)		Level 2 Soldier	
Small natural humanoid		XP 125 each	
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +2; darkvision		
HP 36; Bloodied 18			
AC 18; Fortitude 14, Reflex 13, Will 13; see also <i>trap sense</i>			
Resist 5 cold			
Speed 5			
⚔ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the kobold dragonshield's next turn.			
Dragonshield Tactics (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy shifts away or an enemy moves adjacent; at-will)			
The kobold dragonshield shifts 1 square.			
Mob Attack			
The kobold dragonshield gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls per kobold ally adjacent to the target.			
Shifty (minor; at-will)			
The kobold shifts 1 square.			
Trap Sense			
The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic		
Skills Acrobatics +5, Stealth +7, Thievery +7			
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 13 (+2)	Wis 12 (+2)	
Con 12 (+2)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 10 (+1)	
Equipment scale armor, heavy shield, short sword			

TACTICS

The skirmishers try to surround the PCs, achieving as many flanking positions as possible. And they'll use their shifty ability to avoid getting flanked by the PCs in return.

In the first round, the wyrmpriest remains behind its two dragonshield bodyguards, moving so it has line

4 Kobold Skirmishers (S) Level 1 Skirmisher

Small natural humanoid

XP 100 each

Initiative +5

Senses Perception +0; darkvision

HP 27; Bloodied 13

AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 14, Will 13; see also *trap sense*

Speed 6

⚔ **Spear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d8 damage; see also *mob attack*.

Combat Advantage

The kobold skirmisher deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Mob Attack

The kobold skirmisher gains a +1 bonus to attack rolls per kobold ally adjacent to the target.

Shifty (minor; at-will)

The kobold shifts 1 square.

Trap Sense

The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.

Alignment Evil

Languages Common, Draconic

Skills Acrobatics +7, Stealth +9, Thievery +9

Str 8 (-1)

Dex 16 (+3)

Wis 10 (+0)

Con 11 (+0)

Int 6 (-2)

Cha 15 (+2)

Equipment hide armor, spear

of sight to the PCs and can start using energy orbs. The wyrm priest saves its *dragon breath* in case one or more PCs rush toward it. Because the dragonshield bodyguards have resistance to cold, the wyrm priest will breathe on them if it means hitting more PCs.

In the second or third round, depending on your sense of pacing, one of the two dragonshields will charge into the fray and the wyrm priest uses *incite faith* to make it and the remaining skirmishers stronger.

The kobolds are looking for easy pickings, not a war of attrition with the PCs. If three skirmishers die, the fourth one flees as soon as it can, making for a tunnel entrance on the north edge of the map. If either dragonshield dies, the wyrm priest orders a fighting withdrawal back to the tunnel entrance. If the wyrm priest dies, the kobolds cry, "They're invincible! Flee for your lives!" in Draconic, then scatter in any convenient direction.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Walls: The ruined walls have an occasional missing brick (good enough for a peephole, but not enough to usefully shoot an arrow through). They're all 10 feet tall, and it takes a DC 20 Athletics check to climb them. PCs or kobolds can balance atop the walls, but they're less than 6 inches across, so it requires a DC 25 Acrobatics check to do so. Some of the wall squares in the northwest and northeast corners of the poster map are obviously thicker; no Acrobatics check is required to stay atop those squares.

Dark Rubble: The dark rubble squares are covered with gray, glassy tiles that formed many of the floors in parts of Spellgard when it was an active fortress. The tiles pose no difficulty for movement, but they're still infused with some of the magical violence that accompanied



Spellgard's fall into ruin. They're treated as blood rock. Creatures standing on a dark rubble square score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20. The kobolds know how the dark rubble works. PCs who step onto a square have a momentary vision of walls collapsing around them, and then they find themselves attacking with a burst of extra vigor. Tell the PCs the specific effect of the dark rubble when one of them scores a critical hit.

Light Rubble: The other rubble squares are difficult terrain that imposes a -2 penalty on Stealth checks made by moving creatures, because the chunks of stone have a tendency to shift under one's feet.

CONCLUSION

The PCs can't fit through the escape hole the kobolds use. If they're determined to chase the kobolds, they can dig a wider hole in about 20 minutes. Moving through this hole drops them into a tunnel like the ones in the Catacombs section (see page 18 of *Adventure Book Two*)—only it's full of angry kobolds. Give the PCs all the kobold encounters they can handle, adding liberal doses of appropriate traps from the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

OUTDOOR ENCOUNTER 2: ANCIENT GUARDIANS

Encounter Level 3 (725 XP)

This is another encounter you can spring on the PCs as they move around the Spellgard ruins—especially if they need an extra nudge to figure out what’s going on with the alabaster pillars. In this encounter, the PCs come across a pillar that’s still guarded by remnant homunculus guardians of Spellgard. Thoran’s dark creepers found this pillar several hours ago, but they awakened the homunculi, who killed one dark creeper. The other creepers fled back to the Scepter Tower, and they’ll return tomorrow in greater numbers . . . unless the PCs get the pillar for themselves.

SETUP

- 1 arbalester (A)
- 1 iron cobra (C)
- 2 iron defenders (D)

All the monsters go amid the ruins in the middle of the map. They’re marching around, and their exact position doesn’t matter. Place a token or other marker in the middle of the ruins to represent the location of the pillar. Have another token ready to represent the corpse of the dark creeper, which the PCs won’t see right away.

When the characters reach the edge of the map, read:

Through gaps in the walls of a ruined building ahead, you see several iron creatures—at least one snake and two hounds—moving amid the rubble. They seem to be circling a slim alabaster pillar about 10 feet tall.

Perception Check

DC 15: There’s one iron cobra, two iron defenders, and a strange crossbow-on-walking-legs apparatus.

DC 25: There seems to be a small figure lying down against the wall to the northeast.

TACTICS

The homunculi employ basic tactics. The iron cobra and iron defenders try to engage as many PCs as possible in melee while the arbalester moves around the periphery, shooting any PC who is otherwise unengaged. The iron cobra is the creature that the iron defenders are guarding, so they can make immediate reactions when the PCs attack the iron cobra. (Having defenders guarding another homunculus is unusual and evidence that the constructs aren’t functioning properly anymore.) The arbalester and the iron cobra are guarding the area bounded by the wall segments in the middle of the map.

All the homunculi will fight until slain. They won’t pursue the PCs, but the arbalester will keep shooting until the PCs are out of sight.

Iron Cobra (C)		Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 250
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +9; darkvision	
HP 75; Bloodied 37		
AC 20; Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 7; see also <i>slithering shift</i>		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
⚡ Poison the Mind (standard; recharge ⏏ ⏏ ⏏ ⏏) ♦ Psychic		
Ranged 10; affects only creatures taking ongoing poison damage; +8 vs. Will; the target is dazed and slowed (save ends both); see also <i>guard area</i> .		
Guard Area		
An iron cobra can use its <i>poison the mind</i> power against any creature in its guarded area (see the “Guard” sidebar), even if the power hasn’t recharged and even if the target isn’t taking ongoing poison damage.		
Slithering Shift (move; at-will)		
The iron cobra shifts 3 squares as a move action.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 17 (+6)	Dex 15 (+5)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 19 (+7)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 12 (+4)

2 Iron Defenders (D)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 150 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.		
⚔ Guard Creature (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy attacks the creature guarded by the iron defender; at-will)		
The iron defender makes a bite attack against the enemy (see the “Guard” sidebar).		
Pursue and Attack		
When the iron defender makes an opportunity attack, it shifts 1 square before or after the attack.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 5 (-2)	Cha 8 (+0)

Arbalester (A)		Level 4 Artillery	
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 175 each	
Initiative +6		Senses Perception +8; darkvision	
HP 43; Bloodied 21			
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 15			
Immune disease, poison			
Speed 6			
⚔ Slam (standard; at-will)			
+11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage.			
⚡ Bolt (standard; at-will)			
Ranged 20/40; +11 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.			
⚡ Double Shot (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞; see also <i>guard area</i>)			
The arbalester makes a bolt attack against two different targets within 5 squares of each other.			
Guard Area			
At the start of the arbalester's turn, if an enemy is in its guarded area (see "Tactics" for details), the arbalester recharges its <i>double shot</i> power.			
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –	
Str 15 (+4)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 12 (+3)	
Con 13 (+3)	Int 5 (-1)	Cha 8 (-1)	

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Walls: The ruined walls have an occasional missing brick (good enough for a peephole, but not enough to usefully shoot an arrow through). They're all 10 feet tall, and it takes a DC 20 Athletics check to climb them. PCs or kobolds can balance atop the walls, but they're less than 6 inches across, so it requires a DC 25 Acrobatics check to do so. Some of the wall squares in the northwest and northeast corners of the poster map are obviously thicker; no Acrobatics check is required to stay atop those squares.

Dark Rubble: The dark rubble squares are covered with gray, glassy tiles that formed many of the floors in parts of Spellgard when it was an active fortress. The tiles pose no difficulty for movement, but they're still infused with some of the magical violence that accompanied Spellgard's fall into ruin. They're treated as blood rock. Creatures standing on a dark rubble square score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20. The monsters are oblivious to how the dark rubble works. PCs who step onto a square have a momentary vision of walls collapsing around them, and then they find themselves attacking with a burst of extra vigor. Tell the PCs the specific effect of the dark rubble when one of them scores a critical hit.

Light Rubble: The other rubble squares are difficult terrain that imposes a -2 penalty on Stealth checks made by moving creatures, because the chunks of stone have a tendency to shift under one's feet.

Pillar: The pillar is nearly 10 feet tall but surprisingly light. It weighs only 350 pounds, so two PCs can carry it without too much trouble (one at each end). It's not attached to the ground.

Dark Creeper: There's a dead dark creeper against the northeast wall section. It died because of multiple puncture wounds (from the arbalester, mostly).





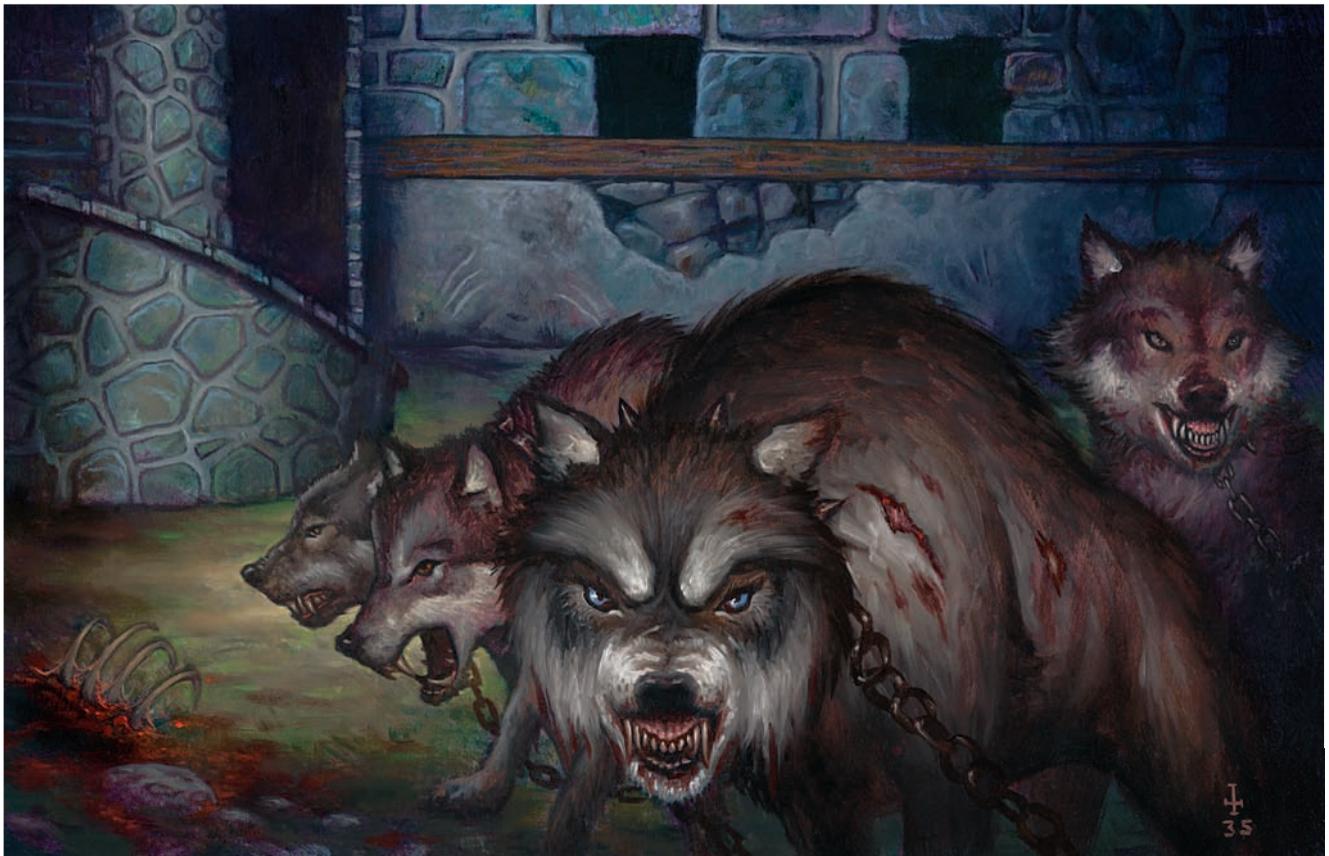
The approach to the Monastery of the Precipice on the edge of the Spellgard ruins



A watchtower and ramparts on the northern edge of the Spellgard ruins



The Scepter Tower of Spellgard, as seen from the base



Savage guardians below the Ramparts (Location R6)

WARREN MAHY, JIM PAVELEC



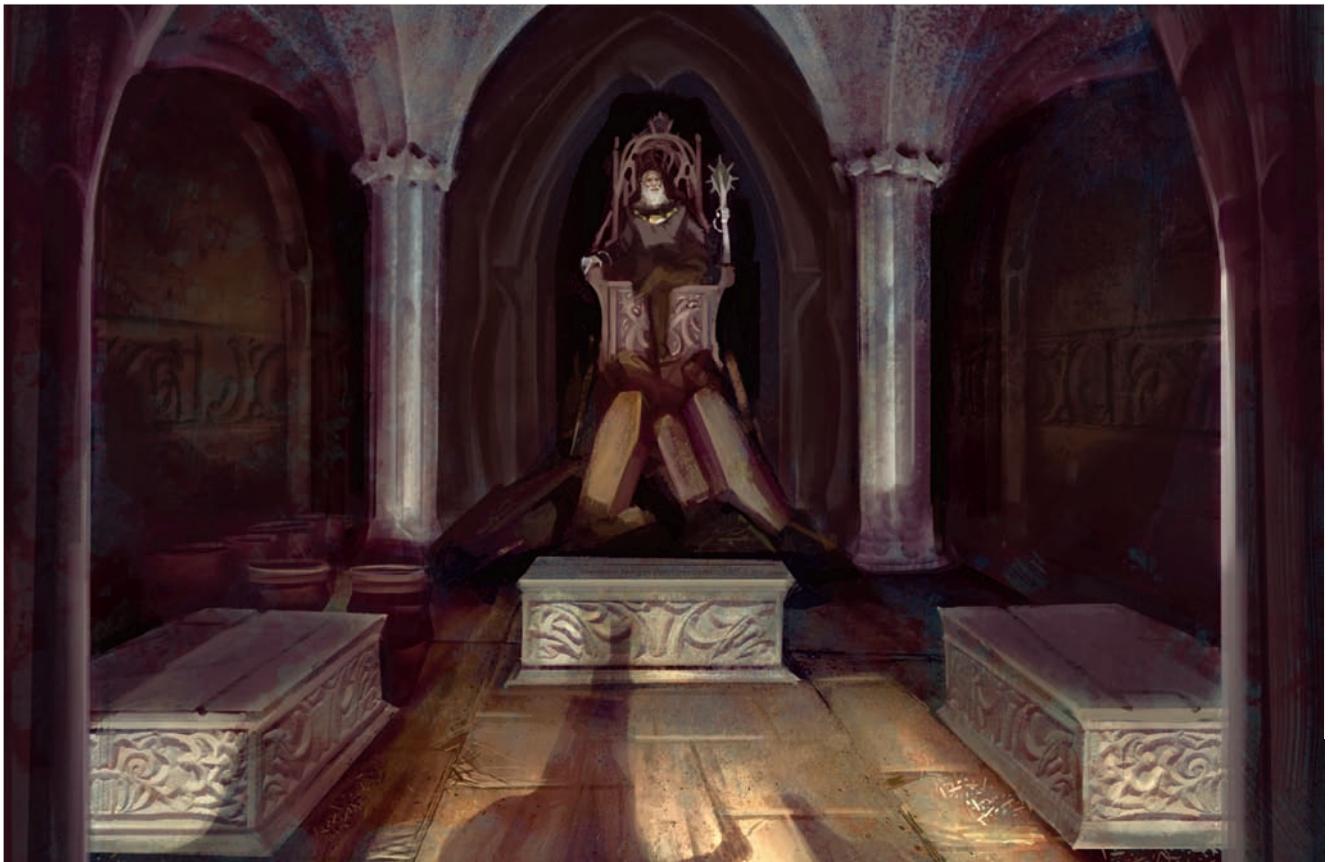
The Servant's Vault, a final resting place for those who toiled for ancient Saharelgard (Location C1)



The arcanists' vault in the Spellgard catacombs (Location C4)



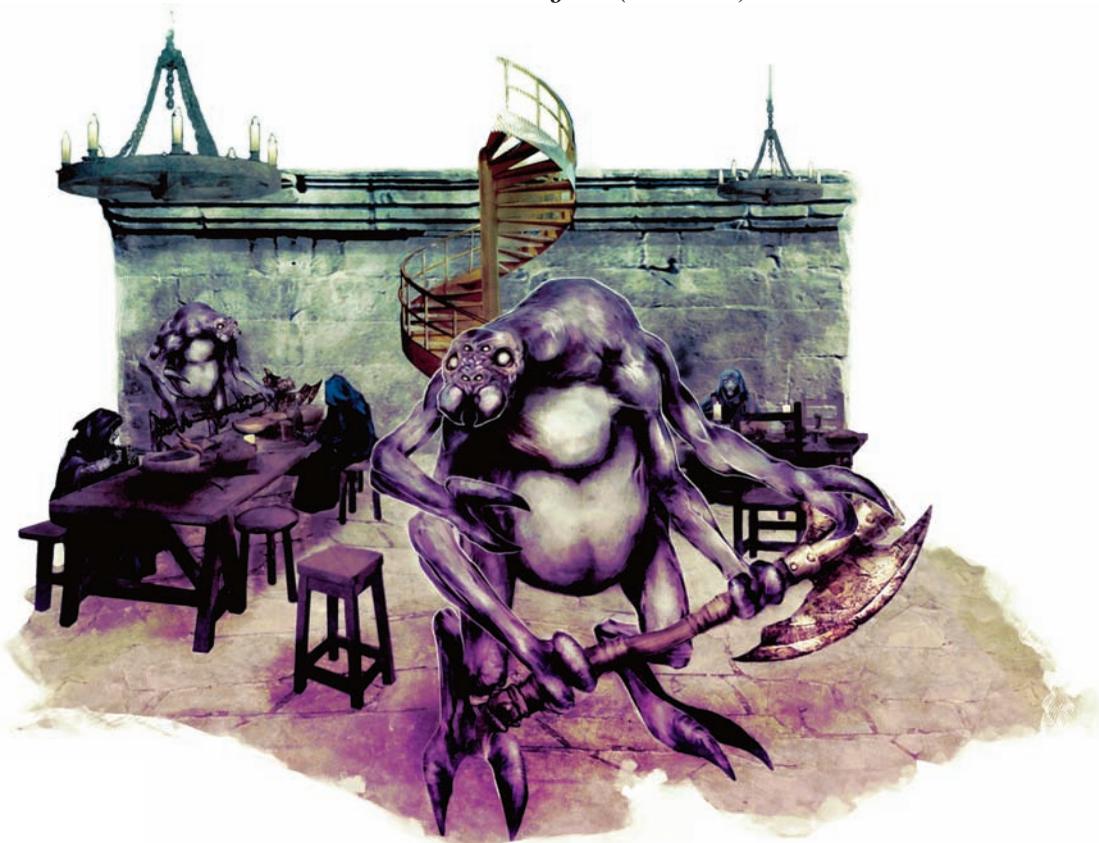
The commoners' vault in the Spellgard catacombs (Location C5)



The funerary chapel beneath Spellgard, and its deadly master (Location C6)



The door bears a strange seal (Location T4)



Ettercaps and dark creepers in the Scepter Tower's feast hall (Location T8)



Thoran within the Scepter Tower (Location T9)



The alabaster pillars (Location T10)



A deathjump spider and dark creepers on the Scepter Tower battlements (Location T12)



Lady Saharel of Spellgard

ATTILA ADORJANY, WARREN MAHY

HOW TO USE THE POSTER MAPS

Scepter Tower of Spellgard includes a two-sided poster map you can use to bring many of its encounters to life.

THE TOWER SIDE

The tower side of the poster map depicts one encounter area (T12) specifically. But you can also use it as a template to construct most of the other levels of the tower, because all nine floors have the same overall shape.

To do so, place barriers of some sort (*D&D™ Dungeon Tiles* work well) atop the map to represent the presence of the interior walls that run along the grid lines. By moving the tiles around as the PCs explore the tower, you can quickly recreate any area between Locations T4 and T14 inclusive. If you're using *Dungeon Tiles*, use the following instructions to construct each encounter area.

T4: Use a small diagonal corner piece, a 2-by-4, a 2-by-2, and a 1-by-2 to build the east and west sides of the room, then run a 4-by-8 and a 2-by-4 down the middle of the room. Add double doors to the south and mark the narrow staircases on the east and west walls.

T5: Build the north and south rooms with a diagonal corner piece, a 4-by-4, and a 1-by-4 (each). Then add double doors and mark the narrow staircases.

T6: Build room T7, then play out encounter T6 in the negative space left over on the tower map. Use a 4-by-4 tile and a 2-square-wide staircase if you need the exterior part of T6.

T7: Use two diagonal corner pieces, a 4-by-4, and a 2-by-4 to cover the floor space, then mark the narrow staircase to the west and add a spiral staircase and double doors.

T8: Simply place a spiral staircase near the middle and you're good to go

T9: On this level, it's easier to build the hallway and leave the rooms as negative space. Run a 2-by-8, a 2-by-4, and a 2-by-2 down the middle going north-south. Then add a 2-by-4 and a 1-by-2 heading out to the west wall and a 1-by-4 and a 1-by-2 where the hallway widens. Add a spiral staircase and doorways.

T10: Only a spiral staircase and a marker for the narrow staircase on the north wall are required.

T11: Use a 4-by-4, a 2-by-4, and a 1-by-4 to build the eastern room. Add doors and staircases, and use another 1-by-4 to mark the north-south wall on the east side of the west alcove; explain to the players that the wall runs along the east edge of those squares and that PCs can stand right there.

T12: Use the poster map.

T13: Use a 4-by-4 and a 1-by-4 piece for each side room. Then add doors and mark the staircases.

T14: Use a 2-by-4 piece and two 1-by-2 pieces in a cross shape for the middle, and use other small tiles to indicate where the narrow staircases are.

THE RUINS SIDE

The ruins side of the map has rubble, walls, and paths typical throughout the ruined fortress of Spellgard. This map is used for two specific encounters ("Kobold Ambush" on page 20 of this booklet and "Ancient Guardians" on page 22), and all or part of the map can also be used for any random encounters the PCs have while exploring the ruins or traveling to and from the ramparts or the Scepter Tower. Feel free to change the orientation of the map and supplement it with your own additions (either *Dungeon Tiles* or other terrain features you create). The map isn't meant to depict a specific part of the Spellgard ruins, so there's no harm in using and reusing it.

Walls: Typically 10 feet tall. Climbing them requires a DC 20 Athletics check. A DC 25 Acrobatics check is required to balance atop a wall.

Dark Rubble: These areas are still infused with the powerful magic that ruined Spellgard in the first place. Creatures standing on a dark rubble square score a critical hit on a natural roll of 19 or 20.

Light Rubble: These squares are difficult terrain that imposes a -2 penalty on Stealth checks made by moving creatures because the stones clatter loudly when displaced.

ILLUSTRATIONS ONLINE

To see graphic depictions of how certain levels of the tower look when *Dungeon Tiles* are applied to the poster map, check out the *Scepter Tower of Spellgard* special feature at dndinsider.com.

ADVENTURE BOOK TWO



SCEPTER TOWER OF SPELLGARD™

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ADVENTURE BOOK TWO

This 64-page book contains the “meat” of the adventure—31 encounters that take place in the three major locations of Spellgard: the Ramparts on the perimeter of the ruins, the Catacombs that lie beneath the Scepter Tower, and the tower itself. Unless the PCs in your group have circumvented the expected sequence of events (see “Alternative: Taking the Tower” on page 17 of *Adventure Book One*), they will traverse each of these locations in the order given here, starting with . . .

THE RAMPARTS

The ramparts represent just a small portion of what was once the northernmost curtain wall of Saharelgard. The Darano clan chose to attempt repairs on this portion of the wall because the western tower was largely intact. An inhabitable basement level appealed to their wererat-inspired desire for solitude.

Though the Daranos are tall for halflings, they are Small creatures in their halfling form. Like normal wererats, they are Medium creatures in hybrid or dire rat form.

When the PCs first approach the ramparts, read:

On the northern flank of the Spellgard ruins, a section of its ancient rampart wall has been rebuilt. New mortar fills the seams of ancient stones. Two towers stand at either end of this section of repaired wall. The western tower appears to have weathered the years well, showing signs of only minor repair. A new wooden door stands at its base, recently rebuilt arrow slits lining the upper walls beneath a new wooden roof. The eastern tower seems to be in a greater state of disrepair.

FEATURES OF THE RAMPARTS

The Darano family began repair work on the relatively intact western tower before moving onto the rampart wall. The curse struck before much work had been done on the eastern tower, which remains much as the clan found it.

Battlement: The battlement wall is 20 feet wide at the base and tapers to 15 feet wide at the top. A tunnel runs the length of the interior (see R3, below). Atop the battlement is a walkway protected on each side by 4-foot-tall merlons. The battlement can be reached by climbing the exterior wall (Athletics DC 20) or through the secret tunnel in Location R5 (Small creatures only).

Ceilings: Aboveground ceilings are 15 feet high and consist of exposed oaken beams supporting close-set wooden planks.

Underground ceilings and corridors are 10 feet high, consisting of heavy beams and wooden planks holding back the dirt above.

Floors: Aboveground floors consist of poorly fitted wooden planks. Though structurally sound, these dirt-streaked floors creak and groan when weight is placed on them.

Belowground floors are flagstone mortared to the bedrock, though some flagstones have been crushed to gravel in places.

Exterior Walls: The outer walls of the ramparts are 5 feet of solid, mortared stone. Interior walls are 9 to 12 inches of brick. Both surfaces are equivalent to a masonry wall (climb DC 20, break DC 35).

The walls of the underground tunnels are bare bedrock. They are roughly hewn, sloping inward a few inches at the floor and ceiling.

Doors: The doors of the ramparts and its basement are little more than wooden planks cobbled together by the Daranos. Their handles consist of pieces of knotted rope run through holes drilled in the planks. A character adjacent to one of these doors can see through the cracks between the planks into the area beyond.

R1. GUARDROOM

The wererats have rigged a pile of precariously stacked boxes just inside the south doorway. Anyone attempting to open the door knocks this over with even the slightest nudge, alerting the room’s occupants.

When the PCs can see into the room, read:

Beyond the door is a roughly square room. A double door is set into a wall along the east side. A spiral stairway provides access to areas above and below this one. A simple chair and table sit near the stairway.

This main entrance to the ramparts is guarded by the Darano wererats at all times.

Pull Rope: A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check notes a pull rope running through a hole in the east wall near the ceiling. Its end dangles within reach of the chair and table, forming part of an alarm system (see Locations R3 and R4).

Tactical Encounter: “R1: Guardroom” on page 6. The encounter begins on the ground floor. If the PCs move to the basement level, use the map provided here.

When the PCs enter the basement level, read:

This chamber contains a clutter of rude cots, a rough plank table, and several chairs. A large oaken chest sits against the south wall, and a double door stands closed to the east.

The wererats not on guard duty in the room above spend their time down here eating and carousing.

Illumination (Basement Level): Torches in wall sconces provide bright illumination in this area.

Table: This table is tall enough that a Small creature can move under it and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.



Cots: A cot provides cover for someone adjacent to it. Hopping onto a cot costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a cot, which can then grant superior cover to a prone creature.

Chairs: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.

Chest: This object is difficult terrain.

Treasure: The unlocked chest holds filthy clothing, damaged odds and ends, and a few morsels of rancid bread and cheese. Buried at the bottom is a small sack holding 12 gp and a bit of ivory scrimshaw carved into a rough representation of a skeletal figure in flowing robes—Lady Saharel. The carving is worth 25 gp.

East Door: A collapsed tunnel lies beyond the door. A character who makes a DC 24 Perception check discovers a passage through the rubble large enough for a Small creature to pass through (see Location R8 for details).

R2. LOOKOUT

These chambers are occupied by Franco Darano and a group of trained fire beetles.

When the PCs enter the second level, read:

This room is intact, though in poor repair. The stone walls are chipped and missing mortar, and a light dusting of rubble is spread across the floor. Arrow slits are visible in the center of each wall. The spiral stairway runs up and down.

Tactical Encounter: “R2: Lookout” on page 7. The encounter begins on the second level. If the PCs move to the third level, use the map provided at right.

When the PCs enter the third floor, read:

Though showing signs of recent repair and a solidly rebuilt roof overhead, this chamber is otherwise sparsely furnished and little

used. A cot has been shoved into one corner, a single chair in the southeast offering a view out through two of the room’s arrow slits.

Franco keeps a lookout from this chamber. The arrow slits provide a clear view over the northern portion of the ruins.

Illumination (Third Level): Daylight coming in through the arrow slits provides dim illumination in this area. The fire beetles shed light as torches; if they move into this area, it becomes brightly illuminated.

Cot: This cot provides cover for someone adjacent to it. Hopping onto a cot costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a cot, which can then grant superior cover to a prone creature.

Chair: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.

R3. BATTLEMENT TUNNEL

This passage, roughly 300 feet long, connects the two towers of the rampart wall. The ceiling here is 10 feet high.

When the PCs look through either of the doors leading to the tunnel, read:

A dark tunnel runs the length of the curtain wall’s interior. The smell of new mortar suggests that the wall and its internal passage have been recently repaired.

Illumination: None (dark).

Alarm Rope: A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check finds a long length of rope running along the ceiling and supported every 10 feet by hooks set into the beams. Pulling on this rope rings the alarm bell in Location R4.



Tracks: Any search of the floor reveals a welter of tracks in the dust—wolves, spitting drakes, and the wererats in halfling, hybrid, and dire rat form.

R4. BUNKROOM

The Daranos' human allies are quartered in this bunkroom. In addition, some of the wererats' trained guard beasts are kept here.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

Several bedrolls are strewn across the floor of this chamber. A cot sits in an alcove to the north of the doorway. A spiral stairway runs up and down from this room.

Alarm Rope: A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check sees a rope running through a hole in the west wall near the ceiling, a bell hung on its end. This alarm rings if the rope is pulled in Location R1 or R3.

Tactical Encounter: "R4: Bunkroom" on page 8.

R5. KALMO'S LOFT

The level above this one was ruined long ago, but this floor's foundation remains sound.

When the PCs can see into this area, read:

The smell of decay is strong in this ruined chamber. The spiral stair leading up has collapsed beneath the fallen ceiling, rubble spreading across the floor nearby.

Secret Tunnel: A rough passageway has been dug up to the third floor through the rubble in the northwest corner (Perception DC 20 to find it). It is large enough for a Small creature to clamber through (Athletics DC 15). From the ruined third floor, climbing down the rubble pile to the rampart below requires a DC 10 Athletics check.

Tactical Encounter: "R5: Kalmo's Loft" on page 10.

R6. KENNEL

This chamber serves as a kennel for the gray wolves the Darano clan trains as guard dogs.

When the PCs descend the stair, read:

The stench of an animal pen fills this chamber. The spiral stairs end at a floor of cracked flagstones. Deep scratch marks mar the walls. A pair of double doors stands closed on the west side of the room.

Tactical Encounter: "R6: Kennel" on page 11.

R7. LOWER GUARDROOM

This area serves as the last line of defense before Ephram's chamber. It is overseen by the goblin hexer Jib.

When the PCs open the door, read:

This rough chamber is outfitted with three iron candelabra, most likely scavenged from the ruins above. Each stands 5 feet high

and bears a number of thick tallow candles, filling the center of the room with light. A number of boxes, barrels, and crates are piled between two doors to the west and south.

Tactical Encounter: "R7: Lower Guardroom" on page 12.

Treasure: Jib keeps his wealth hidden among the boxes of supplies. A character who makes a DC 20 Perception check locates a locked silver coffer (worth 150 gp) that the goblin knows the wererats will not touch. The key is hidden nearby (Perception DC 24). The lock can be picked (Thievery DC 24), or the coffer can be smashed (Strength DC 22, but doing so reduces its value by half). Within the coffer are 80 gp, 12 pp, a large garnet worth 100 gp, and a *potion of healing*.

R8. COMMON ROOM

Old Ephram, the Darano clan patriarch, claims this chamber as his own.

When the PCs enter, read:

This large chamber is illuminated by a low-burning fire pit. The smell of charred meat is perceptible, but the reek of a huge garbage pile near the east doors overwhelms it. In the southwest corner, a large ornate chair stands before a dark wall hanging.

Tactical Encounter: "R8: Common Room" on page 14.

Treasure: A large chest behind the wall hanging holds Ephram's personal belongings and the clan's treasure—200 gp in copper trade bars, 350 gp in assorted coins (though silver pieces are conspicuously absent), a thick gold necklace worth 150 gp, and a *+1 magic orb*.

R9. TRAPPED PASSAGE

This chamber connects to the catacombs beneath Spellgard, and is avoided by the wererats and their allies.

When the PCs open the door, read:

This chamber is dank and deserted. The double door you entered through faces another on the opposite wall, and a passage leads away to the south. Its dark entrance is festooned with dangling cobwebs stirred by a cold, fetid breeze.

Traps and guardians have been set in place to prevent anyone from moving through this area uncontested.

Tactical Encounter: "R9: Trapped Passage" on page 16.

Development: The southern passage connects with a number of side corridors, but these are all collapsed and impassible. The only route open to the PCs takes them approximately 600 feet south, eventually bringing them to the catacombs.

Quest XP: Award the PCs 125 XP for successfully making it through the ramparts and into the catacombs.

RAMPARTS



Third Level



Second Level



Ground Level



Basement Level



one square = 10 feet

ENCOUNTER R1: GUARDROOM

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

5 wererats (W)

The wererat Malcolm Darano (in halfling form) is on guard here. When this encounter begins, four other wererats are on the basement level of this area (see page 2).

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Behind the table crouches a burly halfling, short sword in hand.

Malcolm initially attempts to fool the PCs (Bluff +6) into thinking he is just another seeker. He tries to learn as much as possible concerning the characters' goals before he attacks.

When Malcolm attacks, read:

Before your eyes, the halfling's form changes and grows. His hands twist into black-nailed claws, and his face elongates to take on the appearance of a giant rat as he attacks.

Malcolm calls out if battle is joined, alerting the wererats on the basement level.

When the other wererats begin to appear, read:

Short, ratlike humanoids surge up the stairs with swords drawn.

5 Wererats (W) Level 3 Skirmisher
Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 150 each

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 48; Bloodied 24

Regeneration 5 (if the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)

AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 13

Immune filth fever (see below)

Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)

⬇ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ⬆ Weapon

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⬇ Bite (standard; at-will) ⬆ Disease

+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ⬆ Polymorph

A wererat can alter its physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). It loses its bite attack in halfling form.

Combat Advantage

The wererat deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10

Str 10 (+1) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)

Equipment cloak, short sword

TACTICS

In the first round, Malcolm changes shape into his hybrid form, calls out to his comrades in the basement level, and attacks. In the second round, he uses a minor action to pull the rope, ringing the bell in Location R4. The wererats there do not come to his aid, though they remain on alert for the next hour.

The wererats in the basement level begin arriving to assist Malcolm 2 rounds after he calls out for their help. They come up the stairs one at a time in consecutive rounds, all on the same initiative count. If three of the wererats are killed, the rest run out the south door and disappear into the ruins.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination (Ground Level): A large candle on the table provides dim illumination throughout this area. If the table is tipped over, the candle goes out.

Table: This table is tall enough that a Small creature can move under it and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

Boxes: These cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover.

Chair: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.



ENCOUNTER R2: LOOKOUT

Encounter Level 2 (650 XP)

SETUP

Franco Darano, wererat (W)
5 fire beetles (B)

Franco Darano keeps a lookout over the ruins to the south and east through the third-floor arrow slits. He makes passive Perception checks against anyone approaching from those directions.

Franco's trained fire beetles are on the second floor. A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check notes a faint red glow as the PCs climb the stairs from the ground floor.

When the PCs first see the fire beetles, read:

A red glow flares as five beetles the size of dogs come skittering around the corner. Each has a carapace of black and red, fiery light glowing from its abdomen and eyes.

When the PCs first see Franco, read:

A short, ratlike humanoid hisses as it leaps toward you, sword in hand.

Franco Darano, Wererat (W)		Level 3 Skirmisher
Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)		XP 150
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +7; low-light vision	
HP 48; Bloodied 24		
Regeneration 5 (if Franco takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn)		
AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 13		
Immune filth fever (see below)		
Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)		
⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease		
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph		
Franco can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). He loses his bite attack in halfling form.		
Combat Advantage		
Franco deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target he has combat advantage against.		
Alignment Evil		Languages Common
Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 11 (+1)
Equipment cloak, short sword		

5 Fire Beetles (B)		Level 1 Brute
Small natural beast		XP 100 each
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +0	
HP 32; Bloodied 16		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 12, Will 11		
Resist 10 fire		
Speed 6		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+5 vs. AC; 2d4 + 2 damage.		
⊕ Fire Spray (standard; recharge ⓂⓂⓂ) ♦ Fire		
Close blast 3; +4 vs. Reflex; 3d6 fire damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 14 (+2)	Dex 12 (+1)	Wis 10 (+0)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 1 (-5)	Cha 8 (-1)

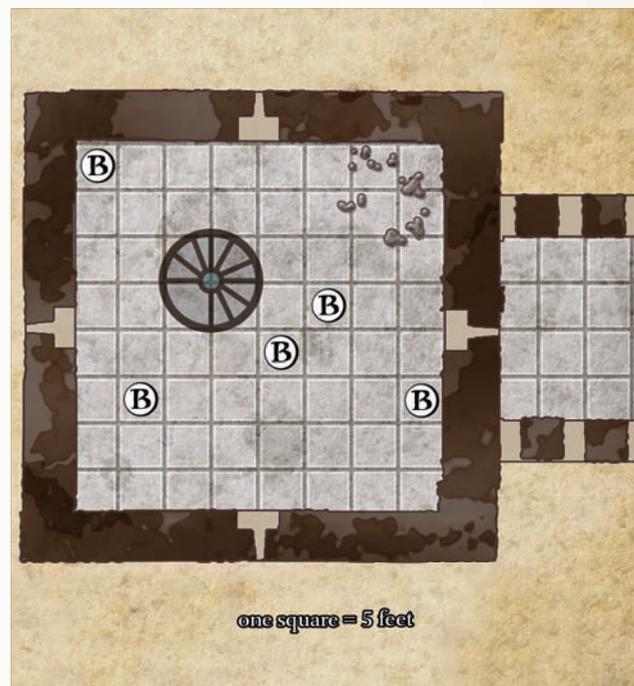
TACTICS

If attacked, Franco shouts for reinforcements. The wererats in Location R1 arrive to help him in 5 rounds.

The beetles use their *fire spray* against groups of foes, flanking single foes for bite attacks. Franco attempts to flank with them to maintain combat advantage. The beetles fight to the death, but Franco bolts if bloodied. He runs down the stairs to the ground floor of Location R1. From there, he flees the ruins.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination (Second Level): The fire beetles shed light as torches, brightly illuminating this area. If the beetles leave the area or are killed, daylight coming in through the arrow slits provides dim illumination.



ENCOUNTER R4: BUNKROOM

Encounter Level 5 (1,050 XP)

SETUP

3 human guards (H)
2 spitting drakes (S)
1 shadowhunter bat (B)
Borlem Darano, wererat (W)

This area serves as the Daranos' main line of defense for their lair below. Borlem Darano oversees it with his trained spitting drakes, a shadowhunter bat, and mercenary warriors. These humans are the remnants of a group caught exploring the ramparts. The wererats won their service by threatening to infect them with disease, then stationed them here.

Borlem hides behind the staircase, and the shadowhunter bat perches in a darkened alcove to the southwest. The mercenaries and the spitting drakes make a frontal assault against intruders.

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Three human warriors in chainmail stand before you, halberds leveled. Two bronze dragonlike creatures, each the size of a lion, growl as they stalk behind them.

When the PCs first notice Borlem, read:

Creeping across the far side of the room is a short, cloaked figure, its ratlike features and bright eyes visible in the torchlight.

When the shadowhunter bat attacks, read:

A huge bat swoops toward you, its long, bladed tail slashing the air.

TACTICS

Borlem Darano orders his human troops to hold the line, even if he is alerted to intruders elsewhere. The warriors press the PCs while the drakes fire their *caustic spit* at those in the back ranks. Borlem maneuvers behind the PCs, flanking with the human guards to attack with combat advantage.

Any sounds of battle in this area alert Kalmo Darano in Location R5. He sends his gravehounds down two at a time in the fourth and fifth rounds to reinforce this position. He then comes down in the sixth round to join the fray, flanking with his gravehounds to gain combat advantage.

The drakes fight to the death. If Borlem or Kalmo is killed, the other wererat retreats to Location R3 or R5. When that happens (or if both wererats are killed), the warriors surrender and beg for quarter from the PCs. They

know of nothing beyond Locations R1, R3, and R4, and want only to leave the ruins.

3 Human Guards (H)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid		XP 150 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 14		
Speed 5		
⚔ Halberd (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the human guard's next turn.		
⚔ Powerful Strike (standard; recharge ⚡; ⚡) ♦ Weapon		
Requires halberd; reach 2; +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 7 damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
↘ Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Streetwise +7		
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 10 (+1)	Cha 12 (+2)
Equipment chainmail, halberd, crossbow with 20 bolts		

2 Spitting Drakes (S)		Level 3 Artillery
Medium natural beast (reptile)		XP 150 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +3	
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Resist 10 acid		
Speed 7		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage.		
↘ Caustic Spit (standard; at-will) ♦ Acid		
Ranged 10; +8 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 4 acid damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 12 (+2)

Shadowhunter Bat (B)		Level 3 Lurker
Medium shadow beast		XP 150
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 12		
Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8; see also <i>flyby attack</i>		
⚔ Tail Slash (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. In dim light or darkness, a shadowhunter bat gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 6 extra damage.		
⚔ Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The shadowhunter bat flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The bat doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 11 (+1)



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: A guttering torch in a sconce on the east wall provides bright illumination in a 3-square radius.

Cot: A cot provides cover for someone adjacent to it. Hopping onto a cot costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a cot, which can then grant superior cover to a prone creature.

NEGOTIATING WITH THE WERERATS

It's possible—but difficult—for the PCs to negotiate with the wererats. Malcolm Darano (in room R1) and Franco Darano (in room R2) are unlikely to negotiate—they're confident of their ability to trick or drive off the PCs.

But if the PCs reach Borlem or Kalmo Darano (in room R5) in fighting trim, they've demonstrated enough of a threat to potentially give the wererats pause. The Daranos won't open negotiations, but they'll listen to any entreaties the PCs make—unless they're actively fighting already.

Level: 2.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Bluff, Diplomacy, Insight, Nature.

Bluff (DC 20): The PCs attempt to make themselves appear more powerful than they actually are. One PC actually makes the check, but everyone else in the party can attempt a Bluff check to “play along” and grant the lead PC a +2 bonus.

Diplomacy (DC 20): The PCs negotiate passage through the ramparts. If the PCs offer payment—even a token amount of coin—grant them a +2 bonus on that specific check; But if the PCs don't hand over the cash, then the wererats attack.

Insight (DC 15): A PC carefully reads the demeanor and body language of the Darano wererat. This skill doesn't earn the PCs a success directly, but it can be used once per round to grant a +2 bonus to the next Bluff or Diplomacy check.

Nature (DC 15): A character uses his or her knowledge of lycanthropy to aid negotiations. The characters can earn only one success with this skill.

Success: The PCs earn 625 XP for overcoming this challenge, and the wererats carefully escort them to the tunnel that leads to the Spellgard catacombs. But these are wererats, after all. No matter what promises the Daranos make, they won't let the PCs come back through the ramparts without a fight. They've figured out that the PCs will likely be battered and beaten when they head back from the catacombs or the tower, and then they'll be easier pickings. But the wererats will honor a bargain that allows the PCs to advance to the catacombs with no further fights.

Failure: Start the combat encounter in whatever room the PCs are negotiating in. Pay close attention to the reinforcements that might arrive (described in each location's tactics section).

Borlem Darano, Wererat (W) Level 3 Skirmisher

Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 150

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 48; **Bloodied** 24

Regeneration 5 (if Borlem takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn)

AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Immune filth fever (see below)

Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ **Polymorph**

Borlem can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). He loses his bite attack in halfling form.

Combat Advantage

Borlem deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target he has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+1)

Equipment cloak, short sword

ENCOUNTER R5: KALMO'S LOFT

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

Kalmo Darano, wererat (K)
4 gravehounds (G)

The wererat Kalmo Darano dwells here with his pets—four gravehounds that were formerly wolves. Once the Darano kennel master, Kalmo was searching the Spellgard ruins with his wolves when a magic trap slew the animals and animated them as zombies. Kalmo refused to destroy the creatures, instead keeping them up here.

When the PCs first see the gravehounds, read:

Four large wolves stalk toward you, but these are no living beasts. Bone and sinew show through their patchy fur, and their jaws are lined with broken teeth.

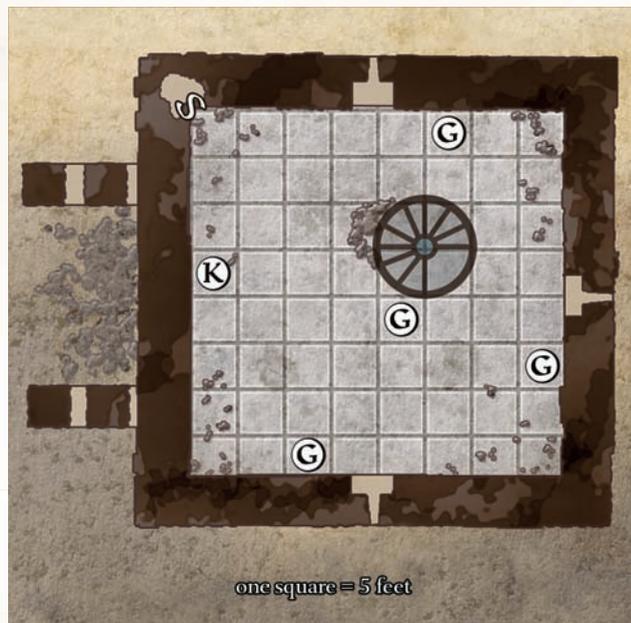
When the PCs first see Kalmo, read:

A ratlike humanoid brandishes a short sword as he directs the undead wolves in their attack.

TACTICS

Kalmo does not sound an alarm, though he responds to one as described in Location R4.

The gravehounds spread out among multiple opponents while Kalmo sticks to the shadows, using Stealth to gain combat advantage. If the gravehounds are all destroyed, Kalmo uses total defense as he retreats to the secret tunnel and escapes in halfling form. Once on the ramparts, he flees the ruins.



Kalmo Darano, Wererat (K) Level 3 Skirmisher
Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 150

Initiative +7 Senses Perception +7; low-light vision
HP 48; Bloodied 24

Regeneration 5 (if Kalmo takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn)

AC 17; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 13

Immune filth fever (see below)

Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)

⊕ Short Sword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease
+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph

Kalmo can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). He loses his bite attack in halfling form.

Combat Advantage

Kalmo deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target he has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil Languages Common

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10

Str 10 (+1) Dex 18 (+5) Wis 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) Int 10 (+1) Cha 11 (+1)

Equipment cloak, short sword

4 Gravehounds (G) Level 3 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead) XP 150 each

Initiative +2 Senses Perception +1; darkvision
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also *death jaws* and *zombie weakness*
AC 14; Fortitude 14, Reflex 12, Will 11

Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant
Speed 8

⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends) and is knocked prone if it is Medium or smaller.

⊕ Death Jaws (when reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic

The gravehound makes a bite attack against a target within its reach.

Zombie Weakness

Any critical hit to the gravehound reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.

Alignment Unaligned

Languages –

Str 16 (+4) Dex 13 (+2) Wis 10 (+1)

Con 14 (+3) Int 1 (-4) Cha 3 (-3)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Daylight coming in through the arrow slits provides dim illumination in this area.

Rubble: Rubble and debris cover the floor, making the entire area difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER R6: KENNEL

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

5 gray wolves (G)

Kalmo Darano (Location R5) was once the Darano kennel master, but he has been ostracized because of his unnatural affection for his undead gravehounds. The gray wolves chained up in this area are now neglected by the Daranos, and they have grown feral from lack of training and food.

The gray wolves are kept on 20-foot-long chain leashes bolted to the south wall. The chains allow some of them to approach the stairs and others to get close to the door, but they cannot leave the room. The ravenous wolves do not attack wererats or goblins, but anything else is fair game. Though PCs might think to use trail rations or other food as a distraction, the feral wolves prefer fresh meat.

The wolves set up a cacophony of howls when they detect intruders. No reinforcements are sent, but all the occupants of Locations R7 and R8 go on alert for the next hour.

When the PCs first see the wolves, read:

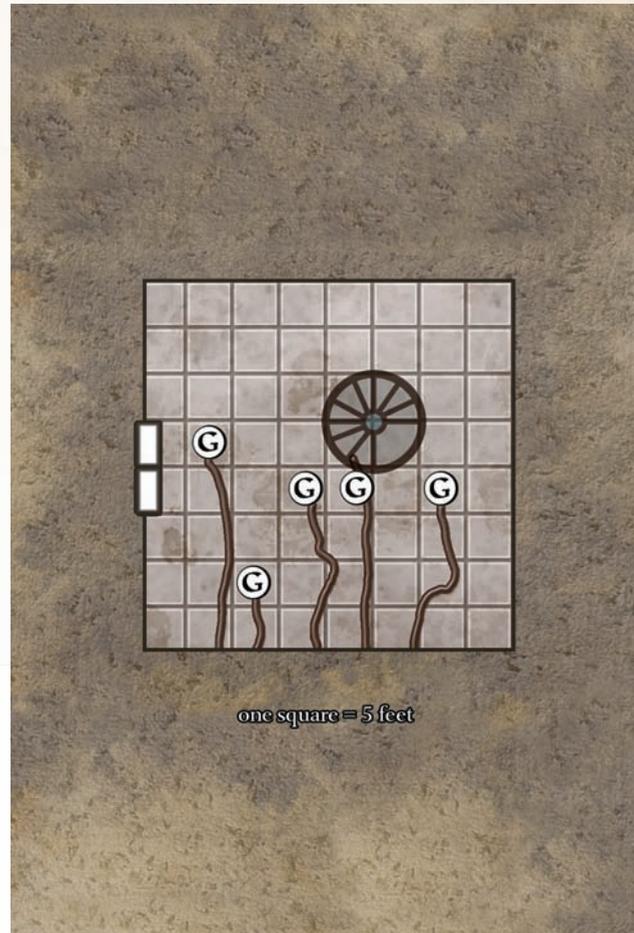
Five gray wolves are chained to the south wall, though they appear to have enough reach to cross the room. Their ribs are clearly visible beneath their fur, and they snarl and snap in anticipation of a meal.

5 Gray Wolves (G)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast		XP 125 each
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +7; low-light vision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Speed 8		
⚔ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 2 damage, or 2d6 + 2 damage against a prone target.		
Combat Advantage		
If the gray wolf has combat advantage against the target, the target is also knocked prone on a hit.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 14 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 10 (+1)

TACTICS

The wolves work together in an effort to maintain combat advantage and knock foes prone. Once a target goes down, all wolves adjacent to it attack, dealing additional damage as they feed.

The first time the wolves succeed at knocking down a PC who's in a square with chains, describe a chain briefly looping around that PC's leg as he clambers to his feet. This has no immediate effect, but the wolves are cunning enough to notice a good trick when they see one.



The next time a wolf knocks a PC prone in a square that has a chain in it, an adjacent wolf (including the attacking wolf, if it has a move action left) moves through at least three squares adjacent to the prone PC, provoking opportunity attacks normally. The prone PC is tangled in the chains and considered grabbed by that wolf. The other wolves attack that PC normally.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Chain Leashes: The chain leashes are 20 feet long and bolted into the stone of the south wall. Draw a line between each wolf and its leash's anchor point on the wall. Treat these squares as difficult terrain. The wolves are not affected by each other's leashes.

ENCOUNTER R7: LOWER GUARDROOM

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

Jib, goblin hexer (G)
4 wererats (W)

Ephram Darano called upon an old friend to join his clan at their new warren under Spellgard. The goblin hexer Jib now assists in overseeing the lair, and has begun to train squads of wererats in goblin battle tactics.

When the PCs see the room's defenders, read:

Four short, ratlike humanoids face you from across the room. Behind them stands a smaller figure, this one wearing leather robes and a headdress of feathers and bone. His skin is a deep orange, his pug nose curling up as he hisses through sharp teeth.

Jib, Goblin Hexer (G) **Level 3 Controller (Leader)** Small natural humanoid (goblin) XP 150

Initiative +3 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 46; **Bloodied** 23

AC 17; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 16; see also *lead from the rear*

Speed 6; see also *goblin tactics*

⊕ **Hexer Rod** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.

➤ **Blinding Hex** (standard; at-will)

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).

➤ **Stinging Hex** (standard; recharge ☞☞)

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).

✱ **Vexing Cloud** (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ **Zone**

Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to Jib and his allies. Jib can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.

➤ **Incite Bravery** (immediate reaction, when an ally uses *goblin tactics*; at-will)

Ranged 10; the targeted ally can shift 2 more squares and make an attack.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

Jib shifts 1 square.

Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)

Jib can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of his level or lower.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common, Goblin

Skills Bluff +10, Thievery +10

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 15 (+3) **Wis** 13 (+2)

Con 14 (+3) **Int** 9 (+0) **Cha** 18 (+5)

Equipment leather armor, hexer rod

4 Wererats (W) **Level 3 Skirmisher**

Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger) XP 150 each

Initiative +7 **Senses** Perception +7; low-light vision

HP 48; **Bloodied** 24

Regeneration 5 (if the wererat takes damage from a silvered weapon, its regeneration doesn't function on its next turn)

AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13

Immune filth fever (see below)

Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)

⊕ **Short Sword** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.

⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**

+8 vs. AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ **Polymorph**

A wererat can alter its physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see *Change Shape*, MM 280). It loses its bite attack in halfling form.

Combat Advantage

The wererat deals 1d6 extra damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)

The wererat shifts 1 square.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common

Skills Bluff +6, Stealth +10, Streetwise +6, Thievery +10

Str 10 (+1) **Dex** 18 (+5) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) **Int** 10 (+1) **Cha** 11 (+1)

Equipment cloak, short sword

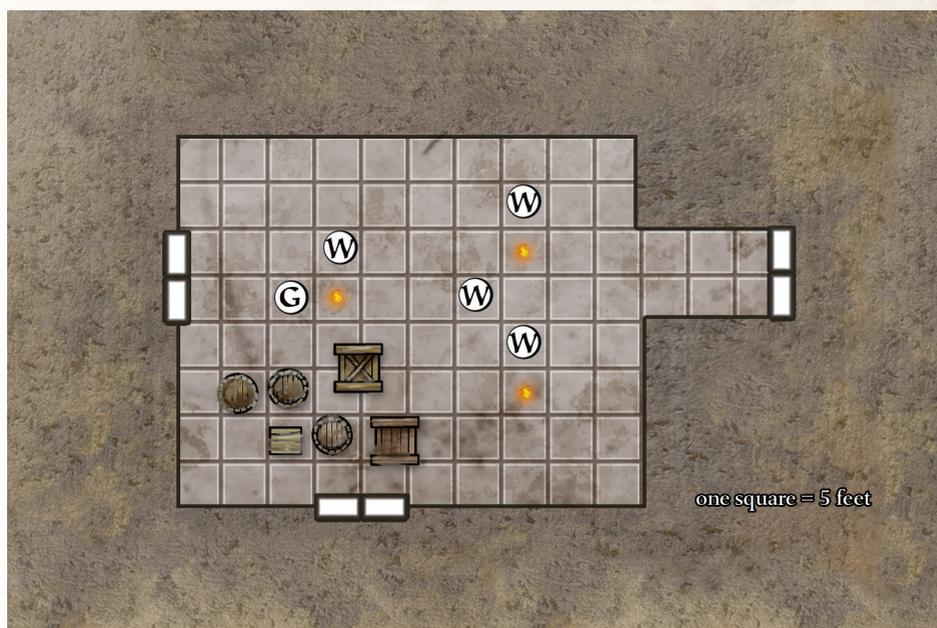
TACTICS

If already alerted by the wolves, the wererat with Jib opens the west doors at the first sign of interlopers, hurling a rock at the doors to Location R8 to alert Ephram. Five wererat minions (see page 14) arrive to assist 3 rounds after the rock is thrown. They are not trained in *goblin tactics* and do not gain the benefit Jib gives to the other wererats.

Jib and one of the wererats move around behind the boxes as the goblin hexer covers himself with his *vexing cloud*. The other wererats move into the cloud to gain concealment, then use *Stealth* to gain combat advantage. If the PCs do not approach within range, Jib uses a minor action to send the *vexing cloud* toward them, the three wererats following with it to make their attacks.

The wererats' *goblin tactics* allow them to shift when an opponent misses with a melee attack. Jib uses his *incite bravery* power to allow wererats using *goblin tactics* to make followup attacks.

Jib uses his *stinging hex* to keep a heavily armored opponent in place, reserving his *blinding hex* for lightly armored foes. His *lead from the rear* power deflects any ranged attacks made against him to his wererat bodyguard, who stays in an adjacent square at all times. If engaged in melee, Jib uses his hexer rod while the wererats fall back to his defense.



If all the wererats are slain (whether any wererat minions survive or not), Jib uses total defense and attempts to run through the south door. (See tactical encounter R9, page 16, for more information.) If Jib gets hit again, though, he falls prone and starts wailing, “Have mercy,

mercy on this poor misguided goblin.” If Jib is wailing or slain, the surviving wererats flee east and leave the ramparts. Any surviving wererat minions flee west to rejoin Ephram in Location R8.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Three free-standing iron candelabra provide dim illumination in a 2-square radius around their locations.

Iron Candelabra: These objects provide cover. A candelabrum can be tipped over as a minor action, snuffing out its light and making the square it is tipped into difficult terrain.

Boxes and Barrels: These

cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover. The boxes hold mundane equipment and barely palatable foodstuffs. The barrels hold murky water.

INTERROGATING JIB

The wererats are tough customers, and they’ve already been through a lot, so it’s hard to capture them, much less interrogate them and get anything useful out of it. Jib, on the other hand, is a different story. He thinks Ephram brought him here under false pretenses. Jib was willing to make the best of it, but he doesn’t want to spill his precious blood making the world safe for lycanthropy. So, if the PCs capture Jib, they have a reasonable chance to extract some useful information from him.

If the PCs manage to capture a wererat, you can use this skill challenge, but add 5 to all DCs. The Daranos are much tougher nuts to crack.

Level: 2.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Intimidate, Diplomacy, Bluff, Insight.

Intimidate (DC 15): This is the relevant skill for PCs who make either subtle or overt threats. If a PC fails at this check, that failure closes off further attempts from that PC because Jib isn’t taking those threats seriously anymore. A PC who succeeds on an Intimidate check takes a -2 penalty on Diplomacy checks for the rest of the challenge; Jib distrusts what he fears.

Diplomacy (DC 20): The PCs appeal to reason and try to cut a deal with Jib. Jib wants to make sure the whole party will deal with him fairly, though, not just the speaker, so he questions each PC in turn: “You really gonna keep your word?” One PC is designated to attempt the Diplomacy

check, but before he or she does so, everyone else in the group attempts a Diplomacy check as well, with each successful check providing the designated PC a +2 bonus.

Bluff (DC 20): A character uses outright lies (“We were sent here by your tribe”) or threats he can’t actually carry out to get Jib to talk.

Insight (DC 15): A character watches Jib’s reactions very carefully. This check, which can be attempted once per round, doesn’t directly grant successes, but it does grant a +2 bonus on the next Intimidate, Diplomacy, or Bluff check. A failed Insight check likewise doesn’t grant a failure, but it imposes a -2 penalty on the next Intimidate, Diplomacy, or Bluff check.

Rough Stuff: If the PCs attack Jib during the interrogation, they automatically earn a failure and have to listen to a minute of Jib’s incoherent wailing (the first time) and outrageous lies such as “There’s a sleeping dragon in the next room” (each time after that).

Success: The PCs earn 625 XP for overcoming this challenge, and Jib tells them in basic terms what they can expect in Locations R8 and R9, including where the pressure plates are for the dart-thrower trap in R9. If the PCs achieve success, Jib does not reappear in Location R9, but a different goblin hexer is present (see page 16).

Failure: Jib starts wailing piteously and won’t stop for several minutes. He’s uncommunicative after that point.

ENCOUNTER R8: COMMON ROOM

Encounter Level 3 (625 XP)

SETUP

Ephram Darano, wererat mage (E)
15 wererat minions (M)

Ephram, patriarch of the Darano family, makes his lair in this large chamber with the lesser members of his clan.

When the PCs enter the chamber, place only the wererat minions visible to them. Reveal the others as they come into the light or are otherwise detected.

When the PCs first see the room's defenders, read:

In the fire pit's dull glow, you see several ratlike humanoids move into attack positions, short swords in hand. From the shadows, scattered points of red light gleam as more of the creatures watch you, unseen.

When Ephram Darano is seen, read:

In front of the ornate chair, one of the ratlike humanoids directs the others in their attacks. This creature is larger than the others and wears black robes edged with arcane sigils.

TACTICS

The wererats are on alert if they were previously warned by the inhabitants of Location R7. Any reinforcements sent to R7 that survived the encounter have since returned here.

When the last PCs enter the room, the wererat minion behind the garbage pile uses a readied action to push it over on them (see "Features of the Area"). The other wererat minions then attack en masse, with multiple attackers focusing on a single target. The wererat minions fight to the death.

Ephram uses his *cloud of daggers* liberally, targeting spellcasters if he can. If any PC breaks the line of minions to attack him, Ephram focuses both of his *ice rays* on that individual. If it becomes necessary, he retreats behind the curtains of his sleeping area to gain concealment from ranged attacks.

Unlike his minions, Ephram has no interest in dying here, and he has constructed an escape route known only to him. If he is bloodied or if two-thirds of his minions are slain, he retreats to the collapsed hallway beyond the west doors (using *dimension door* if necessary). Over the last month, he has dug a narrow tunnel (accessible in his halfling form) connecting to the tunnel in Location R1. Though he is not seen again in this adventure, you might choose to have Ephram appear in the campaign at a later date, seeking revenge against the PCs.

Ephram Darano (E)		Level 6 Controller (Leader)
Small/Medium natural humanoid (shapechanger)		XP 250
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +8; low-light vision	
HP 49; Bloodied 24		
AC 20; Fortitude 18, Reflex 19, Will 16		
Regeneration 5 (if Ephram takes damage from a silvered weapon, his regeneration doesn't function on his next turn)		
Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)		
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+11 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Disease		
+11 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target takes ongoing 2 damage (save ends) and contracts filth fever (MM 180).		
Combat Advantage		
Ephram deals 1d6 + 1 extra damage against any target he has combat advantage against.		
Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ Polymorph		
Ephram can alter his physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). He loses his bite attack in halfling form.		
Cloud of Daggers (standard; at-will)		
Area 1 square within 10 squares; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 force damage.		
Dimension Door (move; recharge ☹)		
Ephram teleports 10 squares.		
Icy Rays (standard; encounter)		
Ranged 10; two bolts of white energy attack targets; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d8 + 7 cold damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of Ephram's next turn.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin, Netherese	
Skills Bluff +7, Initiative +10, Perception +8, Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+3)	Dex 18 (+7)	Wis 12 (+4)
Con 16 (+6)	Int 18 (+7)	Cha 11 (+3)
Equipment dagger		

15 Wererat Minions (M) **Level 1 Skirmisher (Minion)**
Small natural humanoid (shaepechangr) XP 25 each

Initiative +9 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.
AC 17; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 13
Speed 6, climb 4 (not in halfling form)

⚔ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Disease**
+5 vs. AC; 2 damage, and the target contracts filth fever (MM 180)

Change Shape (minor; at-will) ♦ **Polymorph**
A wererat minion can alter its physical form to appear as a dire rat or a unique halfling (see Change Shape, MM 280). It loses its bite attack in halfling form.

Combat Advantage
The wererat minion deals 2 extra damage on melee attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Alignment Evil **Language** Common
Skills Stealth +9 (+14 rat form), Thievery +9
Str 10 (+0) **Dex** 18 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+1)
Con 16 (+3) **Int** 10 (+0) **Cha** 11 (+0)

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Light from the fire pit provides dim illumination in a 3-square radius around its location. The rest of this area is dark.

Garbage Pile: The wererats have stacked their garbage in a precarious pile 8 feet high, providing superior cover. If anyone uses a standard action to give the pile a good push, it collapses in the direction of the push, making an attack (+5 vs. Reflex) against any creatures in the 4 squares beyond the pile's original location. On a successful attack, a character in the path of the collapse is knocked prone. A wererat minion is posted to the south of the pile if the alarm is sounded. It uses a readied action to push the pile over when the last PCs enter through the east doors.

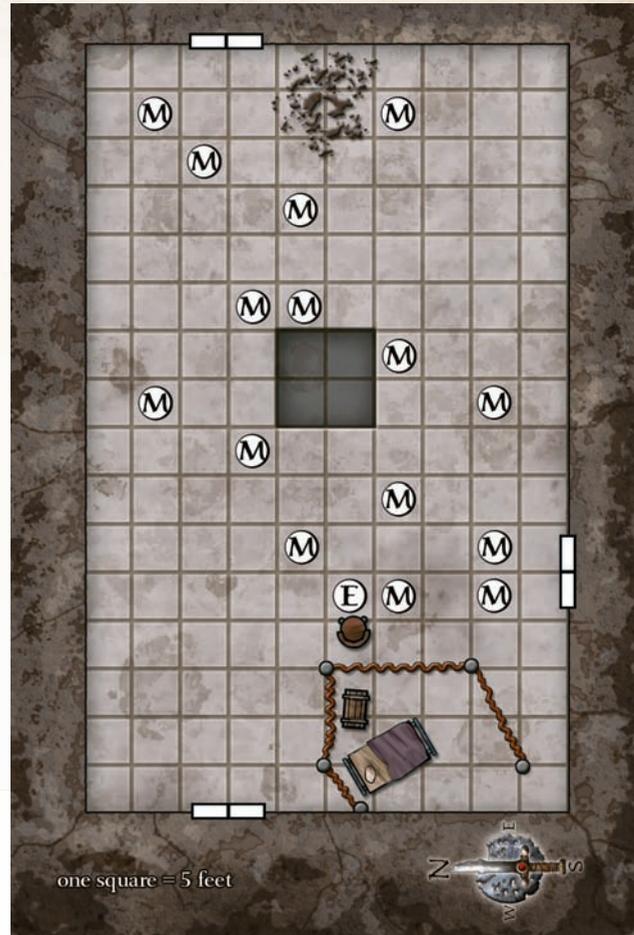
Pushing the pile over removes it as cover but creates difficult terrain in its original 4 squares as well as the 4 new squares the garbage now occupies.

Fire Pit: The fire pit is 10 feet wide and 5 feet deep. It is filled with glowing coals over which the wererats roast the remains of recent victims, all seekers taken from the ruins. Anyone falling into the fire pit takes 3d6 fire damage per round. Scrambling out of the fire pit requires a DC 16 Athletics check.

Partitioned Sleeping Area: Black curtains are strung between 10-foot-high wooden stanchions to enclose a section of the room as Ephram's bedchamber. Within is a bed and straw mattress stolen from the Monastery of the Precipice.

HANDLING MINIONS

Unless some were slain in Location R7, fifteen wererat minions guard this chamber. Rather than make separate initiative checks for each minion, divide them into three roughly equal groups, each with the same initiative modifier (+9).



ENCOUNTER R8: COMMON ROOM

Curtains: The curtains provide total concealment.
Bed: A bed provides cover for someone adjacent to it. Hopping onto a bed costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a bed, which can then grant superior cover to a prone creature.
Chest: This object is difficult terrain.
Ornate Chair: This object was scavenged from the ruins of a Saharelgard dining hall, and it is warped and cracked from years of exposure to the elements. It provides cover.

ENCOUNTER R9: TRAPPED PASSAGE

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

SETUP

3 iron defenders (D)
Jib, goblin hexer

This chamber guards the access passageway leading to the distant catacombs beneath the ruins of Spellgard. The wererats of clan Darano know that Thoran came this way to reach the Scepter Tower. However, after losing a number of his clan to undead attacks, Ephram forbade any further exploration of the catacombs. A pair of deadly traps and three iron defender homunculi now protect this area against incursion.

When the first PC enters the room, read:

Three creatures that look like winged humanoids but also seem mechanical in nature stand in a threatening posture, blocking the way to a dark corridor heading south.

Jib, the goblin hexer from Location R7, fled this way to make a last stand behind the traps and guardians here. He lurks out of sight beyond the east or west door (whichever one the PCs do not enter through). He listens at the door, waiting until he hears one or both of the traps activate before he enters and joins the fray. Assume that Jib had access to healing magic that brings him up to full hit points for this encounter.

If Jib was slain in the earlier encounter, or if the PCs successfully interrogated him (see page 13), the adversary here is a second goblin hexer who has come to this chamber to check the operation of the iron defenders. Rework the readaloud text accordingly. In either case, the iron defenders' guarded creature is the goblin hexer that occupies this chamber along with them.

When the goblin hexer appears, read:

Suddenly, the other door to the chamber opens. A small figure bursts into the room—the goblin spellcaster who escaped from the lower guardroom. He shrieks in rage as he summons up another of his potent abilities.

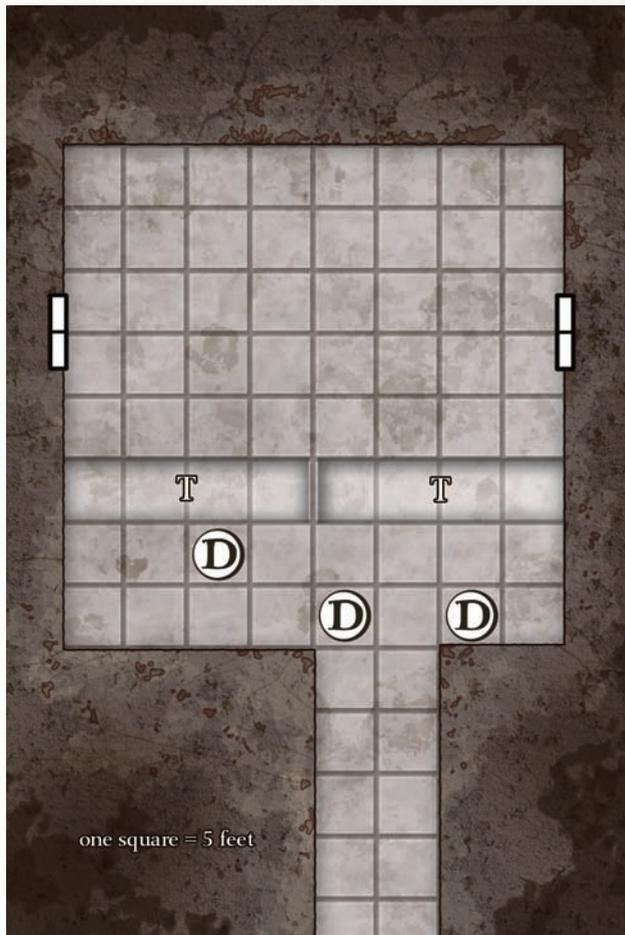
If the goblin hexer encountered here is not Jib, adjust the readaloud text accordingly.

If the characters attack the goblin hexer, read:

The winged humanoids abandon their defensive postures and begin moving in your direction.

3 Iron Defenders (D)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (construct, homunculus)		XP 150
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 47; Bloodied 23		
AC 18; Fortitude 16, Reflex 15, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage.		
⊕ Guard Creature (immediate reaction, when an adjacent enemy attacks the creature guarded by the iron defender; at-will)		
The iron defender makes a bite attack against the enemy.		
Pursue and Attack		
When the iron defender makes an opportunity attack, it shifts 1 square before or after the attack.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 11 (+1)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 5 (-2)	Cha 8 (+0)

Jib, Goblin Hexer	Level 3 Controller (Leader)	
Small natural humanoid (goblin)	XP 150	
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 46; Bloodied 23		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 15, Will 16; see also <i>lead from the rear</i>		
Speed 6; see also <i>goblin tactics</i>		
⊕ Hexer Rod (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 1 damage.		
⤵ Blinding Hex (standard; at-will)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 2d6 + 1 damage, and the target is blinded (save ends).		
⤵ Stinging Hex (standard; recharge ☹️ ☹️)		
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target takes 3d6 + 1 damage if it moves during its turn (save ends).		
✳️ Vexing Cloud (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ♦ Zone		
Area burst 3 within 10; automatic hit; all enemies within the zone take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. The zone grants concealment to Jib and his allies. Jib can sustain the zone as a minor action, moving it up to 5 squares.		
Goblin Tactics (immediate reaction, when missed by a melee attack; at-will)		
Jib shifts 1 square.		
Lead from the Rear (immediate interrupt, when targeted by a ranged attack; at-will)		
Jib can change the attack's target to an adjacent ally of his level or lower.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Goblin	
Skills Stealth +10, Thievery +10		
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 15 (+3)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 9 (+0)	Cha 18 (+5)
Equipment leather armor, hexer rod		



TACTICS

The iron defenders sit on the opposite side of the trapped floor from the PCs, watching the south passage and the doors. Their orders are to slay any creatures other than wererats and goblins that enter this chamber and attack the goblin hexer. They do not attack until one or more characters attack the goblin hexer, at which point they begin to lumber forward. They know about the traps, but are heedless of them, and will move into and through trapped squares without regard for their own safety.

Lacking allies that possess *goblin tactics*, Jib relies on his magical power to defeat the PCs. He first uses *vexing cloud* to provide concealment for himself and the iron defenders and then employs *blinding hex*. He uses follows with *stinging hex* on the closest foes, hoping to keep them immobilized while he stays away from melee. Jib knows the location of the pressure plates for the traps and does not willingly enter those spaces. Determined to take revenge on the PCs, he fights to the death.

If the goblin hexer encountered here is not Jib, the only difference in that goblin's tactics is its unwillingness to fight to the death. If the goblin is reduced to 10 or fewer hit points, it flees through the east or west doorway (whichever is closer).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Dart-Thrower Traps: See the statistics block.

2 Dart-Throwers Trap

Level 1 Warder
XP 100 each

Dozens of minuscule holes pierce a 5-foot section of wall, each concealing a dart launcher.

Perception

- ◆ DC 14: The character notices a pressure plate on the floor.
- ◆ DC 17: The character spots the holes in the wall.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a character steps on a pressure plate. It then enters the initiative order directly after the creature that triggered it, attacking each round for a total of 5 rounds. Thereafter, it must be reloaded before it can fire again.

Attack ◆ Poison

Immediate Reaction or Standard Action Ranged 8

Target: Each creature on a pressure plate.

Attack: +6 vs. AC

Hit: 1d6 + 4 poison damage

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the pressure plate with a DC 14 Thievery check.
- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the dart throwers with a DC 14 Thievery check. Three successful checks are required to completely disable the trap.
- ◆ A character in a trapped square closest to the wall can use a standard action to block the holes with a shield, an outstretched cloak, or a similar flat object. Doing so cuts the dart-thrower's damage in half for its next attack.
- ◆ A character who makes a DC 5 Athletics check (DC 10 without a 2-square running start) can leap over the pressure plate.

PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

If Jib reached this room, then he has already escaped the PCs once (in room R7). Thus he's not the wailing, frightened goblin that PCs who capture him interact with. Every round, he shrieks something in Common:

"You may have overcome the Daranos, but I... am the instrument... of their revenge!"

"You'll soon be entombed here... perhaps I'll bury you myself!"

"If you die here, your spirit won't rest. You'll be an unthinking zombie forever!"

"Flee now or be trapped in Spellgard... for all eternity!"

The iron defenders can't actually use language, but Jib made them utter various remarks whenever they attack. One says, "Your flesh is weak!" The second says, "Feel the pain of the Darano curse!" and the third says, "Spellgard will consume you!"

THE CATACOMBS

The ancient catacombs beneath Saharelgard served as vaults and burial chambers for the castle's residents. They were interconnected by an intricate network of sewers and drainage canals. Though the catacombs survived the fall of Saharelgard, they soon collapsed into ruin, the dead within slowly stirring in response to the turmoil of the world above.

Decades ago, a vampire priest of Bane fleeing the turmoil and destruction of the Spellplague sought out the ruins of Spellgard. Barthus made his way to the long-forgotten catacombs, using his divine powers to cow the undead lurking there, and established himself as lord of this hidden domain.

When the shadar-kai Thoran made his initial foray through the catacombs in search of an entrance into the Scepter Tower, he lost a substantial number of followers to Barthus and his undead guardians. Since then, more of Thoran's dark creepers have fallen victim to Barthus's vampire spawn. Like the wererats and their allies, Thoran's servants avoid this place.

FEATURES OF THE CATACOMBS

Many sections of the forgotten catacombs have collapsed, and are now lost to exploration unless some agency undertakes a major excavation. Those sections that have survived remain structurally sound, including the castle's ancient sewage and storm water canals.

Ceilings: The corridors of the catacombs have 10-foot ceilings. Chambers are normally 20 feet high and supported by vaulted stone arches. Location C8 is an exception, having a flat ceiling 12 feet high.

Floors: The floors of the catacombs are of flagstones mortared to the bedrock.

Doors: Two types of doors can be found within the catacombs: double doors of ironbound wood set in arched frames, and iron door-grates composed of iron bars bolted together vertically and horizontally.

Where the bars of these iron door-grates intersect, spikes are set on both sides, often making it dangerous to attempt to force them open. Unless otherwise noted, a character can force open a door-grate by making a DC 20 Strength check. On any such attempt, whether it succeeds or not, the character runs the risk of being injured (the door-grate makes a +5 attack vs. Reflex and deals 1d4 damage if it hits). Although the iron bars of these door-grates are rusted and pitted in places, the ancient magic of their original construction lingers, keeping them sound and strong. A character adjacent to a door-grate can see through it into the area beyond.

The doors in the catacombs open easily unless otherwise indicated.

Canals: The waste-water canals running through the catacombs are typically 5 feet deep and 10 feet wide, and are filled with water and sludge. In a few areas where canals pass through rooms or passageways, they remain

5 feet deep but are open to the air above. In other places, iron grilles are set along their length (not shown on the map) to prevent access to the castle above. Ancient preservative magic has kept these iron grates strong and intact.

Sewage no longer flows through the canals, though rain water continues to be channeled into the catacombs from the ruins above. Frequent cave-ins along the canals' length leave them full of murky, stagnant water that slowly seeps out through drains. High-water marks in the chambers and corridors are testaments to flooding in the past.

Cave-ins: Erosion and the passage of time have caused large sections of the catacombs to crumble. Though these collapsed sections do not create any structural weakness in other areas, they make further exploration impossible.

Illumination: Except for Location C6, the chambers and passages within the catacombs have no form of illumination. All descriptions assume that the PCs have a source of light or have access to magic that allows them to see in the inky darkness.

C1. SERVANTS' VAULT

The servants of Saharelgard's ruling class were interred in this chamber.

As the PCs approach the north entrance, read:

Bones and rubble are strewn across the passageway here, not blocking your travel but making movement more difficult.

When the PCs enter this area, read:

A stagnant canal cuts through this chamber. The air smells strongly of mold and dank stone. The canal's murky waters branch before exiting through channels to the south and west that leave no clearance between the floor and the surface of the water. The north and south walls are lined with burial niches from floor to ceiling, the pale gleam of bones visible within.

Long strands of feathery mold cover the ceiling like spider webs, and a dark line midway up the walls shows the level to which this room must have flooded in the past. The canal is crossed by a rusted wrought-iron bridge. Passages appear to lead to the east and west, but these are blocked by barred iron doors set with spikes.

A false wall on this end of the passageway once hid the route that leads between the ramparts and the catacombs. A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check determines that the wall was knocked down only recently (by Thoran).

Tracks: A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check while searching the floor finds numerous footprints forming a path between this room and the rubble-strewn passageway. Most of the prints appear humanoid, though some clawed tracks made by the wererats in hybrid form are also visible. The freshest tracks appear to be a month old or more.

Tactical Encounter: "C1: Servants' Vault" on page 22.

C2. NOBLES' VAULT

The nobles of ancient Saharelgard were interred in the burial niches within this chamber.

As the PCs enter the room, read:

The air is cold and clammy here. Water marks on the floor and walls show signs of past flooding. The ceiling of this chamber once featured a fine fresco depicting nobles gathered around a feasting table. A dark, skeletal figure (presumably symbolizing death) sits at the head of the table. Rows of burial niches line the walls to the north and south. A large iron grate is set into the floor in the southeast.

Tactical Encounter: "C2: Nobles' Vault" on page 24.

Treasure: The nobles buried here were interred with finery that has survived the passage of years. If one or more characters take time to search the niches, each individual has a 20% chance per hour to recover 1d10×10 gp worth of jewelry and adornments, to a maximum of 200 gp for the area.

C3. WARRIORS' REST

This area consists of two rooms: a burial vault in the northern chamber and an ossuary to the south. The iron door-grate on the north end is rusted shut, requiring a DC 25 Strength check (rather than the usual DC 20) to force it open.

When the PCs enter the northern chamber, read:

Raised stone biers are spaced evenly around the floor of this wide chamber, a few of them supporting the remains of ancient warriors honorably arrayed in death. The mail-clad forms are shrouded with dust, rusted blades grasped in their bony hands. A scattering of bones and rusted armor litters the floor.

The soldiers of ancient Saharelgard were interred here with full battle gear. After a warrior's remains had spent a period of time lying in repose upon one of the stone biers, caretakers removed the bones and stored them in the ossuary chamber to the south. None of the equipment interred with the bodies is of any value.

When the PCs enter the southern chamber, read:

You see the remnants of large stone boxes that appear to have once lined the floor of this chamber. Around and among the fragments of those boxes, dusty skeletons, hunks of bone, and the corroded remains of armor and weapons are strewn across the chamber to a depth of as much as 2 feet in places.

When the bodies in the crypt to the north had spent enough time on display, they were disposed of in the large ossuary boxes that previously filled this chamber. After the fall of Saharelgard, tomb raiders despoiled this area, removing any items of value.

Tactical Encounter: "C3: Warriors' Rest" on page 25.

Development: Buried in the debris that fills this chamber is one of the slim alabaster pillars (10 feet tall and weighing 350 pounds) that Thoran's servants search for in the ruins. It can be located by a character who makes a DC 20 Perception check.

The iron door-grate to the west (leading to Location C5) is rusted shut (Strength DC 25).

The iron door-grate to the south opens easily. If the characters move along this route, they quickly discover that the passage turns east and ends at an impassable wall of rocks and rubble.

C4. ARCANISTS' VAULT

When the arcanists of Saharelgard fell, they were not buried in communal niches as were the rest of the castle's inhabitants. Instead, each was given his own elaborate crypt within a special burial chamber such as this one.

When the PCs enter this area from either side, read:

A number of self-contained burial vaults fill this chamber, creating a maze of passageways between them. Their roofs are four-sided pyramids that nearly touch the ceiling, and their heavy stone doors are graven with strange glyphs.

Tactical Encounter: "C4: Arcanists' Vault" on page 26.

Treasure: The deathlock wight in this area has looted all the other vaults. His central vault contains nine gold medallions worth 50 gp each, a +1 magic wand, and a potion of vitality.

C5. COMMONERS' VAULT

The canals of the catacombs once ran beneath the flagstone floors of the corridors leading into this room. Those floors have crumbled over the years, exposing the water that lies just inches below the surface of the remaining floor.

When the PCs reach the intersection of the canal and the passageway, read:

The floor here has partially given way, revealing one of the sluggish watercourses that lies beneath the ruins. The dark water rises all the way to the crumbling edge of the floor, murkily reflecting any nearby light. You can continue to make your way along the corridor you have been traveling, or you can head south across a floor covered by several inches of water.

If the characters are coming from Location C4 and heading east along the corridor, they will soon come upon the rusted door-grate near Location C3 (see above). If they decide to turn south toward C5, continue with the following text.

When the PCs first see the burial chamber, read:

A gloomy chamber stretches before you. A canal runs directly through its center. The water channel branches off to both sides in two places, these secondary streams framing small outcroppings of dry floor as they disappear beneath the walls. These side

channels are crossed by arched wrought-iron bridges. One bridge has collapsed into the water, now little more than a twisted tangle of rusty metal.

Stacked rows of burial niches line the walls of this vast space. Most of these niches stand empty, but large piles of bone are heaped before them.

The type of light source the characters have, and how far they advance into this chamber before combat ensues, dictate how much of the area they can actually see. (For instance, the wrought-iron bridge to the south might not be immediately visible when the PCs enter from the north.) Tailor the readaloud text so that it's consistent with what the characters would be aware of at any given time.

Members of the underclass of Saharelgard were interred here. In the aftermath of the castle's fall, grave robbers repeatedly ransacked this open chamber.

Tactical Encounter: "C5: Commoners' Vault" on page 28.

C6. FUNERARY CHAPEL

The dead of Saharelgard were brought to this chamber for their last rites and funeral services before interment in the catacombs.

When the PCs open the door, read:

This somber chamber has chipped and peeling black-plastered walls. A tattered black curtain hangs to the north, a stone bier before it flanked by two glowing bronze braziers on tripods. Rows of moisture-warped wooden pews take up most of the room, with two more tripod-mounted braziers at the back. The fumes given off by the braziers are particularly vile, causing your eyes to water and your throat to burn.

Tactical Encounter: "C6: Funerary Chapel" on page 29.

Treasure: If the bodies of the vampire spawn are searched (Perception DC 16), one is found to be carrying two thin pieces of alabaster: a 2-inch-by-2-inch square and a 4-inch-by-4-inch square with a corner cut off (forming an irregular pentagon). These pieces form part of the key that opens the tower's runic locks (see page 44).

C7. MORTUARY

In this chamber, bodies were embalmed and prepared for interment.

When the PCs open the door, read:

Stone columns support the vaulted ceiling of this spacious chamber. Three large stone tables with drainage grooves cut into them stand in the center of the room. One or two stone urns are placed adjacent to each table, and several more urns are lined up along the north wall. In the east side of the room, a pile of stacked coffins stands 10 feet high. Atop the pile rests a large wooden throne, battered and worn but elegantly carved with motifs of flowers and fantastic animals.

Tactical Encounter: "C7: Mortuary" on page 30.

Treasure: Hidden in Barthus's coffin (see "Features of the Area" in encounter C7) are 85 gp, 380 cp, and a collection of 25 silver teeth worth 2 sp each.

C8. HONOR GUARD

An honor guard was posted in this chamber to control entry into the catacombs. After the fall of Netheril, a mob of looters besieged this area in search of the wealth interred beyond. Though the guards here were slain, the troop captain managed to activate a trap that has guarded the room through all the long years since.

When the PCs open the door, read:

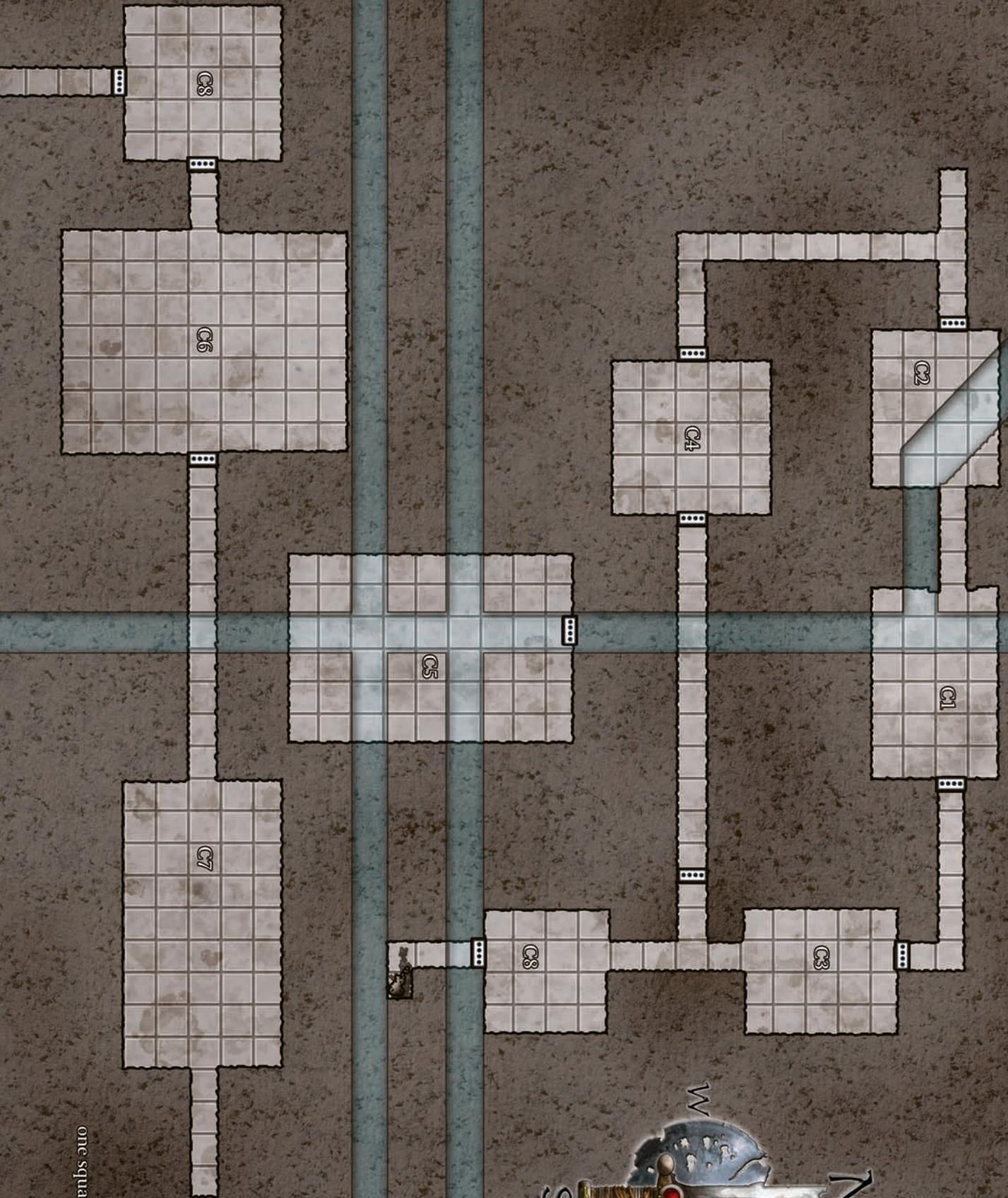
This low-ceilinged chamber is roofed with flat slabs of bedrock, unlike the vaulted ceilings you have seen elsewhere. A short flight of stairs leads down from the doors, and a second stair leads up to another set of doors in the south wall. The bones of roughly a dozen skeletons lie strewn about the room interspersed with their ruined arms and armor, the apparent aftermath of a great battle.

Tactical Encounter: "C8: Honor Guard" on page 32.

Development: Beyond the south door, the PCs discover a passageway leading into darkness. Side passages split off this route at regular intervals, but they all end in blockages caused by cave-ins. The only course open to the PCs continues south for approximately 150 feet, bringing them to the lower level of the Scepter Tower.

Quest XP: Award the PCs 125 XP for gaining access to the Scepter Tower.

CATACOMBS



one square = 10 feet

ENCOUNTER C1: SERVANTS' VAULT

Encounter Level 4 (650 XP)

SETUP

1 boneshard skeleton (B)
3 shadowhunter bats (S)

In the years after Barthus claimed the catacombs as his own, a small colony of shadowhunter bats settled in these depths. When the Daranos first explored this chamber using the access Thoran opened up to the rampart tunnels, they managed to capture one of these creatures (see Location R4).

The shadowhunter bats cling to the ceiling among the hanging strands of mold, providing them concealment. They can be spotted with a successful Perception check opposed by their Stealth checks (+10). The bats are resting, but they become aware of the PCs as soon as they enter the room. If they go unnoticed, they swoop down upon the characters with surprise.

The boneshard skeleton lies in the lowest burial niche to the east of the northern passage, appearing as a pile of bones like those in the other niches. It remains in its niche until detected or until combat breaks out with the bats. It then leaps out and attacks the nearest character.

Characters attempting to flee through this room and avoid combat must face a deadly trap on the other side of the bridge first.

STUDYING THE CRYPTS

PCs who are adept at the Dungeoneering, History, or Religion skill might learn something useful from examining the burial niches.

Dungeoneering (DC 10): These bodies died centuries ago and haven't been disturbed since.

History (DC 15): The tattered fabric amid the bones bears simple embroidery that is distinctive of Low Netheril, an ancient empire that collapsed more than a thousand years ago.

History (DC 20): The garb worn by the bodies indicates that they were all members of the servant caste.

Religion (DC 20): The funerary wrappings indicate that most of the dead lived full lives and were buried with honor at the end of a long life.

The same DCs apply to other buried bodies throughout the catacombs. Change the relevant historical information to match the sort of people buried in each chamber (nobles in C2, arcanists in C4, and so forth).

When the shadowhunter bats attack, read:

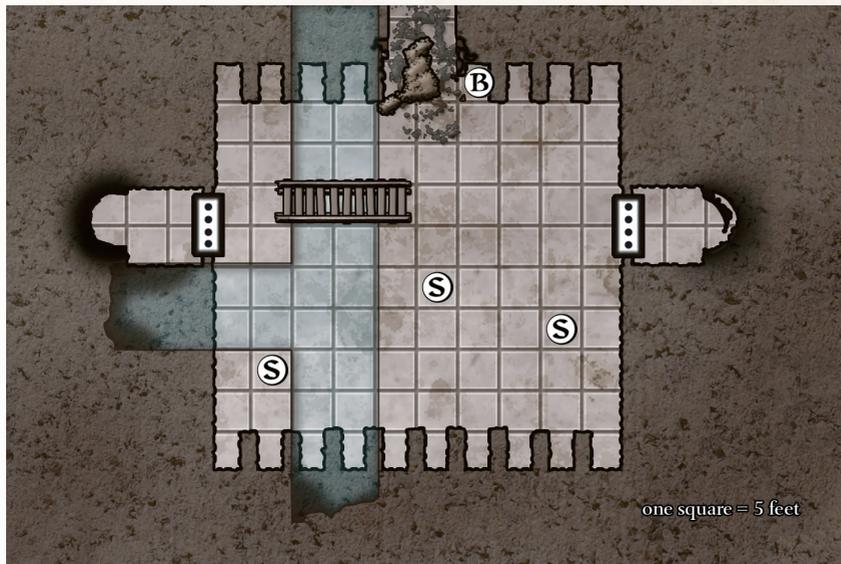
With a sudden flurry of black wings, the mold obscuring the ceiling is whipped wildly about as three bats the size of large dogs swoop down from their perches. Their razor-tipped tails lash wildly as they surround you.

When the boneshard skeleton attacks, read:

A clattering of bones heralds the appearance of a skeleton clambering from one of the niches in the northern wall. One of its arms ends in a shattered stump of bone; the other has a rusted scimitar wired to its forearm in place of a hand.

Boneshard Skeleton (B)		Level 5 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 200
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 77; Bloodied 38; see also <i>boneshard burst</i>		
AC 17; Fortitude 16, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 6		
⊕ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic, Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11) plus 5 necrotic damage.		
⊕ Boneshard (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 3 damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
◀ Boneshard Burst (when first bloodied and again when the boneshard skeleton is reduced to 0 hit points) ♦ Necrotic		
Close burst 3; +8 vs. Reflex; 2d6 + 3 necrotic damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 17 (+5)	Int 3 (-2)	Cha 3 (-2)
Equipment scimitar		

3 Shadowhunter Bats (S)		Level 3 Lurker
Medium shadow beast		XP 150 each
Initiative +9	Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 38; Bloodied 19		
AC 17; Fortitude 14, Reflex 17, Will 12		
Speed 2 (clumsy), fly 8; see also <i>flyby attack</i>		
⊕ Tail Slash (standard; at-will)		
+8 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. In dim light or darkness, a shadowhunter bat gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals an extra 6 damage.		
⊕ Flyby Attack (standard; at-will)		
The shadowhunter bat flies up to 8 squares and makes one melee basic attack at any point during that movement. The bat doesn't provoke opportunity attacks when moving away from the target of the attack.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 13 (+2)	Dex 18 (+5)	Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 11 (+1)



Spiked Swinging Gate

Trap

Level 2 Warder

XP 125

The spiked door grate covering the western exit is a trap. The door pivots outward in a 180-degree arc and pins anyone standing in front of it against the west wall, impaling them on its spikes and locking into place.

Perception

- ◆ DC 25: The character notices the hidden spring mechanism.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a character attempts to open the door grate.

Attack

Immediate Reaction Melee

Target: The creature that triggered the trap and anyone within the 4 squares in front of the trap and the 4 squares to the left of the trap.

Attack: +8 vs. Reflex

Hit: Targets take 2d6 + 2 damage and are pinned against the wall next to the doorway. Ongoing 5 damage each round of being impaled on the spikes pressing against the wall.

Miss: Target takes 1d4 + 2 damage from a glancing blow and is knocked into the canal.

Effect: The spiked door-grate is locked in the open position against the wall north of the doorway.

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 5 Thievery check. The door swings open and locks against the wall. If the adjacent character is to the right of the door, he is affected by the trap normally. Other characters have enough warning to dodge out of the way.
- ◆ An adjacent character can delay the trap with a DC 20 Thievery check. The door grate can be opened without triggering the trap while it remains delayed.
- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 20 Thievery check. The door grate becomes safe to open.
- ◆ A nontrapped character who makes a DC 20 Athletics check can break the door grate after it has locked in the open position, releasing any trapped characters.
- ◆ A nontrapped character who makes a DC 25 Thievery check can disable the lock holding the door grate in place after it has locked in the open position, releasing any trapped characters.
- ◆ A trapped character can slip out from behind the door grate with a DC 25 Acrobatics check (move action).

TACTICS

The boneshard skeleton wades into melee, alternating scimitar and boneshard attacks. It tries to stay in the middle of as many PCs as possible, wanting to increase the effect of its *boneshard blast* if it is bloodied or destroyed.

The shadowhunter bats attempt to stay in darkness or dim light if possible, increasing the effectiveness of their *tail slash* attacks. The bats use their *flyby attack* to remain out of melee range. They flank with the skeleton and each other whenever possible.

If two shadowhunter bats are killed, the remaining bat flees north (making a double move at a run). The skeleton fights until destroyed.

The skeleton pursues foes out of this chamber, but the bats regroup and return to their roosts if the PCs flee.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Canal: The canal is 5 feet deep. Fighting in the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Creatures in the water must use the Athletics skill to move. The boneshard skeleton ignores these effects.

A character who makes a DC 20 Perception check while searching the canal turns up the decomposing corpses of two wererats.

Burial Niches: These niches are 3 feet high by 3 feet wide and 5 feet deep. They are built atop one another, five high to the ceiling, and contain only gnawed bones and the tatters of clothing. The front of the niches can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Wrought-Iron Bridge: The bridge arches as it passes over the canal, and it has a 3-foot-high railing on each side. Though creaky and rusted, the bridge is safe.

Rubble: These squares in the corridor to the north are difficult terrain.

Spiked Swinging Gate Trap: See the statistics block.

ENCOUNTER C2: NOBLES' VAULT

Encounter Level 2 (625 XP)

SETUP

5 rat swarms (R)

Although this chamber has not been claimed by undead, hundreds of rats nest in a complex of burrows along the canal running beneath the floor.

None of the rat swarms are initially visible, though a character who makes a DC 16 Perception check near the grate detects chittering and splashing sounds from below. Do not place the rat swarms on the map until the pit trap is sprung. At that point, two swarms begin attacking from inside the pit while three come up out of the grate.

When the rat swarms emerge to attack, read:

Suddenly a mass of black-furred bodies shoots up from beneath the floor, swarming toward you.

5 Rat Swarms (R)		Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (swarm)		XP 125 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
Swarm Attack aura 1; the rat swarm makes a basic attack as a free action against each enemy that begins its turn in the aura.		
HP 36; Bloodied 18		
AC 15; Fortitude 12; Reflex 14; Will 11		
Resist half damage from melee and ranged attacks; Vulnerable 5 against close and area attacks		
Speed 4, climb 2, swim 2		
⊕ Swarm of Teeth (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and ongoing 3 damage (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 10 (+1)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 2 (-3)	Cha 9 (+0)

Water-Filled Pit

Trap

Level 1 Warder

XP 100

A covered pit is hidden near the west doors. A false floor drops a creature standing on it into the canal running beneath this area.

Perception

- ◆ DC 23: The character notices the false stonework.

Trigger

The trap attacks when a character enters one of the four squares containing the trap.

Attack

Immediate Reaction **Melee**

Target: The creature that triggered the trap.

Attack: +4 vs. Reflex

Hit: The target falls into a water-filled canal 5 feet deep and is attacked by a rat swarm.

Miss: The target returns to the last square it occupied, and its move action ends immediately.

Effect: The false floor opens, and the pit is no longer hidden.

Countermeasures

- ◆ An adjacent character can trigger the trap with a DC 5 Thievery check. The false floor opens harmlessly, but two rat swarms come up out of the pit to attack.
- ◆ An adjacent character can delay the trap for 1 round with a DC 20 Thievery check. The floor becomes safe to cross while the trap remains delayed.
- ◆ An adjacent character can disable the trap with a DC 20 Thievery check. The floor becomes safe.
- ◆ A character who makes a successful Athletics check (DC 10, or DC 20 without a running start) can jump over the pit.
- ◆ A character can climb out of the pit with a DC 12 Athletics check.

TACTICS

The rat swarms try to keep the PCs hemmed in, hoping to maximize the number of creatures caught in their swarm attack aura. The swarms fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

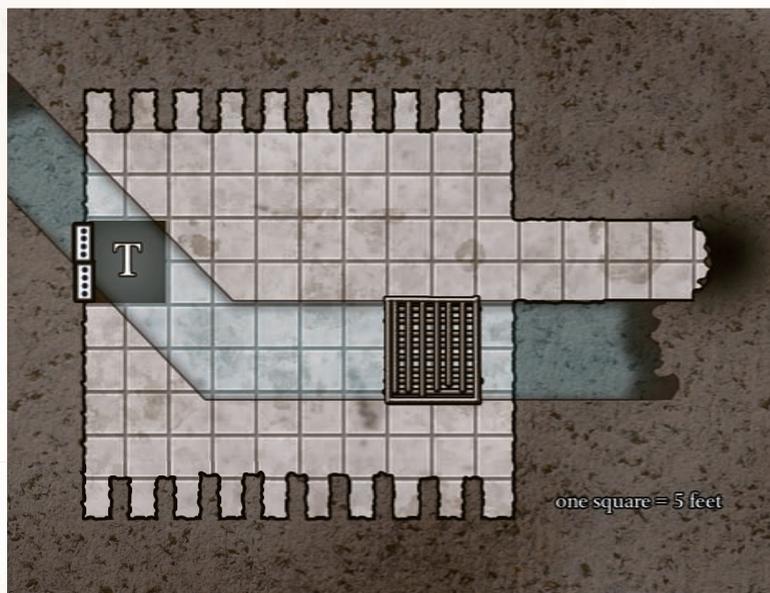
Illumination: None (dark).

Floor Grate: This iron grate is bolted to the bedrock. These squares are difficult terrain. The rat swarms are not affected by the grate.

Burial Niches: These niches are 3 feet high by 3 feet wide and 5 feet deep. They are built atop one another, five high to the ceiling, and contain only gnawed bones. The front of the niches can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Water-Filled Pit Trap: See the statistics block.

Canal: The canal beneath the pit trap is 5 feet deep. Fighting in the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Creatures in the water must use the Athletics skill to move.



ENCOUNTER C3: WARRIORS' REST

Encounter Level 1 (475 XP)

SETUP

- 1 specter (S)
- 12 decrepit skeletons (D)

When Saharelgard fell, a would-be looter was captured and slain in this chamber. This hateful thief returned as a specter, gathering a coterie of undead servants to his dark will.

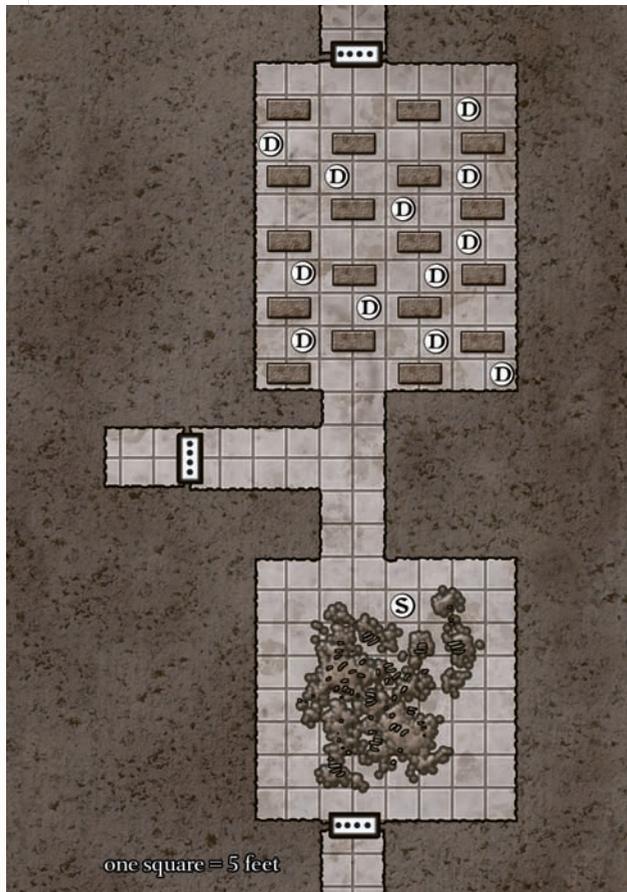
The few bodies visible here are harmless, with the animated skeletons all crouching behind the stone biers. They cannot be seen until the PCs have entered the room. The specter hides beneath the bones in the southern chamber.

When the PCs enter the northern chamber, read:

From the mass of bones scattered among the biers, a dozen skeletal figures rise, longbows clutched in their bony hands.

When the specter attacks (most likely while invisible), read:

Above the skeletal remains that fill this chamber, an insubstantial haze with a humanoid shape suddenly appears.



12 Decrepit Skeletons (D)		Level 1 Minion
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +2; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 13		
Immune disease, poison		
Speed 6		
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+6 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
🏹 Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 15/30; +6 vs. AC; 3 damage.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Str 15 (+2)	Dex 17 (+3)	Wis 14 (+2)
Con 13 (+1)	Int 3 (-4)	Cha 3 (-4)
Equipment heavy shield, longsword, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows		

Specter (S)		Level 4 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 175
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
Spectral Chill (Cold) aura 1; enemies in the aura take a -2 penalty to all defenses.		
HP 30; Bloodied 15		
AC 16; Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing		
⚡ Spectral Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 2 necrotic damage.		
↔ Spectral Barrage (standard; recharge ⏏; ⏏; ⏏) ♦ Illusion, Psychic		
Close burst 2; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; 2d6 + 2 psychic damage, and the target is knocked prone.		
Invisibility (standard; at-will) ♦ Illusion		
The specter becomes invisible until it attacks or until it is hit by an attack.		
Alignment Chaotic evil		Languages Common
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 15 (+4)	Wis 8 (+1)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 15 (+4)

TACTICS

The skeletons hit the PCs with a barrage of arrow fire before drawing their longswords and retreating south to the ossuary. There, they make a stand while the specter harries the PCs with its *spectral barrage*. Characters knocked prone are targeted by *spectral touch* attacks.

These creatures fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Stone Biers: These oblong stone shelves are 3 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 6 feet long. They provide cover. A DC 5 Athletics check allows a character to jump up on a bier as part of a move. Otherwise, they are difficult terrain.

Bone Pile: This pile of dusty bones and rusted equipment is from 1 to 2 feet deep. These squares are difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER C4: ARCANISTS' VAULT

Encounter Level 4 (850 XP)

SETUP

- 1 deathlock wight (D)
- 3 zombies (Z)
- 2 skeletons (S)

One of the arcanists interred in this chamber was a wizard making secret preparations for becoming a lich. Though he was slain in a spell duel before he could complete the process, he had already suffused his being with an unholy power that allowed him to rise as a deathlock wight. The creature has since gathered skeletons from the ossuary and zombies created from the corpses of Thoran's followers.

The undead are hidden when the PCs first enter the chamber. Do not place their miniatures on the map until they attack or a character has spotted them. The deathlock wight stands atop the roof of its burial chamber (the central vault). The skeleton next door lurks inside its vault.

The skeleton in the eastern burial vault remains in place until the PCs pass by its position or it hears the sounds of battle. The other skeleton and the zombies hold their positions until encountered.

The wight remains concealed (Stealth +4) atop its perch to coordinate the battle from above. It does not attack until it is spotted or its servants are engaged.

When a skeleton is seen, read:

The skeleton before you wears the remains of its archaic armor and wields a sharp-edged blade. No mindless automaton, the creature moves with precision and purpose as it attacks.

When a zombie is seen, read:

This corpse shows the fatal wounds of a recent battle, its dead eyes blank as it lunges for you.

When the PCs see the deathlock wight, read:

A decrepit wizard leers at you, blackened teeth twisted between leathery lips. Its skin is stretched taut and peeled away from the bone, eyes glowing with an unholy power.

TACTICS

Once they are engaged, the skeletons and zombies fight their way through the twisting passageways. They attempt to force foes toward intersections, where they can be flanked from all sides or made the target of a nearby skeleton's *speed of the dead* power.

The deathlock wight supports its followers from above by attacking the PCs with its *grave bolt*. When its skeletons fall, it waits to use its *reanimate* power in a way that allows a risen skeleton to sneak up again on the PCs. If pressed

into melee, the wight uses claw attacks against single foes, reserving its *horrific visage* until it can maximize the number of targets.

Barthus is nominally the lord of the deathlock wight, and he has sworn it to his service. The wight is supposed to battle until its servitors are destroyed, then withdraw to Location C7 to warn Barthus of intrusion before returning to defend Location C5. The wight is a reluctant servant, however, and it has only a 50% chance of retreating as ordered. Otherwise, it continues to battle the PCs until destroyed.

The skeletons and zombies fight until destroyed.

2 Skeletons (S)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 150 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 5		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn; see also <i>speed of the dead</i> .		
Speed of the Dead		
When making an opportunity attack, the skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword		

3 Zombies (Z)		Level 2 Brute
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 125 each
Initiative -1	Senses Perception +0; darkvision	
HP 40; Bloodied 20; see also <i>zombie weakness</i>		
AC 13; Fortitude 13, Reflex 9, Will 10		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 4		
⊕ Slam (standard; at-will)		
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 2 damage.		
⊕ Zombie Grab (standard; at-will)		
+4 vs. Fortitude; the target is grabbed (until escape). Checks made to escape the zombie's grab take a -5 penalty.		
Zombie Weakness		
Any critical hit to the zombie reduces it to 0 hit points instantly.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 14 (+3)	Dex 6 (-1)	Wis 8 (+0)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 1 (-4)	Cha 3 (-3)

Deathlock Wight (D) **Level 4 Controller**
XP 175
Medium natural humanoid (undead)

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +1; darkvision
HP 54; **Bloodied** 27
AC 18; **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 17
Immune disease, poison; **Resist** 10 necrotic; **Vulnerable** 5 radiant
Speed 6

⚔ **Claw** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic**
+9 vs. AC; 1d6 necrotic damage, and the target loses one healing surge.

☞ **Grave Bolt** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Necrotic, Paralysis**
Ranged 20; +6 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized (save ends).

☞ **Reanimate** (minor; encounter) ♦ **Healing, Necrotic**
Ranged 10; affects a destroyed undead creature of a level no higher than the deathlock wight's level + 2; the target stands as a free action with a number of hit points equal to one-half its bloodied value. This power does not affect minions.

⬅ **Horrific Visage** (standard; recharge 2) ♦ **Fear**
Close blast 5; +7 vs. Will; 1d6 damage, and the target is pushed 3 squares.

Alignment Evil **Languages** Common
Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10
Str 10 (+2) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 9 (+1)
Con 14 (+4) **Int** 16 (+5) **Cha** 18 (+6)

Explosive Runes **Level 2 Blaster**
Trap
Trap XP 125

Magical runes on an early page in the book explode when examined by the reader.

Perception
♦ DC 20: The character notices the runes and averts his eyes before detonation.

Additional Skill: Arcana
♦ DC 15: The character spots the runes and provides a +2 bonus to Thievery or Arcana checks made to disable it.

Trigger
When a character examines the contents of the book (including with a failed Perception or Arcana check), the runes explode.

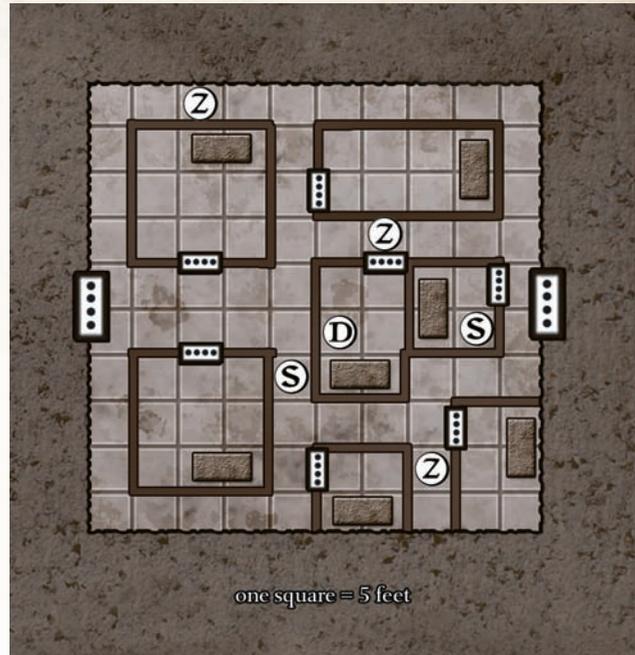
Attack
Immediate Reaction Close burst 1
Target: Each creature in burst
Attack: +6 vs. Reflex
Hit: 2d8 fire damage.
Effect: The book is destroyed.

Countermeasures
♦ A character can carefully deface a glyph, rendering it permanently useless, with a DC 15 Thievery check. Failure detonates the trap.
♦ A character can alter the meaning of the glyph with a few strokes of a quill, disabling it until those strokes are themselves changed (DC 20 Arcana check to disable or reenable). Failure detonates the trap.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Burial Vaults: The burial vaults have 1-foot-thick walls and ceilings of mortared stone. Their heavy slab doors require a DC 16 Strength check to open. The vaults are empty except for a few shelves and a stone bier, upon which lies a decayed skeleton in rotted robes and a book (see the sidebar). The central vault has no skeleton upon its bier.



ENCOUNTER C4: ARCANISTS' VAULT

Each vault is 15 feet high and has a pyramidal roof rising to an apex only a few inches short of the ceiling. The outer walls of a vault can be climbed with a DC 20 Athletics check. Creatures on the roof of a vault gain cover against all creatures not also on a roof. A creature's speed on a roof is half normal.

Stone Biers: These oblong stone shelves are 3 feet high, 3 feet wide, and 6 feet long. They provide cover. A DC 5 Athletics check allows a character to jump up on a bier as part of a move. Otherwise, they are difficult terrain.

THE RITUAL BOOKS

Thieves had plundered most of this area when Saharelgard fell and became Spellgard, but they (wisely) left the trapped books alone. Each of the seven burial vaults holds a trapped book. If the PCs disable the trap on a particular book, then they get access to the ritual contained within. If the trap detonates, the PC holding the book takes damage and the book is destroyed.

Because dealing with each trap is a repetitive process (meaning that characters can glean valuable information from early successes), award the PCs a flat 500 XP for obtaining all seven books.

The books contain the following rituals (it doesn't matter which one lies in which vault):

- ♦ Comprehend Language
- ♦ Make Whole
- ♦ Secret Page
- ♦ Tenser's Floating Disk
- ♦ Eye of Alarm
- ♦ Arcane Lock
- ♦ Knock

ENCOUNTER C5: COMMONERS' VAULT

Encounter Level 4 (950 XP)

SETUP

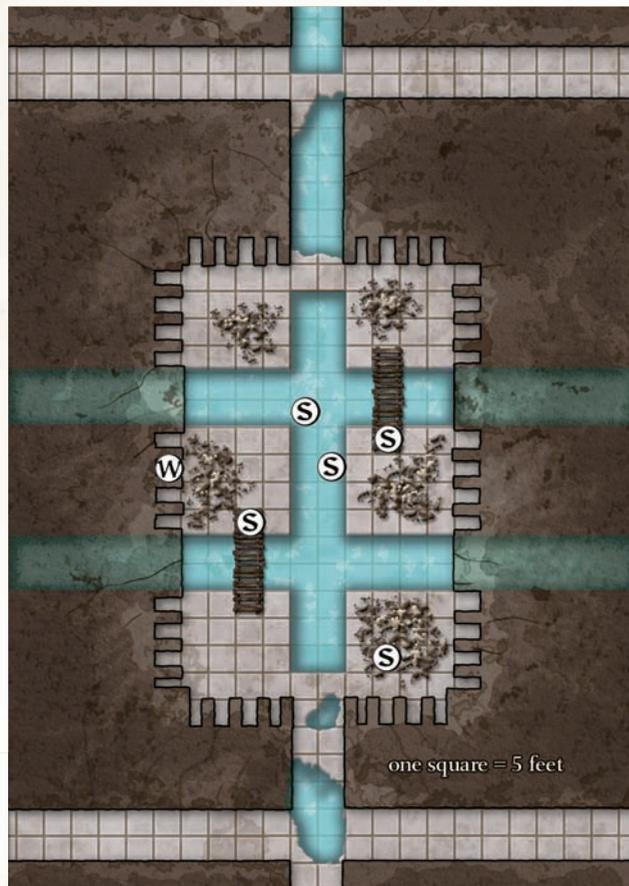
1 wraith (W)
5 skeletons (S)

The wraith hides in a burial niche (Stealth +11). Two skeletons rest beneath the murky waters of the canal, and a third hides atop a pile of bones (all Stealth +4). Do not place them on the map until they attack or are spotted by the PCs.

When the PCs see the two visible skeletons, read:
At the ends of two iron bridges, a pair of skeletal warriors raise their longswords in a battle salute.

TACTICS

The submerged skeletons attack if any other skeleton is engaged or if a PC enters the water. The wraith lets the skeletons occupy the PCs for 1 round, then it attacks. The southernmost skeleton holds its position on the bone pile until anyone tries to pass through the nearby passageway. All these creatures fight until destroyed.



Wraith (W)		Level 5 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid (undead)		XP 200
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +2; darkvision	
HP 37; Bloodied 18		
Regeneration 5 (if the wraith takes radiant damage, its regeneration is negated until the end of the wraith's next turn)		
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 16, Will 14		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic, insubstantial;		
Vulnerable 5 radiant (see also <i>regeneration</i> above)		
Speed fly 6 (hover); phasing; see also <i>shadow glide</i>		
⊕ Shadow Touch (standard; at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+8 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).		
Combat Advantage ♦ Necrotic		
The wraith deals an extra 1d6 necrotic damage against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Shadow Glide (move; encounter)		
The wraith shifts 6 squares.		
Alignment Chaotic evil	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11		
Str 4 (-1)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 10 (+2)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 15 (+4)

5 Skeletons (S)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 150 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 5		
⊕ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn; see also <i>speed of the dead</i> .		
Speed of the Dead		
When making an opportunity attack, the skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Canal: The canal is 5 feet deep. Fighting in the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls except with spears and crossbows. Creatures in the water must use the Athletics skill to move.

Burial Niches: These niches are built atop one another, five high to the ceiling, and contain only gnawed bones. The front of the niches can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

Wrought-Iron Bridges: The bridges arch as they pass over the canal, and have a 3-foot-high railing on each side. Though creaky and rusted, the bridges are safe. The broken bridge has collapsed and is unusable.

Bone Piles: These squares are difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER C6: FUNERARY CHAPEL

Encounter Level 1 (250 XP)

SETUP

5 vampire spawn fleshrippers (V)

Barthus captured a group of ruffians in the ruins several years ago and transformed them into vampire spawn minions after feasting on them. They are under orders to guard against incursion from the Scepter Tower unless they hear his call from Location C7.

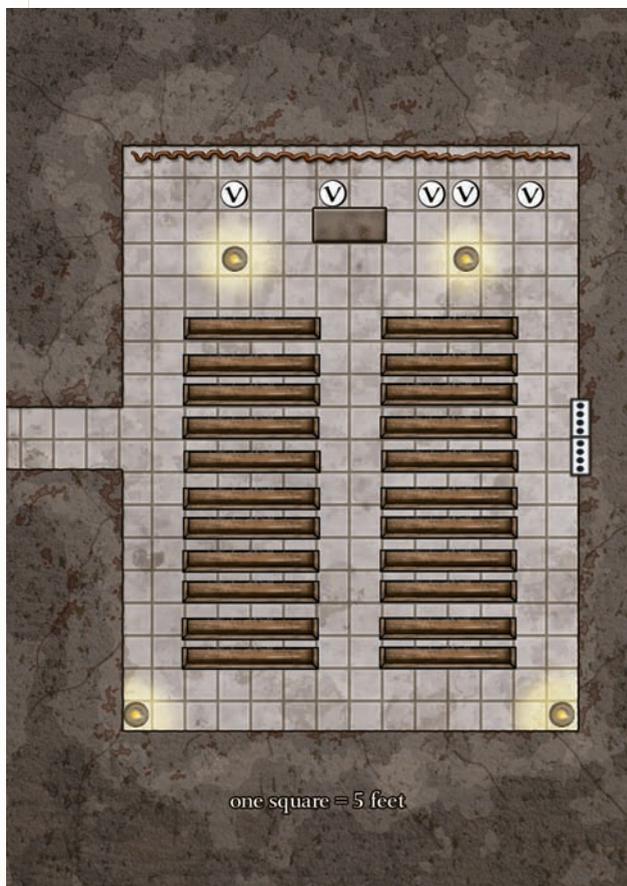
The vampire spawn minions appear to be dead when first seen.

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Dangling from the vaulted stone ceiling, five human corpses in the ragged clothing of vagabonds have been hung by the neck. Their swollen faces and blackened tongues hint at the suffering these wretches endured before the end.

When the PCs approach the bodies, read:

Sightless eyes suddenly focus on you, and with a shriek, all five figures fall to the ground.



one square = 5 feet

5 Vampire Spawn Fleshrippers (V)		Level 5 Minion
Medium natural humanoid (undead)		XP 50 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 17		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic		
Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)		
⚔ Claws (standard, at-will) ♦ Necrotic		
+11 vs. AC; 5 necrotic damage (7 necrotic damage against a bloodied target).		
Destroyed by Sunlight		
A vampire spawn that begins its turn in direct sunlight can take only a single move action on its turn. If it ends the turn in direct sunlight, it burns to ash and is destroyed.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common	
Str 14 (+4)	Dex 16 (+5)	Wis 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 14 (+4)

TACTICS

The vampire spawn loose themselves from their trick nooses with a minor action, allowing them to attack adjacent PCs with surprise. (The drop is less than 10 feet, so they take no falling damage.) The vampire spawn focus on the weakest-looking characters dazed by the fumes of the braziers (see “Features of the Area”), hoping to bloody those targets and thereby increase their damage.

If four of the vampire spawn are destroyed, the last one flees to make a stand with Barthus in Location C7.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The braziers contain glowing coals that cast dim illumination in a 5-square radius.

Fumes: The caustic fumes given off by the braziers fill the area, requiring each PC to make a saving throw each round or become dazed. The vampire spawn ignore this effect.

Pews: These objects provide cover. A DC 5 Athletics check allows a character to jump up on a pew as part of a move. Otherwise, Medium creatures must squeeze to move between them.

Braziers: These objects provide cover. If they are tipped over, they fill 1 adjacent square with burning coals that deal 1d6 fire damage per round to anyone who enters the square. A brazier can be tipped into an occupied adjacent square as a standard action (Dexterity vs. Reflex, 1d6 fire damage). Tipping over a brazier does not prevent it from emitting fumes.

Stone Bier: This oblong stone shelf is 3 feet high, 5 feet wide, and 10 feet long. It provides cover. A DC 5 Athletics check allows a character to jump up on the bier as part of a move. Otherwise, it is difficult terrain.

Curtain: This opaque barrier provides total concealment for creatures that move behind it and stand against the wall.

ENCOUNTER C7: MORTUARY

Encounter Level 6 (1,250 XP)

SETUP

Barthus, vampire priest of Bane (B)

The vampire priest Barthus has chosen this chamber as his inner sanctum. He awaits intruders here atop his makeshift throne.

When the PCs see Barthus, read:

Seated upon a macabre throne is a pale, bearded figure in blackened leather armor. A holy symbol of Bane hangs around his neck, and a vicious-looking mace is clutched in his hand. His black eyes watch you coldly.

TACTICS

If Barthus acts before the PCs do, he moves forward until he's 5 squares from the PCs, uses *dominating gaze* against a PC that looks like a capable melee combatant, then shoots a beam of *forbidding darkness* from his holy symbol. As a free action during his second turn, Barthus lets out a piercing howl that alerts the vampire spawn in Location C6, who come to his aid, reaching the room at the start of round 6.

In the second round and beyond, Barthus's tactics depend on whether his previous attacks have hit and whether some of his powers have recharged. Don't forget to roll for recharges at the start of each of Barthus's turns, because those two attacks are both minor actions and thus an important part of what makes him a solo monster.

If the *dominating gaze* recharges: Use it right away, because it's both Barthus's best attack and the most fun thing he can do. Unless doing so makes no tactical sense whatsoever, try to use the attack on a different PC each time. This adds to the variety of the battle and gives more than one player the vicarious thrill of attacking his buddies. Also, try to avoid dominating PCs who are on the cusp of being bloodied. If possible, Barthus wants to be next to PCs when they become bloodied, because that recharges his *blood drain* power.

When a PC makes the saving throw to end the domination, he's dazed instead due to the aftereffect. Dazed PCs grant Barthus combat advantage, so that's a good time for him to make a blood drain attack.

If Barthus hits with *forbidding darkness*: Attempt a *blood drain* if Barthus has taken more than 5 damage. Otherwise repeat the *forbidding darkness* attack if there's no PC adjacent or make a mace attack if there's a PC within reach.

If more than one PC engages Barthus in melee: Use *desecrated ground* as soon as it's available (assuming that you don't have a *dominating gaze* to hand out). Note

Barthus (B)	Level 6 Controller (Solo)
Medium natural humanoid (undead)	XP 1,250
Initiative +10	Senses Perception +7; darkvision
HP 292; Bloodied 146	
Regeneration 5 (regeneration does not function while Barthus is exposed to direct sunlight)	
AC 24; Fortitude 20, Reflex 17, Will 18	
Immune disease, poison; Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
Saving Throws +5	
Action Points 2	
Speed 7, climb 4 (spider climb)	
⊕ Lifedrinker Mace (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+12 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage. If this attack drops an enemy to 0 hit points, then Barthus gains 5 temporary hit points.	
⊕ Blood Drain (standard, encounter; recharges when an adjacent creature becomes bloodied) ♦ Healing	
Requires combat advantage. +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 8 damage, and the target is weakened (save ends), and Barthus heals 36 hit points.	
⤵ Forbidding Darkness (standard, at-will) ♦ Implement, Necrotic	
Ranged 10; +9 vs. Reflex; 1d10 + 3 necrotic damage, and Barthus gains combat advantage against the target until the end of his next turn.	
⤵ Dominating Gaze (minor; recharge ☹️) ♦ Charm	
Ranged 5; +9 vs. Will; the target is dominated (save ends, with a -2 penalty to the saving throw). <i>Aftereffect:</i> The target is dazed (save ends). Barthus can dominate only one creature at a time.	
⬅️ Desecrated Ground (minor, recharge ☹️) ♦ Necrotic, Zone	
Burst 1; +9 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage, and target is slowed (save ends). Until the end of the encounter, enemies that start their turns within the zone take 1d6 + 3 necrotic damage. Barthus and any allies who are bloodied and start their turns within the zone regain 4 hit points. Barthus can have only one zone of desecrated ground at a time.	
Mist Form (standard, encounter) ♦ Polymorph	
Barthus becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 8, but cannot make attacks. He can remain in mist form for 1 hour or end the effect as a minor action.	
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Netherese
Skills Arcana +8, Diplomacy +13, History +8, Insight +12, Religion +8	
Str 13 (+4)	Dex 15 (+5) Wis 18 (+7)
Con 17 (+6)	Int 10 (+3) Cha 20 (+8)
Equipment +1 lifedrinker mace, leather armor, gold holy symbol of Bane worth 75 gp	

that the slowed effect on the targets is applied only at the moment of attack; PCs who later walk into the zone take only damage.

The vampire spawn arrive in round 6: Barthus moves adjacent to as many of them as possible, then makes a *desecrated ground* attack as soon as it's recharged and at least some of the vampire spawn are bloodied.

Barthus takes significant damage over the course of a single round: Make a *forbidding darkness* attack. If you hit, then move toward that target and spend an action point to make a blood drain. If you miss, then move toward to place yourself adjacent to as many PCs as possible and make a *desecrated ground* attack. *Desecrated ground*

ENCOUNTER C8: HONOR GUARD

Encounter Level 3 (750 XP)

SETUP

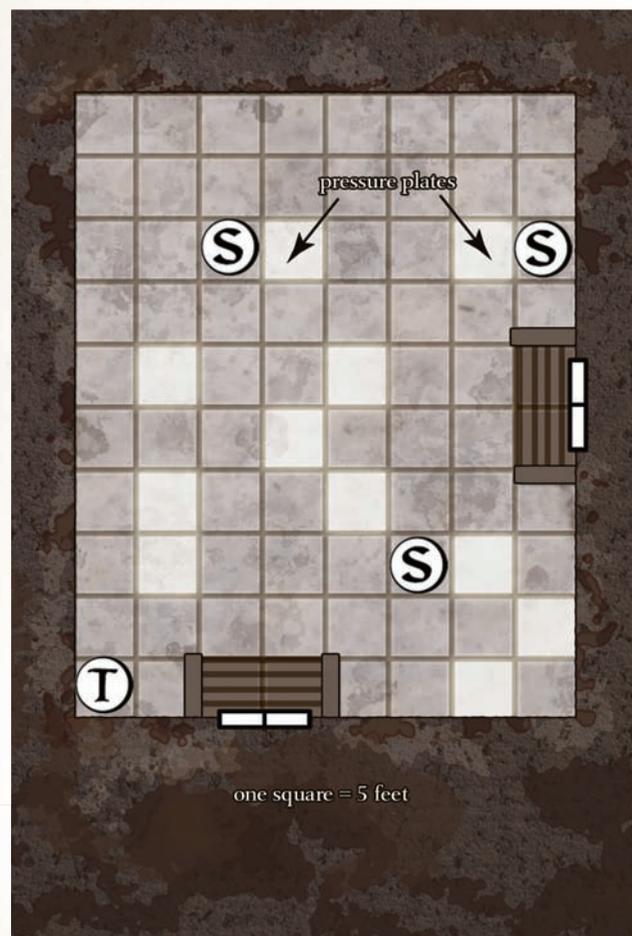
1 troop captain, elite skeleton (T)
3 skeletons (S)

The long-dead honor guard in this chamber has been replaced by a group of skeletal warriors from the ossuary (Location C3). They now lie strewn upon the floor like the rest of the dead, attacking only if the trap is activated. If intruders manage to make it through this room without activating the trap, the undead let them pass freely.

Unless the PCs specifically inform you that they are making Perception checks to search every single square of the room, each character has a 25% chance of triggering the trap each round he or she moves within the chamber.

When the trap is triggered, read:

The floor tile you have stepped on depresses slightly with your weight, a faint click quickly drowned out by the door behind you slamming shut. With a grinding of stone on stone, several iron-grated openings suddenly appear where the walls meet the



ceiling. A roaring sound is heard, followed by a flood of water pouring into the room through these vents.

Just as suddenly, the bones strewn across the floor begin to move of their own accord. Four skeletons rise, rusted longswords raised as they attack.

Troop Captain, Elite Skeleton (T)		Level 3 Elite Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 300
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 90; Bloodied 45		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 17		
Saving Throws +2		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 5		
Action Point 1		
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the troop captain's next turn; see also <i>speed of the dead</i> .		
Skeletal Rebuke (immediate reaction; at-will)		
When hit by a melee attack, make a basic attack.		
Speed of the Dead		
When making an opportunity attack, the troop captain gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword		

3 Skeletons (S)		Level 3 Soldier
Medium natural animate (undead)		XP 150 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3; darkvision	
HP 45; Bloodied 22		
AC 18; Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Immune disease, poison; Resist 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
Speed 5		
⚔ Longsword (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+10 vs. AC; 1d8 + 2 damage, and the target is marked until the end of the skeleton's next turn; see also <i>speed of the dead</i> .		
Speed of the Dead		
When making an opportunity attack, the skeleton gains a +2 bonus to the attack roll and deals 1d6 extra damage.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Str 15 (+3)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 3 (-3)	Cha 3 (-3)
Equipment chainmail, heavy shield, longsword		

TACTICS

The skeletons remain quiescent until the trap is activated. When combat begins, they flank PCs and attempt to keep them away from the doors. The skeletons fight until destroyed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Flood Waters: As water fills this chamber, it begins to impose penalties on those in the area. At waist deep

(approximately 2 feet on a Small creature, 3 feet on a Medium creature), the water becomes difficult terrain for all creatures moving through it.

At higher than waist deep, the water imposes a -2 penalty to attack rolls with weapons other than spears and crossbows. Creatures in the water must use the Athletics skill to move.

AQUATIC COMBAT

The following rules are reprinted from page 183 of the *Player's Handbook*, and page 45 and page 159 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Swim or Tread Water: Part of a move action.

- ◆ **DC:** 10.
- ◆ **Success:** You swim at one-half your speed, or you stay afloat and tread water.
- ◆ **Fail by 4 or Less:** Stay where you are and lose the rest of your move action. You can try again as part of a move action.
- ◆ **Fail by 5 or More:** Sink 1 square and risk suffocation by drowning.
- ◆ **Uses Movement:** Count the number of squares you swim as part of your move.

Aquatic Combat

When fighting underwater, the following modifiers apply:

- ◆ Creatures using powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
- ◆ Characters using weapons from the spear and crossbow weapon groups take no penalties to attack rolls with those weapons while fighting underwater. Characters using any other weapon take a -2 penalty to attack rolls.
- ◆ Creatures move using their swim speed. A creature without a swim speed must use the Athletics skill to swim, as described in the *Player's Handbook*.

Drowning

At the end of three minutes underwater, the PC must succeed on a DC 20 Endurance check, Success buys the character another round. Then the check is repeated at DC 25, then at DC 30, and so on. When a character fails the check, he loses one healing surge and must continue to make checks. A character without healing surges who fails a check takes damage equal to his level.

In strenuous situations such as combat, going without air is much harder. A character holding his breath during underwater combat, for example, must make a DC 20 Endurance check at the end of each round where he takes damage.

A character cannot regain healing surges lost to suffocation until he gains access to air again.

A character with 0 or fewer hit points who continues to suffer from one of these effects keeps taking damage as described above until he dies or is rescued.

When the water has risen over the heads of those in the room, torches, lanterns, and other burning light sources are snuffed out. Powers that have the fire keyword take a -2 penalty to attack rolls. In addition, PCs are in danger of drowning once the water is over their heads (see the sidebar).

Flooding Room Trap: See the statistics block.

Flooding Room Trap

Level 4 Obstacle
XP 175

Several pressure plates are hidden in the floor. When activated, both doors slam shut (if open) and are locked with hidden bars. Grates near the ceiling open, allowing water to pour into the room and fill it. A hidden grate in the floor opens 1 hour later, allowing the water to drain.

Perception

- ◆ DC 16: The character notices a panel covering one of the grates near the ceiling.
- ◆ DC 20: The character notices a pressure plate.
- ◆ DC 24: The character notices the hidden grate in the floor.

Trigger

The trap activates when a character enters one of the squares containing a pressure plate.

Attack

Immediate Reaction

Target: Each creature in the room.

Effect: The doors slam shut and are barred from the outside.

(Characters standing adjacent to a doorway when the doors close can choose which side of the door they end up on.) Eighteen grates open near the ceiling, allowing murky water from the canals to begin pouring into the room. The room fills at the rate of 1 foot every 2 rounds, filling completely in 24 rounds. After 1 hour, a hidden locked grate in the floor opens and allows the water to drain out at a rate of 1 foot every 4 rounds. Those trapped in the room are subject to combat penalties as the room fills, and might drown if they cannot escape.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character adjacent to any pressure plate can delay the trap with a DC 20 Thievery check. The pressure plates become safe to step on while the trap remains delayed.
- ◆ A character adjacent to any pressure plate can disable the trap with a DC 24 Thievery check. The pressure plates are deactivated.
- ◆ A character who makes a successful DC 30 Athletics check as a standard action can break open a barred door, allowing the room to safely drain.
- ◆ A character who makes a successful DC 25 Thievery check can lift a bar on a locked door, allowing it to be opened.
- ◆ A character who makes a successful DC 20 Athletics check as a standard action can break open the hidden drain grate in the floor. This allows the room to drain at the rate described above, slowing the flooding to half its normal rate (1 foot every 4 rounds).
- ◆ A character who makes a successful DC 20 Thievery check can open the hidden drain grate in the floor. This allows the room to drain at the rate described above, slowing the flooding to half its normal rate (1 foot every 4 rounds).

THE SCEPTER TOWER

Like many outposts of the ancient Empire of Netheril, Saharelgard was dedicated to experimentation with and creation of new magic. One area of arcane craft in which the Netherese excelled was the manufacture of magic scepters. These objects eventually became synonymous with the achievements of the empire.

The Scepter Tower was a locus of arcane study and experimentation within Saharelgard. Apprentices under the tutelage of a cadre of master arcanists crafted magic scepters here, from simple devices holding one or two magical effects to legendary artifacts of great power.

When the PCs approach the Scepter Tower from outside, read the following as soon as they obtain a clear view:

A lone tower rises like an ancient guardian above the surrounding ruins. How this structure has remained intact through the toll of uncounted years is unclear. However, the ghostly beacon-glow that emanates from its topmost spire 200 feet above suggests that magic still lingers within its stones.

The tower is a slender structure, solidly built of stone and buttressed on three sides by delicate flying arches. A steep staircase climbs the eastern buttress, passing beneath a lesser spire before reaching the tower's only gate 50 feet above the ground. No windows or other entrances can be seen. A battlement rings the tower more than 100 feet above, studded with flanged spikes.

FEATURES OF THE SCEPTER TOWER

The Scepter Tower has served as a beacon for Saharelgard and Spellgard since the days of Netheril. The magical light at the tip of the spire gives off no heat. Though it is difficult to see during the bright light of day, it casts a like glow across the ruins at night visible from as far as 10 miles away.

Ceilings: Most aboveground ceilings are 15 feet high and consist of exposed oaken beams supporting close-set wooden planks. The ceilings in Locations T10 and T13 are 35 feet high. Location T14 is 15 feet high at the walls and vaults upward to 20 feet near the center.

Underground ceilings and corridors are 10 feet high, consisting of heavy beams holding up thick slabs of bedrock. Location T3 has a 30-foot ceiling of oaken beams and planks.

Floors: Aboveground, flagstone tiles are mortared together over close-set planks, which are in turn supported by thick beams set into the tower's exterior wall. Belowground floors are of flagstone mortared to the bedrock.

Exterior Walls: The outer stone walls of the Scepter Tower vary from 2 to 5 feet in thickness. They have stood since the days of Netheril, and cannot be damaged by any force or magic the PCs possess. The tower is effectively an octagonal interior set within a round cylinder. This structure contributes to the tower's strength at the expense of interior space.

Scaling an exterior wall is possible (Athletics DC 20), but creatures doing so are quickly spotted by the guards on the battlement (Location T12). When the PCs are detected trying to scale the wall, the gnome and the dark creepers begin dropping lead shot on any climbers. See tactical encounter T12 on page 58 for details.

Interior walls within the Scepter Tower are 9 to 12 inches of brick, equivalent to a masonry wall (climb DC 20, break DC 35).

The walls of the subterranean chambers are bare bedrock. They are roughly hewn, sloping inward a few inches at the floor and ceiling.

Doors: Unless otherwise noted, double doors in the underground level are ironbound wooden doors. None are locked, and though their lock mechanisms are intact, the keys have long since been lost. Doors cannot be latched or locked without a key.

The doors within the Scepter Tower are similar, except that each has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The openings revealed by these panels make convenient viewports or arrow slits, providing superior cover to creatures on the opposite side of the door. Each room's description indicates the side of the door where the sliding panel is located.

The vault doors in Locations T4, T9, and T13 are sealed with runic locks from the days of Netheril (see page 44).

Stairs: The Scepter Tower has two kinds of stairs.

The upper and lower reaches of the tower are connected by 5-foot-wide wooden stairs whose supports are mortared into the tower's exterior walls. These stairs zigzag upward, going east-west in the upper part of the tower and north-south near the tower base. They have wooden railings and typically traverse the wall twice every 15 feet (making them shallow by modern standards).

At the Scepter Tower's center, an iron spiral staircase ascends like a spine. The steep 5-foot-wide stairs make one rotation for every 15 feet they climb. On any given level, the northeast square of the staircase is at floor level, the northwest square is downward, and the southeast square is upward.

The central support of the spiral staircase is made of cloudy crystal that glows with the light of a candle, illuminating the staircase and a radius of 2 squares on all sides with dim light.

A creature pushed down a flight of stairs can attempt a saving throw to keep from going over the edge. On a failed saving throw, the creature takes 1d6 damage on the wooden stairs or 1d10 damage on the spiral staircase. The fallen creature comes to a stop halfway down to the next floor on a wooden staircase or down an entire floor on the spiral staircase.

T1. TOWER STORES

These connected chambers served as the primary stores for the Scepter Tower. Anything of value here was destroyed by the passage of time or stolen centuries ago.

As the PCs make their way along the passageway from the catacombs, read:

The humidity of the catacombs has lessened, and the marks of mold and moisture on the walls have disappeared. However, as the passage has grown drier, signs of vermin infestation have become more pervasive. Cobwebs festoon the stone ceiling and the upper walls, growing thicker beyond an intersection ahead.

Tactical Encounter: “T1: Tower Stores” on page 40.

Treasure: The ettercap webspinner has collected 49 cp and 3 pp, which it keeps in a small pouch spun of webbing and attached to its carapace (Perception DC 15 to detect).

T2. GUARD CHAMBER

A former guard post, this chamber now contains detritus and the webs generated by its current inhabitants.

When the PCs open the door, read:

This large web-strewn chamber has a double door to the west flanked by a pair of torches. A large barrel fitted with a tap stands near those doors.

Tactical Encounter: “T2: Guard Chamber” on page 42.

T3. CRAFTERS’ HALL

This chamber was once a workshop where the physical components of scepters were crafted and assembled.

When the door is opened, read:

A wide flight of stairs ascends from the double door to the east. The chamber beyond is lit by a low-burning campfire. A narrow staircase rises along the west wall. A few crates and barrels are stacked along the northwest wall, and worm-eaten wooden tables line the north and south walls.

Tactical Encounter: “T3: Crafters’ Hall” on page 43.

Treasure: The gnomes have stored their payments from Thoran in one of the supply crates (Perception DC 16): 15 gold ingots worth 30 gp each, three pearls worth 150 gp each, and a silver and onyx necklace worth 325 gp.

In addition, a character who makes a DC 20 Perception check finds that one of the gnome arcanists carries three thin pieces of alabaster—a 4-inch-by-8-inch rectangle, a 2-inch-by-4-inch rectangle, and a 1-inch-by-2-inch rectangle. These pieces form part of the key that opens the tower’s runic locks (see page 45).

T4. ARCANE ARMORY

This secure vault was used to store the valuable components used in the creation of Saharelgard’s scepters, as well as magic arms and armor to be used in the tower’s defense if it ever came under attack. Such treasure was removed or stolen when the castle fell.

As the PCs ascend the stairs, read:

A wide hallway circles around a chamber that occupies most of this level of the tower. Intricate double doors stand closed on this chamber’s southern wall. The doors are set with a panel engraved in the shape of a stylized claw, a straight-edged indentation carved within it. Along the opposite wall, another staircase rises.

The door to the central chamber bears a runic lock (see page 45).

Tactical Encounter: “T4: Arcane Armory” on page 44.

Treasure: The open chests have all been looted. If the PCs manage to recover and open the locked chest, they find a *scepter of arcane winter* +2 within. This magic item from the days of Netheril functions as a *wand of shield* +2 and a *wand of icy rays* +2.

T5. DORMITORIES

In the days of Saharelgard, the apprentice crafters of the tower were quartered on this level.

As the PCs ascend the stairs, read:

A wide antechamber opens up at the top of the stairs. Its worn carpet was once burgundy and gold, and the walls bear tattered tapestries showing the floating enclave cities of ancient Netheril. Along the east side of the antechamber, a shimmering curtain of translucent light hangs, filling the air from floor to ceiling. A wide corridor visible through the curtain leads to another set of stairs. Double doors are visible in the corridor’s north and south walls.

Tactical Encounter: “T5: Dormitories” on page 46.

Treasure: Scattered on the table in the northern chamber where the mages played cards are a total of 38 gp and a pair of gold earrings worth 20 gp. The four footlockers in this area contain the personal effects of their owners and valuables totaling 385 gp, 3,090 sp, 57 cp, a jeweled dagger worth 200 gp, and three sunrods.

T6. MAIN DOORS AND RECEPTION HALL

All guests to the Scepter Tower once entered through this chamber, to be received by apprentices or master arcanists (depending upon the visitor’s station).

The PCs are likely to approach this area twice—first from the outside when they initially investigate the tower, then again as they work their way up from the lower level.

If the PCs approach from outside the tower, read the following after they have climbed the steps to the landing:

At the top of the stairs, a wide patio paved in bricks of blue clay opens up before the great doors of the Scepter Tower. These immense slabs of oak are banded with metal and carved with ancient arcane runes. The open patio follows the lines of the buttress, with no railing protecting you from a 50-foot fall to the ground below.

Main Doors: The magic wards that kept this entrance sealed for centuries are now under Thoran's control. Even without them, however, the doors are sturdy and remain barred from within by a massive block of wood requiring a DC 19 Strength check to lift. It takes a DC 40 Strength check to break through the doors and enter the tower by force.

If the PCs approach the tower from the outside, they are attacked by the guards stationed above. See tactical encounter T12 (page 58) for details.

Read the following when the PCs have a view of the inside of the reception hall:

Decorative flagstones cover the floor of this area in patterns of blue and gray. Banners along the walls depict the cities and enclaves that once ruled Netheril. Though these banners must be ancient, their colors remain vibrant and clear.

Tactical Encounter: "T6: Main Doors and Reception Hall" on page 48.

T7. KITCHENS

The inhabitants of the tower have their meals prepared in these ancient kitchens.

As the PCs enter, read:

This hot and muggy chamber is filled with a haze of smoke and noise. A side of boar scorches in a blazing fireplace to the north. Two large tables are strewn with foodstuffs. To the south stands a brick double oven venting steam and smoke, with a pile of boxes, crates, and barrels stacked to one side. In an alcove to the east, a spiral staircase rises.

Tactical Encounter: "T7: Kitchens" on page 49.

T8. FEAST HALL

This ancient feast hall has been restored and furnished with tables and benches of recent construction.

As the PCs ascend the spiral staircase, read:

Three trestle tables are laden with earthenware dishes and food, long benches set up to either side. Chandeliers hanging from the ceiling are set with numerous candles, shedding light throughout the chamber. The spiral staircase near the center of the room continues up and down.

Tactical Encounter: "T8: Feast Hall" on page 50.

T9. MASTER ARCANISTS' QUARTERS

This level once housed master arcanists and the Scepter Lord, who administered the tower under the authority of Lady Saharel.

As the PCs ascend the spiral staircase, read:

The spiral stairs pass through a T-shaped corridor tiled in charcoal gray. Threadbare black curtains hang along the walls,

damping any source of light. To the west and southwest stand two single doors. To the east, a wide alcove holds an elaborate double door. A panel set within it is engraved in the shape of a claw.

Tactical Encounter: "T9: Master Arcanists' Quarters" on page 52.

Treasure: A small chest beneath the bed (Perception DC 16) contains Thoran's operating funds and treasure, consisting of 50 pp, 425 gp, five pearls worth 200 gp each, and a *potion of healing*.

Additionally, a search of Thoran's body (Perception DC 20) reveals a small belt pouch containing eight thin alabaster talismans. These can be assembled to create the key that opens the tower's runic locks (see page 45).

T10. LABORATORY

At the height of Saharelgard, powerful arcanists delved into the deepest workings of the Weave as they experimented with new forms of magic.

As the PCs ascend the spiral stair, read:

The spiral stair ends here. A wooden stairway similar to those seen on the lower floors climbs along the tower's north wall. Between the two sets of stairs stands a circle of eight stone plinths, five of which are topped with beautifully crafted 10-foot-tall alabaster pillars. These pillars glow with a silvery light, showing where the stone floor is etched with sacred circles.

The sacred circles here have been chipped away over the years, losing whatever potency they once had.

Tactical Encounter: "T10: Laboratory" on page 54.

Treasure: A character who makes a DC 16 Perception check while searching the loose rubble of the chipped sacred circles discovers three regularly cut pieces of thin alabaster—a 1-inch-by-4-inch rectangle, a 2-inch-by-8-inch rectangle, and a 4-inch-by-4-inch square. These pieces form part of the key that opens the tower's runic locks (see page 45).

SAVING LADY SAHAREL

Though Thoran's plans for binding Lady Saharel exist only in his mind, he has set down his schemes in the form of rambling notes scrawled onto the stone walls in Location T9. A character who makes a DC 20 Arcana check can glean the broad strokes of Thoran's plot. Additionally, the PCs determine that the threat to Lady Saharel can be ended by clearing the Scepter Tower of Thoran's followers and dispersing the pillars throughout the ruins again. This final act earns the PCs the counsel of the Sorceress of Spellgard.

Quest XP: Award the PCs 625 XP for defeating Thoran and dispersing the alabaster pillars.

T11. GUARDHOUSE

This level of the tower consists of four distinct areas: an armory to the north, a storage area to the west, a guardroom to the south, and a large holding cell to the east.

The holding cell was a well-furnished captain's quarters before being converted by Thoran's forces. Any PCs captured during their foray into the tower are confined here. See "Alternative: Taking the Tower" on page 17 of *Adventure Book One*.

When the PCs can see into the armory, read:

Torches around the chamber reveal rows of armor stands and weapons racks, empty except for a few unstrung shortbows and a dozen spears. Interspersed between these are four chests—three holding black-fletched arrows, the fourth closed.

When the PCs enter the guardroom, read:

A circular table surrounded by a few chairs is all that occupies the southern section of this level.

If the PCs investigate the storage area, read:

This shadowed space is stacked high with boxes of provisions and supplies.

If the PCs enter the holding cell, read:

What appears to have once been private quarters is now a large holding cell. Torchlight from the hallway reveals two hard cots with rough blankets and a few tin dishes.

Tactical Encounter: "T11: Guardhouse" on page 56.

T12. BATTLEMENT

This battlement serves as the main defense point for external assaults against the tower.

When the PCs open one of the doors from Location T11, read:

A wind-whipped parapet surrounds the tower high above the ruins, merlons providing cover against attacks from above and below. Eight spikelike flanges are spaced evenly around the tower, a large barrel sitting beneath each one. The silver light at the tip of the tower's main spire flares high above.

Tactical Encounter: "T12: Battlement" on page 58.

T13. SECURE STOREROOMS

The Scepter Lord stored the tower's most valuable and dangerous items in one of the two chambers on this level of the tower. Having assembled a set of alabaster talismans to open the tower's runic-locked doors, Thoran keeps his more valuable acquisitions here.

As the PCs ascend the stairs, read:

Faded tapestries line the walls of this chamber. Another stairway ascends on the far side of the tower. A pair of side rooms divide this area into four quadrants, each room closed off behind

a heavy door set with engraved panels in the shape of a claw. Torches light three quadrants of the open space, the fourth in shadow. In the light, a layer of bone shards covered with glistening spider webs spreads across the floor. More webs dangle from the walls and the shadows of the ceiling.

Tactical Encounter: "T13: Secure Storerooms" on page 60.

Treasure: Currently stored in the western room are a +1 magic battleaxe, a potion of life whose magic has failed and no longer works, a +1 magic scepter (identical to a +1 magic wand), and +2 darkleaf armor. The eastern room is empty.

T14. STAGING AREA

This area served the upper reaches of the tower, allowing for defense against aerial attack.

As the PCs ascend the stairs, read:

The floor of this bare chamber is littered with bedrolls and trash. The ceiling is 15 feet high at the edges of the room, rising to 20 feet in the middle. A wide column, apparently the base of the tower's great central spire, occupies the middle of the room. A wooden stair wraps around it, ending at a trapdoor in the ceiling.

Tactical Encounter: "T14: Staging Area" on page 62.

T15. ROOFTOP BATTLEMENT

This battlement 180 feet above the ground was the primary lookout point for the Scepter Tower's defensive forces.

When the PCs open the trapdoor, read:

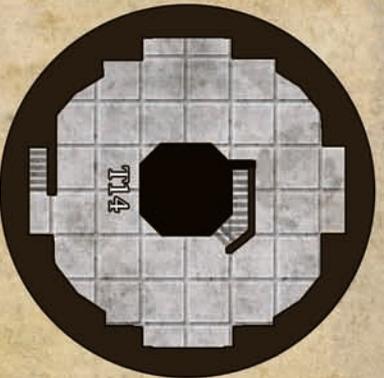
The tower narrows to a 40-foot-wide battlement just below its glowing central spire. A parapet wall surrounds this small platform, providing a wide view of the ruins below and the surrounding countryside.

Tactical Encounter: "T15: Rooftop Battlement" on page 63.

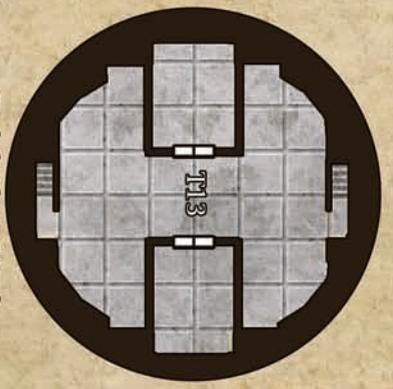
SCCEPTER TOWER



Tenth Floor 180 ft.
above ground level



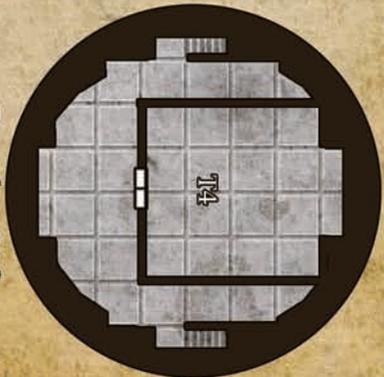
Ninth Floor 160 ft.
above ground level



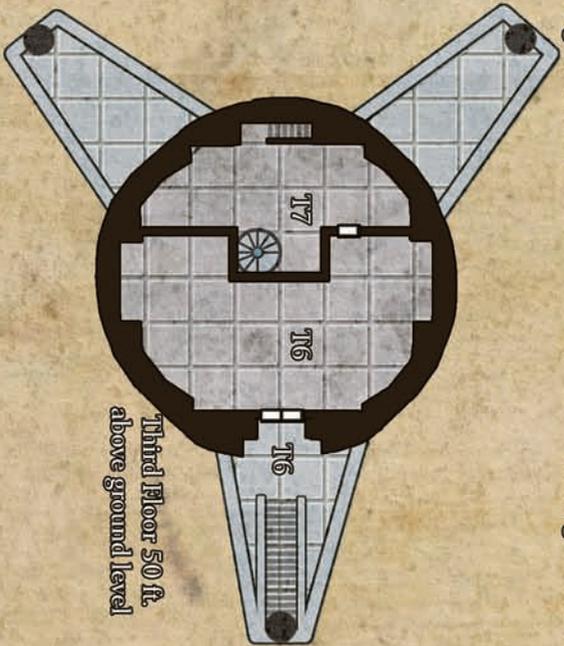
Eighth Floor 145 ft.
above ground level



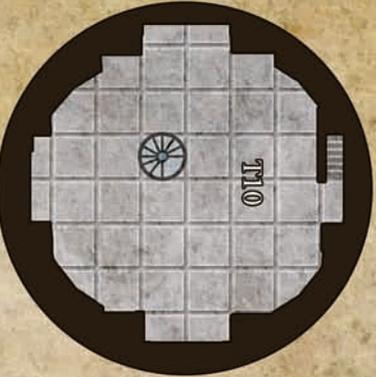
Seventh Floor 130 ft.
above ground level



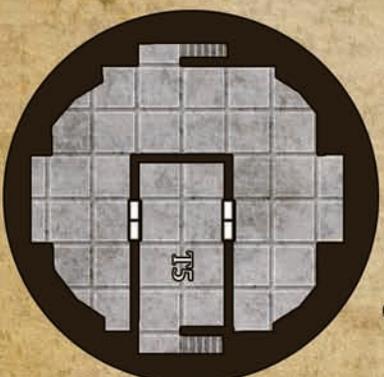
First Floor 20 ft.
above ground level



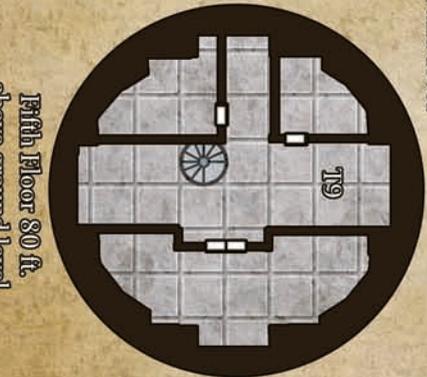
Third Floor 50 ft.
above ground level



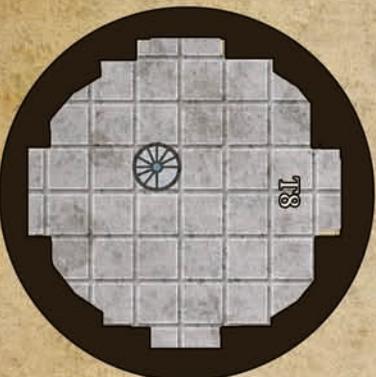
Sixth Floor 95 ft.
above ground level



Second Floor 35 ft.
above ground level



Fifth Floor 80 ft.
above ground level



Fourth Floor 65 ft.
above ground level



One square = 10 feet

ENCOUNTER T1: TOWER STORES

Encounter Level 8 (1,600 XP)

SETUP

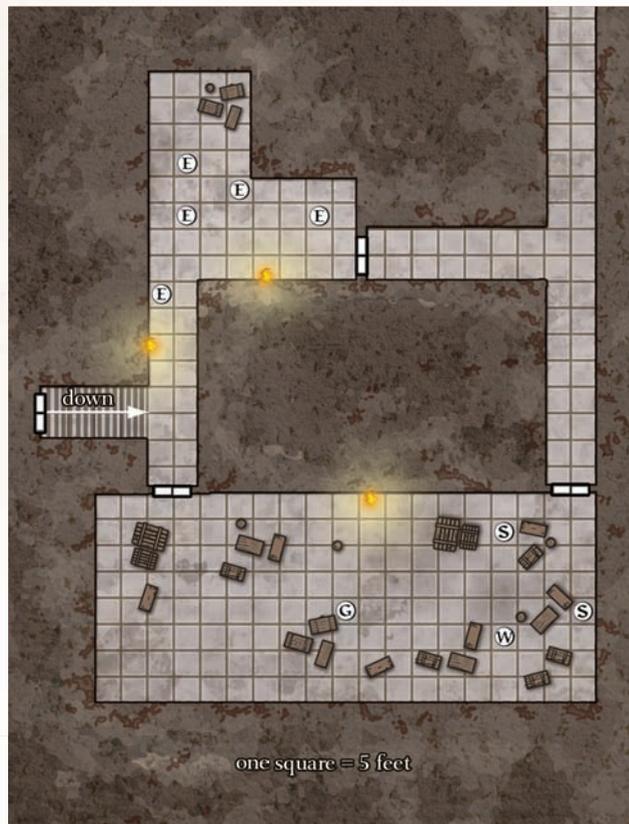
- 1 ettercap webspinner (W)
- 5 ettercap fang guards (E)
- 3 deathjump spiders (S)

Thorán discovered that a group of ettercaps had long ago braved the catacombs to lair in the lower reaches of the tower. By slaying two of their webspinners, he was able to sway the other creatures to his service.

Three of the fang guards are currently feasting on the corpse of a halfling (stripped of all valuables). This was a pilgrim to the ruins kidnapped by the dark creepers a week earlier.

The deathjump spiders detect the approach of adventurers at the southeast door with their tremorsense, putting them and the webspinner on alert. If the PCs take 3 or more rounds to enter the chamber, the webspinner has time to move to the southwest door and rattle it, putting the fang guards on alert.

If the PCs instead approach first through the doorway leading to the west, they find the fang guards distracted.



Ettercap Webspinner (W)		Level 5 Controller
Medium natural humanoid (spider)		XP 200
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +9	
HP 64; Bloodied 32		
AC 18; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 16		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also <i>web walker</i>		
⚔ Longspear (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Reach 2, +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.		
⚔ Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target.		
Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
☞ Web Net (minor 1/round; at-will)		
Ranged 5; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).		
☞ Webbed Terrain (standard; recharge [1/1]) ♦ Zone		
Area burst 2 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is filled with spider webs and is considered difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.		
Web Walker		
An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 5 (-1)	Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, longspear		

5 Ettercap Fang Guards (E)		Level 4 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (spider)		XP 175 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also <i>web walker</i>		
⚔ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).		
⚔ Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Requires combat advantage; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If the attack hits, the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target.		
Secondary Attack: +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of the ettercap's next turn and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
⚔ Web Tangle (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Web Reaper		
The ettercap fang guard gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 2 extra damage against restrained or immobilized creatures.		
Web Walker		
An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 5 (-1)	Cha 11 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe		

3 Deathjump Spiders (S)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (spider)		XP 175 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +9; tremorsense 5	
HP 55; Bloodied 27		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Resist 5 poison		
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb); see also <i>prodigious leap</i>		
⬇ Bite (standard; at-will) ⬆ Poison		
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).		
⬇ Death from Above (standard; at-will) ⬆ Poison		
The deathjump spider leaps at its prey, shifting 6 squares and making a bite attack. On a hit, it deals 1d6 extra damage and also knocks the target prone.		
Prodigious Leap (move; encounter)		
The deathjump spider shifts 10 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Athletics +10 (+20 when jumping), Stealth +11		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 1 (-3)	Cha 8 (+1)

When the PCs first see an ettercap, read:

The barely humanoid creature before you has four arms and two legs. Its bloated body is protected by a hairy, chitinous skin. Two large black eyes sit atop six smaller red eyes, and the creature's flanged mouth opens to reveal wicked fangs within.

When the PCs see a deathjump spider, read:

A human-sized spider rears up from the shadows. Its fangs drip venom, and eight eyes catch the light as it skitters toward you.

TACTICS

If the PCs enter the southern chamber without undue delay, the two closest deathjump spiders attack. The web-spinner conceals itself behind stacked boxes, assisting the spiders with *web net* attacks or using *webbed terrain* to immobilize attackers and hinder movement.

If the fang guards are alerted by the web-spinner or the sounds of battle, one of them moves through the southwest door to reinforce the web-spinner while the rest come around through the corridor to attack the PCs from behind. The fang guards use *web tangle* to immobilize foes. They then follow up with *spider bite* if they can flank for combat advantage, making greataxe attacks otherwise.

If the fang guards are attacked first, the sound of combat alerts the web-spinner. It enters the northern room to fight with them, sending the spiders into the corridor to attack the PCs from behind.

The spiders and fang guards fight to the death, but the web-spinner retreats to Location T2 if half his forces are killed.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Torches in wall sconces provide bright illumination in this area.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from within the rooms, looking out into the corridors.

Piled Boxes: These cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover.

These boxes are the moldering remains of crates stored here before Spellgard's fall. They were preserved by the dry air in the lower level, and have been stacked by the ettercaps to create defensive barriers.

The boxes are full of ancient reagents and supplies from the last days of Saharelgard. Thoran has stripped them of valuables. But just because there's nothing valuable inside them doesn't mean that the PCs can blithely ignore the boxes.

The boxes are made of thin, rotting wood, and they're prone to fall apart or burst at the slightest provocation. Under the following circumstances, the boxes in one square will break open.

- ◆ A creature is pushed, pulled, or slid into a square adjacent to a box.
- ◆ A creature jumps or climbs onto a box.
- ◆ A ranged attack misses and, at your discretion, might reasonably continue beyond its intended target and strike a box.
- ◆ A close or area attack includes a square with boxes in it.

Any square containing a broken box becomes difficult terrain and has additional effects, depending on what was inside it. Roll on the following table.

d%	Contents
01-15	Glass jars of green, goopy slime. It's harmless, but it quivers and seems to spread of its own volition.
16-30	Tiny eggs that spill out in a burst 1. At the end of the following round, tiny lizards hatch from them and run around pell-mell. They all expire at the end of the round after that.
31-45	The box explodes in a gout of brimstone in a burst 1. It makes an attack (+5 vs. Reflex) against each creature in the burst and deals 2d8 fire damage.
46-60	Yellowish-green globules that give off light as a torch float upward, moving up to the ceiling 2 squares in a random direction.
61-75	Blood, somehow still fresh. And it spatters all over the place.
76-90	Gray spores persist in a burst 1 until the end of the next round. Creatures who start their turn in the area or move into it automatically take 5 poison damage.
91-100	Shards of stained glass spray out in a burst 1. Whatever was in there was really ornate, judging from the delicate pieces.

You can, of course, invent your own suitably messy contents.

ENCOUNTER T2: GUARD CHAMBER

Encounter Level 4 (1,025 XP)

SETUP

5 ettercap fang guards (E)
1 gnome arcanist (G)

Under the command of a gnome mercenary, ettercap fang guards control this chamber.

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Five hideous spider-humanoids clutch greataxes as they lurch toward you. A short figure with pointed ears and a tuft of beard grins as he steps out from behind the barrel.

TACTICS

The gnome attacks the closest foes with *scintillating bolts*, using *startling glamor* to shift other PCs closer to the ettercaps. The fang guards use their *web tangle* to immobilize foes before wading into melee. If they can flank for combat advantage, they make use of their *spider bite* attacks.

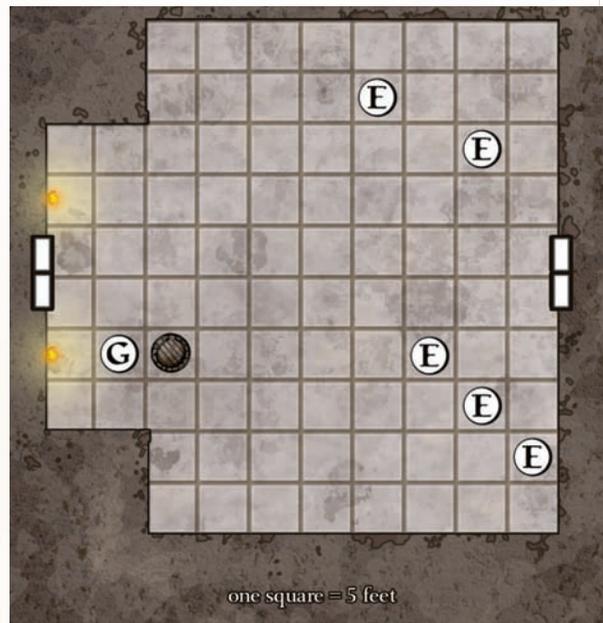
5 Ettercap Fang Guards (E)		Level 4 Soldier
Medium natural humanoid (spider)		XP 175 each
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +3	
HP 56; Bloodied 28		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15		
Resist 10 poison		
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also <i>web walker</i>		
⚔ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).		
⚔ Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
Requires combat advantage; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If the attack hits, the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of the ettercap's next turn and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).		
⚔ Web Tangle (standard; at-will)		
+7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).		
Web Reaper		
The ettercap fang guard gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 2 extra damage against restrained or immobilized creatures.		
Web Walker		
An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages –
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 5 (-1)	Cha 11 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe		

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Torches provide bright light in this area.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside of the chamber.

Gnome Arcanist (G)	Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Small fey humanoid	XP 150
Initiative +1	Senses Perception +1; low-light vision
Aura of Illusion (Illusion) aura 5; the gnome arcanist and all allies in the aura gain concealment and can hide in the aura.	
HP 46; Bloodied 23	
AC 16; Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 13	
Speed 5; see also <i>fey step</i>	
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.	
⚔ Scintillating Bolt (standard; at-will) ♦ Radiant	
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
⚔ Startling Glamor (minor; at-will) ♦ Fear, Illusion	
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square.	
⚔ Illusory Terrain (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ) ♦ Illusion	
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends).	
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome arcanist takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion	
The gnome arcanist turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.	
Fey Step (move; encounter) ♦ Teleportation	
The gnome arcanist teleports 5 squares.	
Reactive Stealth	
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven
Skills Arcana +12, Bluff +8, Insight +6, Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 10 (+1) Wis 11 (+1)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 18 (+5) Cha 15 (+3)
Equipment robes, dagger	



Barrel: This square is considered difficult terrain, and a creature adjacent to the barrel has cover. The barrel contains stale ale.

ENCOUNTER T3: CRAFTERS' HALL

Encounter Level 3 (800 XP)

SETUP

2 gnome arcanists (G)
4 gnome skulks (S)

The bulk of Thoran's gnome mercenaries remain here when off duty. Any combat in Location T2 puts these forces on alert.

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Six small creatures with pointed ears are spread out across the room. Two have the look of spellcasters, and the others wear dark leather.

2 Gnome Arcanists (G)	Level 3 Controller (Leader)
Small fey humanoid	XP 150 each
See the facing page for statistics.	

4 Gnome Skulks (S)	Level 2 Lurker
Small fey humanoid	XP 125 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +2; low-light vision

HP 34; **Bloodied** 17

AC 16; **Fortitude** 14, **Reflex** 14, **Will** 12

Speed 5

⊕ **War Pick** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).

⤵ **Hand Crossbow** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.

Combat Advantage

The gnome skulk deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) ♦ **Illusion**

The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.

Reactive Stealth

If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.

Shadow Skulk

When a gnome skulk makes a melee or a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven

Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9

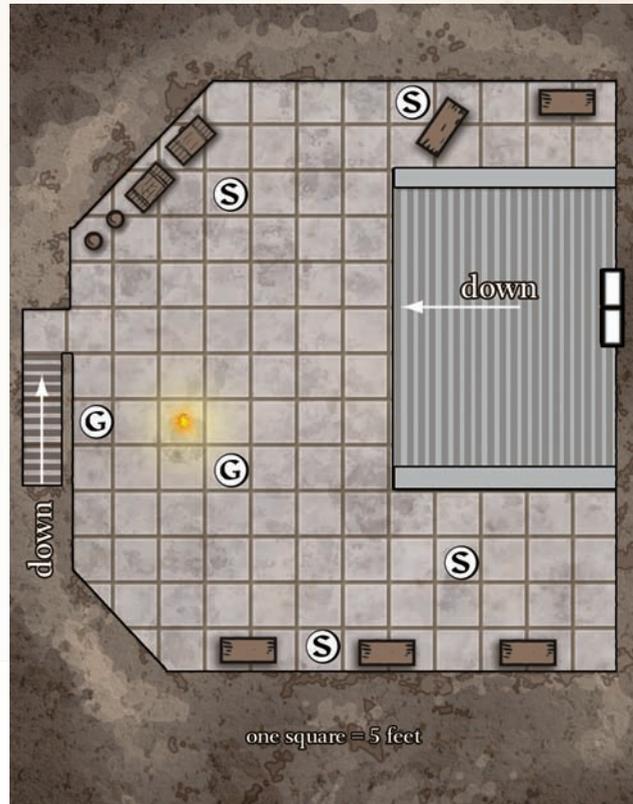
Str 8 (+0) **Dex** 17 (+4) **Wis** 12 (+2)

Con 16 (+4) **Int** 14 (+3) **Cha** 13 (+2)

Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts

TACTICS

The arcanists use *illusory terrain* to keep opponents at bay as they attack with *scintillating bolts*. The skulks hide in the dark corners of the chamber, using *Stealth* to gain combat advantage.



FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: A low-burning campfire sheds light as a torch. The area beyond the illumination is dark.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside of the chamber.

Tables: Although they appear normal, these tables have rotted away to mere shells. Any attempt to hop up on a table causes it to collapse, knocking the character prone. A Small creature can move under one of these tables and gain cover, but they crumble if they are tipped over (becoming difficult terrain in the squares they now occupy but not providing cover).

Crates and Barrels: These cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover.

ENCOUNTER T4: ARCANE ARMORY

Encounter Level 5 (800 XP)

SETUP

The PCs find no opponents when they initially enter this chamber. Rather, the area is haunted by a phantasm—a remnant of the spirit of a mind flayer that died here.

When a creature is foully slain, its spirit is sometimes trapped in an endless reenactment of its demise. A phantasm is a nonsentient entity that has no awareness of its surroundings and no ability to affect them. As such, it cannot threaten or even interact with the PCs. However, if the phantasm's tragic performance is watched closely, the PCs can determine how it died and gain insight into the presence of a deadly trap here.

The phantasm cannot appear again for 24 hours. When it does, it runs through the same grim scene. Thoran recognizes the apparition for what it is, but he has not had time to disable the trap and investigate this area.

When the PCs open the runic-locked door, read:

The walls, floor, and ceiling of this well-lit chamber are covered with thin sheets of hammered lead bolted into place. Seven stone

chests are spaced around the room in a rough semicircle, their lids thrown open, all empty. In the center of the chamber stands another stone chest, this one closed and bearing a large elaborate lock.

When a PC approaches the closed chest, read:

Even as you approach, you are startled to see a creature suddenly appear before the locked chest. The figure is humanoid in form but not in visage. Its slimy skin is a violet hue. Four octopuslike tentacles dangle from its face beneath blank, alien eyes. It wears richly appointed robes of mauve and black, their edges embroidered with arcane symbols.

Give the PCs a chance to react to the sudden appearance of the phantasm, then read:

Though the creature glances over its shoulder, it makes no sign that it notices your presence. It kneels before the chest, its robes obscuring its hands. Suddenly, simultaneous blasts of wind buffet it from both sides, though the air in the room does not stir.

The creature springs to its feet but it is already too late. The fine robes shred as they fall from its body, the violet skin beneath



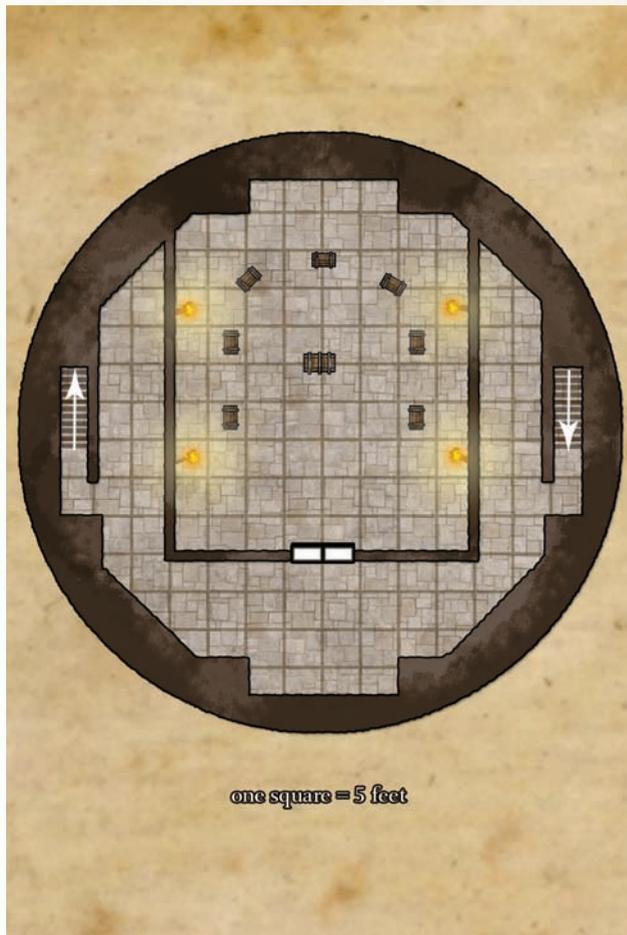
RUNIC LOCKS

In the days of old Saharelgard, the castle's secure chambers were sealed by magic locks that could be opened only with special sets of alabaster talismans. Such doors are found in three areas within the Scepter Tower, their faces sealed by stone plates engraved with a stylized claw. The claw is inset with a straight-edged indentation. The doors open when a complete set of these magic talismans are properly placed within the indentation.

Thoran has an intact set of talismans, and the PCs can assemble their own from pieces found elsewhere in the fortress. The talismans magically stick into place when set anywhere inside the indentation on a door, so the PCs can freely manipulate them until they have figured out how to assemble the required shape.

Location C6 contains a 2-inch-by-2-inch square and a 4-inch-by-4-inch square with a corner cut off (forming an irregular pentagon). Location T3 contains a 4-inch-by-8-inch rectangle, a 2-inch-by-4-inch rectangle, and a 1-inch-by-2-inch rectangle. Location T10 contains a 1-inch-by-4-inch rectangle, a 2-inch-by-8-inch rectangle, and a 4-inch-by-4-inch square.

If the PCs cannot find a complete set of talismans but can deduce which shapes they are missing, Brother Turnagall can make replacements from scraps of magically resonant alabaster in his possession back at the monastery. Each piece takes one day to craft at a cost of 20 gp, but replacement pieces have a 10% chance of being ineffective when tested on a runic lock.



burning away. Layers of twisted muscle and unidentifiable organs are exposed and destroyed in a heartbeat. Though it tries to run, the creature quickly falls as the blast of wind hits it again.

A mass of decaying flesh and bleached bone lies before you, then even that dissolves. In the end, the pain-wracked creature collapses to a shapeless mass, then a dark stain on the stone floor, then nothing.

No sign remains of the strange creature, nor of what might have destroyed it. The room is as empty as it first appeared.

DEVELOPMENT

A DC 15 Dungeoneering check identifies the creature as a mind flayer. The room contains nothing of value except the locked (and trapped) chest.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Everburning torches in wall sconces provide bright illumination in this area.

Doors: The doors of the central chamber bear runic locks (see the sidebar). These doors do not have the usual sliding iron panel and viewport.

Stone Chests: These objects are difficult terrain. The locked chest can be opened with a DC 24 Thievery check.

Caustic Blast Trap: See the statistics block. The nozzles that expel the gas are hidden directly below the sconces that hold the torches.

Caustic Blast Trap Level 10 Elite Blaster 800 XP

Four sections of wall hide nozzles that let loose a blast of caustic gas every few seconds once triggered.

Perception

- ◆ DC 26: The character notices a hidden nozzle. (DC 16 after viewing the phantasm if a DC 16 Intelligence check is made first, or if the PCs specifically look near the sconces.) Additional nozzles can be noticed with a DC 12 check.
- ◆ DC 30: The character notices the trap's connection to the chest in the center of the room. (DC 10 after viewing the phantasm if a DC 12 Intelligence check is made first.)

Trigger

When a character attempts to open or move the chest in the center of the room, the jets make their first attacks as immediate reactions. They then enter the initiative order directly after the creature that triggered the trap, attacking each round. The blasts cease as soon as all creatures have left the room.

Attack

Immediate Reaction or Standard Action Close blast 4

Target: Each creature in blast

Attack: +11 vs. Reflex; creatures in squares that are overlapped by more than one blast are subject to attacks from each of the overlapping blasts.

Hit: 3d8 + 4 acid damage and followup

Followup: +9 vs. Fortitude

Hit: Ongoing 5 acid damage and blinded (save ends)

Miss: Half damage.

Note: The caustic gas damages only organic matter (including living creatures, clothing, ropes, and so on), leaving equipment of stone, metal, and other inorganic substances unharmed. See "Damaging Objects" on page 65 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*.

Countermeasures

- ◆ A character adjacent to a vent can delay one caustic blast for 1 round with a DC 23 Thievery check.
- ◆ A character adjacent to a vent can disable one caustic blast with a DC 26 Thievery check.
- ◆ A character adjacent to the chest can disable all the caustic blasts with a DC 30 Thievery check.
- ◆ A character can tie off and drag the chest from the room and out of the area of the blasts with a DC 20 Strength check. The implement used to drag it must be inorganic (such as a metal chain) to avoid being destroyed.

ENCOUNTER T5: DORMITORIES

Encounter Level 2 (350 XP)

SETUP

2 human mages (M)

Thoran recruited four human mages to accompany him on his expedition to Spellgard. One is currently on duty in Location T7, and the other is leading a patrol through the outer ruins (where he can be encountered as a wandering monster).

The remaining two mages, Palagro and Tevinwerd, are currently off duty in the northern dormitory. If they are not alerted, the mages sit at the table playing cards. If word has reached them of intruders in the tower or if someone passes through the curtain of light (see below), Palagro is watching the corridor through the door's viewport.

The mages remain in their room until confronted or until one of the PCs has passed through the curtain of light. This powerful permanent magical effect endures from the days of Netheril. Though illusory in nature, the magic of the curtain has a profound effect on those who see it.

Placing a hand or a held object through the curtain has no effect other than causing a slight tingling sensation. Inanimate objects sent through are likewise unaffected. However, when a creature passes through the curtain to the other side, all his clothing and equipment appears to vanish, leaving him naked to all observers in the area (including himself).

Only the character who passed through the curtain can detect the illusion at first (a DC 24 Perception check). Until the effect is detected as illusory, none of the creatures witnessing the effect can see or use any of the affected character's equipment. Hand-held items (including weapons and shields) are dropped but continue to remain unseen. However, an affected character continues to gain the benefit of any armor worn. Each time an attack misses that otherwise would have hit the character without the benefit of his armor, he is allowed a DC 20 Perception check to detect the illusion.

When an affected character realizes that his disappearing equipment is an illusion, he can pass that information on to his companions. This knowledge entitles those characters to a DC 20 Perception check to overcome the effect. Characters who succeed on their checks can see and touch the formerly missing equipment as normal.

Palagro and Tevinwerd are familiar with the effect of the curtain and are no longer affected by it. If one of them passes through the curtain in the presence of the PCs, the apparently naked mage's obvious disregard for his condition (including his use of "invisible" equipment) allows a DC 20 Perception check for each affected PC.

The illusion persists for as long as characters remain on this level. It ends when an affected character is halfway up or down the stairs to the level above or below.

When a PC steps through the curtain of light, read:

As you step through the strange field of shimmering light, you feel no ill effects. However, you realize with a sudden shock that your armor, equipment, and clothing have disappeared. You stand there utterly naked even as the door to the north opens, and two human males race into the corridor with quarterstaves raised.

2 Human Mages (M)		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175 each
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +5	
HP 42; Bloodied 21		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔	Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
	+4 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.	
☞	Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force	
	Ranged 20; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 force damage.	
⚡	Dancing Lightning (standard; encounter) ♦ Lightning	
	The mage makes a separate attack against three different targets: ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 lightning damage.	
⚡	Thunder Burst (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder	
	Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).	
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Arcana +11		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 17 (+5)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 18 (+6)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff, wand		

TACTICS

Palagro uses *thunder burst* on any PCs affected by the illusion, while Tevinwerd uses *dancing lightning* on powerful-looking PCs on the opposite side of the curtain. The two then focus *magic missile* attacks on any dazed targets before repeating the tactic in reverse (Palagro using *dancing lightning*, Tevinwerd using *thunder burst*). The mages enter into melee using *magic missile* or their quarterstaves, depending on the target's defenses.

If both mages are bloodied, they use total defense as they retreat to Location T7 and regroup with their comrade there. If one of the mages is slain, the survivor likewise flees to T7.

DEVELOPMENT

Palagro and Tevinwerd's goal is to neutralize any PCs affected by the illusion, even as they attempt to kill or drive off other characters. They hope that affected PCs are inspired to surrender by the apparent loss of their equipment. Captured PCs are bound and gagged, then have

their “missing” gear collected before they are marched to Location T6. (Characters automatically recognize the nature of the illusion when they leave this area.) Prisoners are locked in Location T11 in preparation for interrogation, as described in “Alternative: Taking the Tower” (page 17 of *Adventure Book One*) and tactical encounter T11 (page 56).]

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The curtain of light provides bright illumination in the corridor. An everburning torch in a wall sconce illuminates the northern room. The southern room has no light source.

MAGE TURNCOATS

Most of Thoran’s underlings are unswervingly loyal to him. But the human mages are an exception. They’re merely well-paid mercenaries. They’re loyal as long as both are together, but if the PCs can isolate one mage (probably by killing the other), that mage will subtly mention that he might be induced to switch sides. The PCs can seal that deal with the following skill challenge. Note that each skill component has three DCs. Use the first DC if the PCs have captured either mage, use the second one if the PCs talk to the mages before attacking, and use the third DC if the PCs try to work out an agreement in the middle of a battle or in a standoff after some fighting has occurred.

Level: 3.

Complexity: 2 (requires 6 successes before 3 failures).

Primary Skills: Diplomacy, Bluff, Intimidate, Arcana.

Diplomacy (DC 13/17/21): The PCs make the case that they’re eventually going to drive Thoran from the tower. One PC is designated to attempt the Diplomacy check, but before he or she does so, everyone else in the group attempts a Diplomacy check as well, with each successful check providing the designated PC a +2 bonus.

Bluff (DC 15/20/25): A character attempts to make himself appear more powerful than he actually is.

Intimidate (DC 15/25/20): A character promises future violence. A single failure closes off this skill for everyone in the party.

Arcana (DC 15): The PCs engage in arcane shop-talk to try to establish a rapport with the mage. The characters can earn only one success with this skill.

Success: The PCs earn 750 XP for overcoming this challenge, and the mage fights on the PCs’ behalf (putting himself at risk as little as possible). At the end of every encounter, there’s a 2 in 6 chance that he flees or turns on the PCs (depending on how wounded he is and the PCs are).

Failure: The mage initiates combat unless he’s already helpless, in which case he becomes grimly uncommunicative.



Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside of both chambers, looking out into the hallway.

Tables: A table is tall enough that a Small creature can move under it and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

Chairs: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.

Beds: A bed provides cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to hop up on a bed. A character can make a DC 15 Strength check to tip over a bed, which can then provide superior cover.

Footlockers: These objects are difficult terrain. The footlockers provide cover for targets lying prone behind them.

ENCOUNTER T6: MAIN DOORS AND RECEPTION HALL

Encounter Level 7 (1,225 XP)

SETUP

4 ettercap fang guards (E)
3 dark creepers (D)

Thoran's search parties enter and leave through the main doors. The guards stationed here make this one of the most heavily fortified areas of the tower.

When the PCs enter this area (whether through the main doors or from the kitchen), read:
Spiderlike humanoids with greataxes lurch forward. Around the edges of the room, vague shapes stir in the darkness.

TACTICS

Three ettercaps attack with *web tangles* while the fourth rings a hanging alarm bell. In melee, they flank to use their *spider bite*. The dark creepers move freely among the PCs, using *dark step* to gain combat advantage.

If the alarm is sounded, reinforcements come from Location T7 (in 2 rounds), T8 (4 rounds), T5, and T9 (10 rounds). The occupants of T9 retreat to that area if the battle goes poorly. All other creatures fight to the death.

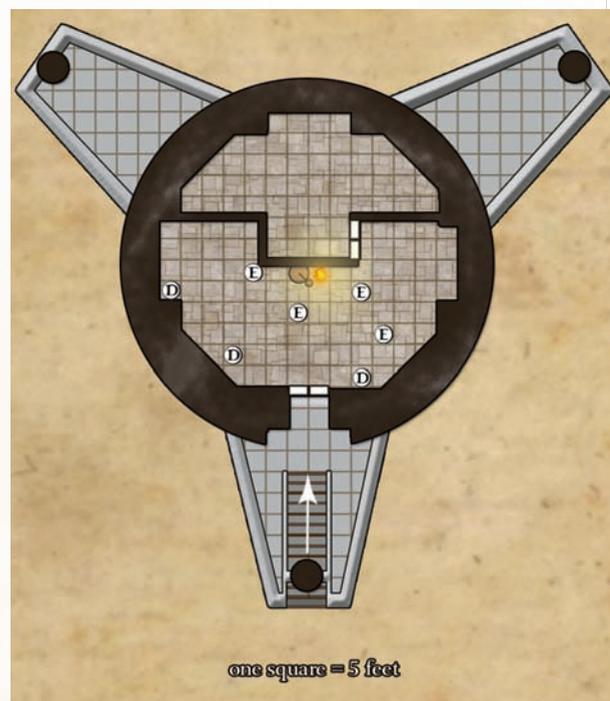
FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: A torch in a wall sconce provides bright illumination in the central part of this area.

3 Dark Creepers (D) Small shadow humanoid	Level 4 Skirmisher XP 175 each
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>	
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Speed 6	
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
↘ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
← Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points) Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage The dark creeper deals an extra 1d6 damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (move; at-will) The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11	
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3) Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, 5 daggers	

4 Ettercap Fang Guards (E) Medium natural humanoid (spider)	Level 4 Soldier XP 175 each
Initiative +6 Senses Perception +3	
HP 56; Bloodied 28	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 16, Will 15	
Resist 10 poison	
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also <i>web walker</i>	
⊕ Greataxe (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).	
⊕ Spider Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison Requires combat advantage; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If the attack hits, the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target. <i>Secondary Attack</i> : +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of the ettercap's next turn and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).	
⊕ Web Tangle (standard; at-will) +7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).	
Web Reaper The ettercap fang guard gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals an extra 2 damage against restrained or immobilized creatures.	
Web Walker An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Stealth +9	
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 14 (+4) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 16 (+5)	Int 5 (-1) Cha 11 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, greataxe	

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside, looking out onto the entry landing and into the kitchen.



ENCOUNTER T7: KITCHENS

Encounter Level 1 (475 XP)

SETUP

- 1 human mage (M)
- 12 kobold minions (K)

A gang of kobold minions cooks for Thoran's followers under the direction of the mage Vargus.

When the PCs first enter the room, read:

A swarm of diminutive reptilian humanoids scurry from table to fireplace and back again. Their scales are a dull red-brown, their doglike heads crowned with small horns. Standing on a table near the center of the room, a robed human shouts commands above the din.

Human Mage (M)		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +4	Senses Perception +5	
HP 42; Bloodied 21		
AC 17; Fortitude 13, Reflex 14, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔ Quarterstaff (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+4 vs. AC; 1d8 damage.		
☞ Magic Missile (standard; at-will) ♦ Force		
Ranged 20; +7 vs. Reflex; 2d4 + 4 force damage.		
☞ Dancing Lightning (standard; encounter) ♦ Lightning		
The mage makes a separate attack against three different targets: ranged 10; +7 vs. Reflex; 1d6 + 4 lightning damage.		
⚡ Thunder Burst (standard; encounter) ♦ Thunder		
Area burst 1 within 10; +7 vs. Fortitude; 1d8 + 4 thunder damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Arcana +11		
Str 10 (+2)	Dex 14 (+4)	Wis 17 (+5)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 18 (+6)	Cha 12 (+3)
Equipment robes, quarterstaff, wand		

12 Kobold Minions (K)		Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid		XP 25 each
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 11; see also trap sense		
Speed 6		
⚔ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
☞ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +5 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
Shifty (minor; at-will)		
The kobold shifts 1 square.		
Trap Sense		
The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Stealth +4, Thievery +4		
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, 3 javelins		

TACTICS

Vargus orders the kobolds to attack before he runs to Location T6 for reinforcements, returning in 2 rounds. The kobolds stay close together, attacking the weakest-looking PCs. When Vargus returns (or if he is prevented from leaving), he tips over a table for cover, then uses *thunder burst* and *dancing lightning* against the closest PCs.

Vargus flees to Location T6 or T5 if he is bloodied, but the kobolds fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The fireplace provides bright illumination in the northern area, and the glow of the oven gives off dim illumination in the southern area.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the other side of the door (Location T6).

Fireplace and Oven: Anyone knocked into or against the fireplace or oven takes 3d6 fire damage per round.

Table: A table is tall enough that a Small creature can move under it and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

Piled Boxes and Barrels: These cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover.



ENCOUNTER T8: FEAST HALL

Encounter Level 5 (1,350 XP)

SETUP

- 2 gnome arcanists (G)
- 3 dark creepers (D)
- 3 ettercap fang guards (E)

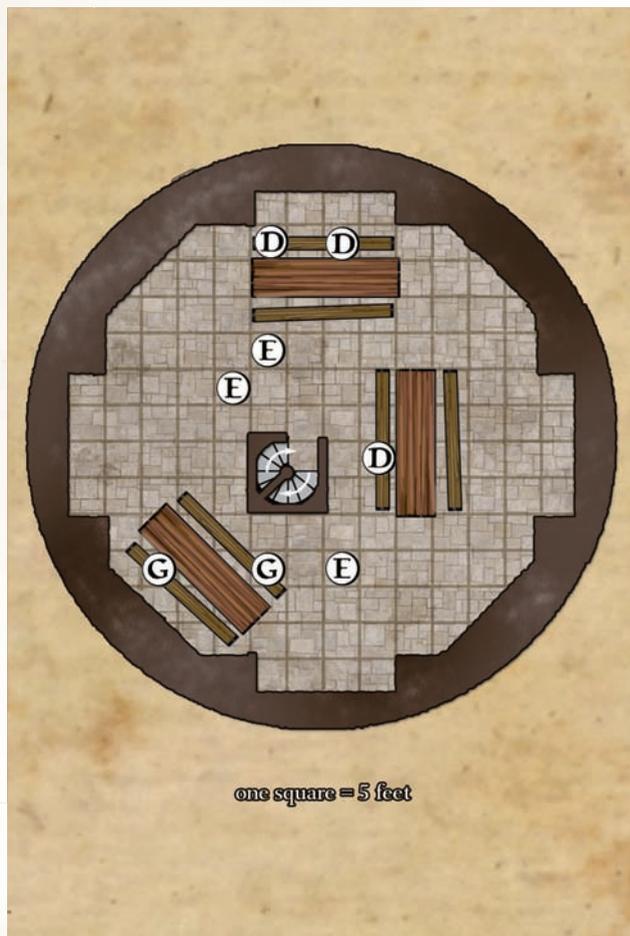
Thoran's humanoid mercenaries take their meals here in shift rotations throughout the day and night. The ettercaps (who dine alone in the lower levels) stand on guard while the others eat.

When the PCs enter the room, read:

Three dark-cloaked, halfling-sized creatures jump up from one of the tables, plates and mugs scattering. At the same time, three spiderlike humanoids bearing greataxes move to attack.

When the PCs see a dark creeper, read:

What you took at first to be a halfling is clearly not. This creature wears black garments veiled in shadow. Its pallid, hairless face is set with wide-staring white eyes, a large nose, and a mouth full of crooked, stained teeth.



The gnome arcanists are seated at a table behind the stair. They are not visible unless a PC looks back in that direction.

If the PCs see the gnome arcanists, read:

Behind the staircase lurk two small humanoids with pointed ears and tufted beards. They wear arcanists' robes, and they sneer as they slip away from their table and spread out behind you.

3 Dark Creepers (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Small shadow humanoid		XP 175 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>		
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
↘ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
⬅ Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage		
The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Dark Step (move; at-will)		
The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11		
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3)	Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, 5 daggers		

TACTICS

When the PCs enter, the fang guards attack the strongest-looking combatants with *web tangle*. They then close in, using their *spider bite* if they can flank for combat advantage. The dark creepers attack from behind the cover of their tables, targeting nearby foes with thrown daggers before moving into combat with their *dark step*.

The gnomes use *illusory terrain* to slow opponents, then use *startling glamor* to assist the dark creepers and fang guards in combat. They focus their *scintillating bolts* on particularly dangerous-looking foes, trusting the ettercaps and the dark creepers to target dazed PCs.

If the battle appears to be going against them, one of the gnome arcanists runs up the stairs while the other runs down. The one going up warns Thoran and brings the inhabitants of Location T9 to the battle in 3 rounds. The other flees to Location T6 and rings the alarm bell. Any surviving guards there join the battle in 4 rounds, followed by the reinforcements that respond to the alarm (see Location T6).

3 Ettercap Fang Guards (E) **Level 4 Soldier**

Medium natural humanoid (spider)

XP 175 each

Initiative +6 **Senses** Perception +3**HP** 56; **Bloodied** 28**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 15**Resist** 10 poison**Speed** 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also *web walker*⚔ **Greataxe** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+9 vs. AC; 1d12 + 5 damage (crit 1d12 + 17).⚔ **Spider Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
Requires combat advantage; +9 vs. AC; 1d6 + 4 damage. If the attack hits, the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target. *Secondary Attack*: +7 vs. Fortitude; the target is stunned until the end of the ettercap's next turn and takes ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).⚔ **Web Tangle** (standard; at-will)
+7 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends).**Web Reaper**
The ettercap fang guard gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls and deals 2 extra damage against restrained or immobilized creatures.**Web Walker**
An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** –**Skills** Stealth +9**Str** 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 13 (+3)**Con** 16 (+5) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 11 (+2)**Equipment** leather armor, greataxe**2 Gnome Arcanists (G)** **Level 3 Controller (Leader)**

Small fey humanoid

XP 150 each

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision**Aura of Illusion (Illusion)** aura 5; the gnome arcanist and all allies in the aura gain concealment and can hide in the aura.**HP** 46; **Bloodied** 23**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13**Speed** 5; see also *fey step*⚔ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.☞ **Scintillating Bolt** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Radiant**
Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).☞ **Startling Glamor** (minor; at-will) ♦ **Fear, Illusion**
Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square.↩ **Illusory Terrain** (standard; recharge ⏏ ⏏ ⏏) ♦ **Illusion**
Close burst 5; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends).**Fade Away** (immediate reaction, when the gnome arcanist takes damage; encounter) ♦ **Illusion**
The gnome arcanist turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.**Fey Step** (move; encounter) ♦ **Teleportation**
The gnome arcanist teleports 5 squares.**Reactive Stealth**
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.**Alignment** Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Arcana +12, Bluff +8, Insight +6, Stealth +8**Str** 10 (+1) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+1)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+3)**Equipment** robes, dagger

All the creatures here are loyal to Thoran. They fight to the death.

PORTRAYING THE MONSTERS

Depending on your players' tolerance for the sublime, you can portray the gnome arcanists as a strange mix of the light-hearted and the deadly. They don't move around the battlefield so much as dance, and they speak only in rhymes as they fight. For example:

- ♦ (When shooting a *scintillating bolt*) "Step right up! Not a moment to lose/But you'll lose yourself in a thousand hues!"
- ♦ (When making a *startling glamor*) "Keep this in mind . . . /A horror behind!"
- ♦ (When casting *illusory terrain*) "Your friends will pay a painful cost/While bound in magic, you are lost!"
- ♦ (When using *fey step*) "Foes beware!/I'm over there!"
- ♦ (When using *fade away*) "You have cut me to the heart/So with a wink, I must depart!"

Feel free to add your own verses. But you're the best judge of what works for your table. If poetry-spouting gnomes won't work for you and your friends, then for heaven's sake don't do it.

The dark creepers, on the other hand, are bitter, grim antagonists. They hurl curses and imprecations at the PCs but otherwise don't communicate.

The ettercap fang guards only hiss and grunt.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Chandeliers festooned with candles provide dim illumination throughout this area.

Tables: These tables are tall enough that a Small creature can move under one and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. Because these tables are large, it takes a standard action and a DC 10 Strength check to tip one over. A tipped table provides cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

Benches: These objects are difficult terrain.

ENCOUNTER T9: MASTER ARCANISTS' QUARTERS

Encounter Level 6 (1,375 XP)

SETUP

Thoran, shadar-kai warrior (T)

1 dark stalker (S)

3 dark creepers (D)

Thoran has converted this level of the tower and its luxurious rooms into his command post. The area is home to his dark creeper bodyguards, as well as a dark stalker who has allied with Thoran. This creature rules over all the dark ones now serving the shadar-kai's cause.

The dark creeper guards stand concealed in the unlit hallway, and they do not reveal their positions unless detected. They attack (with surprise if possible) as soon as two or more PCs are up the stairs.

Thoran and the dark stalker are ordinarily in their rooms, emerging when melee begins (see below).

When the dark creepers attack, read:

A diminutive shape suddenly unfurls from the darkness, shadow cloaking it as it draws a dagger and attacks.

When the PCs first see the dark stalker, read:

A tall, cloaked figure emerges from the shadows. Its face is pearly white, its eyes blank. In its three-fingered hands, the creature grips a scimitar of black steel.

When the PCs first see Thoran, read:

The darkness parts to reveal a humanoid figure shrouded in billowing black robes, dark chainmail visible beneath them. His head is shaven except for a single gray braid extending from the top of his skull. The wicked-looking blade he wields burns with black fire.

TACTICS

The dark creepers let out a shrill whistle when they first attack. This noise alerts Thoran and the dark stalker, who emerge from their rooms 2 rounds later. The dark creepers stay in constant motion, using *dark step* to maintain combat advantage.

The dark stalker first uses *invisibility*, moving out into the corridor and attacking. It subsequently uses its *dark fog* to hide its movements and gain combat advantage.

Thoran opens his door a crack to assess the melee before using *shadow jaunt* to obtain the best position. He attacks the closest PCs with *double attack*, reserving *cage of gloom* for a leader if possible.

The dark creepers fight to the death to defend their masters. Thoran and the dark stalker retreat to Location T8 or T14 if both are bloodied (or if the other is killed), rallying their surviving followers.

Thoran, Shadar-Kai Warrior (T)		Level 8 Soldier
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 350
Initiative +11	Senses Perception +6; low-light vision	
HP 86; Bloodied 43	AC 24; Fortitude 19, Reflex 20, Will 17	
Speed 5; see also <i>shadow jaunt</i>		
⬇️ Katar (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon	+13 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage (crit 1d6 + 9).	
⬇️ Double Attack (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon	Thoran makes two katar attacks.	
⬇️ Cage of Gloom (standard; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞)	Thoran makes a katar attack. If the attack hits, he makes a secondary attack as strands of shadow coil around the target. Secondary Attack: +11 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).	
Shadow Jaunt (move; encounter) ⬆️ Teleportation	Thoran teleports 3 squares and becomes insubstantial until the start of his next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Acrobatics +15, Stealth +15		
Str 17 (+7)	Dex 20 (+9)	Wis 14 (+6)
Con 14 (+6)	Int 12 (+5)	Cha 11 (+4)
Equipment chainmail, 2 katars, pouch with alabaster talismans		

Dark Stalker (S)		Level 10 Lurker
Small shadow humanoid		XP 500
Initiative +14	Senses Perception +7; darkvision	
HP 81; Bloodied 40; see also <i>killing dark</i>	AC 24 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 21, Reflex 24, Will 23	
Speed 6		
⬇️ Scimitar (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon	+15 vs. AC; 1d8 + 5 damage (crit 1d8 + 13).	
➤ Dagger (standard; at-will) ⬆️ Weapon	Ranged 5/10; +15 vs. AC; 1d4 + 5 damage.	
☼ Dark Fog (standard; sustain minor; encounter) ⬆️ Zone	Area burst 4 within 10; creates a zone of darkness that blocks line of sight (creatures with darkvision ignore this effect).	
⬅️ Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark stalker explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage		
The dark stalker deals 2d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Dark Step (move; at-will)		
The dark stalker moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.		
Invisibility (minor; recharge ☞ ☞ ☞ ☞) ⬆️ Illusion	The dark stalker becomes invisible until the end of its next turn.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +15, Thievery +15		
Str 12 (+6)	Dex 21 (+10)	Wis 14 (+7)
Con 15 (+7)	Int 14 (+7)	Cha 19 (+9)
Equipment black garments, scimitar, 4 daggers		

3 Dark Creepers (D)

Small shadow humanoid

Level 4 Skirmisher

XP 175 each

Initiative +8**Senses** Perception +4; darkvision**HP** 54; **Bloodied** 27; see also *killing dark***AC** 18 (see also *dark step*); **Fortitude** 15, **Reflex** 17, **Will** 15**Speed** 6⚔ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.

↘ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**

Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.

⬅ **Killing Dark** (when reduced to 0 hit points)

Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends).

When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.

Combat Advantage

The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.

Dark Step (move; at-will)

The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.

Alignment Unaligned**Languages** Common**Skills** Stealth +11, Thievery +11**Str** 11 (+2)**Dex** 18 (+6)**Wis** 14 (+4)**Con** 14 (+4)**Int** 13 (+3)**Cha** 13 (+3)**Equipment** black garments, 5 daggers

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The corridor and the western rooms are dark. A candelabrum near the center of the east room provides dim illumination in a 2-square radius around its location.

Western Rooms: Though the western rooms have been thoroughly looted of valuables, they remain sparsely furnished with comfortable beds and antique desks. Lingering magic has protected these furnishings from the passage of time. The dark stalker has claimed the northwest chamber as its own. The dark creepers take turns sleeping on the floor of the southwest room.

Eastern Room: This area has a curtained-off section holding a large and elaborate bed covered in ermine furs (where Thoran sleeps), a table and chairs, and a large work area that once belonged to the Scepter Lord.

Doors: Each of the doors leading to the western rooms has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside, looking out into the hallway.

The doors to the eastern room bear runic locks (see page 44). These doors do not have the sliding iron panels and viewports of the western doors.

Curtains: These opaque barriers provide total concealment for creatures that move behind one and stand against the wall.

Tables: These tables are tall enough that a Small creature can move under one and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.



Chairs: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.

Beds: A bed provides cover. It costs 2 squares of movement to hop up on a bed. A character can make a DC 15 Strength check to tip over a bed, which can then provide superior cover.

ENCOUNTER T10: LABORATORY

Encounter Level 3 (1,000 XP)

SETUP

1 bound oni night haunter (O)

In preparation for his plans to control Lady Saharel, Thoran used the partial array of alabaster pillars to summon and bind an oni night haunter to his control. He has confined the creature to this chamber and tasked it with guarding the area against any intrusion.

The surge of arcane energy focused by the pillars has made this creature more powerful than normal (a fact that Thoran remains unaware of). When Thoran has completed his plans to bind the Lady Saharel, the oni intends to slay the shadar-kai, gaining control of Saharel's spirit for its own ends.

The oni hides in the darkness against the southern wall. As the PCs ascend the stairs, it uses *deceptive veil* to disguise itself as an elderly human male prisoner (Bluff +14), hoping to lure characters into the range of its *hypnotic breath*. To avoid alerting the players to imminent combat, do not place a miniature at the oni's location until it drops the disguise and takes on its normal form.

When the PCs first approach the pillars, read:

From the darkness to the south, a frail voice cries out: "No more, please! I know nothing, I tell you!" In the shadows, an elderly human male in tattered clothing lies on the floor, his hands bound behind him. When he sees you, he stares in astonishment. "You are not the dark ones, Pelor be praised! Help me, friends!"

If the characters are reluctant to approach the oni, it introduces itself as Hector, a seeker captured by dark creepers in the ruins a week ago. "Hector" tells the characters that

THE ALABASTER PILLARS

Each slender pillar is 10 feet tall and weighs 350 pounds. The PCs might have already found one pillar that was missed by Thoran in Location C3 of the catacombs.

Powerful arcane energy lingers in this ancient laboratory. Thoran's dark research has enabled him to focus this energy with the alabaster pillars located throughout the ruins, eventually allowing him to bind and command the spirit of Lady Saharel. The pillars are nonmagical, merely resonating with the arcane power found in this area. They no longer glow if removed from the chamber.

Thoran's nefarious plans for the pillars are stored entirely in his alien mind. Unless you wish to connect their potential power to the specifics of your campaign, the pillars are of no use to the PCs after they are dispersed back into the ruins.

he has been tortured by an evil shadow creature named Thoran, who seeks the locations of more alabaster pillars in the ruins. The oni continues this ruse until at least half the PCs are within 5 squares, or until it is detected.

When the oni's true form is revealed, read:

A gaunt, ogrelike creature stands before you, muscles twisted and gnarled beneath its green skin. Its hair is a shocking yellow, its teeth and nails as black as pitch. It swings a heavy iron mace set with spikes, a cloud of noxious fumes pouring forth from its mouth as it attacks.

Bound Oni Night Haunter (O)		Level 10 Elite Controller	
Large natural humanoid		XP 1,000	
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +6; darkvision		
HP 212; Bloodied 106; see also <i>hypnotic breath</i>			
AC 26; Fortitude 25, Reflex 23, Will 24			
Saving Throws +2			
Speed 8, fly 8 (clumsy)			
Action Point 1			
⊕ Morningstar (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon			
Reach 2; +15 vs. AC; 1d12 + 6 damage, and a Medium or smaller target is pushed 1 square.			
← Hypnotic Breath (standard; recharges when first bloodied) ♦ Charm, Sleep			
Close blast 5; +13 vs. Will; the target is dazed (save ends). <i>First Failed Save:</i> The target falls unconscious (no save).			
⊕ Devour Soul (standard; at-will) ♦ Healing, Psychic			
Affects an unconscious target only; +15 vs. AC; 2d10 + 5 psychic damage, and the oni night haunter regains 10 hit points. This attack does not wake the unconscious target.			
Deceptive Veil (minor; at-will) ♦ Illusion			
The oni night haunter can disguise itself to appear as an elderly Medium or Large humanoid. A successful Insight check (opposed by the oni's Bluff check) pierces the disguise.			
Gaseous Form (standard; sustain standard; encounter) ♦ Polymorph			
The oni night haunter becomes insubstantial and gains a fly speed of 8 (hover). It can enter and move through a porous obstacle that would otherwise prevent movement (such as a door or a cracked window). It remains in this form as long as it sustains the power.			
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Giant		
Skills Bluff +14, Insight +11, Stealth +13, Thievery +13			
Str 20 (+10)	Dex 16 (+8)	Wis 12 (+6)	
Con 18 (+9)	Int 12 (+6)	Cha 18 (+9)	
Equipment morningstar			

TACTICS

Because it is magically tasked with guarding this chamber, the normally reclusive oni is compelled to destroy any creatures entering the area other than Thoran or his followers. It uses *hypnotic breath* against as many foes as possible, targeting *devour soul* attacks against any PCs who fall unconscious as a result. If necessary, it spends its action point to take an additional move or uses *gaseous form* to reach fallen PCs.

The oni uses its morningstar against PCs who resist falling unconscious, targeting dazed opponents to gain combat advantage.

Unable to leave this chamber, the oni fights to the death. However, it does not warn Thoran of the intrusion, hoping that if it dies at the hands of the PCs, they in turn will slay the shadar-kai.

PORTRAYING THE ONI

If the PCs engage “Hector” in conversation without approaching him, make a Bluff check for the oni (+14) and compare it against the PCs’ passive Insight checks. And if players ask to make active Insight checks for their PCs, by all means let them.

The most entertaining outcome is for “Hector” to tell a couple of whoppers mixed with truth, then either get found out by suspicious PCs or drop the disguise of his own volition. In other words, it’s probably more fun if he

STUDYING THE PLINTHS

A character who is strong in the Arcana, History, or Religion skill might learn something useful from examining the plinths. By this point in the adventure, the PCs have probably already found and examined at least one of the alabaster pillars. But the plinths are far more informative for the PCs. Thoran painted mystical sigils all over the plinths with pillars atop them, and he has marked in chalk where the sigils will go once he finds pillars for the remaining plinths.

Religion (DC 15): Some of the symbology refers to spirits. There might be a connection to transcendence, too, but that involves some guesswork about some of the more obscure symbols.

History (DC 15): The brushwork in the painted sigils is reminiscent of ancient Netheril; there’s a specific set of vertical back-and-forth strokes that’s common in artwork from the period.

History (DC 25): The brush strokes aren’t quite right, however. They look more like the work of someone trying to mimic the style of master Netherese sigilists, rather than something from old Netheril itself.

Arcana (DC 10): The chalk symbols are clearly incomplete—they’re basically blank spots where the real symbols will go later. And taken together, it looks like the whole pillar-and-plinth apparatus is designed for the ritual binding of a specific spirit.

Arcana (DC 20): The binding would clearly be a long-term or permanent condition, and the ritualist would have complete control of the bound spirit. And the sigils are designed for an immensely powerful spirit with a historical connection to Spellgard itself. Lady Saharel, in other words.

Arcana (DC 30): For the ritual to work, the ritual leader is going to need an inherent connection to the Shadowfell—the sort of connection that only a native would have.



ENCOUNTER T10: LABORATORY

isn’t completely convincing. If “Hector” is just a little too eager for the PCs to come over and untie him, then you’ll get some good social interaction, then a good fight, then some important exposition when the PCs examine the plinths.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The glowing pillars atop five of the plinths give off dim illumination in a 4-square radius around each location.

Stone Plinths and Pillars: The stone plinths are 3 feet high, the pillars rising 10 feet above that. The plinths and pillars provide cover. An individual can leap atop one of the unoccupied plinths with a DC 5 Athletics check. An alabaster pillar and its plinth can be climbed with a DC 10 Athletics check.

ENCOUNTER TII: GUARDHOUSE

Encounter Level 3 (1,000 XP)

SETUP

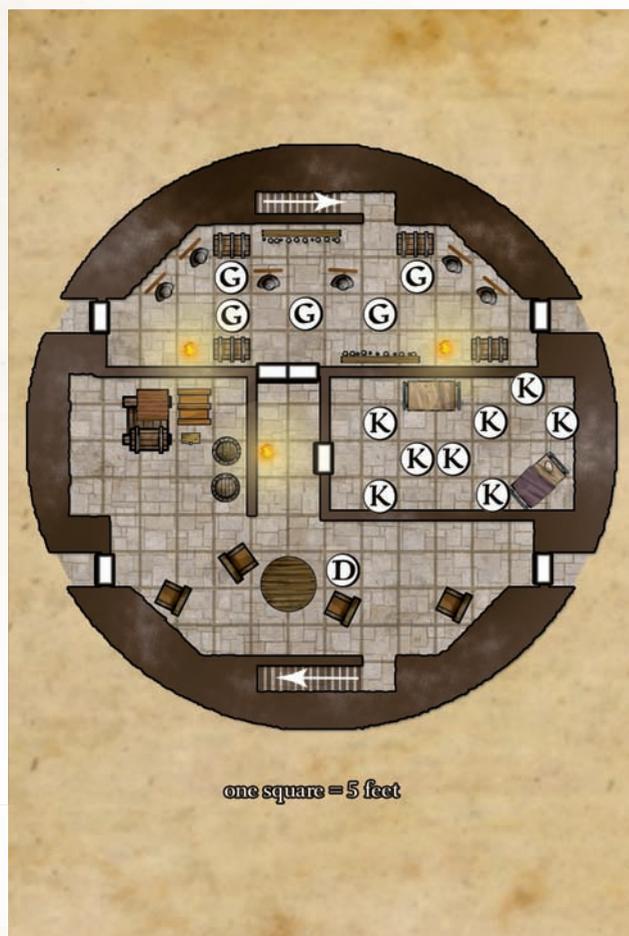
1 dark creeper (D)
5 gnome skulls (G)
8 kobold minions (K)

A lone dark creeper in the guardroom oversees this level while a squad of gnome skulls trains in the armory.

If the PCs enter this area on their own, the holding cell is currently home to a group of kobold minions recently captured in the ruins. The dark creeper is finishing off a flagon of wine, and the gnomes are distracted as they practice. All take a -2 penalty to Perception checks.

If the PCs have been captured and placed in the holding cell, the kobolds are moved temporarily into the storage area, guarded by two dark creepers. The dark creeper and the gnomes are all on alert.

Captured characters are held in the eastern cell with the bar in place (see “Features of the Area”). Whatever foes captured the PCs leave this level after they are locked up.



When the PCs have been put in the cell, read:

A bar slams into place on the other side of the door as a voice calls out, “Get Thoran! He’ll want to deal with this lot!” As your eyes grow accustomed to the dim light, you see the shadow of the bar backlit by torchlight, a narrow gap visible along the doorframe.

If the PCs have not been captured, or if they can free themselves from the cell without making noise, they can move freely throughout this area until they are spotted.

If the gnomes in the armory see the PCs, read:

Five small creatures with pointed ears and swept-back hair are engaged in a military drill, war picks clashing together as they feint and parry. Then one of them spots you, and with a shout, all five lower their weapons and advance.

If the PCs are seen in the guardroom, read:

Another of the strange small creatures you fought previously sits at the table, noisily slurping at a wineskin. When he sees you, he lurches to his feet, his teeth bared in a snarl. A cloud of shadow shifts around him as he attacks.

The kobold minions come into play only after a fight breaks out. The kobolds use the distraction of combat to cover their own escape (either from the cell or the storage area).

When the kobolds appear, read:

A gang of short reptilian humanoids swarms into the field of combat, spears flailing.

Dark Creeper (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Small shadow humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>		
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>); Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.		
↘ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 5/10; +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.		
⚡ Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)		
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.		
Combat Advantage		
The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Dark Step (move; at-will)		
The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11		
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3)	Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, 5 daggers		

5 Gnome Skulks (G)		Level 2 Lurker
Small fey humanoid		
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +2; low-light vision	
HP 34; Bloodied 17		
AC 16; Fortitude 14, Reflex 14, Will 12		
Speed 5		
⚔ War Pick (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+7 vs. AC; 1d8 + 3 damage (crit 1d8 + 11).		
↘ Hand Crossbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +7 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage.		
Combat Advantage		
The gnome skulk deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome skulk takes damage; encounter) ♦ Illusion		
The gnome skulk turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.		
Reactive Stealth		
If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.		
Shadow Skulk		
When a gnome skulk makes a melee or a ranged attack from hiding and misses, it is still considered to be hiding.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common, Elven	
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +11, Thievery +9		
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 12 (+2)
Con 16 (+4)	Int 14 (+3)	Cha 13 (+2)
Equipment leather armor, war pick, hand crossbow with 20 bolts		

8 Kobold Minions (K)		Level 1 Minion
Small natural humanoid		
Initiative +3	Senses Perception +1; darkvision	
HP 1; a missed attack never damages a minion.		
AC 15; Fortitude 11, Reflex 13, Will 11; see also <i>trap sense</i>		
Speed 6		
⚔ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
+5 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
↘ Javelin (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon		
Ranged 10/20; +5 vs. AC; 4 damage.		
Shifty (minor; at-will)		
The kobold shifts 1 square.		
Trap Sense		
The kobold gains a +2 bonus to all defenses against traps.		
Alignment Evil	Languages Common, Draconic	
Skills Stealth +4, Thievery +4		
Str 8 (-1)	Dex 16 (+3)	Wis 12 (+1)
Con 12 (+1)	Int 9 (-1)	Cha 10 (+0)
Equipment hide armor, light shield, 3 javelins		

TACTICS

The gnome skulks attempt to lead or drive the PCs out of the well-lit armory, so they can gain concealment in dim light, and they try to use Stealth to attack with combat advantage.

The dark creeper distrusts the gnome mercenaries and fights on its own. It moves from foe to foe to prevent flanking and to make use of *dark step*.

After grabbing their spears from the armory, the kobold minions do not engage the PCs directly. Instead, they block movement, make opportunity attacks, and pro-

vide all combatants cover against ranged attacks as they scramble about trying to avoid the fight.

If bloodied, the dark creeper retreats to Location T12, returning with the guards stationed there in 3 rounds. If four gnomes are killed, the survivor retreats to Location T3, leaving the tower if the gnomes there have been routed.

If the dark creeper and the gnomes are eliminated, the kobold minions pledge their mercenary services to the PCs (an offer of little worth). If allowed to, they retreat downstairs and flee the tower.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Torches in wall sconces provide bright illumination in the north and south rooms. Indirect torchlight provides dim illumination in the east room and the west room.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels on the double doors open from the south, looking into the armory. The panel on the cell door opens from the outside, looking in. The panels on the exterior doors open from the inside, looking out onto the battlement.

Table: This table is tall enough that a Small creature can move under it and gain cover from doing so. Hopping onto a table costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a table, which can then provide cover to a standing creature or superior cover to a prone creature.

Chairs: Chairs do not limit or restrict movement through a square. A chair is light enough to be picked up and used as an improvised weapon.

Cots: A cot provides cover for someone adjacent to it. Hopping onto a cot costs 1 extra square of movement. A character can use a standard action to tip over a cot, which can then grant superior cover to a prone creature.

Chests: The three open chests contain 200 arrows each, for use by the dark creepers stationed on the battlement. The closed chest is empty unless one or more PCs has been captured, in which case it holds their weapons and gear.

The chests are difficult terrain.

Weapons Racks and Armor Stands: The shortbows here are used by the dark creepers on the battlement. The spears are the weapons of the recently captured kobold minions. The racks and stands provide cover.

Piled Boxes: These cluttered squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover. The boxes hold foodstuffs and supplies for the tower guards.

Cell Door: The cell door has had a bar added to the outside. The gap between the door and the frame is wide enough that a dagger or other slender object can be used to easily lift the bar. However, doing so without making a DC 16 Thievery check drops the bar loudly to the floor, alerting anyone in the guardroom or the storage area.

ENCOUNTER T12: BATTLEMENT

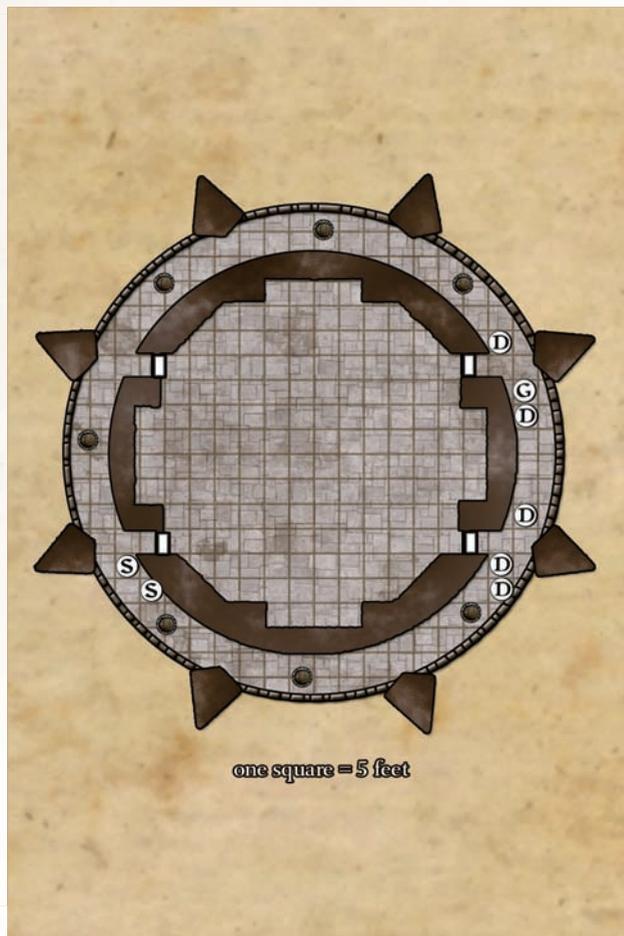
Encounter Level 6 (1,375 XP)

SETUP

5 dark creepers (D)
2 deathjump spiders (S)
1 gnome arcanist (G)

The gnome and the dark creeper archers stationed here are charged with guarding the battlement. In addition, a pair of deathjump spiders have escaped from the ettercaps and made a lair on the far side of the tower. Though these creatures do not attack Thoran's mercenaries, the dark creepers and the gnome assume that the spiders' presence makes the far side of the tower safe enough. As such, they avoid that section of the battlement.

If the PCs approach the Scepter Tower from the outside, their first encounter is with the sentries stationed here as they reach the doors to Location T6 below.



If the PCs approach the doors at Location T6 from outside the tower, read:

An arrow suddenly cracks against the stones near your feet, followed by three more that sail wide as if gauging the distance and wind. Looking up to the merlons of the battlement 80 feet above, you see a group of hooded figures raise bows for another volley.

When the PCs meet the dark creepers and the gnome arcanist on the battlement, read:

From around the curve of the battlement wall, a number of small, dark figures race toward you, shortbows drawn. Behind them, a short figure in robes snarls as it turns and races away.

When the deathjump spiders attack, read:

A blur of shadow is your only warning as an enormous spider leaps toward you from the spire above.

5 Dark Creepers (D)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Small shadow humanoid	XP 175 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +4; darkvision
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>	
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Speed 6	
⊕ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
+9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
↘ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon	
Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
◀ Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points)	
Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage	
The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (move; at-will)	
The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11	
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3) Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, dagger, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows	

2 Deathjump Spiders (S) **Level 4 Skirmisher**

Medium natural beast (spider)

XP 175 each

Initiative +8 **Senses** Perception +9; tremorsense 4**HP** 55; **Bloodied** 27**AC** 20; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 18, **Will** 16**Resist** 5 poison**Speed** 6, climb 6 (spider climb); see also *prodigious leap*⊕ **Bite** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).

⊕ **Death from Above** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Poison**

The deathjump spider leaps at its prey, shifting 6 squares and making a bite attack. On a hit, it deals 1d6 extra damage and also knocks the target prone.

Prodigious Leap (move; encounter)

The deathjump spider shifts 10 squares.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –**Skills** Athletics +10 (+20 when jumping), **Stealth** +11**Str** 17 (+5) **Dex** 18 (+6) **Wis** 14 (+4)**Con** 15 (+4) **Int** 1 (-3) **Cha** 8 (+1)**Gnome Arcanist (G)** **Level 3 Controller (Leader)**

Small fey humanoid

XP 150

Initiative +1 **Senses** Perception +1; low-light vision**Aura of Illusion (Illusion)** aura 5; the gnome arcanist and all allies in the aura gain concealment and can hide in the aura.**HP** 46; **Bloodied** 23**AC** 16; **Fortitude** 13, **Reflex** 15, **Will** 13**Speed** 5; see also *fey step*⊕ **Dagger** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Weapon**

+6 vs. AC; 1d4 damage.

⚡ **Scintillating Bolt** (standard; at-will) ◆ **Radiant**

Ranged 10; +6 vs. Fortitude; 1d6 + 4 radiant damage, and the target is dazed (save ends).

⚡ **Startling Glamor** (minor; at-will) ◆ **Fear, Illusion**

Ranged 10; +7 vs. Will; the target slides 1 square.

↔ **Illusory Terrain** (standard; recharge Ⓜ Ⓜ Ⓜ) ◆ **Illusion**

Close burst 5; targets enemies; +7 vs. Will; the target is slowed (save ends).

Fade Away (immediate reaction, when the gnome arcanist takes damage; encounter) ◆ **Illusion**

The gnome arcanist turns invisible until it attacks or until the end of its next turn.

Fey Step (move; encounter) ◆ **Teleportation**

The gnome arcanist teleports 5 squares.

Reactive Stealth

If a gnome has cover or concealment when it makes an initiative check at the start of an encounter, it can make a Stealth check to escape notice.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** Common, Elven**Skills** Arcana +12, **Bluff** +8, **Insight** +6, **Stealth** +8**Str** 10 (+1) **Dex** 10 (+1) **Wis** 11 (+1)**Con** 14 (+3) **Int** 18 (+5) **Cha** 15 (+3)**Equipment** robes, dagger**TACTICS**

If the PCs approach the tower from below, four dark creepers attack with their shortbows. The other dark creeper and the gnome begin dropping lead shot through the embrasures between the merlons. All the defenders have superior cover against foes on the ground.

The fist-sized shot can be dropped into any square within 10 feet of the tower (+6 vs. AC; 2d6 damage). The dark creepers and the gnome are well practiced in this tactic, and have a virtually unlimited supply of ammunition.

If attacked on this level, the dark creepers fire off one volley before dropping their bows and entering melee. They try to spread the PCs out to make use of *dark step*. The gnome arcanist runs to Location T14, bringing reinforcements back in 4 rounds. After 2 rounds, the dark creepers at Location T15 fire down upon the PCs from above.

The deathjump spiders do not enter combat unless attackers come up to this level of the tower. When the spiders hear the sounds of battle, they scurry around and up the outside of the tower, attacking with *death from above*.

All the creatures here fight to the death.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: This area is brightly lit, either by daylight or by the glow of the spire atop the tower at night.

Doors: Each door has a sliding iron panel just below eye level for a Medium creature. The panels open from the inside (Location T11).

Battlement: The merlons of the battlement are 4 feet high. Against airborne attackers, they provide cover. Against attacks from below, they provide superior cover.

Barrels: These squares are considered difficult terrain, and a creature in one of these squares has cover. The barrels contain lead shot for dropping on intruders below.

ENCOUNTER T13: SECURE STOREROOMS

Encounter Level 4 (900 XP)

SETUP

4 deathjump spiders (S)
1 ettercap webspinner (W)

With his dark creepers searching the ruins for the alabaster pillars (and because he does not fully trust his gnome mercenaries), Thoran has enlisted the ettercaps and their spiders to guard the treasures stored here.

The ettercap and the spiders all lurk in the darkened section of the chamber. An ancient stone throne there bears a skeleton in tattered robes—an arcanist of Netheril who died here. By leaving the mummified corpse in place, Thoran hopes that intruders mistake it for an undead guardian.

The spiders cling to the ceiling, gaining total concealment in the darkness. If the PCs direct a light to the web-shrouded ceiling, the spiders have only concealment, but characters must make Perception checks against the spiders' Stealth checks (+11) to see them.

The ettercap crouches behind the throne to gain cover. These guardians attack only if the PCs investigate the northeast corner of this chamber or if they attempt to open the vault doors.

When the PCs direct a light into the northwest corner of this area, read:

A stone throne sits against the dark wall, graven with runes and sigils of power. Upon it is slumped a skeletal figure, arcane symbols visible on its tattered black robes. Strands of silk wrap this mummified corpse, its bony fingers clutching the stone arms of the throne. The skeleton's strangely shaped skull grins evilly, its teeth sharpened to points.

RUNIC LOCKS

Just as in room T4, the doors here are sealed by stone plates engraved with a stylized claw, and they open only when the PCs place a complete set of magic talismans within the indentation.

If the PCs have defeated Thoran, then they have a set of talismans already. And if they've cleared Locations C6, T3, and T10, they've got a full set. (And if the PCs deduce what shapes they're missing, they can have Brother Turnagall back at the monastery fabricate replacement pieces for them.)

The solution to the puzzle appears on page 44. Show the players the illustration that accompanies that information, and make mock versions of the pieces for the players to work with at your table.

If the PCs' Perception checks beat the deathjump spiders' Stealth checks, read:

Within the tangle of webs obscuring the ceiling, four dark shapes can be seen. They shift slowly as they shadow your movements on the ground.

If the PCs approach the throne or attempt to open the runic doors, read:

Suddenly a humanoid creature lurches up from its hiding place beside the throne. Its eight eyes are bright in the shadows, a long-spear raised in two of its four arms. Even as the creature attacks, movement erupts within the shadows shrouding the ceiling. Four enormous spiders drop to surround you.

4 Deathjump Spiders (S)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium natural beast (spider)		XP 175 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +9; tremorsense 5	
HP 55; Bloodied 27		
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16		
Resist 5 poison		
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb); see also <i>prodigious leap</i>		
⊕ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
+6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).		
⊕ Death from Above (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison		
The deathjump spider leaps at its prey, shifting 6 squares and making a bite attack. On a hit, it deals 1d6 extra damage and also knocks the target prone.		
Prodigious Leap (move; encounter)		
The deathjump spider shifts 10 squares.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages –	
Skills Athletics +10 (+20 when jumping), Stealth +11		
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 1 (-3)	Cha 8 (+1)

Ettercap Webspinner (W) **Level 5 Controller**
XP 200
Medium natural humanoid (spider)

Initiative +4 **Senses** Perception +9
HP 64; **Bloodied** 32
AC 18; **Fortitude** 17, **Reflex** 16, **Will** 16
Resist 10 poison
Speed 5, climb 5 (spider climb); see also *web walker*

⊕ **Longspear** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Weapon**
 Reach 2, +10 vs. AC; 1d10 + 3 damage.

‡ **Spider Bite** (standard; at-will) ♦ **Poison**
 Requires combat advantage; +10 vs. AC; 1d6 + 3 damage, and the ettercap makes a secondary attack against the same target.
Secondary Attack: +8 vs. Fortitude; ongoing 5 poison damage (save ends).

⤵ **Web Net** (minor 1/round; at-will)
 Ranged 5; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is restrained (save ends).

✱ **Webbed Terrain** (standard; recharge Ⓜ) ♦ **Zone**
 Area burst 2 within 10; +9 vs. Reflex; the target is immobilized (save ends). The zone is filled with spider webs and is considered difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.

Web Walker
 An ettercap ignores the movement effects of spider webs and difficult terrain related to spider swarms.

Alignment Unaligned **Languages** –
Skills Stealth +9
Str 16 (+5) **Dex** 14 (+4) **Wis** 15 (+4)
Con 16 (+5) **Int** 5 (-1) **Cha** 13 (+3)
Equipment leather armor, longspear

TACTICS

The ettercap webspinner uses *webbed terrain* to immobilize dangerous-looking melee combatants. The deathjump spiders flank whenever possible, using *death from above* against characters attempting to break away from the group.

The webspinner hangs back, using the throne for cover and attacking with *web net* and its longspear for as long as possible. If pressed into melee, it joins the spiders, flanking for combat advantage to make use of *spider bite*. The ettercap and the deathjump spiders fight to the death.

The sound of combat in this area brings three of the dark creepers from Location T14 down the stairs in 3 rounds. The dark creeper reinforcements flee as soon as one of them is bloodied, returning to Location T14 and preparing for a last stand.

DEVELOPMENT

When the ettercap and the spiders have been slain, the PCs have access to the runic-locked chambers to the east and west.

When the PCs open the runic-locked east door, read:
This large chamber is empty except for shelves of black stone lining the walls. Dust covers everything, and the air has a stale scent.



ENCOUNTER T13: SECURE STOREROOMS

When the PCs open the runic-locked west door, read:
The door opens to reveal a large room lined with shelves of black stone. Several shelves are smashed to rubble, but those standing closest to the door contain a number of objects beneath a black drop cloth.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Torches in wall sconces provide bright illumination in this area except for the northeast quadrant. The light does not reach the high ceiling.

Doors: The doors of this chamber bear runic locks (see the sidebar). These doors do not have the normal sliding iron panel and viewport.

Ceiling Webs: The webs that cover the ceiling provide total concealment. If the PCs direct a light source to the ceiling, the webs provide only concealment.

Skeleton and Throne: A DC 25 Nature check recognizes the skeleton as that of a bugbear. The throne provides cover and can be climbed with a DC 5 Athletics check.

ENCOUNTER T14: STAGING AREA

Encounter Level 6 (1,225 XP)

SETUP

7 dark creepers (D)

The dark creepers maintain a secondary barracks in this area to defend the top of the tower and the secure store-rooms below.

The dark creepers lurk here in absolute blackness. They rely on their darkvision to alert them to intrusion, making Stealth checks to hide as the PCs enter. Do not place their miniatures on the map until the PCs are able to see them.

When the PCs enter the area, read:

From the shadows comes a hail of arrows. A mob of small, hooded creatures surges toward you, darkness clinging to their forms as they attack.

7 Dark Creepers (D)		Level 4 Skirmisher
Small shadow humanoid		XP 175 each
Initiative +8	Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>		
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.		
↘ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.		
← Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points) Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.		
Combat Advantage The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.		
Dark Step (move; at-will) The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.		
Alignment Unaligned	Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11		
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3)	Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, dagger, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows		

TACTICS

Three of the dark creepers stay back to take opportune potshots with their bows, targeting spellcasters and PCs carrying light sources if possible. The other four close with the PCs, using *dark step* to attack with combat advantage.

As the battle progresses, play the four dark creepers in melee boldly—use *dark step* every round, even if you don't need to move. You want one of the dark creepers to die quickly in melee so you get to use its *killing dark* ability. The other dark creepers will go all-out against blinded PCs,

with both melee and ranged attacks gaining the extra 1d6 damage.

The dark creepers that remain at range can exploit the solid column in the middle of the room to stay out of line of sight from most of the PCs and just pick off a character who's standing a little apart from his friends. If the PCs spread out to counter this strategy, then your melee dark creepers have more room to maneuver and gain combat advantage.

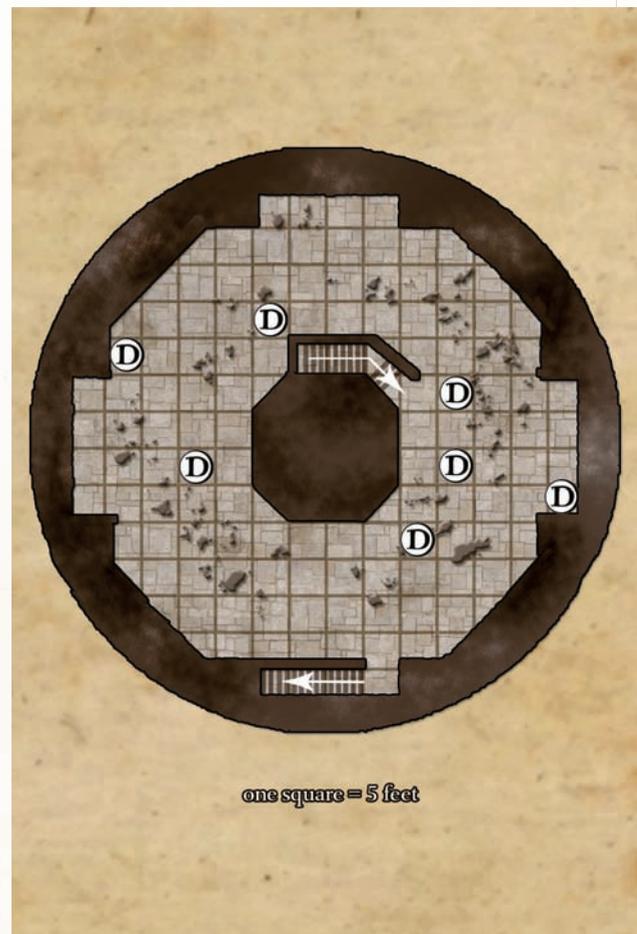
If you get a chance to plunge the room into darkness by rendering unconscious the PCs who have torches, then dousing those torches, by all means do so. Nothing says "D&D" like trying to light a new torch while mysterious cloaked figures are stabbing you.

If four dark creepers are killed, the others flee the tower.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: None (dark).

Debris: These squares are difficult terrain. The dark creepers' movement is unaffected.



ENCOUNTER T15: ROOFTOP BATTLEMENT

ENCOUNTER T15: ROOFTOP BATTLEMENT

Encounter Level 2 (525 XP)

SETUP

- 2 dark creepers (D)
- 1 deathjump spider (S)

Two dark creeper lookouts keep watch over the tower and the grounds of Spellgard. By way of their reports, Thoran is able to monitor the movements of seekers and other groups throughout the ruins. A trained deathjump spider clings to the spire 10 feet above them, its tremorsense alerting it to the approach of any creatures the guards cannot see.

When the PCs reach this level, read:

An enormous eight-legged shape unfurls from the spire above, dropping toward you. At the same time, two small, shadowy figures dart into view with bows drawn.

2 Dark Creepers (D) Small shadow humanoid	Level 4 Skirmisher XP 175 each
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +4; darkvision	
HP 54; Bloodied 27; see also <i>killing dark</i>	
AC 18 (see also <i>dark step</i>), Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15	
Speed 6	
⬇ Dagger (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon +9 vs. AC; 1d4 + 4 damage.	
↘ Shortbow (standard; at-will) ♦ Weapon Ranged 15/30; +9 vs. AC; 1d8 + 4 damage.	
← Killing Dark (when reduced to 0 hit points) Close burst 1; targets enemies; each target is blinded (save ends). When slain, a dark creeper explodes in a spout of darkness.	
Combat Advantage The dark creeper deals 1d6 extra damage on melee and ranged attacks against any target it has combat advantage against.	
Dark Step (move; at-will) The dark creeper moves up to 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks, and gains combat advantage against any target that it ends its move adjacent to.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages Common	
Skills Stealth +11, Thievery +11	
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 13 (+3) Cha 13 (+3)
Equipment black garments, dagger, shortbow, quiver of 10 arrows	

TACTICS

The sentries here call out to the dark creepers stationed at Location T12 below. If the PCs have somehow bypassed that area, those dark creepers send a messenger to Thoran advising him of a possible incursion.

The dark creepers fire arrows at the closest PCs, then draw their daggers. They split up to make the best use of the limited space on the battlement, using *dark step* to gain combat advantage.

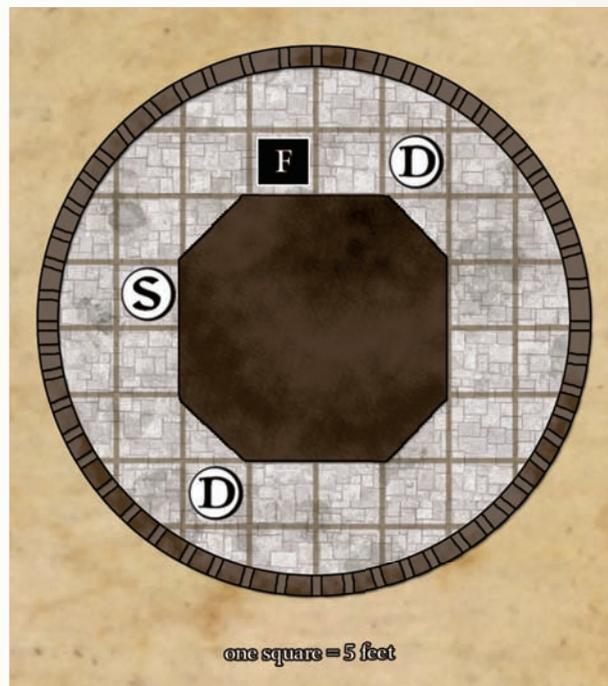
Deathjump Spider (S) Medium natural beast (spider)	Level 4 Skirmisher XP 175
Initiative +8 Senses Perception +9; tremorsense 5	
HP 55; Bloodied 27	
AC 20; Fortitude 17, Reflex 18, Will 16	
Resist 5 poison	
Speed 6, climb 6 (spider climb); see also <i>prodigious leap</i>	
⬇ Bite (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison +6 vs. AC; 2d6 + 3 damage, and the target takes ongoing 5 poison damage and is slowed (save ends both).	
⬇ Death from Above (standard; at-will) ♦ Poison The deathjump spider leaps at its prey, shifting 6 squares and making a bite attack. On a hit, it deals 1d6 extra damage and also knocks the target prone.	
Prodigious Leap (move; encounter) The deathjump spider shifts 10 squares.	
Alignment Unaligned Languages –	
Skills Athletics +10 (+20 when jumping), Stealth +11	
Str 17 (+5)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 15 (+4)	Int 1 (-3) Cha 8 (+1)

The spider fights to the death. If one guard and the spider are slain, the other guard runs down into the tower to regroup with the dark creepers in Location T12, or to flee the ruins.

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: This area is brightly lit.

Battlement: The merlons of the battlement are 4 feet high. Against airborne attackers, they provide cover. Against attacks from below, they provide superior cover.







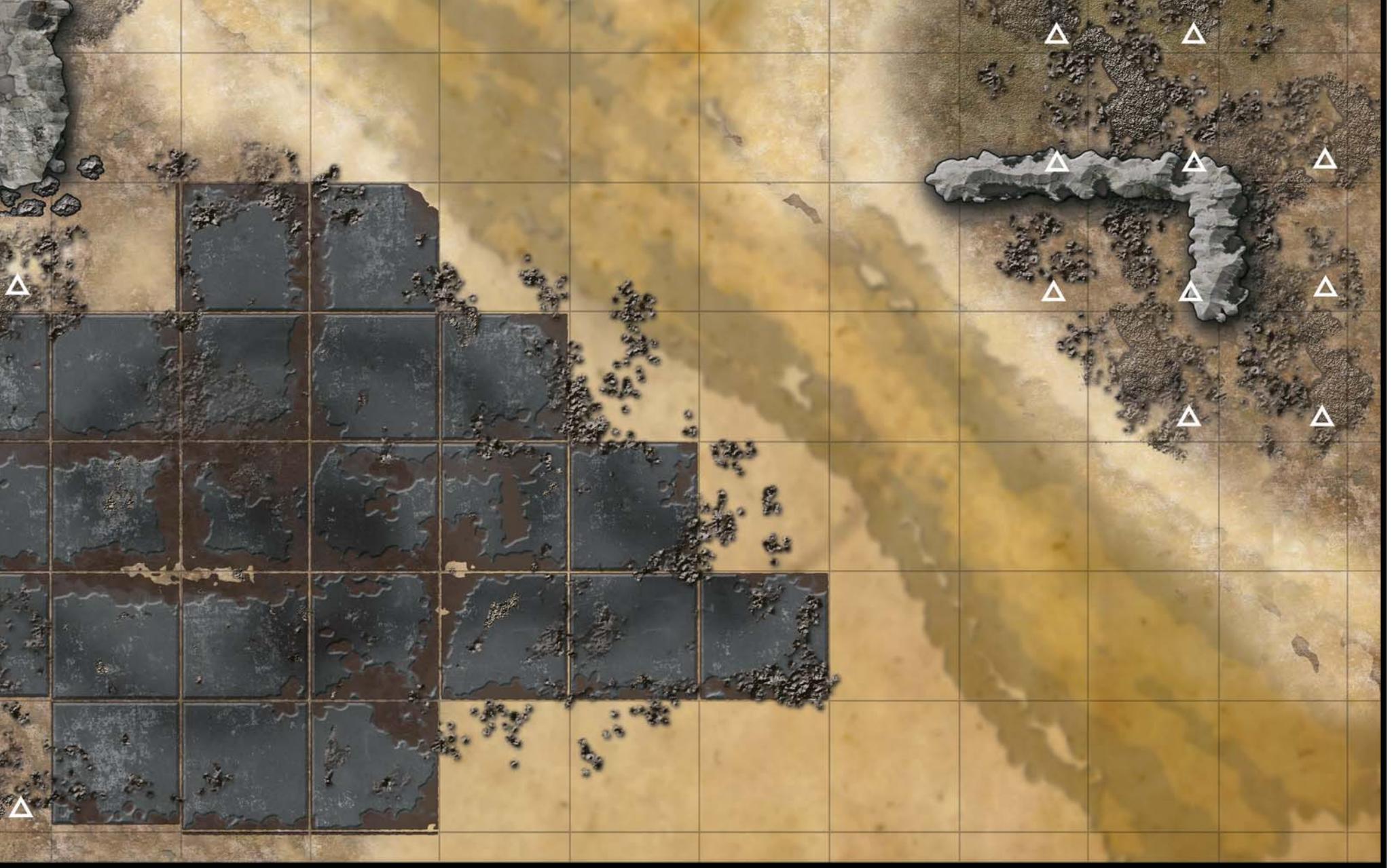














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