

MOATHOUSE RUINS

For many years, a cult of Chaotic Evil flourished. Although the location of their Temple is lost, the following facts regarding it and its followers are known. This information may be gleaned, piece by piece, through conversation with the villagers. Oldtimers know far more of the tale than newcomers, and certain special individuals (notably those on the Village Council) could relate the whole story as found here, given sufficient provocation and trust in those inquiring. It is unlikely that such trust will be cause for revelation even so, unless seriously interested characters attend a special Council meeting for the express purpose of aiding the village.

The cult was based on the premise that the elemental forces of the universe are Chaotic and opposed to mankind, and are thus Evil. Fire was regarded as the first elemental evil, and its penchant for Chaos fitted the premise of the cult. Water was likewise worshipped as an even more powerful force of Chaotic Evil, in the form of floods, storms, and raging seas beating upon the land and ocean vessels. The epitome of Chaotic Evil, however, was regarded as a combination of air and earth, represented by blackness. This combination was regarded as a complete negation of matter, corresponding with the demonic Abys.

The cult grew powerful and rich, attracting followers of the worst sort and offering them safety within the walls of the Temple stronghold; its members were assassins, brigands, and the like. The cult sought to destroy all works of Good and to disrupt order. From their fortress the followers would ride to rob, pillage, and lay waste the lands about. Captives from those raids were brought back to the Temple to serve as human sacrifices (to the fire, the water, and the blackest Evil) or to slave their lives away in bondage.

Eventually the neighbours of the Temple grew tired of these depredations. All banded together to form a mighty host. Their army marched to the Temple which thereafter was besieged, fell, and its inhabitants put to the sword. It is reported by some sources that the Temple and its precincts resisted complete destruction, but the majority state that the whole was razed so that the cult could never emerge again nor could any find where it once flourished.

The moathouse was once an outpost of the Temple, held by the black lord of the fortress, a vile cleric of damnation, and his evil men and humanoid troops. From its watchtower – an advance base for raids, looting, and destruction – servants of the Temple were to bring the village and all the lands around it into subjection. The conquered folk were then to be used as slaves to construct yet another fortress further west, spreading the evil power of the Temple in ever-growing rings to encompass all of the land around its base.

This outpost was ignored during the destruction of the Temple, for the army which came against the wicked hordes was so strong as to be totally immune to any pinpricking from the garrison of the moathouse. Only after the end of the battle which destroyed the main armies of the Temple of Elemental Evil was attention turned to this place. A detachment of horse and foot with a small siege train then came to the marshlands, to lay the castle low. The common folk from miles around came to help, and the moathouse was surrounded, cut off, and battered into extinction.

The ruined moathouse is now shunned by the villagers, who hate its former evil and the memory of the terror it brought to them.

FURTHER BACKGROUND: Those who have returned to the moathouse have been careful to raid far from this area, never nearer than 3 or 4 leagues, travelling on foot or being concealed in wagons of ‘traders’ who are in fact secret servants of the Temple. No victims have been left alive to tell the tale, nor has any trace of men, mounts, goods, wagons or animals ever been found; so mysterious disappearance are all that can be remarked upon.

Heading to the ruins: The track from the Temple area to the moathouse is seven leagues. It is another league beyond that to the village.

A scrub of thorns, thistles, weeds, and shrubs grows thickly along the edge of the track which leads to the ruins. Even the track is mostly overgrown and cluttered with fallen branches and trees. Here and there it is washed out, in other places a mire. Some game evidently still follows the track, however, for beyond a mile or so from the settlements faint pathways can be seen. But even considering this, going is slow. Considerable hacking and clearing is necessary to make the way passable, so the first trip from the village will take over two hours to reach the place on horseback, or double that to trudge along on foot.

Two miles from the village, the land begins to sink and become boggy. The track here is only about 15 feet wide or so, with crumbling embankments making travel near the edge dangerous. The bogs stink. The vegetation appears dense and prolific, but somehow sickly and unhealthy, creepers and vines throwing their strangling loops over the skeletons of dead saplings and living bushes alike. Tall marsh plants grow thickly where cattails and tamaracks do not. The rushes and cattails rustle and bend even to a slight zephyr, and weird birdcalls, croakings, and other unwholesome sounds come faintly across the fen.

Off to the left (north) can be seen the jagged silhouette of the moathouse, and a side path, banked high to cross over the wetland to either side, juts north to the entrance of the ruin even as the main track continues easterly.

Twists in the moathouse: 1d3 brigands (reinforcements); 1d4 troll rats; a giant tick overhead (this horror came in through the chimney):

Giant Tick						
Nature 4	Might 3	Precedence –		Instinct: Suck the blood of warm-blooded creatures		
Crawling, Dropping, Sucking Blood						
Hit Points:	Drive Off 9	Kill 5		Flee 2		
Other Conflict Hit Points:		Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating				
		Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating				
<i>Blood drain:</i> In kill, capture and drive off conflicts, a giant tick will attach itself to its victim with a successful Attack or Feint action. Once attached, it begins to feed, draining one hit point from the victim for each subsequent action it remains attached. Even the Stubborn level benefit cannot protect against this effect. Removing the tick requires reducing its hit points to zero.						
<i>Disease:</i> At the end of a kill, capture or drive off conflict, each team member who lost one or more hit points must make an Ob 3 Health test. <i>Suggested condition:</i> sick						
<i>Weapons and Armour:</i> Chitin (chain)						
<i>Other weapon</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>	
Burrowing Bite	Kill, Capture, Drive Off	+1D	–	–	–	

Strange noises in the moathouse: a scraping noise, as materials above shift; the squeaking and rustling of rats in the floor below; the sound of footsteps, a trick of echoes as these are the adventurers' own.

Entrance (2 and 3): There is a tower on the gateway's left side; its upper portion collapsed. When the moat-house was taken, part of the drawbridge was battered through and its chains were broken. It has remained fallen since. The gates at the other end of the entrance passage are broken: one door hangs open on one great hinge, while the other is splintered and holed, but still in position, wedged and shored closed from inside.

The damaged drawbridge will bear a person, but if crossing it on a horse make an Ob 2 Riding test (+1D for mules and ponies); *suggested twist* steed breaks through the timber and injures a leg.

Two brigands (of four plus their leader) will be on watch behind the gate, and one will peer out the escape route from (7), and they will spot adventurers who approach unless the latter succeed in Scout vs Scout. If the brigands succeed, *suggested twist*: the brigands warn their fellows, and if the adventurers appear:

- *weak*, set up an ambush in the Black Chamber (hiding in the cluttered furniture in the room);
- *reasonably competent*, bar and bolt the door and leave if it is battered, taking their petty loot and leaving the rest safely hidden;
- *overwhelming*, sneak out as soon as the PCs enter the moathouse, taking all of their loot with them and heading for greener pastures.

Careful examination of the ground beyond the gate reveals foot prints heading to the steps up to the building.

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	1
Will	2 [4]	Circles	3
Health	4 [6]	Precedence	0
Skills	Scout 4, Fighter 3 [4], Manipulator 3, Labourer 3, Peasant 3, Hunter 2		
Wises	Swamp-wise, Village-wise		
Traits	Bitter (1), Wicked (1) [2]		
Armour	Leather [Chain]		
Weapons	Crossbow, mace; crossbow, sword; halberd; shield, spear, hand axe [shield, flail]		

Loot: The leader wears a gold chain (neck 1, 2D); the first carries a pouch of worthless coins of unknown provenance; the halberdeer has a tinderbox and 3 candles.

If the adventurers enter through the swamp rather than via the path, test Pathfinder (Ob 4); *suggested twist*: the adventurers are attacked by giant killer frogs (two normal, one large):

These nasty things will leap from their lurking places in the tall weeds near a pool's edge; voraciously hungry, they attack madly			
Nature 2 [3]	Might 1 [2]	Precedence –	Instinct: Always satiate hunger
Lurking, Leaping, Devouring			
Hit Points:	Drive Off 5 [7]	Kill 3 [5]	Flee/Pursue 2 [3]
Other Conflict Hit Points:			
Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating			
Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Large frog: The largest of these monsters are Might 2, Nature 3, weight at least 150 lb, and have tongues up to 12' long which they use to attack those more than 5' away

Weapons and Armour: –

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Sharp teeth	Kill	+1D	–	–	–
Large body	Drive Off	–	+1s	–	–
Powerful leap	Flee/Pursue	–	+1D	–	+1s
Tongue [large only]	Kill, Capture	+1D	–	+1s	–

Compromise: horses become mired in the mud, or panic and throw their riders

Loot: chipped precious stone (2D) inside the large frog.

Gate tower (4): Nothing is visible in the tower, even if an arrowslit is peered through, for the inside is too dark to see what is inside without light, and its occupant lurks above, crouched on the remains of an upper floor 15' overhead. A scattering of husks and a few bones on the floor may give warning; the gleam of coins (1D of copper, pack 2) may tempt investigation. There is also a small ivory box (pack 2) worth 2D.

As soon as anyone steps into the tower, the great wolf spider will leap and bite:

A cunning and vicious hunter who living on the edge of civilization. It has a voracious appetite and must feed on a steady supply of dogs, horses, human adults and even human children. It hides by clinging to walls or ceilings from which it ambushes its prey, wrapping them in silk and then injecting them with virulent venom delivered via its fangs			
Nature 5	Might 4	Precedence 1	Instinct: Always attack from ambush
Hunting, Hiding, Climbing			
Hit Points:	Drive Off 5 [7]	Kill 3 [5]	Flee/Pursue 2 [3]
Other Conflict Hit Points:			
Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating			
Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Venomous: A successful Attack or Feint with its *Fangs* weapon forces the target to make a Health test with an obstacle equal to the spider's margin of success. *Suggested condition:* sick. *Suggested twist:* incapacitated by hallucinations for the remainder of this turn and the next

Weapons and Armour: Chitin (as chain armour)

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Camouflaged carapace	Capture	—	+1D	+1s	—
Silk webs	Capture	—	—	—	+1D
Eight horrible legs	Kill	—	—	—	+1s
Fangs	Kill	-1D	—	—	—
Eight Eyes	Drive Off	—	+1D	—	—
Wall Climbing	Drive Off	+1a	—	—	—

Steps to the house portion of the fortress (5): The doors at the head of the stairs are broken, one sundered and the other flat on the floor. Careful examination of the steps will show that some traffic (human or animal) comes this way.

Great Hall (6): This was clearly once a great audience chamber, but has been thoroughly sacked and despoiled: leaves and dirt cover the floor; the furniture has been destroyed; along with tattered banners and tapestries, cobwebs hang from the walls and from the ceiling above; heaps of rotting cloth have been thrown into the corners.

Looking up, beams and chunks of stone poke through: the upper stories of the place are totally destroyed, and likely to be impassable to any creature larger than a rat. (The entire upper floor is collapsed and ruined.)

The heavy door to (7) is in good repair.

Black Chamber (7): This was the quarters of the former lord of the moathouse. Its heavy door has been repaired by the outlaws; it can be bolted (its usual state) and barred (Health Ob 4 to open if bolted, Ob 5 if also barred). The chamber is floored in black flagstones, has ebon coloured wall hangings (now burnt and tattered), and a clutter of wrecked furniture (which the brigands will hide in, if they stage an ambush).

The brigands pitch bedrolls in odd corners; the remains of a fire can be noted in the northern fireplace.

There is rubble where the wall collapsed, leading to stepping stones across the moat. Buried under it is a chest (Labourer Ob 2 to dig through the rubble and reveal the hidden loot): 2D copper coins (pack 4); small silver-threaded rug (2D, pack 2); silver ewer (4D, pack 2, 2 draughts).

The brigands are unaware of **the secret door and staircase down to the dungeons**, leading to the area between the secret doors (Scout Ob 3 to discover). They give the southern wing a wide berth after one of their number was killed by the reptile there some weeks ago.

South Wing (8 to 12): After a few steps, the risers of the stairway (8) are covered with dust, crushed stone, broken wood, and burned heaps of cloth. At the landing half way up they are completely choked with rubble, and it is impossible to clear the loose stone and huge wall section so as to allow passage.

The first western room (9) is empty. It was once a conference chamber; but its dirt and wreckage show no sign of any recent occupant (although a small rat or two can be seen scurrying away). Behind a splintered wall case whose contents are long gone is a fine sword (Scavenger Ob 4 to find).

The second western room (10) is empty. This bed chamber was once the quarters of a castle troop leader or some other petty official, but is now a total wreck, the bed chopped to pieces and the furniture smashed or gone.

The eastern room (11) was once very opulent, a salon where many expensive furnishings were, for the tatters that remain still look rich (though are of no value in themselves): +1D to Scavenger tests for valuables in this room. However, there is a bat colony in here, flying in and out through the arrow slit. Detecting the bat colony doesn't require a test as long as the players indicate they're proceeding slowly and scanning their surroundings, as the stench of bat guano is usually overpowering, and guano is plentiful in this area, useful for alchemy, cooking fuel or torch-making. However, bats are sensitive to acute stimuli: loud noises, pyrotechnics or light (like torches or lanterns) will cause them to swarm. If disturbed by bright lights or noise, scores of bats will drop from their perches and swarm the adventurers. The adventurers may avoid disturbing the colony by dousing their lights before opening the door, and testing Scout versus the swarm's Nature 6. *Suggested twist:* the colony is disturbed and the bats swarm the adventurers, initiating a drive off conflict.

These massive rats will devour almost anything and often carry diseases. They lurk in packs in dark corners of dungeons, especially near the lairs of undead monsters. Though they are not known to be aggressive, they exhibit a frightening intelligence. If threatened, they will defend their nest and will always attack when their assailants are at their weakest.

Nature 6	Might 1	Precedence –	Instinct: Always sleep during the day and hunt at night		
Spying, Biting, Flying					
Hit Points:	Drive Off 14		Kill 8	Flee 4	
Other Conflict Hit Points:		Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Swarms Reduce the swarm's Nature by 1 at the end of each round as individual bats are killed or break off from the swarm. They cannot use the Defend action to regain lost disposition.

Sharp, tiny teeth: If a bat swarm uses the diseased bite weapon to damage a character, roll 1d6. On 1, they become sick from the bite

Weapons and Armour: None

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Diseased Bite	Kill, Capture, Drive Off	+1D	–	–	–
Leathery Wings	Kill, Capture, Drive Off	–	–	+1s	+1D
Corkscrew Flight	Flee	+1D	–	–	+1s

Compromise: the fluttering bats cause any light source to be dropped and extinguished.

The bat colony will return if the area is left undisturbed for four consecutive turns.

In the south-east corner (12), rubble has spilled into the moat. This has enabled a huge lizard, over 12' long, to crawl up into a nice safe lair where it can hole up after hunting:

Nature 4	Might 3	Precedence –	Instinct: Hide and sleep when sated	
Hunting, Swallowing, Swimming				
Hit Points:	Kill 9	Capture 5	Drive Off 3	
Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Weapons and Armour: Hide (as leather armour)

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Camouflaged scales	Capture, Drive Off	–	+1D	+1s	–
Snapping Jaws	Kill	+1s	–	–	+1D

West Wing (13 to 16): The storeroom (13) is infested by a hungry horde of 7 troll rats; they will attack without fear:

These massive rats will devour almost anything and often carry diseases. They lurk in packs in dark corners of dungeons, especially near the lairs of undead monsters. Though they are not known to be aggressive, they exhibit a frightening intelligence. If threatened, they will defend their nest and will always attack when their assailants are at their weakest.				
Nature 2	Might 1	Precedence –	Instinct: Always steal shiny objects for the nest	
Consuming, Burrowing, Swarming				
Hit Points:	Kill 9	Capture 5	Drive Off 3	
Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Swarms: A group of 10 or more troll rats counts as Might 2 rather than 1

Diseased: At the end of a kill, capture or drive off conflict in which a team has lost one or more points of disposition, all team members must make an Ob 2 Health test. *Suggested condition:* sick. Or *suggested twist:* the character is not infected but becomes a disease carrier, forcing anyone they share food or drink with to make an Ob 2 Health test to avoid infection

Weapons and Armour: None

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Sharp Bite	Kill	–	–	+1s	–
Lithe Body	Drive Off	–	–	–	+1D
Quick Claws	Flee	+1s	–	–	–

On an upper shelf in this storage area is a jug (pack 3) full of oil (equivalent to 3 flasks).

The **stairs lead down, northwards, to the dungeon (D1)**; on the fifth stair is a plain gold ring (2D, pocket or worn/hand 1) – to notice it is Scavenger Ob 2. There is a landing half-way, where the stairs turn southward.

In the adjacent kitchen (16) the remains of mouldering foodstuffs and kitchen work tables are visible, including a wooden cask (pack 4) near the fireplace on the north wall.

The south-east room (14) is empty: only a few mangy pelts, stuffed heads and shattered antlers indicate its former status as a trophy room. Despite the considerable litter here, there is nothing of value to be found.

The south-west room (15) is empty and stripped of everything save broken and ruined furnishings. It was the domicile of the major-domo of the castle.

The partially-collapsed western chamber (17) was once a barracks room for some of the castle guards, as indicated by the remains of cots and plain wooden chests. Near the south end of the room is an intact small chest (pack 5) holding a crossbow and a quiver of bolts. If the overhead rubble is forcefully moved, shoved or levered it will be clear that it cannot be done safely (Health Ob 3): *suggested condition:* injured as the rubble falls further.

Twists in the dungeon: 1 or 2 Bugbears; 1d3 Gnolls; 1d6 troll rats; 1d3 aptrgangrs

Strange noises in the dungeon: thumping above (the lizard out hunting, or some other passing critter); moaning (the wind passing through some cracks and crevices); distant rattling (could be anything).

Dungeon entry area (1 to 3): The stairs descend southwards. A creeping ooze has been carefully placed and fed in a position over the central arch of the stairway. Any cautious approach, either looking up or moving along the walls will avoid it, but otherwise any person coming down the stairs and stepping off it into the dungeon floor must test Scout vs ooze Nature 6 or be subject to a Trap/Kill attack:

This alien, green corrosive slime hides in crevices or clings to walls and ceilings, waiting to drop on unsuspecting passers-by. Once in contact, it dissolves wood, metal and flesh with startling efficiency

Nature 6	Might 4	Precedence –	Instinct: Always creep into a crevice	
Creeping, Dissolving, Smothering				
Hit Points:	Trap/Kill 15	Drive Off 8	Flee 3	
Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating			

Ooze: Metal and wood weapons have little effect on the ooze. Characters wielding them count as unarmed against the creature

Alien death stalker: It can initiate a special kind of kill conflict. A creeping ooze will attack a character in a confined or small space to trap them. Test ooze Nature versus Scout. If the ooze wins, it forces the trapped character into a special trap-and-kill conflict. Roll Health and add to Nature for the character's disposition. Actions are: Attack (Health), Defend (Scout), Feint (Lore Master), Manoeuvre (Health). Characters killed as a result are turned into a creeping ooze.

Mindless: Oozes are immune to spells like Celestial Music, Thread of Friendship, Somnific Trance, Phantasmal Vision, Wizard's Bane and Sorcerous Suggestion and invocations like Inspiring Aura, Poison Mind, Sigrun's Voice of Thunder, Sigtyr's Arresting Speech, Vafrudnir's Silver Tongue, Balm of the Lords of Serenity and Chant of the Lords of Valour

Weapons and Armour: –

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Pseudopods	Trap/Kill	+1s	–	–	–
Oozing Mass	Trap/Kill	–	–	–	+2D
Sticky Fluid	Trap/Kill	–	+1D	–	–
Hydra	Drive Off	–	+2D	–	–
Suffocating Grip	Drive Off	+2s	–	–	–

A few torn sacks, broken barrels and shattered weapon racks show that tis large area was once a storage place and armoury for the fortress.

Great heaps of rubble and broken containers and furniture, all obviously junk, are at the western end of the room. They hide the two locked doors. Clearing the rubble requires an Ob 3 Labourer test: *suggested condition:* exhausted; *suggested twist:* creeping ooze drops, Gnolls ambush or aptrgangrs attack.

The locks on the two doors are new and well-oiled (Criminal Ob 2 to pick). To chop or smash down the door is Health Ob 4. Behind the doors are:

- *Northern storeroom:* 50 spears, 16 polearms, 3 battle axes, a crate of 120 arrows (pack 16), a crate of 200 crossbow bolts (pack 16), 70 black capes with a yellow eye of fire sewn on them, 2 barrels of salted meat (carried 4 or pack 8 and 18 portions each; the meat has a slightly odd smell and mild grey tinge to it: Cook Ob 2 or Alchemist Ob 3 reveals that exposure to contaminants has begun corrupting it, such that each portion consumed as rations requires a Health test at Ob 2, with failure imposing the exhausted condition);
- *Southern storeroom:* 12 suits of leather armour, 30 shields, 3 barrels of salted meet (as above), and hidden behind them two casks of brandy (carried 2 or pack 4 and 8 draughts each: does not cure hungry/thirsty but grants +1D to recover from angry or afraid – each is worth 1D).

Corridor lined with cells (4 and 5): An aptrgangr lurks in each of these cubicles (five in total). The aptrgangrs will come shuffling forth immediately upon the entry of any character, attempting to drive the intruders into the torture chamber (5).

APTRGANGR (AGAIN-WALKER)

These mindless corpses are animated by spirits of hunger, and possess an insatiable appetite for living flesh; they are the get of the Jotunn Svikr but have been stolen from the Dread Wolf by Hrym, Lord of Undeath, for his own foul purpose: each corpse that rises as an aptrgangr has one nail torn out at the roots by Hrym to add to the hull of his Dead Ship

Nature 3	Might 2	Precedence –	Instinct: Always seek the living
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Devouring Flesh, Hunting, Shambling

Hit Points:	Kill 4	Drive Off 7	Flee 3
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Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating
	Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating

Soulless: Aptrgangr cannot speak or understand speech, and are immune to spells like Celestial Music, Thread of Friendship, Somnific Trance, Phantasmal Vision, Wizard's Bane and Sorcerous Suggestion, as well as invocations like Inspiring Aura, Poison Mind, Sigrun's Voice of Thunder, Sigtyr's Arresting Speech, Vafrudnir's Silver Tongue, Balm of the Lords of Serenity and Chant of the Lords of Valour

Slow: Aptrgangr reveal their first action to players after both sides have selected their actions but before actions are compared; players then have the option to swap their action 1 and action 2 – the characters still act in the original order, but exchange actions

Hunger: Anyone slain by an aptrgangr as the result of a kill conflict rises to become one of them; an adventurer who is injured from a kill, capture or drive off conflict with an aptrgangr becomes cursed, suffering -1D to all actions until the curse is removed; the curse may be removed by the Absolution of the Lord of Endings invocation, a Sign of Abrogation spell or similar effects; if the curse is not removed by the end of the next town phase, the victim becomes an aptrgangr

Weapons and Armour: Aptrgangrs' unliving flesh absorbs one point of damage from piercing and slashing weapons; bludgeoning weapons do damage as normal

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Ragged Nails	Kill, Drive Off	+1D	–	+1s	–
Unreasoning Hunger	Kill, Drive Off	–	+1D	–	–
Mindless Persistence	Flee	+1D	+1s	–	–

A 2D semi-precious gem was hidden long ago behind a loose stone in the southern-most cell: it is Scavenger Ob 3 to find it (+1D if specifically searching in that cell).

At first glance, the torture chamber (5) will seem long abandoned, for dust, dirt and cobwebs abound. A careful inspection will reveal that some of the instruments and mechanisms have been used very recently, and that several of the skeletons in the place are recently dead. Further investigation will reveal some drops of blood on the floor (from a sloppy ghoul), trailing south to the secret door in the pillar (Scout Ob 5; *suggested twist:* a ghoul attacks through the secret passage). Inside the pillar is a shaft 30' deep, with obviously-used iron rungs set into the stonework for descent/ascent. The door at the other end does not require a test to find.

Gnolls' area (6 to 8): The storeroom (6) leads to the guardroom (7) leads to the captives room (8).

The door to the storeroom (6) has greased hinges, so it opens easily and silently. The room is littered with a mess of filth and broken junk but is otherwise unremarkable.

The 5 Gnolls in the guardroom (7), together with their hyena, have been lured into service with the promise of fresh meat, including plenty of human flesh. Recruited to raid and pillage, they are also instructed to guard the room against any creatures who do not wear the symbol of the “new Master” (the yellow eye of fire) and know the proper secret sign (crossed arms before the face). Even if properly dressed, those who do not make the secret sign are to be attacked and captured. The room is lit by two torches.

The Gnolls are not pleased with their loot, nor with the greater status accorded to the Bugbears newly joined. Their activities to the south and east of the moathouse have also taken a toll on their numbers. They will fight fiercely, but if made an initial offer of 1D of coins may be negotiated with to desert (leaving via the stairs in 1, never coming back); if offered double that (ie 2D) they will also lead the adventurers through the two secret doors to the east, and will tell the party that there are Bugbears and human guards. *NB. Conversation with the Gnolls must be in the speech of Gnolls or Bugbears.*

These wild, hyena-like trolls are known for their demon-worshipping ways. Rangy and muscular, they stand seven to eight feet tall and have heavy, razor-fanged jaws that can crush and splinter bones. They keep hyenas as pets, guardians and even messengers. They often name themselves after descriptive actions: Drinks Blood, Eats Hearts, Crushes Skulls, etc

Nature 5	Might 3	Precedence 1	Instinct: Never attack directly; always wait in ambush	
Ambushing, Devouring, Worshipping				
Hit Points:	Capture 12		Flee/Pursue 6	Drive Off 4
Other Conflict Hit Points:		Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating		

Hyena: This beast grants the Gnolls +1D to ambushing and devouring tests

Weapons and Armour: Leather and battle axes (x4); chain, bow, and a flail to pick up if necessary (♀ leader)

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Iron Grip	Capture	+1s	–	–	–
Loping Stride	Flee/Pursue	–	–	–	+2D
Intimidating Bark	Drive Off	–	–	+1s	–

The Gnolls will devour any killed at the first opportunity, and will toss wounded and prisoners into the captives room (8).

Heaps of old clothing, carpeting, rags and skins serve as beds; mixed into these is an Elven Cloak. A large wooden chest (pack 10) contains the Gnolls' treasure: worthless glass beads and similar trash (pack 2); brass candlesticks (1D, pack 1); 1D of copper coins (pack 2). The leader also has a small gemstone (1D).

The door to the captives room (8) is heavily barred. It currently contains a pair of humans who have undergone only mild torture, and a badly beaten Dwarf.

The human will admit to being merchants, and will promise large rewards for their release, to be sent to the village as soon as they return home. At the next town phase after their release, a passing caravan will deliver 1D per merchant to the rescuers.

The Dwarf was caught spying by some Gnolls, and will also ask to be freed, giving a plain iron ring to whomsoever first agrees. This ring is recognised by many Dwarves within 100 miles as a sign that the bearer is an ally, and thus gives +1D to Persuade tests against them (and +1 Disposition in Convince conflicts).

Each of the **two secret doors** to the east is Scout Ob 3 to discover (*suggested condition*: exhausted; followed by *suggested twist*: Bugbears come through the second secret door).

Bugbears’ area (9 to 12): In this area, the ceilings are 15' high.

A huge iron grate will fall from the ceiling at this point (9) if triggered by opening one of the false doors (11) which reveal bare stone wall behind. When triggered, the distant clangour will be heard. The secret door (Scout Ob 3) leads to a winch which hauls the grate back up (Labourer Ob 2).

To spot the trap (the iron grate is painted greyish-brown to blend with the stone, and when in the tunnel ceiling its underside is even with the stone) is Scout Ob 6, and to disarm it at that point is Sapper Ob 2. To spot the trap on one of the doors is Scout Ob 3, and to disarm it at that point is Sapper Ob 3. Behind the first investigated false door is 1D of silver coins (pack 1); behind the second is a plain cloak.

In the oddly-shaped northern room (10) are 3 bugbears. If any lights are shown in the chamber to the south, these creatures will investigate. They know that “the Master” is quartered to the south-east. In total, they have silver coins worth 1D (pack 1). They have a barrel (pack 8) on which burns a candle (they have 5 spares).

In the area to the west (12) lives the Bugbear shaman. He communes with spirits in the darkness, and wears, as a bracelet, a jewelled necklace (5D, worn/neck).

These massive, furred trolls boast rippling muscles and savage fangs and claws. Over-reliant on their size, with a weakness for child-flesh, they can often be tricked into following their base desires even when it is foolish to do so.

Bugbears are locked in a perpetual war with humanity. Humans cut down their forests. Bugbears fight them off, steal their children and terrorize their settlements. The humans retaliate and escalate by burning down whole forests or calling down plagues.

Bugbears live in matriarchal clans. Male bugbears act as shamans and underbosses, while the clan itself is led by a matriarch and a cadre of female bugbear seers.

Bugbears name themselves after natural features or natural phenomena: Mountain, Snow, River, Tempest, etc.

Nature 6	Might 4	Precedence 1	Instinct: Always repay an insult with ten-fold miseries
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Stalking, Terrorizing, Cracking Bones

Hit Points:	Flee/Pursue 13	Kill 7	Drive Off 4
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Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating
	Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating

Silent: Bugbears make no sound when they walk through or emerge from the forest: +1D, +1s to all stalking and terrorizing tests in forests

Shaman: The shaman (♂) is Nature 7, Precedence 2

Weapons and Armour: Patchwork hides equivalent to leather; polearms

<i>Other weapon</i>	<i>Conflict</i>	<i>A</i>	<i>D</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>M</i>
Silent Tread	Flee/Pursue	+1s	–	–	–

Pool (13): When the dungeons were dug, a natural pool of water was found where evidently some connection to an underground stream exists. As it was considerably below floor level, the area was dug lower and the entrance to the pool enlarged.

In the water, on a ledge near the back (southwest) pool edge, is a human skull and bones. Beneath the skull is a jewelled platinum pin (3D, worn/cloak 1 or pocket). *Suggested twist* for any test: the treasure slips of the ledge and is lost below.

Burial Crypts (14): These were built with the expectation (not met!) of long tenancy. Most of the niches are empty, although a few contain splintered coffins, wrappings, and gnawed and split bones.

At the south end of the crypt squat two ghouls. If they are not able to ambush, they will pretend to be captives in rags (ie trick conflict):

Ghouls are hideous, undead humans with an unceasing hunger for the flesh of living folk. They haunt the margins of civilization, hunting for easy prey, and often band together with other ghouls, forming packs of two to six fiends. They wear the rotting rags they died in, but occasionally a cunning ghoul will disguise itself in the clothing of its victim. Perceptive individuals will recognize the carrion stench of their breath and their filthy claws.

Nature 4	Might 3	Precedence 0	Instinct: Always drag victims back to my secret place before feasting
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Eating the Dead, Hiding, Hunting the Living

Hit Points:	Capture 10	Kill 6	Trick 4
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Other Conflict Hit Points:	Within Nature: roll Nature, add successes to Nature rating
	Outside of Nature: roll half Nature, add successes to Nature rating

Paralysing touch: The ghoul's touch paralyses the living: anyone knocked out of a conflict by a ghoul can't regroup from Defend unless Breath of the Burning Lord is first cast on them. Elves are immune to ghoul paralysis

Will of the grave: Ghouls are immune to the spells Thread of Friendship, Somnific Trance and Sorcerous Suggestion and the invocations Inspiring Aura, Poison Mind, Sigtyr's Arresting Speech, Vafudnir's Silver Tongue and Chant of the Lords of Valour

Weapons and Armour: –

Other weapon	Conflict	A	D	F	M
Shambling Gait	Capture	–	–	+1s	–
Undead Strength	Capture	–	–	–	+1D
Filthy Claws	Kill	–	–	+1s	–
Iron Sinews	Kill	–	–	–	+1s
Low Cunning	Trick	+1s	–	–	–
Memories of Life	Trick	–	–	+1s	–

The ghouls are given corpses to eat by the “Master”, or sometimes even prey not dead (from the torture chamber) so that they can enjoy some sport.

To find the **secret door** requires Scout Ob 2 from the crypt side, as there are some bloody rags caught in it.

The back of the crypt is broken out and there is an earth tunnel, foul and damp and only about 5' high, leading to the ghouls' noisome den (A) where a heap of bones and skulls is made; in this mess is 1D of silver coins (pack 1). Beyond the nest is a warren of small (3' diameter and smaller) burrows; a trail of gold coins leads into these: to collect 1D of gold coins is Ob 4 Scavenger test (*suggested twist*: hopelessly lost in the warrens). Mapping in these burrows is not possible.

Chambers of the New Master (16 to 18): The northward corridor has three guards (X); their sergeant is in the room at the corridor's end (16). In the barracks room just to the north (17) are 6 more guards, another sergeant, and their captain (the Lieutenant to the "Master").

These are the alert and fearless guards of the "New Master", garbed all in black, with gold eyes of fire embroidered upon their tunics and cloaks.

If the first group of guards (crossbows etc) + sergeant is engaged in combat, they will try and alert their fellows by sending up a low hooting sound (to bring half the further contingent – spears etc) or howling if they are being defeated (to bring the balance, including the "Master"); this will affect any compromise.

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	3
Will	3 (Serjeant 4)	Circles	2
Health	5	Precedence	0
Skills	Fighter 4, Scout 3, Labourer 3		
Wises	Cult-wise, Drinking-wise		
Traits	Defender (1), Stubborn (1)		
Armour	Chain		
Weapons	Crossbow, dagger, sword (6); Dagger, spear (3) [Serjeant: shield, dagger, mace]		

Loot: Each sergeant wears a gold chain of office (neck 1, 2D). Across the soldiers is 2D of gold coins.

Lieutenant – he stays near his lord always, and accompanies him wherever he goes			
Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating
Nature	4	Resources	4
Will	5	Circles	5
Health	4	Precedence	1 Might 3
Skills	Commander 4, Hagglar 4, Orator 3, Mentor 3, Strategist 3, Fighter 3, Rider 3		
Wises	Cult-wise, Soldier-wise, Watch-wise		
Traits	Defender (2)		
Armour	Plate		
Weapons	Shield, dagger, sword, hand axe		
Loot:	Pouch has 3 semi-precious stones (6D); chain of office is jewelled with a topaz (4D)		

In the rectangular room to the south of the barracks are:

- supplies: salted meat, hard biscuits and dried fruit (preserved rations); a barrel of (weak) wine (no recovery bonus); a barrel of water;
- piles of rushes and grass (for bedding and fodder);
- two riding horses, with saddles, tack and a lance nearby.

The Master's room (18) is lavishly furnished with thick rugs (pack 6, 4D), wall hangings (2x pack 5, 3D), soft chairs and a couch, cushions, and food: wines, liquors and dishes of sweetmeats. He has a silver tray (pack 2, 3D) and 2 silver goblets (each pack 1, 1 draught, 2D). A brazier continually burns to warm the place, send a fragrant incense into the air, and provide dim light.

Lareth the Beautiful – 5th level Theurge (Militant, Acolyte, Feared in Hell, Exorcist)

Young, handsome, well-endowed in abilities and aptitudes, thoroughly wicked, depraved, and capricious, he is the dark hope of Chaotic Evil: from the Forgotten Temple Complex and looked upon with special favour and expectation, he has been sent into this area to rebuild a force of human and trollish fighter so as to gather loot and restore the Temple to its former glory

Evil to the core, and cunning, if the situation appears in doubt Lareth will use bribery and honeyed words to sway the balance to his favour, and he will offer his jewelled chain as ransom for his life

Lareth is not at all averse to gaining new recruits of any sort, and will gladly accept adventurers into the ranks, but will test and try them continually, and those who arouse suspicion will be quietly murdered in their sleep; those with too much promise will likewise be dealt with, for he wants no potential usurpers or threats to his domination

He has two enemies –the 6th level warrior Rufus, and more recently Burne, the Wizard of the Tower

Raw Abilities	Rating	Town Abilities	Rating		
Nature	6	Resources	1		
Will	4	Circles	1		
Health	4	Precedence	3 (priest)	Might	3
Skills	Fighter 5, Haggler 4, Manipulator 5, Orator 4, Ritualist 5, Theologian 3, Healer 2				
Wises	Cult-wise, Bugbears-wise, Folly of Good-wise				
Traits	Cynical (1), Leader (1), Loner (1), Touched by the Gods (1)				
Once per session spend a persona for Nature or Wise; once per session spend a fate for Wise					
Armour	Plate				
Weapons	Staff of Striking (10 charges: spend 1 to gain +1D to an Attack action, spend 2 charges to gain +1s on a successful Attack or Feint action), mace				
Loot:	A jewelled gold chain set with diamond chips, and fire opals (pocket, 7D)				
Urðr	3				
Relics	Silver replica of Sigtyr’s sceptre (worn/neck, Sigtyr’s Arresting Speech, Ob 3, +1D Oratory to inspire followers when write signs of Lord of Victory on one’s brow)				
	Crown of the Lords of Law (worn/head, Wrath of the Lords of Law, turn demons, celestials and spirits)				
	Pair of heavy leather gloves inscribed with the sigils of the Lord of Forges (worn/hands 2, Cloak of the Lord of Forges, Ob 1 to shield self for one turn)				
	Sigtyr’s Sceptre of Rule (belt 1 or carried 1 or pack 2, Visage of the Lord of Victory, Ob 2/3to give self +1 Precedence for a Convince/Convince Crowd conflict)				

If Lareth is slain cautious and discreet inquiries will be made in the village, the servants of evil making every attempt to learn what happened. If any of his possessions turn up his slayers will be known: in the next town phase an assassin (Fighter 6, Manipulator 5, Slaying Trait L3) will be sent to the village to eliminate them.

NOTES

Ob 2 (hidden chest; ring on stairs; secret door in crypt)

Ob 2 or 3 (brigands' scouting; giant lizard; disarm grate trap)

Ob 2 or 4 (dungeon entrance doors)

Ob 3 (secret door to dungeons; secret doors in dungeon; rubble in western roof; rubble in dungeon entrance; frogs; spider; aptrgangrs; aptrgangr gem; ghouls)

Ob 3 or 6 (find grate trap)

Ob 4 (crossing swamp; bats; ooze; gold coin trail)

Ob 4 or 5 (black chamber door; brigands fighting; troll rats)

Ob 5 (secret door to burial crypt)

Ob 6 (Gnolls; Bugbears)

Ob 4 to 6+ (soldiers of the Master)