

The Burning Sage's Demense

A Dungeons & Dragons® adventure for 4 characters of 4th level.

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The Map for this dungeon may be downloaded at:

http://www.wizards.com/dnd/images/mapofweek/928_v1.jpg

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Preparation

“The Burning Sage’s Demense” is a D&D adventure suitable for characters of levels 3-5. Although balanced for four PCs who begin the adventure at or near 4th level, this adventure can be played as written with 3rd-level characters looking for a real challenge or 5th-level characters who do not mind a few less dangerous encounters. The adventure can be modified for parties beyond this range of level (and/or size) by increasing the number of antagonists in the Obsidian Keep. Increasing the class level of the primary villain(s) will increase the challenge level of the adventure only if the party confronts the villain(s) directly (not an absolute in this adventure). Please see the “Scaling the Adventure” section for more thorough details on modifying the adventure. However, this alters the challenge-to-treasure ratio. Remember that changing the total number of monsters also changes the total number of experience points available for a given party. The adventuring party should include at least one arcane spellcaster. A cleric PC with access to *endure elements* spells is highly recommended; though not absolutely necessary, such a character’s presence will greatly help mitigate the problems posed by the extreme environmental conditions of this adventure.

Adventure Background

Information in italics is for the DM only – at least initially – the players may discover some of the italicized information during the course of the adventure. It is suggested that the players be given most of the non-italicized information.

Approximately seventy years ago, Orestian, a mage of great prominence, retired to continue his study of heat, fire, and other related spells. He announced his retirement at the 23rd Festival of Fire (commemorating his defeat of a pair of green dragons which were ravaging the countryside) and further announced he would select an apprentice at the 25th Festival of Fire. He promised that his apprentice would return in to choose another apprentice at the Festival of Fire five years subsequent. This process was to continue – every five years, his apprentice would announce the new apprentice at the Festival of Fire – and in the event of his death, instead of announcing the new apprentice, his old apprentice would announce his death. *He did this for several reasons - he wished for his legacy to remain alive in the world through his apprentices, he wished to have “new blood” every so often to offer a fresh view on his research, and he knew he would need apprentices to perform various household duties.* He used mighty magics to raise a keep on the rim of a volcano, *knowing full well that the location in and of itself would help discourage frivolous seekers of information (it also provided a wonderful setting to study fire magic).* He spent a year searching for someone suitable to be his first apprentice, and settled on an attractive 19-year old woman (*he of course wanted some companionship – which would include the role of consort – in his retirement*). She announced the apprenticeship of another beautiful woman – this one twenty years old – five years later. After two more female apprentices, his apprentice was announced as a male (*the old sage had found a consort from one of the outer planes by this time*) and the apprentices were roughly evenly split between male and female from that time.

The local rulers (*as well as certain other powerful individuals and organizations*) have on occasion sent groups to ask the sage questions and glean advice over the intervening seventy years. In the first year, they sent three expeditions. Two turned back from the volcano, but the third returned with a map to the keep. The requests for aid became more infrequent over the years, as the rulers more or less forgot about the resources the sage had (*which suited him just fine*) and the last request for aid was sent eight years ago by his third apprentice (*who still resided in the town*). She perished of old age about two years ago.

The 100th Festival of Fire took place two weeks ago and it has been five years since the last apprentice was chosen – a young foreign man named Radinnal Kra’alin. This year, a new apprentice should have been chosen. But Radinnal never appeared at the festival. Concerned, the local ruler has procured a map from Resrov (the leader of the last expedition to the keep, which occurred eight years ago) and is now searching for a hardy adventuring band to go to the keep and inquire as to the state of the sage.

Radinnal was not actually a neophyte mage – he was a rather competent wizard in his own right. Growing up, he had a mysterious patron, whom he has never met. His patron sent a message to his family, saying that his magical schooling would be paid for and that in return, he was to learn the craft of a fire mage. Radinnal studied under the best masters for two years before a medallion arrived, sent with a note from his patron that it was a protective amulet and he was now to leave his book study and do “field work.” He adventured with several bands before his travels led him to encounter the legend of the Burning Sage. Feeling that this would be what his patron wanted, he determined to apprentice himself to the Sage. He masked his

identity as a competent wizard using alter self and similar spells in an attempt to gain apprenticeship. It took 11 years and four identities for his ruse to work (he was chosen his third time through the apprentice screening at the 95th Festival of Fire). He observed and learned from the Burning Sage for two years. Then, feeling that he knew more than the sage did about some of the summoning experiments, he attempted to make some alterations during a summoning ceremony. The spell went horribly awry and created a temporal anomaly – the inner keep, where the Sage and Radinnal resided, was thrown into an altered temporal state – one that is “out of phase” with the rest of reality. The Sage has since perished (finally succumbing to old age – he had artificially extended his lifespan and the temporal anomaly weakened and distorted those magics – he died about four months after the accident). Taking the keep out of phase has rendered all creatures that were in the keep at the time of the accident incorporeal and bound them within the confines of the keep. To them, the area immediately outside the keep’s external windows and doors appear as a swirling, impassable gray vortex. The continuing temporal anomaly owes its continuing existence only to the summoning circle, which has keyed itself into perpetuating the time curse instead of its original summoning function. Radinnal’s incorporeality has kept him from affecting the circle in any way, so he waits desperately for someone to come and break the spell. The Sage’s consort, Maelin (a female ghaele celestial) was understandably upset with him for his role in both the death of her lover and the creation of their mutual prison, but has come to pity him because much she sees his hatred of himself. He has ruminated on his failings and is a shattered and broken man, who blames himself for everything that has befallen the keep. She has tried to comfort him, but he feels it is only out of patronization – he feels utterly unworthy of her, knowing that she is the very incarnation of goodness and her presence only deepens his misery.

The nature of Radinnal’s mentor is unbeknownst to him. The famous Battle of Verdant Fire, which gave birth to the Festival of Fire, involved not two green dragons, but a strange pair of lovers – a green dragon and a troglodyte sorcerer who polymorphed herself into the form of a green dragon. She was horribly wounded over a large lake, and plummeted to the ground, dying from impact when she hit the water (and reverting to her necromancer form). While the Sage and townsfolk saw the dragon plummet into the water, they assumed (correctly) it had died, but could not see the transformation back into her true form. The two had a daughter who heard of the death of her parents. This hideous creature, half-dragon and half-troglodyte, spent a long time trying to figure the best way to effect revenge. She is the mysterious patron who sponsored Radinnal and subtly pushed him to pursue apprenticeship with the Burning Sage. Her mother’s sorcerous blood flows through her veins, but she has never really tried to develop it, relying lazily instead on the magic items left by her mother. The money used to pay for Radinnal’s schooling came from her father’s hoard (her bitter heart has more need for vindictiveness and revenge than for the glitter of treasure). The amulet given to Radinnal was an amulet of inescapable location, which she used to focus her scrying (using her mother’s crystal ball). She was watching when he modified the spell circle and saw the catastrophe in the keep before the crystal ball went dark (the temporal anomaly keeps her from scrying further). Assuming he (and the Sage) was dead, she moved to complete her revenge – by moving into the keep of the man who had slain her parents.

Unbeknownst to her, other forces were also watching the Sage. He had made many powerful enemies who also wanted a share of the spoils. A half-fiend bugbear named Errvikar had been dispatched to plunder the keep of the sage, arriving only a few days after she did. She had spent her time terrorizing the frightened azers and the sphinx that had lived in the keep as

consultants to the sage. She slew the sphinx and waits to animate it into undeath using her mother's necromantic staff. When Errvikar arrived with some of his allies, she suddenly found herself in a two-front battle. To make matters worse, the azers heroically decided to destroy the side entrance to the keep, collapsing it in a pile of rubble, sealing all of them in together. None of them could break through the ensorcelled front doors (which were designed for receiving guests and have now become a rather effective trap). The azers have managed to take control of the northern area of the keep. They are in a fight for survival, and have rigged mechanical traps as well as using multiple glyphs of warding to keep themselves safe. The necromancer has moved to the eastern area of the keep, while the bugbear and his minions stay in the western area of the keep. None of them dares enter the Burning Tower, which appears to be engulfed in continual swirling gray flame any more. The bugbear and necromancer were both confronted by the image of Maelin when they entered and fled in terror from the wrathful outsider, not knowing that she could not affect them in any way. The azers cannot cut their way through the forces of the necromancer and bugbear to get at the bridge. The three groups are now locked in a war for survival.

Adventure Summary

The characters are asked to investigate the failure of a legendary wizard to appear at a festival where he was to select a new apprentice. The characters make their way to his home – a keep built on the rim of a volcano, and find the outer keep inhabited by a few of the original inhabitants but mostly old enemies of the wizard. All of the groups in the keep are at war with each other and are terrified of the wizard’s tower, which overlooks the keep, because it is engulfed in swirling gray flames. As the party explores the keep and interacts with its inhabitants, they learn a few more details of the wizard and his work, as well as finding some a very strange phenomenon, a black “flame” that drips pure chill and darkness. Eventually the group makes their way to the tower, to discover that the tower’s inhabitants are cursed and that the wizard they seek is dead. The wizard’s apprentice caused a horrible magical accident that initiated the curse and killed his master and is no longer quite stable, his grief and guilt driving him somewhat over the edge. The wizard’s old lover, a celestial, also asks for the party’s help. The party is asked to destroy the magic circle maintaining the curse – only to fall under its effects themselves when they destroy the wards keeping the curse contained (these same wards incidentally keep the party away from the source of the curse). The entire scene shifts from a volcano to the para-elemental plane of ice. Having overcome heat, the party is now forced to overcome extreme cold. They travel back to a variant copy of the original keep (the keep on the volcano being made of obsidian and hideously hot, this keep being made of white opal and nastily cold) to find a means of escape. A few creatures inhabit the keep, including one who holds the group’s means of escape. Their means of escape are held by a frost giant, who is quite willing to part with the item they need, provided they help him out a little bit. The group returns to the tower, breaks the curse, and receives a reward from the wizard’s lover (and possibly the apprentice as well).

Adventure Hooks

A great wizard's new apprentice was to have been announced two weeks ago at the Festival of Fire. However, neither the wizard nor his current apprentice appeared at the festival to announce a selection (or non-selection) of a new apprentice, and now everyone in the town where he performed his legendary exploits is worried about the wizard. The party is recruited to find out what happened to the wizard (if a party member is from the area, he will probably know the legend of the wizard and may even idolize him) by the local baron. The baron provides the party with a map and small iron key with exquisite engraving work on it. He tells them that the key is needed to gain entry to the keep and must be touched to the door of the keep. He explains that touching the key to a locked door automatically triggers the key's magic, but that this key has only a single use left, so they must not use it frivolously. He gives them a *key of opening* (see new magic items sidebar) with a single charge remaining if they do not have access to a *knock* spell.

The Obsidian Keep

The keep is finally visible ahead. It sits in front of a glowing stream of running lava. The dull red glow of a river of lava causes the keep to appear as a deep black silhouette against a red background and behind it appears to be a column of swirling gray flame – an infernal sight, to be sure. The lava appears to run behind the keep from the left side of the keep to the right side before dropping off a precipice and forming a spectacular slow-motion glowing red and yellow waterfall down the side of the mountain. The cry of what might pass for a hoarse eagle pierces the air.

The party must to cut their own path through the mountains. The volcano's fumes and vapors mask the upper mountain in near-darkness. The party is in twilight conditions when they approach the keep unless they have their own light source. The keep itself is fashioned completely of black obsidian. As the party approaches closer, they may notice that the obsidian has blue jagged veins running through it and that there are no individual bricks – to all external appearances, the keep is carved of a single piece of obsidian and has very smooth sides. The blue veins in the rock seems to pulse slightly both in size and with varying degrees of light (never very bright – just enough to be disturbing). The air near the keep is very hot (see Appendix B - Environmental Hazards).

SIDEBAR – WANDERING MONSTERS

Due to the isolation and extremely hostile conditions, there are very few wandering monsters in the Obsidian Keep. Instead of “wandering monsters,” the party may meet patrols of krenshars or skeletons. The krenshar patrols are based out of room 14, while the skeleton patrols come from room 21.

If the party eliminates one of the encounters listed here, either as a wandering monster or in its room, treat rolls for that monster as a roll of “no encounter.” Remember also to adjust the monsters remaining in a room after a wandering monster encounter by deducting losses occurring in the encounter from the forces listed for the appropriate room.

Each time the party enters the main hall, roll 1d10 and consult the following table:

1 – Fiendish Krenshars (EL 3) – A patrol of 3 fiendish krenshars is moving from room 14 to room 7 and back to grab some bones to gnaw on from the sphinx skeleton. The krenshars are fully described in room 14. Losses should be deducted from the krenshars there. **Krenshars: hp 13, 12, 11; see area 8 for full statistics.**

2 – Azer Skeletons (EL 2) – The patrol of 6 azer skeletons is moving from room 20 to room 21 (or vice versa, as the DM sees fit). When they see humanoids (i.e., the PCs), five of them will charge the party. The remaining skeleton will try to move to room 19 (alerting Bruuhl to the fact that there is trouble – she ordered one skeleton to return to her any time the others attack something). **Skeletons: hp 12, 12, 10, 9, 6, 4; see area 21 for full statistics.**

3-10 – No encounter.

Areas 1-6: The Azers' Steading

1. Main Entry

Breaking the monotony of the keep's black walls are nearly invisible doors – invisible save for the silvery sheen laid over a few carvings, a pair of double doors appear to be the only entrance to the keep. The carvings are difficult to make out, but are highlighted by an inlay of silvery metal.

The outer doors of the keep are made of the same obsidian that comprises the rest of the keep. There are elaborate carvings in the door, with portions of the carvings inlaid in a silvery metal (mithral) as noted. The carvings depict a man in a flowing robe (the Burning Sage) using fiery magic to bring down a pair of dragons (the magic bolts fired by the man are inlaid with mithral). Next to him is a man clad in heavy plate armor wielding a sword (the sword is also inlaid with mithral). Above the carvings are Ignan runes legible to any character conversant in Ignan or succeeding at a Decipher Script check (DC 18) inlaid with mithral - these identify the scene as “the Battle of Verdant Flame.” The mithral may be carved from the door – it has a Hardness of 15 and 5 hit points per ounce (a total of ten ounces of mithral may be obtained from the door). Each time the door is touched (including attempts to remove the mithral), the blue veins in the obsidian of the door pulse brightly and the character attempting the extraction receives a mild shock. Treat this as a half-strength *shocking grasp* spell that does 1d4 points of electricity damage, with a Reflex save (DC 14) allowed for half damage. The doors are sealed with an *arcane lock* spell cast by a 20th-level caster, making it extremely difficult to break through the portal (Break DC is increased to 35 due to +10 from the *arcane lock*). If a *knock* spell is used or if the *key of opening* (see the *new magic items* sidebar) obtained from the baron is touched to the doors, the *arcane lock* spell goes dormant for ten minutes and the doors swing silently inward. The characters feel a rush of stale air as the doors open. The characters need to provide their own light source in order to explore the keep. When they are in a position (with a light source) to see inside the room, the following should be read or summarized:

The air in this entryway is filled with all sorts of dust particles that wink and scintillate in the light. The room beyond the doors is rather sparsely furnished. Three benches cast their shadows to on the walls and floors on each side of the room. Those on the right side all appear to be of a size, while those on the left vary considerably – the bench in the center is rather small, while the two benches flanking it are quite large. A large door, which appears to be made of wood, stands on the opposite side of the room. Next to this door, by the three identical benches, stands a small lectern.

Originally intended as a small reception area for guests on business, this room was rarely used. The rush of air when the party opened the doors has disturbed much of the dust that had settled on the room and is responsible for the dust particles the party sees. The three benches on the west side of the room are all normal (human) sized. The center bench on the east side of the room is sized for a gnome or halfling (small size) while the two benches on either side of it are sized for large sized creatures (such as ogres or trolls). All of the benches are fashioned of oak with a deep red varnish. The lectern is of black wrought iron and has a book, inkwell, and quill

on it. It is a sign-in book and the last entry is dated eight years ago and signed by “Resrov and Company.” A Knowledge (local) check (DC 23) will allow the characters to recall that Resrov was the leader of the last group from the town to journey to the keep. Characters may take 10 or 20 on this check and if they do they should almost certainly see the doors swing shut (see Development below).

Treasure: The mithral on the doors is worth 30 gp per ounce (300 gp in total).

Development: Ten minutes after being opened, the doors become intangible, swing shut (their intangibility allows them to close if they have been spiked or barred open with physical objects, though they are unable to pass through force effects), then become tangible again as the *arcane lock* spell regains its efficacy. Unless the party has a spellcaster with access to a *knock* spell, they are trapped within the confines of the keep as unwilling prisoners.

2. Azer’s Lavatory

The smell in this room extends beyond the doorway. It is a pungent mixture of ash, molten metal, and dung. Two small brass-colored pots sit nearly hidden in an alcove on the far side of the room. Heaps of metal scraps and rubbish line the walls on the right side of the room.

The azers use this room as a lavatory and a trash disposal area. The pots are made of brass and are chamber pots. The secret door has a small (4-inch diameter) hole at ground level (the azers use it as a “drain” through which they pour their chamber pots). This hole is actually one of the triggers to the secret door. The door will open if the obsidian sphere (found in area 6) is inserted into the hole. If that occurs, the blue veins in the sphere will glow a light blue, with the blue glow spreading from the sphere along the veins in the door. When all of the veins in the door are glowing blue (which will take about 2 rounds), the door will silently open by sliding upward at a rate of 3 feet per round to a maximum height of 6 feet. The bottom of the sphere marks the bottom of the door and the sphere will remain in place unless disturbed. If the sphere is removed, the door will close by sliding down silently at a rate of 2 feet per round, with the blue glow diminishing as it lowers, and ending completely when the door touches the ground. Any object (or creature) caught under the door as it closes takes 2 hp of damage per round (regardless of hardness) in crushing damage until it breaks (or expires). A stuck creature may escape by succeeding at an Escape Artist check (DC 14 since the slick obsidian wall and floor make it easy to slide out), but each failure on this check imposes a –2 cumulative circumstance penalty on the next check. Characters may not take 10 or 20 on these checks. Up to two other characters may try to hold the door up with a Strength check (DC 20) to help their comrade. Each character that succeeds at this check adds a +2 circumstance bonus to any Escape Artist checks made by a would-be escapee. An item so caught may be freed by a successful Strength check (DC 18).

2a. Hallway between rooms 2 and 3 (EL ½ and EL 2)

If the group enters through the north door (which should happen), the first character to enter this area should attempt a Spot check (DC 14). On a failed check, the character doesn’t notice the metal stand just in front of him until he runs into it, triggering the crossbows (see *trap*, below). As the crossbows are all pointed at the south double doors, the characters should be in no danger

of being hit (though their nerves will likely be frayed). If the check is successful, the character spots the stand in front of him in time. A second Spot check (DC 19) is needed to find the tripwires running from the south door of the room. The characters will not be in danger of triggering the trap unless they move to within 5 feet of the south door or open it. If they move within 5 feet of the double doors without detecting the wires (and the crossbows are still loaded) the crossbows fire. See “trap” below for details. The characters earn double experience points if they pass through the area without springing the trap and normal experience points for disarming the trap. The crossbows are part of the azers’ defense system – since this is the only door by which the other denizens of the keep can gain entry to their area, they keep it well guarded. The crossbows are actually their second line of defense. Their first line of defense is a pair of *glyphs of warding* cast by Joe on the south side of the double doors (one *glyph* per door). See below for details on the *glyphs*. Note for both traps that since failure causes the trap to be triggered, it is impossible to take 10 or 20.

Trap (CR ½): Five crossbows are set on metal stands throughout the room and are linked to the door and one another by fine metal wires. Disturbing any portion of the setup (crossbows, stands, wires, or door) causes the crossbows to fire. Any character within 10 feet of the door will be in the path of fire of the crossbows.

Crossbows: +6 ranged (1d8/x2 crit). *Find:* Spot (DC 14 crossbows, DC 19 wires), *Disable:* Disable Device (DC 17)

Trap (CR 2): *Glyphs of warding (x2, one per door):* Stores a *bestow curse spell* to give a –4 enhancement penalty to all ability checks, attack rolls, saving throws, etc. Will save (DC 17) negates. *Find:* Search (DC 28), *Disable:* Disable Device (DC 23).

Development: If the trap is sprung, two rounds after the crossbows are discharged, two azers (D’gorsz and Banrachk, see area 5 for full descriptions) come armed and running. See area 5 for a full discussion of their reactions to the PCs.

3. Azer Entryway

This room is filled with twisted metal shapes that distort and reflect light, causing a splay of color and shadow to erupt all over the room. The metal has been polished such a high luster that it nearly glows even in meager light. Metal shapes that look similar to trees are placed throughout the floor and shapes that could be mistaken for vines of ivy if not for the metallic luster creep along the walls and the ceiling. It almost appears to be a forest garden turned to metal. Yet for all the chaotic brilliance displayed in the room, it is immaculately clean.

The azers have crafted, polished, and placed the metal trees and vines throughout the room. They are made of brass and are as reflective as mirrors. They have done this to confuse their opponents, specifically the necromancer. She has left them alone since (though her undead thralls continue to be a nuisance). While somewhat eerie, the plants and vines are harmless. The azers change the setup of the trees and vines every so often, and they are the only ones truly comfortable in this room. Non-azer combatants in this room fight as though there was 10% obscurement due to the plethora of light rays and mirrors unless they have another means of locating their opponents (such as tremorsense or echolocation). The azers themselves are

unaffected by this penalty. They keep this room clean so as not to give anything to their enemies to tarnish or destroy the brass mirror forest.

Treasure: The trees and vines are made of a soft copper and would be valuable to an art collector or to an expert on the outer planes. There are 8 “trees” and 4 sets of “vines”. The trees are worth 30 gp each, and each set of vines is worth 15 gp.

4. Priest’s Quarters

A small pail sits in the corner of this room. A pile of neatly folded amber-colored cloth sits next to the pail. There are chalk markings on the walls and the smell of incense slightly taints the air.

These are the chambers of Gorblam, the azer priest and leader. The incense comes from his occasional burning of candles as he continues to appeal to his gods for a way home. The pail of water contains a gallon of water that he keeps as a small reserve against times of hardship or sickness. If he had something else with which to store the water, he would create more water, but he knows how vital it is to keep the necromancer at bay. The cloth is actually fine-spun copper, which acts as his priestly vestment when he prays, though normally he wears his craftsman’s tools and apron now (every azer priest is both a holy man and a craftsman). The chalk markings are mostly passages of azer holy writing written in Ignan. One of the markings is his best attempt to draw an idol of his patron deity (named Unidar Karrendym) – since he has no actual idol, he makes due with this when he worships. There is also a short section which contains a eulogy for each of the azers who has died under his care (a total of 12). Characters who know Ignan or succeed at a Decipher Script check (DC 23) will be able to read the writings. See area 6 for more details on Gorblam.

Treasure: *Potion of Aid* (a translucent, yellow, syrupy liquid with a vaguely metallic taste, value 300 gp) in a ceramic vial, copper priests’ vestments (dwarf-sized, treat as hide armor if worn for protection, value: 50 gp).

5. Azer Common Chamber (EL 6)

This room is lit by the brilliant nimbus of flame that surrounds each of its occupants’ heads. Four stout, copper-skinned, dwarf-sized figures are in various positions around this room. On the near side of the room, one of them sharpens two swords. Another leans on a spear. All of the weapons seem to be made of burnished brass. On the far side of the room, the other two lay prone on brass-colored mats, as though asleep. There are another two mats beneath the feet of the spear bearer and the swordsman. The room is otherwise unfurnished, though the brilliance of the flames reflects eerily off the walls.

This is the main chamber of the azers. They eat and sleep here. When the party enters, the azers immediately assume they are under attack and rush to fight the party. D’gorsz fights with a pair of short swords; the others use spears. The azers fight for two rounds – on the third round, the first azer in the initiative order shouts (in Ignan), “No! Wait! Stop! They aren’t with them!” then shouts in common, “Wait! Stop the fighting! We thought you were someone else!” The other azers lower their weapons slightly, forgoing attacks for a round in an attempt to parlay. If

the party does not cease hostilities, they fight to the death to protect their home. If the party does call off the attacks, the azers are very excited to see them and ask them how they entered the keep. If told that the party came through the front door, they immediately rush to the door. If it is still open (or if the party uses a *knock* spell to open it), they race outside, praising the party as their salvation. They tell the party what they know of the keep (the DM may give the party as much or as little information as he likes regarding the history, layout, purpose, and denizens of the keep through the mouths of the azers). If they remain locked in, their joy is somewhat diminished. They ask the party to find what has become of the sage, or at the very least eliminate the necromancer (they don't know much about the bugbear – all they know is that the necromancer has been fighting something other than azers).

D'gorsz, male azer War3: CR 4; Size M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 2d8+6 + 3d8+9; hp 46; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +4 / +2 melee (1d6+3 / 1d6+1 shortswords); SQ fire subtype; SV Fort +9, Ref +6, Will +3; AL LN; Str 17, Dex 15, Con 16, Int 15, Wis 9, Cha 11.

Skills: Appraise +4, Climb +4, Craft (blacksmith) +7, Hide +3, Intimidate +3, Knowledge (arcana) +3, Listen +2, Move silently +2, Search +3, Spot +5, Use rope +4.

Feats: Ambidexterity, Power Attack, Two-weapon Fighting.

Bruublam, male azer Exp2: CR 3; Size M (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 2d8+8 + 2d6+8; hp 40; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +2 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +7, Ref +6, Will +8; AL LN; Str 12, Dex 16, Con 18, Int 15, Wis 14, Cha 9.

Skills: Appraise +4, Balance +5, Bluff +5, Climb +2, Concentration +6.5, Craft (trapmaking) +7, Diplomacy +0, Forgery +2.5, Handle animal +1, Hide +1, Listen +5, Move silently +3, Perform +0, Pick pocket +3.5, Profession +4, Search +5, Spellcraft +3, Spot +5, Tumble +3.5, Use rope +5.

Feats: Power Attack, Skill Focus (bluff).

Angi-nyarachk, male azer Exp4: CR 5; Size M (4 ft., 0 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 + 4d6+8; hp 40; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 18 (+2 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +4 melee, or +5 ranged; SV Fort +6, Ref +6, Will +11; AL LN; Str 12, Dex 15, Con 14, Int 18, Wis 18, Cha 13.

Skills: Climb +2, Concentration +4, Craft (locksmith) +12, Disable device +6, Hide +2, Knowledge +5, Knowledge (arcana) +5.5, Knowledge (nature) +9, Listen +14, Move silently +2, Open lock +12, Perform +8, Profession +11, Ride +4, Search +8, Spot +7, Swim +6, Use magic device +6.

Feats: Point blank shot, Power attack, Skill focus (open lock).

B'gorzzk, female azer Exp1: CR 2; Size M (4 ft., 2 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 + 1d6+2; hp 21; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural); Atk +1 melee, or +3 ranged; SV Fort +5, Ref +6, Will +4; AL LN; Str 12, Dex 17, Con 14, Int 16, Wis 9, Cha 9.

Skills: Bluff +1, Climb +2, Craft (weaponsmith) +8, Forgery +5, Heal +1, Hide +1, Knowledge +5, Listen +4, Move silently +4, Perform +1, Pick pocket +6, Search +7, Spellcraft +5, Spot +2, Use magic device +0;

Feats: Power attack, Skill focus (pick pocket).

SA - Heat: The azers' intense body heat is conducted through their weapons (as the weapons are made entirely of metal), doing an additional 1d4 points of fire damage on a successful hit.

Fire Subtype: Immune to fire, takes double damage from cold based attacks (except on a successful save).

Treasure: Four brass sleeping mats, etched with a flame motif (value 40 gp each), brass halbspear, intricately worked with a design of vines creeping up the handle and the spear head in the form of a large brass leaf (carried by Bruublam - value 30 gp), two brass shortswords, engraved with Ignan runes naming the swords "Light" and "Fury" (carried by D'gorsz - value 60 gp each).

6. Azer Forge (EL 7)

The air in this room is both smoke-filled and searingly hot, burning throat and nose as it is inhaled. A small forge is in one corner of the room, glowing from the heat of its use. Several metalworking implements surround the forge as two forgers, apparently oblivious to the heat, work some sort of burnished metal into plant-like shapes.

Temperature: This room is about 150° F and should be considered as though it were in "abyssal" heat (see "Environmental Hazards" sidebar).

This area serves as the azers' forge area (which explains the high temperatures). Gorblam is here working with K'bruurk to improve and re-work some of the brass trees (from room 3).

Gorblam, male azer Clr5: CR 7; Size M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 2d8+4 + 5d8+10; hp 50; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural); Attack +6 melee, or +6 ranged; SV Fort +9, Ref +7, Will +10; AL LN; Str 17, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 12, Wis 17, Cha 12.

Skills: Climb +4, Craft +14, Heal +10, Hide +1, Listen +6, Move silently +3, Open lock +3.5, Search +4, Spellcraft +9, Spot +6.

Feats: Power Attack, Silent Spell, Weapon Focus (warhammer).

Possessions: Masterwork warhammer (see **treasure** entry below).

Spells typically prepared (Domains: Fire, Sun):

0—*create water* (x3), *guidance*, *resistance*, *read magic*; 1— *Bless*, *command*, *detect undead*, *protection from evil*, *summon monster I*; 2—*aid*, *augury*, *hold person*, *silence*, *spiritual weapon*; 3—*create food and water*, *magic circle vs. evil*, *searing light*.

K'bruurk, male azer Exp2: CR 3; Size M (4 ft., 3 in. tall); HD 2d8-2 + 2d6-2; hp 21; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved initiative); Spd 30 ft.; AC 19 (+3 Dex, +6 natural); Attack +3 melee, or +4 ranged; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +8; AL LN; Str 14, Dex 16, Con 9, Int 12, Wis 15, Cha 10.

Skills: Appraise +6, Bluff +5, Climb +3, Craft +6, Disguise +5, Hide +3, Intimidate +2, Listen +5, Move silently +3, Pick pocket +5, Search +4, Spot +7, Tumble +5.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Power Attack.

Treasure: Masterwork brass warhammer – crafted from a single piece of brass and with the face of an azer on the head of the hammer (carried by Gorblam – value 350 gp).

7. Lair of the Sphinx

Ruined and charred remains of books and scrolls litter this room. A huge, nonhuman skeleton lies next to one wall, inert and bleached. Several broken wooden stools are also scattered about.

Before the fall of the keep, an androsphinx was kept in this room. It was one of the Sage's many advisors (he sat on the stools while talking to it) and was quite happy with the unique opportunity given it to learn (from the books and scrolls provided by the Sage). A character may determine that the skeleton is the remains of a sphinx by succeeding at either a Wilderness Lore check (DC 23) or a Knowledge (monsters) check (DC 18). It long ago starved to death, eventually decaying to its current skeletal state. The skeleton has been left alone by the necromancer – she doesn't want to animate it until she needs its services, at which time she uses her Staff of the Necromancer to animate it. When (if) animated, it has the following statistics:

Large Skeleton: CR 1; Large Undead (); HD 2d12; hp 15; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft; AC 13 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +3 natural); Atk 2 claws +2 melee (1d6+2); Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5ft / 10 ft; SQ Undead, immunities; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +3; AL N; Str 14, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feats: Improved Initiative

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

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

Areas 8-16: Bugbear and Friends

8. Lair of the Bugbear (EL 6)

As the door to this room opens, a blast of furnace-hot air escapes. In the room are two large cat-like creatures, an enormous black canine with a silvery forehead and upper face with two eyes like glowing red coals and a third glittering yellow eye in the center of its forehead, and a winged humanoid holding a huge spear. Several pieces of heat-withered furniture decorate the room.

Temperature: This room is hot enough for the heat to qualify as “abyssal.”

The furniture in this room consists of two benches (stolen from the area now inhabited by the azers) and a beautiful hard cherry chair with blue velvet upholstery (now dirty, stained, and torn) stolen from the Feast Hall (area 13). A half-fiend bugbear and his “pets” have taken up residence in this room. The bugbear fancies himself the king of the keep and uses the chair as a throne. He keeps several pewter dishes with which he feeds his pets (his “court”).

Originally sent here on a quest to settle an old score, the bugbear has become somewhat unstable since being trapped in the keep with the necromancer and azers. He constantly mutters to himself of tax collectors and wonders why they haven’t returned. He worries about the state of his perceived kingdom (“even the king himself goes hungry - the farmers must be punished”). If he hears the sounds of combat, he prepares for the revolution (“the hungry peasants at last rise against their benevolent king”). If the party intrudes and does not immediately recognize him as king and present him with their tribute (in the form of food for himself and his “court”), he will be enraged at these “spies” and attack them. A successful Sense Motive check (DC 22) allows the PCs to guess his problem - he thinks he’s a king and he’s very hungry (if they think to try it); a Bluff check (DC 13 if the PCs offer food, DC 23 if they don’t; +2 circumstance bonus applies to the check if the PC attempting the check does so in the Goblin language) will allow them to appease the “good king.” If the PCs befriend the king, he presents them with his flask of Blackflame (see “New Magic Items” sidebar) and instructs them to find the source of the drought that blights his land and end it (in a very kingly fashion, of course).

If he is alerted to the party’s presence (for example, if hears the sound of combat), the bugbear will feed his *potions of fire breathing* to the two krenshars in the room. This allows each of them to breathe fire three times for 3d6 points of damage each breath (Reflex save DC 15 for half) in addition to the abilities detailed below. If he has not been alerted, he swallows one of the potions himself as his first combat action. He prefers riding his hellhound as a mount, attacking with his huge spiked chain. If he is caught unaware of the party, he quaffs a potion, then attempts to leap onto his hellhound mount. If is aware of the party, he will be on the hellhound when they arrive

Errvikar, Male Half-Fiend Bugbear: CR 4; Medium Outsider (7 ft); HD 3d8+6; hp 30; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 30 ft, fly 30 ft (average); AC 20 (+3 Dex, +4 natural, +2 leather, +1 small shield); Atk Longspear +6 melee (1d8+4 [x3]); or bite +6 (1d6+4); or 2 claws +6 (1d4+4); Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft / 10 ft (with longspear) SQ: Darkvision 60 ft, immunity to poison, resistance to acid, cold, electricity, and fire 20, spell-like abilities; SV Fort +3, Ref +6, Will +1; AL CE; Str 19, Dex 16, Con 15, Int 14, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +4, Hide +9, Jump +10, Listen +6, Move Silently +13, Ride +9, Spot +6.

Feats: Alertness

SA - Spell-like abilities: (Cast as though by a 3rd-level sorcerer or cleric) Darkness 3/day, Desecrate

SQ - Immunity: Errvikar is immune to poison.

SQ - Resistance: Errvikar ignores the first 20 points of damage taken per round from acid, cold, electricity, or fire-based attacks.

SQ - Skills: Gains a +8 competence bonus to Move Silently when flying.

Large Hellhound: CR 4; Large Outsider (6 feet high at shoulder); HD 6d8+18; hp 45; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 40 ft; AC 17 (-1 Size, +1 Dex, +7 natural); Atk Bite +8 melee (1d8+5); Face/Reach 5 ft by 10 ft / 5 ft; SA breath weapon; SQ scent, fire subtype; SV Fort +7, Ref +4, Will +4; AL LE; Str 21, Dex 11, Con 17, Int 6, Wis 10, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +10, Listen +5, Move Silently +12, Spot +7, Wilderness Lore +0.

Feats: Improved Initiative, Track

SA - Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of fire, 45 feet, every 2d4 rounds; damage 1d6+1, Reflex half (DC 13). The fiery breath also ignites any flammable materials within the cone. Hell hounds can use their breath weapon while biting.

SQ - Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

SQ - Scent (Ex): Hell hounds receive a +8 racial bonus to Spot and Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent, due to their keen sense of smell.

Possessions: As the “court jester,” wears a platinum mask which covers only the eyes and part of the “forehead.” The “third eye” mentioned in the room description above is the garnet in the mask.

Krenshars (2): CR 1; Medium Magical Beast; HD 2d10; hp 16, 14; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 15 (+2 Dex, +3 natural); Atk Bite +2 (1d6), 2 claws +0 (1d4); SA scare, smite good, SQ darkvision 60 ft, cold and fire resistance 5, scent, spell resistance 4; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +1; AL NE; Str 11, Dex 14, Con 11, Int 6, Wis 12, Cha 13.

Skills: Hide +4, Jump +4, Listen +4, Move Silently +6

Feats: Multiattack

SA - Scare (Ex or Su): As a standard action, a krenshar can pull the skin back from its head, revealing the musculature and bony structures of its skull. This alone is sufficient to scare away foes (treat as Bluff check with a +3 bonus). Combining this ability with a loud screech produces an unsettling effect that works like a *scare* spell cast by a 3rd-level sorcerer (Will save, DC 12 negates). If the save is successful, that opponent cannot be affected again by that krenshar’s scare ability for one day. The shriek does not affect other krenshars.

SA - Smite Good (Su): Once per day, each krenshar can make a normal attack to deal an additional +2 damage to a good foe.

SQ - Cold and Fire Resistance (Su): Ignores the first 5 points of damage every round dealt to it from cold and fire-based attacks.

Treasure: The hellhound wears a mask made of platinum and inset with a yellow garnet (total value 1050 gp). As noted, the bugbear carries two *potions of fire breathing*, though by the time the party gets to them, one or more is likely to have been used. The bugbear also carries a *potion of blackflame* (see the “new magical items” sidebar) in a small crystal vial (value 30 gp). Stuffed in the upholstery of the chair is an arcane scroll containing the spell *sleep* (caster level 1, value 25 gp) that can be found by searching the chair (DC 16, DC 24 if the room in general is searched).

9-12. Cloakrooms

Each of these rooms was once used as a place to hold cloaks, boots, and other items of clothing. Several pairs of rotten boots, molded cloaks, and piles of rat droppings will be found in each of

these rooms, hanging from small hooks on the walls and placed on low shelves. The clothing has succumbed to both age and the heat and is now tattered, moth-eaten, and worthless.

13. Feast Hall

The air in this room is clammy and cold - a stark contrast to the rest of the keep. Shadows seem to deepen in the room and the air feels somewhat sticky and humid. This hall is dominated by a huge table that nearly runs the entire length of the room. It is flanked on either side by six chairs (per side). The rotted remains of a lace tablecloth are draped over the table. The center of the tablecloth has a huge black stain in it. Above the table is a strange flame burning near the ceiling where it seems an inverted, cage-like dome has been splayed. The shadows seem to emanate from the flame.

This room is at a comfortable temperature to the party members (see the “Environment” sidebar).

The flame is Blackflame (see “new Magical Items” sidebar) - the only known source in these regions. The flame drips potion of blackflame at a rate of one drop per day. The stain on the tablecloth is from the potion - if the tablecloth is wrung out, a total of two doses of blackflame may be obtained (value 500 gp each dose). The flame cannot be moved from its position. The “dome” structure surrounding the flame was actually shaped from the obsidian walls of the keep and cannot be removed.

Treasure: Under the table (found with a Search check - DC 8) is a masterwork dwarven waraxe crafted of elm wood, then treated with lacquer to seal it. The lacquer was applied in several layers and in various colors - the entire axe is green, but in various shades and swirling patterns. The axe was a gift to one of the Sage’s former companions (a dwarf) from an elven community that the green dragons had been pestering. The dwarf gave it to the sage so that the sage could study the properties of the lacquer (hoping that duplicating it would bring profit to his clan as they sold weapons treated with the stuff). The axe is hard as steel because of the treatment (value 680 gp). The lacquer also has the curious property of fireproofing the axe. The bugbear discarded the axe when he stole the chair from this room, feeling that wood and hellhounds didn’t mix.

14. Lair of the Krenshars (EL 3)

This stench in this room is incredible, mixing offal, corpses, and ash into a truly foul concoction. The floor is covered in waste and shattered bones. Several piles of ash and burnt wood are also visible. A low, guttural growling sound fills the air. It seems to echo off the walls and come from every direction at once. Moving among these monuments to death and decay are several strange-looking cat-like creatures. As they move about in the ash and mess, small puffs of ash come up silently from their feet, making small cloud trails of gray particles wherever they walk.

This room is the lair of most of the krenshars that the bugbear keeps as pets. The party may have already encountered some of them as wandering monsters; if so, the krenshars’ numbers ought to be reduced accordingly. The krenshars are gnawing on some bones taken from the sphinx’s lair. When the party enters, they will be in nearly a blood-crazed frenzy; they are extremely hungry

and will immediately attack, desperate for new food. They will try to surround the nearest party member and bring him down. After any member in the combat collapses (krenshar or PC), the krenshars will pull the skin on their head back and begin shrieking in an attempt to drive off the rest of the party so that they can gorge themselves on the fallen body (PC or krenshar).

Fiendish Krenshars (6): hp 13, 12, 11, 11, 10, 6; see area 8 for full statistics.

15. Office (EL 2)

A more or less intact desk and chair seem to indicate that this room was once a study or office of some sort. The chair is scratched and heavily gnawed on, but still serviceable. Several unlit candles, some partially used, are scattered on the floor near the desk. The desk is possessed of several drawers, all of which are closed.

This was the office where notes on various experiments were collated, expanded upon, and organized by experiment. The large oak writing desk with several drawers is on the south side of the room. If a Search check (DC 13) is successful, a small, locked strongbox is found in one of the desk drawers, hidden under several rolled scrolls with notes on applications of Burning Hands spells to material from the para-elemental plane of magma. The strongbox is made of steel can be opened by an Open Locks check (DC 19). The strongbox is trapped and contains the treasure.

Trap (CR 2): If an attempt is made to open the lock on the strongbox without the key, a small needle will spring out of the lock. The needle is coated in a nasty poison derived from material from the para-elemental plane of magma. *Damage* 1d6 temporary Con, secondary damage 1 permanent Con (Fort Save DC 15); *Find Search* (DC 18); *Disable Disable Device* (DC 23)

Treasure: Inside the box is one dose of a *potion of fire breath* (blue, tastes of cinnamon) and 500 sp.

16. Office Closet

The merry glint of copper comes from a huge number of ingots, melted blobs, and some coins piled about the room.

Treasure: This was the repository for the metal the azers' metalwork. There is 4000 cp worth of copper here, but only 300 cp of it is in coin form - the rest is in ingots and various amorphous, melted blobs.

Areas 17-24: Lair of the Necromancer

17. Troll's Playground (EL 5)

Piles of bone and furniture, most of it chewed, broken, or cracked, are spread throughout this room. Rubbish is strewn everywhere and the foul stench of urine hangs in the air.

The room is home to Skizix the troll. Skizix is voraciously hungry and if present, immediately attacks anything he sees (except Bruuhl – see area 19, whom he fears) unless ordered otherwise by Bruuhl. Skizix has been mostly starved for the last year or so, with only his incredible regenerative ability keeping him alive – he sees this as an opportunity to get a decent meal, and isn't about to waste it. Skizix tried to attack Bruuhl several times, but she has merely used the enervation power of her staff to keep him at bay and he is now too terrified of Bruuhl to try any funny business with her now. If Bruuhl hears the sounds of battle, she will cast *mage armor* on herself, re-focus (to up her initiative roll to 27) and then enter the room, trying to catch the party off-guard. See room 19 for a complete description of her tactics.

Skizix, male Troll: CR 5; Large Giant (9 ft tall); HD 6d8+36; hp 60; Init +2 (+2 Dex); Spd 30 ft; AC 18 (-1 Size, +2 Dex, +7 natural); Atk 2 claws +9 (1d6+6), bite +4 (1d6+3); Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft / 10 ft; SA Rend 2d6+9; SQ Regeneration 5, scent, darkvision 90 ft; AL CE; SV Fort +11, Ref +4, Will +3; Str 23, Dex 14, Con 23, Int 6, Wis 9, Cha 6.

Skills: Listen +5, Spot +5

Feats: Alertness, Iron Will

Possessions: see Treasure entry below.

Treasure: Skizix wears a matching pair of platinum rings (he likes shiny things), one on each filthy hand. The rings are very simply wrought, and the ring on his right hand has a sard (yellow chalcedony) gemstone set in it (there is a similar setting on the other ring, but the stone has long since been lost). The ring with the stone is valued at 340 gp, the ring without valued at 300 gp, though considerable cleaning is needed to get all of the obscene filth that troll hands inevitably collect off the rings.

18. Annunciation Chamber

A charnel stench mingles with the tint of chlorine in the air in this room. Bones lie around this room. That there is no furniture or other niceties to break the black-on-white serves only to heighten the whiteness of the bones.

The room contains the remains of some of the azers slain by the necromancer (their flesh was eaten by Skizix long ago and Bruuhl occasionally tosses him a new bone to keep him from complete misery - though she is doing it more and more infrequently as her supply of bones decreases).

19. Lair of the Necromancer (EL 6, EL 8 if Skizix joins)

This room has the faint scent of chlorine in the air. A large pile of broken wood and cloth decorated with bones and skulls rests on one side of the room. A scaled humanoid sits in this chair, holding a black staff with what appears to be a human skull on one end. Many more bones are scattered about the room.

Bruuhl assumes the characters are here to help the sage and if the party did not enter through Skizix' room (room 17), her first action is casting *mage hand* and opening the door to Skizix'

room and calling him to defend her. She then *animates* some of the skeletons in the room (1d6 with the *Staff of the Necromancer* (see the “new Magical Items” sidebar), casts *mage armor* on herself (making her AC 27) and then attacks the party, using the *enervate* power of the staff to weaken them, then using her breath weapon. She then tries to *summon monsters* (abyssal dire rats) to do her fighting for her. She prefers spells to physical fighting but if pressed will prove to be a nasty opponent.

Bruuhl, Female Half-Dragon/Half Troglodyte Sor3: CR 6; Medium Dragon (4' 11" tall, 138 lbs.); HD 2d10+10 plus 3d4+15; hp 49; Init +7 (+3 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Speed 30 ft; AC 23 (+3 Dex, +10 natural); Atk +7 (1d6+6 staff or 1d4+6 bite) or +5 (ranged touch attacks by spell or staff); SA breath weapon, spells, magic items; SV Fort +9, Ref +4, Will +2; AL LE; Str 21, Dex 16, Con 20, Int 11, Wis 9, Cha 17.

Skills: Hide +10, Jump +5, Listen +2, Move Silently +3, Search +2 Spot +0.

Feats: Brew Potion, Improved Initiative, Multiattack

Possessions: *Staff of the Necromancer* (see “new magic items” sidebar with 8 charges), *ring of coolness* (see “new magic items” sidebar), *ring of sustenance*.

SA - Breath Weapon (Su): Once per day, as a part of her draconic heritage, Bruuhl can breathe a 30 ft cone of gas for 6d6 points of damage, Reflex save (DC 17) for half.

Spells Known (6/6, DC 12+spell level):

0—*dancing lights, detect magic, ghost sound, mage hand, ray of frost*; 1—*burning hands, mage armor, summon monster I*.

Animated Skeletons: hp 10 each, see area 21 for complete statistics.

Summoned Abyssal Dire Rats: CR ½; Small Magical Beast; HD 1d8+1; hp 6 each; Init +3 (+3 Dex); Spd 40 ft, climb 20 ft; AC 15 (+1 size, +3 Dex, +1 natural); Atk Bite +4 melee (1d4 plus Disease); SA Disease, smite good; SQ scent, darkvision 60 ft, cold and fire resistance 5, SR 2; SV Fort +3, Ref +5, Will +3; AL NE; Str 10, Dex 17, Con 12, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 4.

Skills: Climb +11, Hide +11, Move Silently +6.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (bite)

SA - Disease (Ex): Filth fever - bite, Fortitude save (DC 12), incubation period 1d3 days; damage 1d3 temporary Dexterity and 1d3 temporary Constitution (see Disease, page 74 in the DMG).

20. Antechamber

A charnel stench mingles with the tint of chlorine in the air in this room. Bones lie around this room. That there is no furniture or other niceties to break the black-on-white serves only to heighten the whiteness of the bones.

This room contains the remains of some of the azers slain by the necromancer (and serves the same purpose as room 18).

21. Skeleton Barracks (EL 2)

The clicking sound of bone on bone reverberates through the air. A half dozen skeletons shamble back and forth. They seem stouter and shorter than humans, perhaps dwarf-sized. Bunks line one of the walls of this room.

The skeletons are patrolling through this area (if they have not been encountered already) when the party enters. They are on a “route” that takes them through rooms 22, 23, and 24, then back around the hall to room 21. When they notice the party, five of them attack while the sixth attempts to escape to “warn” the necromancer. If a single skeleton enters her chambers through room 18, the necromancer knows something is wrong.

Azer Skeletons (6): CR 1/3; Medium Undead (4 ft tall); HD 1d12; hp 12, 12, 10, 9, 6, 4; Init +4 (+4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft; AC 13 (+1 Dex, +2 natural); Atk 2 claws +0 melee (1d4, rake); SQ undead, immunities; AL N; SV Fort +0, Ref +1, Will +2; Str 10, Dex 12, Con -, Int -, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Feats: Improved Initiative

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

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

22-24. Guest Bedroom

These areas served as guest bedrooms. Forgotten in room 24 is a bag containing the **treasure**, originally the property of one of the members of Resrov’s group. The bag is hidden between the mattresses in the bed (Search DC 18 to find)

Treasure: 25 pp and a *potion of hiding* (value 150 gp) in a metal vial.

25. Bridge

Visible on the opposite side of a huge obsidian bridge is a tower that appears to be wreathed in swirling gray flames. The bridge runs over a river of lava. Halfway across the bridge is a stairway that seems to lead downward into the lava flow itself. The air here is hellishly hot and burns the throat. The lava flow near the stairway appears to be disturbed, as though some large object lies buried under the lava.

The party is not able to see the force walls that comprise the sage’s field laboratory (see area 26 below) until they are nearly even with them. Special wards (similar to *magic circle against ...* spells) on the opening from the stairs into the laboratory’s force walls prevent outsiders from entering the laboratory.

“Upstream” a little ways in the lava is a small gate to and the para-elemental plane of magma. The sage opened this portal many years ago to study various creatures. Since the natives cannot survive long away from the lava flow, the sage didn’t worry about containment - instead, he contained himself when studying in order to observe the creatures in a more natural habitat. Unfortunately for the party, two mean-spirited (neutral evil) magma mephits are currently frolicking in the lava and will attack on sight - they like to see things burn. They will try to remain out of reach of the party, spitting cones of magma from above. Their damage reduction powers will probably make them seem tougher than they are if the party uses missile weapons against the mephits (a recommended tactic – use the mephits’ ability to fly to keep them out of reach of party members) since most characters will not have magical missile weapons.

Magma Mephits (2): CR 3; Small Fire Outsider; HD 3d8; hp 16, 15; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 30 ft., fly 50 ft. (average); AC 16 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +4 natural); Atk 2 claws +4 (1d3 plus 2 fire); SA breath weapon, spell-like abilities, summon mephit; SQ Fire subtype, fast healing 2, damage reduction 5/+1; SV Fort +3, Ref +4, Will +3; AL NE; Str 10, Dex 13, Con 10, Int 12, Wis 11, Cha 15.

Skills: Bluff +5, Hide +11, Listen +6, Move Silently +7, Spot +6.

Feat: Improved Initiative.

SA - Breath Weapon (Su): Cone of magma, 10 feet; damage 1d4, Reflex save half DC 12. Living creatures that fail their saves are tormented by burned skin and seared eyes unless they are immune to or protected from fire. This imposes a -4 morale penalty to AC and a -2 morale penalty to attack rolls for 3 rounds.

SQ - Spell-like abilities: Once per hour, a magma mephit can *shapechange* into a pool of lava 3 feet in diameter and 6 inches deep. The mephit’s damage reduction improves to 20/+1. The mephit can’t attack while in lava form but can use other spell-like abilities. It can move at a speed of 10 feet, but it can’t “run.” In this form the mephit can pass through small holes or narrow openings, even mere cracks. The pool’s touch ignites flammable materials such as paper, straw or dry wood. Once per day, a magma mephit can use *pyrotechnics* as the spell cast by a 6th-level sorcerer. It can use itself as the fire source without harm.

SQ - Fire Subtype (Ex): Fire immunity, double damage from cold except on a successful save.

SQ - Fast Healing (Ex): A magma mephit heals only if it is touching magma, lava, or a flame at least as large as a torch.

SQ - Summon Mephit (Sp): Once per day, all mephits can summon other mephits much as though casting a *summon monster* spell, but they have only a 25% chance of success to summon one mephit of the same type. Roll d%. On a failure, no creature answers the summons. A mephit that has just been summoned cannot use its own summon ability for 1 hour.

26. Field Laboratory

The area here seems to be a cube made of glass - the lava swirls around a roughly cubic area but does not intrude into this room. The room is lit from all sides by the dull red glow of the lava. Many sheets of paper, both blank and well-used, are scattered about five or six workbenches a lone table dominates the center of the room. Several globes and disks of various

colors, seemingly made of glass, float throughout the room, coloring and distorting the lava flows beyond.

The “walls” of this room are permanent *walls of force*. The party should feel quite uncomfortable “walking” on lava and seeing lava swirling all around them (it doesn’t quite spill over the top of the cube). This room served as a laboratory and observatory. Most of the laboratory work was moved into the tower (see room 33) long ago, but the sage still used this room as an observatory and a place to meditate up until the time of the accident. The air in here is stale, but breathable (and noticeably cooler than the outside air). The lenses have been enchanted with permanent levitation spells, but are merely chunks of colored glass used by the sage to entertain visitors from the para-elemental plane of magma and to examine interesting lava flows in more detail. When removed from the force cube, the lenses lose their enchantment.

Two of the floating lenses are actually gems, though it will take a Spot check (DC 18, must check for each gem) to realize this. See **treasure** entry for details.

Treasure: Two of the lenses are actually gems – one is a 100 gp chunk of amethyst and the other an 80 gp piece of brown jasper.

The Burning Tower

Wandering Monsters: There are no wandering monsters within the Burning Tower.

27. Maelin's Rest

A beautiful figure stands in the center of the room, gazing out a window. The roiling grey fire is visible outside the window. The figure is that of a strikingly beautiful elven female - strangely, light seems to emanate from her, illuminating the entirety of the room. The room is decked in the trappings of a wizard - candles, a cot, and a desk are all here, as well as a substantial bookshelf.

The form is, of course, Maelin. She makes her “home” here. She spends most of her time in her humanoid form. After two years of endless prayers, she is quite happy to see the characters. She explains as much of the situation in the keep as she knows, provided the party wants to listen, but does not leave the room as she knows Radinnal often walks the halls and she does not wish to see him hurt further by her presence. Once the curse on the tower is lifted and she returns to corporeality, she immediately moves to the Obsidian Keep and drives out any remaining evil there, then returns to bury and mourn the sage. She also uses her spell-like abilities to heal the party after the curse is lifted if needed.

Maelin knows most of the history of the Sage's demense, as well as the location of the mystic circle that keeps her trapped. She explains to the party that they will need something that can pierce the dimensional rift and touch spirits. “After all,” she says, “we, whom you see as spirits, are just as alive as you, but we cannot interact with you in normal ways. You must find a way to allow us to bridge the gap or free us yourselves.”

Maelin does not fight with the party - her statistics are only given for anyone curious to how she intends to clean out the obsidian keep. She ought to be able to lay waste to a party foolish enough to attack her. Only some of her statistics are given here (for a full description, see the Monster Manual).

Maelin, Celestial (Ghaele): CR 13; Medium Outsider; HD 10d8+20; hp 65; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft., fly 150 ft. (perfect); AC 25 (+1 Dex, +14 natural); Attacks +4 *greatsword* +21/+16 melee (2d6+14 and positive energy) or 2 light rays +11 ranged touch (2d12); SA spel-like abilities, spells, gaze, positive energy; SQ damage reduction 25/+3, SR 28, celestial qualities, alternate form; SV Fort +9, Ref +8, Will +10; AL CG; Str 25, Dex 12, Con 14, Int 17, Wis 16, Cha 16.

Skills: Animal Empathy +13, Concentration +12, Escape Artist +11, Hide +11, Knowledge (arcana, planar, nature) +13, Listen +15, Move Silently +11, Sense Motive +13, Spot +15.

Feats: Alertness, Blind-Fight, Improved Initiative.

SA - Protective Aura (Su): As a free action, a ghaele can surround itself with a nimbus of light having a radius of 20 feet. This acts as a double-strength *magic circle against evil* and as a *minor globe of invulnerability*, both as cast by a 10th-level sorcerer. The aura can be dispelled, but the celestial can create it again as a free action on its next turn.

SQ - Celestial Immunities (Ex): Immune to electricity and petrification attacks.

SQ - Resistance (Ex): +4 racial bonus to Fortitude saves versus poison.

SQ - Keen Vision (Ex): Low-light vision and 60-foot darkvision.

Spell-Like Abilities: At will - *aid, alter self, charm monster, color spray, comprehend languages, continual flame, cure light wounds, dancing lights, detect evil, detect thoughts, dispel magic, hold monster, improved invisibility (self only), major image, see invisibility, and teleport without error (self plus 50 pounds of objects only);* 1/day - *chain lightning, prismatic spray, and wall of force.* These spell abilities are as the spells cast by a 12th-level sorcerer (save DC 13 + spell level).

28 and 38. The Halls of Insanity

This long hallway is biting cold. The walls are beautifully painted with scenes of forests and fields, a welcome break from the black obsidian of the keep. A dark figure is visible at the end of the hallway, pacing back and forth and muttering to itself softly.

The figure at the end of the hallway is Radinnal. He is, as usual, ruminating on his perceived failures and sins. When he sees the party, he rushes toward them and throws his arms around the nearest character (treat as a touch attack), sobbing, “Thank you! You have come at last and...” he suddenly draws back, noting that his touch adversely affects the character (he feels the energy flow from the character to himself as the Wisdom drain occurs - because Radinnal reacts to stop it immediately, assume only a single point is drained instead of 1d4).

Radinnal looks at his hands and body in horror after this. He then begs the party to help him, promising not to touch them again. He asks them to help him atone for his crimes. He offers to lead the party to the source of the curse, lamenting, “I tried to stop it! My magic has gone awry! I cannot touch nor affect the cursed circle! But perhaps you can! Please, I beg of you, help me be free and atone for the death of my master.” He leads them to room 31, then leaves in panic, saying that they must proceed without a failure like him.

If the party does not immediately agree to follow him, Radinnal looks depressed, and begins pacing and muttering again. His muttering about his sins and need to be redeemed should be treated as his babbling attack. Note he does not have the Madness ability common to true Allips, nor is he truly undead.

Radinnal (Incorporeal), treat as Allip: CR 4; Medium Undead; HD 9d12; hp 48; Init +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd fly 30 ft (perfect); AC 15 (+1 Dex, +4 deflection); Atk Incorporeal touch +3 melee (1d4 permanent Wisdom drain); SA Babble, Wisdom drain; SQ Incorporeal, +2 turn resistance; SV Fort +1, Ref +2, Will +4; AL CN; Str -, Dex 12, Con -, Int 11, Wis 11, Cha 18.

Feats: Improved Initiative

SA - Babble (Su): An allip constantly mutters and whines to itself, creating a hypnotic effect. All sane creatures within 60 feet of the allip must succeed at a Will save (DC 16) or be affected as though by a *hypnotism* spell for 2d4 rounds. This is a sonic, mind-affecting compulsion. Opponents who successfully save cannot be affected by the same allip’s babble for one day.

SA - Wisdom Drain (Su): Those whose Wisdom is reduced to 0 by the allip become helpless until at least 1 point of Wisdom is restored.

SQ - Incorporeal: Can be harmed only by other incorporeal creatures, +1 or better magic weapons, or magic, with a 50% chance to ignore any damage from a corporeal source. Can pass through solid objects at will, and own attacks pass through armor. Always moves silently.

29. Materials Rack

Row upon row of shelving dominates this room. All manner of items, strange and mundane, are splayed across the shelves.

This is a massive storage closet for material components to spells. Any spell component that has no listed cost in the PHB (i.e., one that is free) may be found here. PC spellcasters may use this opportunity to re-fill their spell component pouches (role-play searching through the shelves of sundry items for that desired horse hair or bat guano and sulfur).

30. Tower Bachelor's Kitchen

A large pot-bellied stove rests in one corner of the room. A small table and several hooks are on the opposite wall, with every conceivable variety of pots, pans, and cooking implements hanging from the hooks. There is a small cabinet near the table.

This room was used by the apprentices of the sage as a kitchen. Inside the cabinet are frozen meats (salted), vegetables, and fruits, frozen when the curse overshadowed the keep and sucked the warmth from it. The characters may improvise daggers from the two large knives found here. The two small rooms between room 30 and room 35 are pantry areas, and contain larger hunks of meat, small bags of fruits and vegetables, and a barrel of mead.

31. Laboratory Racks

A large archway graces one side of this room. Light flickers in the room beyond, casting odd shadows over the room. The opposite side has several inset shelves, with all manner of glass vials, beakers, and tubes mixed with metal implements of various and sundry descriptions.

This room is the storage area for all of the materials needed in the labs (rooms 32 and 33). Everything here is more or less intact, and any glass or metal item relating to alchemy (vials, graduates, tongs, and other such things) that the DM wishes to allow the party to find may be found here. This room is roughly normal, comfortable temperature.

32. Outer Laboratory

A fire burns brightly on the door that stands opposite from the archway in this room. That is, the door seems to be engulfed in bright, hot flame, but is not consumed. The air in this room is quite hot. A disgusting mass of dirty glass with many huge metallic and blackened impurities forms a layer along the floor of the room and the walls and ceiling show scorch marks.

One of the results of the fight against the curse that has gripped the keep has been the creation of this magical flame. The flame was put in place by Radinnal in order to curb the spread of the curse. It quickly burned out everything made of wood in the room (and this fire melted all the glass and metal around as well, forming the twisted and ashy mass of glass and metal seen on the floor - these have since cooled and hardened). However, the magic was twisted by the temporal problems, it has instead become the anchor that keeps the tower from slipping farther out of phase. The door cannot be opened until the flame is extinguished. It can be extinguished either by doing 10 points of cold damage to it in a single round or by pouring a *potion of blackflame* (see the “new Magical Items” sidebar) on it. When this occurs, read the following:

There is a horrible groan as the flame is extinguished. A huge shudder rocks the tower and a wave of intense weakness and nausea sweeps over you. Just as quickly, it passes, and you are once again in possession of your senses.

The party has been swept into the temporal vortex and the castle has slipped from the prime plane into the para-elemental plane of ice (the plane diametrically opposed to the plane of magma, which was the focus of study in the tower). The party will notice nothing different - except that Radinnal and Maelin have vanished from the tower (they are out of phase “up” while the party is out of phase “down” so they can no longer even detect one another) - until they try to return to the Obsidian Keep. The obsidian keep will have been replaced with the White Opal Keep (see below for more details).

33. The Cursed Circle

Various summoning implements - chalk, burnt-out candles, and several grey stones are arranged about the room. A large, glowing blue circle and pentagram floats about two feet off the floor of this room. It almost appears that the circle was traced in chalk, then the chalk raised undisturbed off the floor.

The party is out of phase with the circle (see room 32) by the time they reach it - the very thing that holds them trapped is now inaccessible to them. The circle is incorporeal and can only be affected by force attacks (for example, magic missiles) or ghost touch weapons (one such weapon is found in the White Opal Keep). Treat the circle as having an AC of 10. Once 10 points of damage are inflicted on the circle in an appropriate manner, it winks out of existence in a bright flash, a thunderclap, and a cloud of chalk dust.

34. Memorial to Berutars

The seven walls of this room without a door each bear a mural of the same warrior. Each picture depicts him performing a heroic act. The warrior is tall and mustachioed, wearing shiny half-plate and carrying a glowing greatsword. A statue, evidently of the same warrior, stands in the center of this room.

This room was created by the sage as a memorial to the paladin Berutars, who was an old adventuring companion of the sage. He was slain shortly after the Battle of Verdant Flame. Four of the murals depict him in battle, one depicts him giving alms to beggar children, one depicts him acting as advisor to a long-dead baron, and the last mural depicts him healing the sage.

35. Sage's Bedroom

A plush four-poster bed spread with fiery red bedclothes occupies one side of this room. An old man clad in a dusky red robe lies on the bed motionless. A small table and oil lamp sit next to the bed. Next to the table is a small pile of dusky red fabric.

This was the sage's bedroom. The body on the bed is the sage's. It is still undecomposed and incorporeal. The fabric is the sage's two spare robes. The sage was brought here by Maelin after the accident and after he died in her arms. Maelin often slept here as well. Both Radinnal and Maelin avoid this room as it is too painful for either of them to look upon the sage.

36. Maelin's Quarters

A small mat and a wardrobe are all that fills this room. The wardrobe is partially open, revealing shimmering fabric inside. Next to the mat is a small ceramic cup.

This room **was** Maelin's private space - the wardrobe contains a half dozen beautiful outfits (some a little more - um - revealing than others), all made of a shimmery cloth. Maelin and Radinnal also avoid this room - for Radinnal, it is a reminder of Maelin's innocence and goodness and for Maelin, it is a painful reminder of her relationship with the sage. The cup at one time held wine, but this has long since evaporated, leaving a sticky reddish residue.

37. Study

Bookshelves line the walls of this room and two small desks and chairs sit in opposite corners of the room. One of the desks has a quill and open book on it. The other has a small pile of closed books on it.

The bookshelves contain treatises on all sorts of arcane subjects and is an excellent resource for spell research. The book lying open on the desk is the sage's journal. The last entry is dated two and a half years ago, and mentions a great new summoning experiment to take place the next day. Careful examination of the notes reveals that the sage was trying to summon a magic-wielding elemental from the plane of magma (similar to efreeti and djinni) to teach him magma-related spells, specifically a *cone of lava* spell (like a cone of cold, only with lava).

The White Opal Keep

This transformed version of the keep retains the layout of the obsidian keep, but its walls are made completely of white opal instead of black obsidian. The air is biting cold (see “Environmental Extremes” sidebar) Treasures and Monsters found in the obsidian keep are missing from the white opal keep, as well as the azers’ bones and their metalwork. Furniture remains the same. Changes to each room beyond this are detailed below (if a room has no entry, assume the guidelines given above apply).

Wandering Monsters: There is a 1 in 10 chance that the stirges from area 2 are flitting about, looking for another meal and that they come across the party. See area 2 for their statistics. After the party defeats them, there will be no further wandering monsters.

1. The Giant’s Rest

A huge form dominates this room. A huge blue-skinned humanoid with a fluffy white beard nearly fills the entirety of the room with his mass as he sprawls out in a semi-prone position. A large sack rests at his side. He looks forlornly toward the front archway door of the keep. A gargantuan axe, longer than two humans, is grasped in his enormous right fist.

Changes: The doors are no longer arcane locked and can be opened easily from either side. Outside the keep is the para-elemental plane of ice. Characters will see a blustery, snowy field with razor sharp icicles everywhere. Travel in the para-elemental plane of ice is beyond the scope of this adventure - and for 4th level characters, it probably spells a quick death.

A frost giant stumbled upon the white opal keep during the middle of a hot spell. Seeking relief, he ducked inside. He is too large to move any deeper into the keep and doesn’t realize that he is now trapped in time (every time he opens the doors, it’s still too warm outside). He waits, more or less miserably, for the warm snap to end. Even though it’s cold for the party, it’s still a little too warm for his tastes. When the party enters the room, he eyes them with some interest. He parleys with them if given the chance. If the party has any *blackflame* (see “new Magical Items”), he offers happily to trade his “knife” for it, telling the party that spirits leave him alone when he shows them the knife. He also offers to wrestle with the strongest character - he hasn’t had any exercise and is getting bored. He grapples to inflict subdual damage. Once the character is pummelled to unconsciousness (the most likely event), he laughs, saying, “That was great! You little ones is good sport! Never wrestled little one with such energy! Take the soul knife!” In the unlikely event that he loses the wrestling match, he is a gracious loser (he’s happy to have someone to talk to), and offers them the “knife” and his “handkerchief”.

He has also been bothered of late by the stirges that have made their residence in area 2. They are too small for him to easily hit and he is getting very annoyed by them. If the party brings back the five stirge bodies, he happily gives them his knife, saying it is a small price to pay to be rid of such a large nuisance.

Sandor may also be bargained with for food, trying first to hock his handkerchief, then his knife, and finally his dish. For each ten human-sized meals the party can provide, he will give them a

single item (so a cleric with a *create food and water* spell could make out like a bandit). He does not attack unless absolutely necessary - he isn't in a good mood right now, and frost giants prefer to be merry when they are fighting. If the party thinks of other clever ways to relieve Sandor of his equipment, let them try. Bluff and other such checks should have a DC of about 15.

Sandor, male Frost Giant: CR 9; Large Giant (Cold); HD 14d8+70; hp 133; Init -1 (-1 Dex); Spd 40 ft; AC 21 (-1 size, -1 Dex, +9 natural, +4 chain shirt); Atk Huge greataxe +18/+13 melee (2d8+13 [x3]); Face/Reach: 5 ft by 5 ft / 10 ft; SA rock throwing; SQ rock catching, cold subtype; SV Fort +14, Ref +3, Will +4; AL CN; Str 29, Dex 9, Con 21, Int 10, Wis 10, Cha 11.

Skills: Climb +13, Jump +13, Spot +6.

Feat: Cleave, Great Cleave, Power Attack, Sunder

SQ - Cold Subtype (Ex): Cold immunity, double damage from fire except on a successful save.

Possessions: “Kostorgelmer,” +1 shortsword (see **treasure**), small metal shield +1 (used as a dish), cloak of resistance +1 (used as a handkerchief), bag with five huge loaves of bread (each roughly man-sized)

Treasure: Korstorgelmer, +1 shortsword, *ghost touch* (originally crafted by dwarves, it is made of exceptional steel and has an ivory hilt - value 8,000 gp, 1,200 as a mundane weapon), small metal *shield* +1 (made of steel - value 1,159 gp), *cloak of resistance* +1 (white linen with a blue thunderbolt embroidered in it - value 1,000 gp)

2 and 2a.

A faint buzzing noise fills the room. The door leading to the entry portal of the keep is bent on its hinges, leaning slightly open at the top even though the bottom is tightly closed. Piles of filth are strewn all about here.

Changes: The secret door in this room is open. The room is still littered with garbage and has become the nest for five Fiendish Stirges. These stirges have been feeding well, biting away at Sandor (he inadvertently broke the door between Area 1 and the rest of the keep and now can't keep them out) while he naps. He would dearly like to get rid of them.

Fiendish Stirges (5): CR ½; Tiny Magical Beast; HD 1d10; hp 10, 9, 8, 2, 2; Init +4 (+4 Dex); Spd 10 ft, fly 40 ft (average); AC 16 (+2 size, +4 Dex), Atk Touch +6 melee (1d3-4); Face/Reach: 2 ½ ft by 2 ½ ft / 2 ft / 0 ft; SA attach, blood drain, smite good; SQ Cold and Fire resistance 5, darkvision 60 ft, SR 2; SV Fort +2, Ref +6, Will +1; AL NE; Str 3, Dex 19, Con 10, Int 3, Wis 12, Cha 6.

Skills: Hide +14.

Feats: Weapon Finesse (touch)

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

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

SQ - Cold and Fire Resistance (Su): Ignores the first 5 points of damage from cold and fire-based attacks each round due to its fiendish nature.

7. Wolf's Lair

A huge white beast lays curled up in the corner of this room. It breathes heavily and small crystals of ice seem to be frozen on its fur. Though a pile of straw and other refuse is gathered in an apparent nest on one side of the room, the beast is curled up opposite the straw, as though unwilling to use the warmth offered by such a bed.

Changes: Other than the changes noted above and the absence of the sphinx skeleton, this room is unchanged.

Kegraff entered the keep at the same time Sandor did. Kegraff is not Sandor's pet, but rather another unfortunate caught in the warm snap. However, he is much hungrier (Sandor's bread is fine for giants but not for wolves) and mean-spirited than Sandor and when aware of the party, attacks in the wild frenzy of the starving.

Kegraff, Winter Wolf: CR 5; Large Magical Beast (Cold); HD 6d10+18; hp 51; Init. +5 (+1 Dex, +4 Improved Initiative); Spd 50 ft; AC 15 (-1 size, +1 Dex, +5 natural); Atk Bite +9 melee (1d8+6); Face/Reach 5 ft by 10 ft / 5 ft; SA breath weapon, trip; SQ scent, cold subtype; SV Fort +8, Ref +6, Will +3; AL NE; Str 18, Dex 13, Con 16, Int 9, Wis 13, Cha 10.

Skills: Hide +6, Listen +9, Move Silently +7, Spot +9, Wilderness Lore +1.

Feats: Alertness, Improved Initiative.

SA - Trip (Ex): A winter wolf that hits with a bite attack can attempt to trip the opponent as a free action without making a touch attack or provoking an attack of opportunity. If the attempt fails, the opponent cannot react to trip the winter wolf.

SQ - Cold Subtype: Cold immunity; double damage from fire except on a successful save.

Skills: Winter wolves receive a +7 racial bonus to hide checks in areas of snow and ice. A winter wolf has a +4 racial bonus to Wilderness Lore checks when tracking by scent.

9-12. Closets

Changes: The closets are completely empty and no longer contain cloaks and so forth.

13. Blackflame Hall

Changes: The table and chairs are gone, but the Blackflame remains in the ceiling. It no longer drips, but may be "carried" in this cold climate if a metallic weapon (or other normally non-flammable object) is used as a "torch." The object is destroyed by the Blackflame as though it were a torch burning - after about 10 minutes, the edge of a metal weapon will be useless and a medium-sized weapon is completely consumed in 1 hour.

25. Bridge

The outside of the area is no longer a volcano and lava river, but a glacier and river of mercury. Mercury fumes are poisonous - onset time one minute, initial damage 1d6 temporary Constitution points, secondary damage 1 permanent Constitution point, Fortitude save negates (DC 12), with one save required for every 1 minute (10 rounds) spent on the bridge (+2 to save DC for each previous save required).

Dungeon Features

The three various locales (obsidian keep, flaming tower, and white opal keep) each have their own flavor and distinct features. Each is described in some detail below.

Obsidian Keep

The obsidian keep is, as mentioned in the text for room 1, made entirely of what is known as “electric obsidian”, a black obsidian with veins of blue (leaning towards cyan) running through it. The walls are about a foot thick in most places and the ceiling is about 15 feet high (to accommodate the wizard’s larger visitors). Small (about 2” diameter) air ducts are placed about every 10 feet in the ceiling. These are “S” shaped – that is, they go up from the interior ceiling, curve around and down, then curve back up again to exit through the roof (this keeps the ash out of the keep’s interior). At one time, a *decanter of endless water* was used to provide water for the keep, however, this has long since been broken and destroyed (it is among the destroyed items in room 14). Temperature-controlling spells were used to control the interior temperature of the keep, but these have long since seen their duration expire. The walls, ceiling, and floor (all made of this obsidian for a very monotonous effect) have been permanently ensorcelled with minor variations on the *mending* spell. It is this mending spell that causes the glowing “pulse” in the blue veins of the wall. The walls “heal” immediately when chipped or otherwise harmed, so the walls remain completely intact and more or less impervious to attack. The walls “heal” 30 points of damage per round, though if a single attack does more than 30 points of damage, it will break a (possibly large) chunk away from the wall (and the enchantment on that chunk will be broken). This is how the azers demolished the wall near area 7 – they used a powerful concoction (similar to modern alchemist’s fire only more volatile) to blast the wall for several hundred points of damage. The area, including the hallway, has a fine coat of obsidian powder on the floor, making it slightly slippery. The keep lacks windows (again, the proximity to a volcano made them impractical) and the interior doors are made of a treated wood, reinforced with steel (though the wizard created the keep’s walls himself, he lacked the wherewithal to make the doors he wanted, so he had them brought in). Most doors are unlocked, as the undead and fiendish inhabitants of the keep do not particularly care (in some cases, do not even notice) if the doors are locked and the azers have multiple traps on the door leading from their area to the rest of the keep. Other spells keep lava from coming closer than 5 feet from any part of the keep itself (though not the bridge). And the outer walls and ceiling have minor cleaning enchantments that immediately sweep ash from the walls. The bridge from the keep to the tower is also made of obsidian, with *walls of force* in cylindrical shape protecting the bridge supports from the lava flow. The walls of force match the obsidian shape so perfectly that it appears that the obsidian merely resists the lava.

Flaming (Gray) Tower

The tower is made of a beautiful blue marble, not fully appreciated from the outside due to the soot and other accumulations (this was not ensorcelled to resist soot and ash). The gray flame that surrounds the tower also shuts off the heat from the volcano – the flame itself feels quite cold, though passing through it (to enter the tower) will not harm the party. The interior of the tower is rather chilly and lighter than the keep – all rooms have at least one and possibly two windows in the outer wall. Instead of glass, these windows are enchanted with special *walls of force* that allow air to pass through for ventilation, thus avoiding the problems that a more fragile

material might cause. The tower is very clean, with multiple *unseen servant* spells acting as cleaners and moving through the tower daily to sweep, dust, and so forth. While the gray flame surrounds the tower, the windows throw a flickering, eerie, almost strobe-like light on the interior areas. The tower is silent (save for the sounds the PCs may make) despite resting on an active volcano (more sorcery). The ceiling is 20 feet high in most areas, but reaches 50 feet in the shrine (room 34) and laboratories (rooms 32 and 33). Because of this, the ceiling often has a “skewed” look – one that didn’t bother the wizard but might make the party uncomfortable.

White Opal Keep

This is a small pocket structure created in the para-elemental plane of ice when the party breaks the containment on the circle causing the curse (see room 32). The temporal distortion around causes the party to exit the tower two weeks after the keep is formed, by which time a few creatures will have taken up residence in the keep. The rooms are all empty except as noted – this is basically a hollow shell of the obsidian keep. Except for the material makeup of the keep, it is in all physical respects the same as the obsidian keep.

Concluding the Adventure

Once the curse has been lifted, Radinnal is thankful, though still devastated and broken. He says, “now that the sage is gone, it falls to me to select a new apprentice.” He may select one of the party - an arcane spellcaster if possible, saying, “I will train you in the ways of the Burning Sage so that his legacy will live on, then return to my own country, never to use spells again in atonement for my wrongs. I thought I was wise, but I was foolish. I thought I could teach, but oh, what a price I had to pay for what I learned. I must continue his legacy - that is right - but only long enough to pass it to another before I relinquish it.” This is an opportune time for a DM to introduce his own prestige class to the campaign.

Maelin, too, is grateful for the party’s help. After a ceremonial cremation of the sage, she tells the characters, “I appreciate all you have done for me - and for Radinnal. Though it is true he slew my love, it was not done maliciously and he has paid for it many times over. I cannot justly require more of him. I also am beholden to you for freeing us both.” There are two possible rewards (choose one appropriate to your campaign below).

Option one: Maelin grants the party collectively use of one *commune* spell. “I grant your group a boon - once, when you seek knowledge, seek me - I shall hear your call and do what I can to provide. A majority of your group must agree, however, to use this boon.” When the party asks for her, she appears in one minute with the answer to their question(s) subject to the restrictions of the *commune* spell (having already asked the appropriate powers).

Option two: Maelin offers the party a single metal rod (weighing 10 pounds and made of a silvery metal - value 5,000 gp). If asked, she laughs, “Surely, you are familiar with mithral! You will never find a purer mithral than this, collected from my home plane. Use this to forge yourselves blades worthy of your valor!”

In addition to the rewards, mentioned above, consider awarding each party member a story award XP bonus of 500 XP. The PC who first figures out how to affect the chalk circle in room 33 should receive a 100 XP puzzle-solving award, and the first PC who uses (or suggests using) blackflame to douse the flames in room 32 should receive a 100 XP puzzle-solving award as well.

Appendix A – New Magic Items

Key of Opening: A Key of Opening usually resembles a normal iron key, though it is often covered with fancy designs. Each key carries three knock spells, which are cast as though by a 6th-level sorcerer. The key is activated by touching it to a locked door, at which time it discharges one of the knock spells. When the third spell is discharged, the key crumbles to rust.

Caster Level: 6th

Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, *knock*

Market Price: 300 gp

Weight: negligible

The Staff of the Necromancer: This item is a 6-foot long, 3-inch diameter quarterstaff fashioned of darkwood, with a knot on one end resembling a human skull. It has a hardness of 15 and 30 hp, with a Break DC of 26. The Staff of the Necromancer has the following abilities:

Ray of Enfeeblement (1 charge, DC 14)

Darkness (1 charge)

Enervation (2 charges, DC 17)

Animate Dead (2 charges)

Caster Level: 12th

Prerequisites: *animate dead*, Craft Staff, *darkness*, *enervation*, *ray of enfeeblement*.

Market Price: 47,000 gp for a fully-charged staff (the one used by the necromancer has just 8 charges left, making its value about 7,500 gp)

Weight: 5 pounds

Ring of Coolness: Operates in all respects as a *ring of warmth* (q.v.) except that it protects its wearer from heat.

Oil of Blackflame: This strange stuff is a distillate of blackflame. When poured on an item or individual, it inflicts 1d8+10 cold damage (as a *shocking grasp* spell, only with cold damage instead of electrical damage), with a Reflex save allowed (DC 14) for half damage. If quaffed, it inflicts the same amount of damage with no saving throw allowed.

Prerequisites: access to Blackflame (q.v.) and time.

Market Price: 500 gp

Weight: 1 pound

Blackflame: This usually manifests itself as a flame that casts shadows instead of light, radiates cold instead of warmth, and burns metal instead of wood. Blackflame is extraordinarily rare and cannot easily be moved from the location where it is found. In a single “source” location, it can burn for years without needing metal fuel (unlike Blackflame produced by lighting an item from a Blackflame source and moving it – these Blackflames require a constant supply of metal as regular flame would require a constant supply of wood). A source of Blackflame left in pure darkness will release one drop of Oil of Blackflame per day. If collected, this may be used to make potions of Blackflame – it takes 100 drops to make a single dose of the oil.

Prerequisites: Minor Artifact

Market Price: unknown

Weight: not applicable

Appendix B - Environmental Hazards:

During the course of the adventure, the characters will be in hostile to near-hostile environmental conditions nearly the entire time. For a complete description of penalties and rules for extreme conditions, please refer to the Dungeon Master's Guide, pp. 85-89. Only a very brief summary is given here.

Extreme Heat

When the characters approach to within 300 feet of the Obsidian Keep, they will begin to encounter heat levels of about 95° F – enough to be mildly dangerous.

Effects: These conditions require a character to make a Fortitude save (DC 15, +1 for each previous check) or sustain 1d4 points of subdual damage. Characters wearing heavy clothing or any sort of armor suffer a –4 penalty on their saves. Characters with the Wilderness Lore skill may receive a bonus and may help others (see the skill description, p. 76 of the PH). A character reduced to unconsciousness begins to take normal damage at a rate of 1d4 points per hour.

The air inside the keep is even hotter – about 125° F – this continues to be hazardous (any deviations are noted in the text).

Effects: Fortitude saves are required every 10 minutes instead of every hour.

The bridge (area 25) over the river of lava and a couple of other areas within the Keep reaches 200° F heat – this easily falls into the “abyssal heat” category from the DMG.

Effects: Breathing air in these areas deals 1d6 points of normal damage per minute (no save), and characters must make Fortitude saves as above every 5 minutes. Characters wearing metal armor are treated as though by a *heat metal* spell.

Extreme Cold

The heat is abated when the characters enter the Burning Tower. Unfortunately, the same magical distortions that keep the heat out of the tower have created an area of uncomfortable cold. While in the Tower, the characters will be in temperatures of about 15° F (-8° C). Again, any variation from this in an individual room will be described in the text.

Effects: These cold temperatures require the character to make a Fortitude save each hour (DC 15, +1 per previous check) or sustain 1d6 points of subdual damage. As with extreme heat, Wilderness Lore skill may be used to gain a bonus.

The cold will intensify when the characters move (via dimensional shift) to the para-elemental plane of ice and the White Opal Keep. Here, the cold will be a numbing –40° (F or C). This should be a more or less short jaunt, as the characters should already be familiar with the floor plan of the Keep and will likely be anxious to find a way out of the environmental extremes.

Effects: Temperatures this cold require a Fortitude save once every 10 minutes instead of every hour, though characters in winter clothing will only need to save once every hour.

If the characters suffer any subdual damage, treat them as fatigued until they heal the subdual damage (they are suffering from heat stroke, heat exhaustion, frostbite, or hypothermia).

Once the Tower has been returned to normal, the environmental control spells set in place by the Sage will return to efficacy, and the characters will be in a comfortable environment (by this time, they should be very thankful for such simple gifts) again.

Appendix C - Treasure Value By Location:

1. – 300 gp (mithral)
 3. – 300 gp (brass trees and vines)
 4. – 350 gp (potion, copper vestments)
 5. – 310 gp (mats, spear, sword)
 6. – 350 gp (masterwork brass warhammer)
 8. – 2,505 gp (mask, potion of blackflame, scroll, potions of fire breath)
 13. – 2,760 gp (blackflame potions, masterwork dwarven waraxe)
 15. – 961 gp (gem, silver pieces, potion of fire breath)
 16. – 40 gp (copper pieces and miscellaneous copper ingots and melted blobs)
 17. – 640 gp (two platinum rings)
 19. – 11,500 gp (Staff of the Necromancer, Ring of Sustenance, Ring of Coolness)
 24. – 400 gp (platinum pieces and potion of hiding)
 26. – 180 gp (jasper and amethyst)
 1. (Onyx Keep) - 10,159 gp (shortsword, shield, handkerchief)
- Conclusion Option Two: 5,000 gp (mithral rod)
- Total: 35,755 gp

Appendix D - Creatures and Challenge Ratings by Location

Obsidian Keep

5. Azers (4) – CR 5, 4, 3, 2 – If the party helps them escape, the party should receive half the experience points they would have received for defeating them.
6. Azers (2) – CR 7, 3 – If the party helps them escape, the party should receive half the experience points they would have received for defeating them.
7. Skeleton (Sphinx) – CR 1
8. Half-fiend Bugbear – CR 4, Huge Hellhound – CR 4, Fiendish Krenshars (2) – CR 1 each
14. Fiendish Krenshars (6) – CR 1 each
17. Troll – CR 5
19. Half-Dragon/Half-Troglodyte Necromancer – CR 6
21. Skeletons (6) – CR 1/3 each
25. Magma Mephits (2) – CR 3 each

Burning Tower

27. Maelin (Celestial – Ghaele) – CR 13
28. Radinnal (Allip) – CR 4 – When the party breaks the curse, award them full experience points for “defeating” Radinnal.

White Opal Keep

1. Frost Giant – CR 9 – If the party is able to get the ghost touch shortsword by any means (bargaining, wrestling, etc.), award them full experience points for this encounter.
2. Fiendish Stirges (5) – CR 1 each
7. Winter Wolf – CR 5

Scaling the Adventure

For 1st- or 2nd-level PCs, the obsidian keep will likely be overwhelming. The azers ought to accompany the party and help them against the other foes in the obsidian keep; make the party the leaders and the azers their willing soldiers. Consider making the necromancer a 1st-level sorcerer and do not have her use her Staff of the Necromancer's *enervation* effect. The bugbear should not have potions of fire breath. Give the party a safe haven to rest without interruption between encounters (the azers' area is good for this).

For 3rd-level PCs, run the adventure as written, but have the attacks on the party be straightforward and direct – play everything as horribly hungry and therefore concerned only with procuring food, not with good tactics. The party will likely suffer some heavy casualties (especially against Skizix the troll), so give them plenty of opportunity to rest.

For 5th-level PCs, run the adventure as written. The group will probably be sufficiently challenged. If the group is having too easy a time, add more krenshar and skeleton encounters. Also consider having the sphinx skeleton (area 7) already animated.

For 6th-level PCs, consider changing either the necromancer to a half-dragon/half-medusa or change the bugbear to a kyton (but not both). Liberally add krenshars and skeletons, as the party ought to be able to slice through these rather easily. A couple of extra winter wolves in the White Opal keep might be warranted as well.

For 7th-level PCs, change the necromancer to a half-dragon/half-medusa and change the bugbear to a kyton (this was how the adventure was originally created - before playtesting indicated it needed to be scaled back). Make the azers and frost giant less friendly, and make Radinnal truly insane, not stopping his Wisdom-draining attacks.

For 8th- or 9th-level PCs, apply things as for 7th-level PCs, but add also as many Magma Mephits on the bridge as desired. On the bridge to the White Opal Keep, add Ice Mephits. Also, increase the necromancer's level to be two levels less than the average party level (make sure she has plenty of *summon monster* spells) and give her staff more charges. This makes her a truly formidable opponent, as she will be able to summon many skeletons and creatures from the lower planes to keep the PCs at bay while slowly draining their life with *enervation* attacks from the Staff of the Necromancer.