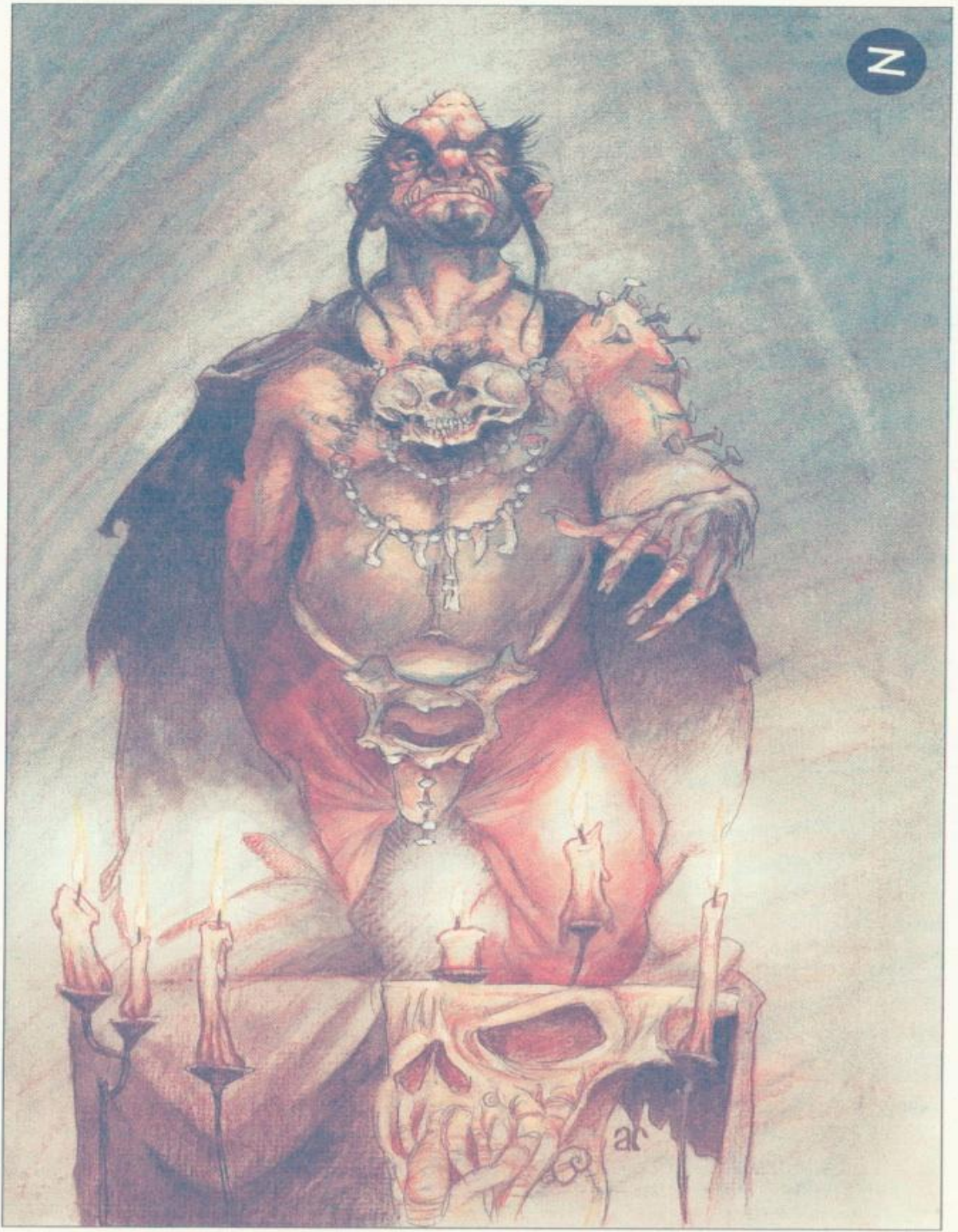


# *Trouble at the Tower of Deryndradin*



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Upon reaching Overland, the pcs will doubtless want to investigate what happened at the tower belonging to Karl's master, Deryndradin. However, they will also be forced to deal with the fallout from their captain's rather draconian methods regarding discipline. Each issue (and the skill challenge(s) and xp rewards applicable) are described separately below.

## ENTERING OVERLAND

When the party approaches Overland, they may take pride in the fact that it is now surrounded by a low berm and a crude pallisade is about 1/5 built. However, when they go to the town square, they find a gallows set up and three local soldiers hanged with signs reading "Deserters" around their necks! An Insight or Streetwise check, DC 10, is sufficient to gauge the community's reaction: they aren't happy at all, and the new government is taking the blame. If the party decides to deal with this issue first, go to *Discipline Like You've Never Seen*, below.

If the party instead starts to investigate the tower, go to *Deryndradin's Tower*, below.

Note that it is quite possible for the party to split up or otherwise work both challenges at once.

## DISCIPLINE LIKE YOU'VE NEVER SEEN

If the party decides to investigate the hanged deserters, they have several different approaches that they can try. First, they can approach Captain Lentor, the man they left in charge of their recruitment effort (see *Lentor's Story*, below). Alternatively, they can ask around on the streets and see what they can ascertain. A Streetwise check, DC 14, informs them that the hanging was performed by Lentor, and he declared that the men had deserted their fellows and dishonored themselves. Further information must come from Lentor himself.

### *Lentor's Story*

When approached by the party, Lentor will relate the following tale: Lentor had been running patrols. Three days ago, one of his patrols was ambushed by a group of Double Javelins skirmishers and they were pretty well decimated. Two men died; the others were lucky to escape with their lives. Immediately, Lentor, the dwarves and his best four human troops set out to punish the skirmishers. They found them quickly, and the engagement that ensued left several of the skirmishers wounded and one dead, with Lentor and his men suffering only a few superficial wounds. Since they had the advantage, they elected to pursue the enemy.

This proved to be a terrible mistake. As they pursued, they encountered a terrifying thing like they had never seen before- a dog-man of some kind strapped into a huge suit of metal armor with weird purple crystals set into it. A single blow from its huge arms tore a man in half, and it was accompanied by more Double Javelins. It was obvious that things had gone sour; Lentor rallied his men, managed to scoop up several badly wounded troops and made a quick travois, and then they fled.

After about an hour, when they thought they were clear, they were ambushed as they retreated. This time the dog-man was not there, but a sudden hail of javelins inflicted more wounds.

"This is when they deserted," Lentor continues. "Each of them was helping to carry men too wounded to walk, but they broke and ran. Not only that, if they *hadn't*, we could have won that fight. As it was, two more men died and we had to run off with our tails between our legs. We found 'em later- they'd ditched their uniforms and we even overheard them talking about how better all the rest of us died than they did. So I made an example of them."

### *Consequences*

The pcs may deal with Lentor as they see fit, but the townsfolk are very unhappy. Soothing them requires a successful skill challenge.

## SOOTHING THE TOWNSFOLK (600 xp)

**Setup:** See above. If a character has a popularity bonus in Overland, the pc may apply it to one of the skill checks she makes during the challenge, deciding whether to use it after making the roll and learning whether it succeeds or fails.

**Level:** 7

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

**Primary Skills:** Bluff, Diplomacy, History, Insight (once opened by Bluff or Diplomacy), Intimidate, Streetwise

*Bluff* (DC 17 or 22; 1 success; 1 maximum): The characters deceive the townsfolk in some way, either falsely claiming to discipline Lantor or making false allegations against the hanged soldiers. (The higher DC is for claims involving the hanged deserters.)

*Diplomacy* (DC 18; 1 success; 6 maximum): The character talks the townsfolk down, soothing them and assuring them that the local boys' lives won't be wasted or using some other honest and forthright approach.

*History* (DC 20; 1 success; 1 maximum): Some of the local population might be swayed by appeals to historical greatness or the like.

*Insight* (DC 13; 1 success; 2 maximum): Not available until a Bluff or Diplomacy check is attempted. By carefully observing the crowd's reaction to any Bluff or Diplomacy checks, the character helps guide the discussion in a manner that helps mollify the angry townsfolk.

*Intimidate* (DC 13; 1 success; 4 maximum): Sometimes throwing your weight around gets things done more easily than anything else. However, some people just won't be intimidated (thus only four successes are available via this skill). Anyone who makes one or more Intimidate checks during the skill challenge will suffer a -1 popularity in Overland hereafter.

*Streetwise* (DC 13; 1 success; 3 maximum): The character uses the "grapevine" to spread pacifying messages through town or something similar.

**Success:** If the party succeeds, they avoid any immediate negative effects from the hangings, and the townsfolk settle down.

**Failure:** If the party fails the skill challenge, each of them suffers a -2 popularity in Overland. Each of the governors must also make a saving throw or instead suffer a -4 popularity in Overland. Finally, there may be further social consequences to come.

## DERYNDRADIN'S TOWER (1200 xp)

The pcs can question the folk of Overland for information about what happened at the tower. Before beginning to make Streetwise checks, the pcs can ascertain little- only that the tower was breached and then a large amount of confusion ensued in the area- some claim the dead were walking, others that the villains were giants, others that dark sorcery clouded their eyes. Getting any real information requires making Streetwise checks as described below.

Dealing with the tower involves a skill challenge split into two phases. The first involves asking around town and trying to breach the wards surrounding the tower. The characters can only move on to the second phase once they have achieved 3 successes with Arcana, Endurance or Thievery to enter the tower.

**Setup:** Characters approaching the tower find it sealed by a visible cage of energy. When anyone approaches too close, a formidable pressure pushes him or her back. The pcs must investigate the tower's breaching with this skill challenge.

**Level:** 7

**Complexity:** 4 (requires 10 successes before 3 failures)

**Primary Skills (phase one):** Arcana, Athletics, Endurance, Streetwise, Thievery

**Secondary Skills:** Nature (once opened by Streetwise), Perception (once opened by Streetwise)

*Arcana* (DC 23; 1 success, 3 maximum): The character attempts to use his skill with the arcane arts to weaken or unravel the wards. A failure doesn't count as a failure in the skill challenge, but the pc is lashed by force and suffers 3d10+5 points of force damage. Any

successes gained with Arcana are removed after an extended rest.

**Athletics** (DC 18; 1 success, 1 maximum): The character attempts to force his way through the wards. Whether the character succeeds or fails, he takes 3d10+5 force damage. If he succeeds, he reaches the front door and gives all further attempts to breach the wards gain a +2 bonus.

**Endurance** (DC 16; 1 success, 1 maximum): The character attempts to run interference while others work and absorb the wards' attacks. A success indicates that the next time a character would suffer force damage from the wards, the damage is negated. Failure deals 3d10+5 points of force damage to the character attempting this check.

**Nature** (DC 13; only after 1 Streetwise success; no successes): Observant characters might wonder where bodokod come from. A successful check indicates that they are found underground and towards the mountains to the west, and a clan of dwarves called the Grumblegolds is the closest seller of the beasts.

**Perception** (DC 16 or 20; only after 2 Streetwise successes; no successes): If the pcs examine the graveyard, they find a number of graves have been dug up. DC 16: However, they were dug up from within, not from without. (This is a clue that the corpses were animated as undead.) DC 20: The pcs find a set of large footprints from a humanoid of some sort, obviously of about 10' in height and substantial weight.

**Streetwise** (DC 8; 1 success, 3 maximum; requires one day): The character asks around on the streets, hoping to learn some of what happened. This skill can gain the pcs the following information, given a few successes:

1 success- Whatever breached the tower arrived in a very large covered wagon, drawn by large beetles called *bodokod*. (This opens up Nature as a secondary skill.)

2 successes- The attack on the tower came in the dead of night; strange spirits and the walking dead were involved. The next morning, a few locals discovered that the town's cemetery had been disturbed and about half a dozen bodies stolen. (If the characters go the graveyard, this success opens up Perception as a secondary skill.)

3 successes- The wagon left after only a few hours. It was headed south. With the bodokod driving it, it would be slow and steady and could have kept moving the entire time since they left.

**Thievery** (DC 23; 1 success, 3 maximum): The character attempts to disturb and disable the wards guarding the tower. A failure doesn't count as a failure in the skill challenge, but the pc is lashed by force and suffers 3d10+5 points of force damage. Any successes gained with Thievery are removed after an extended rest.

**Primary Skills (phase two):** Arcana, History, Insight, Perception, Religion, Streetwise. Each check except for Insight requires one day's time.

**Arcana** (DC 18; 1 success, maximum 3 successes): By carefully looking at the books and documents strewn about the tower and examining what was disturbed, what books have been left open, etc, the character tries to figure out what was the tower's attacker was after. A failure indicates that the character has accidentally obscured some clues, and increases all DCs by one. Multiple failures stack the penalty. Successes yield the following information:

1 success- The intruder got into some old treatises on artifact destruction. It looks like he was trying to determine whether there was a record of something being destroyed, but since he kept ransacking the place it seems like either he found confirmation that it wasn't or else he found no information on it at all.

2 successes- The intruder also looked at a lot of information regarding the Nine Hells.

3 successes- Somehow, the intruder knew right where to look for what he found, information that only Karl and his master should have. However, Karl's master was once the apprentice to the tower's previous lord, and *that* man had two apprentices- Deryndradin and a half-elf named Crulchief. Crulchief was ultimately cast out of the tower when he showed a disturbing interest in demonism. As far as Karl knows, Crulchief went east towards the coast, claiming that he was going to seek a place to call his own.

**History** (DC 21; 1 success, maximum 1 success): Examination of the disturbed documents and notes indicates that whatever the villain's concern was involves events from roughly 2500

years ago. Failure counts against the pcs in the challenge but has no specific consequence.

**Insight** (DC 20; 1 success, maximum 1 success): The attacker's technique shows that he was extremely focused, perhaps even a fanatic of some sort. It also appeared to be taking steps to remain unseen and work quickly, indicating that it is avoiding unnecessary risks, yet it has great physical strength and is full of rage (as indicated by the nature of some of the destruction). An interesting contradiction, indicating that whatever cause it serves, it is more important to the tower's attacker than its own personal desires. A failure does not count against the characters in the skill challenge, but instead leads them to believe that the creature's motivations were strictly personal, probably against Deryndradin himself.

**Perception** (DC 16; 1 success, maximum 1 success in the tower and 1 outside of town): The character examines the things that the attacker appeared to be reviewing in the tower, and ascertains that it wasn't after valuables. Instead, it seems that it was searching for some kind of information- and it appears to have found it, since it left relatively quickly.

If the characters make three *Streetwise* successes, they can examine the ground south of town for tracks. A second success can thus be earned with this skill.

**Religion** (DC 20; 1 success, maximum 2 successes): The character examines the little bits of candle stubs and piles of incense ash in order to deduce more about the intruder's methods and goals. The character gains the following information:

1 success- The intruder was using evil tools- the candles were made from humanoid fat and the like. These are often used by the cults of evil gods, demons and devils.

2 successes- The intruder left other subtler signs as well, and was specifically a demon-worshiper of some kind, although exactly what demon is being worshiped is impossible to determine.

**Streetwise:** This works just as it did in phase one.

**Success:** If the characters succeed at the skill challenge, in addition to whatever other information they pick up, they find a reference that the intruder clearly studied carefully, as evidenced by the presence of a large bloody thumbprint on the page. See **Player Handout 1**. They may have discovered enough information to attempt to pursue the enemy; if they do so, go to *Not So Hot Pursuit*, below.

**Failure:** The characters can glean no more clues about the goals or identity of the intruder, and they miss the handout.

## NOT SO HOT PURSUIT

If the characters learned that the wagon headed south, they may attempt to track it. Doing so leads them along the road towards Woodcut for about a mile, then the trail cuts south overland (across the drier ground further from the creek). The Nature or Perception DC to track the wagon is only 9 once the trail has been discovered (see *Perception* in the skill challenge at Deryndradin's Tower, above, for details on locating the trail).

Unfortunately for the pcs, their quarry has set an ambush in his wake. When the pcs have tracked the deep ruts of the wagon for about 10 miles, they are set upon by a rear guard. These enemies are stationed in brush and behind trees or other obstacles, so pcs whose passive Perception is less than 20 are surprised.

### THE AMBUSH (EL 7 for 7 pcs; 2200 xp)

**Setup:** The pcs are on a plain, essentially flat, with a scattering of concealing terrain (brush and scrubs) and about a half dozen small trees around. If the pcs spot the enemy without being surprised, they do so when the nearest foe is approximately 10 squares away; if the party is surprised, the undead spring the trap from all around.

**Creatures:** This encounter includes the following creatures:

**2 coffer corpse warriors** (level 9 soldiers)

**2 zombie hulks** (MM 275; level 8 brutes)

**1 osteopede** (OG 145; level 8 elite skirmisher)

## CONTINUED PURSUIT

Assuming that the pcs continue their pursuit of the wagon, after another mile they come upon a farmstead that it passed through. There is an ominous lack of activity, and the goats lay dead in the field. A large farm house and a barn are the only buildings.

**Perception DC 15:** *You notice blood around the yard. No noise comes from the farmstead except the moaning of the wind.* **DC 19:** *Some of the blood looks like drag marks leading into the barn.*

If the pcs investigate the house, they find blood splashed about but no bodies. There is nothing of interest within the place. The barn, however, is a different story. Within it is a horror show- including terrible demons.

## THE BARN (EL 8 for 7 pcs; 2500 xp)

The barn was the site of the poor family's sacrifice. The evil villain our heroes are pursuing dragged them in here, then had his undead servants restrain them while he built a crude altar to Orcus, then slew them. Use the "Barn of Death" map.

The barn has a loft reached by a ladder. To one side, a pile of tools has fallen over on itself (this happened during the family's doomed struggles). To the other, the bodies of the family (husband, wife, son and two daughters) lie strangled. Before them is a dead goat; its head has been spiked to the wall and much of the flesh torn from it. Hay bales fill much of the back of the barn under the loft.

**Note:** When tracking initiative, make sure to include a space at the start of the round for the fire that will almost certainly break out. See *hay bales*, under *Features*, for details.

**Creatures:** This encounter includes the following creatures:

**2 blazing skeleton volley hurlers (B)** (level 7 elite artillery)

**1 vortex wraith (V)** (OG 192; level 9 soldier)

**1 fading visage (F)** (level 7 elite controller)

**6 rupture demons (D)** (MM2 60; level 5 soldier skirmishers)

**Tactics:** The blazing skeletons will immediately use their *explosive orbs* when intruders arrive. (This may start a fire if any hay bales get caught in the burst.) They will attempt to remain at range in the loft, firing *flaming volleys*.

The

**Features:** This encounter includes the following features:

**Illumination:** During the day, the loft is illuminated by numerous windows. At night, the barn is dark save for whatever light the pcs bring.

**Ceiling:** The ceiling is 30' above ground level.

**Bodies:** The squares with dead bodies require one extra square of movement unless the creature entering makes an Acrobatics check, DC 10, as a free action.

**Hay Bales:** The hay bales are stacked 10' high; they are blocking terrain but can be climbed with an Athletics check, DC 13. If a hay bale is caught in the area of a fire attack (or if a targeted fire attack misses a creature adjacent to the hay bales), the affected squares ignite. Anyone adjacent to a burning bale at the end of its turn takes 5 points of fire damage. Worse yet, the fire spreads to each adjacent hay bale square at the start of each round. Once an entire stack of bales is alight, any hay bale squares within 2 ignite immediately and creatures starting their turn within 2 squares of it take 5 points of fire damage.

If a square of hay bales under or adjacent to the loft catches fire, the loft must make a saving throw at the start of each round or catch fire. If this happens, it spreads to each adjacent square at the start of each round and any character ending its turn in or adjacent to the burning squares takes 1d10+5 points of fire damage.

Once the fire reaches the walls of the barn, they must save or ignite just like the loft. Likewise, they spread to each adjacent square at the start of each round.

Once the fire has ignited at least 20 squares of the loft and the walls of the barn, the fire grows in intensity. Any creature that ends its turn within 3 of the flames takes 2d8+5 fire damage, and any creature that ends its turn adjacent to the flames gains ongoing 5 fire damage (save



ends).

When the fire has ignited at least 40 squares of the loft and the walls of the barn, it reaches its maximum intensity. Any creature that enters or starts its turn inside the barn takes 4d6+5 fire damage and gains ongoing 5 fire (save ends).

*Loft:* The loft is 20' up. A ladder allows relatively easy travel up and down (Athletics DC 5; by making a check at DC 10, a character may ascend or descend at full speed instead of half speed). The loft is empty except for some loose hay and a bag of dried apples.

*Tools:* The pile of tools is difficult terrain.

Blazing Skeleton Volley Hurler		Level 7 Elite Artillery
Medium natural animate		XP 600
Initiative +7	Senses Perception +6; darkvision	
HP 132; Bloodied 66		
AC 21; Fortitude 17; Reflex 19; Will 18		
Immune disease; poison; Resist 15 fire, 10 necrotic; Vulnerable 10 cold (if the blazing skeleton volley hurler takes cold damage, it cannot use Flaming Volley until the end of its next turn), 5 radiant		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⚔ Blazing Claw (standard; at-will) • Fire		
+10 vs AC; 1d4 + 2 damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends)		
🔥 Flame Orb (standard; at-will) • Fire		
Ranged 10; +10 vs Reflex; 2d4 + 5 fire damage, and ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends)		
🔥 Flaming Volley (standard; at-will) • Fire		
The blazing skeleton volley hurler makes two flame orb attacks.		
💣 Explosive Orb (standard; encounter) • Fire		
Burst 1 within 10; +10 vs Reflex; 3d10 + 5 fire damage; Miss: half damage.		
New Power (standard; at-will)		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages —
Str 14 (+5)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 16 (+6)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 5 (+0)	Cha 7 (+1)

Fading Visage		Level 7 Elite Controller
Medium elemental humanoid (demon)		XP 600
Initiative +6	Senses Perception +4	
<b>Lucidity Control</b> aura 4; At the start of its turn, each enemy in the aura chooses: it takes a -2 penalty to saves until the start of its next turn, it is slowed until the start of its next turn or it takes 5 psychic damage.		
HP 148; Bloodied 74		
AC 21; Fortitude 16; Reflex 19; Will 23		
Immune illusion; Resist 10 variable 2/encounter		
Saving Throws +2		
Speed 6		
Action Points 1		
⬇ <b>Baffling Touch</b> (standard; at-will) • Charm, Psychic		
+11 vs Will; 1d10 + 5 psychic damage, and the target chooses: it falls prone, the fading visage slides it 4 squares or it is blinded until the start of its next turn.		



<b>↩ Visage of Madness</b> (standard; recharge 11)		
Blast 3; +9 vs Will; the target gains vulnerable 10 psychic (save ends).		
<b>➤ Meet Your Enemy</b> (minor 1/round; at-will) • <b>Charm</b>		
Ranged 5; +11 vs Will; the target makes a basic attack at an enemy of the fading visage's choice.		
<b>↩ All You Know is a Lie</b> (free; when first bloodied; encounter) • <b>Illusion</b>		
The fading visage may choose to make up to four squares in the burst difficult terrain until the end of the encounter.		
Burst 4; +9 vs Will; 3d8 + 5 psychic damage, and the fading visage slides the target to any other space in the burst; Miss: half damage, and the target slides 1.		
<b>Evaporating Lucidity</b> (while bloodied)		
The fading visage shifts 3 squares in a random direction at the start of its turn, and any time it deals psychic damage the target is also blinded until the end of its next turn.		
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil <b>Languages</b> Abyssal, Supernal		
<b>Skills</b> Bluff +12, Insight +9, Stealth +11		
<b>Str</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Dex</b> 16 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 13 (+4)
<b>Con</b> 10 (+3)	<b>Int</b> 13 (+4)	<b>Cha</b> 19 (+7)

## CATCHING THE WAGON

If the pcs continue their pursuit, the trail veers so as to pass west of the ruins of Thrushton. The pcs catch up to the wagon along the Goldwash, some three miles upstream of the ruins. The wagon is stopped at a ruined fort and the bodokod have been slaughtered. Another dead goat has been impaled on a stick and set upright before the wagon.

The ruined fort is pretty much only a foundation and a few crumbling walls. A Perception check, DC 21, will find a hidden trap door that looks as though it has been disturbed very recently. Characters going below enter *Quah-Nomag's Escape*.

## QUAH-NOMAG'S ESCAPE (EL 10 for 7 pcs; 3502 xp)

Quah-Nomag is in the midst of performing a ritual that will let him escape to the Elemental Chaos. An Arcana check, DC 20, will ascertain that it is an *Abyssal fall* ritual, which transfer him and his allies to the Abyss. He will attempt to finish the ritual, which requires that he spend five standard actions while upon the dais to do so; however, he will use Favor of Tenebrous and Throw an Elbow liberally, and if he is not bloodied upon spending a fourth standard action towards the ritual, he will pause long enough to fight for a few rounds (until he is bloodied) before making his escape through the portal, throwing out a last taunt as he flees: "Fools, even if you stop me, Zirithian will succeed below!"

The cellar that Quah-Nomag is working his ritual in has been converted to a makeshift temple of Tenebrous.

**Creatures:** This encounter includes the following creatures:

**Quah-Nomag (Q)** (level 10 solo controller)

**4 skeleton soldiers (S)** (OG 77; level 6 minions)

**3 evistros (E)** (MM 54; level 6 brutes)

**Features:** This encounter includes the following features:

*Illumination:* This area has torches in the walls, giving the entire area good light.

*Ceiling:* The ceiling is 20' high.

*Dais:* The dais is raised 2' above floor level; it requires one extra square of movement or an Athletics check, DC 10, to mount. All rituals performed on the dais receives a +3 bonus to the skill check.

*Sarcophagi:* These are difficult terrain, although it is unlikely that any pcs will enter the

areas they occupy.

**Wineracks:** These are blocking terrain but are easily pushed over as a minor action (Strength check, DC 12). If toppled, a winerack attacks each of the two or three squares adjacent to it in the direction it is toppled: +9 vs. Fortitude; **Hit:** 1d10+4 damage and the target is knocked prone; **Miss:** half damage; **Effect:** The attacked squares become difficult terrain until cleared.

**Treasure:** One of the sarcophagi remains intact. It is sealed and difficult to breach, requiring 3 successful Thievery checks, DC 24; a character that obtains 3 failures cannot make another attempt until his Thievery bonus increases. The sarcophagus can also be broken open with a Strength check, DC 25, or by inflicting 200 points of damage. If it is broken open with damage, each of the gems within must make a saving throw or become flawed, losing 90% of its value. The sarcophagus contains the remains of an old knight and his treasure: ten garnets worth 50 gp each, a suit of *ironclad scale armor* +2 (PH3 199) and a *broadsword* +3.

Quah-Nomag, Ogre Servant of Tenebrous	Level 10 Solo Controller
Large natural humanoid	XP 2,500
<b>Initiative</b> +5	<b>Senses</b> Perception +10
<b>Threshold of Death</b> aura 3; Each living creature other than Quah-Nomag that starts its turn in the aura gains vulnerable 2 all until the start of its next turn. Death saves made within the aura suffer a -2 penalty, and a creature that dies within the aura has its soul consumed by Tenebrous.	
<b>HP</b> 416; <b>Bloodied</b> 208	
<b>AC</b> 23; <b>Fortitude</b> 23; <b>Reflex</b> 17; <b>Will</b> 18	
<b>Resist</b> 5 necrotic; <b>Vulnerable</b> 10 radiant	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +5	
<b>Speed</b> 8	
<b>Action Points</b> 2	
⊕ <b>Greatclub</b> (standard; at-will) • <b>Weapon</b>	
Reach 2; +15 vs AC; 2d10 + 5 damage. See also Joy in Dying.	
↩ <b>Greatclub Sweep</b> (standard; at-will)	
Burst 2; Targets enemies.; +13 vs AC; 2d10 + 5 damage. See also Joy in Dying.	
↓ <b>Throw an Elbow</b> (minor (only 1/round until bloodied); at-will)	
+15 vs AC; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed until the end of its next turn. See also Joy in Dying.	
✂ <b>Vitality Siphon</b> (standard; at-will) • <b>Necrotic</b>	
Ranged 10; +14 vs Fortitude; 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, Quah-Nomag gains a +2 bonus on attack rolls until the end of his next turn, and the target is slowed (save ends).	
↩ <b>Fearsome Invocation of the Undead God</b> (standard; recharge	
⊞ ⊞) • <b>Fear, Psychic</b>	
Burst 5; +12 vs Will; 2d6 + 5 psychic damage, and the target moves its speed away from Quah-Nomag (triggering opportunity attacks normally).	
<b>Joy in Dying</b> (while bloodied)	
Quah-Nomag's greatclub and greatclub sweep attacks also push the target 4 or knock it prone when they hit (Quah-Nomag's choice), and his throw an elbow attack also knocks the enemy prone on a hit.	
↩ <b>Favor of Tenebrous</b> (immediate reaction; when hit by a melee or close attack; at-will) • <b>Necrotic, Lightning</b>	
Burst 3; targets the triggering creature; +14 vs Reflex; 3d6 + 5 lightning and necrotic damage, and the target slides 2.	
<b>Alignment</b> Chaotic Evil	<b>Languages</b> Giant
<b>Skills</b> Arcana +12, Athletics +16, Endurance +13, Religion +12	

<b>Str</b> 22 (+11)	<b>Dex</b> 10 (+5)	<b>Wis</b> 21 (+10)
<b>Con</b> 16 (+8)	<b>Int</b> 14 (+7)	<b>Cha</b> 13 (+6)
<b>Equipment</b> Hide Armor, Greatclub		

## SKIRMISHING WITH THE DOUBLE JAVELINS

If the pcs decide to try to find signs of the Miloxi armor wearing Double Javelin dog-man, they can go to the site of the ambush and look around for tracks. It requires only a Perception check, DC 10, to find signs of the armored form headed back towards Woodcut. All indications are that the mercenaries have had enough time to return to base. However, if the pcs follow for five miles, a Nature or Perception check, DC 20, will reveal that the armored form doubled back and headed off across some rocky ground where it wouldn't leave tracks nearly so obvious.

Following this trail leads our heroes to a Double Javelin encampment shielded from view via magic rituals. Unless someone makes an Arcana or Insight check, DC 21, the party won't recognize that they are entering the encampment until they enter its area, and the Double Javelins will gain a surprise round.

### THE DOUBLE JAVELIN SCOUTING CAMP (EL 8 for 7 players; 2475 xp)

Unless the pcs perceive the camp before stumbling into it, they will be surprised. When setting up the battle mat, **do not** include the guy wires (see **Features**, below).

If the Double Javelins gain a surprise round, set them up differently, with the armor-bound canus juggernaut, the worg and the human lackeys towards the pcs and the javelineers in the back.

At the start of round 3, an earthquake begins (see *Features*, below).

**Monsters:** This encounter includes the following creatures:

**1 armor-bound canus juggernaut (A)** (level 12 elite brute)

**3 Double Javelin javelineers (J)** (level 4 artillery)

**1 worg (W)** (MM 265; level 9 brute)

**2 human lackeys (H)** (MM 162; level 7 minions)

**Features:** This encounter includes the following features:

**Earthquake:** Beginning at the start of round three, an earthquake shakes the area that the fight is taking place in. Roll an attack on each creature in the battle at the start of each round: +11 vs. Reflex; *Hit*: 1d10+4 damage and knocked prone.

**Guy Wires:** A character moving into a guy wire square makes a Perception check, DC 20, as an immediate reaction. Failure (or if the pc chooses not to use his immediate action) indicates that the character has run into the guy, suffering 1d6+3 points of damage and ending his move in the guy wire's square. Otherwise, guy wires count as difficult terrain.

**Partial Palisade:** This partially built palisade is 15' high and constitutes blocking terrain. It can be climbed with an Athletics check, DC 20.

**Tents:** The tents are blocking terrain, but an attack on a tent that deals 10 points of damage will collapse it and turn it into difficult terrain.

**Treasure:** If the pcs manage to slay these foes and search the camp, they find a chest holding 1200 gp and an *orb of reversed polarities* +2 (PH 238).

Armor-Bound Canus Juggernaut	Level 12 Elite Brute
Large natural humanoid	XP 1,400
<b>Initiative</b> +6	<b>Senses</b> Perception +15
<b>HP</b> 304; <b>Bloodied</b> 152	
<b>AC</b> 24; <b>Fortitude</b> 25; <b>Reflex</b> 23; <b>Will</b> 24	
<b>Saving Throws</b> +2	
<b>Speed</b> 6	
<b>Action Points</b> 1	

⬇ <b>Tremendous Blow</b> (standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +15 vs AC; 2d10 + 5 damage.		
⬇ <b>Armor Grab</b> (standard; sustain standard; at-will)		
Reach 2; +13 vs Reflex; 2d6 + 5 damage, and the target is grabbed. Sustain standard: 2d6+5 damage, and the target takes a -2 penalty on attempts to escape the grab until the end of its next turn. The armor-bound canus juggernaut can grab only one target at a time.		
⬇ <b>Crushing Grip</b> (standard; at-will)		
+15 vs Fortitude; Only against a grabbed target; 3d6 + 5 damage, and the target is dazed (save ends) and the grab ends.		
⬅ <b>Crackle of Radiation</b> (minor; recharge ⏏) • <b>Radiation, Radiant, Poison</b>		
Burst 2; +11 vs Fortitude; 3d10 + 5 radiant and poison damage, and the target gains 1 RAD.		
⬇ <b>Defensive Blow</b> (immediate reaction; when an enemy moves adjacent; at-will)		
+13 vs Fortitude; 2d10 + 5 damage, and the target is pushed 2.		
<b>Ruthless Opportunist</b>		
When the armor-bound canus juggernaut hits with an opportunity attack, the target is also knocked prone.		
<b>Alignment</b> Unaligned	<b>Languages</b> Common, Canus, Tabaxi	
<b>Skills</b> Athletics +15, Nature +15		
<b>Str</b> 19 (+10)	<b>Dex</b> 10 (+6)	<b>Wis</b> 19 (+10)
<b>Con</b> 22 (+12)	<b>Int</b> 16 (+9)	<b>Cha</b> 16 (+9)

Double Javelin Javelineer		Level 4 Artillery
Medium natural humanoid		XP 175
Initiative +5	Senses Perception +4	
HP 43; Bloodied 21		
AC 16; Fortitude 16; Reflex 16; Will 15		
Speed 6		
⚔ Shortsword (standard; at-will) • Weapon		
+11 vs AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
🏹 Javelin (standard; at-will) • Weapon		
+11 vs AC; 1d6 + 4 damage.		
🏹 Double Javelins (standard; at-will) • Weapon		
Requires two javelins; the Double Javelin javelineer makes two javelin attacks.		
🏹 Throw on the Run (standard; recharge ⏏ ⏏) • Weapon		
The Double Javelin javelineer moves 4 and makes a ranged basic attack. It gets a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement.		
Alignment Unaligned		Languages Common
Str 16 (+5)	Dex 17 (+5)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 10 (+2)	Cha 12 (+3)

## AFTERMATH: AN UNEXPECTED VISIT

If the pcs manage to slay the armor-bound canus juggernaut, the Miloxi armor is damaged past the point of usefulness. An expert in the ancient ways of radiocrystal might be able to repair it, but our heroes could easily fully destroy it. If they do, while they camp that night, they are

visited by an unexpected figure: the mysterious dwarf druid Nom.

Nom approaches them just before they lay down to sleep and the first watch starts. He emerges from the shadows and bows to our heroes, congratulating them on having made a very wise decision in destroying the armor. He says:

*"I am certain that you have many questions, and although I cannot answer them all, I can answer some. As you know, I am a druid- but I am of a sect called the Gray Druids. We dwell deep underground, where the cycles of nature rely on fungus rather than your strange green plants. You have weather; we have seismics. But I digress. The Gray Druids are little known to our cousins on the surface; many have never even heard of us. Because we dwell deep, ancient secrets of the surface filter down to us over time as they are buried in the sands and dust of eons and forgotten by your folk. So it is with radiocrystal.*

*"You have seen these weird crystals with their violet radiance. You know they are dangerous to those too close to them. Well, I can tell you that they were the central source of the power of an ancient empire of a cat-like folk called tabaxi. They dared to harness the powers of radiocrystal, and in the end those powers destroyed them.*

*"When radiocrystal artifacts are discovered by those of us that dwell below, they often cause sickness and death. They can pollute water sources, contaminate valuable minerals, turn thriving ecosystems into a memory. They are always dangerous, and though sometimes they can be harnessed for a brief time, it is best to remember the hubris of the tabaxi. Far better to destroy these things, or at the least to hide them away where the mad remnants of the tabaxi and their experiments- such as that canus you battled- can never find them.*

*"To that end, I am a member of another organization. Composed not merely of druids, nor merely of those of us that dwell deep below the surface, this organization is called the Crystal Breakers, and we are dedicated to wiping out all knowledge and memory of the radiocrystal artifacts, and to destroying such artifacts wherever they might be found. We would like to offer you membership in our cause."*

He will pause for basic questions, and can give the party basic information along the following lines:

- The Crystal Breakers are a secret organization, and they would prefer to remain unknown to most. (The lure of the knowledge they have could attract very dangerous attention indeed.)

- He was not watching the party, he was watching the canus.

- The radiocrystal that the party gave him previously has been destroyed in a device called a Lead Furnace.

- If the party agrees to join the Crystal Breakers, they must first complete a task for the organization: slaying a radiation-warped hydra in the hills to the south.

- If they join, they will be given a surface contact.

- If they tell Nom about their harassment by the druids, he can arrange to have the non-Shadow Circle druids stop attacking, but the Shadow Circle is certain to be hostile.

**Quest XP:** At this point, each pc should receive 350 quest xp.

**Treasure:** As long as the pcs don't turn hostile, before he leaves Nom gives them the following items: 3 *potions of vitality* (PH 255), a +3 *gambler's dagger* (AV 69), a suit of +2 *rat form leather armor* (AV 48), a +2 *cloak of survival* (AV 250), a pair of *branchrunners* (AV 127), a pair of *green thumbs* (AV 135), a *cap of water breathing* (AV 138) and a *survivor's belt* (AV 167).

# PLAYER HANDOUT #1

From the tome *Reflections on the Eternal*, by the noted sage Witterfine, penned almost 1500 years ago:

Permanent disposal of artifacts and relics is very difficult. Usually each has but a single method of destruction that will permanently undo its existence, and the method is always obscure and difficult. This is the answer to the ignorant question: Why are so many artifacts of evil and destructive nature hidden in vaults, secured by wards or otherwise locked away when they will inevitably surface again? The answer is plain: destruction is not always an option.

It is possible to take steps to ensure that an artifact or relic remains hidden, but since they often have their own sentience, it is very difficult—some say impossible—to work out a permanent solution. Guardians age and die or can be destroyed; traps can be disarmed or wear down over centuries or millennia of time; spells fade or are triggered. Even burying an artifact is no guarantee of long-term prevention of its recovery and/or misuse.

Some extremely creative methods have been devised over the aeons to secret artifacts and relics away, from the mostly dangerous (the Staff of Saint John is said to have been fed to the Chromatic Dragon) to the outrageous and expensive (the Delphinate was said to have hired itself out for an incredible annual sum to contain a pair of dangerous Melian artifacts, the Electron Harness and the Radiation Claw). Others have been contained at the center of a large sequence of epic warding magic (the Staff of Sekolah), while still more are simply wielded (Clumsy and the Rod of Seven Parts, the Deleter, etc).

A few artifacts and relics can be rendered powerless or destroyed if the Power involved in its forging (if any) can be slain. Deep in the Astral Sea, the floating petrified corpses of dead gods sometimes rest next to the shattered remains of the tools they once invested. However, this is a very dangerous proposition in and of itself, and it is equally likely that destroying the artifact or relic is a necessary precursor to the destruction of the Power. Moreover, some artifacts and relics survive the destruction of their related Power and serve to transform a later wielder, restoring the Power to life and puissance.

Perhaps the most creative and, perhaps, effective method ever used to conceal an artifact or relic was the River Lethe. Using a powerful ritual, the ancient eldritch liege Lillamere burned all memory of an artifact, leaving it hidden deep in the Hells. What artifact? Nobody remembers, of course. The beauty of this method is that not only is any memory of the artifact's existence forgotten; even the artifact itself, if it has any lingering sentience, cannot recall its intention to free itself. Indeed, only one document mentions Lillamere himself allow this author to even mention this! One wonders if His Majesty had indeed stumbled upon the perfect method to hide an artifact forever. Alas, without reaching the impossible heights of magical mastery that he had attained, it is impossible for anyone to replicate his ritual...