

BECKON

OF THE

BEAST



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AN ADVENTURE FOR CHARACTERS OF 5TH TO 7TH LEVEL

BECKON OF THE BEAST IS A FIFTH EDITION adventure for three to six characters of 5th to 7th level, optimized for a party of four 6th-level characters. In the remote wilderness, a converted fort has fallen to the machinations of a dangerous cult. Thorne Beastcaller, the charismatic and ruthless leader of the Beast's Bloodletters, has been freed from his imprisonment and now prepares a ritual that threatens to unleash monstrous forces upon the realm. Can the heroes infiltrate the fort, rescue its imprisoned guards, and stop Thorne before his blasphemous ceremony reaches its crescendo? This adventure takes place in Cartosia, but the names of people and places can be changed to place this adventure in any rugged forested environment across a variety of campaign settings.

BACKGROUND

For centuries, the remote fortress of Rhinehaven Fort stood as a bulwark against the threats lurking in the wilderness beyond the borders of civilization. Its thick walls and commanding position atop a rocky outcropping made it an ideal defensive position, occupied by a succession of garrisons tasked with safeguarding the realm's frontiers.

In recent years, as the borders of civilization pushed ever outward, Rhinehaven Fort's strategic importance waned. The garrison was reduced, and the keep fell into a state of mild disrepair. It might have been abandoned entirely were it not for the sudden emergence of a sinister cult known as the Beast's Bloodletters.

Led by the megalomaniacal warlock Thorne Beastcaller, the Beast's Bloodletters began as whispers in the dark corners of taverns and cryptic symbols carved into ancient trees. Thorne claimed to have uncovered forbidden rituals capable of channeling the essence of an entity he called Miagon (MEE-aggon) — an ancient deity of destruction, transformation, and chaos. Through these rites, Thorne promised power and rebirth to those who would follow him.

As the cult's influence grew, so too did the swath of destruction left in its wake. Two villages were ransacked, citizens were kidnapped for dark rituals, and parts of the wilderness itself seemed to twist and corrupt in their presence. Most terrifying were the beastmen—humans transformed by Thorne's magic into monstrous, animal-like creatures of savage strength and unwavering loyalty.

It was only through the combined efforts of several local lords that Thorne and his inner circle were finally captured. Seeking a secure location to imprison these dangerous fanatics, the coalition settled on Rhinehaven's Fort. Hastily converting the old fortress into a specialized prison, they renamed it "the Gaol" and interred Thorne and his lieutenants in its deepest chambers.

Victory, however, proved short-lived. Underestimating both the cult's resources and Thorne's connection to the

Miagon, the coalition watched in horror as a force of beastmen laid siege to the fort mere weeks after Thorne's incarceration. The Gaol's comparatively meager defenses were overwhelmed, Thorne and his lieutenants freed, and the tables turned as the former guards found themselves locked in the very cells they once guarded.

Now, Thorne and his followers linger in the battered remains of the fort, interrogating their captives and preparing for a grand ritual. Deep in the bowels of the gaol, Thorne believes he can fully manifest an aspect of Miagon into the Material Plane, ushering in an age of bestial dominion. As the full moon approaches, time grows short to prevent this calamity.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

There are several reasons why the party might be compelled to infiltrate the gaol and confront Thorne Beastcaller. A few of these reasons are outlined below:

The Desperate Plea. The coalition, its resources stretched thin and its confidence shaken, has chosen to abandon the gaol as a lost cause, seeking to reassess and petition for further aid from greater powers. But one member, unwilling to accept defeat, approaches the party in secret. They explain the dire situation and the threat Thorne poses to the entire region. Offering a substantial reward (1,000 gp per party member), they implore the heroes to infiltrate the fort, free any surviving guards, and put an end to Thorne's machinations.

A Personal Vendetta. One of the party members has a personal connection to someone who was kidnapped or transformed by the Beast's Bloodletters. Perhaps a family member, mentor, or old friend. They've traced the cult's activities to the gaol and see this as their chance for rescue or revenge.

The Curious Occultist. A scholar specializing in ancient religions and cults has been studying a perceived resurgence of dark god worship. They hire the party to infiltrate the gaol and recover any texts or artifacts related to Thorne's rituals. The scholar believes that understanding these rites is crucial to preventing future incursions by gods of evil and chaos.

THE GAOL

The gaol, formerly Rhinehaven Fort, speaks to its former glory and recent devastation. The keep's conversion into a prison and subsequent assault by the Beast's Bloodletters have left it in a state of disarray. Its surface levels bear the scars of recent conflict, and though its subsurface prison remains intact, it is permeated by the atmosphere of lingering malevolence that envelops the site. Unless otherwise stated, the gaol's features are described as follows:

Ceilings, Walls, and Floors. The fortress was built centuries ago using large blocks of granite. The above-ground section shows significant damage from the recent siege. Ceilings in the main chambers and corridors reach 15 feet high, while those in smaller rooms are 10 feet high. Many ceilings show damage, with some partially collapsed. The underground prison has uniformly 10-foot high ceilings, reinforced to prevent escape attempts.

Floors throughout are worn smooth, though strewn with debris on the surface levels. Walls are two feet thick. The gaol's outer walls can be climbed with a successful DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

Unstable Stonework. The aftermath of the beastmen's siege has left the gaol structurally compromised in many above-ground areas. As a result, some spells or activities may have consequential effects. A spell such as fireball or thunderwave has a 20 percent chance to cause a ceiling collapse twice the size of the spell's area, dealing 16 (3d10) bludgeoning damage to all creatures in the area. This collapse might block or bury objects or exits.

Doors. Interior doors are made of thick oak reinforced with iron bands. They have AC 13 and 25 hit points. Many doors on the surface levels show signs of damage, with some hanging askew or completely torn from their hinges.

Light. The assault on the gaol left many windows shattered and sections of the roof collapsed. During the day, most above-ground areas are brightly lit by natural light. At night, cultists maintain torches and braziers in occupied areas, providing dim light. The lower level of the gaol is lit throughout by torches in wall-mounted sconces.

Cultists. Members of the Beast's Bloodletters share no typical uniform. They each, however, bear a scar depicting eight arrows in a radial pattern on the back of their right hand—a Mark of Miagon. Unless and until their potential deceit has been discovered, characters who are able to replicate this scar through prestidigitation or other means have advantage on all Charisma checks to engage with cult members within the gaol.

Beastmen. Beastmen are monstrous, animalistic hybrids born from the corrupting influence of chaotic energies. Once human, these creatures have been warped by exposure to dark chaos magic, transforming them into savage beings that blend humanoid and bestial traits. They roam the wildlands, drawn to areas saturated with chaotic power. While often acting independently, beastmen can be temporarily bound to the will of powerful chaos worshippers who know the right rituals, such as Thorne Beastcaller. It was a summons issued directly from Miagon that temporarily united a horde of beastmen, allowing them to overwhelm the gaol's defenses and free Thorne from captivity. Many of these beastmen have now dispersed, but Thorne is powerful enough to retain control of a few that remain at the gaol.

- **Beastmen** use **minotaur** statistics.

- **Beastmen Ravagers** are beastmen further warped and corrupted by the magic of chaos. They use **minotaur** statistics with the following changes:

- Their AC is 15 (natural armor).
- **New Ability: Chaotic Frenzy.** The reaver channels chaotic energy to make three melee attacks. If two or more of those attacks hit the same target, the target must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or be stunned until the end of its next turn.

APPROACHING THE GAOL

The gaol's positioning on a rocky outcropping provides it with unobstructed views across the surrounding hillsides. While an advancing army would surely be spotted, the brush and tree cover provides ample opportunity for a smaller party of adventurers to approach undetected. A party approaching the gaol off-road that makes a successful group DC 11 Dexterity (Stealth) check can reach its walls without being noticed by the cultist scouts perched atop the tower (area 4). This group check is made with advantage if the party approaches from the southwest, opposite the tower.

If the party approaches the gaol conspicuously by walking the road that meets its front gates, they will be coldly greeted by the cultists from the tower, accompanied by the beastmen from the courtyard, who demand to know their business while simultaneously ordering that they return from where they came. Providing an answer that prevents the cult from attacking requires a successful DC 10 Charisma (Persuasion) check, as they are deeply suspicious of outsiders. Convincing the cult that the party has meaningful business inside the hideout, such as a meeting with their leader or an item to deliver, requires a successful DC 20 Charisma (Persuasion) check, at which point the cult will allow the party to enter, though they must be accompanied by at least one cultist at all times.

RAISING THE ALARM

Any cultists that spot the party on the surface level of the gaol will move to raise the alarm by ringing the bell that stands in the center of the courtyard (area 3). No such bell exists in the below-ground area of the gaol, it is possible that yelling or the sounds of combat may not alert the occupants there, at GM discretion. If the bell is rung or the alarm is otherwise raised throughout the gaol, GMs can refer to the following to help inform how the gaol's occupants react:

- Beastmen from the courtyard (Area 3) move to secure the entrance and patrol the upper levels.
- Cultists in the kitchen (Area 10) arm themselves and begin searching the lower levels in groups of three.
- Gringus the Jailer retreats to the cells (Area 9) and prepares to use prisoners as hostages if necessary.
- Hirovane in the Interrogation Room (Area 18) begins a hasty ritual to summon minor demons (four imps) for defense.

- Thorne in the Isolation Chamber (Area 17) confidently moves to patrol throughout the gaol's upper and lower levels, eager to face any intruders directly.

The following areas are keyed to the provided map of the Gaol:

I. UPPER RAMPARTS

The once-proud walls are now a patchwork of destruction and hasty repairs. Gaping holes punctuate the battlements, offering glimpses of the wild landscape beyond. Splintered wood and piled rubble litter the area.

The upper ramparts offer a commanding view of the surrounding area, though much of the defensive advantage has been lost due to the extensive damage. If the party approaches the gaol conspicuously, the cultists from the tower will move to this area to greet them. A single ballista remains intact overlooking the road, though it is too damaged to properly fire its bolts. Characters and cultists can walk a full circuit of the fortress from this vantage point, though they must navigate carefully around areas of collapse and instability that are bridged in places by wooden ladders laid horizontally over the debris.

2. GATEHOUSE

The gatehouse is clear evidence of the ferocity of the recent assault. Its heavy wooden doors hang askew, splintered and charred. The portcullis is a twisted mass of iron, frozen half-raised. Rubble from the partially collapsed upper level spills onto the ground, creating uneven footing.

The gatehouse, once the fortress's primary point of entry and defense, now lies in ruins. The roof has entirely collapsed, leaving the interior exposed to the elements. Debris from the upper level makes fills the center of the room and makes traversal difficult.

Treasure: Hidden Cache. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a glint of metal, revealing a small, battered strongbox wedged between the rubble. The box contains the gatehouse guards' pay: 50 gold pieces and a pouch of semi-precious stones worth another 25 gold pieces.

3. COURTYARD

The once-orderly courtyards now present a chaotic landscape of destruction and makeshift fortifications. Shattered stonework and splintered timber litter the ground. Hastily erected barricades of rubble and sharpened stakes create some perimeter defenses for both the outer and inner yards. In the center, a grotesque altar of mismatched debris and rubble, ringed by bones and body parts, rises ominously. The air hangs heavy

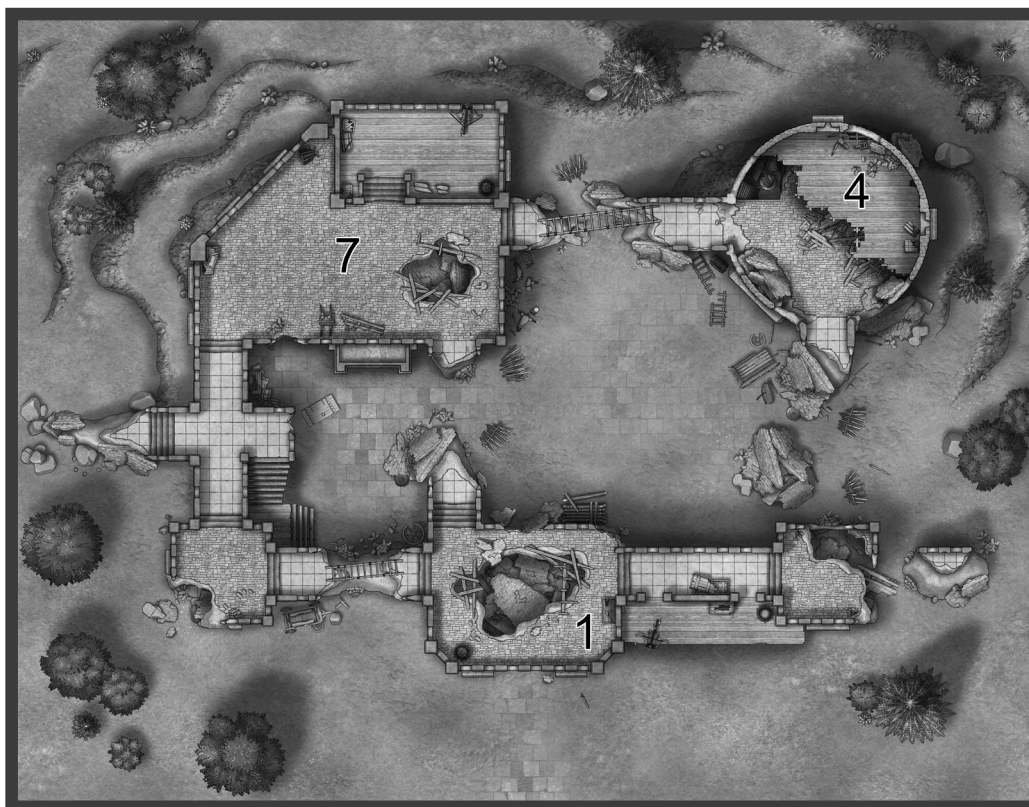
with an acrid, musky scent mingled with the sickly-sweet odor of decay.

The distinction between the outer and inner courtyards has blurred due to the partial collapse of the dividing wall.

Hazard: Altar of Chaos. The altar, constructed from the rubble of the fallen gaol, is adorned with disturbing symbols crudely painted in blood and viscera. Characters who approach within 10 feet of the altar must succeed on a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw or be afflicted with horrifying visions of their own transformation for the next hour, suffering the effects of the poisoned condition as they retch and struggle against the visions. A character can repeat this saving throw every five minutes, ending the effect on a success.

Patrolling Beastmen. A group of two **beastmen** and a **beastman ravager** constantly patrols the courtyards and the outer perimeter of the gaol. They move in an irregular pattern, hungry for destruction and alert for any signs of intruders. The patrol takes approximately ten minutes to complete a full circuit. Characters can attempt to hide or sneak past the patrol with a Dexterity (Stealth) check against the beastmen's passive Perception. If the beastmen notice any intruders, they attack immediately and fight savagely until they are slain.

RAMPARTS



BAILEY



4. TOWER UPPER LEVEL

Portions of the outer wall of this tower have crumbled away, offering a dizzying view of the surrounding wilderness. Makeshift repairs of wood and canvas partially shield the interior from the elements.

This area serves as the primary lookout post for the Beast's Bloodletters. Despite the damage, it still offers an excellent vantage point over the surrounding area. A ladder leaned against the rubble provides access to the tower's bottom level.

Encounter: Cultist Lookouts. Two **cult fanatics** are stationed here at all times, keeping watch over the surrounding area. They are alert but not expecting trouble, giving them a passive Perception of 11. If they spot intruders, one will immediately move to sound the alarm bell in the courtyard (Area 3) while the other engages in combat as necessary.

5. STOREROOM

Broken crates and shattered barrels litter the floor, their contents long since pillaged. Tattered sacks and scraps of cloth are strewn about, evidence of a thorough ransacking. A few intact shelves cling stubbornly to the walls, mostly bare save for a few unremarkable items.

This room, once the fortress's primary storage area, has been thoroughly looted by the Beast's Bloodletters. Most valuables and useful supplies have been taken, but a thorough search might reveal something overlooked.

Treasure: Hidden Cache. A character who spends at least 5 minutes searching the room and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a loose stone in the wall behind one of the shelves. Behind this stone is a small cavity containing a pouch with 250 gp and two potions of superior healing.

6. MESS HALL

The acrid smell of death assaults your senses as you enter what was once the fortress's mess hall. Overturned tables and shattered benches are scattered across the room, evidence of a fierce struggle. Dark stains mar the stone floor, leading to a horrific sight in the far corner—a pile of corpses, the fallen defenders of the gaol, unceremoniously stacked like cordwood.

This large chamber, once a place of communal meals and camaraderie, now stands as a grim reminder of the brutal assault that overwhelmed the fortress. A dozen corpses are piled here, the bodies showing signs of both combat wounds and post-mortem mutilation. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Wisdom (Medicine) check can determine that some of the bodies have been drained of blood, likely for

ritualistic uses. A staircase descends to the gaol's lower level (marked with an 'X').

Encounter: Vermin. The room's state has attracted vermin. Touching any of the corpses in the room causes a **swarm of rats** to scurry out and swarm the nearest creature, clawing and biting at any exposed flesh. The rats immediately disperse once attacked.

7. EMPLACEMENT

Large, cracked stone slabs form in this wide, open area form a level platform, clearly designed to support heavy equipment. Scorch marks and deep gouges mar the surface, telling of recent, fierce combat. Steps descend to a low parapet, damaged in several places.

This area was once a formidable defensive position, designed to house siege weaponry. Now, that siege weaponry has been destroyed, its shattered pieces littering the area. There is nothing of value to be found here.

8. SECURITY OFFICE

This cramped room bears the hallmarks of administrative efficiency turned to chaos. A sturdy desk dominates the space, its surface cluttered with scattered papers and overturned inkwells. Filing cabinets line one wall, some with drawers hanging open. A board on another wall displays various notices and duty rosters, now partially obscured by spatters of dried blood.

This room was used to log any comings and goings to and from the prison by staff and captives. Among the notices on the wall, one blood-stained document stands out—a warning about increased beastment activity in the surrounding forest, dated just days before the gaol fell.

Security Ledger. Characters who make a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check amidst the mess of documents in this room can locate a large, leather-bound ledger, which includes detailed records of prisoner movements, guard rotations, and security protocols. A character who makes a successful DC 10 Intelligence (Investigation) check to sift through this ledger reveals the location of a hidden weapons cache in the armory (area 16), as well as the location of the secret door in the captain's quarters which leads to the arcane suppressor room.

9. CELLS

This large, open chamber is dominated by the presence of numerous cells. Iron-barred enclosures line the perimeter of the room, their dark interiors barely visible in the dim light. In the center of the space, a cluster of cells stands like a grim island, creating narrow walkways around its edges. The air is thick with the stench of unwashed bodies and a musky, animal odor. Dim torchlight casts flickering

shadows across the stone floors, and the occasional moan or growl echoes off the walls.

This area contains multiple cells, each roughly 10 feet square. Most cell doors are closed and locked, and can be opened with a DC 15 Dexterity check using thieves' tools or with the keys carried by Gringus the Jailer (see page X). Multiple sets of doors exit to the east and west.

Partially-Transformed Prisoners. Three cells containing prisoners in various stages of transformation. In one cell, a man writhes on the floor, his skin sprouting patches of coarse fur. Another cell holds a figure hunched in the corner, their hands already transformed into bestial claws. The third contains a prisoner whose transformation is nearly complete, pacing on newly-formed hooves and ramming the bars with nascent horns. These transforming prisoners are in constant agony and cannot communicate coherently. If released, they attack indiscriminately. Each uses **beastman** statistics but with half the normal hit points.

Imprisoned Guards. Two cells contain a total of four imprisoned guards (use **veteran** statistics). They are weakened from their ordeal (half normal hit points) but can provide the following information if rescued:

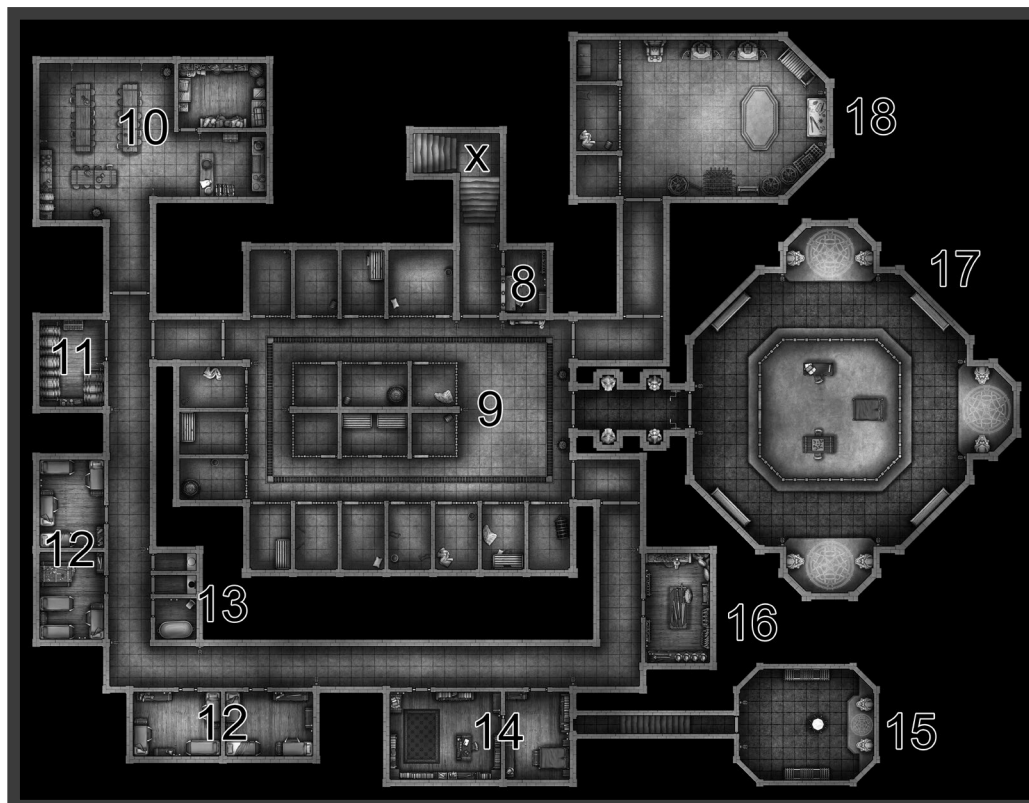
- Several other prisoners have been removed from the cells and never seen again. Others, after being touched by Thorne, have begun to transform into beastmen.

- There is a nearby armory where the guards can recover their weapons and assist the party in retaking the goal. They are willing to die fighting the Bloodletters, if necessary.
- The cult has disabled the gaol's arcane suppressor—it may be possible to reactivate it, though the guards don't have the required expertise. The gaol's presiding wizard was slain during the assault.
- A jailor named Gringus carries the keys to the cells, and patrols the halls in the company of two beastmen.

GRINGUS THE JAILER

Gringus, a hunched and wiry man with a perpetual sneer, serves as the Beast's Bloodletters' jailer. His left eye is milky white and unseeing, while his right darts about nervously. Clad in stained leathers adorned with crude symbols, Gringus patrols the gaol's lower hallways, accompanied by two loyal **beastmen**. He carries a ring of keys that unlock all the cells in Area 9, as well as various other doors throughout the lower level. Gringus uses **cult fanatic** statistics but replaces his dagger with a vicious barbed whip (1d6 slashing damage). He's a coward at heart and will attempt to flee if cornered. If captured, Gringus can be persuaded to reveal information about the gaol's layout and the cult's plans with a successful DC 14 Charisma (Intimidation) check.

CELLS



10. KITCHEN

If the cult hasn't been alerted, the party can hear sounds of revelry from within this chamber echoing throughout the lower levels of the gaol.

The scent of charred meat and spilled ale hits you as you approach this large chamber. Raucous laughter and the clinking of tankards echo from within. The gaol's kitchen has been transformed into a makeshift feasting hall for the Beast's Bloodletters, who revel in their retaking of the fort.

This area serves as both a functional kitchen and a gathering place for off-duty cultists. The atmosphere is rowdy and tense, with cultists celebrating their recent victory and preparing for the upcoming ritual. A few long tables and cooking surfaces fill the space, and a door opens to a pantry in the far corner of the room, which contains a reasonable stock of provisions that the cult is quickly bleeding dry.

Encounter: Celebrating Cultists. The cultists here are drinking, eating, and engaging in boisterous conversation. They are not expecting trouble and have a passive Perception of 10 due to their inebriated state. In total, there are three **cult fanatics**, ten **cultists**, and a single **beastman** that lurks against the far wall of the room. If combat breaks out, all occupants fight to the death. If interrogated, any captured cultists can gleefully reveal the location of Thorne, as well as the fact that a major ritual to call forth Miagon to the Material Plane is being prepared. They are otherwise uncooperative and willing to suffer in service to the cult.

11. COLD ROOM

The temperature in this chamber is noticeably lower than the rest of the gaol. Barrels line the walls, and various cuts of meat hang from hooks suspended from the ceiling.

This room serves as the gaol's cold storage area for perishable food items. There is nothing of significant value here.

12. GUARDS' QUARTERS

These interconnected rooms once housed the gaol's guards. Now, they've been repurposed by the Beast's Bloodletters. The scent of unwashed bodies and animal pelts is pervasive.

This area consists of several rooms, formerly used as living quarters for the guards. Bunk beds and personal lockers, many ransacked, line the walls of the sleeping areas. A common area features tables and chairs, now littered with half-eaten food and empty bottles. Discarded guard uniforms are mixed haphazardly with cultist robes and animal furs, reflecting the space's new occupants.

Encounter: Cultists. Four **cultists** are resting in these rooms. They attack any intruders that they notice, and fight loyally to the death.

13. PRIVY

The privy reeks of excrement and is scrawled with bloody graffiti. A flayed skull has been left atop one of the holed benches. There is nothing of value to be found here.

14. CAPTAIN'S QUARTERS

This pair of rooms, once the private domain of the gaol's captain, now serves as a planning area for the Beast's Bloodletters. Maps and documents are strewn across a large desk. Shelves of books line the walls.

The main room serves as a study, and adjacent is a bedroom featuring a four-poster bed, now occupied most often by Hirovane (see area 18), Thorne's chief ritualist.

The shelves in these rooms hold several dossiers on various prisoners, including Thorne and his lieutenants. A character who makes a successful DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check can quickly locate Thorne's file, which provides an overview of his known history, associates, personality, and suspected affiliated spies. A character who has reviewed this file (which takes a total of five minutes) has advantage on any Charisma checks made in dialogue with Thorne.

Treasure: Hidden Compartment. A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals a hidden compartment in the desk. Inside is a potion of mind reading and a scroll of *silence*.

Secret Door. A switch in the bookshelf against the east wall of this room requires DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check to notice, and activates a secret door that opens into a narrow corridor leading to the arcane suppressor (area 15).

15. ARCANE SUPPRESSOR

The air here feels thick and heavy, as if charged with latent energy. Intricate runic patterns cover the walls and floor, their faint glow pulsing erratically. In the center of the room stands a large crystalline apparatus, its light dim and faltering.

This room holds the arcane suppressor which neuters magic in the isolation chamber (area 17). The central crystal structure is surrounded by four smaller crystals at cardinal points. Each crystal is connected to the central structure by faint, flickering lines of energy. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals that the apparatus is still functional but operating at minimal capacity. A casting of *detect magic* reveals an aura of abjuration magic emanating from the crystal structure.

Reactivating the Suppressor. Characters can attempt to restore the suppressor's functionality through a series of Intelligence (Arcana) checks. Each successful check restores some functionality and provides a cumulative effect against any spellcasters in the isolation chamber:

- DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check: Stabilize the energy flow. All spellcasters within the isolation chamber have disadvantage on spell attack rolls and creatures have advantage on saving throws against their spells.
- DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check: Amplify the suppression field. Spellcasters within the isolation chamber can only cast spells of 3rd level or lower. Attempts to cast higher-level spells automatically fail, expending the spell slot.
- DC 20 Intelligence (Arcana) check: Restore critical functionality. Spellcasters within the isolation chamber can only cast cantrips.

Each check requires one minute of dedicated focus. A character can repeat these checks, but on a failed check, the character takes 2d8 force damage as the unstable arcane energies lash out.

16. ARMORY

Racks of weapons line the walls of this fortified chamber, and sturdy wooden chests are stacked against one wall. The air is thick with the scent of oil and leather. Despite signs of recent rummaging, the room remains well-stocked with arms and armor.

This room serves as the gaol's primary armory, containing weapons and armor for the guards. The Beast's Bloodletters have clearly helped themselves to some of the equipment, but much remains.

Treasure: Hidden Cache. A character who makes a successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check notices a slight discoloration in one section of the stone floor. Further investigation reveals a hidden compartment containing a *wand of counterspell* (like the *wand of fireballs*).

17. ISOLATION CHAMBER

This octagonal chamber emanates an aura of otherworldly power. Three magical circles dominate the room, their arcane energies pulsing softly with an orange light. The room is covered in frenzied, chaotic writings—a mixture of prayers, treatises, and mad ravings scrawled on parchment. A large cell fills the center of the room, its iron bars gleaming in the mystical glow. Within the cell, you can see a pair of desks and a simple bed, all bearing signs of recent, frenetic use.

This chamber, meant to hold him, has become Thorne's personal sanctum and the focal point of his connection to Miagon. The magical circles in the room function facilitate the arcane suppression field that the cult had disabled.

Encounter: Thorne Beastcaller. Thorne (use **archmage** statistics) is found here, either within the cell or just outside it, deep in communion with Miagon. He is a tall, gaunt figure with wild eyes and skin that seems to shimmer and shift subtly. His voice carries an unnatural resonance, as if multiple entities speak through him. Thorne exudes an aura of manic intensity and absolute conviction, his every movement and word pulsing with barely contained chaotic energy. He barely acknowledges the party's presence, viewing them as insignificant insects in the face of his impending apotheosis. When reduced to 0 hit points, Thorne's body convulses and transforms into a **glabrezu**, an avatar of Miagon. This form fights until truly destroyed.

Treasure: Thorne's Spellbook. Amid the chaos of papers on one of Thorne's desks within the cell is his spellbook, containing all of his prepared spells plus three additional spells of the GM's choice. The book itself is bound in shifting, iridescent leather and is worth 500 gp to the right buyer.

18. INTERROGATION ROOM

The stench of copper and decay assaults your senses as you enter this dimly lit chamber. What was once an interrogation room has been transformed into a macabre ritual space. Jars and vials of dark, viscous liquid line the shelves along the walls. In the center of the room, a corpse rests on a large stone table, stained with blood and surrounded by arcane symbols painted on the floor. On the left side of the room, three smaller alcoves are sectioned off by iron bars into holding cells for those awaiting interrogation.

Thorne's lieutenant and ritualist, Hirovane, prepares this room for the Miagon summoning ritual. Several corpses occupy the holding cells, drained of their blood.

Encounter: Ritualist Hirovane. Hirovane (a **mage**), Thorne's chief ritualist, is present in this room. She is a stout woman with pale, almost translucent skin and deep-set eyes that gleam with a mix of religious fervor and barely contained madness. Her demeanor oscillates between cold, calculating intelligence and bursts of manic energy, especially when discussing the "glorious transformation" that Miagon will bring. She is fanatically loyal and will fight to the death to protect the ritual preparations.

Treasure: Hirovane's Belongings. If the party defeats Hirovane, they may acquire an ornate dagger used for bloodletting worth 75gp, a *pearl of power*, and her spellbook, worth 300 gp.

AFTERMATH

The resolution of this adventure hinges on the party's success in defeating Thorne and thwarting Miagon's manifestation. If successful, the Beast's Bloodletters cult is effectively dismantled, though some members may have escaped. The gaol is liberated, and surviving guards can be freed. Local authorities will likely enlist the party's help in restoring order to the region and possibly tracking down escaped cultists. Thorne's writings may interest magical researchers, but also pose risks if they fall into the wrong hands. Any surviving beastmen in the surrounding wilderness will need to be dealt with, and the party may face difficult decisions regarding partially transformed prisoners.

Should Thorne escape or the ritual succeed, even partially, the region faces an immediate threat from Miagon's growing influence. Nearby settlements may need to be evacuated as the wilderness becomes increasingly corrupted. The party could be enlisted to lead a larger force against Thorne and his empowered cult, or to research ways to banish or seal away Miagon.

REFERENCES

This work includes material taken from the System Reference Document 5.1 (“SRD 5.1”) by Wizards of the Coast LLC and available at <https://dnd.wizards.com/resources/systems-reference-document>. The SRD 5.1 is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License available at <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/legalcode>.

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