

GORGON IN FAIRFLOW

By Elven Tower and Dungeon Mapster

Designed for use with

ShadowDark RPG



LEVEL 4 ADVENTURE

A MID-LEVEL SHADOWDARK ADVENTURE ABOUT UNCOVERING A TERRIBLE CONSPIRACY

THE GORGON

ADVENTURE PRIMER

Please, it's all the gold I could gather. Something rotten eats at the core of our poor city. I don't know who is guilty but surely you can root them out.

Father Donovan



ut of the primordial fears that assail mankind since the beginning of time, one stands out as particularly vicious. Most are afraid of the devilish entity that can turn a person to stone with its gaze. Such being has many names: the medusa, the crone, the gorgon. It is commonly portrayed in paintings and carvings as a winged human female with living, venomous snakes in place of hair. Its most dangerous feature was its ability to turn those who looked into her eyes to stone. Legend has it that those who fall victim to a gorgon's gaze are forever gone. Some scholars theorize of an antidote but all evidence remains inconclusive.

THE MOUNTAIN GORGON

A GORGON NAMED Valeska lived in a series of uncharted caverns under a mountain range. She reigned unimpeded. Valeska commanded the respect and fear of several goblin and dwarvish tribes. For decades, the arrangement worked. Valeska, the gorgon queen, was aware of the underground dwellers' contempt when they came to pay her tribute. They showered her with gifts and riches to appease their ruler and escape the terrible fate of becoming a stone statue. However, one day the goblins and dwarves rebelled. They came at Valeska with mirror shields and fighting strategies that avoided looking at the gorgon directly. Some of them were still turned to stone but Valeska was unable to stop them all. They stormed her underground palace and drove her off the mountain.

A NEW HOME

VALESKA TRAVELED FOR 6 months before moving into the underground depths of Fairflow, 3 months ago. She has decided to have a less prominent profile and attempt to rule from the shadows. Things changed fast. These days, in Fairflow, important individuals know of the mighty gorgon under the city and respect her as the de-facto ruler while maintaining a facade of normalcy.

People suspect that things are amiss but believe that a criminal organization is behind it all. Innocents have gone missing, politicians have been replaced, and taxes have been increased steeply without any real reason for doing so. Covertly, a few individuals seek answers as law-enforcement forces are believed to be involved.

ADVENTURE HOOKS

Level 4 Adventure

HIRED BY THE COMMONS

The commonfolk in Fairflow's extended districts, represented by Father Donovan, discreetly offer a bounty for investigating the strange happening in the city and tracking down the criminal mob leader (40 gp, 4 XP).

SEEKING THE SPIRITS

Varden, a city watch soldier, suspects that his superiors are in on the strange conspiracy occurring in Fairflow. He has heard of the characters' exploits and summons them to the tavern in Fairflow's High District to share his scandalous suspicions that the captain and the mayor must have colluded with the criminal guild (0 XP).

MONSTER HUNTERS

A dwarf named Balka tried to track Valeska since she left her lair in the mountain range. Her tracks went dry near Fairflow. Balka offers a reward on behalf of Clan Harken for bringing the gorgon's head as a trophy (60 gp, 6 XP).

RUMORS

d10 Details

- 1 A human statue lies to the south of Boat House, at the bottom of the canal. Jack, the miller, might know about it.
- 2 The former mayor was replaced 3 months ago. Mayor Gontti disappeared one day. The new authorities claim he had to leave in a hurry but no one saw him leave town.
- 3 Captain Carlsen suddenly became strict and merciless when collecting taxes and tithes. He has grown deaf to the townsfolk's needs, caring only about the money.
- 4 The new mayor, Perkins, and a group of new Speakers passed new laws that negatively affect the low classes.
- 5 No one has seen Bartosz, the court wizard, in weeks. His magical door-gate won't let anyone inside his tower.
- 6 Despite the bad rumors, there is little crime in Fairflow.
- 7 The jailhouse under the town hall is empty. People arrested for any alleged crimes simply disappear.
- 8 Jack, the miller, claimed he saw something until Captain Carlsen paid him a visit. Now, he is silent and obedient.
- 9 There has been an increase in traffic of barges to the east. Merchandise is always well covered in rags.
- 10 An old legend of a devilish woman with evil eyes and snakes for hair has resurfaced recently for some reason.

FAIRFLOW

Strange happenings go down at the Boat House. I've seen many a suspicious skiff leaving at night with covered cargo. They leave through the east canal.

Varden

Fairflow is a small city that was settled along the riverbanks of the Blue Stones River. At the city's heart, engineers have modified the river flow through the use of canals that redirect the flow and direction. In some areas of the thriving borough, people move on skiffs and barges. The Blue Stones River flows from the north into Fairflow's canal network and then exits through the east. Many merchant barges sail east to sell their wares in the dozens of smaller settlements that exist downstream.

The High District of Fairflow (depicted on the next page) is where the most important individuals in town reside and work. The mayor, the captain of the city watch, the court wizard, and dozens of wealthy individuals call this place home. The High District is surrounded by nine other burghs (not illustrated in the map), commonly referred to as the Extended Districts. The commonfolk, the peasantry, and the lower classes live there.

Valeska arrived 3 months ago and bullied the rulers into submission. Those who refused became the first statues in her newfound lair. The remaining scaffolding of government bows to her whims. Many out of fear, a few out of sincere admiration and zealotry. The rulers have illegally raised taxes and tithes without the crown's consent. The surplus of gold and goods is siphoned out of Fairflow through the east canal and into Valeska's Lair under the city. The gorgon's lair was once an extension of the jailhouse when the city was founded but an earthquake cut that section of the compound off. Now, it is only accessible through a side tunnel outside of town. The barges appear to leave town but they bring the goods to the tunnel and ship the goods back into Valeska's Lair.

Village Features

► **Events.** Check for Random Events each time a new area is visited. There is a 3-in-6 chance for an event.

► **Weather.** Fairflow is in a region with a temperate climate with mild summers and rough winters. There is a 4-in-6 chance it rains each day during the rainy season.

► **Ambiance.** People in Fairflow are worried about the recent happenings but unable to do anything about it while its government colludes with Valeska. Most people do not know. Those who do are too afraid to talk.

RANDOM EVENTS

d8	Details
1	A court courier arrives with a tax caravan. The mayor invites him in but the tax man never leaves. Captain Carlsen then drives the caravan off using force.
2	Four soldiers surprise the characters and demand they surrender half of their wealth as a ' <i>special foreigner tax</i> '.
3	The mother of Carmine, a missing soldier, asks for help. Her son was on a merchant barge when last seen.
4	Two men are hanged for refusing to comply with the new taxes in front of the Town Hall. The grim audience watches but no one dares defend the poor fellows.
5	A statue that closely resembles Tarnish the local beer brewer is found near the tavern. The man is missing.
6	A random character feels a strong compulsion to explore the wizard's tower. This is Bartosz asking for help.
7	A crowd gathers outside the Mayor's Manse asking for more lenient taxation. Captain Carlsen (knight) shows up with ten soldiers and disperses the crowd violently.
8	Four dwarves from Clan Harken arrive in town looking for a gorgon. Hours later, Captain Carlsen tells them lumberjacks up north saw it in the forest. They leave.

TAVERN

The plights in Fairflow do not appear to assail the patrons of the unnamed tavern in the High District. Many wealthy individuals can withstand the higher tithes and many have found a way to mutually benefit from Valeska's reign. Both Father Donovan and Varden (see **Adventure Hooks**) await the characters' appearance. Upon meeting, they invite the party to a private booth to converse. The priest knows little about the current affairs but Varden shares his suspicions of Captain Carlsen's involvement with whatever the criminal faction is doing. Varden also assures them that many people have gone missing near the Boat House across the street.

WINDMILL

A week ago, a man refused to obey the captain's orders. The captain and a hooded person visited him and brought him to the Boat House at night. The poor lad was turned into stone and dropped into the canal. Jack, the miller witnessed this after leaving the tavern. He started talking about it until the captain visited him and threatened to have him suffer the same treatment. Jack fears for his life. So, he may only share what he knows if the characters inspire confidence (**Reaction** check).



BOAT HOUSE

The Boat House used to provide local transport and accessibility to merchants but it was closed off to the public weeks ago. The foreman, a man named Haldo, is happy with the new arrangement as he takes some of Valeska's riches on the side for himself and his crew. They currently load a barge to move silver and export goods to the gorgon's lair tonight. The characters are not allowed inside. If they insist, the twelve laborers (**peasants**) attempt to subdue the characters and bring them to Carlsen.

The contents of the barge are part of the shipment that the crown expects within two weeks but that Valeska plans to keep. It is worth 300 gp in assorted goods.

TOWN HALL

Each one of Fairflow's nine extended districts is represented in the Town Hall by an elected Speaker; with the Mayor presiding over the gathering. They make the laws that have so changed the life of the peasantry in Fairflow. Civilians are not allowed into running sessions. It is known that the only person that votes against the new developments is Speaker Vadra. Despite her position and opinion, Valeska ordered that she be left alone as a facade. Alas, there is little she can do on her own.

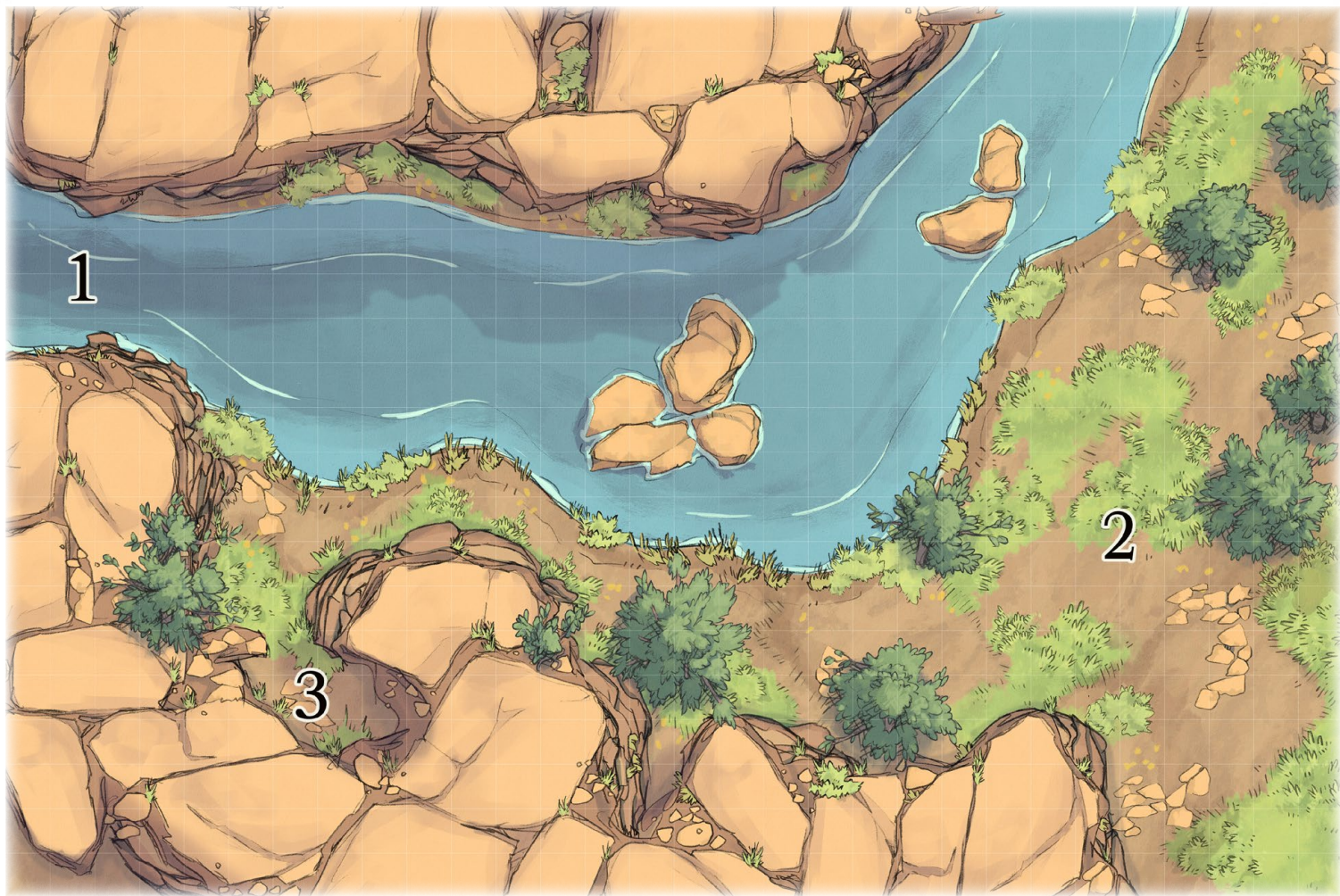
MAYOR'S MANSE

The mayor can only be reached by requesting an audience. A successful **Reaction** check allows the characters to secure an audience within 1d4 days. If confronted, Mayor Perkins denies any accusations and claims that he and his peers follow the crown's commands; advising the characters to travel to the west to petition the crown to change things. He is always guarded by six **soldiers**.

WIZARD'S TOWER

Days after Valeska arrived, the previous mayor defied the gorgon. Before being turned into stone, he managed to tell her that she was no match for Bartosz, the wizard. Valeska came to the tower and had a fierce confrontation with the mage. Bartosz tried to use a binding ritual on Valeska but the spell was reflected by the gorgon's abilities and he became trapped in a specially prepared containment vase. The tower's door is sealed magically. A spellcaster can open it with a DC 15 spellcasting check.

Bartosz (level-3 wizard) is freed by opening the vase that rests in the entrance hall. He is starving, has 1 HP, and STR of 5. Still, he offers to help. He confirms the presence of a gorgon in Fairflow and how dangerous her gaze is. He doesn't know where her lair is located.



THE RIVERSIDE SMUGGLING

SEVERAL TRAILS OF evidence point to the Boat House and the secretive shipments sent downstream. The characters may come here on a boat, following one of Foreman Haldo's barges, or follow the barge on land. They find people loyal to the gorgon by the riverside, half a mile from the city gates. The crew unloads the boat into a cart to bring the goods to the hidden tunnel (area 3).

1. BLUE STONE RIVER

Beyond the city canals, the Blue Stones River becomes a slow-flowing stream along a 20-foot-deep fjord. The average depth is 30 feet except by the beach-like riversides. The fjord is too narrow for full-length oars or to extend large sails. Most vessels use short oars and poles to navigate the narrower sections of the rocky buffs.

2. THE RIVERBANK

The crew has orders to arrest any witnesses. If the characters have not yet encountered Foreman Haldo (**peasant**), he is here. There are six **peasants** and two **soldiers** with him. During the fight, if any become demoralized, they surrender and claim they acted under duress. They say Captain Carlsen has a nefarious ally that can turn people into stone. Foreman Haldo does not yield. He curses those who reveal any secret information.

3. THE HIDDEN TUNNEL

The underground passage is half hidden by rocks and greenery. The mine-like tunnel was originally built as a secret escape route for the mayor and other important officials. It connects to the lowest level of the jailhouse under the Mayor's Manse. It was seldom used and got eventually blocked off after an earthquake cut off access to that level. Valeska is mildly irritated by all the moving around to get to the lair so she has demanded Mayor Perkins open up the blocked corridors to avoid using the canals at all. The masons claim removing the debris without caution might cause a collapse. Still, they work faster than recommended under the threat of death.

The half-mile tunnel leads to area 1 of the Gorgon's Lair. The characters find two blocked-off tunnels that lead up to the upper levels. Careful inspection reveals that seismic activity destroyed them (DC 14 INT check).



This adventure belongs to a series of collaborative projects that involve other Patreon creators. This one-shot adventure features work by [Elven Tower](#) and amazing cartographer [Dungeon Mapster](#).

THE GORGON'S LAIR

Pitiful mortals... Thou shall not dare stand in my way and thwart my ambitions. Look into my eyes and understand your position. Thine lives are forfeit.

Valeska, the Gorgon



After coercing the local governance into submission, Valeska settled her lair in the difficult-to-reach level of the jailhouse, deep beneath the Mayor's Manse. The higher levels were too overt for her taste and did not include the useful barracks and interrogation rooms found herein.

The secrecy of the lair is useful but the hassle of the secret tunnel and the river transportation downstream has turned from a convenience to a complication to settle matters and pass down orders. Mayor Perkins has a team of masons at the higher levels trying to dig their way down here and create a more direct passage. The masons' prompt work has caused the structure to become unstable (see **Structure Integrity** below). The dungeon is unlikely to collapse on its own but the mining explosives found in area 5 may be used to precipitate this event, should the characters find it a plausible strategy.

Dungeon Features

► **Danger.** Risky. Check for a random event every 2 crawling rounds and after loud noises (3-in-6 chance).

► **Light.** Some chambers have braziers with permanent light; the rest are dark. Only the gorgon is dark-adapted.

► **Structural Integrity.** Any explosion, ponderous magical burst, or an extremely loud noise may cause the structure to shudder. Loose debris falls on a random creature and deals 3d6 damage (DC 15 DEX check).

RANDOM EVENTS

d6 Details

- | d6 | Details |
|----|--|
| 1 | Captain Carlsen (knight) and two soldiers move toward area 1 to reach the secret tunnel. They speak about moving merchandise downstream to sell elsewhere. |
| 2 | Four soldiers approach the characters from the cells (area 7). They are loyal to Carlsen and attack on sight. |
| 3 | A man bearing wounds of torture has escaped. He approaches the characters. Carmine has been missing for days. He was on a merchant barge and saw the operation on the riverside. He refused to obey Captain Carlsen. |
| 4 | The characters stumble upon a petrified soldier with a scared visage who displeased Valeska only hours ago. |
| 5 | Two dwarf guards approach. They were sent by Clan Harken to investigate the gorgon. They join the party. |
| 6 | Two soldiers come from area 1 hauling a bound man crying for help. He is brought to area 7 for questioning. |

1. ENTRANCE HALL

The long, descending staircase leads to a landing and carries on further down. The cracked masonry of the walls does not inspire confidence in its structure.

The characters' arrival may alert the distracted guards in area 2 (see below) unless they are careful and attempt to approach stealthily (DC 13 DEX check).

► **The Walls.** Inspection of the masonry for 1 crawling round, reveals that the whole compound is unstable and prone to collapsing. The inspection also reveals the seal of Saint Terragnis on some blocks. It is a human custom to mark jails in such a way (DC 14 INT check).

2. BARRACKS

The chamber contains a makeshift dining table, a checkers board, and stacking bunk-beds by the wall.

Two **soldiers** and four **guards** are in this room. Some rest while others eat and play checkers. If surprised, there is a 2-in-6 chance that the group surrenders as they are unarmored and their weapons are sheathed. One of the guards attempts to escape down the stairs to area 7 to alert the rest of the garrison. If that occurs, the men there ready their crossbows for an ambush (see area 7).

3. LATRINES

The dark chamber contains a latrine with wooden scaffolding consisting of four seats. The pungent smell is stomach-turning and eye-watering; almost unbearable.

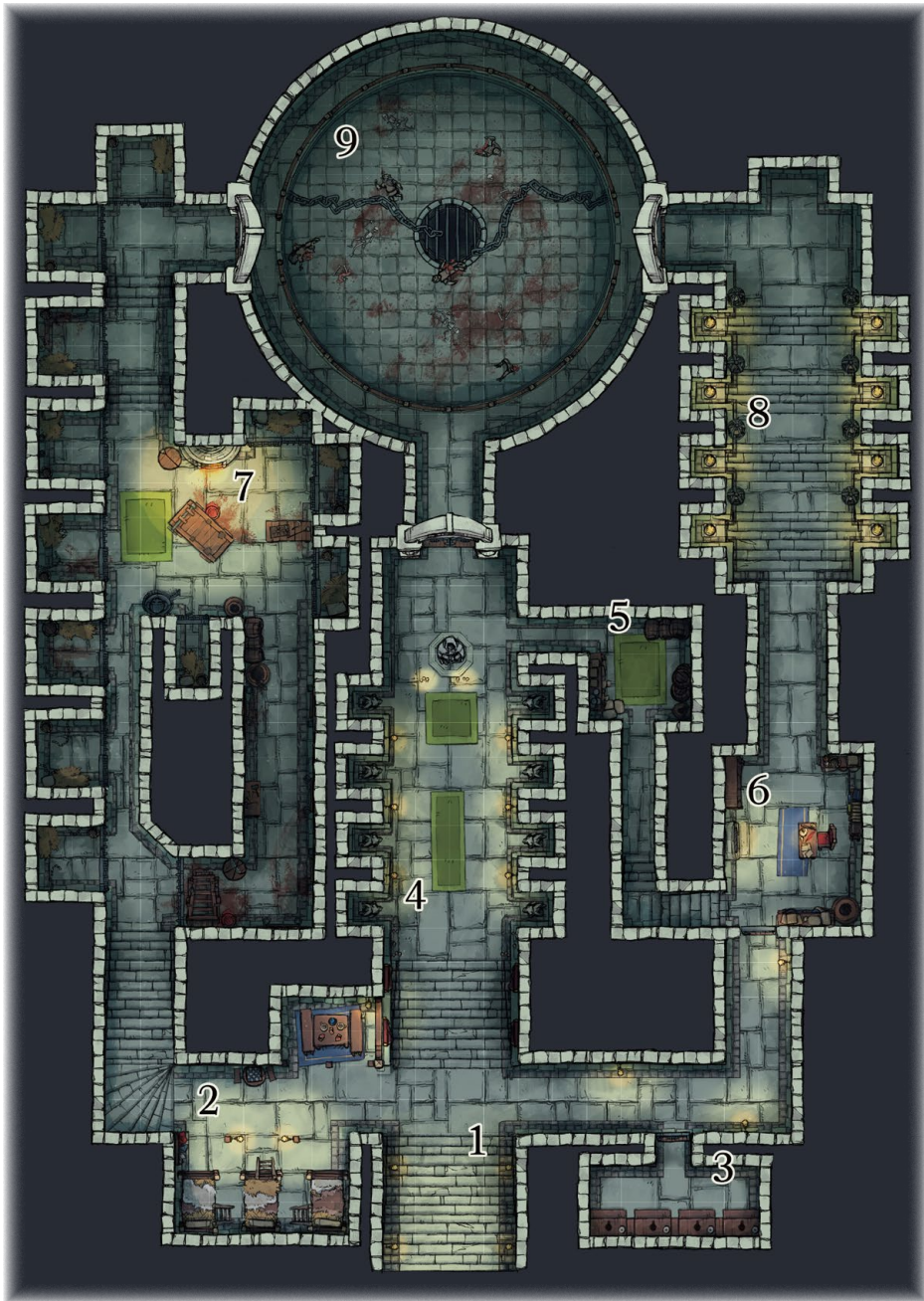
► **Treasure (3 XP).** A soldier has stolen valuables from area 5 and stored them in a metal box under the seat of the easternmost latrine seat. It contains 20 gp, a golden bracelet (15 gp), and a ceremonial dagger (10 gp).

4. HALL OF SAINT TERRAGNIS

Eight stone cherubs on stone plinths hug the walls and flank a 10-foot-tall statue of Saint Terragnis. The knight's emerald gaze appears to follow the faithful.

► **Blessing.** A faithful follower of the sacred knight who spends 1 crawling round praying earns a **luck token**.

► **Cursed Treasure (3 XP).** If a person dares steal Saint Terragnis's emerald eyes (15 gp each), they are cursed for 27 days to roll all checks with disadvantage.



5. STORAGE ROOM

The room contains wooden crates and barrels stacked from floor to ceiling and bunking shelves.

Trading goods and a small amount of coinage are stored here by Valeska's goons in recent weeks. The gorgon has ordered Captain Carlsen to set up merchant routes to turn this into gold. Alas, the captain is a slow partner.

► **Explosives.** A crate of mining explosives can be used in any large chamber to bring collapse the structure. The fuse string is 15 feet long, making detonation a truly dangerous affair (DC 18 DEX check, see **Conclusion**).

► **Treasure (6 XP).** The room contains barrels of grains and wine (30 gp), sacks of flour (10 gp), porcelain pieces (100 gp), a box of spice (70 gp), 10 gp, and 250 sp.

8. DESCENT OF DESPAIR

Poor men clamor for mercy from inside eight hanging cages along a descending staircase. The lads bear gruesome marks of torture and mistreatment.

Six men were placed here after they refused to obey Captain Carlsen and the subsequent torture session. Half of them were members of the city watch, the rest are innocent witnesses of the captain's nefarious activities.

If released, the prisoners are too weak to leave but they are grateful to their mysterious saviors. They also warn the characters of Valeska, the gorgon. She is often found in the large, round chamber below. The prisoners claim that she has used her petrifying gaze on some prisoners but would rather bully the rest into submission. That is why Captain Carlsen has kept most people alive.

6. INVENTORY ROOM

A woman named Innara is Carlsen's accountant for this operation. She also is a corrupt Speaker at the Town Hall.

► **Innara.** The amoral woman (**peasant**) claims to be here under duress if confronted and begs to be 'rescued'.

► **The Books.** Innara profits from Valeska's goals and as long as she plays along, she can illicitly enrich her estate by cooking the books and deceiving the gorgon. A careful study of the books for 2 **crawling rounds** reveals that she embezzles 10% of the proceeds.

► **Treasure (2 XP).** The room contains two crates of fine wine (20 gp each), seven sacks of grain (10 gp), and a leather sack with 4,600 cp.

7. CELLS AND TORTURE CHAMBER

The room contains twelve cells and a rich assortment of torturing devices which have seen recent use. Half the cells are occupied by witnesses of the recent supply runs and by soldiers who refused to obey Captain Carlsen.

Seven **guards** and two **soldiers** are in this room. If they become alerted of the characters' intrusion, they turn over some tables as makeshift covers and set up crossbows on them pointing toward the south stairs (area 2). These soldiers are loyal to Captain Carlsen and do not betray the cause. Nothing scares them more than the gorgon and the prospect of becoming petrified.

9. THE GORGON'S LAIR

A round chamber with a 30-foot-tall ceiling and a grated shaft in its center. Scattered bones, dismembered parts, and petrified people litter the grim room.

Macabre spectacles were once held in this location. Prisoners condemned to death were pitted against terrible beasts for entertainment while the rich placed bets on who would last longer. All this was done in secrecy and was Fairflow's deepest secret a few years ago until the last mayor put a stop to it. Now, Valeska calls it home.

Valeska (**gorgon**), Captain Carlsen (**knight**, unless the party fought him elsewhere), and four **guards** await the characters here. By now, the gorgon is most likely aware of the attack on her lair by the characters. She is surprised by their boldness and foolhardy behavior but her primordial disdain toward mankind prevents her from being afraid. Alas, if the battle turns deadly, she tries to parley and offer a cut of the operation but does not yield.

GORGON

An immortal woman of striking features and green eyes with coiling snakes for hair and scaled skin.

AC 14, **HP** 38, **ATK** 1 snake bite +6 (1d6 + poison), **MV** near, **S** +2, **D** +1, **C** +2, **I** +2, **W** +3, **Ch** +4, **AL** C, **LV** 8

Godborn. Hostile spells targeting the medusa bounce onto the caster unless they pass a DC 15 check to cast.

Petrify. Any creature (including the gorgon) who looks directly at the gorgon, DC 15 CON or petrified.

Poison. DC 15 CON or go to 0 HP.

ADVENTURE CONCLUSION

THE CHARACTERS REACH the end of this adventure and face the consequences of their deeds.

THE GORGON IS DEFEATED

The gorgon lies defeated and a city-wide conspiracy comes to light. If the characters return to the surface with prisoners and evidence of the mayor and the captain's collusion with the gorgon, the commonfolk revolt and retake control of the city. Speaker Vadra earns the recognition she deserves and is elected mayor while all her competitors are put behind bars and replaced. Father Donovan and Varden are grateful to the characters and commend them for their heroic exploits in the dungeon. Mayor Perkins and Captain Carlsen are sentenced to death by hanging the next morning at the Town Hall.

If Fairflow's populace learns the heroes kept the stolen goods under the manse, they call for their arrest.

THE MAYOR'S MANSE COLLAPSE

Detonating the explosives causes the underground jailhouse and the Mayor's Manse to collapse, killing everyone there, the gorgon included. Characters who fail the DEX check are too slow to exit and lose their lives. Fairflow's response to such an event is mixed unless the characters have evidence of Mayor Perkins's involvement.

JOURNEY TO THE DWARVISH HALLS

Balka, the dwarf, congratulates the characters on their success. She begs the characters to accompany her back to the dwarvish halls under the mountain range to receive the full hospitality of the dwarven clan leaders.

