

DUNGEON VAULT MAGAZINE

No. 4

6 ORIGINAL ADVENTURES
1 BROCHURE ADVENTURES
HIGH RESOLUTION MAPS
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THE BEST ADVENTURES FOR THE BEST GMS

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About this Magazine

Dungeon Vault Magazine is all about providing interesting ideas and lore to DMs and storytellers. Within this issue, you will find varied adventure ideas.

These short modules do not stick to a unified template of sections. Instead, they are organically created and follow their own pace. The types of modules you can expect are city/town settings, regional settings, dungeons, outdoor locations, encounter maps, and one-page adventures.

The modules are written with 5th ed. OGL in mind but rules are often left to a minimum. Most adventures are appropriate for low to mid-level (Levels 1 to 10) adventuring parties. We include a note at the beginning of each adventure with a ballpark estimation of party level and playing time.

As the DM, you are free to change or modify any or all the information found here. NPC names and settlement names are the first you should consider changing to accommodate any homebrew-world lore. All material in this release is intended personal use.

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The report says the caravan is missing, sir. This is the third raid this month. What shall we do?

-Concerned Ward.

GOBLIN LAIR



BACKGROUND LORE



Several travelers and caravans report that the eastern road is no longer safe. Dangerous goblin raiders roam the area and have attacked some lone travelers or small and unprotected caravans. It is hard to know or calculate the amount of damage they have done or how many lives have been lost. But one thing is certain, the road is dangerous and the goblins' power and influence are growing stronger.

Over the past few weeks, the goblins have sent strange letters and other written messages to nearby settlements and toll houses. They claim to hold some prisoners captive in their lair and offer to free them in exchange for gold. They ask for 10 gold coins per person. But 15 for the children, of which they have two, or so they claim. The local authorities have ignored such letters so far as it appears that none of the people described in the letters fits the description of anyone known or important. It could all be a ruse for all they know.

But they do not deny that something must be done to make the roads safer for merchants and caravans. Their absence could wreck local economies and decrease the availability of important products. They offer a bounty of 100 gold coins to whoever returns with the head of the goblin leader and makes sure that they disappear from the roads.



AREA DESCRIPTION

1. LAIR ENTRANCE

The entrance to Jedanni's lair is just a hole on the hillside. There are no markings or features of interest. A successful **DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check** reveals several footprint tracks coming in and out of the cave. A few of them appear to be medium-sized footwear tracks. The rest are small-sized goblin barefoot tracks. Jedanni is the leader of the clan. He commands the other goblins with an iron fist.

2. GOBLIN GUARDS

This is a small hub area that connects to many of the other cave chambers. At any given time, 1d6 **goblins** are here on guard-duty. There is not much to do here so the goblins often amuse themselves with dice games or by telling stories. One of the goblins is Darkuf. He is stronger and a bit larger than the other guards. Darkuf despises Jedanni and wants his position. He is waiting for a good opportunity to dethrone him. Darkuf may prove to be a good ally to the adventurers.

3. FUNGI GARDEN

The sun window on the upper east section of the wall lets in just enough light and humidity to make this part of the cave the perfect spot to grow fungi. A female goblin named Gika is the chief farmer. A team of three other goblins helps her grow and care for the fungi. The clan prefers meat over vegetables or fungi but no one says no when food is scarce. Gika and her goblins do not oppose any intruders in the cave. They kneel and beg for their lives in broken common tongue if it comes to it.



5. CELL

When Jedanni's goblins attack a caravan, travelers, or small settlements, they often bring some prisoners with them and put them in this cell. The cage bars consist of improvised tree trunks set in an angle against the ceiling. Jedanni has tried to sell some of the prisoners back to the settlements in exchange for a monetary reward. This plan has failed so far. It appears that most travelers are not worth paying for or they come from farther places and nobody knows them. This is why Jedanni is looking for an important local to kidnap. There are six adults and two children currently in the cell. They are malnourished and weak.

Some other goblins in the clan believe in Gika. This is a faction that opposes Jedanni's warring methods. They would rather live in peace and sustain themselves from the land and the forest around them. If the lair is under attack, they either run for their lives or kneel and ask for mercy.

The south side of the wall features ancient decorations of cave paintings. The crude illustrations depict human hunting deer and buffaloes.

4. COMMUNAL ROOM

Most of the clan sleeps in this area. The accommodations are grim or non-existent. Most of them sleep on the ground. The cave is humid and protects them from the harsh elements. At any given time, there are 6d8 non-combatant goblins (females, old, children) and 3d6 **goblins**. The latter do their best to attack any intruders. There is nothing of value in this room.

A section where many goblins sleep is covered with old bear pelts. The goblins found a pack of bears when they moved into this area and killed them. The best pelts are next to Jedanni's throne in **Area 6**. The ones in this location were damaged or useless.

6. CHIEF JEDANNI THRONE

This room is a large chamber with an underground pond and a narrow stream that goes west. A medium-sized wooden throne painted in red and gold sits by the southern wall. A rug of pelts and leather extends beyond the throne a few feet. Two burning braziers and a few boxes of gold and trinkets surround the throne. Jedanni sits royally in this throne and commands the clan. Jedanni is taller and buffer than the other goblins but still smaller than an average human. His abnormal size, muscular strength, and gift for cruelty are the reason why most goblins in the clan fear and obey him without question.

Jedanni (**goblin** with maxed out HP and a +4 bonus to STR and CON) is never alone. At any given time, there are 2d6 non-combatant goblins in the room, 2d6 **goblins**, and a **wolf** loyal to him. The collective value of the gold coffers near the throne is 108 gold coins.

7. VAULT AND TREASURES

This chamber is Jedanni's vault and sometimes sleeping chamber. There is a pelt on the floor where he sleeps. A long dagger resting on top of the pelt shows marks of

GENERAL FEATURES

Jedanni's clan lives in a small cavernous complex under a forested hill. The caves appear natural in origin. There is evidence that a pack of bears lived in here for a while long ago. Some of the walls are decorated with ancient rock paintings from an old human civilization.

Terrain. The cave natural floor is rough but even. The goblins sculpted the stair steps in some of the passageways to make passage easier. Other than that, the floor evenness is a result of the constant transit of the cave's dwellers. Water drippings from the ceiling have caused the formation of stalagmites in many chambers in the cave. Squares partially occupied with a rock, stalagmite, or other objects are considered difficult terrain.

Light. Most of the areas in the cave are in complete darkness. **Area 3** has an opening in the upper east wall. A halo of sunlight comes in during the day and provides bright light in the middle of the room; the rest of it is in dim light. There are two braziers and a wood stove in **Area 6** that provide a 15-foot-radius of bright light.

Smells and Sounds. The exotic smells from the fungi garden give the cave a sensation of verdant greenery mixed with decay and goblin filth. If an adventurer manages to enter the cave unannounced, goblin chatter and laughter fill the air.

dried blood. There are many varied objects around the room in disarray. These correspond to the stolen assets that the goblin clan took from several caravans and travelers. Most of the stuff has little monetary value for the goblins unless they find a way to sell it for gold, like wheat, spices, and some delicate fabrics. A horse-drawn cart is needed to haul the contents of this room back to civilization. The collective value of these items, when sold at a city market, is 40 gold coins.

DEVELOPMENT

If Jedanni dies or runs away to save his life but the adventurers spare the non-aggressive faction in the clan, there are two alternatives for its future. If Darkuf survived, he takes over the clan within a week and the clan returns to their usual activities under new leadership. Nothing is changed except for the fact that Darkuf is a weaker leader and the clan is not better off with fewer members.

If both Jedanni and Darkuf are gone, Gika takes over the clan and becomes the first matriarch for this particular clan. She commands the clan to abandon their olden ways and pledge to sustain their weakened numbers from the fungi gardens and the forest around them. The road attacks stop and the clan starts to thrive.



The Anfoor can use the eldritch device to reveal the most guarded secrets. Nothing escapes it.

-Translated from the Observatory Door.

THE ANFOOR OBSERVATORY



BACKGROUND LORE

There exists an obscure location high on the mountain range where, rumor has it, one can obtain any piece of information. It is near the summit of a large mountain range. The journey there is not dangerous per se but winter clothes are a strong recommendation among the locals. Written records refer to it as “the observatory”. A nearby settlement by the skirts of the mountain calls it the “Anfoor Observatory”. People there can provide some insight into it:

- It is an observatory of the universe that can look into anything. Any data or information can be learned by looking through it.
- The observatory caretaker and the only person who can use it is called “the Anfoor”. A strange title that traces its origin to a different plane of existence.
- People usually have to wait for the Anfoor to operate the observatory.
- There is a price but it is always different. The Anfoor bargains for something interesting or of sentimental value. The price paid must feel like a genuine loss for the Anfoor to operate the eldritch device.

The Anfoor Observatory is millennia old. A tradition of caretakers known as the Anfoors provide the special service of information. Anfoor means librarian in a lost language and the individuals that carry this title take it seriously. There is only a single Anfoor that serves for forty years. They are seldom physically in the observatory, instead, they use a type of astral projection to attend to the needs of the place. This ethereal form allows them to interact physically with objects and visitors.

The observatory is like a window into a different part of reality. It can see distant places and people but it can also consult books, scrolls, or any written content in a faraway location.

As part of their job, they must not judge the visitor, nor the question or the information they wish to discover. For the Anfoors, lore and data are a non-descriptive concept that should be available to any who seeks it.

GENERAL FEATURES

The Anfoor Observatory of Possible Realities is located near the summit of a large mountain range. The way to the observatory is not dangerous or secret but it is a long journey. Eight days of mountain trekking from the base of the mountain to the observatory.

Terrain. The stone tiles in the observatory show slight signs of erosion and use but they are well kept in most places. Any square partially occupied with an object is considered difficult terrain.

Doors. The regal wooden doors have intricate bas-reliefs that depict incredible landscapes. The sculpted sceneries follow the wooden grain and create a marvelous spectacle. Each door is worth 150 gold coins if removed and sold. The door to the Anfoor’s Office features a high-end lock. An adventurer can bypass such a lock with a successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**.

Light. All areas in the observatory are in bright light except for the vault (**Area 5**)

Beams. Four different arcane devices (**Area 4**) known as beam generators produce rays of dense light. The central area of the observatory features many mirrors that redirect and focus the light northward to the main reflector. All mirrors rest on 20-foot-tall iron posts so the rays are also elevated.

THE ANFOOR OBSERVATORY OF POSSIBLE REALITIES



They understand the consequences of sensible information in the wrong hands but wash their hands from any repercussions their work may cause. It is not their job to gatekeep the passage of secrets in the planes.

Despite common belief, the observatory is not infallible and there is some information it cannot access. Spells that prevent scrying or remote detection, and anti-magic fields stop the observatory from prying. In some cases, the observatory is capable of producing partial information if a written record is not hidden inside the non-detection zone.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. LOBBY / WAITING AREA

The mountain road ends with a large, mountainous wall. A 15-foot-tall arch of semi-square stone blocks is the only entrance. There are no markings, text, runes, or anything that betrays the purpose of this location. The entrance leads to a long hallway with stone walls and well-kept stone floor tiles. The hallway turns right to a beautiful oak door with a sculpted bas-relief of a twilight landscape.

There are two couches, two side tables, a service table and a brown rug in the room. There is a 35% chance that another person or small group is currently “camping” in the room, waiting for the correct time for an accurate prediction. An invisible servant does its best to keep the place in the best condition. The service table by the northeast corner is enchanted with a timed *create food and water* spell. It produces enough food for as many as ten people two times a day. The invisible servant takes care of any remaining food after an hour of its creation.

2. THE ANFOOR’S QUARTERS

A gith monk named Rufanni is the current Anfoor in charge of the observatory. He is not physically in the observatory. Instead, he performs a type of astral projection that lets him interact with the objects and people in the observatory. His body and clothes appear vaporous and semi-transparent. Below the waist, the shape of his legs vanishes in a cloud of vapor.

Rufanni only comes when a visitor requests his presence. If the observatory is empty, Rufanni stays at home in the Astral Plane. When visitors show up, the invisible servant touches a magical bell in the Anfoor office. A copy of this bell rings in Rufanni’s home to notify him of the just arrived visitors. Rufanni uses a crystal ball in the observatory office to determine the position of the stars and the planes and decide when is the best moment to consult the observatory. Sometimes, a waiting period of up to three weeks is necessary to get an accurate projection of reality.

3. ROOM OF REFRACTIONS

A roughly octagonal room with several branching paths. There are six medium-sized mirrors and one large mirror on top of 20-foot-tall iron posts. A spider web of light rays dissects the room as they move from mirror to mirror and collect their energy in the large mirror. A brighter and denser beam of light moves northwards from the larger mirror. The light looks different from normal light rays. It looks denser, as if it had some corporeal qualities. Sometimes it appears as if it were a mix of flowing liquid and quasi-material plasma.

4. BEAM GENERATORS

After a short flight of ascending stairs, an arcane device powered by orange-glowing crystals is the only thing in this chamber. Only the Anfoor knows the command words to activate or deactivate the beam generators. A successful **DC 17 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that the device draws energy and mass from the ethereal plane and projects it in a tight beam. This type of eldritch machine is not used anywhere else. Perhaps the technology is well guarded or lost.

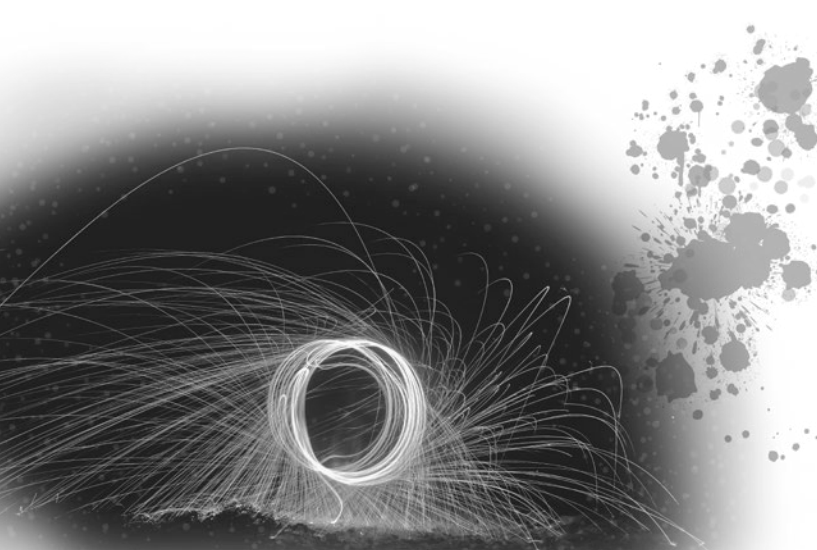
5. SECRET VAULT

A **passive Perception score of 18 or higher** or a successful **DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check** reveals the presence of a removable section of the wall. A person must push two switch-bricks at the same time to activate a mechanism that slides the wall to the side and reveal a hidden passage. There are several unlocked wooden chests inside the room. They contain boxes of papers, documents, and images of important things that the current Anfoor has seen through the observatory over the past thirty years. Some of the information and documents here have invaluable worth to the appropriate buyer.

6. OBSERVATORY OF REALITIES

The focused light beam hits an 8-foot-wide curved mirror that diffuses the light and reflects it down into the 20-foot-wide circular pond in the middle of the room. The pond is two-inches-deep and the crystal-clear water appears calm. Most of the time, the light projected on the water mirror manifests as a changing mix of colors and shapes with no clear purpose. Only the Anfoor can manipulate the device to activate it. The Anfoor stands under the curved mirror and chants an arcane incantation that includes the question of information that the visitors want to learn. If the moment is right, the projection on the floor changes and reveals pieces of information that could be acquired in no other way. It can reveal the location of an individual across the planes. It can show a detailed map of a fabled object or place. It can even reveal the identity of a masked individual or entity. The scope and power of the observatory are only limited by the Anfoor’s ability to relate the question to a particular moment in time and space by analyzing the stars and the movements of the astral bodies. If the Anfoor chooses the correct time, anything can be learned in the observatory. The observatory cannot see the future or respond to information that has not come to pass.

The average waiting time is 1-2 weeks before the moment is right. The more detailed and obscure the information to be learned is, the more time waiting for the appropriate window of opportunity. The longest Rufanni has had a visitor wait for a prediction is eight months.



Everyone is working double shifts during the harvest season. The Major must ship the tithes soon.

-Worried Farmworker

GOLDCREST



BACKGROUND LORE



Goldcrest is a beautiful small farming town two days east of the kingdom's capital. Many consider it a breadbasket for the region and the grain contributions to the metropolis are essential to the local economy. The capital assigns a town major every four years to oversee that the farming operation and the labor force work as intended.

Goldcrest is located among an important merchant road. Travelers of all kinds, merchants, and trading caravans pass through this town all the time and help boost the local economy. One interesting feature in Goldcrest is a garden of statues in the middle of town. A two-foot-tall stone wall surrounds a verdant garden with six stone statues. Each statue represents a past king from the dynasty. The newest statue represents the current living king. There is gossip among the townsfolk as some of them claim to have seen the king in the capital during an official announcement and they say that the statue does not look like him at all.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. BLUE SALAMANDER INN

This is the largest building in Goldcrest. It is a two-story inn with a pallid blue façade. A wooden sign over the main entrance shows a pair of strange blue snakes coiled around one another. The inn has ten rooms of different sizes for rent. A section of the first floor is reserved as a small apartment for Davis, the owner. Davis inherited the Blue Salamander Inn from his grandpar-

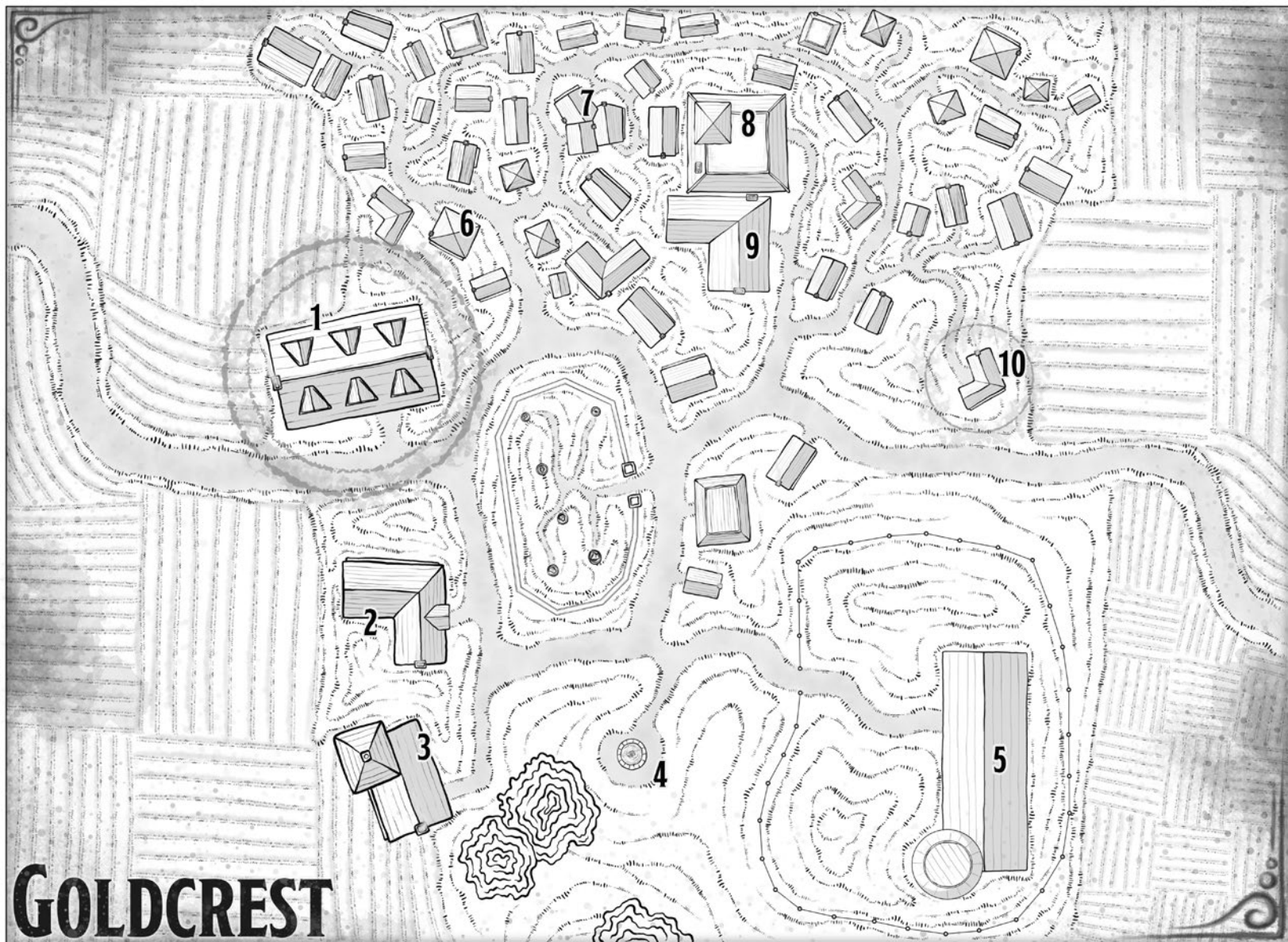
ents who passed away a few years ago. Davis employs six people in town and usually has half the inn available to rent. Goldcrest does not receive many visitors but merchants and adventurers stop in town to take a well-deserved rest.

Quest. Davis expected a wine and ale shipment from the capital a week ago but it never arrived. He fears that the shipment or the caravan might have been attacked, or that they had an unfortunate delay. He is willing to pay 50 gold coins to a group of sellswords who retrace the route and find out what happened to the shipment.

2. GUDRIK'S GENERAL SHOP

A two-story L-shaped building is the only location where locals can buy and sell stuff. Gudrik's General Shop has all kinds of necessary items for farming and caring for livestock in stock. Gudrik has a small catalog of useful stuff for travelers or adventurers but his wares in this department leave much to be desired. Gudrik buys and sells all sorts of things to traveling merchants. He often buys trinkets that no one in town needs but that he believes other travelers might want to acquire. If the adventurers come looking for some type of specialty equipment or item, there is a 15% chance that Gudrik has it in stock. Gudrik employs four people in his store.

Quest. A merchant sold Gudrik an expensive crate of silk but it turned out it was only half full. Gudrik claims that the merchant parted east two days ago in a mule-drawn cart. He should not be too far from Goldcrest. If the adventurers help Gudrik collect the difference in gold he overpaid, they can keep 30% of the recovered gold.



3. YUNNO'S BLACKSMITH

Yunno is a tall overweight man with brown hair and strong arms and back. Yunno's work consists of making nails, horseshoes, and other small iron tools and implements. He also makes farming implements and crude swords. His weaponry is of lamentable quality, but good enough to put on a show when the town is in danger. Goldcrest is in a strategic geographical location that has kept it isolated from the worst end of military warfare. Despite his apparent mediocrity when working with weaponry, Yunno is capable of making simple repairs or small modifications to weapons and armors. Yunno employs a full-time helper and also trains two young apprentices.

Quest. Yunno explains that there is a mining town east of Goldcrest. If the adventurers happen to go through that area and bring iron ores or other more exotic metals, Yunno pays a fair price for them.

4. GOLDCREST WELL

A large circular stone well in between the blacksmith and the barn is the main source of drinkable water in Goldcrest. People do not use this water for the farms, utilizing a crude irrigation system from a nearby river for that, instead. The well draws its water from an underground source that has not dwindled for years.

Quest. The freshwater from the well is now tainted. It is mixed with a strange greasy black substance. The worst thing is that the black muck coalesced into an amorphous mass a few days ago and tried to attack the townsfolk. They killed it with farm implements but a farmer suffered serious acid burns. It appears that a new creature is forming now.

5. BARN AND GRANARY

A large rectangular building with a two-story-high circular granary tower dominate the southeast end of town. A three-foot-tall fence surrounds the barn and limits the pasture area for livestock. Sheep occupy the majority of the building with a herd of more than sixty animals. The

rest of the animals are a few cows and goats. Grey Jenny is the animal husbandry expert in Goldcrest and she is in charge of the barn. She is a middle-aged woman with a strong tough body. She always wears her hair in a thick braid that almost reaches her waist. The barn is under direct jurisdiction of the town major and it employs twenty people.

Quest. The barn is the home of Halla, a sheep. This sheep is special. For some reason, its wool grows golden and has become a rare but expensive material. Grey Jenny has tried to breed Halla for months unsuccessfully. A tragedy occurred yesterday: Halla managed to jump the fence and escaped. Grey Jenny claims that she could not have gone too far. She offers gold to travelers willing to find Halla, the Golden Sheep.

6. VILMA'S APOTHECARY

A small unmarked house is the place to go when an ailment hits or a person feels weak. Vilma is an old woman of a thin frame and slow movements, but sharp eyes. Both her father and grandfather were apothecaries. Vilma continues the tradition but it appears the family profession ends with her. She never had children and her siblings died in a war decades ago. The adventurers can find all kinds of herbal potions, treatments, and medicine in Vilma's store. Even exotic components or ingredients have a 40% possibility of being in stock.

Quest. Vilma knows her years are ending. She wants to teach everything about her tradition to a suitable apprentice. A blood-related relative is not an option so she is willing to teach whoever accepts to be her pupil. If one of the adventurers wishes to stay, they stay with Vilma for five years. Otherwise, the adventurers may interview and find the perfect apprentice among the townsfolk.

7. GRONDY'S FLOPHOUSE

Grundy is the only half-orc living in Goldcrest. He used to be a farmworker and did that most of his life. Lately, he added some modifications to his house and expanded it in a rather uncommon way. Grundy now leases parts of his home to travelers for a cheap price. He competes with the Blue Salamander Inn but the prices and accommodations are so different that no one minds. For a silver coin, Grundy provides a pelt to lie down on the floor but not much else. There is a latrine outside and no way to take a bath. Breakfast is included but it is not tasty.

Quest. Grundy housed four merchants yesterday and they stole from him. They left this morning and took four pelts with them. Grundy cannot replace them easily because of the cost so he offers a night of alcohol, fun, and free lodging to whoever catches up with the dishonest merchants and retrieves the pelts.

GENERAL FEATURES

Goldcrest is located two days east of the kingdom's capital. It is primarily a farming town and a valuable asset to the region.

Terrain. Large portions of farmed land surround Goldcrest in all directions. The terrain is more or less flat, with few trees or hills.

Population. Goldcrest has a population of 300 people. 95% human, 5% mixed.

Exports. Goldcrest's main exports are wheat and barley. The vast majority of farmland around the city produces these grains. The town exports a small number of animal goods too.

Government. A representative in the capital appoints a major as the person in charge of Goldcrest once every four years. This major pledges allegiance to the crown and contracts an obligation to send shipments of grain as a tithe. The exact amount the town must send is agreed upon during the last month of the previous year.

Smells and Sounds. The smells of plants, fertilizer, manure, and mud are common throughout Goldcrest. The sound of the wind often whistles and reminds people of the chant of whales. Locals say this happens when the wind blows through some hollow trees.

8. MAJOR'S HOUSE

The currently appointed major is a man from the capital named Horld. Major Horld lives near the center of the town, next to the labor bunkhouse. The major's estate features rock and brick walls and tall windows. It is not a fortified manor but it is more secure than the rest of the buildings in Goldcrest. Major Horld's main job is to make sure that all farmlands are working throughout the year, that the supply of laborers is enough for the farms, and to collect tithes in the form of grain shipments for the capital. He is supposed to send a shipment every three months. The people in town respect Major Horld but a faction of farmworkers thinks that things would work better and smoother without him snooping around.

Quest. Major Horld is ready to send a grain shipment to the capital but the recent rumors of brigands and dangers on the road worry him. He is willing to offer one-hundred gold coins to seasoned adventurers to escort the three horse-drawn carts safely to the capital.

9. HARRY'S LABOR BUNKHOUSE

The town employs hundreds of low-level workers for the farms but not all of them own a house or wish to establish in Goldcrest. The labor bunkhouse is the temporary home of sixty or more farmworkers. They sleep and eat here when not working. The bunkhouse administrator is in charge of paying the workers but he always takes a small portion of their pay to cover the cost of the bunkhouse. Most people here live day by day. With no family,

opportunities, or a large salary, most workers end the day and spend the rest of their wages on alcohol or entertainment.

Quest. A group of sixteen farmworkers has taken the labor bunkhouse hostage to protest for their low pay. Their strike is costing too much to Goldcrest during the harvest season. They demand that Major Horld raises the pay of all farmworkers before they return to work. They have barricaded themselves inside the building and have farm implements for arms. The major wants adventurers to break their way inside and negotiate a surrender. He does not want to raise the pay but neither does he want to solve this thing with force.

10. AGARIS' BOTANY LAB

Agaris is a reclusive character in town. He seldom abandons his home and tends to send an errand boy to do his shopping or anything else he cannot bother himself doing. Agaris is an accomplished spellcaster that moved to Goldcrest ten years ago to be closer to nature. Back then, forests and plants surrounded the town but it became a farming hub and endless wheat fields are all there is. Agaris has devoted his study and magic to the incantation of plants and magic related to nature. People say he is a botanist but he is more of a conjurer of plants, or a nature necromancer. People still remember an incident four years ago when three strange plant creatures knocked him out and attacked the villagers. The plant monsters broke a farmer's hand and killed a sheep before running away into the wild. Agaris paid for the farmer's treatment and wages while he was convalescing but they still hold him accountable for the unfortunate development.

Quest. Agaris reveals a dangerous truth to the adventurers. He used divination magic to track the escaped plant creatures from a few years ago and they are still close to Goldcrest. The problem is that they are now larger and meaner. He fears that the plant creatures might one day stumble across Goldcrest and attack again. He offers the adventurers a magical compass that detects plant creatures in exchange for them going south and getting rid of them.



Of the several brave individuals who dared use the teleportation circle... No one ever returned.

-Grim Scripture

JYKER'S TRAPPED VAULT



BACKGROUND LORE

No one knows who Jyker was or what his deeds were. What remains of human and elven records that mention this individual is scarce, vague, and sometimes, contradictory. The few scholars that have studied this subject agree that the obscure figure named “Jyker” must have been a spell-caster of sorts. There are dubious references to a staff of power, a grandiose spellbook, and a personal library with volumes and treatises lost to time.

Cross-references of different documents reveal what appears to be a lair or vault created by Jyker. An obscure passage translated from a dead language points to the fact that no one should ever visit this location because it shelters Jyker’s treasured possessions and they are surrounded by danger. Many have tried to retrieve them in the past unsuccessfully. The document also includes a circle of magical runes for teleportation spells. There is a modern log of three instances in which people used the rune circle to travel to the vault but they were never heard of again. The place was deemed too dangerous to even explore and all paperwork went back to cold storage to be forgotten.

The adventurers may come across this information by mistake or as an interesting turn of events. An important piece of lore they need may only be found in Jyker’s vault. If the adventurers gain access to the available documentation about Jyker and his would-be lair, they have access to the rune circle for the teleportation spell. Additionally, a successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check** reveals that the information is consistent with the description of a created demiplane outside of known reality.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. ENTRANCE

The magical mist from the teleportation spell vanishes as you appear in a ten-foot-wide hallway with a metal door at the opposite end. Two alcoves on either side of the hallway house identical stone statues of a guardian with a shield and a long knife.

The magic runes in the teleportation circle deactivate on arrival. The adventurers cannot use the circle to exit the demiplane for 2d4 hours. A **passive Perception score of 16 or higher** reveals the location of a hidden passage in the south alcove. It leads to the machinery room for the crushing wall trap.

2. CRUSHING WALL TRAP

The south wall of the hallway appears to be a large metal panel. It looks out of place when compared with the stone bricks that conform the rest of the area.

The eastern end of the hallway is a *crushing wall trap*. When triggered, a falling portcullis divides the area and locks whoever is inside while the metal wall slides north.

Trigger. A pressure sensitive panel next to the metal door activates when at least 50 pounds of weight are applied to it. A passive Perception score of 18 or higher reveals the presence of the panel.

Effect. An iron portcullis falls as soon as the pressure panel is activated. The metal wall slides north and takes 4 rounds to reach the other end of the hallway. Any creature in the room when the two walls approach each other must make a **DC 16 Strength saving throw**, taking 19 (6d6) bludgeoning damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to disarm the trap from the machinery room behind the metal panel. Otherwise, a character may attempt to lockpick the metal door to **Area 3** or lift the portcullis with a successful **DC 18 Strength (Athletics) check**.

3. POND OF SHADOWS

A large chamber flanked by rows of stone pillars with a two-foot-deep pond at the opposite end. Murky, greenish water flows from the pond outward on four straight canals that reach the walls. A dark mist rises from the pond and coalesces into vaguely formed humanoid shapes in the air as the torches go out and darkness comes.

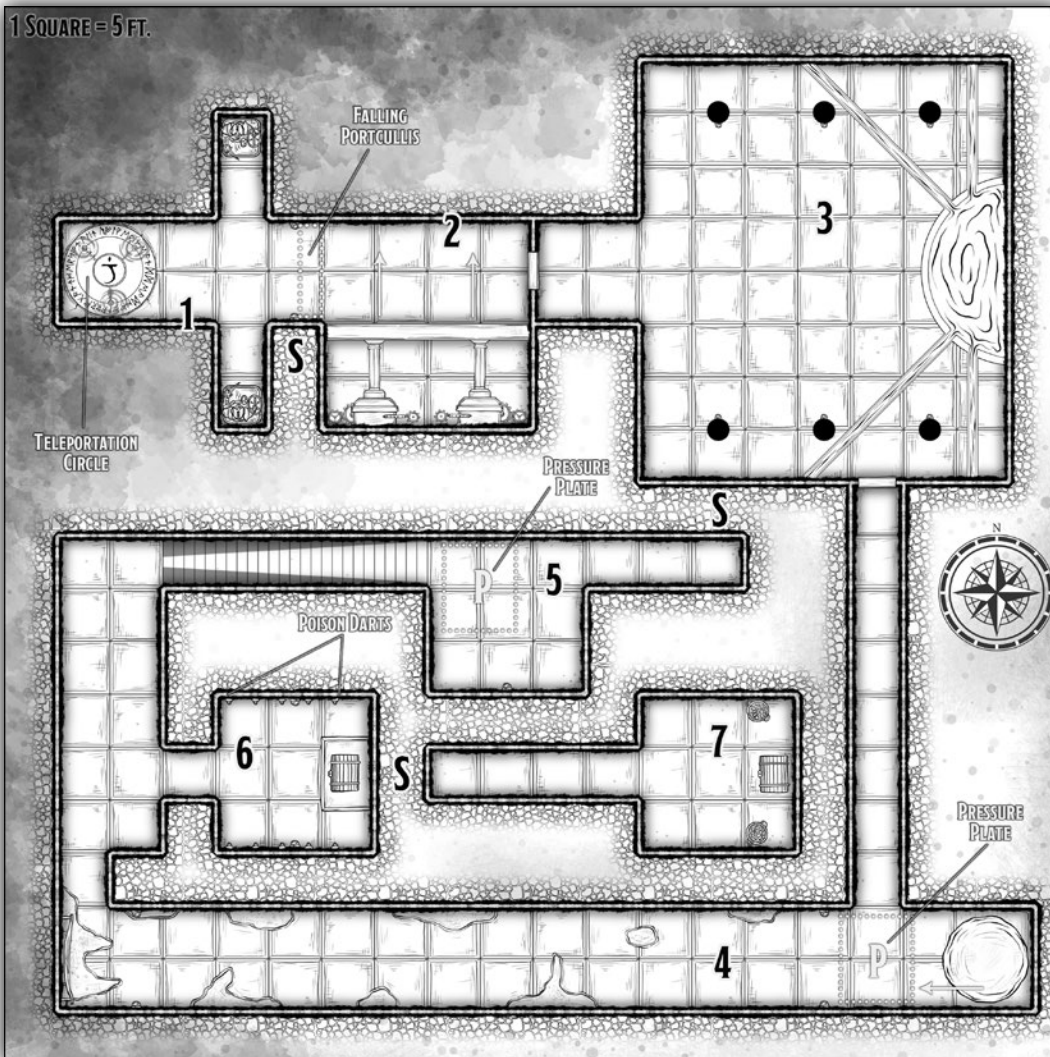
6 **shadows** emerge from the pond and attack when the torches' fire dies. After the shadows are dealt with, the magical torches burn bright again and the door on the south wall opens. A **passive Perception score of 16 or higher** reveals the location of a hidden passage by the south wall.

4. ROLLING BOULDER TRAP

The narrow hallway intersects a wider slanted hallway that extends more than seventy feet to the west. The hallway is slanted downwards at a 35-degree angle. A large irregular boulder by the eastern end of the passage looms menacingly. Nothing seems to hold it in place.

The entire extension of the hall is a rolling boulder trap. When triggered, the large rock is set loose and it rolls down the slanted hallway until it reaches the westernmost wall. It crushes anything in its path.

Trigger. A pressure sensitive panel in front of the boulder (see map) activates when at least 50 pounds of weight are applied to it. A **passive Perception score of 18 or higher** reveals the presence of the panel.



Effect. The magical force that keeps the rock in place disappears and it starts moving down the hallway at increasing speed. Any creature in the hallway must make a successful **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or take 16 (5d6) bludgeoning damage.

Countermeasures. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to disarm the pressure panel to avoid triggering the trap. Failure by 5 or more causes the trap to trigger.

5. SPIKED PIT TRAP

Before you, a 15 by 15 feet chamber with no furnishings or decorations stands apart from the rest of the dungeon. A lone magical torch is the only light source here. A long flight of stairs descends into the darkness below.

GENERAL FEATURES

Jyker's Vault is located in a 100 by 100 feet demiplane which exists outside of reality in a remote region of the Astral Plane. It can only be accessed through the teleportation circle in **Area 1**.

Terrain. The dungeon in general has a good state of conservation. The stone tiles have little erosion damage. A thick layer of grey dust covers all surfaces in the place, signaling it has been a long time since a person accessed the demiplane.

Doors. The two metal doors are shut and do not have a handle or a clear way to open them. The door in **Area 2** opens automatically after the trap in that chamber resets. The door in **Area 3** opens automatically upon dealing with the shadows. An adventurer can attempt to bypass the machinery that powers either door with a successful **DC 18 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check**. Doors magically close or return to their original state after 1d4 days.

Traps. The vault features several protection mechanisms designed to kill, maim, or scare off any visitors. These traps are mechanical devices imbued with magic. After functioning as intended, all traps reset to their original state after 3d8 minutes. If a trap is tampered with, disabled, or destroyed, it still returns to its original state after a longer period of 1d4 hours.

Light. Sconces with magical torches provide bright light in most chambers. The magical torches go off if removed from their resting places.

There is nothing of interest in this room. A *spiked pit trap* awaits in front of the stairs. When triggered, one or more creatures may fall to their deaths in the spikes below.

Trigger. A pressure sensitive panel in front of the stairs (see map) activates when at least 50 pounds of weight are applied to it. A **passive Perception score of 18 or higher** reveals the presence of the panel.

Effect. When triggered, a rectangular-sized section of the floor gives in and opens to a forty-foot-deep spiked pit. Any creature in the area must make a successful **DC 16 Dexterity saving throw** or fall to the bottom of the pit and take 17 (4d8) piercing damage.

Countermeasures. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to disarm the pressure panel to avoid triggering the trap. Failure by 5 or more causes the trap to trigger.

6. FAKE VAULT

The light from two flickering torches flanks a single wooden chest at the end of the room. The wooden chest is closed but unlocked. A strange mural behind the chest depicts an eldritch scene of gods giving objects of power to mortals. The strange implications of such an image elude explanation.

The room has a *poison dart* trap. The north and south walls feature offset adornments which shoot darts that target any creature within the room.

Trigger. Lifting the wooden chest lid pulls a string that triggers the trap. A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the presence of the trigger line in the chest.

Effect. When triggered, rows of poison darts fly from both walls. Any creature in the room must make a **DC 14 Constitution saving throw**, taking 12 (4d6) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

Countermeasures. A successful **DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to disarm the trigger thread line. Failure by 5 or more causes the trap to trigger.

The chest is empty except for a small scroll. It has a single phrase, printed in blood red ink. It reads "The real treasure is the friends we made along the way".

A **passive Perception score of 15 or higher** reveals the location of a hidden button at the bottom of the chest. Pushing the bottom causes a section of the east wall to slide sideways and reveal a hidden passage to the true vault.

7. JYKER'S VAULT

The short passage opens up to a 15 by 15 chamber with an unremarkable wooden chest by the east wall. Two glowing braziers flank the chest and provide a warm orange flickering light.

This is the resting place of Jyker's treasure. No one has accessed this chamber since the conception of Jyker's demiplane. No one ever got this far. The unlocked chest reveals that its internal area is larger than it would appear from the outside. It contains several leather sacks with varied coins and precious stones. The collective value of these items is 11,000 gold coins. Jyker's spellbook, staff (*staff of the magi*), and personal notes and books are in the chest too.

The glowing crystals in Svlinten are the most beautiful thing I have seen in my travels.

-Seasoned Merchant.

SVLINTEN CITY



BACKGROUND LORE



The various races that inhabit the world have different characteristics. Their complexion and physical differences help them adapt better to diverse kinds of environments.

Humans, in particular, are the most versatile and flexible of humanoids. They have learned to make the most of their surroundings and readjust their needs to facilitate life. Gnomes and dwarves, on the other hand, are known for their cunning ability to shape rock and stone. It is a common thing to see underground settlements run by a dwarf clan, or a community of gnome sages.

The Underground City of Svlinten is one of those gnome-preferred locations. The city has been around for ages and its history goes back a couple of gnomish generations. The pioneers of this large underground settlement did not mean to stay long when they first got here. Their journey through the Underdark had been rough and they needed a safe place to rest. One day, the stumbled upon a large cavern. They stood in awe admiring the colorful lights that the crystal-covered walls produced. There were only two entrances to the chamber so they thought they could camp there while keeping watch from afar. They just stayed a night, but the wonderful view of the cave persisted in their thoughts.

The gnomes came back to the mystical cavern a few fortnights later intending to stay. Headed by Danik Philbin, the gnomes settled down. They inaugurated the place with the construction of Philbin's Threshold, a large arch in the southern entrance of the cave, marking the beginning of a new settlement. And so, Svlinten came to be.

With the passing of years, Danik Philbin convinced more gnome families to come to do business in Svlinten, or settle down there. The cavern was an attractive sight. The cavern is full of white Faerzness-infused crystals attached to its walls and rock formations. They emanate a light which, combined with the rest of the colored crystals' glow, creates a mesmerizing view. The gnomes learned to cohabit with the magic of the Underdark. They take advantage of the Faerzness to improve their innate magical properties, and they also utilize it in farming to grow larger crops and mushrooms.

Svlinten became a popular venue. The Philbin family prospered more with each generation. Bladik Philbin is Danik's great-grandchild. He has been the leader of Svlinten for about a hundred years. However, his time in power has been stained by the invasion, a grim event from fifty years ago. Gnome sages claim the crystal eaters were a creation of the Faerzness magic underground. These beasts invaded the city from the east.

At first, the gnomes were more than capable of dealing with one or two of these vermin. But with the passing of weeks and months, the monsters increased in numbers and strength. One day, Bladik Philbin send some gnomes to place an iron bar gate to cover the tunnel. This was merely a momentary solution. The crystal eaters made their way through them and threatened with wiping out the whole settlement.

Bladik set a plan into motion, then. It took him a couple of hard months. While defending the city and risking everyone's lives by stalling the monsters in the eastern side of the cave, he sent scores of gnomes to build a wall that divided Svlinten in two. Bladik sacrificed one-fourth of the whole city to save the rest, and his plan worked. The enormous barrier also halts the course of the water



coming from the natural springs above the chamber. The ruins, as they call them now, have been abandoned for decades. A group of trained guard gnomes is tasked with the security of the blockade and its protection. Even though many lives were lost, the wall succeeds in keeping the monsters at bay.

Many gnomes admire Bladik and are grateful to him. They believe Svlinten would be overrun if it were not for him. But a few of the underground dwellers hold a

GENERAL FEATURES

River. The water flow comes from above the ground and like a waterfall, it never stops.

Illumination. There is no day cycle in Svlinten. The caves are in a permanent state of glow. The Faerzness-infused crystals light the cavern at all times.

Housing. All gnomes live in holes dug inside hills and rocky formations. There are no single homes per se. All gnomes are accustomed to live a little crowded.

Crystal Eaters. These monsters resemble crustaceans. Use the stats of a **giant crab** with shiny pincers with adamantine plating. Their diet consists of crystals, precious stones, and quartz.

grudge on him, stating this is still only a temporary fix. They think Bladik should not have given up such a large section of the city. Or that he should have asked other leaders and settlements for help. In any case, Bladik is way more loved than hated.

Professor Luvikus is Bladik Philbin's associate. He is a scientist. He has been living in Svlinten all his life and he knows everything about the crystals in the city and how to manipulate Faerzness to their favor. Everything but one thing, how to stop the crystal eaters. He has been researching for the past few years. He recollects all kinds of samples of crystals and conducts experiments on them. He is trying to find a way to counter the crystal eaters' physical composition by rendering the crystals unattractive to them and their diet. So far, his experiments have failed.

The scientist gnome has not tried anything yet. All his previous experiments contained local samples of crystals from the city's walls. He asked Bladik's permission to make an excursion outside the protective walls. He wishes to capture a crystal eater alive, which has never been done before. He is certain that an autopsy on one of these monsters is the key to hinder them. Bladik refused his request, saying he already has enough detractors.

And he does not plan to send gnomes outside the wall. Bladik offered his associate funds to hire someone to do this for him, however.

Luvikus is now looking for a group of sellswords or mercenaries that can do the job. Helped by Bladik, he offers 2,000 gold pieces for a living specimen of a crystal eater.

IMPORTANT NPCs

BLADIK PHILBIN

The direct descendant of Danik Philbin always wears an elegant doublet and several pieces of jewelry. He fancies rings overall. Bladik has a round face and prominent cheeks. He has a small white goatee and he wears a pair of golden spectacles. He spends his time listening to the general complaints among Svlinten citizens.

Goal. Maintain his reputation by forbidding Luvikus from using gnomes for his task.

Instinct. He tells anecdotes of the city and his predecessor Danik over and over.

Flaw. He prioritizes what the gnomes might think of him over the importance of getting rid of the crystal eaters.

PROFESSOR LUVIKUS

Luvikus looks like a mad scientist. He has scruffy, long white hair. He wears a very thick pair of spectacles that make his gray eyes look larger than normal. His pink nose contrasts with his pale skin. He has a high-pitched voice and gets excited when the topic of the conversation turns to science and his experiments.

Goal. Find a group of brave enough adventurers who take the job.

Instinct. Stare into the horizon with a thoughtful look when he talks about what he thinks might happen once he does his experiments with a living specimen.

Flaw. He is a man of science and discredits all talks of gods and religion coming from clerics and priests.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. PHILBIN'S THRESHOLD

The large arch is the oldest structure of the city. Danik Philbin and the pioneers he arrived with built it. Since this was the very first construction, the gnomes never stopped expanding it. Now it is the size of a small castle. It contains a small square with a market. The best spice and mushroom vendors sell their wares in this privileged location. There are always members of the guard welcoming visitors and newcomers. They also keep records of who enters and leaves at all times.

2. PHILBIN'S QUARTERS

Most of Svlinten residences are holes carved in rock formations. These rocky mounds are large enough to contain several chambers and allow dozens of gnomes to inhabit them. This mound belongs to Bladik Philbin. Other members of his family live here as well. Philbin's Quarters can be seen from the entrance to the city.

3. LUVIKUS' LAB

This mound houses Professor Luvikus' lab. He has a chemistry laboratory and a workshop here. This is where he spends most of his time. Luvikus has three assistants or helpers. Young gnomes, apprentices of chemistry and Faerzness' magical properties, have their chambers here. They live to learn from Luvikus.

4. FARMER'S MARKET

Farming is an important profession in the city. Many gnomes dedicate their lives to their farms. This hill houses a combination of many small storefronts. Several gnomes occupy the mounds' spaces to exhibit their wares and crops. Local vegetables and fruits are always present.

5. BEETLE RIDERS

Gnomes in Svlinten implemented a transport system riding giant beetles. Beetles enjoy ingesting the mushrooms the gnomes plant; it has become a symbiotic relationship over the years. The gnomes care for the beetles, breed them, and feed them, while the beetles allow the gnomes to ride them. A successful **DC 14 Wisdom (Animal Handling) check** allows a character to befriend a beetle and ride it. Svlinten gnomes do not have to make this check.



6. WHEAT FARMS

Most of the farms in Svlinten are wheat farms. These are located closest to the underground river. The wheat grown in Svlinten is a variant species that needs less light and grows well with the Faerzress light from the crystals. The wheat is smaller and less nutritious than its surface counterpart but the gnomes offset it by planting more of it. The underground stream that feeds the farms enters the cave from a waterfall on the west wall. The gnomes have dug canals over the years to direct the flow of the water to their advantage.

7. MUSHROOM FARMS

Svlinten also has large plantations of exotic mushrooms. The natural magic of the place helps the gnomes harvest the rarest of mushrooms. Some of them have magical or healing properties, others are common species but larger in size. All these varieties are available in the farmer's market. The locals consume this product but the exported mushrooms sold to human settlements on the surface bring the most profits to Svlinten by far.

8. WALL

The protective barrier that keeps the crystal eaters at bay is fifty-feet tall. Members of the guard are present at all times and patrol the top of the wall. They seldom have to defend the walls from the monsters. The wall has three gates but no one uses them. The gnomes built dams along the wall to stop the flow of the water from crossing to the ruined part of the city. Only the dry paths remain.

9. ABANDONED MAIN SQUARE

This used to be one of the most popular places in Svlinten and the former location of the Farmer's Market. Five roads intersect in here, forming a star. A large 20-foot-tall copper statue of founder Danik Philbin overlooks the ruins.

10. RUINS

This section of the city has been abandoned for more than four decades. Crystal eaters roam the streets and inhabit deserted buildings. Many gnomes in the city consider the ruins to be lost forever and think it is best if they are forgotten. Luvikus thinks otherwise and trusts he can find a way to deal with the monsters once and for all and recover what they lost almost half a century ago.

11. EASTERN TUNNEL

Hundreds of years ago, this tunnel was as an entrance to the city, although it was not as used as Philbin's Threshold (**Area 1**). The iron bars that covered the entrance show signs of deep corrosion and some of them are destroyed. The tunnel is believed to be full of monsters and danger. No visitor has accessed the city chamber from this tunnel in decades.

If you're looking for a grand place to stay and hunt, look nowhere else but the Oakleaf Manor.

-Knowledgeable Traveler.

THE OAKLEAF MANOR



BACKGROUND LORE



wealthy people seldom stay idle, or in the same place. They usually have their hands full working on future projects, taking care of their businesses, or spending their gold in fancy locations. This is no different for Rathnir, who comes to Oakleaf Manor once or twice every two moons. The mesmerizing building in the middle of the road between two bursting cities is a luxurious inn, and he is the proprietary. Whenever he comes, he sees that the Lords of the Market meeting takes place. Successful and powerful merchants, corrupt officers, and lesser crime magnates compose this organization. The members of this privileged group discuss new ways to increase their wealth, new potential business venues, or how to get rid of an uncomfortable competitor.

Rathnir is a charismatic, easygoing, yet greedy changeling. He acquired great wealth thanks to his innate gambling skills. He excels at cards, roulette, or any other gambling games that require mathematics and analytic abilities. Rathnir has short-term photographic memory which makes him an expert in card games; he can gauge the odds of winning and can predict the best strategy nine out of ten times. He took advantage of his shapeshifting ability to move around in inconspicuous ways and has fooled many casinos and gambling houses owners by making them believe he had never set foot in them, even though he enjoyed a winning streak the night before.

Rathnir leads a dangerous life. He owns many brothels, taverns, and inns in Goldenleaf, South Hildberg, and other neighboring cities and towns. He is no stranger to the criminal life in the urban underworlds. At this point, he has become a crime lord himself. He assumes the shape

of a fine and sophisticated tiefling whenever he meets with the Lords of the Market. They all meet at Oakleaf Manor, which is Rathnir's venue. The members of this group believe Rathnir is just a tiefling. Only Vamin, the half-elf who takes care of the manor whenever Rathnir is away, knows about his real identity. The manor works as a sophisticated inn all year round while Rathnir is busy managing his affairs most of the year. He returns to the manor whenever he wishes to relax, lay low, or meet the Lords of the Market.

The meeting takes place in the large conference room. These tycoons plot and conspire until sunset and then leave. If there are enough free rooms at the moment, sometimes a few of these distinguished individuals stay for a couple of days. They do so when they need to keep a low profile for a while, or just because they wish to unwind and take a breather from the stress of their criminal lives.

Rathnir enjoys hunting. Oakleaf Manor has a trophy room to display the stuffed heads of the greatest prey he has hunted. Rathnir loves to bring guests here. He delights in watching his guests admire his trophies. He also utilizes this room whenever he needs to meet with an adversary or someone he does not know well. He believes negotiations done in this particular room of the manor tilt to his favor but he cannot explain why that is. Rathnir also takes joy in horse racing and equitation. It is one of his favorite activities whenever he is around.

CURRENT AFFAIRS

It is that time of the month. The Lords of the Market are to meet soon. Rathnir has looked forward to having this reunion for a long time. Their next objective is to get rid of two of the most influential lords in Goldenleaf and

South Hildberg. These are important court members and their family names have a strong weight in the cities' decisions. Both politicians have stepped in Rathnir's way on multiple occasions. The two men are not aware of Rathnir's existence but their decisions and policies oppose Rathnir's objectives. Rathnir decided this is the next step toward amassing more wealth. The details of this operation are to be discussed in this next meeting.

Rathnir warned Vamin about the importance of this event and asked him to have everything ready for that day. The loyal half-elf hired a group of six halfling helpers for a few days. The halflings are catering experts and fantastic cooks. They know the manor well too as Rathnir has hired them several times in the past. They are, in fact, a small section of their criminal organization. The skillful team of halflings arrived some days in advance to prepare everything. They brought food and supplies to prepare a banquet. They verified all jerkies, dried fruit, and wine in the cellar were in optimal condition. They readied the dining room and helped Vamin with any other preparations.

The Lords of the Market gather in Oakleaf Manor at the appointed time. As usual, their bodyguards accompany them. The manor looks the liveliest during these meetings due to the number of horses in the stables and the carriages overcrowding the land. Rathnir, his assistant Vamin, ten Lords of the Market, the six halflings, and a total of 15 bodyguards hired by the Lords occupy the mansion that day.

If Oakleaf Manor is busy with traveling guests, Vamin kindly asks them to stay upstairs in their rooms for that day. He also offers a couple of horses to trot around the area for a while, free of charge. The point is to keep guests away from the conference room and avoid any attempt to eavesdrop on the Lords of the Market. A couple of years ago, a common merchant happened to overhear a piece of delicate information. He had an unfortunate "accident" the day after and lost his life. A terrible tragedy. Rathnir paid a dear price that day to keep mouths shut.

ABOUT OAKLEAF MANOR

A character who wishes to know or remember additional information about Oakleaf Manor must make an **Intelli-**



gence (History) check. The character remembers facts according to the next list. He remembers all the facts for which DC he meets and exceeds. The character rolls with advantage if he has stayed here before:

- **Everybody Knows** – Oakleaf Manor is a luxury inn in the middle of the road between Goldenleaf and South Hildberg. It is nice as it is expensive.
- **DC 14** – A half-elf runs the place. People think it unlikely that he can manage the whole place by himself. Some say he is not what he seems.
- **DC 16** – An obscure crime lord owns Oakleaf Manor. They say it is a devil that comes from time to time and has unhallowed reunions filled with vices and ill company.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. LOBBY

Oakleaf Manor has a large entrance. A varnished elegant double door. Small carvings of oak leaves with symmetrical shapes cover the surface of the doors. They form a splendid pattern. In deeper carvings, the name “Oakleaf Manor” can be read. Two doors East and West of the

GENERAL FEATURES

Doors. Besides the main door, all doors in the manor are varnished and elegant. Doors to the stable, cellar, or privies are good quality but have no sophisticated touch. A successful **DC 15 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to open all the doors that are locked, to which Rathnir and Vamin have the only keys. A successful **DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check** grants a character the same effect, but the noisy entrance alerts nearby guests in the manor.

Light. Oakleaf Manor features lamps on the ceilings. Rathnir paid a considerable amount of gold for a wizard to install *eternal flame* spells that activate and deactivate on command. Guests are given the magic command word to manipulate the light in their rooms at will.

Road to Goldenleaf and South Hildberg. Both cities are less than a day away from Oakleaf Manor, and their commercial relationships with other nearby towns cause considerable traffic to this road. Rathnir saw this opportunity and built Oakleaf Manor.

Fah-Tee and Caterpillar. Both horses ended up living at Oakleaf Manor because Rathnir got rid of their owners for being too talkative and sharing confidential information. They are healthy beasts and Vamin takes good care of them. Guests are free to ride them while they stay at the manor.

entrance signal the wardrobes (**Area 2**). Two magnificent sets of armor flank the entrance to the lobby. Rathnir has exquisite taste for decoration, a handmade sewn rectangular carpet dominates the chamber. It depicts a fine map of the countryside. Six wooden pillars flank the walls and support the second-floor balcony and the staircase

2. WARDROBES

These small cubicles contain a pair of closets and drawers to store coats and other pieces of clothing. Vamin welcomes all visitors and recollects their coats with grace and delicacy. Both doors to these rooms are locked at all times. Only Vamin possesses the key. He opens them whenever new guests arrive, and he only opens them again the moment they leave.

3. FOYER

Rathnir keeps one of his trophies in here. The brown bear pelt near the hearth was a formidable opponent. The room has a small table and two tall green chairs. The furniture looks new and unused. A floor to ceiling bay window looks to the stables and the forest beyond. 4 bodyguards are waiting in this room (3 **bandits** and 1 **guard**) the day of the meeting.

4. LIBRARY

Rathnir is not a man of many books. The ones he owns are rare volumes about card and strategy games. The





small library has two bookcases with some books each and a large number of journals with news about Rathnir's exploits. There is a large rectangular wooden table with six chairs. These chairs are large and sturdy. A large window looks to the stables. 3 bodyguards are playing a dice game in this room (2 **bandits** and 1 **thug**) the day of the meeting.

5. RATHNIR'S PERSONAL QUARTERS

The three doors to Rathnir's room are locked at all times. He owns the only key. Long, thick, intricate curtains cover both tall windows and leave the room in a semi-permanent twilight. This allows the changeling to sleep in darkness, even when there is a full moon. Rathnir's chamber has its own hearth, chest, wardrobe, and a small closet.

A successful **DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the presence of a safe box behind a painting. Rathnir has the only key on him at all times. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to force the lock and open it. It contains bags with coins, precious stones, and several pieces of expensive jewelry. The collective value of this treasure is 5,000 gold pieces.

RATHNIR, THE CHANGELING

Rathnir adopts numerous and various shapes when he is traveling to be inconspicuous. However, he always assumes the shape of a tiefling when he comes to Oakleaf Manor. None of the Lords of the Market know about this. They all believe Rathnir is a tiefling.

In his tiefling form, Rathnir wears his long white hair in braids. Some of them swirl around the horns in tight spirals, giving his horns an elegant touch. He wears long tunics and extravagant trousers and boots. He fancies golden jewelry. Bracelets, rings, and a couple of earrings, such as Rathnir's expensive tastes and he has whole matching sets to show off different jewels in every possible occasion.

6. TEA GARDEN

Five floor to ceiling window panels surround this small teahouse. Vamin comes to this chamber often to paint, his only past time. A usually incomplete canvas painting and a side table with oil paints move around the room throughout the year as Vamin finishes his work of painting the surrounding forest.

A round table with fruit and some cups in the center has five garden chairs around it. On the western wall, a

rectangular table features a teapot and supplementary cups. There are 3 bodyguards (**bandits**) drinking tea in here the day of the meeting.

7. SPECIALTY STILL

Rathnir is an avid drinker. He appreciates strong beverages and installed a distillery in Oakland Manor. Vamin knows well how to work it. The manor produces ale and some other spirits. The cellar (**Area 25**) contains several fermentation vats, barrels, and bottles of these products. Vamin takes care of maintenance and he knows how the distillery works. The door is locked at all times and only Vamin has the key.

8. WAGON STALLS

There are three wagon stalls to park carriages of heavy luggage. The three stalls have large wooden doors that open from the center. Only one carriage fits in each of the stalls.

9. STABLE STORAGE ROOMS

The stables' entrance hallway connects to two storage rooms. The one to the West contains fruits and horse treats such as apples, pears, and dried sweets in crates. The one to the East holds the horse master's tools displayed on a large table and varied horse-caring and gardening supplies.

10. STABLES

Rathnir owns two horses that live in Oakleaf Manor. Their names are Fah-Tee and Caterpillar. Vamin takes care of them and feeds them daily. Guests in Oakleaf Manor can use them as mounts to take a delightful promenade near the woods free of charge. A few times a year, when enough guests bring swift mounts of their own, Vamin organizes friendly races in the plains towards Goldenleaf. A guest in Oakleaf Manor can take riding lessons for a fee.

11. CONFERENCE ROOM

The Lords of the Market meet or organize their banquets in this opulent conference room. A refined, sumptuous, hand-carved image dominates the room. Majestic elk with a beautiful landscape shine on the surface of the rectangular oak table. The varnish looks bright under the fine sheet of crystal on top of the wooden frame. The head of a beast over the hearth throws its cold gaze upon the red velvet tall chairs. There are eleven of them, and Rathnir's seat is the one by the South wall.

There are five large windows with thick red curtains. A side table has few jerkies, sweets, and a musical instrument. On the day of the meeting, the room is full. Eight of the Lords of the Market are non-combatant individuals. Rathnir (**bandit captain**) and two others (**berserkers**) know how to defend themselves.

A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check** allows a character to approach the conference room from outside without being detected. Eavesdropping and overhearing the meeting reveals their plan about killing Goldenleaf and South Hildberg lords.

If they are interrupted, Rathnir cancels the meeting and asks everyone to leave so he can deal with the uninvited guest. If Rathnir and the rest of the crime lords are attacked, all the non-combatant members flee to their horses and escape. Those who can fight draw their weapons and attack. Vamin gets to the scene in seconds to help Rathnir. All the bodyguards stay to defend their lords' retreat.

12. DINING ROOM

Oakleaf Manor offers all meals of the day to their guests. There are three tables and enough chairs to serve sixteen guests. There is a bar with four stools near the exit. A large bay window looks to the South and West woods. Two rocking chairs on an orange carpet lay in front of the hearth. The stuffed head of a dire goat hangs over the



hearth. The stuffing is of bad quality and the goat has a strange facial expression. 5 bodyguards are eating in this room (3 **bandits** and 2 **thugs**) the day of the meeting.

13. KITCHEN

The kitchen stock is plentiful and Vamin has the authorization to dispose of coin from the coffers to guarantee the quality of accommodation in the manor. The methodic half-elf has memorized specific times of the year when he hires external help for cleaning or maintenance. Rathnir's meetings are an example of those occasions and that is why the six halflings are present that day. They move around fast and serve food to all guests present, including bodyguards.

14. PRIVY

Oakleaf Manor does not have any restrooms inside the main building. The four privies are a few feet away. Vamin hires stable boys or wenches from nearby farms to clean them. These laborers also help with the stables and other chores.

15. STABLE HAYLOFT

The Stable Storage Rooms (**Area 9**) have stairs access to the hayloft. Bales of straw wrapped in wire fill the room. A pair of double doors on the North wall are the only way to move large amounts of hay to the loft. A large wooden ramp by the north side of the room is used to move stuff up to the loft. A small pulley system near the doors can be used for the same purpose too. Series of trapdoors along the slanted walls of the loft allow the caretaker to dump hay directly into the horses' stalls below.

16. TROPHY ROOM

This is Rathnir's favorite place in Oakleaf Manor. He comes and spends hours staring at his trophies. The two elk carved in the table in the conference room are supposed to portray the two elk trophies in here. The head of a mighty boar, a massive ram, and a bear also complement his collection. A successful **DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check** reveals the head of the boar can be pulled like a door. There is a safe box behind it containing Oakleaf Manor's coffers. A successful **DC 16 Dexterity (Thieves Tools) check** allows a character to open the box. Coins, checks, bank bills, and other trinkets have a collective value of 7,000 gold pieces.

A nice carpet with matching patterns to the one in the lobby dominates the second section of the trophy room. Two coffee tables with expensive delicacies and desserts are always present when Rathnir meets someone here. Guests are allowed to visit the trophy room as long as Vamin accompanies them at all times.

17. VAMIN'S ROOM

Even though Rathnir told Vamin to take any room he wanted on the second story of Oakleaf Manor, the humble half-elf opted for a small single room. Vamin has a bed, a hearth, and a chest for his personal belongings. He only comes here to sleep during the night.

Vamin (**cult fanatic**) is not only Rathnir's assistant, but he is also his bodyguard while he is staying at the manor. The half-elf is around his boss at all times and runs to his aid if necessary.

18. 21. 22. INDIVIDUAL BEDROOMS

Oakleaf Manor has three individual rooms for rent. They have a hearth, a chest, and a table or a small bookshelf. All three rooms have windows with brown-ish curtains that match the bedsheets.

20. SECOND FLOOR LANDING

The second story landing overlooks the lobby. There is a carpet with lineal patterns near the doors of the double bedrooms. Another carpet with astronomic drawings decorates the area outside the single bedrooms. Two pots with bonsai trees complement are near the south side of the landing.

19. 24 DOUBLE BEDROOMS

Oakleaf Manor has two king-size bedrooms. Both have a wardrobe and two chairs facing the floor to ceiling windows that overlook the forest beyond. One of them has a hearth, making it the most expensive room in the manor.

23. COUPLE BEDROOM

This room has almost the same size as the single bedrooms but has a larger bed. Two people can sleep in here. The room comes in handy for couples who wish to stay but cannot afford the double bedroom rates.

25. CELLAR

There are two different accesses to the cellar. The stairs in the kitchens (**Area 13**) or the entrance ramp from outside the manor. The cellar is full of boxes and barrels of dried food and grains. An arsenal of supplies fills the space underground Oakleaf Manor. Enormous fermentation vats with homemade ale and liquor occupy a great section of the room. Large loaves of mutton, boar, and veal meat rest on tables, salt poured all over them. There is also a stock of durable vegetables and fruits in boxes and on some tables.

A SCAMMER BY THE RIVER

The townsfolk in New Haldir often mention an obscure figure in the province who is said to know the future. They mention her in passing because they think saying her name out loud brings bad luck. None of them can prove such a curse exists, but such is the unmovable force of superstitions in the common folk.

The person they refer to is none other than Madame Iuv, but most people use a different name for her. The Diviner, the Conjurer, or the Seer. She has a complex reputation which ranges from a savior to a symbol of bad omens, depending on whom one asks. It is a common belief that Madame Iuv does not help nor injure, she only lays her magical tarokka deck cards on the table and speaks truths that come not from her, but from a higher entity. She claims the words she utters during her divination trance come from another world. A wise entity from beyond the veil takes over her mind and body and uses such multi-dimensional connection to interpret the tarokka cards, understand the present, and predict the future. At least, this is what Madame Iuv explains to people who ask. She assures her tarokka deck is a valuable heirloom passed down through generations for hundreds of years.

People in town do not come to her unless a great urgency forces them to wonder about their immediate future. Her services are costly, but people are more worried about the unintended consequences of her readings and displays of power. The locals are well aware that some of the people who visit her have found their way to untimely accidents or deaths a few days after. All of them died from unrelated causes but one cannot help but wonder if Madame Iuv or her predictions had anything to do with the tragedies.

A minor local lord who lost his brother in an equitation contest two weeks after consulting Madame Iuv came to confront the old seer in the mountains and threatened to destroy her house near the river unless she committed to finding a way to return his brother back to life.

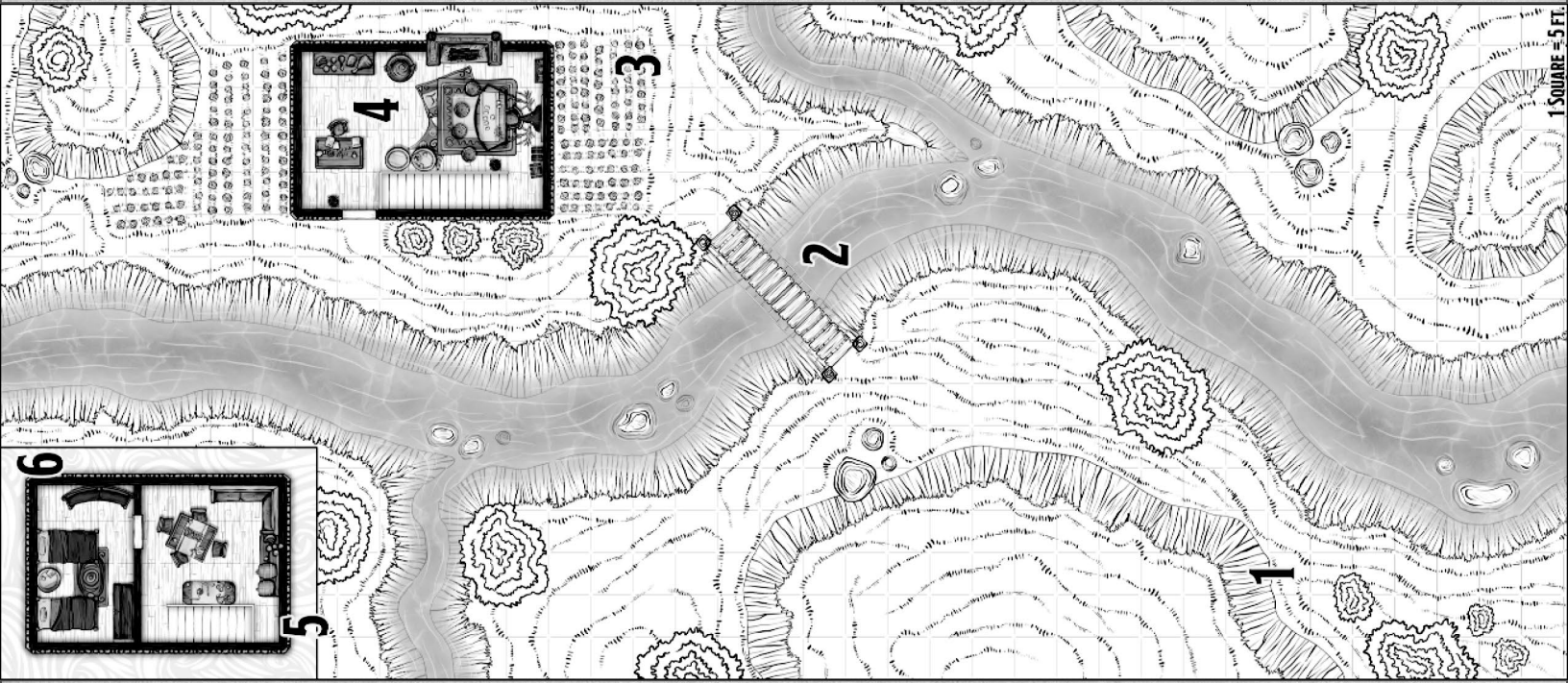
Madame Iuv did not like the bargain but accepted to try to convince the priest, Father Garond, to perform a revival ritual on the poor man. The priest does not have such power but accepted to stage a fake ceremony on the condition that Madame Iuv pays the fee and that she performs a private reading for him. Father Garond is vulnerable to the local rumors and tales and believes the diviner in the mountains has a true connection to otherworldly sources of information. Father Garond staged a fake ritual and then explained that the soul did not want to return to the world of the living.

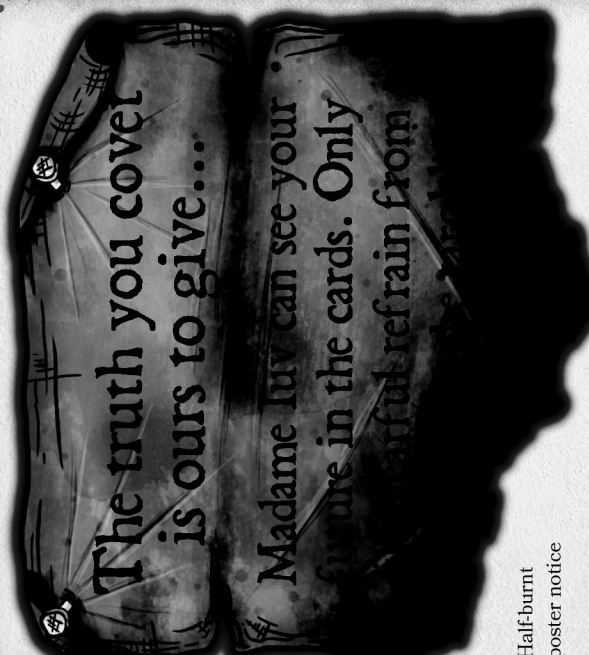
The lord did not buy it and was furious beyond belief. He promised to take revenge on the charlatan seer. He died two nights later in his sleep. Everyone thinks it was Madame Iuv.

THE TRUTH

Madame Iuv is a middle-aged woman who lives with her younger brother Taligan. They live two hours away from New Haldir in a two-story house next to the river. Madame Iuv knows some simple divination and illusion spells but she is not an accomplished diviner. Her reputation far exceeds her capabilities. She knows magic spells to perform a few cheap tricks, just enough to fool and scam travelers and the locals who are brave enough to come to her.

Madame Iuv reads the tarokka cards to people and does her best to interpret the hidden meaning in the infinite combinations. She also uses simple divination magic to pry into her client's lives and find out bits of information that she can use when talking to them. She can then use this information to give the impression that she has preternatural knowledge of all things and people.



A piece of parchment with a map and text. The map shows a path through a landscape with mountains and a river. The text is written in a stylized, slightly irregular font.

The truth you cover
is ours to give...
Madame Iuv can see your
secrets in the cards. Only
you can refrain from

Half-burnt
poster notice

Her brother, Taligan, waits on the second floor and uses some strange wind and percussion instruments to create sound effects that enhance Madame Iuv's work. It is all a scam.

Whenever difficult clients threaten their way of life, Taligan goes out of his way to silence them. He knows how to prepare a fine poison that paralyzes and kills the victims in their sleep. The main ingredient for this poison is a rare mountain flower that blooms upstream during the fall. The blue tincture from the flower's essence has permanently died Taligan's hands.

ADVENTURE HOOK

A great way to implement this adventure is a moment when the adventurers are searching for a crucial piece of lore that will move the adventure forward. The locals imply that Madame Iuv can extract any kind of information from strange forces in other worlds. The adventurers may also find the poster notice (see above).

A group of adventurers may see through the scam promptly and oppose the dishonest diviner. Taligan comes downstairs armed and ready to fight while Madame Iuv attempts to escape north to hide in the mountains.

AREA DESCRIPTIONS

1. THE RIVER PATH

A two-hour walk north toward the mountains brings the adventurers to an idyllic virgin landscape. Hills and tall ridgelines merge with grassy hills and forested areas. Crystal clear water flows south toward New Haldir. The narrow road follows the river upstream to a wooden bridge.

2. A RIGGED BRIDGE

The only way to cross the stream is through a 25-foot-long rope bridge. The bridge and ropes appear to be in good condition and no wooden tile is missing. Two sturdy wooden posts support the bridge on each end of the riverbank. A draconic rune carved in the posts reads "passage".

The first person to cross the bridge causes a wooden tile to give in when stepped on. The unlucky individual may well fall to the cool water below but this minor accident poses no danger.

Upon close inspection, smart adventurers may determine that the bridge was rigged to cause such a mishap. The wooden tile had already been pre-drilled to make it weak and brittle. The purpose of such ruse is anyone's guess.

3. HOMEGROWN VEGGIES

A two-story house overlooks the river and surrounding lands. There are no windows in the first story. A column of yellow-tinted smoke emerges from the chimney's exhaust. The farmed area to the north and south of the house features lettuces and carrots. From the looks of it, harvest season is a few weeks away.

There are three red berry bushes in front of the house and next to the only entrance. The berries are ripe and sweet.

4. MADAME IUV'S PLACE

The main door is unlocked. Upon entering, visitors encounter a dim-lighted chamber covered in thick white smoke from candles and incense. The smell is so concentrated it dumbs the minds

for a few seconds upon breathing it. There is no one in the room. An air of mysticism and foreboding pervades the scene. There is a large oak desk and four seats near the south wall. The dark eyes of a grim deer head on the wall overlook the desk. The hearth's fire creates moving shadows of the deer's horns along the walls. A dark, glinting crystal ball and a deck of intricately decorated cards rest on the desk.

Madame Iuv descends from the second story as if in slow motion, to heighten the air of mystery. She performs her usual routine and reads the cards to the adventurers. She uncovers the card of "the hanged man" and mentions that one of the adventurers had a recent accident on a bridge.

Madame Iuv does not have answers to the adventurers' questions. Her show falls apart when inspected. Magic users notice the subtle spells and convenient interpretations. If confronted, Madame Iuv uses an invisibility spell and makes a run for the mountains. Taligan fights to cover her retreat, his knife coated in the deadly poison.

5. UPSTAIRS LOUNGE

Madame Iuv and Taligan hang out in this area when there are no customers. Whenever they hear the bell from the front door, Madame waits a minute or two before coming down. There is a corner couch, a table with some food and wine, a dining table, and a table with some wind and percussion instruments.

Taligan uses these implements to create sounds effects that enhance his sister's performance downstairs whenever she mentions certain code words.

6. DOUBLE BEDROOM

The two siblings sleep here. The room has two individual beds, a wardrobe, a night table, and a red velvet couch. They do not spend much time here. Madame Iuv keeps her spellbook in the wardrobe. The book contains a few illusion cantrips and simple divination spells. A secret compartment under the couch reveals the location of an iron safe box. It contains 205 gold coins.

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