

CORE4-3

RUNNING AMOK

A DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] *LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS* ADVENTURE

BY PIETER SLEIJPEN

REVIEWED BY DAN ANDERSON AND M. SEAN MOLLEY
PLAYTESTED BY BUDDY ARNOLD, DAVID BERGE, FRED UPTON,
GLEN McELHOE, ILYA RAKHLIN, JASON DAVIS, JOHN~ALAN PASCOE,
JULIO ESPERAS, LORI ANDERSON, MARK KNOBBE, MICHAEL STEINBACH,
RENOUT VAN RIJN, STEVEN MARTIN, AND YOERIK DE VOOGD

For years the tenuous peace between Netheril and Cormyr held. For years the city of Urmlaspyr, last remnant of free Sembia, lay in between. Now something stirs in the darkest places of the city. Citizens run amok without apparent cause, wielding shadow powers they did not have before. What could cause these otherwise peaceful people to fly into a murderous frenzy? A *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure set in Urmlaspyr for characters of the Heroic tier (levels 1-10).

This adventure is part of Chapter 1 of the *Desolation series*. Chapter 1 includes four Heroic tier adventures leading up to the conclusion in CORE5-1. The other three parts are SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, and CORE4-5. You can play these four adventures in any order, but you should try to play them with the same character, and you should try to play all four parts before you play CORE5-1. The *Desolation series* also includes Paragon tier adventures (starting with SPEC4-6). It is not expected that a player can follow both tracks with the same PC.

Based on the original DUNGEONS & DRAGONS[®] rules created by E. Gary Gygax and Dave Arneson and the new DUNGEONS & DRAGONS game designed by Andy Collins, Rob Heinsoo, and James Wyatt.

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Be sure to keep up with the LFR Community at our campaign website: <http://community.wizards.com/lfr>.

PREPARING FOR PLAY

In order to play this adventure, you'll need copies of the D&D 4th Edition core rulebooks. These are the *Player's Handbook*, *Dungeon Master's Guide*, and *Monster Manual*, or the corresponding D&D Essentials products. Any other rules referenced in this adventure will be noted in the **New Rules** section at the end of the adventure.

Throughout this adventure, text in **bold italics** provides player information for you to paraphrase or read aloud when appropriate. Information about non-player characters (NPCs) and monsters appears in the full stat-block format with each combat encounter. For non-combat encounters, this information appears in abbreviated form in the adventure text.

Along with this adventure, you'll find a session tracking sheet. If you're playing this adventure as part of a WPN event (see above), complete and turn in this sheet to your organizer directly after play.

READING MONSTER STAT BLOCKS

Most of the information should be easy to understand, as it mirrors the information presented in the *Monster Manual*. Attacks may have a letter next to them designating the type: M for melee, R for ranged, C for close, and A for area. Auras are designated with the O symbol, as well as the aura keyword.

A lower-case letter (used only for certain melee and ranged attacks) denotes that the attack can be used as a basic attack.

IMPORTANT DM INFORMATION

As the DM of the session, you have the most important role in facilitating the enjoyment of the game for the players. You take the words on these pages and make them come alive. The outcome of a fun game session often creates stories that live well beyond the play at the table. Always follow this golden rule:

Make decisions and adjudications that enhance the fun of the adventure whenever possible.

In support of the golden rule, we offer these guidelines:

- **You are empowered to make adjustments to the adventure and to make decisions about how the group interacts with the world.** This is especially important during non-combat encounters, but you may also need to adjust the combat encounters for groups that are having too easy or too hard of a time with the adventure.
- **Don't make the adventure too easy or too difficult.** Never being challenged makes for a boring game, and being overwhelmed makes for a frustrating game. Gauge the experience of the players (not the characters) with the game, try to feel out (or just ask) what they like in a game, and attempt to give each player the experience they're after when they play D&D. Everyone at the table should get a "chance to shine."
- **Be mindful of pacing, and keep the game moving to ensure you finish on time.** Watch for stalling, as play loses momentum when this happens. At the same time, make sure that the players don't finish the adventure too early; provide them with a full play experience. *Living Forgotten Realms* adventures are designed to be played in about 4 hours; be very aware of running long or short, and adjust the pacing accordingly. If that means you need to "call" a combat encounter when it is obvious that the PCs are going to win, then feel free to do so.
- **Give the players appropriate hints so they can make informed choices about how to interact with the environment.** Players should always know when enemies are bloodied or affected by conditions. Give them clues about how to interact with their surroundings so they can tackle skill challenges, combats, and puzzles without getting frustrated by a lack of information. Encourage immersion in the adventure and give the players "little victories" for figuring out a good choice from your clues.

In summary, being the DM for a *Living Forgotten Realms* adventure isn't about following the adventure's text

word-for-word; it's about creating a fun, challenging game environment for the players. Chapters 1 and 2 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* are filled with good information about being a DM for a D&D game.

APPROPRIATE CHARACTER LEVELS

This adventure supports the entire Heroic tier of play (character levels 1-10). Paragon and Epic tier characters may not play this adventure. The highest-level character in the party must be within three (3) levels of the lowest-level character in the party.

Living Forgotten Realms defines five Adventure Levels (ALs) within each tier. The choice of AL affects the difficulty of most obstacles (particularly combat encounters and skill challenges) the PCs will face during the adventure, and also determines the rewards available to the PCs for successfully overcoming those obstacles. The players must decide as a group which AL they want to play, and inform you of their decision before beginning the adventure. We recommend that you calculate the average character level and use that as a starting point, but a group of experienced players might choose to "play up" for a greater challenge, while a group of less-experienced players might choose to "play down" while they're learning the ropes.

The group may not choose an Adventure Level that is more than three levels above the lowest-level character in the party. For example, a group with a level 2, level 3, and four level 5 characters may not choose to play the AL 6 version of an adventure because level 6 is more than three levels above the 2nd-level character. This group could choose to face the adventure at either AL 2 or AL 4, but they will probably choose AL 4 because that's the best fit for the group (the average character level is $25/6 =$ approximately 4).

If (and only if) the group can't agree on an Adventure Level, the DM may cast a tiebreaking vote.

FAILING TO DEFEAT AN ENCOUNTER

If the group fails to defeat an encounter (for example, if they have to flee from a combat because it's too tough or they fail too many checks during a skill challenge) it doesn't have to mean the end of the adventure. In most cases, both success and failure should lead to interesting story outcomes. The PCs might miss out on some XP or treasure, but whenever possible, give them a chance to work around their failure and still bring the adventure to a successful conclusion.

In the Rewards section, there is a baseline XP award (the minimum amount a PC can earn). There are also one or more XP awards available for completing specific objectives as outlined by the adventure. Part of the DM's

job is to decide if and when the PCs have fulfilled each objective, even if they failed at some of the individual encounters along the way.

CHARACTER DEATH

When a character dies during the course of an adventure, the player always has at least one option (Death Charity) and might have additional options (such as the Raise Dead ritual). Most importantly, the DM must decide if the rest of the group has access to the dead character's body.

- **Pay for the Raise Dead ritual.** If the group has access to the body and chooses this option, the component cost is usually divided evenly amongst the group (although this is not required, it is generally considered good form to share the costs). The component cost is 500 gp for heroic tier, 5,000 gp for paragon tier, and 50,000 gp for epic tier). If a PC can cast the ritual, then the component cost is the only cost. If the group must locate an NPC to cast the ritual, that NPC charges a fee equal to 20% of the component cost.
- **Use a power that returns dead characters to life.** Certain characters gain powers that allow them to restore life without using the Raise Dead ritual or paying a component cost. For example, the warpriest (a cleric build from *Heroes of the Fallen Lands*) gains the *resurrection* daily utility power at 8th level. NPCs may not be used for this option unless an adventure specifically says so; a player character with the appropriate power must be at the table (assuming he or she isn't the dead character) and all other conditions for using the power must be met. For example, *resurrection* may only be used at the end of an extended rest, and the character must have died within the last 24 hours.
- **Invoke the Death Charity clause.** If the group doesn't have access to the dead character's body, or if they have the body but cannot afford (or are unwilling) to pay for a ritual, the player can choose to return the PC back to life at the end of the adventure, exactly as if the Raise Dead ritual had been used on the dead character. The details of exactly how the character's body made its way back to civilization are up to the player, or this can be left deliberately vague. There is no direct cost for accepting Death Charity, but the character forfeits all non-XP rewards for the adventure (including gold, Story Awards, and the opportunity to select a Treasure). The PC cannot participate in the same adventure a second time.

Regardless of which option is chosen, any character who dies during an adventure gains 20% less XP from that adventure. In other words, characters that died during the adventure earn 80% of the amount earned by those characters that did not die during the adventure (for example, if the rest of the party earned 500 XP, the characters who died only earn 400 XP).

If a character is killed in the final encounter, but the rest of the party prevails, then the DM may choose to waive the 20% XP penalty if he or she believes that the group as a whole would not have succeeded without the dead character's sacrifice. The 20% penalty also does not apply in the event of a TPK (Total Party Kill), because the DM should reduce the entire group's XP award to reflect the fact that the party as a whole failed to complete some or all of the adventure's objectives.

Sometimes, invoking the Death Charity clause is the only option to return a dead PC to life. For example, if the group suffers a TPK and no friendly NPCs know where to find them, then it's unlikely that their bodies can be recovered. The DM is the final arbiter of whether or not a dead character's body can be recovered. Remember, the Death Charity clause is always an option, no matter what happened to the PC. Returning from the dead (by whatever means) is optional and up to the player, but the decision must be made at the table and recorded on the character's Adventure Log. Any character who chooses not to return from the dead is permanently retired from play.

Mounts are not characters. These rules do not apply if a mount is killed during an adventure. To resurrect a dead mount, the owner must pay 20% of the mount's market price at the end of the adventure in which the mount died.

MILESTONES

Whether the characters succeed or fail in an encounter, they generally reach a milestone after every second encounter following the start of the adventure or their last extended rest. Some encounters do not count toward a milestone, usually because they are pure roleplaying encounters or do not pose a meaningful challenge to the party. If an encounter is not intended to count toward a milestone, it will say so. In particular, you should not deny the players a milestone just because they are having an easy time with the combat encounters. After each encounter, inform the players whether that encounter counted toward the next milestone. Reaching a milestone gives each PC another action point and affects some magic item powers.

LASTING EFFECTS

Sometimes a PC suffers a lasting effect that isn't automatically resolved by the end of the adventure, such as the death penalty or the later stages of a disease.

Death Penalty: When a character dies and is brought back to life, that character usually suffers a death penalty. For example, a character brought back by the Raise Dead ritual or a warpriest's *resurrection* power suffers a -1 penalty to all attack rolls, skill checks, saving throws, and ability checks until he or she has reached three milestones. The player should record the character's death on his or her Adventure Log, and then keep a running tally of milestones reached. Once the PC has reached the third milestone since coming back to life, the death penalty ends.

Sometimes the death penalty is paid by a character other than the character that was returned to life. For example, if a sentinel uses the *restore life* power, there is a cost of four healing surges. These healing surges cannot be regained until the PCs who spent the surges (which cannot include the character who was returned to life) have reached three milestones or taken three extended rests. The character(s) who spent the surges track this on their individual Adventure Logs. As each character crosses the appropriate threshold, the death penalty ends for that character, regardless of whether it is still active on other characters.

Diseases: A disease lasts until it is cured or it reaches its final state. Normally, a PC makes an Endurance check after each extended rest to see if the disease improves, worsens, or maintains its current condition. At the end of an adventure, any character suffering from a disease must resolve the disease to either its cured or final state, using the necessary number of extended rests to do so. Other characters adventuring with the PC may aid the afflicted character during this time. If a disease reaches its final state and the PC can get a Cure Disease ritual cast (and pay the appropriate costs), they may do so.

Other Lasting Effects: Other effects that last beyond the scope of the adventure should be resolved at the DM's discretion. Effects that last for a well-defined period of time (those that end after a certain number of days or extended rests) should be resolved at the end of the adventure in which the effect was obtained (unless otherwise specified, such as by a Story Award). Effects that use a benchmark of unknown duration (such as milestones) should be recorded on the character's Adventure Log and tracked across adventures.

It is always the player's responsibility to inform his or her DM at the beginning of an adventure if the character is suffering from a lasting effect.

DCs BY ADVENTURE LEVEL

This adventure uses the terms Easy, Moderate, and Hard to refer to the Difficulty Class (DC) of most checks. If a DC is given as a static number (such as DC 15 or DC 25 instead of Easy DC, Moderate DC, or Hard DC) then that number is the same regardless of Adventure Level (this applies to certain skill checks whose difficulty is specifically set by the core rules, such as monster knowledge checks, jumping and swimming checks, etc.)

Should you need to improvise a DC during the adventure, use the following table.

Adventure Level	Easy DC	Moderate DC	Hard DC
2	9	13	20
4	10	14	21
6	11	15	23
8	12	16	24
10	13	18	26

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The free city of Urmlaspyr earned its freedom from Netherese rule seven decades ago in a destructive rebellion whose scars are still visible for all to see. A dark cloud covers the sun, blocking most of the light and keeping the city in eternal twilight. Other parts of the city include rifts into the Shadowfell almost like miniature versions of the shadow Maelstrom that consumes the old Sembian capital of Ordulin. With help from Cormyr, these parts are walled off and their dangers have been contained for decades. Despite the lack of sunlight, or perhaps because of it, and due to its good natural harbor, the city has since flourished as a go-between for Cormyr and Sembia and as the place for shadow creatures to live and trade.

Recently the Ordulin Maelstrom has been wildly fluctuating and expanding. The rifts within Urmlaspyr have also become more active. The local authorities are having difficulties containing the problem. They are unable to determine the cause and the city's limited resources are strained to deal with dangerous incursions from the Shadowfell. Cormyr offered assistance, mostly by hiring adventurers, but that country has its own problems. Some locals are whispering that they should once again join Sembia since its Netherese overlords are much better equipped to deal with the problems than the Cormyreans. Few heeded these whispers at first, but the opinion has gained support with each incident. Obviously, Cormyr suspects Netheril is behind these incidents, but there is no proof of any central organizing force behind the incidents and some point out that the

Maelstrom itself is showing signs of an alien intelligence and that it might be behind the trouble. The fact is that nobody knows for sure, and people are worried.

Against this backdrop Cormyr is hiring adventurers to deal with individual incidents, and hopefully learn more about what is going on while on the job. One of the events starts with the adventurers enjoying breakfast in the Old Keep inn when a farmer and his dogs suddenly run amok. They use strange shadow powers they did not have before, killing innocents until stopped by the PCs. The characters quickly learn the farmer was not the only person that went berserk: both a rich grain merchant and a simple blacksmith did the same the day before. None of the three had ever been in contact with one another and the authorities are baffled.

The Cormyrean ambassador, Deskyr Thanterim, hires the PCs to investigate the incidents. Soon the investigation takes them to the Fair and a simple pastry baker. The baker has been using local Shadowfell fruits, bone berries, tainted by the local shadow Maelstrom (a tendril of the Ordulin Maelstrom) which when eaten induces madness in non-shadow creatures. The baker is unaware of the taint, but when investigating the orchard, the PCs learn the taint has spread to the local plant life. Dealing with the problem is relatively easy, but the question remains whether similar madness-inducing rifts have opened elsewhere in town and other innocents are at risk.

DESOLATION: CHAPTER 1

The *Desolation* series is a major LFR plot arc that spans a number of adventures centered on the ongoing conflict between Netheril and Cormyr. Chapter 1 of the series includes the following four Heroic tier adventures, which can be played in any order:

- SPEC4-5 *Rising Darkness*
- CORE4-3 *Running Amok*
- CORE4-4 *Shadow Siege*
- CORE4-5 *Skeletons in the Closet*

The events of Chapter 1 culminate in the adventure CORE5-1. We strongly recommend that you play the first four adventures (remember, you can play them in any order) before playing CORE5-1.

Chapter 2 of the *Desolation* series is for the Paragon tier and begins with SPEC4-6 *Raging Shadows*. We do not expect or intend that the same PCs will be able to follow both the Heroic-tier and Paragon-tier tracks.

DM's INTRODUCTION

The PCs may already be familiar with Deskyr Thanterim, either from having played *CORE1-1 Inheritance*, or from the other parts of the *Desolation* series (see sidebar). The PCs may also have previously served the kingdom of Cormyr in any number of CORM adventures. As such, these PCs have met and potentially befriended ambassador Thanterim directly. If a PC earned his disfavor, such as with Story Award **SPEC56 Ambassador's Disfavor** from SPEC4-5, he treats that particular PC coldly. He has little choice in working with the PCs to solve the matter at hand. This is a chance to regain his favor though.

The adventure starts while the PCs are enjoying breakfast at the Old Keep inn. They are here by invitation of Thanterim. The invitation was vague. It could be a simple business meeting or a reward for a job well done. Before Thanterim can arrive, one of the other guests and his dogs change into shadow monstrosities and attack everybody in the common room.

After the fight the Night Watch (the name of the Watch implies that it only operates at night, but it in fact operates both day and night) and, somewhat later, Ambassador Thanterim arrive at the inn. They are grateful for the PCs' aid. Since there have been two similar attacks just the previous day, they hire the PCs to investigate the cause and if possible deal with it. The two other cases, a blacksmith and a rich grain merchant, seemingly have nothing in common.

The characters can investigate any of the three victims. Each of these is detailed in a separate encounter with the clues summarized in a sidebar. The PCs are free to do this research in any order, or even ignore one or more of the cases. They eventually learn that all three victims visited the Fair, and potentially that the only commonality between the three is food - pastries to be precise. Red herrings refer to Vlondril the Jeweler, the Singing Drake, and potentially street urchins at the Fair.

Eventually the PCs arrive at the Fair and the food court. Here they find the final clues leading to Varranth the Baker and potentially the fourth case of people going insane - a group of human street urchins are changing into nasty darklings. The PCs can choose to ignore this problem since by now they should know Varranth is behind the shadow transformations (with the urchins potentially providing the final clue if the PCs are still unsure). Dealing with the urchins earns the gratitude of the locals.

Varranth lives and works in one of the poorer parts of town near one of several walled off cursed sections. He is unaware of what his pastries do to non-shadow creatures, although whether he is willfully blind or truly

innocent is up to the PCs to decide. He is under the non-magical influence of a dryad living in his garden since the shadow curse has increased in power. She guards the shadow infused garden. She caused the baker to use the poisoned berries and to sell the products to non-shadow creatures.

While the PCs might at first not investigate the garden, the Night Watch certainly does, potentially calling the PCs back to deal with the dryad and her underlings. Once the PCs deal with her, they are thanked by the Night Watch and Ambassador Thanterim. They want the PCs' opinion on what to do with the baker. There is a ritual to deal with the shadow curse, but it is very expensive, and the ambassador needs some convincing to finance it (the baker's garden is in a poor part of town and poses no further threat as long as nobody eats the food from the garden).

Regardless, the PCs are rewarded for a job well done and asked to stick around the city for more work. The growing shadow influence is not stopped and remains a matter of great concern to the Ambassador and to Cormyr.

Important Note on Lighting: The sky in Urmlaspyr is always covered in thick dark clouds. As a result even during the brightest of days the light is dim. This condition affects all the combat encounters. You can also play it up during the non-combat encounters to emphasize the strangeness of the city's atmosphere to the players. Furthermore, Urmlaspyr's close proximity to the Shadowfell means that the radius of all non-magical light sources is halved.

PLAYER'S INTRODUCTION

Read or paraphrase the following to the players:

The Old Keep is an inn well known for its good food and its castle-like furniture and decorations. Since it is always dark outside in Urmlaspyr even during the daytime, there are several chandeliers providing dim light.

The Old Keep is not too crowded this morning, but a group of young men next to the stage keep the mood loud and festive. You are here by invitation from Deskyr Thanterim, Cormyrean Ambassador to Urmlaspyr. He has not yet arrived, but several other adventuring types are waiting in the common room as well.

Besides the PCs and the employees the following groups of people are present (see the map of Encounter 1 for their locations):

- **1. Lone farmer and his dogs (Garrim):** The stocky weather-worn human enjoys his food in silence. At his feet lay two (or three) massive, well-behaved dogs.
- **2. Banker and four scribes:** A richly dressed chubby human is eating breakfast with four somewhat nervous scribes (also human). The rich man is doing most of the talking, mostly congratulating himself on a deal they made the day before.
- **3. Four warehouse guards:** Four armed mercenaries (shadar-kai) are holding a whispering conversation over their food. They look like soldiers, not adventurers. They are discussing the increased number of shadows and darklings in the city, and how their profits have been up as a result. The local merchants are worried and have been paying for extra security. Still, the mercenaries are a bit concerned, because at some point it will be cheaper for the merchants to leave the city instead of hiring more guards.
- **4. Romantic couple:** A clearly romantically involved couple (a half-elf and a human) are eating their breakfast. They are somewhat irritated by the noise of the nearby journeymen, but take it in stride.
- **5. Loud group:** Ten young men (humans, half-orcs, and shadar-kai), members of the local carpenter's guild, are celebrating the fact that they have just made it to journeyman status. They are obviously in a good mood, and plan to have fun the whole day.
- **Maids:** There are three serving maids working in the Old Keep this morning.

Allow the PCs a few moments to chat with one another before letting them pick a spot on the map and proceeding with Encounter 1. They should have little to no time to interact with the other guests before Garrim goes crazy.

Note that Deskyr did not mention the nature of this meeting in his invitation to the PCs. If he has worked with the PCs before, they can assume that he has invited them here to thank them for their past efforts and to get them up to speed on local events. If he does not know the PCs, he likely invited them to get an idea of their personality and skills with the possible intent to hire them for the various tasks in town. (Since Deskyr does not and could not know what is about to happen, he obviously did not invite the PCs here specifically to deal with the threat that is about to erupt during Encounter 1; the PCs being in the right place at the right time is just one of those coincidences that so often arise in an adventurer's career.)

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: EQUAL TO THE AL

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at ALs 2 to 6:

- 1 Garrim (G)
- 2 shadow stalkers (S)
- 2 shadow hounds (H)

This encounter includes the following creatures at ALs 8 and 10:

- 1 Garrim (G)
- 2 shadow stranglers (S)
- 2 shadow hounds (H)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the shadow stalkers or stranglers (dependent on AL).

Six PCs: Add a shadow hound and increase Garrim's hit points to 56 / 85 / 104 / 123 / 143. If you have a particularly strong group you can also give him a +1 bonus to all defenses, attack rolls, and damage rolls.

Difficulty: While the PCs are fighting, the shadows are at least at first trying to deal with the guests at the inn. Having each shadow pick different groups and switching to other victims before actually killing anybody to cause maximum havoc (but minimum number of victims) is a method to make the fight easier. Having the shadows focus more on killing guests makes it harder. Be careful to balance the risk and opportunity based on the skill of your group. They should have a decent chance of saving people, but having to risk an attack of opportunity or ignoring more dangerous opponents to save an innocent is good way to see how much the PCs care about protecting bystanders. Regardless, give the PCs a fair chance of success.

On the other hand, when the shadows attack the bystanders they are not attacking the PCs. The fight becomes harder if the shadows switch targets quickly to focus on the PCs instead of the NPCs.

SETUP

It is the start of the day, and the PCs are sitting in the common room of the *Old Keep* while waiting for Deskyr Thanterim to arrive for a breakfast meeting.

A loud female shriek of pain and fear easily pierces the noises of the tavern. "GARRIM! STOP! YOU ARE HURTING ME!"

One of the maids is desperately trying to get away from the sturdy farmer who until a few seconds ago had been quietly eating his meal. The farmer has the poor girl's arm grabbed. Something is clearly wrong with him. Black lines cover his pale skin like the cracks in dried mud and a halo of shadows surrounds him. Neither the lines nor the shadows were there earlier. What is more, the farmer's dogs seem to be similarly afflicted, growing in size and snarling aggressively.

The reason for Garrim's change is not apparent. PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Arcana check detect shadow and transmutation magic on the farmer and his dogs. It is ingrained in their flesh, and it cannot be simply dispelled (although a ritual like Remove Affliction might work if the PCs had time to use it). It doesn't take an expert to realize the man is intent on murder. A DC 20 Insight check (whether passive or active) shows Garrim is under magical control, but not from an outside source.

Garrim and his dogs are overcome by a murderous rage, but not a mindless one. At first they attack the nearest living non-shadow opponents, which depending on where the PCs are sitting, might be the PCs or one of the five other groups enjoying breakfast. Once confronted with serious opposition though, whether shadow or natural, they focus on the threat and not the other guests (giving fast PCs a chance to save the maid). If there is an equal choice, they attack non-shadow creatures before attacking shadow creatures.

The guests and employees simply want to leave as quickly as possible. The four shadar-kai mercenaries are professional guards, and they quickly take charge of organizing the other NPCs, leaving the PCs to deal with the monsters.

Two shadows sensed the shadow magic in Garrim and they have sneaked closer. With the start of the trouble, they see a chance for some fun (they enjoy any activity that is both lethal and comes at the expense of non-shadow creatures). They enter the tavern through the windows. PCs can make a DC 20 / 21 / 22 / 23 / 24 Perception check (active or passive) to spot the shadows before the shadows act.

Note: If Garrim's initiative is the highest of the fight then lower it behind at least one PC to give the players a fair chance to rescue the maid Miri.

Standing up from the chairs is a free action (sitting is not the same as being prone).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: The tavern is dimly lit. Remember the *shroud of night* aura of the shadow hounds!

Chandeliers: The chandeliers are tied to a nearby wall. They can be dropped with a standard action by untying the rope or targeting it with an attack that deals at least 5 damage. The chandelier falls down, making everybody below the target of the following attack:

M Chandelier • Encounter (once per chandelier) Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +AL +3 vs. Reflex Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage, and the target is knocked prone and pinned to the floor (restrained and cannot stand) (escape DC moderate). Miss: Half damage, and the target is pushed 1 square away from the chandelier.

Furniture: The furniture is difficult terrain.

Guests and Maids: The NPCs act at the end of the round. For simplicity's sake, assume that these non-combatants are automatically hit when attacked by monsters. The first time an NPC is hit (including taking ongoing damage at the start of their turn), they become bloodied. The second time they die. Each NPC has 1 healing surge. They try to leave the tavern as quickly as possible without triggering opportunity attacks.

If the PCs spend powers and actions to protect the civilians (for example to give an NPC a saving throw against Garrim's *soul fire*) always rule in favor of the PCs. Don't roll a saving throw; assume the NPC automatically makes it.

TACTICS

Garrim and the shadow hounds are intent on killing any non-shadow creature within range. The curse does not make them mindless. In fact it imbues them with a dangerous cunning. Garrim prefers to stay at range, using *soul fire* against as many opponents as possible. If he starts his turn in melee, especially if most targets are already taking ongoing necrotic damage, he uses *shadow touch* before teleporting out of melee range.

Garrim's dogs work as a pack, focusing on the weakest target outside the group (in other words the character furthest away from allies) or wherever Garrim directs them to. As long as at least one dog lives, it is very likely the whole common room is dimly lit at best.

The shadows are not allies of Garrim and his dogs, but they sense a kindred spirit. They create as much havoc as possible by dropping chandeliers and attacking PCs or NPCs on the outskirts of the fight. Don't forget their *born of shadows* trait. The shadows try to hide whenever possible.

Garrim and his dogs fight to the death. The shadows flee as soon as Garrim and the dogs are defeated or they are reduced below 25% of their maximum hit points.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Regardless of how the fight goes, the Night Watch arrives on the scene at the start of the sixth round. If the fight is still going on, the shadows flee and Garrim and any remaining dogs are quickly defeated. The PCs are politely asked to lower their weapons (obviously only after the attackers are defeated and nobody is bleeding to death on the floor) and take a seat. Sergeant Hakan (male shadar-kai), wants to know what happened. He is a skilled leader, polite but clearly intent on doing his job.

Obviously, the PCs are innocent and they have nothing to fear. Assuming the PCs are not overly aggressive, proceed with Encounter 2. The ambassador arrives on the scene after about 15 minutes.

The other guests are treated the same way. Any surviving guests and employees are grateful and go out of their way to thank the PCs. Someone eventually fetches the innkeeper, who is concerned about the welfare of his employees and guests. He is shocked and worried about the attack. See Encounter 3 for more information on him, the guests, the maids, and Garrim.

TROUBLESHOOTING: FIGHTING THE WATCH

The Watch in Urmlaspyr is not overly corrupt. They are a bit on edge due to the recent troubles, but keep a professional attitude. They are grateful to people who can handle problems themselves. Still, they need to make sure this incident was nothing nefarious.

Since this is a clear-cut case of self-defense, the PCs should have no problem with the Watch. If for some reason they choose to flee the scene, they may do so. The Watch has better things to do than chase down witnesses. Deskyr contacts the PCs later on, trying to hire them to solve the mysterious attacks (see Encounter 2). Fighting the Watch is not smart, especially for low-level PCs. Set up the scene, but before the fighting starts, have Deskyr appear, demanding to know what happened. If that does not help, allow the PCs to get away, but the adventure is basically over. Note that if only one or two PCs are giving the Watch a hard time, Deskyr can smooth things over. Don't let one player ruin the fun of the rest of the table!

MILESTONE

The encounter counts towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (AL 2)

1 Garrim (G)	Level 3 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 150
HP 47; Bloodied 23	Initiative +4
AC 17, Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 17	Perception +7
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d8 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
A Soul Fire (fear, necrotic, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: Ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends). In addition, the first time the target willingly moves closer to Garrim before the end of its next turn, the target takes 5 psychic damage.	
Miss: 5 necrotic damage.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
R Shadow Step (teleportation) • Recharge 5-6	
Effect: Before the attack, Garrim teleports up to 10 squares.	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: Garrim teleports the target 10 squares to the square it just left.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
A Dark Transposition (necrotic, teleportation) • Encounter	
Trigger: An enemy hits the Garrim.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 5 necrotic damage, and then Garrim and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.	
Skills Stealth +6	
Str 10 (+1)	Dex 17 (+4) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 15 (+3)	Int 11 (+1) Cha 20 (+6)
Alignment unaligned Languages Chondathan, Common	
Note: Tiefling occultist modified for a shadow feel.	

2 Shadow Hounds (H)	Level 2 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 125
HP 38; Bloodied 19	Initiative +5
AC 15, Fortitude 16, Reflex 14, Will 13	Perception +7
Speed 7. Teleport 7	Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Baying (fear) • At-Will	
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies within burst); +5 vs. Will	
Hit: The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.	
Skills Endurance +8, Stealth +8	
Str 19 (+4)	Dex 15 (+3) Wis 13 (+2)
Con 14 (+3)	Int 6 (-1) Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment unaligned Languages -	

2 Shadow Stalkers (S)	Level 2 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 125
HP 32; Bloodied 26	Initiative +9
AC 14, Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 13	Perception +3
Speed 8	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
Insubstantial	
The stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadowy Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +5 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage.	
M Shadow Stalk (necrotic) • Recharge when the stalker uses shadow step	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 1d8 + 5 necrotic damage, and the stalker shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the stalker is melded with the target's shadow, it moves when the target moves without provoking opportunity attacks, and it gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target. When the target saves, the stalker shifts to a square adjacent to the target.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Shadow Step (teleportation) • At-Will	
Trigger: A living creature within 5 squares of the stalker drops to 0 hit points or fewer.	
Effect (Free Action): The stalker teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering creature and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 19 (+5) Wis 14 (+3)
Con 13 (+2)	Int 12 (+2) Cha 11 (+1)
Alignment evil Languages Common	

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (AL 4)

1 Garrim (G)	Level 6 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 250
HP 71; Bloodied 35	Initiative +6
AC 20, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 20	Perception +9
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 10 necrotic	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
A Soul Fire (fear, necrotic, psychic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +9 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> Ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). In addition, the first time the target willingly moves closer to Garrim before the end of its next turn, the target takes 10 psychic damage.	
<i>Miss:</i> Ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
R Shadow Step (teleportation) • Recharge 5-6	
<i>Effect:</i> Before the attack, Garrim teleports up to 10 squares.	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +9 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> Garrim teleports the target 10 squares to the square it just left.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
A Dark Transposition (necrotic, teleportation) • Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> An enemy hits the Garrim.	
<i>Effect (Immediate Interrupt):</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 5 necrotic damage, and then Garrim and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.	
Skills Stealth +8	
Str 10 (+3)	Dex 17 (+6) Wis 13 (+4)
Con 15 (+5)	Int 11 (+3) Cha 20 (+8)
Alignment unaligned Languages Chondathan, Common	
Note: Tiedfling occultist modified for a shadow feel.	

2 Shadow Hounds (H)	Level 4 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 175
HP 54; Bloodied 27	Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 18, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +8
Speed 7. Teleport 7	Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
Shadow Ambush	
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 5 damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
C Baying (fear) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 5 (enemies within burst); +7 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.	
Skills Endurance +9, Stealth +9	
Str 19 (+5)	Dex 15 (+4) Wis 13 (+3)
Con 14 (+4)	Int 6 (+0) Cha 16 (+5)
Alignment unaligned Languages -	

2 Shadow Stalkers (S)	Level 4 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 175
HP 44; Bloodied 22	Initiative +10
AC 16, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 15	Perception +4
Speed 8	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
Insubstantial	
The stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadowy Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage.	
M Shadow Stalk (necrotic) • Recharge when the stalker uses shadow step	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 5 necrotic damage, and the stalker shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the stalker is melded with the target's shadow, it moves when the target moves without provoking opportunity attacks, and it gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target. When the target saves, the stalker shifts to a square adjacent to the target.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Shadow Step (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Trigger:</i> A living creature within 5 squares of the stalker drops to 0 hit points or fewer.	
<i>Effect (Free Action):</i> The stalker teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering creature and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 19 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 13 (+3)	Int 12 (+3) Cha 11 (+2)
Alignment evil Languages Common	

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (AL 6)

1 Garrim (G)		Level 8 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 350
HP 87; Bloodied 43		Initiative +7
AC 22, Fortitude 18, Reflex 20, Will 22		Perception +10
Speed 6		Darkvision
Resist 10 necrotic		
TRAITS		
Shadow Infusion		
While Garrim is within dim light or no light when his attacks hit they also give vulnerability 5 necrotic until the end of Garrim's next turn. Whenever Garrim takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Shadow Touch (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
A Soul Fire (fear, necrotic, psychic) • At-Will		
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +11 vs. Reflex		
Hit: Ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). In addition, the first time the target willingly moves closer to Garrim before the end of its next turn, the target takes 10 psychic damage.		
Miss: Ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).		
MOVE ACTIONS		
R Shadow Step (teleportation) • Recharge 5-6		
Effect: Before the attack, Garrim teleports up to 10 squares.		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +11 vs. Will		
Hit: Garrim teleports the target 10 squares to the square it just left.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
A Dark Transposition (necrotic, teleportation) • Encounter		
Trigger: An enemy hits the Garrim.		
Effect (<i>Immediate Interrupt</i>): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 5 necrotic damage, and then Garrim and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.		
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 10 (+4)	Dex 17 (+7)	Wis 13 (+5)
Con 15 (+6)	Int 11 (+4)	Cha 20 (+9)
Alignment unaligned Languages Chondathan, Common		
Note: Tiefling occultist modified for a shadow feel.		

2 Shadow Hounds (H)		Level 6 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast		XP 250
HP 70; Bloodied 35		Initiative +7
AC 19, Fortitude 20, Reflex 18, Will 17		Perception +9
Speed 7. Teleport 7		Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant		
TRAITS		
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10		
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.		
Shadow Ambush		
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d6 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Bite • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage.		

MINOR ACTIONS		
C Baying (fear) • At-Will		
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies within burst); +9 vs. Will		
Hit: The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.		
Skills Endurance +10, Stealth +10		
Str 19 (+6)	Dex 15 (+5)	Wis 13 (+4)
Con 14 (+5)	Int 6 (+1)	Cha 16 (+6)
Alignment unaligned		Languages -

2 Shadow Stalkers (S)		Level 6 Lurker
Medium shadow humanoid		XP 250
HP 56; Bloodied 28		Initiative +11
AC 18, Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 17		Perception +5
Speed 8		Darkvision
TRAITS		
Born of Shadows		
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.		
Insubstantial		
The stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Shadowy Touch (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage.		
M Shadow Stalk (necrotic) • Recharge when the stalker uses shadow step		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the stalker shifts into the target's space and melds with its shadow (save ends). While the stalker is melded with the target's shadow, it moves when the target moves without provoking opportunity attacks, and it gains a +4 bonus to all defenses and a +5 bonus to attack rolls against the target. When the target saves, the stalker shifts to a square adjacent to the target.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Shadow Step (teleportation) • At-Will		
Trigger: A living creature within 5 squares of the stalker drops to 0 hit points or fewer.		
Effect (<i>Free Action</i>): The stalker teleports to a square adjacent to the triggering creature and gains a +2 bonus to attack rolls until the end of its next turn.		
Skills Stealth +12		
Str 12 (+4)	Dex 19 (+7)	Wis 14 (+5)
Con 13 (+4)	Int 12 (+4)	Cha 11 (+3)
Alignment evil		Languages Common

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (AL 8)

1 Garrim (G)	Level 10 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 500
HP 103; Bloodied 51	Initiative +8
AC 24, Fortitude 20, Reflex 22, Will 24	Perception +11
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 10 necrotic	
TRAITS	
Shadow Infusion	
While Garrim is within dim light or no light when his attacks hit they also give vulnerability 5 necrotic until the end of Garrim's next turn. Whenever Garrim takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 6 necrotic damage, and ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
A Soul Fire (fear, necrotic, psychic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +13 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> Ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends). In addition, the first time the target willingly moves closer to Garrim before the end of its next turn, the target takes 10 psychic damage.	
<i>Miss:</i> Ongoing 5 necrotic damage (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
R Shadow Step (teleportation) • Recharge 5-6	
<i>Effect:</i> Before the attack, Garrim teleports up to 10 squares.	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> Garrim teleports the target 10 squares to the square it just left.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
A Dark Transposition (necrotic, teleportation) • Encounter	
<i>Trigger:</i> An enemy hits the Garrim.	
<i>Effect (Immediate Interrupt):</i> Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 5 necrotic damage, and then Garrim and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 10 (+5)	Dex 17 (+8) Wis 13 (+6)
Con 15 (+7)	Int 11 (+5) Cha 20 (+10)
Alignment unaligned Languages Chondathan, Common	
Note: Tiefling occultist modified for a shadow fecl.	

2 Shadow Hounds (H)	Level 8 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 350
HP 86; Bloodied 43	Initiative +8
AC 21, Fortitude 22, Reflex 20, Will 19	Perception +10
Speed 7. Teleport 7	Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
Shadow Ambush	
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d8 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 7 damage.	

MINOR ACTIONS		
C Baying (fear) • At-Will		
<i>Attack:</i> Close burst 5 (enemies within burst); +11 vs. Will		
<i>Hit:</i> The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.		
Skills Endurance +11, Stealth +11		
Str 19 (+7)	Dex 15 (+6)	Wis 13 (+5)
Con 14 (+6)	Int 6 (+2)	Cha 16 (+7)
Alignment unaligned Languages -		

2 Shadow Stranglers (S)	Level 8 Artillery
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 350
HP 77; Bloodied 38	Initiative +8
AC 22, Fortitude 17, Reflex 20, Will 21	Perception +6
Speed 8	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Born of Shadows	
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.	
Insubstantial	
The stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadowy Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the strangler becomes invisible to the target until the end of the strangler's next turn.	
R Blinding Shadows (necrotic) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 4 necrotic damage, and the target cannot see anything more than 3 squares away from it until the end of the strangler's next turn.	
R Strangling Darkness (necrotic) • Recharge 5-6	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10 (one creature); +13 vs. Fortitude	
<i>Hit:</i> The target is restrained and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends both).	
A Devouring Dark (necrotic) • Encounter	
<i>Attack:</i> Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in burst); +13 vs. Reflex	
<i>Hit:</i> 1d10 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the strangler's next turn,	
<i>Miss:</i> Half damage.	
Skills Arcana +10, Stealth +13	
Str 12 (+5)	Dex 19 (+8) Wis 14 (+6)
Con 17 (+7)	Int 12 (+5) Cha 19 (+8)
Alignment evil Languages Common	

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (AL 10)

1 Garrim (G)	Level 12 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 700
HP 119; Bloodied 59	Initiative +9
AC 26, Fortitude 22, Reflex 24, Will 26	Perception +12
Speed 6	Darkvision
Resist 10 necrotic	
TRAITS	
Shadow Infusion	
While Garrim is within dim light or no light when his attacks hit they also give vulnerability 5 necrotic until the end of Garrim's next turn. Whenever Garrim takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Shadow Touch (necrotic) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 necrotic damage, and ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).	
A Soul Fire (fear, necrotic, psychic) • At-Will	
Attack: Area burst 1 within 10 (enemies in the burst); +15 vs. Reflex	
Hit: Ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends). In addition, the first time the target willingly moves closer to Garrim before the end of its next turn, the target takes 15 psychic damage.	
Miss: Ongoing 10 necrotic damage (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
R Shadow Step (teleportation) • Recharge 5-6	
Effect: Before the attack, Garrim teleports up to 10 squares.	
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +15 vs. Will	
Hit: Garrim teleports the target 10 squares to the square it just left.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
A Dark Transposition (necrotic, teleportation) • Encounter	
Trigger: An enemy hits the Garrim.	
Effect (Immediate Interrupt): Close burst 3 (creatures in the burst). Each target takes 10 necrotic damage, and then Garrim and the triggering enemy teleport, swapping positions.	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 10 (+6)	Dex 17 (+9)
Con 15 (+8)	Int 11 (+6)
Wis 13 (+7)	Cha 20 (+11)
Alignment unaligned	
Languages Chondathan, Common	
Note: Tiefling occultist modified for a shadow feel.	

2 Shadow Hounds (H)	Level 10 Skirmisher
Medium shadow magical beast	XP 500
HP 102; Bloodied 51	Initiative +9
AC 23, Fortitude 24, Reflex 22, Will 21	Perception +11
Speed 7. Teleport 7	Darkvision
Resist 5 necrotic; Vulnerable 5 radiant	
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
Shadow Ambush	
When the shadow hound teleports adjacent to an enemy, it gains combat advantage and deals an extra 1d8 damage on the next attack it makes against that enemy this turn.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Bite • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 9 damage.	

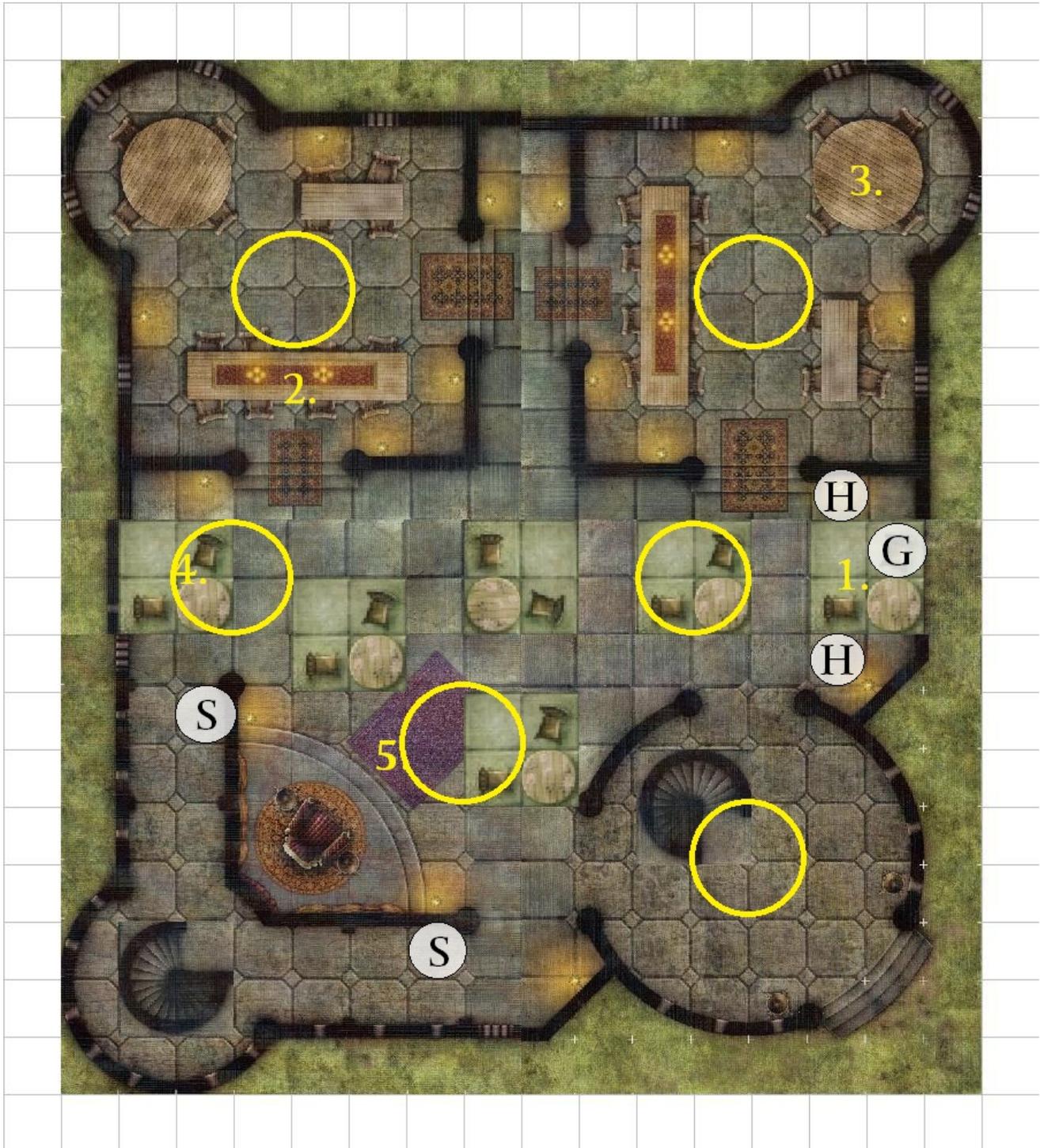
MINOR ACTIONS		
C Baying (fear) • At-Will		
Attack: Close burst 5 (enemies within burst); +13 vs. Will		
Hit: The target takes a -2 penalty to all defenses until the end of the shadow hound's next turn.		
Skills Endurance +12, Stealth +12		
Str 19 (+8)	Dex 15 (+7)	Wis 13 (+6)
Con 14 (+7)	Int 6 (+3)	Cha 16 (+8)
Alignment unaligned		
Languages -		

2 Shadow Stranglers (S)	Level 10 Artillery	
Medium shadow humanoid	XP 500	
HP 89; Bloodied 44	Initiative +9	
AC 24, Fortitude 19, Reflex 22, Will 23	Perception +7	
Speed 8	Darkvision	
TRAITS		
Born of Shadows		
The stalker can make a Stealth check to become hidden when it has concealment instead of needing total concealment.		
Insubstantial		
The stalker takes half damage from all attacks, except those that deal force damage. Whenever the stalker takes radiant damage, it loses this trait until the start of its next turn.		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Shadowy Touch (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +13 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the strangler becomes invisible to the target until the end of the strangler's next turn.		
R Blinding Shadows (necrotic) • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +15 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target cannot see anything more than 3 squares away from it until the end of the strangler's next turn.		
R Strangling Darkness (necrotic) • Recharge 5-6		
Attack: Ranged 10 (one creature); +15 vs. Fortitude		
Hit: The target is restrained and takes ongoing 15 necrotic damage (save ends both).		
A Devouring Dark (necrotic) • Encounter		
Attack: Area burst 2 within 10 (enemies in burst); +15 vs. Reflex		
Hit: 2d6 + 6 necrotic damage, and the target is blinded until the end of the strangler's next turn.		
Miss: Half damage.		
Skills Arcana +11, Stealth +14		
Str 12 (+6)	Dex 19 (+9)	Wis 14 (+7)
Con 17 (+8)	Int 12 (+6)	Cha 19 (+9)
Alignment evil		
Languages Common		

ENCOUNTER 1: FARMER'S RAGE (MAP)

TILE SETS NEEDED

DN6: Castle Grimstead x2; Dungeon Tiles Master Set - The Dungeon x6 (just for the tables)



G = Garrim; H = Shadow Hounds; S = Shadows

1 = Lone farmer and dogs; 2 = Banker and scribes; 3 = Warehouse guards; 4 = Romantic couple; 5 = Loud group
Yellow circles = chandeliers

ENCOUNTER 2: START OF AN INVESTIGATION

IMPORTANT NPCs

Deskyr Thanterim: male human; Cormyrean ambassador.

Sergeant Hakan: male shadar-kai; Watch Sergeant.

Jaden: male human; innkeeper.

The PCs have defeated a few shadow creatures, half of whom were perfectly normal non-aggressive natural creatures shortly before. Now they are politely questioned about events by Sergeant Hakan of the Watch. Details on any surviving guests can be found in Encounter 3. The guests try to stay out of the conversation for now.

Around this time the middle-aged balding innkeeper Jaden also arrives from the kitchen. The man is genuinely worried about the fate of his customers and employees, grieving for any deaths and worried sick about events. He offers any survivors a drink on the house, and waives the costs for any meal or drink the guests had that morning. He also verbally defends his guests against the Watch even though that is not really necessary.

Allow the PCs some time to interact with the Watch and the innkeeper before Ambassador Deskyr arrives on the scene. The text assumes the PCs are inside politely discussing events with the Watch when the Ambassador arrives; adjust as necessary.

You hear loud voices just outside the inn. Before anybody can react, the door opens and a small contingent of soldiers marches in, closely followed by an elegantly dressed young man with a commanding presence.

PCs who have previously met Deskyr Thanterim recognize him easily; if none of them have met the Ambassador before then it's still safe to assume that they would have had a basic description of him since he was supposed to meet them here for breakfast.

Deskyr nods to you, then turns towards Sergeant Hakan. "Good morning, Officer. I am Ambassador Deskyr Thanterim of Cormyr, and these are my guests you are interrogating. How may I be of assistance?"

Unless warned by the PCs that the Ambassador was on his way here to meet them, Sergeant Hakan is a bit surprised about Deskyr's appearance. Even if the PCs

had already brought up the Ambassador, the Sergeant was not entirely sure the PCs were telling the truth. Hakan reacts equally politely, introducing himself as the officer in charge of the scene, and apologizing for any inconvenience. Urmlaspyr is a Sembian city, and its authorities are well aware of the power of money. Deskyr's sincere politeness and compassion are an unexpected and welcome surprise to Hakan.

Once Deskyr is brought up to speed by Hakan and the PCs, he becomes visibly concerned. He has had reports of similar incidents taking place in other parts of town. Nobody is served by people running amok in the streets of the city, and who knows how many innocent civilians might be affected next. So he takes a more business-like attitude, turning towards the PCs and asking them whether or not they are available for a job. He can provide the PCs with the following information:

- Two others ran amok under similar circumstances yesterday evening. Like this incident, there no outward signs anything was amiss until they changed and started attacking bystanders.
- The first victim was a rich grain merchant, Xandos Elkweed, from Golden Lion Street. He was quickly subdued by his bodyguards, but not before killing one of them and severely wounding his own wife. He can be found in his house. [Note that this account differs from what really happened. The real events are told by the bodyguard in Encounter 4. As Deskyr mentions, he did not have the time for extensive fact gathering.]
- The second victim was a blacksmith, Malark Greyskirt, from Dawn Road. He went on a rampage in the Singing Drake, a lower-class tavern where he was meeting his coal supplier. He killed his supplier and several bystanders before he was killed by the Watch. His body is at the shrine of Kelemvor at the edge of the Cemetery. His wife and sons can be found at the family's house.
- None of the three victims seem to know one another, or even come from the same social circles or part of town. They have nothing in common.
- If specifically asked, Deskyr knows that both victims were human (like Garrim).
- Since the trouble only started yesterday, and Deskyr has only just made the impromptu decision to hire the PCs, he knows nothing more. Since the other two events took place in other parts of town, neither does Sergeant Hakan.
- Hakan has heard his fellow Watch members talk about the events, but nothing official has been said and he had other things to worry about.
- Worried about more victims, Deskyr urges the PCs to resolve this matter quickly, especially with the town

already on edge. Many peaceful shadow creatures live in town and have done so for seven decades. Deskyr is worried that if the commoners hear enough stories and are led to believe that any shadow creature is a potential mass murderer, there is a good chance of riots and other mob actions that would cause the loss of innocent lives.

- Sergeant Hakan protests a bit when Deskyr wants to hire the PCs to investigate the matter, but that seems more out of habit. He drops his protests quickly as long as the PCs agree to keep the Watch in the loop and don't start attacking random citizens because they look creepy or act weird. In all honesty, he is glad for the aid, as are all decent Watch officers.
- If requested, Deskyr and Hakan can seal a writ for the PCs to show to people who might otherwise question their authority. These writs hold no legal power, but can smooth things over with concerned citizens and overeager guards as long as the PCs follow the law.
- Deskyr offers 50 / 80 / 150 / 250 / 350 gp in payment, half now, the other half upon success.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

Assuming the PCs accept the mission, they should start their investigation immediately. Deskyr wishes them good hunting, before leaving for the Embassy. He doesn't need a report about every little step, as long as he gets one when the PCs have solved the mystery and corrected the problem or are stumped. Sergeant Hakan is similarly interested in the end result, although he does ask the PCs to keep him a bit more in the loop to prevent unnecessary clashes with the Watch.

Depending on where the PCs start their investigation, proceed to Encounter 3 for the farmer (and further interaction in the Old Keep), Encounter 4 for the merchant, or Encounter 5 for the blacksmith. The investigation into one or more of the victims (likely two) eventually leads to the Fair (Encounter 6). Encounters 3, 4 and 5 can be run in any order depending on the choices of the PCs. In fact, they are all optional, and the PCs are likely to at least ignore parts of each encounter (if not the whole encounter). Don't force the players to investigate every little clue. As long as they end up at the Fair and have a faint idea of what they are looking for, things are fine.

Note that the investigation is not a skill challenge. Learning that the only commonality between all three victims is the Fair is automatic with the right questions. All other information is optional; potentially helpful, but not necessary to solve the problem.

MILESTONE

The encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

If the banker in Encounter 1 survived, he gives the PCs a *shield of silver light*. Deskyr offers 25 / 40 / 75 / 125 / 175 gp per PC as an advance payment.

Note that if the banker dies, but the PCs still go out of their way to save citizens throughout the adventure, they can still earn the shield as a Treasure option.

WHAT MIGHT THE PCs ALREADY KNOW?

- Magical attacks that transform a person instantly through the use of spells are usually of short duration, and the person transforms back at death.
- PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Arcana check remember a chaos beast's attack changes others into a creature like itself within seconds. The effect is permanent unless treated with a Remove Affliction ritual.
- A DC 15 Religion check points out various undead that turn their victims into undead seconds after the victim's death. But this requires the monster to be present, which was obviously not the case here.
- Permanent transformations tend to be the result of rituals, magical diseases, or curses. The most obvious example is lycanthropy (DC 15 Nature check), a disease-like curse that can spread through wounds. The change tends to be sudden, but is usually tied to a specific phase of the moon or time of day.
- PCs who succeed at a DC 20 Arcana check (or who have come across it in an adventure) remember the Abyssal Plague, a disease spread by a special breed of demons. The Abyssal Plague transmutes people into demons. However, the victims show signs of the disease days before the change.
- Most magical rituals require the victim to be present throughout the casting time, and tend to change the target on the spot (such as the ritual to change somebody into a shade or lich). Somebody could have designed a new ritual with a delay in its onset time, but the victim still would need to be present during the casting. Once cast such rituals do not leave traces of their magic for long.
- There are stories of cursed items (clothes, jewelry, and weapons) and alchemical substances warping victims into monsters. Most work instantly when worn or consumed, but some activate on a trigger such as when angry or drawing a weapon to fight. Items can also be used to spread a precast curse, in which case a delay might be incorporated, if only to protect the person placing the curse (fey are especially known to use such curses). Magic curses are hard to detect on items, and a transmitter loses all traces of magic quickly after its trigger occurs.

ENCOUNTER 3: THE FARMER

[OPTIONAL]

IMPORTANT NPCs

Garrim: mad shadow-infused farmer or confused male human.

Jaden: male human; innkeeper.

Miri: female half-elf; maid at the Old Keep.

The most logical place for the PCs to start their investigation is in the rustic Old Keep inn, where they faced Garrim and his shadow hounds.

MANAGING THE INVESTIGATION

The reason Garrim and his dogs ran amok was because they ate the poisoned food sold by Varranth at the Fair. Although Garrim bought the brownies in the afternoon, he did not eat them right away. He had some for a snack late that night after he returned from the Singing Drake, but he didn't like the taste, and he fed the remainder to his dogs.

Obviously, you don't want the players to figure out too fast that the tainted pastries were the true cause (since that discovery is what pushes the adventure toward its conclusion). As a result some of the clues in this scene may make more sense to use as corroborating evidence after the PCs have visited one or more of the other investigation sites (see Encounters 4 and 5). The PCs certainly do not need to visit every possible site, and you should keep the overall game time in mind to ensure that there's plenty of time left to give the adventure a proper conclusion (you don't want to have to rush through Encounters 6, 7, and 8).

Assuming the PCs begin their investigation here immediately after Encounter 2, it should be very unlikely for them to make the connection to the brownies/berries eaten by Garrim in just this one scene. They can always return later to seek confirmation that Garrim also ate the tainted food after they get stronger leads in other scenes.

The common room of the Old Keep is a mess after the fight. Servants and guests in various states of distress sit on the few pieces of surviving furniture, while others stoically help with the cleanup. Watch Officers sternly shoo curious bystanders away from the building while also helping the wounded.

Most of the guests know little to nothing about Garrim. The farmer is not from the city and he kept his distance from the other guests. He is likely in town for the Fair, spending most of his time there. He returned late the

night before, somewhat drunk and in a festive mood. So he likely did well at the Fair. Any guest can direct the PCs to Jaden and the servants who likely know more.

Jaden the Innkeeper: Jaden is a hospitable and caring man who is shocked by these events. Garrim is a regular customer, visiting the city a few times per year to sell his goods and to buy things he cannot get at his home village. He is a farmer from a nearby village and has a wife and a young child. He is a gentle man, but after an incident with thugs, he always takes his dogs with him when visiting the city. He arrived yesterday morning, left for the day, and ate dinner before leaving again. Jaden does not know what time he returned. Garrim kept his distance a bit, but he was good friends with Miri.

Miri the Maid: Miri is the waitress hurt by Garrim in Encounter 1. If she died in Encounter 1, the PCs have to do without her information.

Miri is a motherly middle-aged half-elf woman with red hair and freckles. She is good friends with Garrim, and grieving if her friend is dead or consumed by worry if he is alive. She has little to add to Jaden's story, but she can fill in a few more details of the timeline. She was here when Garrim returned a few hours after midnight. He was not drunk, just in a festive mood. She can also provide the same information as Garrim (see below), except for the brownies which he did not mention. If pressed, she remembers the package on his bed which contained the brownies.

Garrim the Farmer's Room: There is nothing strange in the room. It is clean, and Garrim's stuff is packed. He was clearly ready to leave after breakfast. The package material for some brownies lies in the garbage bin, but unless the PCs are looking for it, it is not out of the ordinary. The crumbs do not contain any poison or magic, which to astute PCs would mean it was likely the berries that contained the poison and not the dough. Unless the PCs are specifically looking for the package material (perhaps because they found something similar at the blacksmith's place) you might want to ask for a Hard DC Perception check to find it, since it is not an out of the ordinary item.

RITUALS

There are several rituals that might come in handy in this scene (Remove Affliction and Speak with Dead). If the PCs can cast these rituals, they may. If not, an NPC cleric can be located. Remove Affliction costs 300 gp and Speak with Dead costs 170 gp. The PCs can convince Deskyr Thanterim to foot half the cost with a Moderate DC Diplomacy check, or the entire cost with a Hard DC check. The cost of a Raise Dead ritual, however, would have to come out of the PCs' pockets.

GARRIM

If the PCs kept Garrim alive (by knocking him unconscious in the fight) then they can interrogate him; if they killed him then they can examine his body.

Appearance: Garrim is a broad-shouldered weather-worn human male with short black hair and a large beard. The shadow magic turned his skin alabaster with the blood in his veins clearly visible as dark black lines beneath his skin. His eyes and talon-like nails are equally black as night.

Personality: If the PCs captured Garrim alive, they quickly find out he is still in a murderous rage. Soft babbling is intermixed with frothing outbursts of anger. He is unable to provide any answers until treated. Once treated he is confused, shocked, and wracked by guilt. Garrim is a friendly, hard-working man who tends to keep to himself.

Examination: PCs examining Garrim and his dogs can learn the following:

- **Hard DC Arcana:** There are traces of shadow and transmutation magic on the farmer and his dogs. The magic is quickly fading after having cursed its victims.
- **DC 15 Arcana or Heal:** A Remove Affliction ritual (see New Items) can remove the curse, which would allow the PCs to question Garrim if he is still alive. The curse is a level 10 effect regardless of AL. An NPC cleric can be located to perform the ritual for 300 gp, which Garrim survives but at 0 hit points.
- The only out of place object Garrim carries is a small package in a pouch around his neck. It contains a pair of simple but beautiful silver earrings. Their value is 25 gp. These items carry the smith-mark of Vlondril Aranal, an elderly female drow jeweler. Jaden recognizes the mark, and can direct the PCs to her shop near the Fair. A Moderate DC Arcana check detects faint traces of magic - which could be the result of being in close proximity to Garrim when he changed, or because the earrings might be the cursed item that changed the farmer (the fact that he did not wear the earrings could explain why it took so much time for the curse to affect Garrim). [False clue, has nothing to do with the problem.]
- A Moderate DC Perception check notes dried red paint on the tails of one of the dogs.
- A Hard DC Heal check reveals that Garrim and his dogs show signs of poisoning, likely through food since there are no wounds besides those taken in the fight. If they examine the stomach contents, they find something that with a Hard DC Nature check can be recognized as some kind of fruit-filled pastry.

What he knows: If Garrim is dead, the PCs require a Speak with Dead ritual if they want to question him. His corpse provides logical answers even if the affliction is not removed. If the PCs cannot perform Speak with Dead themselves, they can arrange a cleric to perform it for 170 gp. In that case they can ask one question.

- Garrim arrived yesterday morning, first visiting the Old Keep to book his usual room. He then went to the Fair to sell his goods. By the end of the day he had sold everything for a decent profit. It was still early, so he visited the jeweler Vlondril Aranal and bought a pair of earrings for his wife's birthday. He ate dinner at the Old Keep, and then went to the Singing Drake to celebrate. He did not drink much, not wanting to spend too much money. He was planning to leave early for home the next day. He doesn't remember leaving the tavern. If carefully questioned, his last memory is from around midnight.
- He did take the dogs with him both to the Fair and the tavern. He likes the additional security, having had a bad experience with thugs some time ago during a visit to the city.
- He does not remember anything odd happening. He did give some street urchins a bit of his food and a few coins. He's learned that these sorts of "donations" can save a lot of trouble later on.
- If specifically asked what he ate, he mentions a healthy breakfast at his home, a quick lunch from a vendor at the fair, and dinner at the Old Keep. Only if asked about snacks or treats does he remember buying a few pastries in the afternoon from a vendor at the Fair (he got the shadar-kai ones, bone berry brownies, for free). He cannot remember eating them though (he ate one when he returned from the Singing Drake and fed the rest to his dogs). The vendor was a thin male shadar-kai with a raspy voice. Garrim does not know his name, let alone where he lives. Garrim's description does not ring a bell with the staff of the Old Keep or the Watch Officers.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs are done at the inn, they can either focus on one of the other two victims or decide to visit the Fair, the jeweler who sold Garrim his earrings, or the Singing Drake. Proceed to Encounter 4 if the PCs want to investigate Xandos Elkweed the merchant or Vlondril the jeweler. Encounter 5 details Greyskirt the blacksmith and the Singing Drake. If the PCs head for the Fair proceed with Encounter 6.

CLUES IN THIS SCENE

- Besides the Old Keep, Garrim visited the Fair during the day and the Singing Drake during the evening.
- Garrim does not remember anything past midnight. He did not drink enough to explain the memory loss.
- Garrim has silver earrings with him, but he did not wear them. They radiate faint shadow magic. The jewelry was crafted by Vlondril Aranal.
- There is dried red paint on the tail of one of the dogs.
- Garrim and his dogs show some signs of poisoning. If the PCs actually open up their stomachs and study the contents, the most likely culprit is a fruit pastry of some kind.
- Garrim remembers buying brownies at the Fair, but not eating them. He got the bone berry brownies for free. The vendor was a thin male shadar-kai.

MILESTONE

The encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

The PCs could keep the silver earrings, but once he's cured, Garrim wants them back. If Garrim is dead, Jaden wants to send the earrings to Garrim's wife. The few gold pieces the PCs would earn by selling the jewelry is not added to the treasure of the adventure regardless of whether they keep the earrings or not.

Note if the PCs go out of their way to get Garrim cured, this counts towards earning Story Award **CORE84 Gratitude of the Trader's District**.

ENCOUNTER 4: THE MERCHANT [OPTIONAL]

IMPORTANT NPCs

Kesk: male shadar-kai bodyguard.

Xandos Elkweed: male human merchant.

Shanelle Elkweed: female human, daughter of Xandos.

Alak Aranal: male drow merchant.

Vlondril Aranal: female drow jeweler.

One of the three humans that changed into a shadow-infused monstrosity and went berserk was the grain merchant Xandos Elkweed. He survived due to the actions of his bodyguard, the shadar-kai fighter Kesk. Priests removed the curse, and he is recovering in his large townhouse on Golden Lion Street. PCs wanting to hear his and his bodyguard's story need to visit it.

Following the directions given by Deskyr you soon arrive at the Golden Lion Street - a broad, clean, well-lit avenue lined by tall stately houses. Stone stairs lead up to the Elkweed residence. Like all these houses it is well-maintained with tall glass windows and ostensibly decorated to show off the inhabitants' wealth.

When the PCs announce their presence, an elderly servant, Ander, opens the door. He is extremely polite and calm, wanting to know what a group of adventurers is doing at the Elkweed residence. If the PCs politely explain they are investigating Xandos' attack and two similar events (especially if they show a writ by Deskyr or Sergeant Hakan), he brings them to the kitchen to talk with Kesk, the bodyguard.

It takes some convincing to get him to bring the PCs to Master Xandos. Xandos is ill, and does not remember much anyway, so Kesk is the person the PCs need to speak with. If they do manage to do so, he leaves them to talk with his master while the PCs talk with Kesk.

Kesk the bodyguard: Kesk is a male shadar-kai, large and strong, covered in tattoos and piercings. He wears well-oiled scale armor and clean clothing, and is surprisingly polite and intelligent (which causes many people to underestimate him). He likes his current job. It pays well, is relatively safe, and the Master treats him with respect. A PC who succeeds at a DC 15 Diplomacy check gets Kesk to admit he dislikes Xandos's daughter Shanelle, a spoiled empty-brained brat who treats Kesk as her personal servant.

Kesk can provide the PCs with the following information:

- Master Elkweed went berserk at his warehouse around 5 pm. He complained about having a queasy feeling in his stomach, then his onyx clasp flared with black light and the man changed into a shadowy monstrous caricature of his former self. The monster conjured a cloud of black energy that struck with a deadly cold. Kesk knocked Xandos unconscious quickly, but two dockworkers had already died due to the black flames.
- Kesk immediately brought Master Xandos to the temple of Waukeen where a cleric removed the affliction, nearly killing Xandos in the process. The cleric did not know how Xandos was cursed. The clasp was likely the focus of some kind of vile ritual, but the cleric had no proof and the clasp did not radiate any magic anymore. Just to be sure they destroyed the clasp.
- Master Xandos regained consciousness this morning, not remembering anything from the moment he had left the residence for the Fair late yesterday morning. He was still weak, but the cleric of Waukeen (who paid a house visit this morning) assured Kesk that Xandos would recover without any further effects.
- Yesterday, Xandos, Shanelle, and Kesk left the residence late in the morning. They spent time at the Fair until around noon when they visited Vlondril's Shop where Shanelle bought a golden onyx cloak clasp for her father, which he proudly wore for the rest of the day. Afterwards, they dropped Shanelle off at home and went to Xandos' warehouse at the docks for inspection of the newly arrived goods.
- If asked about whether anything unusual happened, Kesk says that a group of human urchins, members of a gang called the Day Runners, were begging for food at the Fair. Kesk was ordered to chase them away. Later that day one of them tried to pick Xandos' pocket, but Kesk prevented it. Kesk gave the kid a beating, but let him go.
- If asked about what they ate, Kesk is a bit curious about why it would matter. They had a normal breakfast in the morning. Just after noon Kesk and Xandos ate a quick lunch at the Fair. They ate some fresh pastries. This surprised Kesk a bit since most humans would not like the strong taste of the shadar-kai food. If asked, he described the vendor as a thin male shadar-kai. There was nothing special about the vendor, and if he was some kind of villain in disguise he was very good at hiding it.

Xandos Elkweed the grain merchant: If the PCs insist on speaking with Xandos, the elderly servant returns during the conversation with Kesk. He politely waits until the PCs are finished before bringing them upstairs to his Master. Xandos receives them in his bedroom. He

is a fat human man in his early forties with thin greasy hair. He looks pale and tired, but the wrinkles in the corner of his eyes show he loves to laugh often and loudly. He confirms Kesk's story with little to add. The magic affecting him is long gone, and nothing new is revealed if the PCs examine him.

Shanelle Elkweed the daughter: Shanelle is an eighteen year old woman with long curly black hair and pale skin. She is vain, but worried and overprotective about her father. She insists on being present when the PCs meet him. She treats obviously rich and polite characters with respect. Characters of lower station are received with thinly disguised disdain. She has little to add to the story, except maybe a detail here or there (especially about the jeweler's shop). She feels guilty about the gift, and will be visibly relieved if told it is not the cause. She wants the culprit severely punished.

VLONDRIL ARANAL THE JEWELER

The drow jeweler Vlondril Aranal has a workshop at Garnet Street near the Fair. While this lead is a red herring, it is certainly possible the PCs will decide to pay her a visit at some point during the adventure.

Vlondril's workshop is on the first floor of a well maintained although dour looking house. A small bell announces your presence when you enter the shop. The front room is small and empty except for a large counter showcasing inexpensive jewelry, mostly simple necklaces, earrings, and bracelets. An open door leads to the workshop at the back.

An elderly drow male in simple clothing walks in from the workshop. With a smile, he says: "Welcome to Vlondril's shop. I am Alak. How can I help you?"

Alak is Vlondril's husband. The two have an odd, but loving relationship. Alak is outgoing and friendly. Vlondril is grim and domineering. It was their love that got them to leave their drow heritage behind. Alak is shocked to hear their jewelry is somehow connected with the madness and attacks, and he is eager to help. Vlondril, who is working in the workshop, is angry since she feels they are being accused because they are drow.

Obviously the two are innocent, and there is nothing magical to be found in the workshop or the house, nor any sign that the two would even know how to weave such a potent curse. They are both skilled rogues though, and Alak is a master with mechanical traps and poisons. Perceptive PCs note several well hidden traps protecting the shop that could be activated in an instant.

Alak talked with both Garrim and Xandos. He can confirm they were both here the day before, but not at

the same time. Garrim focused on the simpler items. Xandos looked at the more valuable items, which are in a couple of lockers in the workshop. There is nothing special about the items they looked at.

If asked about why the clasp would flare with black energy, Vlondril mentions that onyx sometimes reacts with necrotic and shadow magic. She assures the PCs though that the clasp itself was not magical.

Note: If the PCs are stumped, but know about the poison, you can use Alak to help the characters a bit. He is an expert in poisons, and can suggest that since there are no obvious entry wounds, and given the onset delay, the poison was most likely ingested, probably delivered through something that the victims ate.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs are done with the merchant or the jeweler, they can either focus on one of the other two victims or decide to visit the Fair or the Singing Drake. Proceed to Encounter 3 if the PCs want to investigate Garrim the farmer. Encounter 5 details Greyskirt the blacksmith and the Singing Drake. If the PCs head for the Fair proceed with Encounter 6.

CLUES IN THIS SCENE

- Xandos can't remember what he did during the day.
- Xandos visited the Fair with his daughter in the morning, met with the jeweler Vlondril Aranal around noon, and inspected his warehouse in the afternoon. It was at the warehouse Xandos went berserk.
- At the jeweler's shop, his daughter bought him a cloak clasp as an early birthday present.
- A group of human urchins were begging for food. Kesk chased them away. Later that day they tried to pick Xandos' pocket, but Kesk prevented it.
- The group ate a light lunch at the Fair. Kesk and Xandos ate some pastry (they both ate the same types which is odd since they are usually disliked by non-shadar-kai). Kesk recalls the vendor was a thin shadar-kai, a simple baker with as far as he knows no hidden motives or skills as a fighter or assassin.

MILESTONE

The encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 5: THE BLACKSMITH [OPTIONAL]

IMPORTANT NPCs

Barkas Greyskirt: male human journeyman blacksmith (son of the deceased).

Borivik the Damaran: male vryloka bartender.

Starn “Grimface” Steelshield: male dwarf cleric of Kelemvor.

One of the three humans that changed into a shadow-infused monstrosity and went berserk was the blacksmith Malark Greyskirt. He was killed by the Night Watch. His son, Barkas, was present during the event and can be found at the smithy on Dawn Road. PCs wanting to hear his story need to visit the smithy.

The smell of smoke, sweat, leather, and horses is strong around the muddy Dawn Road. There are few lanterns along the street; most of the light comes from the open workshops. The Dented Kettle Smithy appears to be one of many similar establishments. Inside, the forge fire is burning, but there are no sounds of activity. A young broad-shouldered man sits on the anvil, staring silently into the distance.

The grieving young man is Barkas, Malark’s eldest son. He opened the smithy this morning in the hope the work would distract him, but to no avail. At first he is very suspicious about the PCs, thinking they are here to gloat about his grief or to avenge the deaths caused by his father. Once calmed, he is more willing to listen.

He is shocked if he hears about the two other attacks, but at the same time the news makes him hopeful that his father was not responsible for what happened. He silently accepts that his father could have been cured with a Remove Affliction ritual, but the family would have lacked the funds. Considering the damage Malark was doing, Barkas has made peace with the fact that the Night Watch killed his father. He did remember his father grumbling about a group of human urchins and that the city should do something to properly raise those kids.

If asked about his father’s day, Barkas tells the PCs that Malark spent most of his time in the smithy. He had a lunchtime meeting in the Singing Drake with his charcoal supplier, Anler Hopskin. He did wander over to the Fair very early in the day before starting to work at the smithy. Barkas was not present so he cannot provide much information. He was busy off-loading the charcoal Anler had delivered.

The blacksmith’s body has been taken to the shrine of Kelemvor, but Barkas is willing to let the PCs examine the stuff his father had with him that day. Most of it is what one would expect. There is no jewelry or other odd ornaments. PCs that make a Hard DC Perception check (Easy DC if they found the red paint on the dog’s tail in Encounter 3) spot some red paint on the dead man’s coat. The PCs also find the same kind of packaging material as in Garrim’s room in the garbage bin in the smithy if they make a Moderate DC Perception check, but only mention this if they found the same clue in Encounter 3, if they have examined Malark’s body, or if they are already focusing on what the victims ate (otherwise this is just like any other garbage in the bin).

SHRINE OF KELEMVOR

PCs wanting to examine Malark’s body need to visit the Shrine of Kelemvor next to the cemetery at the edge of the city.

The Shrine of Kelemvor is a squat, grim building, its exterior decorated with various grotesque statues. It looks more like a large tomb than a shrine. Inside is a large circular room with marble floors and a towering statue of Kelemvor in the middle. There are stone benches along the walls. Richly carved wooden doors lead to the wings left and right of the shrine itself.

The PCs do not need to wait long before a gaunt dwarf shuffles into the shrine. He has a long gray beard and wears black robes. This is Starn Steelshield, the local priest of Kelemvor.

Starn does not talk more than necessary, and it’s easy to see why the locals have nicknamed him “Grimface.” He brusquely informs the PCs he is not able to resurrect the dead, cure the sick, or remove any curses. He can perform the last rites, speak with the dead if his Lord is willing, or offer advice on how to deal with the more common types of undead. If the PCs say that they are here to examine the body of Malark Greyskirt, he wants to know on what authority. He is rather protective towards those under his care, especially the dead who cannot defend themselves against desecration and worse.

The writ, the presence of Barkas, or a Moderate DC Bluff or Diplomacy check convinces Starn the PCs intend no harm, and he takes them down a set of stone stairs into a very cold room below the shrine. The room contains three large slabs. Oddly shriveled human corpses lie on two of the slabs - the two victims of Malark’s rage. The shadow-infused corpse of Malark lies on the third slab, his body riddled with halberd wounds. If the characters succeed at a Hard DC Diplomacy

check, Starn is willing to leave them alone with the bodies; otherwise he remains to observe the PCs.

No trace of magic remains. PCs examining the corpse realize Malark died due the many halberd wounds. It must have taken a lot of force to bring him down. There are no other wounds or outward signs of magic. PCs who succeed at a Hard DC Heal check determine that Malark does show signs of poisoning, likely through his food since there are no wounds besides those taken in the fight. If they examine the body's stomach contents, they find something that with a Hard DC Nature check can be recognized as the remains of some kind of fruit pastry.

If the PCs ask Starn whether there is anything odd about the corpse, Starn points to the signs of poisoning, but the dwarf did not perform an autopsy and he does not know about the brownies. Malark's personal belongings are at his house.

THE SINGING DRAKE

The timing of Malark's and Garrim's visits to this public house compared to the time they went berserk doesn't really match up, so it is unlikely for the Singing Drake to be the origin of the curse. Still, it is a location that the victims have in common, so the PCs might want to visit it to verify a few things.

The Singing Drake may be found on the Dawn Road. It is a large, simple tavern for the lower classes, looking for a simple meal and some cheap ale. The place is crowded due to the nearby Fair and the mood is festive.

Usually the Singing Drake is quiet and its customers subdued, enjoying their drink and food in silence. The guests are honest hard-working people from the neighborhood. Due to the nearby Fair the pub is more crowded and festive than normal, but the customers are still mostly simple honest folk.

There are no signs of any fight having taken place the evening before. If asked about the recent events, the guests just shrug. With the Fair going on, it is no surprise the owner wants to keep the pub open at all hours. Virtually all of the guests are visitors from outside of town, here for the Fair. They either don't know about the attacks, or don't care. Those who have heard things assume it was simply a fight gone bad; after all, there are many shadow creatures in the city and sometimes things turn ugly. PCs with a decent Insight skill realize most of the guests are worried, but don't like to be reminded about the city's troubles. They are here to enjoy a pleasant night and forget about the troubles of daily life.

The best person to speak with is the bartender, Borivik the Damaran, a red-headed vryloka with an easy

smile and a reputation as a good listener and one who knows how to keep a secret. Once he learns why the PCs are here, he confirms Garrim was here the night before. Garrim was celebrating with some other guests. None of them were regulars, but knowing one another is not overly important at such festive times. Garrim drank mostly ale, and left about 3 hours after midnight. He was tipsy, but hardly drunk. There was nothing special about the people he hung out with.

If asked about the fight earlier in the day Borivik grows grim. Malark was a regular and a friend. Malark changed all of a sudden. It reminded Borivik a bit of when he witnessed a demonic possession in his homeland of Damara. He knows little about such things though. Luckily the Night Watch are frequent guests in the tavern, or more people would have died. There was no flare of dark energy from anybody's jewelry as far as Borivik remembers.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

When the PCs are done with the smith and/or the Singing Drake, they can either focus on one of the other two victims or decide to visit the Fair. Proceed to Encounter 4 if the PCs want to investigate Xandos Elkweed the merchant or Vlondril the jeweler. If the PCs head for the Fair proceed with Encounter 6.

CLUES IN THIS SCENE

- Malark spent most of his time in the smithy. He had a lunchtime meeting at the Singing Drake with his charcoal supplier. He did wander over to the Fair very early in the day before starting work.
- Malark grumbled about a group of human street urchins, although the specific reason is not known.
- As far as his son knows, Malark ate a healthy breakfast at home, the same as the whole family, and presumably lunch at the Singing Drake. Whether or not he ate anything else is unknown to his son.
- The same packaging material may be found in the garbage of the smithy as in Garrim's room at the Old Keep.
- There are faint traces of red paint on Malark's coat.
- Malark's corpse shows signs of poisoning and it must have been something he ate. In his stomach, the likely culprit is a fruit pastry of some kind.

MILESTONE

The encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 6: TROUBLE AT THE FAIR

SKILL CHALLENGE: LEVEL EQUAL TO AL, COMPLEXITY 3

At some point the PCs should conclude that the only meaningful commonality between the three victims is the Fair. Chances are they also know it has something to do with food from a particular vendor. Run this encounter when they visit the Fair to gain more information and perhaps find the culprit.

The Fair is a yearly one-ride (ten days) long event that draws a crowd from all around the city. Farmers sell their surplus crops, looking to spend their profits on items they cannot buy in their own hamlets. Peddlers and merchants from outside of town use the opportunity to sell their own wares. The crowds also draw in various street artists, swindlers and pickpockets. The end result is large area filled with all kinds of people, all looking for a quick profit or simply entertainment.

In the eternal gloomy twilight of Urmlaspyr, though, the Fair is not nearly as colorful as similar events in other places would be.

Depending on how well the PCs did in the previous encounters, they are either looking for a vendor selling various kinds of pastries or simply trying to trace the steps of one or more of the victims.

The Fair is spread out across various streets and several squares. The vendors tend to move around a lot depending on the available spots, although there is some clustering of those selling the same type of goods. The area is crawling with people, and few of the visitors of the day before are still around to be questioned the day afterward. The fact is that neither finding a specific vendor, nor tracing the steps of any particular NPC is going to be easy.

If you have the time, allow the PCs to wander around and interact with the Fair. Feel free to add your own NPCs and vendors to spice things up. Otherwise simply use the Streetwise section, or let the PCs go directly to the Food Market if time is tight. Use the Urchin section if the characters are looking for the street urchins mentioned in Encounters 4 and 5.

Regardless, at some point the PCs enter the Food Market and are witnesses to a group of human street urchins in the midst of a shadow transformation. Proceed with the skill challenge. Note that the exact setup and start of the challenge can vary depending on the PCs' actions, so adjust accordingly. The PCs can also

choose to simply ignore events, leaving it to the local authorities. Dealing with the urchins is entirely optional. However, ignoring the plight of the locals means the PCs lose out on Story Award CORE84.

AUTHORITIES

The Night Watch patrols the Fair vigorously in teams of three. They wear leather armor and are armed with clubs and daggers. Stronger patrols of six wearing chain and armed with longwords and halberds are less common, but these reinforcements arrive quickly on the scene in case of trouble.

The guards are well equipped to deal with the normal troubles of a busy marketplace, but they are not nearly as skilled in dealing with supernatural threats, and they know it. When confronted with such threats, they would much rather keep their distance and let the adventurers take the lead, with the braver guards rushing in to help citizens get out of the way. In other words, the Watch members are there to help, but not to replace the role of the PCs.

In the unlikely event that the PCs are the ones causing trouble, the Watch shows up to talk to them. As long as nobody got permanently hurt and nothing big was stolen (and what was stolen is returned), they are willing to overlook minor crimes after a warning. They prefer not to fight with dangerous looking mercenaries, even more so when the PCs mention they are working for the city. Of course, a bribe is always a good way to smooth things over (both with the Watch and the locals).

If the PCs do something terribly illegal, it is up to you to decide whether the adventure ends or the characters manage to avoid the authorities long enough to get results. Regardless, they should not earn the favor of the citizens (Story Award CORE84). If one PC does something criminal, it should not disrupt the game for the rest, and you are free to withhold any or all of the Story Awards from just that character. Neither the locals nor Ambassador Deskyr look kindly on criminal activity.

STREETWISE

Urmlaspyr is a city of eternal twilight and even on the brightest of afternoons the sun cannot pierce the black clouds conjured long ago. As a result the city is a favorite place for races favoring the shadows, such as shadar-kai, dark ones, drow, orcs and even the occasional undead (although even in Urmlaspyr the undead have to hide). As a result the city is both similar and different from a typical surface city. Similar in that the Fair is crowded with people all looking for the perfect sale or entertainment and that such a crowd cannot help be noisy and festive. It is different in the type of people

(even though humans are still the dominant race), and the lack of bright light despite various street lanterns.

Asking around provides the following rumors:

- Ghosts have been appearing in the houses of the rich, in some cases even chasing them out. If even the rich are not safe what could possibly protect the poor?
- A few people openly blame the Netherese for the increased threat from the Shadowfell, although Netheril denies it. There have even been some fools proclaiming that Cormyr should do something about it, declaring a full out war as opposed to cowering in a corner and letting the world as a whole suffer.
- Others actually think it is a natural effect of the curse that has been afflicting the town since the rebellion seventy years ago (covering the whole city in darkness) getting stronger over time. They blame the adventurers that caused the Ordulin Maelstrom to expand, which has repercussions on the similar curse here, pointing out that Netherese have been trying to stop the expansion even at the cost of their lives. Since Cormyr cannot help, perhaps it is time to ask Netheril for aid. The Netherese after all know a lot about the Shadowfell and their soldiers are well-equipped to deal with threats from that plane.
- People have been changing into shadow monsters, killing indiscriminately before being consumed by the magic that morphed them. They change because they got too close to the walled sections of the town. [Note that the PCs know this to be false. While the walled off sections are dangerous as a doorway for creatures from the Shadowfell, merely being near these areas does not change a person, at least not in the sudden fashion of the recent events.]
- Two urchin gangs, the Day Runners (mostly humans) and the Night Crawlers (mostly shadar-kai), are in a turf war which threatens to disrupt the Fair. To keep things quiet the authorities have provided food to both gangs in return for their cooperation. Most citizens think the authorities are lazy and should either punish the urchins instead of rewarding them or round them up and send them to an orphanage.

PCs wanting specific information on the events of this adventure need to make a Streetwise check, learning the following depending on the results of the check:

- **Easy DC:** Vendors of particular types of products tend to cluster. The food court is more or less in the center of the Fair and every visitor tends to pass by there unless purposely avoiding it.
- **Moderate DC:** The PCs are advised to talk with the Night Crawlers, one of the local urchin gangs. They

know exactly what is going on the Fair. Mind you, the day before the Day Runners pulled a very successful prank and people are expecting some kind of prank from the Crawlers to top the Day Runners.

- **Hard DC:** One of the food vendors, a shadar-kai pastry baker, has been acting oddly. He is too eager to sell to humans. The baker says it is to broaden his market, but humans rarely like the strong flavors most shadar-kai prefer. This morning he even provided most of his pastries for free to the Day Runners.

URCHINS

The PCs might be looking for the local urchins, either because both the Merchant and the Blacksmith apparently had a conflict with them, or simply because urchins tend to know what happens on the streets. Since they include useful clues, you can also let the PCs have a run in with the Night Crawlers before they arrive at the Food Market.

There are two major urchin gangs active at the Fair: the Day Runners and the Night Crawlers. The Day Runners consist mostly of humans and a couple of halflings. The Night Crawlers are shadar-kai with the occasional orc and goblin. The two gangs are fierce rivals although they are still kids so their rivalry is limited to pranks, fistfights and the like. If confronted with a common threat, such as well-meaning adults, they tend to unite. Note that most of the children are not orphans, despite what the rumors might say.

The Night Crawlers are watching a group of acrobats perform. Their leader is a shadar-kai girl named Darana, a tomcat and fighter. She is suspicious of strangers, but can share the following once befriended through sweet talking or offering sweets or coins:

- The Day Runners are their rivals. They are nightblind, foolish, and mean. The human authorities also treat the Day Runners better than the Night Crawlers, giving them lighter punishments for their pranks.
- The Day Runners had a run-in with the Night Watch yesterday after they caused a stall to collapse, spilling melons all over the street. Darana grudgingly admits that it was kind of cool. The perpetrators managed to escape.
- Before Darana could think of a similar prank, the authorities approached both groups, giving them a stern warning that if the troubles at the Fair didn't stop, the consequences would be severe for both gangs. Since the Night Watch officer was her uncle (uncle Ikar), Darana could hardly say much about it.
- She is really angry that the food vendors handed out sweets and pastries to the Day Runners to keep them quiet. Their leader, Haranth, rubbed salt in the wound

when he and several of his gang members ate one of her favorite type of brownies right in front of her! The Day Runners didn't even enjoy the treats, because they contained bone berries, stuff humans don't like.

- She remembers the merchant from yesterday because his bodyguard gave one of the Day Runners a beating. She also remembers the blacksmith and the farmer (she really likes dogs). They both visited the Food Market.

The Day Runners are at the Food Market. If the PCs go looking for them proceed with the skill challenge below.

FOOD MARKET

Eventually the PCs end up at the Food Market.

The Food Market is conveniently located in the center of the Fair. Most of the vendors offering food for direct consumption have set up their stalls here. The stalls vary in size from a simple handcart to full-fledged pavilions on the cobbled square. A huge sandstone statue of some general or another riding a griffon is the biggest landmark. The smell of freshly baked goods mixes with the stink of mud, sweat, and smoke, forming an odd palette. As in the rest of the Fair, there are many people of all shapes, sizes, and races wandering about.

A map of the market is provided at the end of the Encounter. The map is from the adventure *Seekers of the Ashen Crown*. You can either use a printout of the map to give the players an idea of the options, or the full-scale version from the official adventure. Unless the PCs zoom in on the Day Runners at number 5, allow them to wander around a bit before starting the skill challenge. Proceed with the skill challenge when the PCs are done roleplaying, are about to approach the Day Runners, or leave the square.

Area 1. Fruit: The area is where the fruit is sold.

These vendors know nothing about the farmer, the smith, or the merchant. They talk mostly about the stunt yesterday that caused a wagonload of melons to collapse all over the street causing all kinds of havoc. They are glad for the pastry vendors for giving food to the Day Runners to keep those kids quiet for now. They are especially grateful for one vendor in particular: the shadar-kai Varranth. Nobody knows the man very well though.

Area 2. Pastries: Pastries, pancakes, waffles, breads, and other baked goods are sold here.

The food is of surprisingly high quality, made mostly for humans and shadar-kai. PCs who search for a freshly

painted spot, following the clues of red paint from earlier encounters, find a stand that is empty. It belongs to Varranth, who gave all his pastries away this morning to appease the local urchins and prevent them from committing mischief. He left soon afterwards. The nearby bakers recognize the packaging material from both Garrim's room and the blacksmith's shop as being used by Varranth.

Area 3. Meat: Roasted meat, skewers, sausages, chicken legs, burgers, ribs, and similar items can be found in the stalls in this area.

The butchers have had little trouble with the urchins, because the urchins are smart enough to keep their distance from burly men with meat cleavers. Some of the vendors remember Garrim because he bought sausages for his dogs. Garrim seemed like a pleasant fellow. He was not particularly hungry, and carried a bag with some pastries which he had apparently bought earlier at the southern end of the market. The vendor remembers Garrim joking he got some of the baked goods for free, but since it was shadar-kai stuff he doubted he would eat it anytime soon.

Area 4. Fish: Whether raw, baked or fried, this is the place to go for seafood at the Fair. Nothing of importance can be learned here.

Area 5. Entertainment: A group of fire dancers is performing here. The music is provided by three musicians. The Day Runners are watching the show. When the PCs go here, proceed with the skill challenge.

Area 6. Sweets: All kinds of sweets are sold here, although some of the products are anything but sweet. This area has been a prime target for the street urchins since the Fair opened, for obvious reasons. A couple of strong looking thugs stand by to keep the kids away.

As with the fruit vendors, the merchants are grateful about Varranth's actions. A couple of the vendors remember Xandos Elkweed and his bodyguard, because he was nearly robbed by one of the local urchins. The merchant and his bodyguard had been eating pastries at the time and some of their snack was ruined in the resulting scuffle.

Area 7. Drinks - alcoholic: These tents (and in one case a tavern) sell mostly watered-down ale, although a few also provide overpriced wine and stouter beverages. Nothing of importance can be learned here.

Area 8. Drinks - tea/fruit: Two tents sell steaming hot tea of various kinds, fresh purified water, and fruit juice

along with various light finger foods and snacks. These tents are markedly less popular than the ale tents, but still draw a sizable crowd.

The southern tent is run by a family of Shou, and they remember the blacksmith Malark well. He was here when the kids caused a stir at the fruit stalls. He grabbed one of the kids by the ear and gave the lad a much needed lesson in respect. The Shou gave him some complimentary brownies which they had bought earlier that day. The tea merchant was a bit surprised that Malark wanted bone berry pastries - few humans like the stuff. The Shou buy their snacks at the market, in this particular case from a shadar-kai baker named Varranth. Unfortunately the Shou have no more samples as they gave their last one to Malark.

SKILL CHALLENGE: CATCHING SHADOWS

Goal: The PCs need to help the locals against the now dangerous Day Runner urchins. They can either try to capture the kids alive, or kill them, but they certainly have to stop them from harming the locals.

Complexity: 3 (special)

Primary Skills: Varies

Other Skills: Varies

Victory/Defeat: There are no distinct victory or defeat conditions. Failed checks result in the escape of one or more urchins or leads to death, serious injury, or property damage.

If the PCs fail 3 checks, the remaining dark ones scatter, making it impossible to capture them. The urchins are either scared away by the PCs, or have had enough fun causing mischief. Depending on how early this happens you can decide to withhold the XP for saving the Day Runners, but as long as the PCs seriously tried the locals still reward them for their services.

At the Food Market the PCs witness the Day Runners change into dark ones. Their pranks suddenly take a much more lethal turn. Not all of the urchins change.

The PCs can either help the locals against the now lethal urchins, or simply grab the still-human urchins to question them. Run this skill challenge if the PCs decide to help, otherwise proceed to Ending the Encounter.

If the PCs do help, they have to deal with a gang of dark one urchins spreading all over the Food Market to commit lethal mischief. The characters need to capture or kill the urchins while they run all over the place causing all kinds of distractions. Start with Scene 0.

At the start of the skill challenge there are either six urchins (4 PCs), eight urchins (5 PCs) or ten urchins (6 PCs). They scatter all over the map, each picking a specific spot to create havoc - you might want to use

miniatures to represent the urchins and the PCs. Two flee to each distinct area as detailed in individual scenes. If there are fewer than six PCs, there are also fewer urchins, so one or two of the scenes won't be used. Feel free to design your own scenes in addition to or instead of the provided ones.

The urchins try to avoid capture while causing trouble using the things available in the environment. Each turn the PCs should deal with a complication and come up with a way to capture nearby urchins. In general a successful check should lead to the capture of one urchin. You can also reward creativity and good ideas by allowing a single check to capture more than one urchin.

Special: In the unlikely case you need actual combat stats for the dark ones they are provided below. The stats work best at AL 4 and 6. If you want to use them at other ALs you should lower or raise their level as appropriate. However, this encounter is designed as a skill challenge, not a battle. If your group of players really prefers a fight, and you have the time to run one, you can use those stats to quickly set up a fight.

CAPTURING AN URCHIN

The following are suggestions on how the PCs can capture an urchin. The challenge is not run on a round-by-round basis, but to keep things simple you should still organize things into turns or rounds to avoid any one person dominating the encounter. Each character can make one attack or primary check per turn, where a turn represents about 1 minute of game time. In addition, a PC can make one secondary check in that same turn to deal with the havoc caused by the dark ones (see the specific scenes below) and can also make one move. A character can choose to move twice instead of making a skill check.

Note that the following skills and uses of those skills are just suggestions. Be flexible when the players suggest some of their own ideas!

Attack Power (used instead of a Skill Check)

Unless you are using specific stats the urchins have an AC of AL + 15 and non-AC defenses of AL + 12. Simply hitting a dark one has little result, unless the attack somehow impedes movement. An attack that immobilizes, knocks prone, dominates, dazes, or stuns probably results in the capture of the urchin. An attack that slows, pulls, pushes, or slides the urchin right next to a PC intent on capturing the urchin provides a +5 bonus on the next skill check made to capture that urchin.

Note that the urchins have a +4 bonus to all defenses against opportunity attacks triggered by their

movement. If an urchin is prevented from moving for two turns in a row, that urchin surrenders and may be captured without another skill check.

A missed attack provides the urchin with an opening to strike back at the PC that missed, dealing 5 damage at AL 2, 4, and 6 or 10 damage at AL 8 and 10.

Athletics [Moderate DC] (1 success)

The easiest method of capturing an urchin is by grabbing it, and trying to tie it up or knocking it unconscious. The PC needs to be adjacent to the urchin for this to be possible.

A failed check results in the urchin retaliating, dealing 5 damage (AL 2, 4, 6) or 10 damage (AL 8, 10) to the PC.

Bluff [Easy DC] (not a success or failure)

Once per turn the PC can try to make a feint. If successful the character gains a +5 bonus on the next Athletics or Thievery check to capture the urchin. On a failure, the character takes a -10 penalty on those checks instead.

Diplomacy or Intimidate [Hard DC] (1 success)

The crowd does not consist of hardened adventurers. They are confused about the situation and afraid of getting hurt by the dangerous looking dark ones. Getting them to offer effective help is not easy, but nor is it impossible. The PCs can use this skill at a range of 5 squares.

A successful check means that a bystander is able to tackle or grab a nearby urchin, holding it for the PCs to capture. A failed check results in a seriously wounded bystander, but the PC remains unharmed. If the PC is next to the urchin the PC can opt to take the 5 damage (AL 2, 4, 6) or 10 damage (AL 8, 10) and thus save the bystander.

Thievery [Moderate DC] (1 success)

Using the environment by setting up a trap (e.g. makeshift net, toppling a stand onto the urchin to pin it down) is another way to capture an urchin. The PC can use this skill at a range of 5 squares.

A failed check results in the trick backfiring, dealing 5 damage (AL 2, 4, 6) or 10 damage (AL 8, 10) to the PC (and remember that hit points do not represent just physical damage).

SCENE 0: SHADOW INCURSION

Read aloud or paraphrase the following when the PCs approach the fire dancers in Area 5.

Your attention is drawn to an open area near the center of the square. Three drow are performing a breath taking fire dance while three drummers provide the accompanying music. A large crowd surrounds the area, most of them munching on something to eat or enjoying a tankard of ale.

If the PCs are aware of the dangers of Varranth's pastries and the fact that the Day Runners are present, they are likely here expecting trouble. In this case PCs who make a Moderate DC Perception check (active or passive) note the following. If the PCs have no reason to expect trouble then the DC is Hard.

Throughout the crowd you spot a few street urchins. They are spread out, and the fact that they are unlikely to see the performance from their position, gives you a hint they are up to some mischief. Before you can react, you suddenly see them grimace. Shadows start to dance over their bodies in the same process you saw earlier this morning. Within the blink of an eye, the human youths transform into vicious looking dark ones with talons, sharp teeth, and impenetrable black eyes.

PCs who made the Perception check can act immediately. PCs who failed the check or who are not present at Area 5 are surprised. Most of the urchins scatter, but two remain behind, trying to get to the performers. Unsurprised PCs can try to capture one urchin before it leaves, choosing whether to capture the two rushing towards the flame dancers or those running away.

Once the unsurprised PCs have acted, move the remaining urchins to their respective areas, starting the havoc as described in the scenes below. Then ask to what area the PCs move. Provide the players some clues so they can each pick an area their character is best able to deal with (such as a character with high Nature moving to scene 2). On the first turn they can move to whatever area they want regardless of their speed just as the urchins did. Once in the area they can try to capture an urchin and/or deal with the trouble.

Note that two of the urchins remain human. They are just as surprised about this turn of the events as everyone else. The PCs can easily grab them and leave. In that case the Night Watch eventually deals with the transformed urchins, but not before they cause a lot of havoc. The PCs miss out on Story Award CORE84 if they leave the Fair without helping to deal with the transformed dark ones.

SCENE 1: PYROMANIACS [ENTERTAINERS]

Whoever thought it was a good idea to have flame dancers perform right next to a big heap of straw deserves a good kicking. With an unnatural speed an urchin slides past the fire dancers, grabbing one of their torches and throwing it on the nearby straw in one graceful move. It all happens so fast that the people watching the performance have not even realized the danger they are in.

Fire is never a good idea in a city and even less so in the middle of a large crowd. The PCs have to somehow put out the fire. This is relatively easy in the first round, but becomes more of a challenge with each passing turn (increase the DC unless more people involve themselves since the fire spreads quickly). If the PCs cannot or do not put out the fire, they should at the very least get the people away from here. The urchins stick around till the second turn (even if one is captured), when they either try to burn a nearby tent or strengthen the blaze by throwing the fire dancers' strong liquor on it.

SCENE 2: RUN AWAY HORSE [FRUIT STANDS]

You hear a surprised shout, followed by a grunt of pain and a panicked horse's whinny, from the southwest. These noises are quickly followed by the sounds of hooves and wooden wheels clattering on the cobbles, mixed with screams of terror.

A runaway horse is about to deal a lot of damage to people. The PCs can try to stop it or simply let it run to the west. PCs that fail to stop the horse, take 10 damage. The urchins stick around for 2 turns, trying to get an ox to bolt.

SCENE 3: PANICKING CROWD [NORTHERN TEA TENT]

Loud coughing quickly followed by panicked screams can be heard from one of the larger tents at the northern side of the square. Thick smoke bellows forth, and the crowd, both inside and outside, is on the verge of panic.

PCs can deal with the crowd by calming them down through words or magic. Another method would be to somehow disperse the smoke to show there is no dangerous fire going on (it is a ruse created by a smoke bomb lit by one of the urchins). In the meantime the dark urchins are not about to allow the PCs to calm the crowd. PCs caught in the panicked crowd take 5 (AL 2, 4 and 6) or 10 (AL 8 and 10) damage each turn.

SCENE 4: DANCING KNIVES [MEAT STANDS]

You hear an odd humming sound from the northeast followed by what sounds like dozens of knives being sharpened at the same time. Moments later you hear the sickening thump of blades burrowing into wood and flesh.

Using shadow magic the urchins cause the knives in the area to stir into action attacking nearby creatures. The animated knives can be stopped by disrupting the magic through Arcana or simply by knocking the knives from the air (or grabbing them as they fly by). The wounded civilians can be aided with skills or powers as normal. Any failed check results in the knives homing in on the PCs, dealing 5 (AL 2, 4 and 6) or 10 (AL 8 and 10) damage.

The urchins stick around for two turns before either going to another region or fleeing.

SCENE 5: LOCKED UP [WESTERN ALE HOUSE]

Oddly muffled screams come from the west where you note that all doors and shutters of the erstwhile open tavern are closed. The shouts come from inside.

The doors and shutters are closed by shadow magic, requiring force or Thievery to open. Inside a necrotic zone not unlike what Garrim used in Encounter 1 is flensing the innocent with deathly cold. Once the doors are open the necrotic flames quickly die, giving the PCs a chance to deal with the wounded.

The urchins stick around, attempting to restart the necrotic fire or keeping the doors closed. They leave after two turns.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

At some point the PCs have dealt with the Day Runners, either because all are caught or because the rest fled. Soon afterward the Night Watch arrives. They are respectful towards the PCs, simply wanting to know what happened and more than willing to take any captive urchins into custody. If the PCs were helpful, the crowd hails them as heroes.

It does not take much time to find the non-changed urchins, who don't know what happened. Between the clues the PCs found in Encounters 3, 4 and 5 and what the vendors can tell them in this encounter, it shouldn't take much to realize the pastries of Varranth are the likely cause of all the trouble. The curse affects only non-shadow creatures. It is only through dumb luck that so few people have been affected so far; the tainted food has mostly been eaten by shadar-kai (because of the strong and unusual taste of the bone berries).

While it takes some effort, once the PCs have a name, learning where Varranth lives is not terribly difficult. Proceed to Encounter 7 when the PCs decide to pay the baker a visit.

Any PCs who take pity on the urchins can either use their own powers to cure them or approach Deskyr Thanterim to pay for a Remove Affliction ritual. If the PCs don't ask, and the urchins are still alive, Deskyr eventually pays for the ritual on his own. It takes some time though to get all 6 to 10 urchins cured.

CLUES IN THIS SCENE

- Everybody visiting the Fair eventually ends up at the Food Market. The Night Crawlers gang confirms that all three victims did visit the Food Market.
- A shadar-kai baker has been selling pastries to humans aggressively to “broaden the market” for the unique taste of bone berries, a rather esoteric ingredient not normally enjoyed by humans.
- The baker in question is named Varranth. He even gave away a lot of his pastries to the human street urchins of the Day Runners (who ate the shadar-kai food in front of the Night Crawlers to irritate them).
- The freshly painted market stand belongs to Varranth, who is strangely absent.
- The packaging material found in Garrim's room and the smithy matches Varranth's wares.
- All three victims and the urchins ate bone berry brownies baked by Varranth.

MILESTONE

If the PCs take part in the skill challenge, this encounter counts towards a milestone. Otherwise it does not.

TREASURE

PCs who stuck around to deal with the mad urchins and help the innocents at the Fair gain Story Award CORE84. In addition the people at the market band together in thanks and offer a reward of 10 / 25 / 40 / 150 / 200 gp per PC, a pair of *acrobat boots*, and (at AL 8 and 10) a pair of *boots of dancing* (whether the skill challenge was successful or not).

ENCOUNTER 6: TROUBLE AT THE FAIR (MAP)

POSTER MAP NEEDED

Market - Seekers of the Ashen Crown



ENCOUNTER 6: TROUBLE AT THE FAIR (OPTIONAL COMBAT STATS)

Note: these stats work best for ALs 4 and 6. If you want to use them at other ALs modify them by lowering or raising the creatures' levels as appropriate.

Hex Knight	Level 4 Soldier
Small shadow humanoid	XP 175
HP 54; Bloodied 27	Initiative +7
AC 20, Fortitude 15, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +3
Speed 6	Darkvision

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Dagger (weapon) • At-Will
<i>Effect:</i> The hex knight makes the following attack twice.
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
<i>Hit:</i> 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed until the end of the hex knight's next turn.

r Sling (weapon) • At-Will
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +9 vs. AC
<i>Hit:</i> 1d6 + 4 damage.

M Vicious Flurry (weapon) • Recharge 5-6
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one or two creatures); +9 vs. AC
<i>Hit:</i> 1d6 + 4 damage, and the target is slowed and takes ongoing 5 damage.

MOVE ACTIONS

Dark Step • At-Will
<i>Effect:</i> The hex knight moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the hex knight's next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS

Shadow Hex • At-Will
<i>Effect:</i> One creature within 3 squares of the hex knight is marked until the end of the encounter or until the hex knight uses <i>shadow hex</i> again. While the creature is marked by the hex knight, whenever it makes an attack that does not include the hex knight as a target, it grants combat advantage until the end of its next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Killing Dark
<i>Trigger:</i> The hex knight drops to 0 hit points.
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> Each enemy adjacent to the hex knight is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Athletics +9, Stealth +10
Str 15 (+4) Dex 16 (+5) Wis 12 (+3)
Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common
Equipment 2 daggers, sling, 10 sling bullets

Shadow Slinger	Level 5 Artillery
Small shadow humanoid	XP 200
HP 50; Bloodied 25	Initiative +6
AC 17, Fortitude 16, Reflex 17, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 6	Darkvision

TRAITS

Combat Advantage (necrotic)
Whenever the shadow bolter hits a creature granting combat advantage to it, the bolter deals 5 extra necrotic damage, and each of that creature's adjacent allies take 5 necrotic damage.

Deadly Precision
The shadow bolter's ranged attacks have combat advantage against any enemy that the bolter's allies are flanking.

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Dagger (weapon) • At-Will
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC
<i>Hit:</i> 1d4 + 5 damage.

m Black Bullet (weapon) • At-Will
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 10/20 (one creature); +10 vs. Fortitude
<i>Hit:</i> 1d8 + 5 damage, and the target takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends).

MINOR ACTIONS

Dark Step • At-Will
<i>Effect:</i> The bolter moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the bolter's next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Killing Dark
<i>Trigger:</i> The bolter drops to 0 hit points.
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> Each enemy adjacent to the bolter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Stealth +11
Str 11 (+2) Dex 18 (+6) Wis 15 (+4)
Con 14 (+4) Int 11 (+2) Cha 11 (+2)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common
Equipment dagger, sling, 10 sling bullets.

Shadow Speaker	Level 6 Controller
Small shadow humanoid	XP 250
HP 70; Bloodied 35	Initiative +7
AC 20, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 18	Perception +7
Speed 6	Darkvision

STANDARD ACTIONS

m Dagger (weapon) • At-Will
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +11 vs. AC
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 7 damage.

r Shadow Curse (necrotic) • At-Will
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 5 (one creature); +9 vs. Reflex
<i>Hit:</i> 2d6 + 7 necrotic damage, and the target grants combat advantage and takes 5 damage each time it provokes an opportunity attack (save ends both).

R Choking Shadow (necrotic) • Recharge 5-6
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 5 (one creature); 9 vs. Will
<i>Hit:</i> 3d6 + 11 necrotic damage, and the target is immobilized until the end of the speaker's next turn.

MINOR ACTIONS

Dark Step • At-Will
<i>Effect:</i> The speaker moves 4 squares, gains a +4 bonus to AC against opportunity attacks provoked by this movement, and gains combat advantage against each creature that it ends its move adjacent to until the end of the speaker's next turn.

TRIGGERED ACTIONS

Killing Dark
<i>Trigger:</i> The speaker drops to 0 hit points.
<i>Effect (No Action):</i> Each enemy adjacent to the speaker is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.

Skills Arcana +10, Religion +10
Str 11 (+3) Dex 18 (+7) Wis 18 (+7)
Con 14 (+5) Int 15 (+5) Cha 13 (+4)

Alignment unaligned Languages Common
Equipment dagger.

ENCOUNTER 7: THE BAKER

IMPORTANT NPC

Varranth: male shadar-kai baker.

By now the PCs have solid evidence that the baker Varranth is selling poisoned goods. It does not take them much time to learn where he lives.

The baker Varranth lives in a somewhat secluded part of town near one of the walled off sections of the old city. Some of the buildings are abandoned and boarded up, but most look like they are inhabited by the poor. This is not exactly a part of town that sees much traffic, and Varranth's bakery is so far out of the way that it's hard to see how he finds many customers at all. A small but surprisingly clean alley leads to the address. The ground floor features a single barred wooden door with no windows. There are no street lanterns in this neighborhood, making the gloom and shadows feel oppressive even by the standards of Urmlaspyr.

Allow the PCs to take any precautions they feel are necessary. There is no sign of danger and the typical signs of rats, alley cats, and stray dogs are all around. The house is at the back of what used to be an inn. The front is a seedy pawnshop with no access to the house behind. The garden, annex, courtyard, and stables of the old inn belong to Varranth and function as his bakery and orchard. The other houses around the garden either have no access, or their inhabitants never bothered with it. They are the type of people that work the whole day, only returning home to eat and sleep. Obviously, if the PCs want to enter/observe the bakery from the garden at the back you should proceed with Encounter 8 (they might spot a single shadar-kai female softly singing - the dryad).

The neighbors (all shadar-kai and dark ones) are extremely suspicious of strangers. If the PCs can get anyone to talk, these people have no complaints about their neighbor. He rises early, but he is always willing to chat and provides his wares cheap to his friends. They have not spotted anything unusual about his behavior except that he has spent a bit more time than usual in his garden lately. They assumed it was simply that he was baking extra goods for the Fair. The neighbors have also heard a woman's voice singing from the garden. A few might have spotted glimpses of a beautiful female shadar-kai, but no one has ever met her. They assume it is Varranth's fiancée or sister. In this neighborhood, sticking one's nose too far into the affairs of one's

neighbors is an excellent way to get killed, so everybody keeps their distance.

INSIDE THE BAKERY

Behind the front door is a small room used by Varranth to store his cart, the equipment he needs for his stand, and his coats. It is a relatively clean empty room.

The interior door leads to a small living room with a staircase leading up to two small bedrooms and a dusty empty attic above. One of the bedrooms is empty and disused; the other contains a single bed, stool, cabinet with a bowl for cleaning, and a closet with clothes. Barred windows provide a bit of natural light, although it is never much in Urmlaspyr. The living room is simply furnished, containing a comfortable rocking chair in front of the fireplace, a wooden table, two chairs, and a cupboard.

A door leads to the backyard and the kitchen / bakery. This is the most used area of the house and it contains its own water pump along with all the supplies and equipment needed to bake various types of pastries. A small staircase leads down to a supply room in the cellar.

The garden is detailed in Encounter 8.

VARRANTH

Varranth is a tall, gaunt shadar-kai with short black hair, dark eyes, and (for a shadar-kai) surprisingly few tattoos and piercings. His clothes tend to be dreary and simple.

Under normal circumstances he is a polite bland guy, easy to forget. His only passion is baking, preferably with fresh ingredients, and he is good at it. He prefers his solitude, otherwise he would live in a better neighborhood. These are not ordinary circumstances though.

A few weeks ago, Varranth found a beautiful shadar-kai female in his orchard. He was surprised, but soon very smitten with the shy playful maiden (whose name is Arana). He never bothered asking where she came from or why (he is of course charmed by her magic, but does not know this). Since her arrival all the plants have started growing so much better and faster than before, which Varranth attributes to Arana's skill as a gardener. He is completely smitten with her and constantly worries that she will lose interest in him since he is rather boring.

Little does he know he is being used. She is a black hearted dryad-like creature, corrupted by shadow magic that seeped into the garden not long ago. In a way, she is an independent extension of the Ordulin Maelstrom, or more precisely the powerful magical curse that is behind both the Maelstrom and the perpetual shroud of darkness that afflicts Urmlaspyr. She is tied to the

garden, and immediately realized she could use the baker to spread her poison. Her corrupted fruit and his baked goods were an excellent way to spread the shadow. Of course, it took time to strengthen the shadow rift in the garden, and only recently did the first berries ripen. She knows little of the outside world, and her plotting was not particularly smart or otherwise she would have realized how easy it would be for others to track her down.

Regardless, Varranth is oblivious to what is happening. If the PCs visit his house and remain polite, he treats them with respect. He is not a fighter, and buckles under threats of violence, becoming a nervous wreck.

He can be convinced to show the PCs his bakery since it can be entered without going into the orchard. In the kitchen the PCs find a few remaining bone berries. They can easily detect the vile shadow magic infesting these items with a DC 15 Arcana check or recognize the berries' poisonous aspect with a DC 15 Heal or Nature check. There is also a batch of light blue apple-like fruits, equally infected. This fruit is a kind of apple native to the Shadowfell.

Varranth is honestly surprised if he is told that these fruits are poisonous. He has been eating them himself with no ill effect and is unlikely to believe the PCs. When asked about their origin, he either proudly proclaims they are from his own garden (if he is unaware that the PCs think they are poisonous) or stammers he bought them on the market (an obvious lie if he thinks that the PCs want to search his garden, because he does not want them to find Arana).

He tries to keep the PCs out of the garden, but there is little he can do. It should be clear he is hiding something, and he does try to warn his love before entering the garden by making excessive noise or simply through loud talking.

Regardless, the fruit is enough proof in the eyes of the authorities. They arrest the baker for murder if the PCs call in the Watch or the Ambassador at this point. Of course, with Varranth's arrest the problem is not truly solved. There remains something poisonous in the garden.

EATING THE FRUIT

While unlikely, it is always possible that one or more of the PCs want to eat the poisoned fruit (or pastries). The food is perfectly fine for creatures with the shadow and, strangely enough, the fey type. Natural creatures run a risk of being cursed. Roll an attack: +13 vs. Fortitude. On a hit the PC is poisoned and will transform into a shadow creature and run amok 4 hours after eating even a single bite of the tainted fruit.

Since the PCs are not evil, it is assumed they pay for the Remove Affliction ritual before it is too late. The affliction is considered a level 10 effect. See the New Rules section for details, and remember the 20% price increase if a NPC is required to perform the ritual. If the PCs refuse to pay, the character is killed when he changes. Use the standard LFR rules to deal with it. Since it happens after the adventure, the character does not take a 20% XP penalty. If the charity of death clause is used, however, the PC does lose all rewards as normal.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

If the PCs take an interest in the garden, proceed to Encounter 8. If they ignore it, and simply bring the baker to the Watch, they are quickly called back. The Watch investigated, and the patrol was either chased away (at AL 2 and 4) or slaughtered (at AL 6 and up) by the plants of the garden. They ask the PCs to finish the job.

MILESTONE

The encounter does not count towards a milestone.

TREASURE

There is no treasure in this encounter.

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN

ENCOUNTER LEVEL: AL + 3

CREATURES

This encounter includes the following creatures at AL 2 and AL 4:

- 1 twilight dryad witch (W)
- 3 twilight twig hunters (H)
- 2 twilight twig blights (T)

This encounter includes the following creatures at ALs 6, 8, and 10:

- 1 twilight dryad witch (W)
- 3 twilight dryad hunters (H)
- 2 twilight bramblewood treants (T)
- 1 daggerthorn briar (B)

SCALING THE ENCOUNTER

Make the following adjustments to the combat based on the number of PCs present.

Four PCs: Remove one of the hunters and the dryad witch's *soporific fragrance* power only recharges on a roll of 5-6.

Six PCs: Add one twig blight or one treant. At AL 6, 8, and 10, also increase the witch's level by 1: set her hit points to 91 / 110 / 130 and add 1 to all her defenses, attack rolls, and damage rolls.

Note on Difficulty: The monsters are relatively spread out on the map. This makes the fight slightly easier under most circumstances (depending a bit on the attack powers of the PCs). Feel free to change the arrangement of the monsters to modify the challenge of the fight. Be careful when you run this encounter with level 1 PCs only. You might want to reduce the hit points of the twigs by 8 and/or lower their AC by 2.

SETUP

At some point the PCs are likely to explore the garden, the source of the poisoned fruit.

You see a relatively large albeit somewhat unusual garden. It used to be a courtyard of some sort, and it is surrounded on all sides by ill-maintained stone houses. All entrances except for Varranth's bakery are boarded over. There are no windows at ground level, and the shutters at higher levels are closed and barred.

The plants in this garden have colors ranging from pale white to dark green, almost black. Many of them

are covered with finger-sized thorns. It looks like a well-maintained orchard, with large fruit trees in neat rows in the middle and grape-like plants climbing along the walls.

A barrier of fallen trees, overgrown with brambles and pale nettles, separates the path to the bakery from the garden.

At first the dryad and her underlings are hiding within the garden well out of sight from anybody at the door (the dryads are hiding within their trees). Only when PCs actually enter the garden past the fallen trees do the creatures take action. At this point the PCs can make a Hard DC Perception check (active or passive) to spot the creatures. Otherwise they are surprised when the creatures attack. This occurs roughly when the first PC reaches the center of the garden.

Note that the brambleweed / daggerthorn briar is automatically spotted (it's visible from the doorway) but unless the PCs succeed on a Hard DC Nature check, they just see a patch of particularly dense brambles. On a successful check they realize the full risk of these plants. Varranth has never been troubled by the daggerthorn briar. If confronted with its presence, Varranth is genuinely surprised. He suspects that it must have been Arana who protected him, but he does not know how (and remember that he does not voluntarily mention her existence to the PCs).

FEATURES OF THE AREA

Illumination: Depending on the time of day the area is either dimly lit or dark. Don't forget the *shroud of night* aura of the dryad witch (her aura is turned off at the start of the fight while she is hiding).

Buildings (walls on the map): The garden is surrounded by buildings. The walls are 30 feet (6 squares) high. The doors and windows at ground level are boarded shut. The windows on the second and third floor are shuttered. It requires a DC 16 Strength check to open any of these.

Brambleweed (B): Only at AL 2 and 4. These squares are difficult terrain. A creature without forest walk that starts its turn in a square containing brambleweed takes 5 damage. A creature without forest walk that ends its turn in brambleweed is restrained until the start of its next turn.

Bushes: These bushes grant concealment and they are difficult terrain.

Fallen Trees: To protect his garden a bit from visitors to the bakery, Varranth placed deadwood and brambles between the house and the garden. This barrier is 5 feet high. It is treated as difficult terrain (and

difficult to jump over; Athletics checks made to jump over the barrier take a -10 penalty). Creatures without forest walk that enter the terrain take 5 damage (the damage is only taken once per turn).

Shadow Rift: The shadow rift is the source of the poison. Non-shadow creatures that enter the area take 5 cold damage (maximum of once per turn) and are slowed (save ends). Within 5 squares of the rift, all light sources are dimmed by one step, exactly as per the *shroud of night* aura of the dryad witch, but the two auras do not stack.

At ALs 8 and 10 the shadow rift also allows the dryad witch to use *beguiling verdure* on creatures regardless of status effect.

Trees: The trees are blocking terrain and they provide cover.

TACTICS

The monsters are well aware of the terrain effects in the garden and use these obstacles to their advantage. They try to lure the PCs deeper into the garden, either by waiting before they attack, by using forced movement powers, or simply by springing in and out of the difficult terrain. They go for the kill, with the soldiers focusing on melee-oriented PCs and the skirmishers/lurkers on ranged attackers. These creatures are all relatively intelligent and they do change their preferred targets if doing so makes more sense.

Remember that all monsters have *forest walk* and as such are not hindered by any of the terrain effects. In addition, many have forced movement attack powers. Remember that the PCs do get a saving throw before being forced into hazardous terrain such as the brambleweed, the daggerthorn briar, (this hazard also attacks creatures in adjacent squares) and the fallen trees. On a successful save, the PC can choose to be knocked prone at the edge instead of entering the hazard (of course a PC can choose not to make the saving throw if the character prefers to remain standing and simply allow the forced movement to occur).

The witch is the leader, but all the monsters keep fighting till death. None of the creatures can leave the garden. Smart PCs might realize this and start shooting from the surrounding windows and walls. In that case the monsters disappear into the thick bushes, gaining full cover.

ENDING THE ENCOUNTER

With the dryad witch and her consorts defeated, the PCs are free to explore the garden. It does not take much skill or time to find the cause of the shadow poisoning: a small rift to the Shadowfell not unlike the

Ordulin Maelstrom (only much smaller). A quick examination reveals that it likely can still be removed with a Revitalize ritual (an expensive high level ritual that costs 3000 gp in material components, but one casting does cover the whole rift). Otherwise it remains, but whether it will expand or not is unknown at the moment. Where the rift originated remains unknown, but it is likely due to the increased activity of the Ordulin Maelstrom and the Shadowfell in general.

Regardless, the PCs have found the source of the problem, and as long as nobody uses the fruit from the garden for food, the town is safe even if the rift is not closed. The characters are free to do with Varranth as they please, although killing him does raise some questions (but can always be explained as self-defense). If they let him go, he is grateful, and quickly flees the city. They can also deliver him to the authorities in which case he faces trial and (unless the PCs intervene) eventually execution. He might have been an unwitting fool, but the authorities do not look kindly on people poisoning their fellow citizens and somebody needs to be the scapegoat for these tragic events. Proceed with the Concluding the Adventure section once the PCs go to the Ambassador or the Night Watch to report their findings.

The dryad and her minions only show themselves / attack when the PCs enter the garden. It is possible the PCs never do so before reporting their findings to the Night Watch and Ambassador Thanterim. If that happens, the Watch immediately explores the whole area and they are attacked by the dryad. They are forced to flee, unwilling (or unable at higher ALs) to deal with the threat. They immediately contact the PCs, asking them to finish the job. The PCs are expected to do so immediately as part of their original assignment.

It is possible that the PCs want to take on the dryad, but only after an extended rest. The dryad is not going anywhere and she is no immediate threat to the surroundings, since without Varranth's baked goods, she has no way to get her poisoned fruit into the city. Whether or not you allow the PCs to take such a rest is up to you. It is likely not necessary, so you could have the Watch become irritated and threaten to send in another band of mercenaries (in which case the PCs fail the major objective if they do not go ahead and tackle the garden without resting). If they actually do need such a rest, however, you can allow them to take it without penalized them. After all, the safety of Urmlaspyr is not well served by creating a pile of dead adventurers.

MAJOR OBJECTIVE

The PCs should complete the adventure's Major Objective in this encounter, unless they are defeated or refuse to enter the garden.

TREASURE

The PCs find 15 / 20 / 35 / 50 / 125 gp each in the form of various coins and jewelry amongst the tree of the dryad witch. In addition the PCs find at an *amulet of seduction* (+1 at AL 2 and AL 4; +2 at AL 6, 8, and 10), *blackleaf gloves*, at AL 4+ an *alluring veil* and at AL 6+ *green thumbs*.

CONCLUDING THE ADVENTURE

The PCs are expected to give a full report to Deskyr Thanterim and potentially Sergeant Hakan of the Night Watch. Both men are extremely interested in the outcome of the investigation, wanting as many details as possible. They are somewhat irritated if the PCs ignored the plight of the common citizens, especially at the Fair, but there is little they can do about it now. Thanterim might mention though that when the PCs are working for him, they are representing Cormyr, and the Crown prefers its employees to think about the good of the common people - as long as it does not jeopardize the greater good, of course.

The situation has both men worried. It is not a good sign that apparently the shadow curse is spreading. Hakan refrains from speculating about the cause. Thanterim thinks it is likely Netheril is behind it, asking whether the PCs found any solid evidence of that or not (in fact there is no such evidence unless the PCs falsified some). The Ambassador also notes that in the past few weeks more trouble has risen as a result of the shadow curse, and he is likely to be in constant need of adventurers for similar jobs. Would the PCs be interested in sticking around to help out with more problems in and around Urmlaspyr? (These future adventures are detailed in the other parts of Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series: SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, and CORE4-5, which can be played in any order.)

Regardless, Thanterim gives the PCs their promised reward as long as they solved the mystery of the shadow transformations. They also earn Story Award **CORE85 Favor of Deskyr Thanterim**. PCs who have Story Award **SPEC56** get that disfavor removed (they should void SPEC56 and do not receive CORE85).

TREASURE

Deskyr pays the remainder of the reward money, namely 25 / 40 / 75 / 125 / 175 gp per character. In

addition he offers each PC an item of their choice from Cormyr's vaults (Treasure X).

If the PCs showed respect to the Night Watch and kept Sergeant Hakan well informed of their progress, the Watch offers them a *warning weapon* (+1 at AL 2 and AL 4; +2 at AL 6 and higher.)

DESOLATION SERIES CHAPTER 1: STORY ARC BONUS

If this is the third adventure in Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series played by any individual PC, that character earns a Story Arc bonus in addition to the other rewards that character has earned in this adventure (the bonus includes both XP and gold; see the Rewards section for details). The PC gets the listed Story Arc bonus for the AL that this adventure was played at, even if the character played other adventures in the series at different ALs.

A character can only earn this Story Arc bonus once. The player should note the extra rewards on his or her log sheet as "*Desolation Series: Chapter 1 Story Arc Bonus*" to avoid confusion, because there is also a Major Quest bonus associated with Chapter 1 (as mentioned on Story Award CORE85). The Story Arc bonus is separate from the Major Quest and is simply a reward for playing through more than half of Chapter 1 with the same PC.

To be clear, the five adventures in Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series are: SPEC4-5, CORE4-3 (this adventure), CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and CORE5-1. Playing any three of these five adventures in any order earns a PC the Chapter 1 Story Arc bonus.

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (AL 2)

1 Twilight Dryad Witch (W)	Level 3 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 150
HP 44; Bloodied 22	Initiative +4
AC 17, Fortitude 13, Reflex 15, Will 17	Perception +11
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Thorny Vine • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 damage.	
Effect: The dryad can slide the target 1 square.	
R Beguiling Verdure (charm) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.	
C Soporific Fragrance (charm) • Recharge 4-6	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +6 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
Requirement: The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a large plant.	
Effect: The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
Effect: The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 26 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 11 (+1)	Dex 17 (+4)
Con 12 (+2)	Int 12 (+2)
Wis 20 (+6)	Cha 16 (+4)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad witch.	

3 Twilight Twig Hunter (H)	Level 3 Soldier
Small shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 150
HP 42; Bloodied 21	Initiative +6
AC 19, Fortitude 14, Reflex 16, Will 15	Perception +8
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Routed	
When an effect forces the twig hunter to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the twig can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +8 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 6 poison damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Vine Snare • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +6 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The twig hunter pulls the target up to 2 squares, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 13).	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
Poison Lash (poison) • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy the twig hunter is grabbing uses an attack power that does not include the twig hunter as a target.	
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 3 (triggering enemy). The target takes 5 poison damage.	

Killing Dark • Encounter		
Trigger: The twilight twig hunter drops to 0 hit points.		
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the twig hunter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.		
Skills Stealth +9		
Str 12 (+2)	Dex 17 (+4)	Wis 14 (+3)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 6 (-1)	Cha 10 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil		Languages Elven
Note: Modified twig blight swampvine.		

2 Twilight Twig Blights (T)	Level 2 Lurker
Small shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 125
HP 28; Bloodied 14	Initiative +9
AC 16, Fortitude 12, Reflex 16, Will 14	Perception +8
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Routed	
When an effect forces the blight to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the twig can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw (poison) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d6 + 7 poison damage.	
M Blighted Claw (poison) • Recharge when the blight uses invisibility	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +7 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 8 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.	
Invisibility (illusion) • Recharge when the blight uses blighted claw	
Effect: The blight becomes invisible until the start of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +10	
Str 8 (+0)	Dex 18 (+5)
Con 10 (+1)	Int 6 (-1)
Wis 14 (+3)	Cha 10 (+1)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified twig blight.	

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (AL 4)

1 Twilight Dryad Witch (W)	Level 5 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 200
HP 60; Bloodied 30	Initiative +5
AC 19, Fortitude 15, Reflex 17, Will 19	Perception +12
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Thorny Vine • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 damage.	
Effect: The dryad can slide the target 1 square.	
R Beguiling Verdure (charm) • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +8 vs. Will	
Hit: The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.	
C Soporific Fragrance (charm) • Recharge 4-6	
Attack: Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +8 vs. Will	
Hit: The target is dazed (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
Requirement: The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
Effect: The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
Effect: The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 27 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 11 (+2)	Dex 17 (+5) Wis 20 (+7)
Con 12 (+3)	Int 12 (+3) Cha 16 (+5)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad witch.	

3 Twilight Twig Hunter (H)	Level 5 Soldier
Small shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 200
HP 58; Bloodied 29	Initiative +7
AC 21, Fortitude 16, Reflex 18, Will 17	Perception +9
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Rooted	
When an effect forces the twig hunter to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the twig can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +10 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 6 poison damage.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
M Vine Snare • At-Will 1/round	
Attack: Melee 3 (one creature); +8 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The twig hunter pulls the target up to 2 squares, and the target is grabbed (escape DC 15).	

TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
Poison Lash (poison) • At-Will		
Trigger: An enemy the twig hunter is grabbing uses an attack power that does not include the twig hunter as a target.		
Effect (Immediate Reaction): Melee 3 (triggering enemy). The target takes 5 poison damage.		
Killing Dark • Encounter		
Trigger: The twilight twig hunter drops to 0 hit points.		
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the twig hunter is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.		
Skills Stealth +10		
Str 12 (+3)	Dex 17 (+5)	Wis 14 (+4)
Con 10 (+2)	Int 6 (+0)	Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven		
Note: Modified twig blight swampvine.		

2 Twilight Twig Blights (T)	Level 4 Lurker
Small shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 175
HP 40; Bloodied 20	Initiative +10
AC 18, Fortitude 14, Reflex 18, Will 16	Perception +9
Speed 5 (forest walk), climb 5	Darkvision
Resist 5 poison; Vulnerable 5 fire	
TRAITS	
Shadow Hunter	
When a shade twig blight is within dim lightning or darkness it gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls.	
Rooted	
When an effect forces the blight to move through a pull, a push, or a slide, the twig can move 3 squares fewer than the effect specifies.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw (poison) • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d8 + 8 poison damage.	
M Blighted Claw (poison) • Recharge when the blight uses invisibility	
Attack: Melee 1 (one creature); +9 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d8 + 8 poison damage, and the target is weakened (save ends).	
Miss: Half damage, and the target is weakened until the end of its next turn.	
Invisibility (illusion) • Recharge when the blight uses blighted claw	
Effect: The blight becomes invisible until the start of its next turn.	
Skills Stealth +11	
Str 8 (+1)	Dex 18 (+6) Wis 14 (+4)
Con 10 (+2)	Int 6 (+0) Cha 10 (+2)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified twig blight.	

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (AL 6)

1 Twilight Dryad Witch (W)	Level 7 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 300
HP 76; Bloodied 38	Initiative +6
AC 21, Fortitude 17, Reflex 19, Will 21	Perception +13
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Thorny Vine • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 3 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 6 damage.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad can slide the target 1 square.	
R Beguiling Verdure (charm) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +10 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.	
C Soporific Fragrance (charm) • Recharge 4-6	
<i>Attack:</i> Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +10 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The target is dazed (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 28 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 11 (+3)	Dex 17 (+6)
Con 12 (+4)	Int 12 (+4)
Wis 20 (+8)	Cha 16 (+6)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad witch.	

3 Twilight Dryad Hunters (H)	Level 7 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 300
HP 82; Bloodied 41	Initiative +9
AC 21, Fortitude 20, Reflex 20, Will 18	Perception +10
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Shadow Hunter	
When a shade twig blight is within dim lightning or darkness it gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +12 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 6 damage, or 3d8 + 8 if no other enemy is adjacent to the dryad.	
M Luring Feint • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad uses <i>claw</i> . If the attack hits, the dryad shifts up to 4 squares, pulling the target with it. If the attack misses, the dryad shifts up to its speed.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 28 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 16 (+6)	Dex 18 (+7)
Con 18 (+7)	Int 10 (+3)
Wis 15 (+5)	Cha 13 (+4)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad hunter.	

2 Twilight Bramblewood Treant (T)		Level 6 Soldier
Large shadow magical beast (plant)		XP 250
HP 76; Bloodied 38		Initiative +7
AC 22, Fortitude 19, Reflex 16, Will 20		Perception +9
Speed 8 (forest walk)		Darkvision
TRAITS		
O Bramble Branches • Aura 2		
Enemies treat squares within the aura as difficult terrain.		
Wooden Body		
Whenever the treant takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).		
STANDARD ACTIONS		
m Slam • At-Will		
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +11 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d12 + 8 damage.		
Effect: The treant marks the target until the end of the treant's next turn.		
R Throw Stone • At-Will		
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +11 vs. AC		
Hit: 1d8 + 5 damage.		
TRIGGERED ACTIONS		
M Entangling Branch • At-Will		
Trigger: An enemy within 2 squares of the treant moves.		
Attack (<i>Immediate Interrupt</i>): Melee 2 (triggering enemy); +9 vs. Reflex		
Hit: The treant grabs the target (escape DC 15).		
Killing Dark • Encounter		
Trigger: The treant drops to 0 hit points.		
Effect (<i>No Action</i>): Each enemy adjacent to the treant is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.		
Str 21 (+8)	Dex 14 (+5)	Wis 22 (+9)
Con 20 (+8)	Int 14 (+5)	Cha 12 (+4)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven		
Note: Modified bramblewood treat.		

Daggerthorn Briar		Level 7 Obstacle
Trap		XP 300
Hazard: A single briar patch of daggerthorn fills 10 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain.		
Perception		
• No check is necessary to notice the briars..		
Nature		
• DC 23: The character identifies the patch as daggerthorn briar.		
Trigger		
The briars attack when a creature without forest walk enters or begins its turn in or adjacent to a square of daggerthorn briar.		
M Attack • At-Will		
Attack (<i>Opportunity Attack</i>): Melee 1 (creature in or adjacent to briar); +12 vs. AC		
Hit: 2d10 + 5 damage and immobilized until escape. The attack deals 3d10 + 5 damage if the target is bloodied.		
Countermeasures		
• Acrobatics DC 16 or Athletics DC 16: Immobilized characters can use a successful check to free themselves.		
• A character can attack a square of daggerthorn briar (AC 18, other defenses 15; hp 70; vulnerable 10 fire). Once a square is destroyed, it cannot attack and is no longer difficult terrain.		

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (AL 8)

1 Twilight Dryad Witch (W)	Level 9 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 400
HP 92; Bloodied 46	Initiative +7
AC 23, Fortitude 19, Reflex 21, Will 23	Perception +14
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Thorny Vine • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 3 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 8 damage.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad can slide the target 1 square.	
R Beguiling Verdure (charm) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +12 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.	
C Soporific Fragrance (charm) • Recharge 4-6	
<i>Attack:</i> Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +12 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The target is dazed (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 30 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 11 (+4)	Dex 17 (+7)
Con 12 (+5)	Int 12 (+5)
	Wis 20 (+9)
	Cha 16 (+7)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad witch.	

3 Twilight Dryad Hunters (H)	Level 9 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 400
HP 98; Bloodied 49	Initiative +10
AC 23, Fortitude 22, Reflex 22, Will 20	Perception +11
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Shadow Hunter	
When a shade twig blight is within dim lightning or darkness it gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +14 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 2d8 + 8 damage, or 3d8 + 10 if no other enemy is adjacent to the dryad.	
M Luring Feint • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad uses <i>claw</i> . If the attack hits, the dryad shifts up to 4 squares, pulling the target with it. If the attack misses, the dryad shifts up to its speed.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 30 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 16 (+7)	Dex 18 (+8)
Con 18 (+8)	Int 10 (+4)
	Wis 15 (+6)
	Cha 13 (+5)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad hunter.	

2 Twilight Bramblewood Treant (T)	Level 8 Soldier
Large shadow magical beast (plant)	XP 350
HP 92; Bloodied 46	Initiative +8
AC 24, Fortitude 21, Reflex 18, Will 22	Perception +10
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Bramble Branches • Aura 2	
Enemies treat squares within the aura as difficult terrain.	
Wooden Body	
Whenever the treant takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Slam • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 10 damage.	
Effect: The treant marks the target until the end of the treant's next turn.	
R Throw Stone • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +13 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 5 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
M Entangling Branch • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy within 2 squares of the treant moves.	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 2 (triggering enemy); +11 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The treant grabs the target (escape DC 16).	
Killing Dark • Encounter	
Trigger: The treant drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the treant is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.	
Str 21 (+9)	Dex 14 (+6)
Con 20 (+9)	Int 14 (+6)
Wis 22 (+10)	Cha 12 (+5)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified bramblewood treat.	

Daggerthorn Briar	Level 9 Obstacle
Trap	XP 400
Hazard: A single briar patch of daggerthorn fills 10 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain.	
Perception	
• No check is necessary to notice the briars.	
Nature	
• DC 25: The character identifies the patch as daggerthorn briar.	
Trigger	
The briars attack when a creature without forest walk enters or begins its turn in or adjacent to a square of daggerthorn briar.	
M Attack • At-Will	
Attack (Opportunity Attack): Melee 1 (creature in or adjacent to briar); +14 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 7 damage and immobilized until escape. The attack deals 3d10 + 7 damage if the target is bloodied.	
Countermeasures	
• Acrobatics DC 17 or Athletics DC 17: Immobilized characters can use a successful check to free themselves.	
• A character can attack a square of daggerthorn briar (AC 20, other defenses 17; hp 80; vulnerable 10 fire). Once a square is destroyed, it cannot attack and is no longer difficult terrain.	

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (AL 10)

1 Twilight Dryad Witch (W)	Level 11 Controller
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 600
HP 108; Bloodied 54	Initiative +8
AC 25, Fortitude 21, Reflex 23, Will 25	Perception +15
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Shroud of Night • Aura 10	
Bright light in the aura is reduced to dim light, and dim light becomes darkness.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Thorny Vine • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 3 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d6 + 9 damage.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad can slide the target 1 square.	
R Beguiling Verdure (charm) • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Ranged 5 (one dazed creature); +14 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The dryad slides the target up to the target's speed, and the target must then make a basic attack as a free action against a creature of the dryad's choice.	
C Soporific Fragrance (charm) • Recharge 4-6	
<i>Attack:</i> Close blast 3 (enemies in the blast); +14 vs. Will	
<i>Hit:</i> The target is dazed (save ends).	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 32 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 11 (+5)	Dex 17 (+8)
Con 12 (+6)	Int 12 (+6)
Wis 20 (+10)	Cha 16 (+8)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad witch.	

3 Twilight Dryad Hunters (H)	Level 11 Skirmisher
Medium shadow humanoid (plant)	XP 600
HP 114; Bloodied 57	Initiative +11
AC 25, Fortitude 24, Reflex 24, Will 22	Perception +12
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
Shadow Hunter	
When a shade twig blight is within dim lightning or darkness it gains a +2 bonus on attack and damage rolls.	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Claw • At-Will	
<i>Attack:</i> Melee 1 (one creature); +16 vs. AC	
<i>Hit:</i> 3d6 + 9 damage, or 4d6 + 11 if no other enemy is adjacent to the dryad.	
M Luring Feint • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad uses <i>claw</i> . If the attack hits, the dryad shifts up to 4 squares, pulling the target with it. If the attack misses, the dryad shifts up to its speed.	
MOVE ACTIONS	
Tree Stride (teleportation) • At-Will	
<i>Requirement:</i> The dryad must be adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad teleports up to 8 squares adjacent to a tree or a Large plant.	
MINOR ACTIONS	
Deceptive Veil (illusion) • At-Will	
<i>Effect:</i> The dryad disguises itself to appear as a Medium humanoid (usually a beautiful elf or eladrin) until it uses deceptive veil again or until it drops to 0 hit points. Other creatures can make a DC 32 Insight check to discern that the form is an illusion.	
Str 16 (+8)	Dex 18 (+9)
Con 18 (+9)	Int 10 (+5)
Wis 15 (+7)	Cha 13 (+6)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified dryad hunter.	

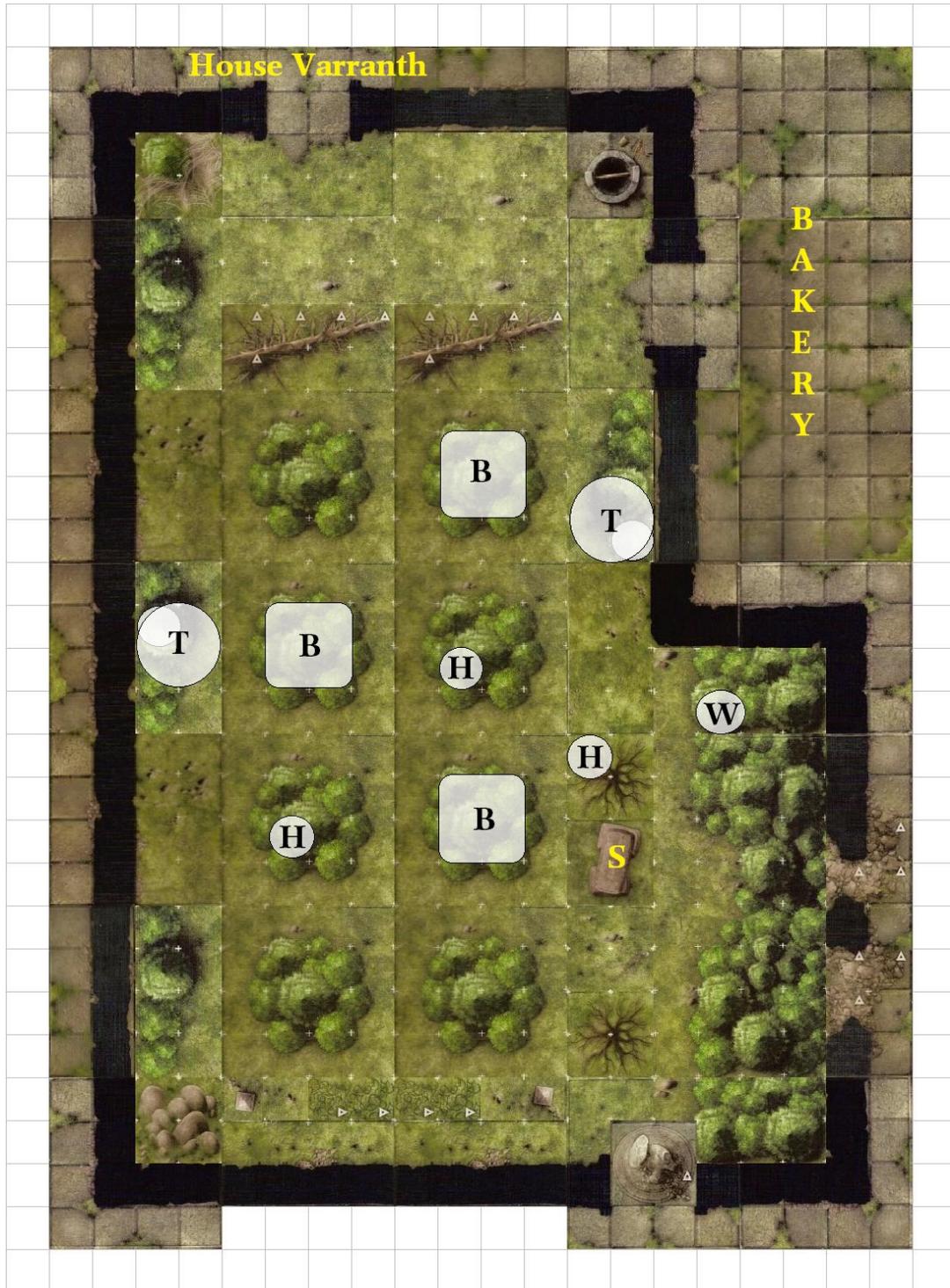
2 Twilight Bramblewood Treant (T)	Level 10 Soldier
Large shadow magical beast (plant)	XP 500
HP 108; Bloodied 54	Initiative +9
AC 26, Fortitude 23, Reflex 20, Will 24	Perception +11
Speed 8 (forest walk)	Darkvision
TRAITS	
O Bramble Branches • Aura 2	
Enemies treat squares within the aura as difficult terrain.	
Wooden Body	
Whenever the treant takes fire damage, it also takes ongoing 5 fire damage (save ends).	
STANDARD ACTIONS	
m Slam • At-Will	
Attack: Melee 2 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 1d12 + 12 damage.	
Effect: The treant marks the target until the end of the treant's next turn.	
R Throw Stone • At-Will	
Attack: Ranged 20 (one creature); +15 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d6 + 7 damage.	
TRIGGERED ACTIONS	
M Entangling Branch • At-Will	
Trigger: An enemy within 2 squares of the treant moves.	
Attack (Immediate Interrupt): Melee 2 (triggering enemy); +13 vs. Reflex	
Hit: The treant grabs the target (escape DC 18).	
Killing Dark • Encounter	
Trigger: The treant drops to 0 hit points.	
Effect (No Action): Each enemy adjacent to the treant is blinded until the end of his or her next turn.	
Str 21 (+10)	Dex 14 (+7)
Con 20 (+10)	Int 14 (+7)
Wis 22 (+11)	Cha 12 (+6)
Alignment chaotic evil Languages Elven	
Note: Modified bramblewood treat.	

Daggerthorn Briar	Level 11 Obstacle
Trap	XP 600
Hazard: A single briar patch of daggerthorn fills 10 contiguous squares, turning them into difficult terrain.	
Perception	
• No check is necessary to notice the briars..	
Nature	
• DC 27: The character identifies the patch as daggerthorn briar.	
Trigger	
The briars attack when a creature without forest walk enters or begins its turn in or adjacent to a square of daggerthorn briar.	
M Attack • At-Will	
Attack (Opportunity Attack): Melee 1 (creature in or adjacent to briar); +16 vs. AC	
Hit: 2d10 + 9 damage and immobilized until escape. The attack deals 3d10 + 9 damage if the target is bloodied.	
Countermeasures	
• Acrobatics DC 19 or Athletics DC 19: Immobilized characters can use a successful check to free themselves.	
• A character can attack a square of daggerthorn briar (AC 22, other defenses 19; hp 90; vulnerable 10 fire). Once a square is destroyed, it cannot attack and is no longer difficult terrain.	

ENCOUNTER 8: POISONED GARDEN (MAP)

TILE SETS USED

DU5 Sinister Woods x6 (mostly for the orchard)



B = Daggerthorn Briar (or Brambleweed); T = Twig Blight / Treant; H = Twig Hunter / Dryad Hunter;
W = Dryad Witch; S = Source Poison

REWARDS SUMMARY

At the conclusion of the adventure, the PCs earn XP, access to Treasures, and possibly Story Awards. All totals listed here are per PC, regardless of whether there were 4, 5, or 6 PCs in the party.

EXPERIENCE POINTS AND BASE GOLD

All PCs earn at least the Minimum XP for playing the adventure. In addition, the Major and Minor Objectives are worth the listed XP awards if successfully completed (as determined by the DM, following the guidelines specified in the adventure). The PCs may be given partial awards if the DM determines that they completed part, but not all, of a given objective. No character can earn more than the listed maximum XP.

Any character that died during the adventure receives 20% less XP than the rest of the party, unless there was a TPK, in which case the entire party presumably failed to achieve at least some of the listed objectives. Even with the 20% penalty, a character may not fall below the Minimum XP for the adventure.

ADVENTURE LEVEL 2

Minimum Possible XP: 225 XP per PC

Minor Objectives

Defeat the Farmer: +25 XP

Rescue the majority of the Day Runners: +25 XP

Deal with the Baker: +25 XP

Major Objective - Learn what is going on and cleanse the garden: +125 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 425 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 75 gp

Story Arc Bonus (PCs can only gain the arc bonus once for playing three adventures of the arc) for PCs that previously participated in two of the following SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and/or CORE5-1: +125 XP, +25 gp

ADVENTURE LEVEL 4

Minimum Possible XP: 320 XP per PC

Minor Objectives

Defeat the Farmer: +35 XP

Rescue the majority of the Day Runners: +35 XP

Deal with the Baker: +35 XP

Major Objective - Learn what is going on and cleanse the garden: +175 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 600 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 125 gp

Story Arc Bonus (PCs can only gain the arc bonus once for playing three adventures of the arc) for PCs that previously participated in two of the following SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and/or CORE5-1: +175 XP, +50 gp

ADVENTURE LEVEL 6

Minimum Possible XP: 450 XP per PC

Minor Objectives

Defeat the Farmer: +50 XP

Rescue the majority of the Day Runners: +50 XP

Deal with the Baker: +50 XP

Major Objective - Learn what is going on and cleanse the garden: +250 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 850 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 225 gp

Story Arc Bonus (PCs can only gain the arc bonus once for playing three adventures of the arc) for PCs that previously participated in two of the following SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and/or CORE5-1: +250 XP, +75 gp

ADVENTURE LEVEL 8

Minimum Possible XP: 640 XP per PC

Minor Objectives

Defeat the Farmer: +70 XP

Rescue the majority of the Day Runners: +70 XP

Deal with the Baker: +70 XP

Major Objective - Learn what is going on and cleanse the garden: +350 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 1200 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 450 gp

Story Arc Bonus (PCs can only gain the arc bonus once for playing three adventures of the arc) for PCs that previously participated in two of the following SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and/or CORE5-1: +350 XP, +125 gp

ADVENTURE LEVEL 10

Minimum Possible XP: 900 XP per PC

Minor Objectives

Defeat the Farmer: +100 XP

Rescue the majority of the Day Runners: +100 XP

Deal with the Baker: +100 XP

Major Objective - Learn what is going on and cleanse the garden: +500 XP

Maximum Possible XP: 1700 XP per PC

Base Gold per PC: 675 gp

Story Arc Bonus (PCs can only gain the arc bonus once for playing three adventures of the arc) for PCs that previously participated in two of the following SPEC4-5, CORE4-4, CORE4-5, and/or CORE5-1: +500 XP, +200 gp

TREASURE

All potential NPC payments or rewards, any treasure that the PCs could have looted during the adventure, and other monetary awards are included in the “Base Gold per PC.” At the conclusion of the adventure, each character receives the listed amount of gold, less any amounts that they did not find or earn, and may additionally select one Treasure from the following list.

A Treasure may give the PC more gold, a magic item, or something else of value. Each player makes one and only one selection for their character; multiple players may choose the same Treasure. Some of the listed Treasures may not be available if the PCs did not complete the objective specified in the adventure to unlock that Treasure.

If a character buys or sells gear during the adventure (or pays for services, such as NPC ritual casting) add or subtract the amount from the base gold.

If a player selects a Treasure that gives their character more gold, add that amount to that character’s base gold award. It is possible and permissible for a character to spend more gold than he or she earns during an adventure, but characters may not spend gold that they do not have. For details on selling items, see the *Living Forgotten Realms Campaign Guide*.

If a player selects a magic weapon or suit of armor for their PC that is not specific on the type of item listed, they must select the exact item at the time they choose that bundle. For example, if a *duelist’s weapon +1* is listed as a Treasure, a player selects the form of the weapon amongst the choices possible for that magic item (light blades). If the player selects the item as a *+1 duelist’s dagger*, the player writes that information down on the PC’s adventure log and the item is forever after that specific weapon.

Certain Treasures have a minimum Adventure Level listed. That Treasure is not available if the group played below the listed AL. However, those who played at a higher AL can always choose from the lower-level options. (Treasures X, Y, and Z are always available at every Adventure Level.)

EACH PC SELECTS ONE OF THE FOLLOWING:

All ALs:

Treasure A: *shield of silver light* (level 4; *Adventurer’s Vault 2*)

Found in Encounter 2

Treasure B: *acrobat boots* (level 2; *Player’s Handbook* and *Dungeon Master’s Kit*).

Found in Encounter 6

Treasure C: *blackleaf gloves* (level 4; *Adventurer’s Vault 2*)

Found in Encounter 8

Treasure D: *amulet of seduction +1* (level 5; *Player’s Handbook Races: Tiefling*)

Found in Encounter 8

Treasure E: *warning weapon +1* (level 4; *Mordenkainen’s Magnificent Emporium*)

Found in Conclusion

AL 4+:

Treasure F: *alluring veil* (level 7; *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*)

Found in Encounter 8

AL 6+

Treasure G: *amulet of seduction +2* (level 10; *Player's Handbook Races: Tiefling*)

Found in Encounter 8

Treasure H: *green thumbs* (level 9; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 8

Treasure I: *warning weapon +2* (level 9; *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*)

Found in Conclusion

AL 8+:

Treasure J: *boots of dancing* (level 11; *Adventurer's Vault*)

Found in Encounter 6

All ALs:

Treasure X (Choose an Item): The character finds a Common or Uncommon permanent magic item of the player's choice. The item must come from a player resource (as defined in the *LFR Campaign Guide*).

The player may choose a Common magic item of the character's level +2 or less, or an Uncommon magic item of the character's level or less. The character must have an available found-item slot, and only permanent magic items may be chosen with this option (no consumables, ammunition, etc.)

Treasure Y (Consumable plus Gold): The character finds an *herbal poultice* plus additional gold. The player should write the consumable gained on their Adventure Log. Consumable items obtained in this fashion do not take up found-item slots.

AL 2: *potion of healing* plus 0 gp

AL 4: *potion of healing* plus 25 gp

AL 6: *potion of healing* plus 100 gp

AL 8: *potion of healing* plus 250 gp

AL 10: *potion of healing* plus 400 gp

Treasure Z (More Gold): The character finds or is given coin, gems, jewelry, art objects, ritual components, or other non-magical valuables (in addition to his or her Base Gold).

AL 2: 50 gp

AL 4: 75 gp

AL 6: 150 gp

AL 8: 300 gp

AL 10: 450 gp

STORY AWARDS

Award these if the PC completes the condition for the award in the adventure.

DESOLATION SERIES: CHAPTER 1 STORY AWARDS

Check whether any of the PCs have now played three or more of the adventures of Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series. If so, check their Story Awards and award CORE82 and/or CORE83 to anyone who qualifies. Note that the Chapter 1 Story Awards can only be earned once. If the PC already earned one of these in an earlier adventure, it is NOT earned a second time. If this is anyone's first adventure in the series, make sure the players understand that they can earn CORE82 and/or CORE83 in the future, after playing more of the adventures in Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series.

PCs earn CORE82 once they have gained any three of the following Story Awards: SPEC57, CORE84, CORE87, CORE89 and CORE90.

CORE82 Honorary Citizen of Urmlaspyr

For your service to the city, the leaders of Urmlaspyr have awarded you all the rights and privileges of citizenship during a grand feast in your honor. You are given a golden medal with the outline of your face on one side and the crest of Urmlaspyr on the reverse (worth 25 gp if sold). If you are interested, you are also granted the use of a luxury apartment with furniture in one of the better parts of the city, rent-free (this has no game mechanical effects other than giving you a place to rest or store items). None of these benefits require you to give up or forswear any other national, regional, or meta-organization affiliations or allegiances.

In addition, you gain **one** (and only one) of the following glory boons: *beloved performer* or *battle-scared champion*. This does not count as one of your Treasure selections from any adventure, nor does it cost a found-item slot. You initially gain the level 1 or level 3 version of your chosen boon (strike through the boon you do not choose). You can buy the higher-level versions of your chosen boon by paying the difference in market price in gold pieces when your character level is at least as high as the upgraded level of the boon. This boon never expires, and you can keep this boon active at the same time as one other alternative reward (in other words, this reward is an exception to the normal LFR rules: it does not count as your one active divine boon).

Beloved Performer

The people of Urmlaspyr remember you well for your daring escapes and mocking wit while facing deadly threats.

Lvl 1 360 gp Lvl 21 225,000 gp

Lvl 11 9,000 gp

Glory Boon (cannot be sold)

Property

You gain a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and Bluff checks.

Level 11: Gain a +2 item bonus

Level 21: Gain a +3 item bonus

Power ◆ Daily (Immediate Reaction)

Trigger: An enemy marks you.

Effect: That mark ends, and you shift 1 square.

Reference: *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*

Battle-Scarred Champion

The people of Urmlaspyr will always be grateful for your help. A few new scars remind you of the price you paid to help them.

Lvl 3 680 gp Lvl 23 425,000 gp

Lvl 13 17,000 gp

Glory Boon (cannot be sold)

Property

You gain a +1 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Level 13: Gain a +2 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Level 23: Gain a +3 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Power ◆ Daily (Immediate Reaction)

Trigger: An enemy bloodies you, but does not reduce you to 0 hit points or fewer.

Effect: You make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Reference: *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*

PCs earn CORE83 once they have accumulated any three of the following Story Awards: SPEC58, CORE85, CORE86 and CORE88.

CORE83 Trusted Agent of Cormyr

Through dedicated and successful service, you have earned the trust of Ambassador Deskyr Thanterim, who has recommended you to the Royal Family of Cormyr. You are offered a job as an Agent of the Crown. While the annual stipend is merely a pittance in comparison to your adventuring income, the post does provide you with limited rights within the kingdom. Cormyrean authority figures are automatically helpful to you under normal circumstances, and they will ignore any minor crimes that you commit while pursuing missions for the good of the kingdom. Of course, the Crown does not look kindly on its agents abusing these privileges, and this position can be revoked if the DM feels you have done something particularly egregious.

If you are willing to openly swear your allegiance to Cormyr, revoking any ties to other governments or nations, you are also knighted. You are given a personal signet ring, and treated with the respect due to minor nobility. (You may in fact be treated with slightly more respect, since unlike many of Cormyr's minor nobles, you actually earned the title.) If you have already been knighted by Cormyr from a different Story

Award, or if you earn a Cormyrean Knighthood in a future adventure, you are raised to the rank of Knight Exalted. In addition to the status of knighthood, you are called to join council meetings on matters of governance and warfare. You are granted a small estate, and are considered a landed noble by right of service.

CORE4~3 ADVENTURE STORY AWARDS

If the PCs went out of their way to save the innocent bystanders in Encounter 1, kept Garrim alive and got him cured, and/or dealt with the urchins and saved civilians in Encounter 6, they earn CORE84. If on the other hand they completely ignored the plight of the commoners (your call), you should not give them this award. Intent is what matters here, not necessarily success.

CORE84 Gratitude of the Trader's District

You made a very favorable impression on the residents of the Trader's District of Urmlaspyr. While the locals are not rich, they remember your name, and you are unlikely to ever have to pay for your drinks while visiting this part of the city.

In addition, the craftsmen and traders pool their resources to grant you access to magical whetstones. At the end of any adventure, you may purchase any Common or Uncommon whetstone (a type of consumable) of your character level + 2 or below, from any LFR player resource, for the normal market price. This does not count as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure, and there is no limit to the number of Common or Uncommon whetstones you may possess. However, you can buy only one whetstone per adventure through this favor.

As long as the PCs treated Deskyr Thanterim with a modicum of respect and (more importantly) they solved the mystery of the shadow transformations, they earn CORE85. Note that PCs with SPEC56 can instead remove that disfavor (they may void Story Award SPEC56 instead of gaining CORE85).

CORE85 Favor of Deskyr Thanterim

You have earned the respect and gratitude of Deskyr Thanterim, the Cormyrean ambassador to Urmlaspyr. His favor would certainly come in handy if you ever wish to pursue a career in public service in Cormyr or when you are in trouble with the Cormyrean authorities. Where applicable, this Story Award counts as a favor with authority figures in and from Cormyr, although in some of the older regional adventures it might require a bit of work from the DM for this favor to make sense. The DM is always free to ignore this favor to keep the game manageable.

The Story Award puts you on the *Trouble in Urmlaspyr* Major Quest, which is Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series. Chapter 1 includes the adventures SPEC4-5, CORE4-3 (this adventure), CORE4-4, and CORE4-5, which you can play in any order. Chapter 1 culminates in the adventure CORE5-1.

NEW RULES

NEW MAGIC ITEMS

Acrobat Boots Uncommon
Level: 2
Price: 520 gp
Feet Slot
Property: You gain a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics checks.
Power: At-Will (Minor Action). You stand up from prone.
Source: *Player's Handbook*, page(s) 246, *Dungeon Master's Kit*, page(s) 264.

Alluring Veil Uncommon
Level: 7
Price: 2,600 gp
Head Slot
Power (Illusion): Encounter (Minor Action). You assume the appearance of a member of any humanoid race of the same size category as you. Your clothing and equipment alter appearance as you desire. The illusion doesn't alter sound or texture, so a creature listening to you or touching you might detect the illusion.
Power: Daily (Free Action). Trigger: You make an attack roll using an encounter or daily attack power that has the charm or illusion keyword and miss. Effect: Reroll the attack roll and use either result.
Source: *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*, page(s) 128.

Amulet of Seduction Uncommon
Lvl 5 +1 1,000 gp
Lvl 10 +2 5,000 gp
Neck Slot
Enhancement Bonus: Fortitude, Reflex, and Will
Properties: You gain a +2 item bonus to Bluff and Diplomacy checks.
When you impose a charm effect that a save can end, the target takes a -2 penalty to the first saving throw against the effect.
Power (Charm): Daily (Standard Action). Make an attack: Close burst 1; one creature in burst; Charisma + the amulet's enhancement bonus vs. Will; on a hit, the target cannot attack you (save ends). While this effect lasts, if the target is adjacent to you when you are targeted by a melee or a ranged attack, the target interposes itself (as an immediate interrupt) and becomes the target of the attack instead. If the target takes damage from any source, the effect of this power ends.
Source: *Player's Handbook Races: Tiefling*, page(s) 28.

Blackleaf Gloves Uncommon
Level: 4
Price: 840 gp
Hands Slot
Power: (Teleportation). Encounter (Free Action). Trigger: Your pact boon triggers. Effect: You teleport 3 squares in addition to the other effect of your pact boon.
Source: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page(s) 108.

Boots of Dancing Uncommon
Level: 11
Price: 9,000 gp
Feet Slot
Properties: Gain a +1 bonus to Reflex defense. You do not grant combat advantage while you are dazed.
Power: Daily (Minor Action). Gain a +5 power bonus to Acrobatics and Athletics checks until the end of your next turn.
Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page(s) 126.

Green Thumbs Uncommon
Level: 9
Price: 4,200 gp
Hands Slot
Power (Conjuration): Daily (Standard Action). You create a wall 8 within 10 squares filled with thorny vines. It can be up to 4 squares high. A creature that attempts to move through the wall must succeed on a DC 20 Strength check or become restrained within the wall (escape DC 20 ends). The wall lasts until the end of your next turn. Sustain minor.
Source: *Adventurer's Vault*, page(s) 135.

Shield of Silver Light Uncommon
Level: 4
Price: 840 gp
Arms Slot: Any shield
Power: At-Will (Minor Action). The shield sheds bright light 5 squares in all directions. You can end this effect as a minor action. You and your allies within the light treat your weapons (including ammunition, thrown weapons, and the like) as silvered (*Player's Handbook*, page 220).
Source: *Adventurer's Vault 2*, page(s) 55.

Warning Weapon

Uncommon

Lvl 4 +1 840 gp
Lvl 9 +2 4,200 gp

Weapon: Any

Enhancement Bonus: Attack rolls and damage rolls

Critical: +1d6 damage per plus

Property: You gain an item bonus to Perception checks equal to the weapon's enhancement bonus.

Utility Power: Daily (Minor Action). Effect: Until the end of your next turn, you are automatically aware of each enemy within 5 squares of you, including those that are hidden or invisible. You know the squares these enemies occupy, but this knowledge does not negate the effects of cover or concealment. Sustain Minor: The effect persists until the end of your next turn.

Source: *Mordenkainen's Magnificent Emporium*, page(s) 33.

NEW RITUALS

REMOVE AFFLICTION

Level: 8

Component Cost: 250 gp

Category: Restoration

Market Price: 680 gp

Time: 1 hour

Key Skill: Heal

Duration: Instantaneous

Source: *Player's Handbook*, page(s) 311.

Remove Affliction wipes away a single enduring effect afflicting the subject. The ritual can remove curses, effects such as charm or domination, and fear, confusion, insanity, polymorph, and petrification effects. All effects of the curse or other effect end.

This ritual is physically taxing to the recipient; if used on an injured character, it can even kill him or her. Upon completing this ritual, make a Heal check, using the level of the effect you are trying to remove (or the level of the creature that caused the effect) as a penalty to this check. The result indicates the amount of damage the character takes. Assuming the character survives, this damage can be healed normally.

Heal Check Result	Effect on Target
0 or lower	Death
1-9	Damage equal to the target's maximum hit points
10-19	Damage equal to one-half of the target's maximum hit points
20-29	Damage equal to one-quarter of the target's maximum hit points
30 or higher	No damage

You can use this ritual on an unwilling subject (usually, a former ally who is under some enemy's

influence), but you will have to restrain someone unwilling to undergo the ritual. If you know that your subject is suffering from multiple enduring effects, you must choose which one this ritual will remove. Otherwise, it affects whichever one affliction you knew about. You learn the affliction level when you begin the ritual, and you can choose not to continue, without expending any components (for example, if you determine the affliction is too powerful for you to remove).

SPEAK WITH DEAD

Level: 6

Component Cost: 140 gp

Category: Exploration

Market Price: 360 gp

Time: 10 minutes

Key Skill: Religion

Duration: 10 minutes

Source: *Player's Handbook*, page(s) 312.

You ask the corpse of an intelligent creature questions and receive answers. The corpse knows what the creature knew in life, what has occurred near the corpse, and no more; the spirit has (usually) moved on to another plane and is not present in the body.

Your Religion check result determines the number of questions you can ask.

Religion Check Result	Number of Questions
9 or lower	Zero
10-19	One
20-29	Two
30 or higher	Three

At the DM's option, questioning the departed spirit might require a skill challenge using Diplomacy.

APPENDIX 1: BLANK MAPS

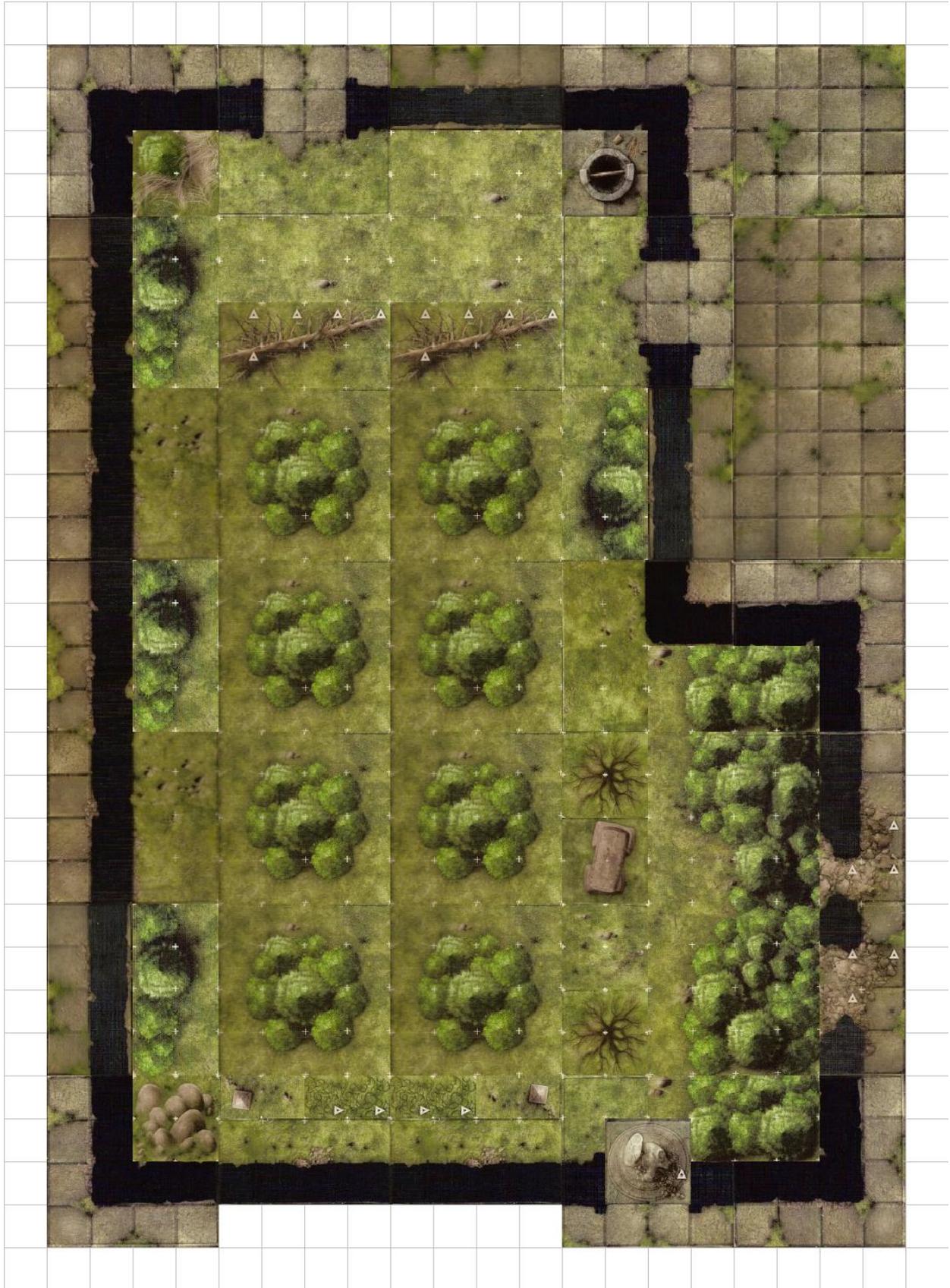
ENCOUNTER 1



ENCOUNTER 6



ENCOUNTER 8



DUNGEONS & DRAGONS LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:

CORE4~3 RUNNING AMOK

CORE84 Gratitude of the Trader's District

You made a very favorable impression on the residents of the Trader's District of Urmlaspyr. While the locals are not rich, they remember your name, and you are unlikely to ever have to pay for your drinks while visiting this part of the city.

In addition, the craftsmen and traders pool their resources to grant you access to magical whetstones. At the end of any adventure, you may purchase any Common or Uncommon whetstone (a type of consumable) of your character level + 2 or below, from any LFR player resource, for the normal market price. This does not count as one of your Treasure selections for the adventure, and there is no limit to the number of Common or Uncommon whetstones you may possess. However, you can buy only one whetstone per adventure through this favor.

CORE85 Favor of Deskyr Thanterim

You have earned the respect and gratitude of Deskyr Thanterim, the Cormyrean ambassador to Urmlaspyr. His favor would certainly come in handy if you ever wished to pursue a career in public service in Cormyr or if you ever get in trouble with the Cormyrean authorities. Where applicable, this Story Award counts as a favor with the government and authority figures within and representing Cormyr, although in some of the older CORM regional adventures it might require a bit of work from the DM for this favor to make sense. The DM is always free to ignore this favor to keep the game manageable.

The Story Award puts you on the *Trouble in Urmlaspyr* Major Quest, which is Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series. Chapter 1 includes the adventures SPEC4-5, CORE4-3 (this adventure), CORE4-4, and CORE4-5, which you can play in any order. Chapter 1 culminates in the adventure CORE5-1.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

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DUNGEONS & DRAGONS LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

(character name)

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:

CORE4~3 RUNNING AMOK

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The Story Award puts you on the *Trouble in Urmlaspyr* Major Quest, which is Chapter 1 of the *Desolation* series. Chapter 1 includes the adventures SPEC4-5, CORE4-3 (this adventure), CORE4-4, and CORE4-5, which you can play in any order. Chapter 1 culminates in the adventure CORE5-1.

DUNGEONS & DRAGONS

LIVING FORGOTTEN REALMS

HAS RECEIVED STORY AWARDS FROM:

DESOLATION SERIES: CHAPTER 1 (HEROIC TIER)

CORE82 Honorary Citizen of Urmlaspyr

For your service to the city, the leaders of Urmlaspyr have awarded you all the rights and privileges of citizenship during a grand feast in your honor. You are given a golden medal with the outline of your face on one side and the crest of Urmlaspyr on the reverse (worth 25 gp if sold). If you are interested, you are also granted the use of a luxury apartment with furniture in one of the better parts of the city, rent-free (this has no game mechanical effects other than giving you a place to rest or store items). None of these benefits require you to give up or forswear any other national, regional, or meta-organization affiliations or allegiances.

In addition, you gain one (and only one) of the following glory boons: *beloved performer* or *battle-scarred champion*. This does not count as one of your Treasure selections from any adventure, nor does it cost a found-item slot. You initially gain the level 1 or level 3 version of your chosen boon (strike through the boon you do not choose). You can buy the higher-level versions of your chosen boon by paying the difference in market price in gold pieces when your character level is at least as high as the upgraded level of the boon. This boon never expires, and you can keep this boon active at the same time as one other alternative reward (in other words, this reward is an exception to the normal LFR rules: it does not count as your one active divine boon).

Beloved Performer Uncommon

The people of Urmlaspyr remember you well for your daring escapes and mocking wit while facing deadly threats.

Lvl 1 360 gp Lvl 11 9,000 gp Lvl 21 225,000 gp

Glory Boon (cannot be sold)

Property

- You gain a +1 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and Bluff checks.
- Level 11: Gain a +2 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and Bluff checks
- Level 21: Gain a +3 item bonus to Acrobatics checks and Bluff checks.

Power ◆ Daily (Immediate Reaction)

- Trigger:* An enemy marks you.
- Effect:* That mark ends, and you shift 1 square.

Reference: *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*

Battle-Scarred Champion Uncommon

The people of Urmlaspyr will always be grateful for your help. A few new scars remind you of the price you paid to help them.

Lvl 3 680 gp Lvl 13 17,000 gp Lvl 23 425,000 gp

Glory Boon (cannot be sold)

Property

- You gain a +1 item bonus to your healing surge value.
- Level 13: Gain a +2 item bonus to your healing surge value.
- Level 23: Gain a +3 item bonus to your healing surge value.

Power ◆ Daily (Immediate Reaction)

- Trigger:* An enemy bloodies you, but does not reduce you to 0 hit points or fewer.
- Effect:* You make a melee basic attack against the triggering enemy.

Reference: *Dark Sun Campaign Setting*

CORE83 Trusted Agent of Cormyr

Through dedicated and successful service, you have earned the trust of Ambassador Deskyr Thanterim, who has recommended you to the Royal Family of Cormyr. You are offered a job as an Agent of the Crown. While the annual stipend is merely a pittance in comparison to your adventuring income, the post does provide you with limited rights within the kingdom. Cormyrean authority figures are automatically helpful to you under normal circumstances, and they will ignore any minor crimes that you commit while pursuing missions for the good of the kingdom. Of course, the Crown does not look kindly on its agents abusing these privileges, and this position can be revoked if the DM feels you have done something particularly egregious.

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Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the organizer when the event was scheduled)

Adventure Title: _____ Session Number: _____
(For administrative use only)

Date of Play: / /
Month Day Year

Start Time: :
Hour Minute

Give hour in military time standard (p.m. hours = hour +12). Don't record the exact minute the adventure played. Instead list the closest 30-minute interval the game was scheduled to start at (30 or 00).

A legal table has no less than four players, and no more than six players.

Player Name	WIN/DCI Number
1	<input type="text"/>
2	<input type="text"/>
3	<input type="text"/>
4	<input type="text"/>
5	<input type="text"/>
6	<input type="text"/>

DUNGEON MASTER

DM Name: _____

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Event Name: _____ Event Code: _____
(This number was given to the organizer when the event was scheduled)

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Date of Play: / /
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Hour Minute

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6	<input type="text"/>

DUNGEON MASTER

DM Name: _____

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