

DWARVEN FORGE®

# CAVERNS DEEP



Encounters 7-15

A Perilous Adventure for Character Levels 5-10



# ENCOUNTER 7:

## MUSHROOM GROTTO

This encounter assumes the adventurers enter from the Cave of Ruin (Encounter 5), following Manx on their way to the Savage Gorge. If not with Manx, they could approach from the same direction after having dealt with the yorghrim. The grotto acts as a hub between several encounters and characters could return from different directions.

The grotto is Graemourna's garden, one of two places where she grows the vile cadaver cap mushrooms she will use for her coming plague. The characters risk infection, though they can also gain knowledge. An infected bulette and the towering Mother of All Mushrooms (MoAM) make this a truly dangerous proposition.

### TERRAIN TIPS:

When you build the Mushroom Grotto, keep the bulette hidden until it detects the characters.

Similarly, keep the MoAM in normal illumination mode until indicated (see the Third Failure section), at which point you can shift to the terrifying ultraviolet mode!

When the characters first reach this area, read:

*A haze of white spores descends like snow from a glistening thirty-foot-tall mushroom in the center of this long cavern. Comparatively smaller mushrooms fill most of the detritus-covered floor, leaving narrow borders around the perimeter of the room. A chained glowing green crystal, similar to the one in the prison passage, can be seen along one wall.*

*There are three exits from this room. Two narrow passages, and a slightly larger passage at the far end of the room atop an elevated rock shelf. An arching bridge of limestone and rock allows access to the elevated area.*

### FOLLOWING MANX

If the characters are not following Manx, skip to the next section.

If the characters are following Manx the ratling, she pauses at the entrance. Read or paraphrase the following.

*Manx turns to you, her long nose twitching. "I was on a ship this one time, caught in a storm. Dangerous business, being an honest merchant," she says with a wink and a swish of her tail. "Couldn't lose the cargo," she continues, as she rifles through her pouches and pulls out a small roll of parchment and charcoal. "So, we threw overboard everything that wasn't nailed down. And a lot that was." She writes as she speaks. "It was a close call, but we made it with our lives and our cargo."*

*She shows you her note, which reads, "Danger ahead! She hears everything I say!" Manx looks at you expectantly.*

Manx will tell the same story over and over again, with only minor variations. She knows Graemourna could be listening to her but can't see her or hear the other characters. This can be a fun roleplaying scene as the adventurers realize how to interact with Manx and ask her the right questions. You can also pantomime answers when appropriate. Her responses are brief, as she is in a rush to get to Smuggler's Cove as soon as possible. She can share the following, based on the character's questions:

- **Goals:** Manx wants to reach friends (her smuggling band), who oppose the hag and are the best chance (she

believes) at ending Graemourna's threat. Equally important to Manx is to give the characters her map so they will recover the chained crystals, which the smugglers need to defeat Graemourna.

- **Insight:** A successful DC 16 Wisdom (Insight) check finds Manx to have good intentions, though she is not sharing everything she knows. Manx won't reveal that she plans on ditching the party at some point. However, when Manx later decides to part ways, any characters succeeding at the check sense that this is not a betrayal—Manx believes this is for the greater good. (As will be revealed in Encounter 8, Manx wants an opportunity to tell her band about the party before the two sides meet.)

- **Who Is Listening:** "Graemourna the hag" is listening. Graemourna is powerful and hateful. The hag can hear anything Manx says, but can't see her or hear the characters. The iron choker Manx wears (which has no visible means of removal) is the source of the magical eavesdropping.

- **Map:** Manx will at some point share her map (see **Handout 7-1: Manx's Map**). Manx doesn't know the caves well, since Graemourna has made changes recently. It is up to you whether Manx provides useful information—some areas she may have scouted personally, others were scouted by the other smugglers.

- **X Marks on the Map:** Each X indicates the location of one of four magic crystals (Encounters 2, 6, 7, 10). Manx and her friends believe they are the key to defeating the hag and escaping. (Manx only knows about these four crystals and is unaware of the fifth crystal found in Encounter 14.) Manx will point at the crystal in this room, at the party, at each X on the map, then at the Smuggler's Cove. Manx wants the characters to recover the crystals, then meet her at the cove.

- **Route:** Manx points along the western wall, pantomiming walking slowly and quietly towards the southern exit. Manx tries to keep the party focused on taking the southern passage (to Encounter 8). If they take too long, she slips away, leaving the map behind and going to the cove.

- **Grotto's Dangers:** She soundlessly pantomimes a huge sickly creature stomping around blindly and points at the drawing of the large beast on the map. She also points at the mushrooms and makes a choking/dying face.

Once you feel Manx has given out enough information, she continues along the western wall, heading south. She hides and moves quietly, trying to avoid the dangers of the room. She doesn't mind if the characters lose sight of her, so long as she thinks they might eventually catch up and might bring some crystals (ideally four) to the cove. If

battle breaks out or another distraction presents itself, she hides and leaves the party, hoping they will follow her trail later. She leaves the map with the party.

Note that stats for Manx appear in Encounter 9.

## FEATURES OF THE AREA

The grotto has several exits, the mushroom patch, and the raised shelf.

### **Northeastern Passage from Encounter 5 (Caves of Ruin):**

This is likely how the characters first arrive. The winding passage becomes moist, with pools of softly glowing algae.

### **Northwestern Passage to Encounter 3 (Bestial Cliff):**

Access to Encounter 3 is blocked by a door formed from heavy logs of wood lashed together by vines (detailed in Encounter 3). As noted in Encounter 3, if the party needs a challenge, you could add a patch of **green slime** (see "Dungeon Hazards" in chapter 5 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide*) just before the door leading to that encounter.

**Eastern Passage to Encounter 12 (Ice Catacomb):** A low arch impedes access from the grotto to this passage. Read or paraphrase the following when a creature studies the passage:

*A cramped stone archway leads into a winding tunnel. A small creature could crawl through the opening, but it would be a tight fit for a larger creature. A pale blue light radiates down the passage, its source concealed beyond a bend. Closer to you, just fifteen feet past the archway, sections of the walls, floor, and ceiling are covered with a wet slime.*

A small creature can crawl through the opening while prone. A medium creature must do so while squeezing to enter the passage. Once a creature has moved 5 feet into the passage, they can stand up.

The wet slime is a type of mold called **frost slime**. Five 10-foot patches of frost slime are in this corridor, starting 15 feet down the passage. When a living creature comes within 20 feet, the closest two repulsive slime patches ripple and slide forward at a speed of 5 feet per round. Frost slime can move along walls and ceilings with ease. The initial five frost slime patches will not leave this

passageway (though new ones may, see below). You can have other patches hang back or move to present a fun challenge.

A creature that is adjacent to or comes into contact with frost slime must make a DC 14 Constitution saving throw, taking 18 (4d8) cold damage. The creature continues to take damage at the start of its turns until no longer adjacent to or touching the slime. A patch of frost slime is destroyed by any effect that cures disease or any effect that deals fire or radiant damage. If a patch is subjected to an effect dealing cold damage, or if the patch reduces the hit points of a creature to 0, it instantly expands to create another patch of frost slime.

The frost slime is not intended to be a lethal or lengthy fight, though it may dissuade characters from exploring the passage at this time.

Once the characters get past the frost slime, they find the passage is blocked by a thick sheet of blue-white ice. Characters estimate breaking through the ice would take at least an hour of work, possibly more. If the players decide to hack away at the ice wall, it is even slower going than expected. They should get the sense that though they can get through it, it is eating away precious time... especially for those who are infected. (The ice will be removed once the ritual in Encounter 12 is completed.)

***Raised Shelf and Passage to Encounter 8 (Savage Gorge):***

A 5-foot wide arched rock bridge leads up from the grotto floor over pools of trickling water to a rock shelf ten feet above the cavern floor. The rock wall can also be climbed with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. The hard rock forming the shelf wall is flecked with nearly impervious Dwarvenite, preventing the tainted bulette from reaching this area. The sound of running water can be heard coming from beyond this passage.

***Chained Conduit Crystal:*** A glowing green crystal is chained to the western wall. See **Chained Conduit Crystal** below.

***Mushrooms and Grotto:*** Patches of black and green mushrooms with pink pustules fill the center of the room and count as difficult terrain. The mushrooms and stalagmites form bottlenecks making it hard to easily cross the chamber.

A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check (made with advantage if identified in Encounter 2) identifies the mushrooms as a form of parasitic fungi called cadaver caps. Smaller versions of these poisonous fungi have been known to grow in the Shadowfell and in the unseelie realms of the Feywild. These are enormous, and they seem to have hair-like tendrils similar to those on

shrieker mushrooms, which can detect the presence of creatures.

A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Nature) check confirms that the towering 30-foot tall mushroom in the center is unnaturally large. Energy from the Feywild could allow it to grow to that size. It seems to drip spores and likely is the source of this growing garden. It is the Mother of All Mushrooms!

See **Traversing the Mushroom Grotto** below. The MoAM is not a creature, but concerted attacks by the party dealing 200 points of damage (vulnerable to fire, immune to poison and necrotic) would destroy it. Only destroying all the mushrooms, a very difficult task, could prevent infection and the use of the **Failure table**. Graemourna loves her garden, and if the characters harm it, make a note for later. She will denounce their deeds and swear to rot their flesh!

## TRAVERSING THE MUSHROOM GROTTO

The mushrooms have the capability to detect the presence of creatures, though the characters can try to avoid detection. If a character has a passive Wisdom (Perception) score of 15 or higher, they can see some of the mushrooms have hair-like tendrils. As the party moves closer, the tendrils move in their direction.

**Special Blue Mushrooms:** Throughout the grotto, brilliant cyan blue mushrooms grow along various patches on the cavern walls. They tend to not be adjacent to the cadaver caps, as if they are poisonous to each other. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the unusual mushrooms. Identifying them requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check, though the check is made at disadvantage if further than 10 feet away from the mushrooms. The rare mushrooms, known as Blue Balecybins, have powerful antitoxin properties. Any creature eating these mushrooms can remove one infection they have suffered from the Infection Deck. There are enough mushrooms for six characters to eat. They should be spread about the grotto so that obtaining all of them is very difficult. If the players burn down the entire mushroom forest, the flames will consume any non-harvested Blue Balecybins as well.

**Avoiding Detection:** All creatures moving through the area must attempt a DC 16 Dexterity (Stealth) check as they move through the cavern. Traversing the cavern requires four checks. You can determine the exact moment they make a check, with the following suggestions:

1. As they first enter the room

2. As they approach or pass by MoAM
3. As they reach the chained conduit crystal
4. As they approach the bridge or other exit

Consult the table below for the impact of each failure. Invisibility, flying, and similar protections grant advantage on the checks. *Manx is assumed to automatically succeed at her checks*—she’s a lucky rogue, has done this before, and is protected by the choker she wears.

**Combat:** Every two rounds of combat count as a failure.

**Failures:** Failures trigger the noted events.

Failures	Impact
1 <sup>st</sup>	A mushroom close to that character seems to swell and seems ready to burst... but then does nothing.
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Something large burrows under the ground, not far from the creature failing the check. In addition, the closest mushroom releases a small cloud of spores in a 10-foot radius centered on the creature failing the check. Creatures in the area must make an Exposure check.
3 <sup>rd</sup>	The chained conduit crystal pulses with energy (see <b>Chained Conduit Crystal</b> below). Read the boxed text found under <b>Third Failure</b> below, as the central mushroom releases a cloud of black spores and changes color. Turn on the “ultraviolet mode” for MoAM! All creatures must make an Exposure check with disadvantage. The tainted bulette attacks as

	described in <b>Tainted Bulette</b> below.
4 <sup>th</sup> and above	The central mushroom releases a large cloud of black spores. All creatures must make an Exposure check.

### THIRD FAILURE

When the third failure is triggered because the chained crystal has been removed—or when you decide the chained crystal pulses—read the following:

*The chained crystal pulses, releasing a green wave of glowing energy that washes across the grotto. As the energy touches the mushrooms, they change color, becoming luminescent purple, pink, and green. The towering central mushroom sprays the room with a shower of black spores. You feel and hear a rumbling from below. The ground and mushrooms erupt in an aggressive spray as an enormous fungus-covered beast emerges and releases a horrible tortured bellow.*

After turning on the MoAM’s ultraviolet mode and resolving the Exposure check at disadvantage for each character, roll initiative. Note the information and tactics in the section below.

### TAINTED BULETTE

A bulette made the mistake of burrowing into this area and became infected. The fungal growths have blinded it and taken over its mind, forcing it to serve as a guardian for the MoAM.

The bulette enters combat if a 4<sup>th</sup> failure is triggered on the failure table. It can also appear, at your discretion, if a creature approaches the natural bridge leading to the raised shelf, as the bulette likes to lair in the earth near this area. Note that every two rounds of combat counts as a failure on the Failure table, which can increase the dangers of exposure!

**Tactics:** The bulette mindlessly attacks the closest creature it can find. The bulette is blind and relies on tremorsense, which could allow clever characters to avoid it. The bulette cannot burrow onto or otherwise reach the raised area due to the Dwarvenite in the rocks.

APL	MONSTERS
5	Tainted Bulette (no legendary resistance)
6	Tainted Bulette (no legendary resistance)
7	Tainted Bulette
8	Tainted Bulette (increase hit points by 15 and attack rolls by 1)
9	Tainted Bulette (increase hit points by 15 and attack rolls by 1)
10	Tainted Bulette (increase hit points by 25, DCs by 1, and attack rolls by 2)

The large crystal pulsing with green light has been chained to a glyph-carved stone disc and to the wall behind it. The crystal is warm to the touch and vibrates with power. When indicated in the 4<sup>th</sup> instance in the failure table above (or at a moment of your choosing) the crystal releases a wave of energy and the mushrooms change to their ultraviolet color.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies that the crystal is a rare device used to channel energy from another plane and is known as a *conduit crystal*. The disc and chains are either heightening the power channeled through the crystal or change that power in some way. The same check reveals that the chains are made of Fellsteel—metal found in the Shadowfell.

A *detect magic* spell detects the presence of transmutation magic, as well as a more unusual and unidentifiable magic.

A DC 20 (Arcana or Intelligence) check can sense that the energy flowing through the crystal is primarily from the Feywild, with some energy from the Elemental Chaos as well.

**Removing the Crystal Before It Pulses:** If the crystal has not yet released its energy, any character preparing to remove the crystal senses that power is slowly building within it. They feel it may be dangerous to remove the chains at this time. If they still release the crystal, it will automatically release a wave of energy as described in the

failure table, triggering the events for that entry. In addition, the harmful burst of energy described below is unleashed, regardless of using *dispel magic* or succeeding at a skill check.

**Removing the Crystal After It Pulses:** Once it has pulsed, the crystal is no longer vibrating dangerously. A *dispel magic* spell safely undoes the chains, allowing the removal of the crystal. A DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Thieves' Tools) check can also remove the crystal. Either failing at a check or simply using brute force to break the chains releases the crystal but it advances the failure table by 1 and also unleashes a burst of energy. Anyone within 30 feet of the crystal must attempt a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. A creature in the area takes 25 (4d10 + 3) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

## TREASURE

The *conduit crystal* pulses with orange light once it is freed. See **Handout 7-3: Amber Conduit Crystal** for statistics. If a character attunes to the item, they awaken the soul bound within the crystal. If this happens, provide them with the **Awakened** version of the handout. You may have the soul within speak to the characters sooner, urging them to attune with it so it can share what it knows.

Lodged in the tainted bulette's carapace is a *scimitar of speed*. See **Handout 7-2**.

Any of the glowing fungi can be used as torches, providing illumination for 2 hours before going dark. However, removing a fungi stalk for this purpose requires an Exposure check.

## CONTINUING

The party will likely proceed to Encounter 8, Savage Gorge. The characters could instead travel to Encounter 5, Cave of Ruin, if they have not been there before. There is a small chance the characters could investigate Encounter 12, Ice Catacomb, but the way is hard to get through and blocked by ice.

If Manx is with the party, she tries during this encounter to break away and go ahead of them to Encounter 8, Savage Gorge, and then through the river passage to Encounter 9, Smuggler's Cove. If she cannot leave them behind, she continues at their side, ever alert for an opportunity to break away.

# ENCOUNTER 8:

## SAVAGE GORGE

This encounter assumes the adventurers enter from the Mushroom Grotto (Encounter 7). If Manx has left the characters behind, she has headed down to the river and Smuggler's Cove (Encounter 9), leaving a clue for them to follow—a strip of bright cloth from her clothing (see **Inspecting the River and Gorge**). Manx has asked them to find four chained crystals before following her, so they have time to explore this area (indeed, the fourth crystal can be found in the lizardfolk lair).

This encounter introduces the lizardfolk. While combat is possible, one of the lizardfolk is talkative and will try to negotiate even during combat. This could lead the characters to travel with the lizardfolk or sneak their way into the Shrine of Skiss-Ryssa (Encounter 10) to reclaim the final crystal. If Manx is still with the party, she will try to sneak away when the party is speaking to the lizardfolk.

### TERRAIN TIPS: SAVAGE GORGE

When you build the Savage Gorge, keep the lizardfolk miniatures out of sight until they emerge or are spotted by the characters.

*You emerge onto a promontory of rock in a large cavern. The air here is hot and thick with moisture. A rickety bridge of logs and fraying rope provides passage across a gorge with crumbling rocky sides. Below, a turbid river rushes out of a narrow archway of rock and carves its way through a widening gorge, slowing down and then curving out of sight. Wisps of steam rise from the river, partially obscuring its surface.*

*Scattered between you and the bridge are the bloody bodies of several lizardfolk. On the far side of the bridge, a single smoky*

*torch illuminates a passage leading out of the area.*

The characters can investigate the bodies. Crossing over the bridge likely triggers the lizardfolk speaking to them (see **Hiding Lizardfolk**, below). The side of the bridge where the characters begin is in darkness, so bringing a light source alerts the hiding lizardfolk.

### LIZARDFOLK BODIES

Investigating the corpses reveals multiple bloody wounds on each, as well as fungal growths along their bodies. The lizardfolk have no weapons, though one (choose at random) has a belt pouch (but this lizardfolk is dangerous, see below).

A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Medicine) check identifies the wounds as coming from crude clubs and spears. A check of 15 or higher, or a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check, confirms that cadaver cap mushrooms have infected the lizardfolk and further identifies the lizardfolk with the belt pouch as being filled with spores that are ready to burst if disturbed.

If the highly infected lizardfolk with the belt pouch is moved, the spores in its body burst and any creature within twenty feet of the body must make an Exposure check. A character aware of the infection can succeed at a DC 17 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to retrieve the belt pouch without disturbing the body. See **Treasure**.

### INSPECTING THE RIVER AND GORGE

Characters can peer down into the gorge and across the river, perhaps noticing several important aspects.

**Crumbling Rock Walls:** The gorge is 20 feet deep. The cliff walls on the side where the characters begin are made of crumbling rock. A successful DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check allows a creature to climb 10 feet up or down the wall. Failing this check by more than 5 causes the character to fall into the river below.

A character studying the far side of the gorge and succeeding at a DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the far side is more stable. A result of 17 or higher (15 if Manx has left a bright strip of her clothing to help the characters follow her) spots a narrow ledge winding its way under the bridge and across the wall in the direction of the river's exit from the chasm. This is Manx's secret trail leading to the Smuggler's Cove (Encounter 9). The walls on the far side can be climbed with a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check. A creature reaching the ledge can then



move along the ledge without needing to make further checks. Using climbing gear provides advantage on any checks to reach the ledge, while using a rope lowers the DC to 10. If the characters miss the clue, that's okay. The characters can explore Encounter 10 and, on their way back, Manx can appear and lead them to the Smuggler's Cove.

**Steaming River:** Steam wafts up from the surface of the river, indicating it is hot but not boiling. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check sees dark orange-scaled shapes moving under the surface of the water. These are lizardfolk, hiding under the water (or fishing, if the characters have no light source and have not been detected). Clever characters might deduce that the lizardfolk like warm temperatures.

**Swimming:** The river's current slows once it passes the bridge and slows further once it reaches the stalagmites. A creature swimming between the rock archway and the area under the bridge must make a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check to swim in the river. Between the bridge and the stalagmites, the check DC drops to 12. The DC drops to 10 past the stalagmites. Succeeding at a swim check allows the creature to stay afloat and move at half speed. Failing at a swim check causes the creature to be unable to move, begin suffocating (see Chapter 8 of the *Player's Handbook*), and descend five feet below the surface. Successive failures cause the creature to descend further.

**Stalagmites:** Several towering stalagmites rise from the surface of the water, some more than 15 feet tall. These are wet with steam, requiring a successful DC 14 Strength (Athletics) to climb.

**Mushroom Patch:** Just before the river curves out of sight, a patch of brilliant cyan blue mushrooms grows along the wall. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the unusual mushrooms. Identifying them requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check, though the check is made at disadvantage if further than 10 feet away from the mushrooms. The rare mushrooms, known as Blue Balecybins, have powerful antitoxin properties. Any creature eating these mushrooms can remove one infection they have suffered from the Infection Deck. There are enough mushrooms for two characters to eat.

## THE PERILOUS BRIDGE

Rough-hewn logs have been lashed together with rope to allow passage over the gorge. Ropes connecting to either end support the bridge's weight and serve as railings. The bridge creaks and groans whenever a creature steps upon it. Inflicting 20 points of damage on a section of the bridge,

or 15 if it is fire damage, will cause the bridge to break apart.

**Tar Trap:** A log in the very center of the bridge is hollow, containing sticky tar. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) spots the tool marks on the log. A creature aware of the trap can step over it safely. A creature stepping on the log finds their legs covered in sticky tar and becomes restrained. A creature restrained by the tar trap can spend an action to attempt a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to end the condition and escape the trap. Dousing affected limbs with strong alcohol will dissolve the tar, and 5 or more points of fire damage will burn it away.

## HIDING LIZARDFOLK

An orange-scaled female venom-spitting lizardfolk (see the **Appendix** for statistics) named Jazza hides behind rocks to one side of the bridge. Jazza wears a leather mask carved and adorned to look like a beetle. Her green-scaled toughscale lizardfolk companions hide around the bed in the nearby passageway. Additional orange-scaled venom-spitting lizardfolk hide below the surface of the water. A DC 15 Wisdom (Perception) check notices the toughscales, while a result of 17 or higher spots Jazza and the other venom-spitting lizardfolk.

If a creature triggers the tar trap, approaches this side of the gorge, or somehow spots her, Jazza speaks in Draconic, switching to halting sibilant Common if necessary. Jazza reacts favorably to anyone wearing a mask, as it is a sign of prowess in battle. She asks the characters to put down any weapons as the caves across the bridge are their territory. If they will comply, the lizardfolk will escort them to their queen, Skiss-Ryssa. Play up negotiations as necessary to make them tense but fun. Jazza is clever and will work hard to have the party believe they are better off agreeing.

**What Jazza Shares.** If asked about the dead lizardfolk, she says they were a hunting party who came back infected and had to be killed instead of being allowed to return to the tribe and spread the infection. Jazza recalls the white, deadened scales and the rotted teeth of the infected lizardfolk with great disgust. The tribe needs to remain pure of this blight. If she spies the symptoms of the infected adventurers, she does not recognize it as the same blight that had befallen the infected lizardfolk. The symptoms the lizardfolk manifest are different than on other creatures. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Insight) or (Medicine) allows players to notice that Jazza sees but does not react to their more noticeable symptoms. It is important that players do not let Jazza or the escorting lizardfolk know that any of them are infected. If this is



discovered, Jazza will not take them to the shrine and it will lead to combat.

Jazza mentions that their shrine has a chained crystal, seeing if this interests the characters. Jazza can also share that the lizardfolk have lived in the caves for generations and served as their domain before Graemourna began her war. The lizardfolk once honored treaties with other creatures, but to Jazza's knowledge, those seem to have all died.

**Learning More:** Successful Wisdom (Insight) or Intelligence (Investigation) checks against Jazza's Charisma (Deception) reveal that she and her companions are surprised to see the characters. In addition, successful checks allow the characters to loosen her tongue. She begins to reveal additional details as they travel, based on the extent of the success. She could reveal that they believed the caves were sealed and that Graemourna had killed all but the horrid cold yorghrim. She also reveals that they are bringing the characters to a huge celebration and ritual called Skullfeast. The characters will be guests in the feast, a huge honor. Skiss-Ryssa herself will do the skull extraction!

Clever characters could find ways to trick Jazza and her companions into allowing weapons, perhaps convincing them of their importance as guests or requesting a demonstration of combat before the meal. If combat ensues, see the section below.

## COMBAT

The lizardfolk are aggressive and only too glad to enter combat. At the same time, they obey their queen (she prefers live prisoners) and if the characters try to resume negotiations they will pause and again offer to take them (weaponless) to their queen.

**Venom-Spitting Lizardfolk:** If battle breaks out, Jazza attacks from range with her hallucinogenic spittle. Her female companions rise out of the water and do the same. They use melee attacks if anyone falls into the water. If the allies on land have been defeated, the lizardfolk in the water swim into the depths and leave the area.

**Toughscale Lizardfolk:** These male lizardfolk bruisers move up to the bridge, physically blocking it. They have been instructed to cut the ropes to the bridge if enemies are crossing, but also to throw nets at anyone that flies. They are not smart and get easily confused. Characters can convince them to focus on a particular threat or otherwise confuse them into other actions with good roleplaying or DC 10 Charisma (Deception) checks. Cutting the bridge takes two actions by the toughscales. Consider splitting their initiatives to give characters time to act and allow

Wisdom (Insight) checks to predict their actions and pick up on how dimwitted they are.

If the bridge is cut, it falls and swings into the opposite cliffside. Anyone on the bridge can attempt a DC 12 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to grab onto the bridge and avoid ending up in the water. A successful check allows a creature to grab onto the ropes, though they still take 5 (1d10) bludgeoning damage from striking the cliff. A creature can climb the bridge (even while in the water) with a DC 10 Strength (Athletics) check.

### Adjusting the Challenge:

This is a good encounter to pause and evaluate the current challenge level. If the party is low on resources and has been having a tough time, hold a few of the lizardfolk in reserve. Add them in later rounds as reinforcements arriving from the shrine or the river. If the characters have had an easy time so far, add additional foes as needed if the additional challenge will be fun. Some lizardfolk could scale the cliff on the character's side to surprise the party and attack characters who typically stay far from the action.

The table below includes Jazza as one of the venom-spitting lizardfolk.

APL	MONSTERS
5	3 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 2 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk
6	4 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 3 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk
7	4 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 3 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk
8	5 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 3 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk
9	6 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 3 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk

10	7 venom-spitting lizardfolk (place 4 in the river), 2 toughscale lizardfolk
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#### **Integrating the Dungeon of Doom's Acid Bath:**

The Acid Bath encounter in the Dungeon of Doom includes the Two-Headed Giant Crocodile. You can include the two-headed croc to increase the fun in this encounter. The crocodile is periodically fed by the lizardfolk, but it resents them. It will emerge to attack anyone falling into the river. The crocodile works best when it initially adds to the challenge but then becomes an asset. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Animal Handling) reveals that the crocodile could be tricked or goaded into attacking the lizardfolk. Checks or clever ideas (using illusions, adding blood or bodies to the river, etc.) can turn the crocodile against the lizardfolk.

## **TREASURE**

The infected lizardfolk has a belt pouch containing two bottles covered in mold. One is a *potion of growth*, the other a *potion of resistance (cold)*. Both are safe to drink, though they taste awful.

Jazza wears a copper ring studded with tiny rubies. It is worth 50 gp.

## **CONTINUING**

If Manx is with the party, and the lizardfolk have been defeated, she asks the characters to wait here several minutes before following her to the Smuggler's Cove (Encounter 9). If the characters are heading to see the queen, she warns them that the queen is insane and dangerous. However, Manx does want the crystal retrieved. She will try to slip away and make her way to the Smuggler's Cove.

If characters are heading to see the lizardfolk, they continue to the Shrine of Skiss-Ryssa (Encounter 10).

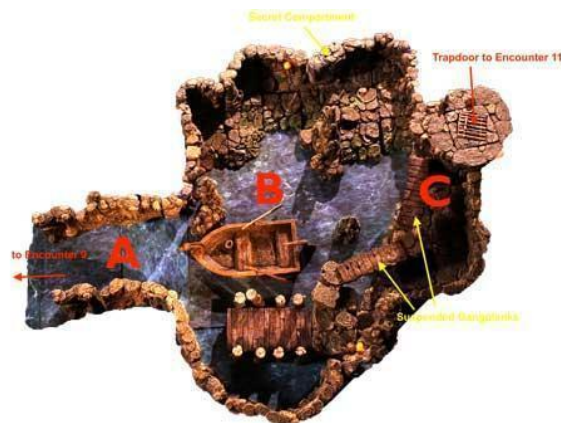
# ENCOUNTER 9:

## SMUGGLER'S COVE

Characters will likely approach from the Savage Gorge (Encounter 8). If they follow Manx's instructions, they will gather four of the chained crystals before entering this area. Characters could also approach from the Hag's Den (Encounter 11) if they discover the trap door.

If Manx has not told the smugglers of their arrival, the smugglers are initially hostile. Manx or the characters may be able to calm them down, and the unexpected arrival of a sea serpent could help them work together. The smugglers can be useful allies against Graemourna, as they have a plan to weaken her hold on the caves.

This encounter is divided into three areas: the river entrance (A), the cove (B), and their hideout (C).



### TERRAIN TIPS: SMUGGLER'S COVE

When you build the Smuggler's Cove, you could use terrain trays to reveal the encounter one section at a time. You can also use cloth to cover up areas, revealing them as the characters approach.

## A. RIVER ENTRANCE

Read or paraphrase the following as the party approaches:

*The narrow ledge descends about three feet below the surface of the river, forcing you to enter the river itself. The river is slower here, though it still retains much of its warmth. Up ahead you can see a wide cavern with a ceiling that rises out of sight. Torches illuminate several dry areas ahead to your left, and a dock and gangplanks to your right. A rowboat is moored to the dock, gently moving with eddies in the slow current.*

The characters can either follow the submerged ledge or swim. Apart from the narrow 3-foot-deep submerged ledge, the water is 15 feet deep.

**Alarm:** Five feet in, Tiberious has placed an *alarm* spell spanning the entrance. Any character not completely submerged will trigger the alarm, alerting the smugglers. If characters carry a light source or do not hide below the surface of the water, they will also be seen by the smugglers in the next area.

## B. COVE AND CREATURE ATTACK

If Manx has warned the smugglers, the characters can approach without being attacked. If Manx is with the characters, she offers to go ahead of them, so the smugglers don't attack them all by mistake. Otherwise, the smugglers will attack the characters unless Manx is clearly visible. Whether combat has started or not, as the characters approach the dock, they trigger the sea serpent's arrival (see **Developments** below). The unexpected threat of the sea serpent can encourage the smugglers to work with the characters.

**Smuggler Band:** The cove is home to three smugglers:

- Manx the ratling – the thief and rascalion who can talk her way past any captain and pick the lock of any mundane vault. See the **Appendix** for her statistics.
- Tiberious the tiefling wizard – the abjuration specialist and expert at bypassing magical wards and defenses. See the **Appendix** for his statistics.



- Bronzo the barbarian – the brawn, who takes out most threats before they can think to harm his crew. See **Appendix A** for his statistics.

The band used this cave as a base of operations, sailing in and out of the cavern through a hidden entrance (now blocked by Graemourna). Goods were moved by wagons through hidden forest trails or by ship along the river and finally through a network of contacts to cities far and wide. Nearly a dozen smugglers profited from the operation before Graemourna struck, killing most of the crew in a decisive battle. Now only three remain, plotting Graemourna's demise. Manx went looking for information to defeat Graemourna and was captured, leaving Tiberious and Bronzo very paranoid.

**Trapped Dock:** Tiberious has placed a *glyph of warding* on the dock. Anyone stepping on the front 10 feet of the dock without saying the phrase “death to Graemourna” will trigger the glyph. Each creature on that section of the dock or within 10 feet of it must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 31 (7d8) cold damage on a failed saving throw, or half as much damage on a successful one. The glyph can be detected with *detect magic* or a successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Investigation) check. A *dispel magic* can remove the glyph, though it can be bypassed by accessing the rear half of the dock.

**Hidden Wizard:** Tiberious is in one of the cove's side caves, and quickly hides behind crates and other supplies if his *alarm* spell is triggered, if he notices someone approaching, or if combat breaks out. He launches spells from cover when appropriate. Some of the goods stored here are valuable and a secret compartment holds a cache of gems (see **Treasure**).

**Death from Above:** Bronzo sits high atop the hideout by the trapdoor to Encounter 11. From this vantage point he has three-quarters cover (+5 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws) and can use his harpoon ballista to fire at approaching enemies. Bronzo shoots first and asks questions later. See Bronzo's statistics in the **Appendix** for details on the harpoon ballista.

**Slippery Gangplanks:** The gangplanks leading up to Bronzo's firing platform and the trapdoor are slippery with moisture. A creature moving on a gangplank must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check or treat the gangplank as difficult terrain. If the DC is failed by more than 4, the creature falls into the water below.

## ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGE

The combination of the *glyph of warding* and harpoon ballista could be too challenging for some lower level

parties, especially when it is followed by the sea serpent's attack. You can reduce the glyph damage to 22 (5d8). Or, the harpoon ballista could jam, slowing down the rate of fire, or you can decrease the harpoon's damage by 5 (1d10).

The encounter's balance hangs on the smugglers joining the characters. You can provide hints through Wisdom (Insight) checks to help the characters understand the smugglers are in dire straits and could use allies.

## DEVELOPMENTS

If the characters aren't expected and have been detected, Bronzo fires his harpoon ballista. Tiberious then begins to launch spells.

The sea serpent enters combat one round after combat begins or after the glyph of warding begins, whichever comes first. If the characters completely avoid combat, the sea serpent attacks as they reach the docks.

If the smugglers are not allied with the characters when the monster appears, allow the characters to attempt DC 10 Wisdom (Insight) checks. On a success, they can tell that the smugglers are unsure of whom to attack. Roleplaying or successful DC 15 Charisma (Persuasion) checks convince the smugglers to fight the monster. Because the information the smugglers have is useful (and fun), you could choose to have them eventually ask the characters to join forces against the monster. This can open the way to parley once more.

## SEA SERPENT

A terrible monster happens across the cove and decides to attack. The caustic sea serpent uses the statistics of an **adult black dragon**, with the following modifications:

- The sea serpent has no wings and no fly speed.
- The sea serpent has no wing attack legendary action. Instead, it may use a legendary action to swallow. The sea serpent makes a bite attack against a medium or smaller creature. If the attack hits, that creature takes the bite's damage and must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw or be swallowed. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the sea serpent, and it takes 21 (6d6) acid damage at the start of each of the sea serpent's turns.

If the sea serpent takes 30 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the sea serpent must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw at the end

of that turn or regurgitate all swallowed creatures, which fall prone in a space within 10 feet of the sea serpent. If the sea serpent dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 15 feet of movement, exiting prone.

**Tactics:** The caustic sea serpent is a mindless font of destruction. It attacks the first creature it sees. After that, it attacks the creature that deals the most damage to it.

APL	MONSTERS
5	1 caustic sea serpent (decrease its AC by 2, hit points by 10, and damage from its attacks by 5)
6	1 caustic sea serpent (decrease its AC by 1, hit points by 10, and damage from its attacks by 3)
7	1 caustic sea serpent (decrease its AC by 1 and damage from its attacks by 2)
8	1 caustic sea serpent
9	1 caustic sea serpent (Increase its hit points by 10 and the damage of all attacks by 2)
10	1 caustic sea serpent (increase its hit points by 20 and the damage of all attacks by 5)

## C. SMUGGLER'S HIDEOUT

Once combat is over and the smugglers are either dead or have become allies, the characters may investigate the hideout and speak with any surviving smugglers. The smugglers tell their tale, share meager rations, and can then share their plan. Note that the hideout itself is in Encounter 11, though this information is included here for narrative purposes.

### THE SMUGGLER'S TALE

- The smugglers have used this cove as a hideout and base of operations for years. There were once nearly a dozen smugglers, but only three remain after the smugglers tried to attack Graemourna. She defeated them easily with spells of ice and her yorghrim allies.

- The smugglers once had a working agreement with the lizardfolk, bartering smuggled goods (mostly weapons and food) in exchange for safe passage. The lizardfolk have become violent and want people for sacrifices, so the remaining smugglers now hide from them.

- Graemourna sealed off the river exit and iced over the main entrance to the caverns, trapping the smugglers inside. Since that time, the smugglers have tried to carefully watch her activities from the shadows. Graemourna doesn't know it, but she chose as her lair (Encounter 11) a place that is joined to this cave by a secret entrance. Thus, the smugglers have a secret way to get into her lair, which they formerly used as one of their smuggling routes to the surface.

- Graemourna has been growing mushrooms and creating diseases. The mushrooms are terribly infectious and likely part of her larger plans. Anyone coming into contact with the mushrooms seems to die within a week or two. If any characters have been exposed, the smugglers keep their distance but remain friendly. They hope defeating Graemourna could undo the sickness or at least stop it from spreading.

- Graemourna has a magic "graystaff" which seems to boost her power significantly. Manx was once watching Graemourna when one of the energy waves that sometimes pulses through the caverns went off. The graystaff seemed to absorb the energy, growing brightly.

- Beyond Graemourna's lair is an ice cave. Some sort of ritual takes place there. Every morning, about an hour before dawn, Graemourna leaves the ice cave and travels to the surface. Her spells call forth the icy storms that have been plaguing the regions, keeping the caverns secluded and the river closed. It takes her about thirty minutes to do this. She never deviates from her schedule.

- Tiberious believes that most of Graemourna's magical defenses and her graystaff are all powered by a rune-covered column in the ice cave. If the runic column can be destroyed, it should severely weaken her.

- Another passage from the hag's lair leads to a cave of magic crystals (Encounter 13). She's been up to something powerful, magical, and nefarious in that cave.

### THE SMUGGLER'S PLAN

Once this information has been given, the smugglers share their plan of attack:

- Wait until an hour before dawn when the hag is out casting her ritual.

- Use the secret tunnel to sneak into her lair. Head right through it into the ice cave.
- Tiberious will cast an abjuration ritual to overpower the Runic Column and overload Graemourna's magic staff. If the power of the chained crystals is harnessed, the energy should cause the staff to be destroyed. However, the ritual will also take 30 minutes, so they need to work together. Graemourna will catch them if they're a minute late.

## MANX'S TALE

Since they have some time, Manx can share a few more details, writing on paper and pantomiming as needed to explain what happened to her.

- Manx was trying to map the locations of the chained conduit crystals so her gang could steal them. Manx became infected in the mushroom grotto.
- Manx was captured by Graemourna. In order to stay alive, she made a pact with the hag. The hag bound her with the iron choker, which seemed to cure her of the infection. In exchange for curing her, Graemourna ordered her back to the smuggler's hideout.
- However, Manx refused to say anything aloud which would reveal their location or what they knew. Manx continued her mapping mission and found the summoning chamber. A griffon appeared and was immediately beset by strange hounds. Unbeknownst to her, the commotion drew yorghrim to investigate. They captured her and intended to feed her to the spiderbeast when the characters arrived. Though Manx tried to tell the yorghrim she worked for Graemourna, they neither believed her nor felt honor-bound to protect her.

## TREASURE

**Cargo:** Crates of supplies near Tiberious contain various types of goods. Most (such as fine silks and wines) cannot easily be transported. A small silver chest worth 25 gp can be found amongst the cargo, carved with images of Valorian knights. The chest is trapped with a poison needle and has a minor magical enchantment which always keeps the needle covered in poison. A DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check locates the needle, after which a successful DC 14 Dexterity (Thieves' Tools) check disarms the trap. A character opening the chest without disarming the trap must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw, taking 34 (4d10 + 12) poison damage on a failed save or half as much on a successful one. Inside the chest are five emeralds worth 100 gp each.

**Secret Compartment:** A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check discovers a secret compartment

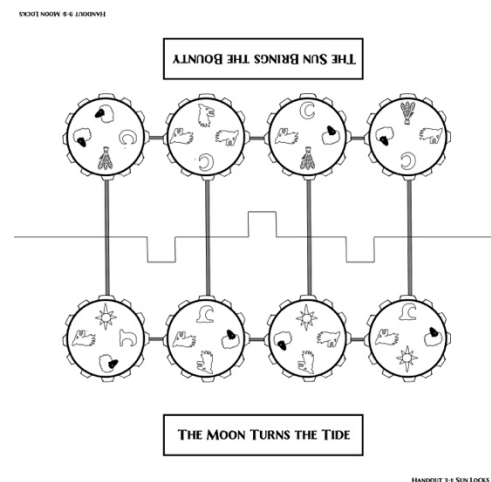
behind a false rock in the wall near the cargo. The smugglers can also ask the party if they happen to know how to open this strongbox, as the smugglers are unable to do so and very curious about what might be found inside.

The compartment hides the second **Artificer's Strongbox** (the first can be found in Encounter 3, Bestial Cliff). See that encounter for information on the strongboxes and how to open them. The lid of the strongbox is set with a complex mechanism of cogs and gears similar to the first half found in encounter 3. Provide the players with **Handout 9-7: Moon Locks** when they get close enough to examine the strongbox.

As shown on the handout, graven reliefs of radiant suns, wolf heads, and wheat crops decorate the strongbox lid. An inscription under the mechanism reads "The Sun Brings the Bounty." Clasps are fitted to the edge of the strongbox, suggesting that the mechanism is designed to be bolted onto something. If the players already have the first half with them, they realize that the two boxes fit together, but are still unable to open the combined strongbox.

When compared with the matching strongbox found in Encounter 3, Bestial Cliff, the two sets of gears form a puzzle that the players can solve to unlock both strongboxes.

**Unlocking the Strongbox:** The strongbox has four magical locks that cannot be picked and can only be unlocked manually by solving the puzzle. When the two are combined they have 8 locks. Each strongbox is 3 feet long, 2 feet wide, and weighs 40 lbs. The strongboxes are magically locked and hardened to resist all forms of damage. Each use of a knock spell unlocks one of the four locks if opened individually, or 8 locks if combined. Or players can move the gears to solve the puzzle. The correct solution is:





Once the box is finally opened, this one contains a *ring of feather falling*, two *immovable rods*, a *mace of smiting*, chainmail *armor of resistance (fire)*, and a spell scroll of *greater restoration*. Each strongbox contains one half of a once powerful magical machine called the Transmutation Engine (see Encounter 5, Cave of Ruin). Give players **Handout 9-8: Transmutation Engine**. It is currently inert and does not detect as magical.

**Bronzo's Axe:** Bronzo's axe is a +1 magical weapon. It is carved in runes in different languages, all of which mean "wound." Bronzo hasn't figured it out, but his axe can act as a *sword of wounding* if the word "wound" is spoken. If someone points this out, Bronzo is very glad to use its powers. See **Handout 9-1: Bronzo's Axe of Wounding**.

## CONTINUING

If the characters have not yet recovered the four chained crystals, the smugglers urge them to do so. The smugglers stay behind, feeling their time is best spent going over the coming plan and protecting the cove.

If the characters have recovered all four chained crystals, the smugglers propose the characters pause to recuperate (a short rest if necessary, potentially a long rest) before proceeding through the trapdoor into the Hag's Den (Encounter 11).

# ENCOUNTER 10:

## SHRINE OF SKISS- RYSSA

The adventurers enter this massive cavern through the tunnel leading from Encounter 8, Savage Gorge. The Skullripper lizardfolk tribe have built a sanctuary here under the protective aura of a magic tribal totem.

The characters may arrive with the lizardfolk, escorted as if captive, or could sneak in. Roleplay is possible, though it likely turns to combat once the bloodthirsty queen becomes involved.

### A. ENTRY TUNNEL

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Read or paraphrase the following as the party approaches the main cavern along this tunnel:

*Crimson light glows at the end of the tunnel and the air throbs to the beat of tribal drums. As you advance, the temperature rises, and the air becomes sticky and humid. Up ahead, steam coils from a pool of simmering green water.*

At this point, ask the players to make the following check:

**DC 10 Wisdom (Perception):** The character hears bestial voices chanting in the cavern ahead. If their check result beats the DC by 5 or more, the character can discern a repeated word chanted in the Draconic language, which translates as “Skullfeast!”

**Lizardfolk Guides:** If the sentries from Encounter 8, Savage Gorge, led the characters here, they swim through the bubbling pool and urge the characters

to follow them. The lizardfolk refuse to aid the group in crossing the pool, as they see it as a simple test of their abilities.

### BUBBLING POOL

This pool of water is heated to near boiling point by volcanic vents underneath the main cavern. Any warm-blooded creature that enters the water for the first time on its turn or starts its turn inside it takes 1 fire damage. The pool fills the width of the tunnel and is 12 feet across at its narrowest point. Creatures with a Strength score of 12 or higher can jump the pool if they run at least 10 feet before jumping.

Flooded tunnels honeycomb the rock underneath the shrine, connecting this pool with the bubbling pools inside Area B: Main Cavern. Players who specify that their characters are investigating the pool notice the submerged tunnel leading to Area B. The tunnels are unlit, so any creature swimming through without a light source must feel their way along the walls. Creatures who attempt to blindly navigate the tunnels must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom (Survival) check at the end of each of their turns or become disoriented until the end of their next turn. Disoriented creatures are stunned.

Mineral veins of copper striate the rock, coloring the water with a livid green hue. Due to this murkiness, creatures in the underwater tunnels have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight, even if they can see in the dark. The lizardfolk have learned the layout of the underwater tunnels and can navigate them without penalty. As coldblooded creatures, they are also unaffected by the hot water.

### B. MAIN CAVERN

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Blood-red light floods this cavern from the tribal totem at Area C. The area is well lit, but steam drifting from the pools means that creatures have disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight.

Read or paraphrase the following as the party enters the cavern:

*A torch-lit cavern yawns before you. The air is muggy, and your view is masked by clouds of steam rising from rocky pools in the cavern floor. Two pinnacles of stone loom above the vapors, the closer one adorned with a tribal banner and the furthest capped with a circle of rune-carved mammoth tusks. Crimson light spills from a burning, saber-toothed tiger skull mounted on a pile of bones under the banner.*

*Over a dozen reptilian humanoids cavort in a crazed dance to the wild beat of tribal drums. As they whirl about, they chant in their guttural, sibilant language. In their fervor, the monsters don't appear to have noticed you... yet.*

Characters who understand Draconic can discern that the lizardfolk are repeatedly chanting the word “Skullfeast” (or specifically “Skull-feast? Skull-feast!”).

It's time to introduce the players to Skiss-Ryssa. Once they've taken in the scene, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*A terrifying figure comes into view, looming inside the circle of mammoth tusks: a seven-foot tall lizard queen carrying a halberd capped with jagged bone. A frill of blood red spines protrudes from her brow and her shins and forearms are clad in dragonscale. Gazing down at her cult, she throws her head back and shrieks with mad delight.*

The following creatures are present here:

- The lizardfolk warrior queen Skiss-Ryssa and three lizardfolk ritualists (see the appendix for statistics) stand inside the shamanic stone circle

at Area D. From the entrance, the ritualists can't easily be seen through the steam.

- A total of fourteen lizardfolk cavort in the main cavern, with another four venom-spitting lizardfolk patrolling the flooded tunnels below.

The lizardfolk have the statistics listed in the *Monster Manual*, with the following modifications:

- All the lizardfolk have resistance to fire damage and vulnerability to cold damage.

**Sentries:** If the sentries escorted the characters here, they present them to their queen (see “Dealing with the Lizardfolk”).

**Tactics:** During combat, the lizardfolk exploit the pools and underwater tunnels to evade and flank the intruders. The lizard queen moves to attack the group while her ritualists remain on higher ground, often perched on the Stairway to Violence.

**Treasure:** Characters who kill Skiss-Ryssa can claim the magic halberd *Virickullis* (see the Appendix).

## DEALING WITH THE LIZARDFOLK

The lizardfolk value brute strength over diplomacy. They attack intruders on sight unless the sentries from Encounter 8, Savage Gorge, escort them here. If so, the supplicants have one chance to prove their worth before they are cut down and fed to the thing in the sacrificial pit. A character wearing the lizard mask from Encounter 3, Bestial Cliff, can attempt to parley here even if they or their comrades killed the sentries.

None of the lizardfolk speak Common fluently. Their queen, Skiss-Ryssa, can manage a few simple words but is incapable of holding a proper conversation unless the characters understand Draconic. Even if they can communicate in their tongue, the lizardfolk prefer deeds to words. One word they do know is their tribal name Skullripper, which they use whenever referring to themselves in the collective. Characters who studied the cave paintings in Encounter 5, Cave of Ruin, can gain an edge in this parley as they can recall the actions shown in the paintings. Each of the Parley Actions listed below appeals to either Skiss-Ryssa, her ritualists, or the lizardfolk warriors. If the players haven't seen the



cave paintings or fail to make the connection, success on a DC 16 Wisdom (Survival) check can grant insight into one of the Parley Actions.

To win the clan's respect, the players must impress Skiss-Ryssa and at least one other faction. Skiss-Ryssa insists that every character participate: if any character holds back, she jabs her magic halberd at them and barks "You Prove."

As each character takes a parley action, note the success or failure and the relevant faction. The results are apparent to the characters as they occur. Once all the characters are finished, determine whether each faction has more successes than failures. If a faction has fewer successes than failures (or if no attempt was made to appease the faction), the characters do not impress that faction. If they fail to impress any two factions, or if they fail with Skiss-Ryssa, she attacks and orders her followers into battle.

#### **Parley Actions**

**Tribute (Treasure):** Skiss-Ryssa can be appeased with the following gifts: armor or weapons wearable by lizardfolk, sparkling gems, or wondrous magic items. To impress her, the character must offer her "shinies" of at least 500 gp value. Offering tribute to her underlings is a grave insult if performed in her presence and earns the group one failure.

**Tribute (Food):** Skiss-Ryssa's lizardfolk warriors can be appeased by an offering of fresh meat. In lizardfolk culture, the leaders of the pack always give food to their underlings before partaking themselves. Hence, it is an insult for an adventurer to offer food to the lizard queen or her ritualists. If they do so, they earn the group one failure.

**Show of Strength:** A character who performs a feat of great strength can impress both the ritualists and the warriors, but not Skiss-Ryssa herself as she sees it as a threat to her authority. Whatever the player chooses to do, success on a Strength check is probably required.

**Combat Challenge:** A character can challenge Skiss-Ryssa, one of her ritualists, or a lizardfolk warrior to a duel to the death. Skiss-Ryssa always asks one of her ritualists to fight in her stead. If the character kills a ritualist, they succeed in impressing the other

ritualists and the lizardfolk warriors, but not Skiss-Ryssa. If they kill a lizardfolk warrior, they only succeed in impressing the other warriors.

**Blood Sacrifice:** Characters who slaughter another humanoid in view of the lizardfolk succeed in impressing the warriors and their ritualists, but not Skiss-Ryssa.

If the characters succeed at impressing Skiss-Ryssa and at least one other faction, she personally challenges the toughest-looking character (or two characters at APL 5 and 6) to a duel inside the shamanic stone circle (Area D). Skiss-Ryssa surrenders if brought below 30 hit points and awards the *Warmask of Skiss-Ryssa* to her opponent (see Area C: "Tribal Totem"). As she hands it over, she growls two words in Common: "Kill Cold One," a reference to Graemourna. If Skiss-Ryssa is killed in ritual combat, any surviving tribesfolk surrender and award the *Warmask of Skiss-Ryssa* to her slayers.

#### **SKULLFEAST CEREMONY**

If the players choose to hang back and observe the ceremony, they witness the following events.

*After a minute or so of chanting, one of the lizardfolk dashes over to a dark cave in the wall, and with a crazed scream, he leaps into its depths. Terrible slurps, howls, and gurgles sound from the pit, followed by a huge belch as the severed head of the sacrifice spins out of the pit and bounces wetly across the floor. The lizardfolk go wild with excitement!*

*One of the ritualists descends from the stone circle, takes the head, and slowly parades it back up the stairway to the altar. Once at the top, the lizard queen cracks the skull open with her claws and takes a bite of the fresh, still steaming brains. She pours the blood out of the skull into a bowl and then tosses the remains to her lizardfolk*

*below, who pass it between them, rejoicing as they hungrily devour the brain. When they are done, one of the ritualists places the skull on the pile underneath the totem. As the skull is placed, the crimson flames inside the tiger skull flare up briefly.*

The ceremony then repeats, but this time it takes roughly an hour for the worshipers to reach the fever-pitch needed for another sacrifice to occur. After three such sacrifices have taken place, the lizardfolk collapse to the floor and rest, safe in the knowledge that their totem is charged with profane power.

### BUBBLING POOLS

These bubbling pools are much like the one detailed in Area A: Entry Tunnel. The smaller pools each have a diameter of 10 feet, and the larger pool is 25 feet by 18 feet. A network of submerged tunnels extends underneath the cavern to link the pools together and connect them to the entry tunnel.

### CHAINED CONDUIT CRYSTAL

The large crystal pulsing with green light has been chained to a glyph-carved stone disc and to the wall behind it. The crystal is warm to the touch and vibrates with power. Every 2d4 minutes, the crystal blazes with green light. When it does so, the flames of the tribal totem (see Area C) flare up and magically absorb the crystal's radiance, nullifying the normal effects of the burst. Thanks to this magical ward, the lizardfolk tribe remains protected from Graemourna's cadaver blight.

A creature can use its action to attempt to pry the crystal from the wall, requiring success on a DC 12 Strength check. If the creature uses mining tools such as a pick or shovel to perform this action, it gains advantage on the check.

The *conduit crystal* pulses with yellow light once it is freed. See **Handout 10-2: Citrine Conduit Crystal** for statistics. If a character attunes to the item, they awaken the soul bound within the crystal. If this happens, provide them with the **Awakened** version of the handout. As the personality within can help

guide the characters, you may choose to have it speak to a character, urging it to attune to the crystal.

## C. TRIBAL TOTEM

This glowing totem stands atop an outcrop of rock that is 12 feet higher than the surrounding cavern floor. A natural stone "staircase" curls up around one side of the outcrop. Characters who attempt to climb the outcrop's sheer sides must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to scale the wet rock without falling.

The tribal totem is the source of Skiss-Ryssa's power, so she forbids anyone from approaching it. If the characters dare to ascend the outcrop, the lizardfolk attack them and Skiss-Ryssa focuses her attacks on the interlopers closest to the totem.

When the characters get close enough to take a good look at the totem, read the following aloud:

*Magic flames roar from a sabre-tooth tiger skull at the base of this grisly tribal totem. A crude reptile-skin banner hangs above the skull, with a tribal mask mounted to its crosspiece.*

A *detect magic* spell reveals an overpowering aura of abjuration magic emanating from the totem, and a strong aura of abjuration and transmutation magic emanating from the mask. Characters who succeed on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check discern that the two objects are not magically linked.

### TRIBAL TOTEM

The tribal totem has AC 10, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and immunity to poison or psychic damage. While it remains intact, it grants Skiss-Ryssa her legendary actions listed in her statistics and nullifies any bursts of magic emanating from the *chained conduit crystal* embedded in the wall nearby.

If a creature damages the totem with an attack or spell but does not destroy it, they must immediately make a DC 15 Wisdom saving throw. On a failed save, the primal spirits of Dreadhollow forest possess the creature. **Give the player Handout 10-1 if this occurs to their character.** While possessed, the creature can't willingly attack the totem and instead tries to kill the nearest living creature it can see. The possessed creature can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

At your discretion, spells such as *dispel magic* or successful skill checks could suppress the totem's magic for one or more rounds.

## WARMASK OF SKISS-RYSSA

This cursed magical mask is a holy relic of the Skullripper lizardfolk clan and belonged to the first human Rootwalker to defeat the tribe's lizard queen in mortal combat. Skiss-Ryssa awards the mask to any supplicant who convinces her that they can defeat Graemourna (see "Dealing with the Lizardfolk"). The mask is detailed in the appendix.

## D. SHAMANIC STONE CIRCLE

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This pinnacle of rock thrusts 20 feet above the surrounding cavern floor and is capped with a circle of carved mammoth tusks. A natural stone "staircase" wraps around one side of the pinnacle. Characters who attempt to climb the sheer sides must succeed on a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to scale the wet rock without falling.

Characters who understand Draconic can identify the runes etched into the tusks as a profane prayer to the reptile gods. A DC 15 or more Intelligence (History) or (Religion) check will warn them that some sort of curse is embedded within the prayer and speaking it aloud will trigger it. Any humanoid, non-lizardfolk creature that speaks this prayer aloud whilst standing inside the circle must succeed on a DC 15 Constitution saving throw or transform into a lizardfolk loyal to Skiss-Ryssa. Such a character is lost from play until a *remove curse* spell or similar magic is used to restore them, or after 1 hour.

## STONE ALTAR

A stone altar stands inside the circle, carved with ghastly images of bloodletting. The altar is enchanted to enhance primal magic in its vicinity. Any spell cast within 10 feet of the altar by a lizardfolk ritualist or by a druid, ranger, or Nature-domain cleric counts as being cast using a spell slot one level higher than the slot expended.

**Skullfeast Bowl:** A large clay bowl on the altar swirls with blood from the skullfeast. If a creature is mad enough to drink from the bowl, their Strength score changes to 30 for 1 minute, after which time their skull explodes, killing the creature and showering gore over everything within 10 feet. If the battle goes badly for Skiss-Ryssa, she may drain the bowl to earn a legendary death!

## E. SACRIFICIAL PIT

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This pit contains an aberrant mass of animated flesh bearing a multitude of howling, hungry maws and staring bloodshot eyes. Formed from Graemourna's black magic, the thing in the pit exists for one purpose only: to devour the living and vomit their decapitated heads back onto the cavern floor.

Any creature that falls into the pit or starts its turn in contact with the thing is grappled by its hungry maws (escape DC 14). While grappled, the creature takes 17 (5d6) slashing damage at the end of each of its turns. Creatures that escape the grapple can climb back up the slimy walls with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check.

If a humanoid starts its turn outside and within 10 feet of the pit, its mind is assaulted by the strange gibbering from within. The creature must succeed on a DC 12 Wisdom Saving throw or take 9 (2d8) psychic damage and move its speed in a random direction. Read or paraphrase the following aloud if a player succumbs to the gibbering:

*Your blood boils with rage, and a crone's voice rasps in your ear:*

*"Let me whisper in your ear,*

*Words you'll likely dread to hear,  
You're my tool now, little knife,  
So, sharpen up, and take a life."*

The thing in the pit is powered by magic and cannot be harmed. Any creature who looks at the aberration and succeeds on a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check can discern that it is a magical effect. A *dispel magic* spell targeted into the pit permanently banishes the creature if the spellcaster succeeds on a DC 17 ability check using their spellcasting ability.

### CONTINUING

There are no unexplored routes leading from this cavern, so characters who survive the encounter must backtrack to Encounter 8, Savage Gorge.



# ENCOUNTER 11:

## HAG'S DEN

It is most likely that characters will approach from the Smuggler's Cove (Encounter 9), having claimed the four chained conduit crystals and befriended smugglers. It is also possible that the characters are exploring on their own, arriving from the cove or from the Ice Catacomb (Encounter 12).

If the characters are following Tiberious' plan, they will try to sneak through the hag's den as quickly as possible, though they will be tempted by all that they see. Graemourna's lair is full of temptations and dangers. Play up the risk and reward to create a fun encounter. The smugglers do not know much about the lair—they take a back seat and let the characters decide how much to explore or ignore in the lair. Characters are expected to return to this room after completing Ice Catacomb.

### What if the Characters are Off-script?

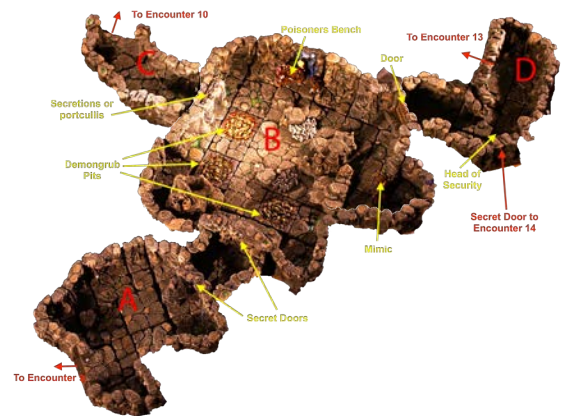
If the characters are off-script, you can run with their explorations, playing it fast and loose. Graemourna could be here and could fight the characters to test their strength but then retreat. Hags are clever tactical creatures who play the long game, and as is revealed later, Graemourna can easily incorporate the characters' apparent success into her plans. She might abandon a combat to go maintain her weather ritual, so Valoria's forces can't find her lair and truly upset her plans. She may simply retreat and let the dangers in her lair hurt the characters while she checks on what damage they have done elsewhere in the caverns.

If the characters have not met with the smugglers, one of them could be found here, sneaking around while Graemourna is away. This could get the characters back on track. The characters can also find clues regarding her ritual and her staff, which can help them get back on track.

It is also possible the characters could race through this room and miss information. An NPC or even a clue in another encounter can let them know the hag's den is filled with important information.

This encounter is divided into four areas: the smuggler's entrance (A), Graemourna's den (B), the passageway to

the Ice Catacomb (C), and the passageway to the Crystal Caverns (D), which also has a secret passage to the Underdroom.



### TERRAIN TIPS: HAG'S DEN

When you build the Hag's Den, you could use terrain trays to reveal the encounter one section at a time. You can also use cloth to cover up areas, revealing them as the characters approach.

Keep the demongrub pit that is not by a door covered, the other two uncovered and visible. The suit of armor stands by the central stalagmites, facing area C.

## A. SMUGGLER'S ENTRANCE

If accompanied by the smugglers, they share that they use this area as their sleeping quarters. Graemourna seems not to know about the secret door or this area. The smugglers have snuck into Graemourna's den several times, and report it is filled with curiosities. They have read some of the hag's notes but touched nothing else.

Read or paraphrase the following as the party enters the room:

*This small cavern seems to be a dead end, dotted with stalagmites and stalactites. Near one large stalagmite are several bedrolls and the remains of a campfire.*

Investigating the bedrolls unearths several mementos and notes each of the smugglers has kept. Manx has a sheaf of love letters from admirers and hopefuls she met in many different ports and towns. Tiberious has a small rusty mirror and a comb he uses to groom himself. He has carved a few notes on the rocks near where he sleeps, including “get the hag’s staff.” Bronzo’s bedroll has a rock upon which he has painted a crude bear face, to serve as his teddy bear at night.

A short passage joins this room to Graemourna’s den (area B) with secret doors on either side. Each secret door can be found with a successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) check. If a creature knows that the secret doors are present, 1 minute of searching eventually locates both doors.

## B. GRAEMOURNA’S DEN

This main room is filled with interesting and tempting features, as well as several dangers. Graemourna’s scattered notes are spread throughout the room and can be investigated from any place within the chamber. The suit of armor may trigger as characters cross its line of sight (see below). All other features below require a character approaching and interacting with it. See each section as characters approach that specific element. If the characters are ignoring the interesting areas of the room, you could grant a Wisdom (Perception) check for them to see a tempting detail.

Note that the time spent in the Hag’s Den has an impact on Encounter 12. See the information in Area C on how time spent impacts the later ritual.

Read the following when the characters first view the room:

*This room is an assault on your senses. Papers, refuse, and interesting knick-knacks litter the floors and stalagmites of this cavern. A wretched smell emanates from a pit not far from where you stand. The 10-foot-deep pit is filled with a blacksludge, churned by arm-long reddish-green grubs. Another open pit can be seen near an apparent exit to the room, though the archway is obscured by a curtain of green moss.*

*A large stalagmite rises out of the refuse near the center of the room. Two piles of bones flank it, and a suit of blood-stained plate armor stands unmoving against the stalagmite.*

*A long workbench stands against the far wall, covered in alchemical devices. Amongst these you can see a hefty tome bound in green hide.*

From the entrance, characters can interact with the scattered notes and one pit. They can see the armor, bone piles, moss-filled archway, and workbench. Once characters reach the midpoint of the room, they can see the door leading to Encounter 13. Approaching that door also reveals the treasure pile (described further below).

### GRAEMOURNA’S SCATTERED NOTES

Graemourna constantly schemes, chaotically recording her thoughts on scraps of parchment, torn hide, bits of chewed bone, stone fragments, and other materials. Notes are even inscribed into the stone walls and stalagmites. A character may spend a minute to search through the refuse in any 5’ square they occupy within the room. Have them roll a d12 and consult the table below. That particular square is then exhausted of anything other than Graemourna’s useless indeterminate ramblings.

Some of the information is very important, so it is worth finding ways to encourage characters to search, even if they have to come back for it. The smugglers, the Head of Security (see below **Section D, Passageway to Crystal Caverns**), or other NPCs could suggest this to characters. Characters that find the antidote can eventually cure themselves of any infections, as well as rid the forest and even Zaltar’s imp Doom of the infection.

Note: Cross off the items that are found. You can always share information that they don’t find here somewhere else. One of her notes could be found in later encounters, perhaps along with treasure or on the body of a monster.

d12 Result	Recovered Notes

1	A roll of parchment states "Zaltar, Zaltar, wizard most rotten! Must come to fix the chamber of summoning! Zaltar promised circle built and hourly summoning. Once per day is all it gives, and one-way only. Wretched archmage, how to the forest will I send the infected? Zaltar claims my runic column is at fault, or that the ice shield interferes. Ice I melted and column and staff inspected. Zaltar, Zaltar, are you lying? If our bargain is not honored, take back I will what he asked of me. Cursed archmage, Zaltar!"
2	Clawed on a piece of hide: "Graemourna's surefire cure for the common cold: One pinch of troll mucus, two drops of treant sap, one dab of ear wax, one hair from a halfling. Mix in water or ale and drink." (All of the ingredients save the halfling hair can be found on Graemourna's workbench.)
3	Carved into the stone floor: "Three, three, three days past the feast of shadows! That is the perfect time to unleash my plague! Three, three, three days past!" (The feast of shadows is a well-known holiday in Mythras. It takes place in the fall and is only a week away, so Graemourna plans to unleash

	her plague ten days from now. If the characters reach Encounter 12, their actions force her to unleash the plague early.)
4	A torn page: "Pixie, pixie, experiment forty-three. Lasted seven days after infection before dying, little pixie. Exposure to cadaver caps and chained crystal on first day, spread infection through body and its eyes became wonderfully enlarged. Sickly pixie lived six more days. On seventh day the body collapsed, and tendrils emerged, showering the area with beautiful spores. Gratifying death, but no luck shortening death to one day. Valoria shall fall and then the rest of Mythras, whether in one day or seven! Nixie, nixie, experiment forty-four..." (A DC 13 Intelligence (History or Investigation) suggests the document is about a month old.
5	Fragment of parchment: "...cultivated best when exposed to chained crystals for at least five separate pulses. Now the cycle step two, two! Expose creature to cadaver caps, oh delight! Now for step three, three, three! Collect the spores after death and repeat.

	Each time stronger, more concentrated!"
6	Inscribed on an old minotaur horn: "Found another use for minotaur blood! Just a dab behind each ear to prevent infection!" (If desired by the DM, this could actually help eliminate one Infection Deck card per character per long rest.)
7	Inscribed on the inside of a giant beetle's carapace: "Frost, blessed frost! Tales of the Graystaff were old but true. Staff in hand is cold enhanced. With staff and runic column are blizzards brought, large as Dreadhollow Forest. With staff are my enemies frozen in the chamber. Hold person, cone of cold, ice storm, wall of ice. Other powers may yet be unlocked. Its name was lost to time, but I discovered it: 'ever-chill.'" (Ever-chill is the activation phrase for the staff.)
8	A green rune-etched bottle has a strip of paper bearing words in green ink: "Blue Balecybin, why do you grow? Blue Balecybin, why do you glow? Does the Feywild make you so? Opposed to cadaver caps you are. Elven blood, turmeric, ground up bulette shell. If ever mixed, an antidote would go far. Squish-squash, must I

	destroy these mushrooms blue." (Mixing these ingredients can indeed create an antidote. Even a drop of it can cure cadaver cap infection, though it takes two days of work and a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Alchemist's Supplies) check to discover the right ingredient mix for the antidote. Turmeric and elven blood can be found on Graemourna's workshop. The bulette shell can be recovered from Encounter 7. Blue Balecybin mushrooms are found in Encounters 7, 8, 12, and 14.)
9	Written on a crumb-covered napkin: "Heard rumor of a gingerbread house in the forest. Must investigate, I must. Tasty it is, gingerbread! Must always beware children with ovens, however."
10	Etched in the bottom of a red slipper: "Fickle fickle memory! My grimoire's anger needs a remedy. Fruit that is doused in poison and to princesses given, and its color must be that of troll skin. Then cackle, of course!" (This is Graemourna's reminder to herself of the passphrase to her Grimoire, "green apple," which must be followed by a cackling laugh.)



11	<p>Written in blood on a large rolled up piece of hide: "Sad, sad, sad Ansgar! Jarl falls like any mortal. Nothing did he love more than Sunhild his wife, and any love is an open door for Graemourna. Sickly did she fall, what a surprise, and Ansgar any deal would he make. Reached out to Zaltar, but Zaltar too busy fighting doom. Graemourna to the rescue, worry not sweet Ansgar! Foul potion did I brew, give to his beloved Sunhild. Look how she is cured and rises, just as promised. Now must you repay your bargain, every wretched demand I made. Look how Sunhild despises the tasks the yorghrim must do. Sunhild broken in grief, the catalyst for the potion's hidden purpose, now she transforms to horrid spider. Begs for mercy, and I do supply. Her soul I bind away in the coldest stone, a heart in the Heartshard. The spiderbeast is but a hollow shell. The clan despairs, begs for any chance. Look how they transform, bound in shame. All broken, all serve. Feed your beloved spider your prisoners, though thank you she cannot. What have you all become? All broken, all serve!"</p>
12	<p>Written in blood on hide: "Each day must I call the storm forth,</p>

<p>each day. Drains me, it does, casting the spell. Drains the Graystaff of much power, it does as well. Wretched wretched, but from prying eyes must I shield my efforts. Though great great is my power, the heart of the Dreadhollow remains unaffected. Strong is the flow of Feywild magic. Nature won't allow the season's change."</p>
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## SENTRY ARMOR

This suit of plate mail armor is reinforced with Dwarvenite and spattered with dried blood. The suit of armor otherwise appears normal until a creature passes between it and a demongrub pit or approaches within 10 feet of it, whichever comes first. This causes the sentry armor to animate and use its intercept reaction, attempting to push a creature into a pit whenever possible. See the **Appendix** for its statistics.

Once the sentry armor has been defeated, it can be recovered as treasure. See the **Appendix** for its statistics as treasure.

## DEMONGRUB PITS

Graemourna maintains three pits filled with vile demongrubs, keeping them as pets and disposal systems for waste and failed experiments. Demongrubs are worms that feast on flesh and other organic materials, grown to the size of a human arm through exposure to the chained conduit crystals.

The two pits closest to the doors are open and visible. The third pit is concealed by a thin wooden lid covered with papers and refuse. A corpse (see below) hangs from a hook over the open pit closest to the passage to Encounter 12.

A creature approaching within 5 feet with a passive Perception score of 18 or higher or succeeding at a DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) check, notices the wooden refuse-covered lid. Any weight of more than 30 pounds causes the lid to break, plunging everything on it into the pit.

A creature dropping into the pit falls 15 feet, taking 1d6 bludgeoning damage from the fall. In addition, when a creature first falls into the demongrubs or ends their turn there, the creature takes 11 (2d10) piercing damage and 16 (3d10) poison damage from the demongrubs.

A creature in a pit can climb out with a successful DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check. The demongrubs within can be killed if 30 or more points of damage are inflicted on the grubs. The grubs are immune to acid and poison damage and resistant to nonmagical bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing damage.

**Elven Corpse:** The corpse of an elf hangs from a rusty chain and hook above the open pit closest to the passage to Encounter 12. The lower half of the corpse has been stripped clean by the demongrubs, though a silver anklet can be seen on one of the skeletal legs. A creature can try to reach over the pit to grab the anklet with a successful DC 16 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. Failing the check by more than 5 causes the creature to slip and fall into the pit. Magic or clever tactics could provide advantage or allow automatic success. A creature grabbing the anklet, however, causes the corpse to animate. The corpse immediately attempts a grapple. Roll a d20 and add +6 to the roll, opposed by the target's Strength (Athletics) or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. If the corpse wins, the corpse grapples the target, the rusty chains snap, and both fall into the pit. The fall kills the corpse, which otherwise has the statistics of a **skeleton**. The corpse was once an elf named Lieve, and a friend of Mercer's (see Encounter 2). A spell such as *Speak with Dead* could provide useful information regarding Graemourna, the location of chained crystals, or something the party has missed.

The silver anklet is inset with emeralds and is worth 350 gp. It bears a minor enchantment. The person wearing it gains advantage when making skill checks involving a gaming set or games of chance.

## BONE PILES

The two bone piles are more than four feet high and are composed of bones from many kinds of creatures (primarily humans and forest creatures). Most have bite marks, and some have been split open by Graemourna to extract and eat the marrow within. The bone piles are not trapped.

A character inspecting the bone piles notices that one skeletal arm has rune-inscribed iron manacles dangling from it. The manacles (see the **Appendix**) can be removed from the pile with a successful DC 14 Dexterity or Intelligence (Sleight of Hand) check. Failing the check by four or more causes the pile to collapse, creating a loud

noise and causing the area within ten feet of the former pile to become difficult terrain.

## MOSS-FILLED ARCHWAY

Hanging moss appears to cover the archway leading to the Ice Catacomb (Encounter 12). Approaching within ten feet of the archway reveals that the moss is actually green acid, slowly secreted from the top of the arch and dripping down to the ground, where it drains through a stone drain.

A creature passing through the curtain takes 13 (3d8) acid damage, which clings to the creature. The acid continues to deal damage until the creature either succeeds at a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or until it is scraped off (ruining whatever is used to scrape away the acid). Clever plans to shield creatures from the acid while passing through could grant an initial saving throw to avoid touching the acid, or perhaps avoid damage entirely. The curtain always parts for Graemourna.

## WORKBENCH

Graemourna's workbench is full of alchemical and poisoning devices: alembics, crucibles, vials, mortar and pestle, bubbling and smoking flasks, decanting and distillation jars, clay pots with mushrooms of all kinds, and many stoppered vials and jars filled with strange solids and liquids. Graemourna's grimoire and several other items are on the workbench, noted below.

**Supplies.** Characters searching the desk for 1 minute can find at least three sets of alchemist's supplies, a set of brewer's supplies, an herbalism kit, and two poisoner's kits.

**Dagger.** A thin curved dagger fashioned from green-tinged steel. The dagger radiates magic and functions as a +1 weapon when tested and in the first round it is used for combat. It is actually a *dagger of envy*. See the **Appendix**.

**Iron Flask.** This flask is hot to the touch. Opening it releases a **hezrou demon**. The demon immediately attacks with surprise.

**Transparent Metal Flask, Filled with Dust.** This metal flask is transparent but retains its metallic strength. It can be easily opened and contains one use of *dust of sneezing and choking*.

**Quill, Ink, and Parchment.** Graemourna has recently been writing on a scrap of parchment regarding mixing two potions together. The parchment claims that eating purple mushrooms in between drinking magical potions allows both potions to work normally without adverse side effects. A bunch of small purple mushrooms is next to the

note. The mushrooms work... 70% of the time. 30% of the time the mushrooms fail, and the DM should roll on the Potion Miscibility table (see the *Dungeon Master's Guide*). In addition, a failure also forces the character to make an Exposure check.

**Potions.** Several of the stoppered vials and sealed flasks are potions, brewed by Graemourna. They all have a foul smell and taste. Consuming the potions will cause side effects such as nausea, flatulence, acne, or stomach pain, but these are not severe enough to cause a mechanical impact. The potions otherwise work their magic. The potions are:

- 2 Blue-green with white mold floating within: *potions of greater healing*.
- 1 Blue-green with yellow mold floating within: this *potion of greater healing* carries a curse. It heals hit point loss when first drunk and causes the creature's eyes to glow blue. Note the restored hit point total. The next time the creature takes damage, they also lose the hit points the potion had previously restored. The creature's eyes then return to their normal color.
- 1 glowing potion that appears to be lava: *potion of heroism*.
- 1 clear potion that briefly turns red whenever moved: *potion of poison*.
- 2 potions that shift between black and gold colors: *potion of invisibility*.
- 1 green flask that gives off smoke: *potion of diminution*.
- 1 milky white potion with chunks of blue mold: *potion of resistance (cold)*.

**Grimoire.** The main workspace bears an enormous tome bound in wart-covered green hide. When any living creature's hands come close to the grimoire, a face appears in the wrinkles of the tome's leather and it manifests a mouth which snarls and bears enormous teeth. It attacks any creature attempting to touch it. The grimoire's mouth has a +10 attack bonus and deals 27 (5d10) damage on a hit. The vampiric troll-hide grimoire has 60 hit points, AC 13, regenerates 10 hit points at the start of each round and regains hit points equal to any damage it deals with its bite. The grimoire can shuffle and flap about, moving with a speed of 10 ft. If the grimoire is killed, it can still be read (with some effort to bring the pieces back together).

Graemourna's grimoire is not intelligent, though it responds in curses anytime it is spoken to. If its passphrase "green apple" is spoken to it followed by a cackle, it opens

its cover and no longer is hostile for that person while being read and for one hour after.

The grimoire is a spellbook, containing the following spells, which can be discerned by a wizard spending 5 minutes examining the pages:

- 1<sup>st</sup> level: *hideous laughter, sleep, unseen servant*.
- 2<sup>nd</sup> level: *alter self, enlarge/reduce, magic mouth*.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> level: *bestow curse, fear, remove curse, stinking cloud*.
- 4<sup>th</sup> level: *arcane eye, ice storm, phantasmal killer*. The pages containing these spells are covered in spores. The first time a character reads them, they must make an Exposure check.
- 5<sup>th</sup> level: *cone of cold, dominate person*.

Graemourna's grimoire also contains many cryptic notes and experiments, most incomprehensible. Each of the following types of information can be learned by spending 1 minute reading that section of the book:

- **Sysuul.** Graemourna needed a source of utter power and corruption with which to create the disease that would end Valoria. By chance, she learned of the wizard Zaltar capturing the demigoddess Sysuul within the Dungeon of Doom. Graemourna tried to bargain for Sysuul's soul, or at least access to the altar that bound her, but Zaltar would not trust her with Sysuul's fate. She waited, and when she heard that heroes had bested the dungeon and defeated Sysuul, Graemourna collected the necrotic essence of her remains and bathed it in the energies of the Eldritch Eye. The Sysuulian Sludge is the ultimate method for growing the hag's deadly cadaver cap mushrooms.

- **Cadaver Caps:** In the realms of the dark shadowy fey, Graemourna found necrotic fungi capable of spreading and enhancing poisons and disease. Infused with Sysuulian sludge, the mushrooms parasitically infect living creatures with cadaver blight through contact or the release of spores. An affected creature's body blisters with red boils filled with infectious mucus and dies within days. Pseudopods emerging from the corpse quickly grow more cadaver caps. With these she aims to infect Valoria and all of Mythras, creating the sort of revolting world she dreams of.

- **Dreadhollow Forest and the Spirit Tree:** Within this ancient and fell forest is a Spirit Tree. The tree's magical roots reach into the Elemental Chaos and fey realms, creating a site of immense power. The hag killed the dryads that protected the Spirit Tree and contact with the Sysuulian sludge has now corrupted the Spirit Tree.

Several pages are torn from this section, so what else Graemourna has done with the Spirit Tree cannot be learned.

- **The Chained Crystals.** This and the Heartshard section of her grimoire are hard to understand and riddled with contradictions regarding the nature of souls and how to trap them. The following can be discerned with ten minutes of study. Graemourna claims she has learned how to trap a soul and use its essence to empower magical rituals. The hag trapped the souls of adventurers who opposed her in several chained crystals the dwarves had found deep under the Spirit Tree. Bound with souls, the crystals gather Feywild energies from the Spirit Tree and release the energies in focused bursts. Prolonged exposure to this magical energy enhances the magical and bestial nature of living things. With this information, the characters feel they could replicate the ritual to trap a soul using the Heartshard.

- **The Heartshard.** Massive crystals grow within the Crystal Caverns, and the Spirit Tree grew the largest of them all—the Heartshard. Like the chained crystals, the Heartshard can trap a soul. However, this is far stronger. The hag has tested how it can hold a powerful soul, though she plans to exchange it for... the rest of the section has been torn out and cannot be recovered.

- **Animating Objects.** Graemourna's mad ramblings on animating objects span multiple pages, all of it too fragmented and insane to follow. She claims she learned these methods from another hag, then showed Zaltar how to turn people into manacles, hoping this would convince him to give her Sysuul's soul.

- **Eldritch Eye.** Schematics and notes regarding a giant eyeball known as the Eldritch Eye. Graemourna used her cunning and treachery to defeat a giant, pickling and enchanting one of its huge eyes. The giant eyeball (and root tendrils) no longer stop magic from functioning. Instead, it converts magical energy into necrotic energy. She has placed this over a pool of the Sysuulian sludge.

In addition, the Grimoire can contain any information you feel is needed to help resolve any open questions that characters need answered to help them understand their options. For example, if the characters defeated the smugglers, the Grimoire can contain the information the smugglers have, so the party understands how to perform the ritual in the Ice Catacomb.

## TREASURE PILE

Graemourna's hoard of treasure can be seen from her workbench, or as the characters approach the wooden door to Encounter 13.

The treasure hoard includes a dark-stained barrel, silver shield, plumed helmet, bags and large chest, piles of coins, equipment and supplies, and across all of it, a glimmering blue-black greatsword.

The greatsword is real and magical (see below). The rest of the treasure is, unfortunately for the characters, a large hoard mimic, partially domesticated and trained by Graemourna. It has woven itself around the sword, so it appears to be buried under heavy piles of treasure (thus, *mage hand* won't work).

The hoard mimic does have a weakness. It loves actual treasure. If offered at least 1,000 gp in treasure or two magic items, it can switch sides. Until then, it attacks when someone touches it. It can use its pseudopod to draw creatures near, or to move and release them over a pit. Because of this (and its ability to climb with ease), it will try to move near the pits if possible. The sentry armor treats the hoard mimic as an ally.

**Malifex.** This powerful greatsword is detailed in the Appendix.

## C. PASSAGEWAY TO THE ICE CATACOMB

The moss-filled archway leading into this passage is described as part of area B, above, and leads down a short stone passageway. The passageway becomes chillingly cold and leads to the Ice Catacombs (Encounter 12).

Note that the time spent in the Hag's Den has an impact on Encounter 12. The time available in that encounter can be adjusted based on the party doing any of the following, up to a maximum of 6 points:

- Spending time investigating or studying something, such as 5 squares of refuse or perusing 5 sections in Graemourna's grimoire (1 point per major investigation)
- More than two combats (1 point)
- Spending a lot of time dealing with the moss-filled archway (1 or even 2 points)
- Other actions, as decided by the GM.

Total the points earned and use the total in Encounter 12.



## D. PASSAGEWAY TO THE CRYSTAL CAVERNS

A door made from tree limbs lashed with strips of hide bars the way to the passage leading to the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13). Manx or another of the smugglers can share that the passage used to lead to one more cavern and then exit to the outside, but they suspect Graemourna could have altered the passage the same way she froze over the river entrance.

The door is not trapped, and opening it reveals a passageway. Read:

*A passageway curves to your left, with bright white light shining from that direction. Where the passage bends, the wall is relatively flat. From the very center protrudes a cone of rock, framing the decapitated head of an elf. Though it seems to be dead, the face twitches and the eyes move to look in your direction.*

*In a deep and overly dramatic voice, the head decrees, "Woe to you who dare trespass the demesne of Graemourna the Frigid. Turn back, lest you face her eternal icy wrath, as I have. Let my sorry state be an example to all—do not defy her grotesqueness, lest you suffer eternally! None may pass to the Crystal Caverns beyond!"*

The bright light comes from the stone archway and ice door around the corner, leading to the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13). The speaking, disembodied head is the Head of Security. Behind it is a secret door, revealed only if the head is removed. This secret door leads to the Underdoom (Encounter 14).

**Wall of Force.** A wall of force blocks the last ten feet of the passage, preventing access to the Crystal Caverns. Characters must interact with the Head of Security before they can access the Crystal Caverns and follow Graemourna's trail, assuming they already visited

Encounter 12. If the characters have not yet explored the Ice Catacombs, the head could direct them there first.

### HEAD OF SECURITY

**Lord Tifel's Story.** This is "Lord" Tifel, a high elf thespian who once performed on grand stages across the globe. Tifel had a rivalry with an actor who received constant acclaim from critics, while Tifel himself was unfairly panned. Tifel met the tiefling Ozraeline (see the *Dungeon of Doom*) who introduced him to Graemourna. Tifel bargained with the hag for everlasting fame and then was foolish enough to try to steal from her. Graemourna had his head mounted to the wall, his soul bound to the stone, and promoted him to Head of Security. She told him this position made him eternally famous.

Tifel is Graemourna's twisted and sadistic variation on a *magic mouth*, and lacking any other audience, he does what he can with what he is given. The Head of Security delivers his line as often as he can, trying out different voices (all overdone) and even asking for feedback.

**Providing Information.** Lord Tifel isn't supposed to answer questions, but he is dim witted and easily flattered. And, of course, he does hate the hag who put him here. With clever roleplay and/or ability checks, the characters can get information out of him that you wish to pass on. This can include information they missed or clues to future encounters. You can decide how much help he provides based on what the characters earn and the desired challenge level.

**Freeing Tifel.** It is clear that Tifel is miserable. If the characters offer to free him, he is even more inclined to help them. Two successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana or Thieves' Tools) checks can remove the stone plaque from the wall, allowing the characters to carry his head with them. Tifel would like to live in a big city, preferably with an audience. Until then, the characters (and perhaps one or two in particular) are his audience. He likes to sing...

Of course, it should be noted that the characters may find another use for him. His soul could be placed in the Heartshard, allowing the characters to free the soul currently bound within. See Encounter 13 for details.

**Disabling the Wall of Force.** Tifel can explain that the path past the head is blocked by a powerful ritual that allows only a hag to pass through. The only exception is if a creature knows a secret dance—the Widdershins Paddle. The popular fey dance is accompanied by a rhyme. Knowing the rhyme requires a successful DC 15 Intelligence (History or Performance) check. A character receives advantage if they speak Sylvan, are an elf or half-

elf or have a background related to fey or are bards. The rhyme is as follows:

“Widdershins, widdershins, two steps aft

Paddle to the stern whilst strad’ling yer craft.”

As the rhyme implies, the dance is two spins counterclockwise followed by two steps backwards. Then the legs are bowed like riding a horse, and a paddling motion is made while walking forward. Anyone who performs this ridiculous fey dance can walk right through (or waltz right through as it were) the magical field.

If none of the characters know the rhyme, Tifel could be talked into sharing it... but he only exchanges that for his freedom.

**Ice Door.** Once the wall of force is removed, the characters can proceed around the corner, finding a door of ice. This is detailed in Encounter 12.

**Secret Door.** If Lord Tifel’s head is removed, and the wall inspected, a successful DC 13 Intelligence (Investigation) or Wisdom (Perception) check spots a discolored stone behind where the head was mounted. Pressing the stone opens the secret door, leading to the Underdoom (Encounter 14).

## CONTINUING

If the characters have recovered the first four chained crystals and are working with the smugglers, they will likely continue to the Ice Catacomb (Encounter 12) to disrupt the ritual.

On their return visit they will likely speak with the Head of Security and attempt to enter the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13).

# ENCOUNTER 12:

## ICE CATACOMB

Adventurers are most likely to approach this icy chamber from the Hag's Den (Encounter 11), seeking a way to undo Graemourna's ritual. The characters could instead approach from the Mushroom Grotto (Encounter 7). In that latter case, if they proceed either to the Smuggler's Cove (Encounter 9) or Hag's Den (Encounter 11) they can find the clues they need to understand how to come back to this chamber and stop Graemourna's icy ritual.

The Ice Catacomb was once the river's exit, a large warm cavern ruled by the lizardfolk. Graemourna defeated the lizardfolk and froze the room, sealing off the exit. She uses the Ice Catacomb as the nexus to power both her storm ritual and her graystaff.

This is a very large chamber, divided into zones to make it more manageable. While adventurers can explore the area, the heart of the encounter is the ritual to overpower the runic column and destroy Graemourna's magic staff.



### TERRAIN TIPS: ICE CATACOMB

When you build the Ice Catacomb, you can add zombies or similar miniatures inside the ice walls, revealing them after the ritual starts. You should conceal the dead-end passage in area A behind the Ice Wall, adding it once that ice wall has been destroyed.

### A. ENTRANCE FROM HAG'S DEN

When the wall of force is removed in the passage from the Hag's Den (see Encounter 11), read or paraphrase the following:

*The passage ends in a wall of opaque blue-white ice. Light filters through the wall in places, illuminating this part of the passage, but there seems to be something solid within the wall.*

The wall must be destroyed for the characters to pass through. The wall can be destroyed by inflicting 40 hit points of fire damage. The wall is immune to cold, psychic, and poison damage. Otherwise, it can be destroyed by inflicting any other kind of damage over the course of roughly 5 minutes. Halfway through destroying the wall, the zombie within is revealed. Read or paraphrase:

*As the wall begins to break apart, the thing within becomes visible: the rotting body of human female wearing an eye patch. It reaches for you!*

This brief attack is meant to evoke momentary horror, rather than being an actual threat. The **everfrost zombie** (see the **Appendix**) is still stuck in the wall. It will try to attack anyone within melee reach but lacks any ranged attacks. Any smugglers accompanying the characters recognize her as Warla, a capable shipwright and smuggler who once was part of their team. She was killed by Graemourna. The zombie can be defeated safely from range or initiative can be rolled, as appropriate. Once the

zombie has been defeated and the wall broken down, read:

*Frost covers every surface of the cavern beyond. The cavern dead ends to the right but widens to the left and extends beyond sight. You can make out two small iced-over pools and several wall sections that are completely frozen over by ice. Sections of the floor in the distance appear to be made entirely of ice, sparkling in the torchlight.*

The characters may now explore the cavern. Area A includes the dead end, the ice pools, and several ice walls (one of them concealing a secret chamber). When they approach the ice sheet or the natural bridge, see Area B.

## DEAD END

Limestone and ice deposits in this dead end have obscured cave paintings, but parts of them can still be seen. The paintings are intricate and artistically advanced, depicting lizardfolk fishing, trading with humans, and entering the cavern from the surface with baskets of food. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (History) check shows that many of the paintings are more than a decade old and obscured by limestone, but others are far more recent and obscured by the very recent and sudden frost.

## ICE POOLS

The floor gives way in two places to pools filled with an icy slush. A successful DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check notices an unmoving dark shape below the icy surface, perhaps just 10 feet below.

These icy pools (and the one in Area C) are one of the ways the zombies will enter combat during the ritual. Characters could try to come up with clever ways to cover these holes, which could delay the arrival of the zombies (see below). Digging down to the zombie below is unlikely to succeed, as frozen slush refills any amount removed.

## ICE WALLS (AND SECRET CHAMBER)

Area A has ice walls in three locations (two by the ice pools and one where the ice sheet begins). At these locations, the wall is a solid sheet of ice, similar to that which blocked the passageway into the cavern. A successful DC 12 Wisdom (Perception) check or passive Perception check

of 12 or higher notices an unmoving dark humanoid shape entombed in the ice. Each ice wall contains an **everfrost zombie** (see the **Appendix**). Additional zombies are found behind them, in additional layers of ice.

**Destroying an Ice Wall:** Each layer of ice wall can be destroyed by inflicting 40 hit points of damage. The wall is immune to cold, psychic, and poison damage. Otherwise, it can be destroyed by inflicting any other kind of damage over the course of 5 minutes. When an ice wall has been destroyed, the unharmed zombie within is revealed and attacks (with surprise if the characters did not know the walls contain zombies). Additional layers of ice (each containing a zombie) are behind the initial ice wall. Each layer can be destroyed in the same manner. Ice walls will be destroyed automatically during the ritual, releasing the zombies in waves around the room. As described in **Phase One**, characters may be able to destroy ice walls before the ritual begins.

**Secret Chamber:** The ice wall by the ice pool closest to Area B conceals a secret chamber. This chamber cannot be found until the ice is destroyed—either during the ritual as everfrost zombies emerge, or if the party takes the time to destroy this ice wall during Phase One.

**Treasure:** Resting in a nook within the secret chamber is a large tome, bound in hide pierced with curved pins, needles and rods of metal and bone. The first page of the tome presents the title: *Doom's Compendium of Pain*. The tome catalogues traps and monsters, detailing their capabilities with eager wonder and fascination for their ability to create pain. A successful DC 13 Intelligence (History) check finds that some items come from the Dungeon of Doom and were created by Zaltar, others are Graemourna's creations catalogued by her, and others are from additional unlisted sources. A character with the tome gains a +2 to checks involving Thieves' Tools related to traps or any checks related to monster lore for monsters in Dwarven Forge adventures (at your discretion, monsters in other settings could also be included). Though it is not obvious from studying the tome, Zaltar would reward the characters handsomely for this compendium.

Note that the ice wall to the secret chamber holds a single zombie, revealed in the first round of the ritual. After that time, no zombies come from this particular location.

## B. RUNIC COLUMN AND THE RITUAL

This area encompasses the Natural Bridge, Ice Sheet, and the Runic Column where the ritual is performed. The



features are described below, followed by the ritual and the events during the ritual.

## ICE WALLS

The many ice walls function the same as those described in Area A. The bodies entombed within these ice walls are clearly visible, requiring no check to see. Some are scruffy smugglers, others lizardfolk warriors, and a few are hulking yorghrim. All of their faces are frozen in a mask of fear and pain. If surviving smugglers are present, they recognize former members of their crew among the iced corpses.

## BLUE MUSHROOMS

Brilliant cyan mushrooms grow on a wall in this chamber. Identifying the properties of these mushrooms requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check, though the check is made at disadvantage if further than 10 feet away from the mushrooms. The rare mushrooms have powerful antitoxin properties. Any creature eating these mushrooms can remove one infection they have suffered from the Infection Deck. There are enough mushrooms for two characters to eat. If the characters have found one of the scattered notes found in Graemourna's den (see item 8 in the Hag's Den), they could eventually create an antidote.

## NATURAL BRIDGE

Climbing the natural bridge allows characters the easiest path to the level of the runic column where the ritual is to take place. The bridge and steps are coated in frost and all of it is considered difficult terrain.

While on the natural bridge, a creature hit by an attack roll that results in a critical hit is knocked prone and must succeed at a DC 13 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target's choice) or be knocked off of the natural bridge, taking damage from the fall. The height varies, up to 15 feet at its tallest.

## ICE SHEET

The vast ice sheet was once a river flowing out of the Savage Gorge and Smuggler's Cove (Encounters 8 and 9), through this cavern, and exiting to the outdoors. Graemourna sealed off the entrance by freezing the river solid, trapping the smugglers and lizardfolk inside.

A successful DC 20 Wisdom (Perception) check or passive Perception score of 20 or higher notices a large dark shape under the ice sheet, not far from the runic column. It is not possible to break through to whatever object is below, or to discern its nature, until the ritual begins.

The ice sheet is difficult terrain as it is very slippery. Creatures attempting movement on the ice will encounter several challenges:

**Critical Hits:** When a creature is subjected to an attack roll that hits and is a critical hit, the target must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw. On a failure, the attacking creature can move the target 10 feet in a straight line in any direction on the ice. If a target is pushed into an occupied space, they come to a stop in the adjacent square.

**Maximum Damage:** When a creature hits with an attack that deals damage—and half or more of the weapon or spell's base damage dice are the maximum amount (for example, a 6 on a d6)—the creature may slide the target(s) in the same manner as if it were a critical hit (see above). Note that bonus damage dice from other sources (for example, a warlock using *hex* or a rogue with sneak attack) are not included for these purposes.

**Forced Movement:** Any attack or effect that normally forces a creature to be pushed or moved increases the distance of the effect by 5 feet. The special rules in this section already include this bonus movement.

Deliberately scoring the ice could temporarily cause the ice to lose its slippery nature and the above effects. In general, a creature can score and chip away at the ice in one square in one round. Some spells could accomplish this in a larger area, as decided by the DM. However, spells that involve cold, fire, or similar forces will generally melt or resurface the ice, causing it to again become slick.

**Melting the Ice Sheet Away:** A particularly strong fire spell could be used to melt a vast quantity of the ice, turning it into water. This will slow down the zombies during the ritual, as they have to walk under the water. However, this could also release the giant (see **Phase Two**) at the discretion of the DM.

## RUNIC COLUMN

The runic column is a massive arcane power generator shaped like a pedestal, created by Zaltar for Graemourna as part of their bargain. Zaltar worried about Graemourna's plans, so he hid an arcane sensor within the column. If it or the linked graystaff is destroyed, Zaltar will know it (causing him to make an appearance in Encounter 15).

The base of the runic column is mundane frost-covered stone that can be climbed with a DC 15 Strength (Athletics) check. It is difficult terrain, so a creature climbs it at quarter speed. A climbing speed or use of a climbing kit improves climbing to half speed.

The top of the runic column is most easily reached by the natural bridge. The column is covered in translucent ice, and the pulsing runes are visible through it. The column hums and vibrates with power. A single creature, likely the wizard Tiberious, can be on the runic column during the ritual. Additional creatures can fit on the runic column only if the ritual is not in progress, or if the additional creatures are foes intent on stopping the ritual! See the explanation below.

## THE RITUAL: OVERVIEW

If Tiberious is present, read or paraphrase his overview below. Another smuggler could provide this information as well. Otherwise, you can use the information below as a summary of what the characters learn from Tiberious' or Graemourna's notes.

*Tiberious stares up at the massive pillar of frost-covered stone. Roughly 15 feet above the surface of the ice sheet, the stone becomes deep blue ice, covered in runes.*

*Tiberious points excitedly. "That's the runic column! I'll need space to trace a circle around the ledge, where I will stand with the chained crystals. The circle and I must be undisturbed, so I must be alone up there. It will take several minutes for me to conduct the ritual. I will need to concentrate on the ritual. Neither you nor anything else should be allowed to breach the circle. Be on your guard. No matter what happens, I cannot be disturbed, or the ritual will fail."*

*Tiberious begins to climb the natural bridge. He continues, "Things should go smoothly during the first phase, when the runic crystal is not yet overpowered. In the second phase, the runic crystal will be under strain. Anything could happen. If all goes well, we reach the end, and the graystaff will explode. Be ready for a very angry*

*Graemourna... we should be ready to run, preferably away from her den."*

The characters may have questions.

**Assisting Tiberious:** Someone can be close to Tiberious (or the character conducting the ritual) on the natural bridge, providing assistance with the ritual from outside the circle.

**A Character Conducts the Ritual:** If Tiberious is not available, Graemourna's notes indicate how she powers the runic column. A character who is capable of casting spells can replicate Graemourna's process, but for a longer period of time with more power, to overpower the runic column. Upon the shelf, a circle must be etched around the glowing crystal and runes of ice drawn within the circle. The spellcaster must then channel magical energy through the chained crystals and into the runic column. This does not require any checks or exhaust spell slots but does count as concentrating on a spell and consumes the character's actions.

There are three phases to the ritual. Information solely for the DM is in parentheses.

**Phase One:** In phase one, the power channeled into the runic column is increasing but still at normal levels. This phase normally takes 10 minutes. (If the characters took too long in Graemourna's den, the runic column fights back, as noted in "The Ritual: Phase One" below.)

**Phase Two:** At the start of phase two, the runic column is being overpowered. This is expected to take 10 rounds. (During this time, the characters will be attacked by waves of zombies as the runic column tries to protect itself. At the end, a giant also joins the fray.)

**Ritual Conclusion:** The ritual is expected to conclude, causing a spike of power to be channeled into Graemourna's staff, destroying it. (Unbeknownst to the characters, Graemourna will arrive with her staff, a battle will ensue, the staff will finally explode, and both sides will likely retreat.)

## THE RITUAL: PHASE ONE

In this phase, Tiberious (or a spellcasting character) channels spell energy into the runic column while the characters (and any remaining smugglers) stand guard.

Read the following description, adjusting it if a different character is conducting the ritual or if the ritual is being rushed.

*Tiberious sits within the circle, facing the runic column. He leans forward, focusing a thin ray of pale blue energy into the column. The runes glow in response, pulsing faster and faster as it slowly gathers power.*

*The ice in the cavern creaks and groans, expanding over the walls. Your group prepares for the worst, but no threat comes. Yet.*

The phase proceeds based on how long the characters took to get through the Hag's Den. The total score from Encounter 11 (up to a maximum of 6 points) is used in each step below.

**Crystal Diagram:** If the characters recovered the crystal diagram from Encounter 5, Cave of Ruin, the characters know exactly where to place the chained conduit crystals, speeding up the ritual. Reduce the score by 2 points.

**Preparation:** If the characters accumulated more than 2 points, they do not have time for preparations. If they accumulated 0 points, each character can either remove two ice wall layers (at any ice wall locations they choose), close one ice pool (if they come up with a way to do so), or scuff up five squares of the ice sheet (as described in the Ice Sheet section above). If they accumulated 1 – 2 points, each character can either remove one ice wall layer or scuff up two squares of the ice sheet. These guidelines can be modified if you think the party comes up with particularly effective ideas.

**Pulses of Frost:** If the characters accumulated 0 points, the ritual does not cause the runic column to attack. If the characters accumulated 1 – 2 points, the runic column pulses once during Phase One, and twice if the characters accumulated 3 or more points. Each pulse radiates outward from the runic column and covers the entire room. Any living creature in the room must succeed at a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 11 (2d10) cold damage on a failed saving throw or half as much on a successful one.

**Ritual Caster Damage:** The ritual caster is under great strain as the phase concludes. If 0 points were accumulated, the ritual caster manages the strain and takes no damage. If the characters accumulated 1 – 2 points, the ritual caster loses 1/4 of their current hit points, as their life force is drained away into the runic

column. If the characters accumulated 3 – 4 points, the caster loses half of their hit points. If they accumulated more than 5 points, the caster loses 3/4 of their current hit points!

## THE RITUAL: PHASE TWO

During this phase, the ritual caster begins to overpower the runic column, filling it with more energy than it was meant to handle. This phase takes 10 rounds, during which the column protects itself by releasing waves of undead who attack the characters and try to reach the ritual caster.

**Waves of Undead:** Roll Initiative! Each round on initiative count 15, one layer of ice walls explodes in shards of ice as the runic column releases the zombies within. There are 10 **everfrost zombies** per wave (6 regular, 2 yorghrim variants, and 2 lizardfolk variants). They can emerge from any ice wall or even from ice pools.

**Effects of Preparation:** If the characters destroyed any ice walls or closed off ice pools during phase one, that number of zombies will not appear in round one (and the following round, if applicable).

## ADJUSTING THE CHALLENGE: PHASE TWO

The goal is to have an exciting build-up as waves of zombies attack. They should be easy to hit and kill, but over time should begin to become a threat and get closer and closer to the ritual caster. If the characters are winning easily and that's fun, no problem! If they are bored and need a challenge, you can unleash a pulse of frost from the runic column (see Phase One) or add a few more zombies that emerge closer to the characters.

Conversely, you can decrease the challenge by removing a few zombies or having them be less effective (fewer ranged attacks, easily distracted by characters instead of heading to the ritual caster). For most APL 5 – 7 parties, use 7 zombies a round. For APL 8, use 8 zombies. APLs 9 – 10 will typically use the full 10 zombies each round.

**Tactics:** The zombies typically move towards the runic column, engaging any creatures that are near them along the way. The variant zombies use their ranged attacks against characters closer to the runic column, seeing these characters as guardians protecting the ritual. If zombies can reach the runic column, they climb up and attack the ritual caster. Zombies can also move along the natural bridge if coming from that direction.

**Round 8 and the Giant:** On the 8<sup>th</sup> round during initiative count 15, the giant below the ice emerges in a shower of ice and slush. Place the giant in any squares within 20 feet of the runic column. The giant attacks the closest living creatures between it and the ritual caster. If it defeats them, it proceeds to climb the column to reach the ritual caster.

- At an average party level (APL) of 5 – 6, the giant is a size Large everfrost zombie with 25 hit points and an additional +2 to attacks and +2 damage.
- At an average party level (APL) of 7 – 8, the giant is a size Large everfrost zombie with 40 hit points and an additional +2 to attacks and +3 damage.
- At an average party level (APL) of 9 – 10, the giant is a size Large everfrost zombie with 60 hit points and an additional +3 to attacks and +5 damage.

**Allies:** Manx and Bronzo, if they are present, fight alongside the characters. Manx does her best to be effective while staying alive, but Bronzo is prepared to die for his friends.

**Defending the Ritual Caster:** A character that is on the natural land bridge next to the runic column may choose to interpose themselves between any zombie attacks meant for the ritual caster. That character becomes the new target for the attack.

**If the Ritual Caster Falls:** So long as the ritual caster is alive, the ritual continues normally. If the ritual caster is reduced to 0 hit points, a new ritual caster must take the previous one's place by the end of the following round or the ritual goes out of control! If this happens, the runic column releases a pulse of frost (see "**Pulses of Frost**" above) each round until the 10th round is reached. Fortunately for the characters, the ritual still completes.

## THE RITUAL: CONCLUSION

The runic column has been deliberately overcharged. Read or paraphrase the following:

*As the ritual concludes, waves of brilliant blue light pulse from the runic column, dancing across the walls. The column cracks and fractures, and the entire cavern shakes. Stalactites crash to the ground around you, creating a spiderweb of cracks on the ice sheet. The runes flare intensely, releasing a*

*wave of energy that reverberates through the entire cave complex. The energy seems to be harmless to you, but every zombie falls to the ground, unmoving.*

*The chamber is suddenly eerily quiet.*

*With a shrill howl, a twisted and grim woman flies into the cavern atop a floating hunk of blue-black ice. Graemourna the hag is horribly wrinkled, her bony limbs too long and her mouth devoid of all but a few foul and crooked teeth. In her withered left hand is a blue-white staff, glowing with power.*

*She screeches, "Meddle in my affairs, you dare? Wretched weaklings, I do declare! Explain yourselves and beg... that your life I spare!"*

If Tiberious is present, he is surprised that the staff is intact. Characters may feel the same way. The staff was supposed to be destroyed by the runic column's power spike. Tiberious wonders aloud if the ritual somehow empowered the staff, making it stronger!

Graemourna will speak angrily with the characters, trying to create fear and misery. She delights in their suffering and can smell any infections they have. She taunts them and promises destruction. While she is not pleased by the runic column's destruction, her plans are far enough along that she can still succeed. Overconfident, she sees the characters as pathetic worms who need to be taught a lesson. When she tires of talking, she points her staff at the party and unleashes a spell.

**Graemourna's Spell:** Graemourna uses her graystaff to cast a *cone of cold* spell (DC 16, as per her statistics) at as many characters as possible. If that spell's average of 36 cold damage is too much for the party to handle, consider an *ice storm* (average 23 damage). Conversely, if the characters can handle it, Graemourna uses the staff to cast *cone of cold* at a higher level, adding 1d8 additional damage for each level. This is supposed to be a terrifying moment, as Graemourna has seemingly overwhelming power and the characters are wounded and low on resources.

## THE STAFF'S UNDOING

As soon as the spell is cast, read the following. Modify the text if Tiberious is not present or is not alive.

*The vile hag laughs at your wounds, preparing to finish you off. A blinding light pulses, but it comes from the staff and not from the hag. Graemourna looks as surprised as you are.*

*The staff pulses again. And then again. Each time, the pulse is closer together. The room feels colder each time.*

*Tiberious whispers to you, "It did work! Run! Run for your lives! The staff is going to explode!"*

The characters have just enough time to back away from the hag (adjust as necessary, with smugglers emphasizing the danger as needed). Tiberious and Bronzo, if alive, try to shield the characters.

Graemourna's staff explodes, sending her and her floating ice rock in the opposite direction from the party (you can place her far from the party to facilitate her exit) and unleashing a blast of cold that sweeps across the entire ice catacomb. The blast kills Tiberious and Bronzo, sending their bodies flying. Anyone who did not run takes 10d10 cold damage and is pushed 20 feet away from the blast (if you are so inclined, Tiberious and Bronzo's selfless act can halve the damage for the characters). All who heed Tiberious' plea to run are moving away from the blast and are only knocked down and pushed away five feet, but no cold damage.

*Graemourna the hag lifts herself back onto her levitating rock. Her staff is no more, and a trickle of vile black blood streaks down her face. Her wounds are not significant, however, and she still appears terribly*

*fearsome as she stares at you with cold calculating eyes.*

*"You will pay for what you have done, my plans in disarray. I will have my revenge on you and the city of Valoria, a curse I set upon this day!" The hag quickly flies away in the direction of her den.*

Graemourna is between the characters and her den, and she flies towards her den. Though the characters may want to follow her, the characters likely have significant wounds, and this is a good time to retreat and recuperate. If any smugglers are present, they strongly urge the characters to retreat. Otherwise, the souls in the chained crystals can warn them to retreat and suggest where to go. The passage through Area C leads to the Mushroom Grotto and from there the characters can reach the Smuggler's Cove and recuperate.

Graemourna retreats to her den to heal and assess the damage caused by the party to her den and lair. In the passage leading to her den she drops a Toad Bomb. This item appears to be a petrified toad, but when it hits the ground it cracks, and a **gibbering moulder** appears. The creature attacks anyone approaching. Graemourna has three such Toad Bombs and will protect herself with them one at a time, fleeing if the characters defeat all three or manage to move past them in the passage. She returns to her den whenever the characters have departed. After resting and gathering supplies, she makes her way through the secret door to the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13) and the Underdoom (Encounter 14) where she next fights the characters.





## C. EXIT TO MUSHROOM GROTTO

Either during their retreat or prior to the ritual, the characters can explore this side of the cavern. A frozen ice patch can be found in the floor, as well as a large frozen stalagmite and two ice walls.

**Gem-Encrusted Stalagmite.** A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) check or passive Perception score of 13 or higher notices something glittering other than frost. The stalagmite is covered in small diamonds, worth 3,500 gp. The diamonds can be removed with a dagger, Jeweler's Tools, Mason's Tools, or similar items. It takes 5 minutes to extract all of the diamonds.

**Revealed Backpack.** One of the zombies in the farthest ice wall has a backpack, though when it emerges, the pack's rotten straps break, and it is left behind. If the characters break this ice wall before the ritual or examine the wall after the ritual, they easily notice the pack. Inside can be found Leatherworker's Tools, 75 gp in mixed coins, and 4 *potions of superior healing*.

The passageway to the Mushroom Grotto is initially large enough for characters to move normally. See Encounter 7 for the frost slime and narrow arch they will encounter once they leave this area.

## CONTINUING

After Graemourna's overwhelming attack and the destruction of the graystaff, the hag retreats in the

direction of her den (Encounter 11) before she proceeds to Encounter 14. The characters will most likely retreat to the Mushroom Grotto (Encounter 7). Any surviving smugglers suggest retreating to recuperate.

The most likely scenario is the party retreating to rest. After a long rest, they can continue their explorations into the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13). However, the characters could have additional plans.

If Manx survived, the following scene plays out while the party rests, or perhaps as they are celebrating their victory or mourning those who were lost in the battle. If Manx is alive but not present, she could appear now, stumbling and in pain. She can share any information you wish to impart before the scene begins. Otherwise, if Manx is dead you can use the alternate scene while they rest.

## GRAEMOURNA'S REVENGE

Graemourna is livid at the characters and at Manx, who she either saw in the Ice Catacombs or has otherwise ascertained is a traitor. Her punishment is intended to cement the hag as a truly despicable creature—one the party wants to badly defeat. She also uses the last of her stored power over ice and frost to melt the caves, hoping to drown her foes or get them to leave. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Manx the ratling is resting against a wall, cleaning her whiskers. She suddenly gasps and bolts upright, looking in every direction. "Where? I hear her! The hag! Where is she?"*

*Manx slowly lifts her left hand towards her neck, and the iron choker she wears. "Oh, no," she says, and her eyes roll back in her head.*

*When Manx speaks again, her voice is laced with the horrid rhyming cackling of Graemourna the hag.*

*"Heroes, so much you hope to attain. And yet, your eternal reward shall be pain. In*

*caverns deep you will be slain. Whether by my hand or disease you can't constrain."*

*Manx's body shudders and Graemourna continues, "This place for you is a tomb. I'll kill you and resurrect you and your soul endlessly consume."*

*In the direction of the gorge you hear the loud sound of ice cracking.*

*"The river backs up, bringing endless gloom. Your time runs out, very soon."*

*Manx's eyes come into focus, but her look is of terror. Her choker begins to slowly shrink, tightening around her neck.*

**Manx's Demise.** Modify this scene to fit the comfort level of your group, making it less gruesome if desired. The characters have only a few rounds before the choker tightens around Manx's neck and kills her. Clever ideas by the characters could save her. At your discretion, changing Manx's form, reducing her size, a *dispel magic* targeting the choker and succeeding at a DC 16 check, or other ideas could work. Otherwise, Manx is decapitated by the choker. The decapitation will prevent spells such as *revivify* and *raise dead*.

## ALTERNATE SCENE

If Manx has died, Graemourna still manifests to threaten the party. Read or paraphrase the following:

*Entering the cavern is a sickly-looking lizardfolk with fungus-infested scales and bloodshot eyes. She raises her open hands in a sign of peace, then points at an iron choker she wears.*

*The lizardfolk's head sways and her eyes roll back in her head. She speaks, but the rhyming voice is not that of a lizardfolk. It is that of Graemourna the hag.*

*"Heroes, so much you hope to attain. And yet, your eternal reward shall be pain. In caverns deep you will be slain. Whether by my hand or disease you can't constrain."*

*The poor lizardfolk's body shudders once more as Graemourna continues, "This place for you is a tomb. I'll kill you and resurrect you and your soul endlessly consume."*

*In the direction of the gorge you hear the loud sound of ice cracking.*

*"The river backs up, bringing endless gloom. Your time runs out, very soon."*

*The lizardfolk's eyes come into focus, but her look is of terror. Her choker begins to slowly shrink, tightening around her neck.*

The lizardfolk's name is Tez-Zette. Graemourna placed the choker on her recently, after she became infected. As in the section above ("Manx's Demise"), the characters have a few rounds to possibly save Tez-Zette before she is decapitated. Due to her infection, if she is saved, she cannot fight in combat and stays behind, hoping the heroes can save the day and defeat the hag. If the players have and give her the cure to the cadaver caps as well, she will still be weak from the long illness and stay behind. For curing her from the deadly spores, Tez-Zette will reward the players with a 500 gp valued ruby that she has buried nearby with some other possessions (nothing else of value).

## THE FLOOD

If the characters investigate the sound of cracking ice, they find that Graemourna has frozen over the river's underground exit in the Savage Gorge. The magical ice

cannot be melted by mundane or magical means. Due to the wall, the river backs up and the water level begins to steadily rise. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check confirms they have about 24 hours before the water level rises high enough to submerge the entire cave complex.

## OPTIONS

As if the threat of disease was not enough of a ticking clock, the characters now realize the caverns will be their demise if they cannot find a way out.

The only way out is through the Crystal Caverns. This requires finding the secret door in the Hag's Den. If they have not found it, a smuggler or even lizardfolk could recall that there was once an exit from a passage just before the ice catacomb. The Head of Security can offer up the information, ideally in exchange for being spared from the flood.

# ENCOUNTER 13:

## CRYSTAL CAVERNS

The adventurers enter this area from the door in Encounter 11, Hag's Lair.

Graemourna is harnessing the conduit crystals in here to channel arcane power through Caverns Deep. Near the rear of the cave, the imprisoned soul of a yorghrim queen powers a mystical Heartshard that bends the flow of magic to the hag's will.

The cavern is brightly lit by magical light emanating from the crystals. Read or paraphrase the following as the party enters the cavern:

*Rays of scintillating, chromatic light radiate from the crystals filling this cavern. Lilac geodes glitter from the walls and moist periwinkle growths intertwine across the floor. Glowing crystal formations cluster throughout the cavern and the air trembles with an odd, tinkling reverberation. As you gaze around, you see your own reflections refracted hundreds of times. Near the rear of the cavern, a huge crystal rises from the floor, far greater in size than any other you can see in here. In its lustrous depths, you glimpse a mote of light dancing back and forth.*

At this point, ask the players to make the following checks:

**DC 13 Wisdom (Perception):** The character discerns that the tinkling reverberation emanates from the large crystal near the rear of the cavern.

**DC 18 Intelligence (Arcana):** The character senses that the arcane barriers separating this world from the Feywild are weak here. Energies from the mysterious world of faerie are being drawn into this

world: a feat that must require some form of ritual power source.

When a character first moves inside the cavern, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*A woman's voice emanates from the large crystal, distant and muffled, as though underwater.*

*"Help! I'm stuck in here! Oh please, help me! That wicked hag—"*

*The woman's voice fades abruptly, replaced by a crone's mocking rasp...*

*"Magic stone of faerie make,  
Bind this girl 'til her soul breaks,  
Whoever dares to free her heart,  
Must face their darkling counterpart."*

Graemourna has enchanted this area with a dire curse to deter intruders. When the adventurers enter here, her curse taps the magic of the Feywild to warp their reflections into corrupted mirror forms (see "Main Cavern" below).

### TERRAIN TIPS: CRYSTAL CAVERNS

When you build the Crystal Caverns, make note of the following features:

Set the LEDs for the crystals in here to color-changing mode when the players first enter.

Hide the willow-the-wisp figure out of sight. When the characters free the spirit from the Heartshard, use your remote to flip the LEDs for the crystals to green!

Before the encounter begins, prepare duplicate character sheets for every character in the group.

Have matching character figures ready for the entire party. Hide these behind your screen until they're seen.

## A. MAIN CAVERN

This chamber is filled with enchanted crystals that the hag has harnessed for her dark magic.

### MIRROR DOUBLES

Every time a humanoid creature enters this cavern and is reflected in one of the crystals, an illusory duplicate of that creature appears in hiding somewhere else in the cavern. Each creature can only have one duplicate active at a time.

When the first duplicate is created, read or paraphrase the following, addressing the character who triggered the curse:

*A furtive movement catches the corner of your eye. Turning around, you glimpse a stealthy figure ducking behind one of the crystal formations. You only see its face for the briefest of moments, but you recognize it immediately—it's you!*

Place the duplicate's miniature behind a nearby crystal formation. Before playing on, hand the duplicate's character sheet to the player seated to the triggering player's left, along with **Handout 13-1 Mirror Tactics**: this player now controls the duplicate along with their own character. When the duplicate goes into hiding, the player must work in secret with you to determine where the duplicate is located. If they avoid using this knowledge on their own character's turn, grant them inspiration. As more adventurers from the group enter the cavern, more duplicates are created.

Immediately after being spotted, the duplicate uses the power of the crystal formation to teleport to another hiding place inside the cavern (see "Crystal Formations," below). The player controlling the duplicate chooses its new location. Use the miniatures to indicate the duplicates' actual or last known positions on the map.

**Duplicate abilities:** Each duplicate appears identical to its target but has half its maximum hit points. The duplicate has the same spell slots, prepared spells, superiority dice, animal companions (if they are class features) or other expendable resources that its target had at the time of its creation. Any objects carried or worn by the target are also copied (including magic items). The duplicate has a chaotic evil alignment and exists only to destroy the creature whose body it represents. If it cannot find that creature, it hunts for them and avoids all other threats. A duplicate avoids attacking other creatures unless such foes are caught in an area-effect spell alongside its target.

If it drops to 0 hit points, a duplicate disintegrates with all its equipment and cannot be conjured again for 24 hours. A duplicate cannot leave this cavern and disintegrates if its target is absent for one hour or longer. If it kills its target, the duplicate disintegrates with a cackling laugh. If players capture a duplicate and remove the items from them, the items will immediately disintegrate.

### CRYSTAL FORMATIONS

The crystals in this cavern exist simultaneously in two planes of existence: this world and the Feywild. A *detect magic* spell discerns that the crystals radiate powerful illusion and conjuration magic throughout the chamber. The crystals impart the following magical effects:

- Any illusion or conjuration spells cast inside this chamber are treated as though the caster used a spell slot one level higher than the one expended.
- Once per turn (no action), any creature that touches their own reflection in a crystal formation realizes they can attempt to teleport to any other crystal formation in the room. This requires success on a DC 12 Intelligence (Arcana) check (a mirror duplicate always succeeds on this check). On a failed check, part of the character's soul is drawn into their reflection and they take 18 (4d8) force damage. If this damage reduces them to 0 hit points, their body turns to crystal and disintegrates into tiny, reflective shards.



- The crystals also react to magical energies in a similar manner to the chained *conduit crystals*, heightening them. If a crystal formation is caught in the radius of an area-effect spell, it doubles any damage dealt by the spell and grants disadvantage on any saving throws made to resist it. A spell can be changed this way only once.

The crystals lose their enchantment if removed from this cavern. Only Graemourna knows the magic needed to shackle them and keep their magic strong outside the cavern.

## GEODES

The crystals clustered inside these hollow rocks are enchanted with weird Feywild magic. Read the following aloud if an adventurer purposefully gazes into a geode or spends more than a round examining it:

*Looking into the geode, you see your own reflection dancing across hundreds of shiny crystal surfaces. As you look closer, the images distort and shift. Now each reflection shows you with one or more physical improvements: better teeth, coiffured hair, a straightened nose, younger skin; in short, everything you'd ever dream of being. Time passes, and another change comes over the reflections: your skin wrinkles, bags form under your eyes, warts sprout from your nose; all the most repulsive features you could imagine. Back and forth, your reflections shift between beautiful, ugly, and somewhere in between.*

Any creature that touches one of their reflections is cursed to look exactly like the image touched. Due to the shifting nature of the reflections, a character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to touch the right reflection. If they succeed, ask the player to pick a result from the Geode Reflections table. The change is immediate. If they

fail, roll a d6 on the Geode Reflections table to determine their appearance:

## GEODE REFLECTIONS

D6	APPEARANCE
1	Utterly repulsive. The character has disadvantage on Charisma (Persuasion or Performance) checks against other humanoid creatures.
2	Uglier. No negative game effects, but the character's face now bears a look that is best forgotten.
3 -4	Pretty much the same as the character is now.
5	Much Improved. The character looks like they've just stepped from the salon on a good day.
6	Epically beautiful. The character has advantage on Charisma (Persuasion or Performance) checks against other humanoid creatures.

The effect is illusory and therefore masks but does not alter the character's actual appearance. The illusion lasts for a year and a day, or until a *Remove Curse* spell or similar magic is cast over the character. Each character can only use the magic once: after they touch a crystal geode, their reflections look the same in every geode they gaze into.

## B. HEARTSHARD

The Heartshard channels the magic pouring through the crystals into the *chained conduit crystals* found on the walls throughout Caverns Deep. The trapped soul of the yorghrim queen Sunhild empowers the stone's magic. When a character moves to within 5 feet of the Heartshard, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*This crystal is huge and glimmers with magic power. In its depths, you see a ghostly mote of light flittering about. As you*

*watch, a woman's voice emanates from this apparition.*

*"Help me!" she cries. "You must free me from this crystal!"*

This is Sunhild, yorghrim wife of Jarl Ansgar (see Encounter 6, Covert Warcamp). Graemourna transferred Sunhild's soul into the Heartshard, leaving her body to mutate into the monstrous spiderbeast found in Encounter 4, Webbed Lair.

## TALKING TO SUNHILD'S SPIRIT

Sunhild's spirit can reveal the backstory information listed under "Setting" on page 5, as well as the story of her plight as outlined in Encounter 6, Covert Warcamp. In summary, she reveals the following information to her would-be rescuers:

- Sunhild is a fey queen, married to Jarl Ansgar of the yorghrim Clan Skölskyl.
- Sunhild recently fell gravely ill, and no magic could cure her. To aid her, her husband made a desperate pact with the hag Graemourna, swearing fealty for a year and a day in return for a cure to Sunhild's illness.
- Sunhild was cured, but she and her people were forced to move into Caverns Deep to serve the hag. When they did, they discovered a terrible twist to the hag's deal: they were all transformed into monstrous forms!
- Sunhild knows that her soul was snatched from her body during her transformation and trapped inside this crystal. The hag uses her to channel Feywild magic into these caves. If she were freed, the flow of stolen magic might stop!

## FREEING SUNHILD

Sunhild knows a little about *conduit crystals* and has an idea of how to free her soul, but her plan is clearly untested:

- To remove Sunhild's soul from the Heartshard, those outside must place their hands on the

crystal and offer her something powerful and personal to break the enchantment binding her.

- As a yorghrim, Sunhild can think of no greater offering than swearing to abide the four yorghrim oaths. Not all characters need to swear to the same oaths, but all four oaths must be sworn to win her soul's trust.
- To help focus their offerings, a foci, some item that can transmute the magic binding her to the Heartshard, could help ensure success. When players bring out the Transmutation Engine, Sunhild senses its potential and say that it would be of great aid in the ritual. If they do not possess the engine, they can do the ritual without it.

To free Sunhild, up to four characters must lay their hands on the Heartshard and swear to abide up to four of the yorghrim oaths. Due to the magic involved, no two characters can swear to the same oath. When Sunhild explains this plan, provide the players with **Handouts 13-2 to 13-5: Yorghrim Oaths**. The player must now assign the oaths to different characters. Once sworn, the affected character must abide by their oaths for the rest of their lives, or until they are removed using a *remove curse* spell or similar magic.

If the Transmutation Engine is used when each oath is sworn, its Engine's mechanisms whirr loudly and energy from the Heartshard is absorbed into the engine and then the engine pulse out of it and altered and less bright energy back into the Heartshard. The glow of the Heartshard changes color after each pulse of transmuted energy is returned into it. When the fourth oath is sworn, the Transmutation Engine absorbs one last pulse of energy from the Heartshard and sends back the altered energy into the giant crystal. After this occurs, smoke pours out of the engine; the device then cracks into hundreds of unrepairable pieces.

Immediately after that occurs or after the fourth oath is sworn without using the engine, read:

*The crystal glows brightly and bathes the cavern in green light. The light recedes and coalesces back into the glowing wisp, which now hovers outside the crystal.*

*“Wait...” she whispers. “Something is wrong!”*

*Before you can act, Graemourna’s voice rasps through the cavern.*

*“Stolen soul from stolen stone,  
Pay a price that wasn’t known,  
One of you must give to me,  
Your beauty, gone—just touch and see!  
Walk away with no debt paid,  
And you’ll all suffer—that’s the trade!”*

Graemourna’s curse demands that one character gives up their beauty to the Heartshard. The next character that touches the crystal is robbed of any physical beauty. This effect is illusory, as per the magic geodes (see “Geodes”) but lasts permanently and can only be removed by a *wish* spell or similar magic. If a character has already enhanced their beauty using the geodes, the curse simply removes the enhancement. If not, the character assumes the most repulsive form possible (as per “Utterly Repulsive” on the Geode Illusions table). Characters who leave the cavern before an offering is made are afflicted as if they’d touched the stone and received the “Utterly Repulsive” result. If a character willingly gives up their beauty, the rest of the group can leave safely. If the Transmutation Engine was used in the ritual, Graemourna’s curse will be temporary—lasting only one week. The affected character can feel the curse slowly ebbing away, knowing that it will only be temporary. Sunhild remarks that the engine must have been a most powerful device if it was capable of altering the Heartshard enough to dilute Graemourna’s curse. “I know nothing that can alter a Hag’s curse like that,” she remarks.

Removing Sunhild from the Heartshard prevents any more magic from pulsing through the *conduit crystals* in Encounters 2, 6, 7, and 10. When she is freed, Sunhild reveals the following:

- While inside the Heartshard, Sunhild could discern a “great darkness” rising in the caverns to blot out “the light” on the surface above. She does not know exactly what this means, but it’s clearly bad and must be stopped.
- Sunhild’s beloved Ansgar is nearby—the adventurers must help her find him!

Sunhild has the statistics of a **willow-the-wisp**. She accompanies the group until she is reunited with her beloved.

### CONTINUING

The only exit from this cavern leads back to Encounter 11, Hag’s Lair. If the group frees Sunhild, she leads them to the misty portals. Sunhild can sense that the “rising darkness” lies somewhere beyond—along with her beloved!

Summoned by Graemourna, Jarl Ansgar and his brothers have now moved from Encounter 6, Covert Warcamp, to Encounter 14, the Underdoom. If the players follow Sunhild’s lead, they’ll soon face them again!

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# ENCOUNTER 14:

## THE UNDERDOOM

This encounter can only be reached through the Hag's Den (Encounter 11, Area D), from the secret door located behind the Head of Security. Before reaching this chamber, it is advisable that the characters should complete the ritual in the Ice Catacomb (Encounter 12) and visit the Crystal Caverns (Encounter 13). The Head of Security or other NPCs can help guide the party as needed. In addition, you could have the teleporters be keyed only to Graemourna by the magic of the runic column. The characters can use the teleporters only once the runic column has been destroyed in Encounter 12.

The Underdome is where Graemourna concentrates and grows the Sysuulian sludge. The necrotic essence of the remains of the demigoddess Sysuul fills the floor of much of the chamber, with additional rooms on the periphery. Teleporters will force the party to split up, exploring towards the center. Crossing floating driftstones and perilous rock ledges they face Graemourna in a battle over the necrotic sludge!

This is a large encounter, divided into several areas to make it easier to run.

**Area A – Teleportation Chamber.** This small room forces the party to split up, arriving in either Area B or C.

**Area B – Trapdoor Cave.** One of the teleporter arrival rooms, it holds treasure and danger under a trap door. An exit leads to the driftstones and a ledge towards Area G.

**Area C – Crystal Cave.** This second teleporter arrival room holds a powerful sword and hidden dangers. An exit leads to the near shore, Area D.

**Area D – Near Shore.** A chained crystal can be found here, guarded by a trap. Another teleporter here leads back to Area A.

**Area E – Driftstones and Sysuulian Sludge.** Floating rocks allow access across the dangerous sludge, where necrotic tendrils catch the unaware.

**Area F – Eldritch Eye Spire Island.** A giant's eye fires eldritch eyes at the characters. The eye can be disabled here, reachable only through driftstones.

**Area G – Eldritch Eye Far Island.** A second eye can be found here.

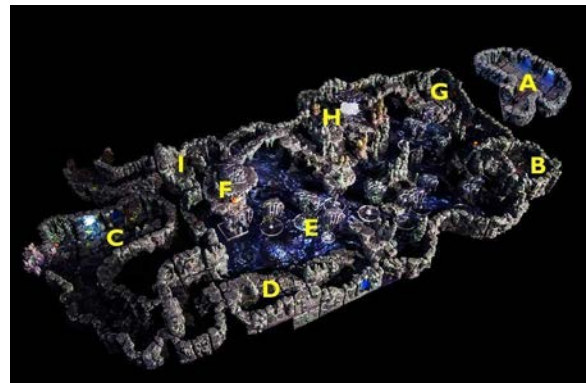
**Area H – Far Shore.** Graemourna conducts a ritual here upon a floating rock platform. Natural bridges lead to areas G and I.

**Area I – Archway and Exit.** Hideous slime drips across an archway. The exit leads to the surface and Dreadhollow Forest (Encounter 15) but is guarded by the yorghrim warchief.

### TERRAIN TIPS: The Underdome

When you build the Underdome, keep the figures of the Yorghrim Warchief on Arctic Faelyn, Necrotic Tendrils, and Graemourna hidden. You can add Graemouran's miniature when they can see her, the necrotic tendrils as they attack, and the Jarl when the party is about to exit.

You may wish to use terrain trays to reveal only the initial three areas, so players do not see the central cavern or know how close they are to one other until they exit the starting areas. You can then rejoin the trays to the central area. You could also use black cloth or similar means to hide the undiscovered locations, though this does give away the relative positions.



## A. ENTRANCE AND TELEPORTATION CHAMBER

The secret door behind the Head of Security in the Hag's Den (Encounter 11, Area D) leads to a small rough-walled chamber. Here two teleporters offer characters a choice. Read or paraphrase the following:

*As the passage twists and winds, the cavern walls become an unnatural dark purple color. It appears as if the very rock has been stained by some dark essence. The water here is fluorescent green, dripping from the ceiling and down walls, forming small glowing pools. The stalagmites and stalactites are tinged green, and even the mushrooms have changed, glowing with brilliant unnatural hues of green, pink, purple, and blue.*

*The passage ends in an oval cave. Amidst the dark rock across from you are two mist-filled gateways.*

If the characters have conducted the ritual with the runic pillar in Encounter 12 and interacted with the Heartshard in Encounter 13, the right-most mist-filled gateway glows blue while the leftmost appears dormant. If the characters have not conducted the ritual and interacted with the Heartshard, both gateways can be inactive so the characters know to go back and deal with any rooms they may have skipped.

If any smugglers are present, they say that this passage used to continue into a large chamber with a sunken floor. A passage from that chamber led out of the caves and into the forest. These mist-filled doors were not here before Graemourna's arrival.

**Gateways.** The gateways are teleporters. Anything partially inserted into a gateway encounters only mist. Once the first person or object has fully entered an active gateway, it is teleported to the destination. When a creature goes through, that gateway then darkens, and the other gateway becomes active. This happens each time the active gateway is used, which forces the party to be split.

The right-most gateway leads to Area B, the Trapdoor Chamber. The left-most gateway leads to Area C, the Crystal Cave.

Should characters try to change how the gateways work, they may make a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check. On a success they realize that they could try to change which gateway is active by manipulating the arcane energies of the gateways. If they attempt this, a successful DC 18

Intelligence (Arcana) check as an action can cause the active portal to become inactive and the other portal to become active. However, each time this check is made, there is a 10% chance that next time the portal will instead lead to the teleporter in Area D. Regardless of effect, this check must be repeated each time something travels through the gateways. If a check fails, the gateway can no longer be changed until the currently active gateway has been used.

The gateways likely force the party to split up between Areas B and C. You can have everyone roll initiative, even outside of combat, to switch back and forth between the groups, or handle one group at a time for a round worth of actions and then swap to the other group. Once the characters have exited Areas B and C, they can see each other, and you can run gameplay normally.

## B. TRAPDOOR CAVE

This is the first of two rooms the character can reach via the alternating misty gateways in Area A. When one or more party members arrive, read or paraphrase the following.

*The gateway's mists swirl around you as you enter, enveloping you. There is a flash of bright light and you appear in a small cavern chamber. One wall bears a heavy stone door. A wooden trap door with a metal ring sits in the middle of the stone floor.*

The gateway glows but cannot be entered from this side. The door is magically locked and leads to Area G, while the trapdoor is trapped and contains treasure and monsters.

### LOCKED DOOR

This thick stone door is magically warded and locked. The door automatically unlocks once the trapdoor has been opened. If the door is opened while the chamber has descended 10 feet or more, the room immediately is filled with necrotic sludge.

Once the door is opened, and the room is in its original raised position, the exit leads onto a narrow ledge 10 feet above the Sysuulian sludge. The driftstones can be accessed from here (see Area E). This ledge also wraps



around the outside of the room, providing access to Area G.

## TRAPDOOR AND TRAP

**Inspecting the Trapdoor.** The square trapdoor is four feet to a side and made of thick wooden beams. The heavy iron ring can be used to pull the trapdoor open. A successful DC 14 Wisdom (Perception) check hears a faint whispering sound, as if someone is trapped within. The whispering sounds like language, but no words can be discerned. A successful DC 15 Wisdom (Insight) check reveals that the sound is deliberately being made to sound like words but is meaningless. A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Investigation) check reveals narrow metal bars within the floor that press against two sides of the trapdoor. Opening the trapdoor would release these bars, though the effect of that is not known. A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Smith's Tools, Thieves' Tools, Tinker's Tools, or similar) check can prevent the bars from releasing when the trapdoor is open. Failure is not apparent until the trapdoor is opened.

**Opening the Trapdoor.** Regardless of whether the bars were disarmed, opening the trapdoor causes an audible click from the exit door as it is unlocked.

If the trapdoor is opened after successfully disarming the bars, the characters see a deep cavity in the floor holding a glowing metal tower shield. The monsters then emerge and attack (see below).

If the bars have not been disarmed, as the trapdoor is opened, the metal bars slam across the opening. The characters can see the shield, but it cannot be retrieved while the bars are in place. The monsters emerge and the trap is activated (see below). The bars can be sundered (AC 12, resistance to nonmagical damage, immunity to poison and psionic damage, and 30 hit points). A successful DC 20 Intelligence (Thieves' Tools) or Strength (Athletics) check as an action can force the bars open for one round so the shield can be retrieved.

**Sinking Floor Trap.** If the trap has been activated, the room shakes and begins to sink. At the beginning of each round, the room sinks down 5 feet. At the start of the second round, the necrotic sludge begins to seep into the room through cracks, as the floor of the room is now even with the Sysuulian sludge. At the start of the 3rd round, the sludge fills the bottom 5 feet of the room and anyone in contact with the sludge takes 9 (2d8) necrotic damage. At the start of the fourth round, the sludge fills the 10-foot-high room and anyone in the room is submerged in the sludge.

**Lever.** A lever is found at the bottom of the trapdoor cavity, partially concealed by the tower shield. It is immediately obvious if the shield is removed. Otherwise, it can be seen by anyone with a passive Perception score of 18 or higher, or with a successful Wisdom (Perception) check of 18. Anyone who descends 5 feet into the cavity can flip the lever. If the room is descending, the lever causes the room to immediately begin ascending. At the start of every round it will then ascend 5 feet, and the height of the sludge decreases in the reverse order described above. If the room was not descending, flipping the lever causes it to descend until the lever is used again.

**Shield.** The glowing tower shield is a magic item. Note that it provides instant attunement when it is grabbed. See the **Appendix** for the full benefits and detriments from Corazon's Bulwark.

## MONSTERS

When the trapdoor is opened, the monsters within are released. The monsters will also emerge if the characters open the main door to leave the room (as the monsters are incorporeal, they can move through the floor to attack). The monsters make haunting whispering noises, which once they are released become phrases threatening eternal doom. The monsters attack without mercy until defeated.

**Adjusting the Challenge.** The table below is based on 3 characters, assuming only half the party is in this room. You can adjust the numbers of monsters if there are fewer or more characters. The monsters do not normally utilize their incorporeal capabilities tactically (unless you think your party needs the challenge).

**Shadows.** The shadows do not drain 1d4 Strength as part of their Strength Drain attack. Instead, the attack drains 1 hit die and the target dies if reduced to 0 hit dice. The hit dice are regained normally (requiring one or more long rests).

APL	MONSTERS
5	2 specters, 3 shadows (see above)
6	3 specters, 3 shadows (see above)
7	5 specters
8	6 specters
9	3 specters, 1 ghost
10	4 specters, 1 ghost

## C. CRYSTAL CAVE

This is the second of two rooms the characters can reach via the alternating misty gateways in Area A. When one or more party members arrive, read:

*The gateway's mists swirl around you as you enter, enveloping you. There is a flash of bright light and you appear in an irregularly-shaped chamber. Crystals line the walls, their color and intensity varying. Some sparkle or glow with an inner light—in particular those in a small alcove not far from the gateway. There is no obvious exit from this cave.*

The gateway continues to glow but cannot be entered from this side. A gibbering moulder pit is concealed near the center of the room, while the crystal alcove conceals a crystalline sword and a monster. The narrow tunnel extending beyond the alcove has a secret door (see “Passage and Secret Door”), providing an eventual exit to the near shore, Area D.

### GIBBERING MOULDER PIT

***Illusion of Solid Ground.*** An illusion of solid ground created by the crystals conceals a 10-foot-square and 10-foot-deep pit in the center of the room (see map). A successful DC 16 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) check reveals that an illusory floor conceals a pit of some kind.

***Gibbering Moulder Pit.*** At the bottom of the dark pit is a grotesque mass of mouths and eyes—a gibbering moulder. The creature will not exit the pit, but if anything makes loud noises, falls into the pit, or looms over the pit, the gibbering moulder begins to use its aberrant ground and gibbering traits. Both features radiate as if from the pit itself (consider the top of the pit to be the starting point for the range of these features). Note that on a result of 5–6, the gibbering feature could cause a creature to travel toward the pit. The gibbering moulder gains advantage when attacking anyone in the pit and can use its blinding spittle to strike the cavern’s ceiling, which is only 10 feet high.

The characters don’t necessarily need to defeat the gibbering moulder through damage. A *silence* spell,

blocking the pit shaft with rocks or sealing it off with a spell, or other clever ideas could be considered to defeat the creature or at least mitigate its effects.

### CRYSTAL ALCOVE

Crystals of all colors and sizes fill this alcove, some just tiny fragments and others up to three feet long. A successful DC 12 Intelligence (Nature) check confirms that none of these crystals occur naturally. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check reveals the crystals are the result of exposure to energies from the Feywild and Shadowfell.

***Crystalline Sword.*** Anyone studying the crystal alcove spots a sword amongst the crystals. The sword is made entirely of translucent rose-colored crystal, with its grip and guard wrapped in strands of copper. The sword is wedged blade-down into a mound of crystals. Any character studying the blade or mound and succeeding at a DC 20 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Perception) check notices that the mound resembles the back and shoulders of a crystalline creature, with the sword sticking out of it.

***Retrieving the Sword.*** The sword is surrounded by sharp crystals, making it hard to retrieve. The surrounding crystals can be broken off before the sword is pulled, though this automatically awakens the monster, with the sword still embedded. Otherwise, a character must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity (Sleight of Hand) check to avoid the sharp crystals, taking 9 (2d8) slashing damage on a failure or none on a success. The character must also succeed at a DC 16 Strength (Athletics) check to pull the blade out. The Strength check can be repeated until successful, though each time the accompanying Dexterity check must be made to avoid damage. Retrieving the sword awakens the monster. See the **Appendix** for details on the Crystal Bloodblade.

### MONSTER

If the sword is removed, or if any crystals in the area are destroyed (including during any battle with the gibbering moulder), the monster emerges from the alcove, showering the area with glowing crystals. The creature has the statistics of the monster below, though in all cases it appears to be size Medium and made entirely of glowing crystal.

***Adjusting the Challenge.*** The table below is based on 3 characters. You can adjust the APL up or down if there are fewer or more characters. The crystalline monster can, at your discretion, decide not to pursue characters that flee the room.

APL	MONSTERS
5	1 crystalline spider (Statistics as a phase spider, -7 hit points. A failed poison save inflicts 10 poison damage. When in the Ethereal plane, it appears reflected in every crystal in the room.)
6	1 crystalline spider (Statistics as a phase spider. When in the Ethereal plane, it appears reflected in every crystal in the room.)
7	1 crystalline spider (Statistics as a phase spider, +15 hit points and +1 to all attack rolls. When in the Ethereal plane, it appears reflected in every crystal in the room.)
8	1 crystalline xorn (Statistics as a xorn, -10 hit points, -1 to all attacks, bite deals 10 damage on a hit.)
9	1 crystalline xorn (Statistics as a xorn)
10	1 crystalline xorn (Statistics as a xorn, +15 hit points and +1 to all attack rolls)

## PASSAGE AND SECRET DOOR

The room narrows and rises, forming a ramp that ends in a dead end. Only small crystals are found here, and none of them emit light, so the area is in darkness.

***Illusory Wall and Secret Door.*** If a creature has a light source, the few crystals in the area shine brightly, sending out rays of light like prisms. These rays of light create an illusion further obscuring the secret door. Attempts to find it are at disadvantage while a light source is in the passage. A creature using darkvision or searching only by touch does not suffer from disadvantage. A successful DC 13 Wisdom (Perception) or Intelligence (Investigation) check

reveals rough stones in three places. Each depresses slightly when pushed, and when all three have been pushed, a stone door opens outward into Area D.

Note that the secret door leads to a chained conduit crystal and a second concealed gibbering moulder pit. See Area D for details.

## D. NEAR SHORE

The near shore is most likely reached from the secret door in Area C, though it could also be reached via the driftstones in Area E. Read the following if they approach from the secret door:

*The stone door grinds open, ushering in air that is warm and bears a foul scent of corruption. The rock walls turn sharp right before opening up into a massive dark chamber. You catch a glimpse of large black stones hanging in midair above what seems to be a dark roiling lake.*

*Closer to you, just before the wall ends, a chained conduit crystal pulses with power, emitting green light.*

This area presents the chained crystal, though just in front of it is a concealed gibbering moulder pit. The characters can also continue along the narrow rock shore to study the necrotic sludge or reach the driftstones. They can also find a teleporter leading back to Area A.

## CONDUIT CRYSTAL AND GIBBERING Moulder PIT

***Concealed Gibbering Moulder Pit.*** The gibbering moulder pit is the same as that encountered in Area C, though the pit is concealed by a thin layer of stone instead of an illusion. A successful DC 15 Intelligence (Investigation) or DC 18 Wisdom (Perception) discovers the perilously thin rock layer and the pit below. As with Area C, the characters may find ways to defeat or circumvent the gibbering moulder pit other than killing it.

***Chained Conduit Crystal.*** The large crystal pulsing with green light has been chained to a glyph-carved stone disc

and the wall behind it. The crystal is warm to the touch and vibrates with power.

A DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check identifies that the crystal is another *conduit crystal*, channeling planar energy in a manner similar to those found in previous encounters (see Encounters 2, 6, 7, and 10). However, this one concentrates the pulses of energy into the necrotic sludge below. The chained crystal is otherwise the same as the others, including a soul contained within it.

**Removing the Crystal Before It Pulses:** If the crystal has not yet released its energy (when the first Eldritch Eye is destroyed, see Area E), any character preparing to remove the crystal senses that power is slowly building within it. They feel it may be dangerous to remove the chains at this time. If they still release the crystal, the harmful burst of energy described below is unleashed, regardless of using *dispel magic* or succeeding at a skill check.

**Removing the Crystal After It Pulses:** Once it has pulsed, the crystal is no longer vibrating dangerously. A *dispel magic* spell safely undoes the chains, allowing the removal of the crystal. A DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana or Thieves' Tools) check can also remove the crystal. Either failing at a check or simply using brute force to break the chains releases the crystal but also unleashes a burst of energy. Any creature within 50 feet of the crystal must attempt a DC 13 Constitution saving throw. A creature in the area takes 25 (4d10 + 3) force damage on a failed save, or half as much on a successful one.

The *conduit crystal* pulses with red light once it is freed. See **Handout 14-3: Crimson Conduit Crystal** for statistics. If a character attunes to the item, they awaken the soul bound within the crystal. If this happens, provide them with the **Awakened** version of the handout. As the personality within can help guide the characters, you may choose to have it speak to the character, urging them to attune to the crystal.

## ROCK SHORE

The rock shore extends along the edge of the Sysuulian sludge. Several stalagmites offer cover, and at the far end is a teleporter and a rock bridge leading to the driftstones. If this is the first time the characters look out upon the Sysuulian sludge, read or paraphrase the following:

*The ground drops ten feet down along one side to a roiling lake filled with thick oily purple-black liquid. The surface undulates as*

*if moved by hidden currents, and it gives off a foul corrupt odor.*

*From this vantage point you can see that the floating black stones are veined with bright blue. Like stepping stones, they form an elevated path across the lake.*

Then read the following after they oriented themselves to the sludge.

*Not far from you, a rock bridge rises up from this ledge near one of the driftstones. On the wall opposite that rock bridge, is a glowing misty gateway, similar to the ones that brought you here.*

**Sysuulian Sludge.** See Area E for information on the sludge. The necrotic liquid is 10 feet below the rocky shore.

**Teleporter.** The teleporter leads back to Area A.

**Rock Bridge.** A set of natural stone stairs leads up to a driftstone. The driftstones are described in Area E, as are the dangers that activate once characters step on driftstones.

## E. DRIFTSTONES AND SYSUULIAN SLUDGE

The center of the room is a massive lake of necrotic sludge, bordered by the other areas. Traversing the necrotic ledge involves crossing the driftstones, avoiding the Sysuulian sludge and necrotic tendrils, likely attacks by the eldritch eyes (see Areas F and G), and attempting to reach the eldritch eyes or Graemourna (Area H).

If this is the first time the characters look out upon the Sysuulian sludge, read or paraphrase from **Section D: Rock Shore** describing what they would see.

Regardless of this being their first time seeing the sludge read or paraphrase the following:

*Rising out of the black mire are several islands of purple-black rock. Two islands jutting from the sludge—one, a twisting stalagmite spire, the other in the far southeast corner—are capped in black basalt, each with a large disembodied eye floating above it. The two eldritch eyes slowly turn to study you with a faint glow of a shimmering haze.*

*In the far northeast corner, there seems to be an exit from the room, though the archway is concealed by dripping green acid. That area and the southeastern island are both linked by stone bridges to a central island. Multicolored mushrooms dot this far shore and rising above it on a floating driftstone is Graemourna the hag. Wisps of eldritch energies flow out of the black sludge, through the two disembodied eldritch eyes, into Graemourna, and finally into the ceiling above her. Whatever terrible ritual she is weaving, you get the sense it should be stopped!*

The many features of the room are described below and are intended to create a dynamic battle as the party tries to reach Graemourna and stop her ritual. Roll initiative as the eyes and Graemourna become hostile.

## GRAEMOURNA AND THE RITUAL

**Graemourna.** Graemourna's primary focus is to complete her ritual, which is transferring power to the dormant primordial (revealed in Encounter 15). She spends her action each round doing so. Graemourna can still use her reaction, as well as legendary and lair actions. See Graemourna's statistics, found in Encounter 12, Ice Catacomb. Graemourna cackles incessantly, periodically taunting the characters. You can use this to reveal any parts of her past or goals you feel the party should know,

especially if they missed important clues in earlier encounters. She is fond of the following phrases:

- "Long have I waited. Like all adventurers, you have been baited."
- "Silly adventurers in the Dungeon of Doom. The demigoddess Sysuul defeated, but I did loom. Concentrated her remains in this pool. She just might speak from the sludge as we duel."
- "You look weary. Have my mushrooms hurt you, deary?"
- "What am I doing with all this power, don't you wonder? Leave these caves and your hearts I will sunder!"
- "So much toil, so much trouble. The pain I'll inflict to your kind will be double!"
- "Harming you with eldritch eyes, ever so glad when an adventurer dies!!"
- "Those Valorian nobles thought they would keep me away. Graemourna's coming back, and disease paves the way."

**Learning About the Ritual.** A successful DC 14 Intelligence (Arcana or Religion) check reveals that Graemourna is drawing power from the Sysuulian sludge, through the eyes, and into an entity of some sort—perhaps an artifact or creature—located between the Caverns Deep and the surface. Destroying the eldritch eyes will likely stop the ritual, as would killing or weakening Graemourna.

### Stopping the Ritual and Graemourna Fleeing.

Graemourna needs six rounds to complete her ritual. You can start this as soon as the party is aware of her (generally, when they reach the main Area E and can see or hear Area H). If both eldritch eyes are destroyed, or if Graemourna's hit point total drops below half (she is fully healed at the beginning of this fight) she fails to complete her ritual and departs atop her driftstone through Area I to the surface (Encounter 15).

## ELDRITCH EYES

The two eldritch eyes are described in Areas F and G. They roll initiative (see their statistics) and attack each turn until destroyed. You may modify the eyes based on the strength of the party.

APL	MONSTERS
5	2 Eldritch Eyes (Reduce each eye's hit points to 50, and their attack bonus to +4)



6	2 Eldritch Eyes (Reduce each eye's hit points to 50, and their attack bonus to +5)
7	2 Eldritch Eyes (Reduce each eye's hit points to 65)
8	2 Eldritch Eyes
9	2 Eldritch Eyes (+5 damage to their attacks)
10	2 Eldritch Eyes (Increase each eye's hit points to 95 and add +5 damage to their attacks)

Characters can use the driftstones to reach Area F and can reach Area G either with the narrow ledge from Area B or the rock bridge from Area H. They may also be able to use driftstones or other clever methods to reach Area G, such as jumping onto stalagmites rising out of the sludge. Clever plans should provide both risks and rewards.

It is intended that characters realize that destroying or incapacitating the eyes is important. This draws them to those areas and creates a more dynamic combat. Easy skill checks or Graemourna's villainous monologue can reveal their importance if necessary.

**When the First Eldritch Eye Dies or Is Deactivated:** The chained conduit crystal pulses, releasing its energy. See Area D.

## DRIFTSTONES AND SYSUULIAN SLUDGE

Floating rocks allow passage across the dangerous sludge, where hidden necrotic tendrils catch the unaware.

**Driftstones.** The driftstones are close enough together that a check is not normally required to jump onto or off the stones. However, one of the driftstones is sentient. By default, it is a middle stone, though you can choose a different one as desired. The driftstone, called Schist, has been told by Graemourna to be wicked. It has trouble doing so, and when a character lands upon it, Schist calls out gravely in Common, apologizing: "I will have to make jumping off really hard. Sorry, Graemourna's orders." A character attempting to jump off of this driftstone must attempt a DC 13 Dexterity (Acrobatics) or miss the jump, falling over the edge as they try to jump. A falling character may attempt a DC 13 Strength (Athletics) check to grab the edge of Schist's driftstone. On a success they grab on, but on a failure, they fall into the sludge. A

character who grabs on may spend half their move to climb back onto the driftstone, arriving prone.

Characters can try to talk Schist out of being naughty. A successful DC 15 Charisma (Deception or Persuasion) convinces Schist to let them pass. Intimidation is at disadvantage, as Schist fears Graemourna far more than any other creature. Effective roleplaying could grant advantage on a check or even grant automatic success.

### OPTION: SHIFTING DRIFTSTONES

If your characters will enjoy a greater challenge, the Sysuulian sludge could react to the presence of living things, creating waves of energy that move the driftstones slightly. In this case, every time a character jumps onto a stone, have them roll a d4. On a 1, the sludge rises or falls and the driftstone moves up or down with it. Any character on the driftstone must make the checks as described above, as if jumping off of Schist's stone.

**Sysuulian Sludge.** A character falling into the necrotic sludge takes 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage for every 10 feet they fall. In addition, a creature ending their turn in the sludge takes 19 (3d12) necrotic damage, must make an Exposure check, and is considered to have failed a death saving throw. If a creature fails three death saving throws, for any reason, it dies. Failed death saving throws from the necrotic sludge remain with the character until they leave this encounter. (Normally, failed death saving throws are removed when a character receives healing or stabilizes.)

A creature can swim in the sludge as if it were water. Climbing out of the sludge and up to a rocky shore or island requires a successful DC 12 Strength (Athletics) check. The sludge is 10 feet below the level of the shores and 15 feet below the driftstones.

## NECROTIC TENDRILS

The Sysuulian sludge harbors some of Sysuul's dormant hatred. Two necrotic tendrils (1 tendril if the average party level is 5 or 6) can emerge anytime a creature moves across the driftstones, flies over the sludge, or falls into the sludge. Quasi-sentient, they have a desire to kill—especially if any adventurers were responsible for Sysuul's demise in the Dungeon of Doom. If you wish, Sysuul's latent personality can manifest, telepathically communicating with a grappled character in the sludge to promise revenge and death.

A tendril can appear in any square you choose within the sludge and can target anything within 20 feet of the

surface of the sludge. The tendril has a +4 attack bonus and deals 5 (1d10) necrotic damage on a hit. A creature hit by the attack must attempt a DC 13 Strength saving throw or be grappled and restrained by the tendril. A grappled target may repeat the saving throw as an action, or at the end of their turns, ending the grapple on a success (and probably falling in the sludge). Standard rules for *Escaping a Grapple* apply. The tendrils cannot be destroyed. However, each tendril has an AC of 8, is vulnerable to radiant damage, and if it takes 20 points of damage or more in a single round it releases anything it has grappled (dropping it) and retreats into the sludge, skipping its next turn in the initiative order.

## BLUE MUSHROOMS APPEARING AS ORANGE MUSHROOMS

Three patches of Blue Balecbyin mushrooms can be found in this chamber. However, in the Underdoom they glow orange in color. Players who have successfully identified these mushrooms before they recognize them and that the Underdoom coloration is not the true color.

Identifying the properties of these mushrooms requires a successful DC 14 Intelligence (Nature) or Wisdom (Survival) check, though the check is made at disadvantage if further than 10 feet away from the mushrooms. When they are successful, they remember that these mushrooms are supposed to be blue in color. Something about the Underdoom makes them glow orange instead of blue. The rare mushrooms have powerful antitoxin properties. Any creature eating these mushrooms can remove one infection they have suffered from the Infection Deck. There are enough mushrooms for two characters to eat. If the characters have found one of the scattered notes found in Graemourna's den (see item 8 in the Hag's Den), they could eventually create an antidote.

## F. ELDRITCH EYE SPIRE ISLAND

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A twisting spire of rock rises out of the Sysuulian sludge. Atop it is a layer of basalt, over which hovers the enchanted disembodied eye of a giant. The eye has a strange distortion effect, appearing to shift its position and making it hard to target at range. Destroying both eldritch eyes is one way the ritual can be stopped and Graemourna forced to flee (see the **Graemourna and the Ritual** section).

**Basalt Rock.** The rock below the eldritch eye is enchanted. A character adjacent to the basalt and casting *dispel magic* or a similar spell or succeeding at a DC 16 Intelligence (Arcana) check, causes the eye to become dormant (effectively incapacitated for the remainder of the

encounter). At your discretion, other methods could also shut down an eye, such as covering it with something solid it cannot quickly destroy.

**Eldritch Eye.** The eldritch eye channels energy from the necrotic pool to Graemourna. Destroying both eyes stops the ritual. In addition, the eldritch eye attacks each round, preferentially targeting characters that are flying or on driftstones. See the **Appendix** for statistics. If this eye is destroyed, a large ruby falls from it. A character that picks up the ruby feels a jolt of power and regains 15 (3d6+5) hit points. A character at maximum hit points instead gains 10 temporary hit points. The ruby has no further magical powers and has a value of 1,500 gp.

**Tactics:** Note that the eye's use of *baleful teleportation* can be too deadly if characters are repeatedly teleported over the sludge. Use the power to create a fun challenge level without being frustrating or allow a character to make a check to grab the closest driftstone or island.

**Reaching the Eye.** The driftstones can be used to reach the island. The stairs are difficult terrain.

## G. ELDRITCH EYE FAR ISLAND

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Destroying both eldritch eyes is one way the ritual can be stopped and Graemourna forced to flee (see **Graemourna and the Ritual** section).

**Basalt Rock.** See Area F for details.

**Eldritch Eye.** A second eye can be found in this corner island. It acts in all ways as the eye described in Area F and statistics are found in the **Appendix**. If the eye is destroyed, a large emerald falls from the eye. A character that picks up the emerald feels a jolt of power and may choose one of the following: regain one spell slot of level 3 or lower, regain a class feature that recharges with a short rest, or gain 10 temporary hit points. The emerald has no further magical powers and has a value of 1,500 gp. Note the tactics above.

**Reaching the Far Island.** The island can be reached via a narrow stone ledge from Area B. A natural bridge also connects the island to Graemourna's island (Area H). A driftstone and stalagmites rising out of the sludge could offer other approaches for clever characters.

## H. FAR SHORE

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Graemourna conducts her ritual here upon her driftstone, floating over an enchanted layer of basalt. Mushrooms grow on this central island, providing an additional threat

to those who draw near. Natural bridges lead to Areas G and I.

**Graemourna.** See the information in Area E regarding her tactics, ritual, and villainous monologue!

**Cadaver Cap Mushrooms.** Anyone who has seen the cadaver cap mushrooms before can easily identify them without a check. A creature ending their turn on this island is showered in spores and must make a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and become charmed by Graemourna. A creature succeeding at the saving throw takes half damage and is not charmed. A charmed creature may repeat the saving throw if they take damage or at the end of their turn, ending the effect on a save.

**Basalt Rock.** The rock under Graemourna is enchanted. A character adjacent to the basalt who casts *dispel magic* or similar spell, or who succeeds at a DC 15 Intelligence (Arcana) check, causes Graemourna to take 15 points of damage from a spike of magical power surging through the stone. If this is done twice, Graemourna's ritual is disrupted and she flees (as noted in the **Graemourna and the Ritual** section, the ritual also stops, and she flees if both eldritch eyes are destroyed or her hit point total drops below half).

## I. ARCHWAY AND EXIT

A natural bridge leads from the far shore where Graemourna conducts the ritual, Area H, to this area. An archway leads out of the room, dripping with green slime. However, as the characters come near, a guardian approaches—Jarl Ansgar, the yorghrim warchief, astride his arctic faelyn timer. Ansgar is honor bound to serving the hag. He has been instructed to keep the characters from passing so she has time to complete her preparations. You can have the jarl appear whenever the characters are preparing to leave.

The jarl begins mounted upon the arctic faelyn timer. See Encounter 6 (Covert Warcamp) for information on Jarl Ansgar and the **Appendix** for the yorghrim and arctic faelyn timer statistics.

Jarl Ansgar initially responds to characters who attempt to speak with him by reciting his oaths. It is clear he is reluctant to carry out his task but feels he must do so. The characters can choose to engage him in battle, though they could choose to spare his life or find a way (such as by using magic that stuns or incapacitates) to get past him without slaying him. The characters could also insist on talking the jarl down. In this case, you could have Sunhild appear as a wisp and plead for her husband's life. If the

characters' words and roleplaying merit it, the jarl could be moved. He might challenge a character to a single duel, so the rest can exit, or even throw himself into the sludge if he is convinced his actions are wrong. You may have the scene resolve as you see best given the characters' actions.

If the characters convince the jarl to not sacrifice himself or attack the players, the Sunhild-wisp will go to her husband. The reunion of Sunhild and Ansgar is a touching moment. The jarl, so moved that he is again with his beloved Sunhild, offers to grant the players a boon. Players can ask him about the boon and Ansgar will let them know that it will bring them closer to the clan and that it is the highest honor. He will not go into any specific details about it. He will admit that it is a painful process and not for the meek.

For characters that agree to receive this boon, he dismounts the faelyn timer and comes to them with his clan symbol pendant in hand. The jarl cuts his hand holding the pendant and his freezing blood causes the pendant to glow with a blue light. He offers his hand in comradery to those on whom he will bestow the boon. He grasps forearms with each character who accepts. As he does this, the blue light of the pendant ice-brands the clan symbol onto each character's forearm. The branding takes just a few seconds. It is painful and deals 1d4 cold damage in the process. He tells each branded character that this symbol bonds them to the clan as a friend and ally. He says the following in Sylvan: "The bonds of blood and ice can never be broken, and we are joined until death." He mounts the faelyn timer and with the Sunhild-wisp rides off into the recesses of the Underdoom.

Players have received this Ice Brand as a boon. The Ice Brand runs uses the same rules as the *warding bond* spell, except that it lasts as long as the jarl remains alive. It can also be removed by the jarl by unbranding which is essentially the same as the branding rite except he says these words in Sylvan: "Ice shatters and blood thins between us, for we are now distant and our lives separate." A *remove curse* spell used specifically to get rid of the brand can also unbrand a character.

For combat, you may modify the encounter as shown below. If the characters are severely wounded or have had an easy time, you can choose a lower or higher APL to further adjust the challenge.

APL	MONSTERS
5	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer. (Subtract 20 hit points

	from the arctic faelyn timer and 15 hit points from the yorghrim)
6	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer. (Subtract 15 hit points from the arctic faelyn timer)
7	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer
8	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer (+1 to all attack rolls for the jarl)
9	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer. (+1 to all attack rolls and +2 damage to all of their attacks)
10	Jarl Ansgar (yorghrim), arctic faelyn timer. (+2 to all attack rolls and +5 damage to all of their attacks)

*The tunnel twists and rises, with steep stone steps curving upwards. A cool breeze brings remarkably fresh air. This tunnel leads to the surface!*

*This also means Graemourna has exited the Caverns Deep. What was the purpose of her ritual? What horrid plan is she carrying out in Dreadhollow Forest? The time has come to learn the answers and stop the hag once and for all!*

The passage leads to the surface and Dreadhollow Forest (Encounter 15).

## GREEN ACID ARCHWAY

This archway leads out of this area and then steeply up to the surface.

Similar to the archway found in the Hag's Den (Encounter 11), the archway leading out of this room drips acid (it looks like moss from afar, but the characters should recognize it for what it is).

A creature passing through the curtain takes 13 (3d8) acid damage, which clings to the creature. The acid continues to deal damage until the creature either succeeds at a DC 18 Constitution saving throw or until it is scraped off (ruining whatever is used to scrape away the acid). Clever plans to shield creatures from the acid could grant an initial saving throw to avoid touching the acid, or perhaps avoid damage entirely. The curtain always parts for Graemourna.

## CONTINUING

Once the characters have resolved the battle with the Jarl and made it through the acid-dripping archway, they may exit the room. Read the following to help the characters transition to the next encounter.

# ENCOUNTER 15:

## DREADHOLLOW

### FOREST

The adventurers enter this final area from the passage leading from Encounter 14, The Underdoom. Among the roots of the Spirit Tree, our heroes confront their nemesis for the final battle but arrive too late to foil her ritual. The adventure ends in a desperate flight to the Heartshard, chased by the titanic apex primordial. If the heroes make it back alive, they can use the magic of the Heartshard to wrench Graemourna's black soul from the primordial's body!

The characters arrive in this area at night. Dreadhollow Forest is dimly lit by starlight, granting disadvantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on sight. This disadvantage is not applied to characters with darkvision

#### TROUBLESHOOTING: WHAT IF GRAEMOURNA DIED?

The characters faced off against Graemourna, and each time she had contingencies to flee if hard-pressed. But what if the characters somehow managed a victory? In this case, we want the characters to still have an exciting conclusion, but for the players to feel like their actions mattered.

One option is for Graemourna to have a link through the Heartshard to either the yorghrim or the dryads. As she died, she pulled from their life essences and restored herself. Some or all of the yorghrim or dryads could be dead/destroyed as a result, or they could be severely wounded, visibly drained by Graemourna. The yorghrim or Graemourna can explain what happened, so the characters understand that their prior victory mattered.

#### A. CAVE MOUTH

Graemourna ordered the last of her yorghrim to defend the Spirit Tree. When the adventurers arrive here, these slaves attack them.

Read or paraphrase the following aloud when the adventurers enter this area:

*The cave finally opens into the wooded depths of Dreadhollow Forest. Stars gleam from the ebon sky, spreading cold light over the frosty trees and spiny thorn bushes. A few paces from the cave mouth, a trio of devilish figures stand guard. As you approach, you hear the hag's voice chanting words of black magic from somewhere nearby...*

At this point, ask the players to make the following ability checks:

**DC 15 Intelligence (Nature):** There's something unnatural about the line of brambles spanning the thicket to the right of the cave mouth. Looking closer, the character sees that the thorny creepers are slowly coiling around themselves as though they are alive...

**DC 15 Wisdom (Perception):** The character spots eerie motes of spectral light bobbing over a ring of mushrooms to the left of the cave mouth.

Players who previously visited Encounter 6, Covert Warcamp, recognize the **barbed devils** as the yorghrim clan warriors Barnat the Berserker, Black Erik, and Eskil the Sehir. Characters who killed these NPCs previously instead encounter unnamed yorghrim from Clan Skölskyl: if so, adjust any read-aloud text below accordingly.

The yorghrim know that Jarl Ansgar had orders to prevent intruders from passing through the Underdoom. They believe that the presence of adventurers here can only mean one thing—the jarl is dead. By their oaths, the yorghrim are now honor-

bound to avenge him. If the adventurers attempt to parley with the yorghrim, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Seeing you, expressions of grief and horror cross the faces of the three cursed yorghrim. Barnat the Berserker howls at the sky and then fixes you with a menacing stare.*

*"Your presence here can only mean only one thing," he spits. "My brother is dead."*

*With grim intent, the yorghrim ready their weapons and chant as one: "Retribution must be delivered swiftly, before the day is done."*

*Screaming with rage, they charge forward!*

**If the jarl was saved:** If the party managed to save the jarl, a character may attempt a DC 14 Charisma (Persuasion) check as an action to convince the yorghrim that the jarl is safe, and they need not carry out their oaths. If characters with the clan symbol ice-branded on their forearms (received from Jarl Ansgar in Encounter 14) reveal their boon, they can convince the yorghrim to abandon the fight without a Charisma (Persuasion) check. If the yorghrim in parlay are convinced in either scenario, they will subtly alert the players that Graemourna is not far from here. She is nearby, hiding in the faerie ring (which she has used to cloak herself with invisibility).

The transformed yorghrim have the statistics of **barbed devils** with the following modifications:

- Barnat the Berserker and Black Erik gain the following attack which they can use in place of Claw:  
**Silvered Longsword.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 7 (1d8 + 3)

slashing damage, or 8 (1d10 + 3) slashing damage if used with two hands.

- Eskil the Sehir has the following power:

**Spellcasting.** Eskil the Sehir (can cast druid spells innately, requiring no material components. Eskil's spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 14). She can cast the following spells:

- At-Will: *shillelagh* (this can be used instead of any claw attack, for 1d8+3 damage), *produce flame*.
- 2/day: *faerie fire*, *thunderwave*, *flaming sphere*.

Whether the adventurers defeat or convince the yorghrim, the wizard Zaltar returns to hasten them to their final confrontation with the hag (see "Zaltar Returns!").

## FAERIE RING

This circle of vibrantly colored toadstools is enchanted with fey magic. Any creature that enters the circle is subjected to the following magical effects:

- A creature inside the circle has truesight, notices secret doors hidden by magic, and can see into the Ethereal Plane, all with a range of 120 feet.
- As a bonus action, a creature inside the circle can turn invisible and simultaneously project an illusory double of itself to appear at any point in line of sight within 50 feet. As an action, the creature can make the double move, gesture, speak, or behave in any way it chooses, limited to the abilities of said creature. The invisibility lasts for one hour, or until the creature attacks or casts a spell, at which point the double vanishes. Once this feature has been used, it cannot be used again by the same creature from the same faerie ring until the next dawn.

The yorghrim know the powers of the faerie ring and exploit it freely to mislead the adventurers during combat.



## WALL OF BRAMBLES

The brambles of this ten-feet-high wall grow so thickly together that they block line of sight through its surface. The brambles are magical in nature and count as impassable terrain. Any damage they take is instantaneously repaired.

**Bramble attacks:** The brambles animate to tear and snag at any living thing that comes close. If a creature moves within 5 feet of the wall or starts its turn within this distance, the brambles lash out at them and the creature must make a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw, taking 13 (3d8) slashing damage on a failed save as the brambles grapple them (Escape DC 16). Until the grapple ends, the target is restrained and has disadvantage on Strength checks and Strength saving throws. If a target starts its turn grappled by the brambles, it takes 13 (3d8) slashing damage. The yorghrim are aware of the dangerous brambles and will avoid or use them to their advantage against the characters.

## ZALTAR RETURNS!

Once the adventurers defeat or bypass the yorghrim, Zaltar arrives to aid them. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*A familiar voice sounds from behind you!*

*“Behold! It is I, Zaltar, Prince of Phantasm, who comes to your aid at this hour of direst need!”*

*With a puff of colored smoke, the robed wizard Zaltar appears behind you. His sickly imp Doom squats on his shoulders, covered in boils and fungal growths. As Zaltar appears, the sudden lurch causes Doom to spew green vomit down the wizard's sleeve.*

Zaltar has returned to aid the characters, but he has his own demands to fulfil in return! The wizard reveals the following:

- Zaltar is pleased that the adventurers have survived this long (if he sent them into the caverns against their will, he argues that they’ve learned much from the experience and will surely thank him in time!).
- Alas, they have no time to lose! Graemourna has almost finished her ritual. Unless she’s stopped now, she’ll awaken a “primal force of untold power” buried beneath the Spirit Tree and use it to wreak havoc on Valoria.
- Zaltar can help the adventurers slay Graemourna, but first, he demands that they hand over the antidote to cure the disease afflicting his beloved imp, Doom.

Only characters who discovered Graemourna’s notes on creating an antidote from the blue mushrooms (as explained in Encounter 11, Hag’s Den) have the means to heal the imp. If the adventurers share the recipe for the cure, Zaltar is delighted and grants them each a magical boon. Each character gains the benefit of a long rest. In addition, each player can roll a d20: once before the end of the adventure, the player can swap the result of this roll with the result of any attack roll, ability check, or saving throw made by their character or another creature that their character can see.

Zaltar grumpily scolds the group if they can’t cure Doom or refuse to do so. In this case, he does not provide the magical boon. If the characters attack him, he simply teleports to another position in the clearing. Regardless of the outcome, the wizard clears the way for the adventurers to face Graemourna:

*Zaltar raises his staff and intones a word of power. He slams the haft of the staff into the ground and the wall of brambles explodes outwards.*

*“The way is clear,” Zaltar shouts. “The fate of Valoria now rests with you.”*

*And with that, the wizard disappears in a puff of colored smoke.*

## B. THE SPIRIT TREE

The characters now face Graemourna. Read or paraphrase the following when they enter this area:

*A rocky bluff rises from the forest ahead, topped by the gnarled, hollowed stump of a gargantuan oak tree. Moss and fungus cling to its bark and a horrid green light pours from within. The hag Graemourna stands silhouetted against this baleful radiance.*

*“Fools,” she cackles. “It’s too late! The primordial has awoken to carry my soul to Valoria on this date! My plague will spread through their city like fleas on a wild dog. A city transformed to a festering bog! Now they shall know the night. Oh, how they’ll pay for previous spite.”*

*As the hag speaks, the frosty ground before her roils as though something huge stirs beneath its surface.*

**Graemourna** is enjoying herself. If the characters talk to the hag, she gladly reveals the details of her dark plot (see **Graemourna’s Revenge** in the **Story and Setting** section, in particular the **Dreadhollow Forest and the Spirit Tree** paragraph on page 8). Even so, her patience wears thin if the characters insult her or show defiance. Unless the players contrive a way to trick the hag, she soon attacks. Even if they find a way to delay the combat, Graemourna’s soul eventually shifts into the body of

the apex primordial (see “The Apex Primordial,” below).

### CONFRONTING GRAEMOURNA

This is the climactic final battle of the adventure. When initiative is rolled, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Graemourna throws her gnarled hands to the heavens.*

*“Doomed dryads of the Spirit Tree! Hear my voice and bend thy knee!” the hag shrieks.*

*In response, three ghostly fey figures emerge from the trees. Their translucent, stick-thin bodies are clad in cloaks of leaves and their eyes burn with malevolence.*

*“Kill them all!” cries Graemourna, pointing a blackened fingernail in your direction.*

Graemourna has summoned the last of the Dreadhollow dryads to protect her. The adventurers face **Graemourna** the hag (she may use all of her capabilities) and three **ghosts**. When the battle begins, Graemourna is standing invisibly inside the faerie ring: the form that the characters see in front of the tree is an illusion. If the party successfully parlayed with the yorghrim, they would know she could be hiding in this faerie ring.

**Tactics:** The ghosts move into melee on the first round of combat, with one or more using *horrifying visage* while Graemourna holds back and casts spells (becoming visible). On subsequent rounds, one of the ghosts will use *possession* during each round while the others fight with melee or use *horrifying visage* to seed panic in the group. Meanwhile, Graemourna uses her most powerful spells.

**Stirring Primordial:** Graemourna’s ritual is complete and the primordial buried in the roots of

Dreadhollow Forest is awakening. Nothing can stop it now. If the characters succeeded in stopping Graemourna's ritual in Encounter 14, The Underdoom, the primordial is emerging lethargically, without causing earthquakes. If the characters failed to stop Graemourna's ritual, the primordial is emerging full of vitality, rocking the glade with violent earth tremors. Each character in the group must roll a d20 on the Earthquake table at the start of each of their turns.

## EARTHQUAKE

D20	EFFECT
1 -2	<b>Tendril!</b> A tendril of wood bursts from the ground and makes the following attack on the character: <i>Slam</i> . Melee Weapon Attack: +10 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 16 (3d6 + 6) bludgeoning damage.
3-5	<b>Subsidence!</b> The ground opens beneath the character and they must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or become restrained by the wet loam (Escape DC 15).
6-9	<b>Tremor!</b> The character must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.
10-20	No effect.

After ten rounds, or when Graemourna is defeated, Graemourna drops dead and the primordial emerges from the earth (see "Graemourna Dies").

**Cursed Items:** Graemourna has power over every magical item that the characters found within Dreadhollow Grotto. As an action after three rounds of combat—or as a reaction to an attack that drops her to fewer than half her maximum hit points—Graemourna produces a severed child's finger from her pouch and snaps it in two. As she does so, the following items animate against their wielders:

- *Warmask of Skiss-Ryssa*. The wearer of the mask must succeed on a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or become possessed by the mask. While the wearer is possessed, the fanged mask comes to life and the wearer must use their movement and a bonus action to attack their nearest ally using the following attack action: *Bite*. Melee

Weapon Attack: +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. Hit: 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage. The wearer can repeat the save at the end of each of their turns, ending the possession on a success.

- *Malifex*. This weapon explodes, releasing the angry **wraith** trapped within.
- *Virickullis & the Bloodblade*. These weapons leap from their wielder's hands and attack the group using the statistics of **flying swords** (you may add their special abilities if the party needs a greater challenge).

**Graemourna Dies:** If the characters kill Graemourna or after 10 rounds, the ritual leeches the hag's soul into the body of the primordial. When this occurs, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Graemourna falls to her knees and gives a strangled cackle. "Oh, little mice. This isn't the end—for me..."*

*Suddenly, misty vapors begin to seethe from her gnarled wrinkles. She opens her maw and smog belches out from her insides. Before your eyes, the hag's body crumples up and rots in the space of just a few seconds. As Graemourna's cackling echoes through the woods, the mist swirls around the giant tree stump and is then sucked down into its hollow depths. For a moment, there is silence. Then the earth before the tree explodes outwards as something HUGE bursts from below.*

The adventurers must now face the apex primordial (see "The Apex Primordial").

## SPIRIT TREE STUMP

The Sprit Tree was once a powerful link between this world and the elemental planes. When in season, its branches would bear magic leaves of fire, gemstone, ice, or lightning. Felled long ago for its riches, all that

remains of this once great oak is its gnarled stump. Now, the necrotic sludge of the Underdoom has poisoned its roots and corrupted the stump with Graemourna's fell magic.

Any creature moving within 20 feet of the Spirit Tree's stump can feel the corruption weighing heavily on their soul. While they remain within this area, they gain vulnerability to poison and necrotic damage and can't benefit from healing.

The hollow tree stump is filled with sloshing necrotic gunk. While the stump remains intact, Graemourna heals 18 (4d8) damage if she starts her turn within 10 feet of it. The stump has AC 8, 25 hit points, a damage threshold of 5, and immunity to poison, necrotic, and psychic damage.

### FAERIE RING

This ring of enchanted toadstools has the same magic as the one encountered in Area A: Cave Mouth. When the adventurers enter the area, Graemourna is standing invisibly inside this ring. Her illusory form stands 20 feet away, in front of the Spirit Tree stump.

## THE APEX PRIMORDIAL

When the apex primordial appears, read the following aloud:

*A titanic creature emerges from the broken earth. Its body is shaped from rugged field stones lashed together by limbs of wood, covered head-to-toe in a layer of wet moss, fungus, and rotten leaves. As you gaze up at it, a vast maw opens in its malformed head to emit a roar that shakes the world around you: a tortured howl from the heart of the primordial forest. Ribbons of gray mist swirl around the creature, and from somewhere deep inside it you hear Graemourna's cackling voice.*

*"Great Forest King! Arise from sleep!"*

*And drag thyself from Caverns Deep,  
Serve me now so all shall know,  
The horror of the rot below!"*

The apex primordial attacks the group. It has the statistics of a **treant** with the following modifications and new powers:

- It has 500 hit points.
- **Legendary Resistance (3/day):** If the apex primordial fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead.
- It understands Common, Druidic, Elvish, and Sylvan but cannot speak.
- It is immune to bludgeoning and piercing damage.
- When it uses Multiattack, it makes four slam attacks instead of two. (At lower APLs, or if the party is severely wounded, you can reduce this.)
- It cannot use the Animate Trees power.
- It has a burrow speed of 20 feet.

Roll initiative and run a single round of combat against the primordial. At the end of the first round, the wizard Zaltar arrives to drive the adventurers back to the Heartshard (see below).

### ZALTAR REAPPEARS

At the end of the first round, the wizard Zaltar arrives to drive the adventurers back to the Heartshard. Read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*As the beast stomps toward you, the wizard Zaltar appears inside the cave mouth in a swirl of multicolored smoke!*

*Zaltar takes a hard look at the primordial.  
"That monstrosity looks nigh-invulnerable!"*

*Any ideas on how to defeat it, adventurers?"*

Allow the characters to discuss options with Zaltar. This conversation can play out over a few actions, or simply at the end of the round, as the primordial prepares to attack again. Zaltar can prompt the characters, asking them questions about what they saw within. Hopefully, the heroes think of the Heartshard and its ability to trap souls on their own, but you can have Zaltar ask if the adventurers know how Graemourna was able to possess the primordial or control Sunhild's spirit. He can also ask them about the cave with all the crystals and what was within. Once enough of a connection has been formed, and hopefully with some agency on the part of the heroes, Zaltar addresses them again. Modify this speech based on the conversation that has taken place. Zaltar could even be following their lead.

*"Quickly, heroes! To me!"*

*Zaltar slams his staff into the ground and teleports you back inside the cave mouth. Wide-eyed, the wizard hisses a warning.*

*"You'll never kill that monstrosity! You must free it from her spell! Back into the caverns! Find a way to tear out her soul like a weed!"*

*Then there is a puff of smoke and the wizard disappears again. With a roar, the monster turns to face you!*

*Clearly you must do this mad task alone—or die trying!*

Zaltar teleports the adventurers inside the cave mouth.

## THE CHASE

The apex primordial moves along an unstoppable path toward the adventurers. Though it moves slowly, it can overcome obstacles by moving through terrain, smashing aside trees and solid rock in its efforts to catch up with and destroy the group.

If you still have the terrain available, you can roleplay the flight back to Encounter 13, Crystal Caverns, turn-by-turn. Call for Strength (Athletics) checks or Dexterity (Acrobatics) checks as needed to handle dangerous leaps or acts of balance.

If you don't have the terrain, you can roleplay the chase back to the Heartshard narratively! The goal here is to make players feel like they're being chased by an unstoppable threat. Use the Chase rules from Chapter 8 of the *Dungeon Master's Guide* to manage the chase, using the following Chase Complications table. The players can't shake the primordial—it unerringly knows where they are inside the caverns.

## CHASE COMPLICATIONS

D20	COMPLICATION
1	Rocky, uneven terrain blocks your way. Make a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to get past it. On a failed check, the rocky surface counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
2	Dripping water has made the cavern floor extremely slippery. You must succeed on a DC 20 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.
3	Startled bats swirl past you. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to duck past them. On a failed check, you take 5 (2d4) piercing damage from bites, and the bats count as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
4	A pool of necrotic sludge blocks your way. If your Strength is 12 or higher you can jump it safely. If not, you land in the sludge and take 18 (4d8) necrotic damage. Wading out of the sludge after taking damage counts as 10 feet of difficult terrain.
5	Wet moss clings to the rock ahead. You must succeed on a DC 15 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.

6	You stand on a puff ball which explodes in a spray of poisonous spores. Make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, taking 9 (2d8) poison damage on a failed save.
7	You try to dodge between rocky columns. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check. On a failure, you run into the rock and take 3 (1d6) bludgeoning damage.
8	The ground ahead is perilously uneven. You must succeed on a DC 10 Dexterity saving throw or fall prone.
9	You are forced to duck under a sharp stalactite. Make a DC 10 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check to avoid it. On a failure, the rock tears into your back and you take 2 (1d4) piercing damage.
10-20	No complication.

## TRAPPING THE PRIMORDIAL

Graemourna's grimoire in Encounter 11, Hag's Den, explains how she trapped Sunhild's soul inside the Heartshard. To capture the hag's soul, the characters must perform this ritual with the Heartshard in sight.

It is possible that the characters did not enter or complete Encounter 13, Crystal Caverns. If so, do not run that encounter at this time. Graemourna's use of the Heartshard has drained the crystal caverns of enough of its energy that the reflections and other elements do not manifest at this time.

To empower the stone, each of the following actions must be performed successfully by one or more adventurers:

- **Speak of Dreams.** An adventurer must tell the stone their heart's desire. If you don't think they're trying hard enough, ask for a DC 18 Charisma (Persuasion) check to persuade the fey spirits.
- **Soul of Poetry.** An adventurer must recite a moving poem or song. If a player cannot do this themselves, their character can attempt a DC 16 Charisma (Performance) check instead.
- **Grace of the Elves.** An adventurer must perform a graceful physical feat in front of the stone.

This requires success on a DC 15 Dexterity (Acrobatics) check.

- **Master of Many Faces.** An adventurer must disguise themselves as another creature, either through a spell or by a convincing performance. If they try the latter, they must succeed on a DC 18 Charisma (Performance or Deception) check. Players who act out the performance themselves can pass without rolling, at your discretion!

If the characters succeed, the Heartshard becomes translucent, exposing the magic circle engraved within. To trap Graemourna, the characters must now lure or trick the primordial into touching the circle! While Graemourna controls the primordial, she does not do so completely. Skill checks or clever positioning can entice it to follow a character, though spells or other powers could force the primordial into the space as well.

If they succeed, read or paraphrase the following aloud:

*Fey magic blazes from the crystal! Lit by its green glow, the monster throws its head back and bellows at the ceiling. Ribbons of gray mist pour from the monster's maw and begin to swirl into the crystal. Gathering in intensity, they coalesce into the wispy form of Graemourna as she is dragged from the monster's body.*

*"No!" she shrieks. "Not this way! No! No! NOOO!"*

*Then, just a moment later, you see Graemourna's ghostlike form appear inside the crystal. The hag pounds her fists on the interior of the crystal walls and screams at you, but you can't hear her. She is trapped.*



*The primordial monster shakes its mighty head groggily and then turns on the spot and stomps slowly back toward the Spirit Tree.*

*You have won.*

## **CONCLUSION**

The adventurers have defeated Graemourna and saved the city of Valoria!

If the characters did not find the antidote, you could allow them to return to Encounter 11, The Hag's Den, to find it and any other lore they missed.

The characters can then travel to Valoria. Though the city was not aware of Graemourna's plans to destroy them with plague, they witness how the unnatural ice storm over the forest suddenly dissipated. A visit from Zaltar tips them off to the extent of the adventurer's heroics. By the time they reach the city, a massive welcome has been planned, and they are greeted as heroes!

Back in Dreadhollow Forest, the apex primordial reburies itself in the ground before the stump of the Spirit Tree and Graemourna's evil taint slowly ebbs away from Caverns Deep.

# APPENDIX A: NEW MONSTERS

## ENCOUNTER 7: NEW MONSTERS

### TAINTED BULETTE

The Mother of All Mushrooms infected this bulette, converting the monstrosity into a mindless guardian for Graemourna’s grotto. The normally fearless bulette now despises all living things, seeking to infect and destroy them.

**Blinded by Infection.** Grim mushrooms and fungal growths protrude from the bulette’s eye sockets, robbing it of sight. The bulette uses its tremorsense to locate enemies.

**Bound to Mother.** The tainted bulette is controlled by the Mother of All Mushrooms, a massive semi-sentient cadaver cap. Being near-mindless protects the bulette from psychic or charm attacks. Lair actions reflect this link, allowing the garden of mushrooms to aid the bulette.

**Agent of Plague.** The bulette is host to horrid fungi and can pass on its corruption to others.

*Large monstrosity, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (13d10 +65)

**Speed** 40 ft., burrow 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
21 (+5)	12 (+1)	21 (+5)	2 (-4)	6 (-2)	4 (-3)

**Skills** Perception +4

**Damage Resistances** psychic, necrotic

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, frightened, poisoned

**Senses** tremorsense 40 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 14

**Languages** — None

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Legendary Resistance (1/day).** If the bulette fails a saving throw, it succeeds instead.

**Magic Resistance.** The bulette has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Empowered by Corruption.** Whenever the bulette is subjected to necrotic or poison damage, the bulette gains advantage on the next attack roll it makes.

#### Actions

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 10 ft., one target. Hit: 43 (5d12 + 11) piercing damage. If the attack roll was an unmodified roll of 17 or higher, the target must make an Exposure check. If the attack roll was a critical hit, the target must pull from the Infection Deck.

**Foul Burrow.** If the bulette burrows at least 15 feet as part of its movement and ends in a space that contains one or more creatures or is adjacent to one or more creatures, it can then use this action to emerge from the chosen space. Each creature in or adjacent to the chosen space must succeed on a DC 16 Strength or Dexterity saving throw (target’s choice) or be knocked prone and take 19 (4d6 + 5) bludgeoning damage. On a successful save, the creature takes only half the damage, isn’t knocked prone, and is pushed 5 feet away from the bulette’s space into an unoccupied space of the creature’s choice. If no unoccupied space is within range, the creature instead falls prone in the bulette’s space. Each target must make an Exposure check, with advantage if they made the saving throw against this attack.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

The bulette can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature’s turn. The bulette regains spent legendary actions at the start of its turn. The bulette can’t use the same legendary action twice in consecutive turns.

**Brutal Bite.** The bulette makes a bite attack.

**Evasive Burrow.** The bulette may burrow 40 feet without provoking opportunity attacks from adjacent creatures.

**Fungal Vomit (*costs 3 actions*).** The bulette spits acidic vomit in a line that is 40 feet long and 5 feet wide. Each creature in that line must make a DC 16 Dexterity saving throw, taking 21 (6d6) damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one. Any creature with an unmodified roll of 5 or lower on their saving throw must make an Exposure check.

#### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), the bulette takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; the bulette can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

**Sticky Mushrooms.** Mushrooms release sticky strands in a 20-foot radius sphere centered on MoAM. When a creature enters the area or starts its turn there, it must make a DC 16 Strength saving throw or become restrained. A creature restrained in this manner may repeat the saving throw at the start of each of its turns, ending the effect on a successful save.

**MoAM Rages.** The Mother of All Mushrooms releases a cloud of spores over the area. All creatures within 15 feet of MoAM must make an Exposure check.

**Mind-Altering Spores.** Cadaver cap mushrooms release spores in a 10-foot radius sphere centered on a point within 30 feet of MoAM. Creatures in the sphere must make a DC 16 Wisdom saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and become charmed by all fungi and the bulette. On a success, the creature takes half damage and is not charmed. A charmed creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a success.

## ENCOUNTER 8: NEW MONSTERS

### LIZARDFOLK

These lizardfolk once lived throughout the Caverns Deep. They warred against the cultists from the surface and established trading agreements with the dwarves and smugglers. Graemourna's arrival changed everything, decimating their numbers and forcing them into a singular large cave serving as the shrine for their ferocious warrior-queen, Skiss-Ryssa.

**Cold-Blooded.** The lizardfolk are cold-blooded, needing warm waters and hot chambers to thrive. They are vulnerable to cold, which makes them more susceptible to Graemourna's icy magic.

**Skullfeast.** The lizardfolk worship Skiss-Ryssa as if she were a god, believing that the ritual sacrifices she commands grant her immense power. Skullfeast is their favorite ritual, where Skiss-Ryssa shares the brains of a creature with the tribe. The tribe hopes Skullfeast will empower Skiss-Ryssa and the tribe to finally defeat Graemourna.

**Creatures of Ritual.** The tribe respects rites and rituals, even new ones. Challenges to ritual combat must be honored, even if made by creatures from another tribe. The lizardfolk's mightiest wear masks, a symbol of status and battle prowess.

**Identifying Scales.** Lizardfolk scales in this tribe vary in coloration by gender. The males have many small hard green scales and are called toughscales. The females, known as venom-spitting lizardfolk, have larger orange scales and poison sacks on either side of their throats.

### TOUGHSCALE LIZARDFOLK

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 58 (9d8 + 18)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	5 (-3)	7 (-2)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Athletics +5

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Resistances** fire, poison

**Senses** passive Perception 8

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 3 (700 XP)

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk makes two melee attacks, each with a different weapon.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (2d6 + 3) piercing damage.

**Heavy Club.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 16 (2d6 + 9) bludgeoning damage.

**Weighted Net.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 10/30 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d6 + 7) bludgeoning damage. A Large or smaller creature hit by a net is restrained until it is freed. A net has no effect on creatures that are formless, or creatures that are Huge or larger. A creature can use its action to make a DC 12 Strength check, freeing itself or another creature within its reach on a success. Dealing 5 slashing damage to the net (AC 10) also frees the creature without harming it, ending the effect and destroying the net. The net is weighted, reducing the speed of a flying creature to 0. A flying creature without hover falls. A creature with hover descends until it reaches the ground (up to 500 ft. per round) but does not take damage.

### VENOM-SPITTING LIZARDFOLK

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 41 (8d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	15 (+2)	13 (+1)	12 (+1)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +6, Perception +6, Stealth +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

***Hold Breath.*** The lizardfolk can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

#### **ACTIONS**

***Multiattack.*** The lizardfolk makes one melee attack with its bite and one attack with either a claw or javelin.

***Bite.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage and 2 (1d4) poison damage.

***Claw.*** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 6 (1d6 + 3) slashing damage.

***Javelin.*** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 30/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 2) piercing damage.

***Hallucinogenic Spittle.*** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 12 (2d6 + 5) poison damage and the target must make a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the target begins to hallucinate. When the hallucinating target next makes an attack, it is unable to distinguish friend from foe and must target a randomly determined creature within the attack's range. A hallucinating creature repeats the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

## ENCOUNTER 9: NEW MONSTERS

### MANX THE RATLING

SEE ENCOUNTER 4: NEW MONSTERS.

### TIBERIOUS THE TIEFLING ABJURER

Tiberious is an arcanist smuggler, using his skills as an abjurer to bypass the magical defenses the gang encounters as they pilfer goods.

**Self Interest.** Tiberious is the least invested in the gang. He has seen how easily their gang was defeated by a powerful creature such as Graemourna and simply wants to escape the Caverns Deep to find a safer occupation.

*Medium humanoid (tiefling), chaotic neutral*

**Armor Class** 13 (*mage armor*)

**Hit Points** 23 (4d8 + 5)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
9 (-1)	10 (+0)	11 (+0)	16 (+3)	14 (+2)	14 (+2)

**Skills** Arcana +5, Insight +4, Investigation +5, Stealth +2

**Resistances** fire

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 12

**Languages** Common, Infernal

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)

**Spellcasting.** Tiberious is a 5<sup>th</sup>-level spellcaster. His spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 14, +6 to hit with spell attacks). Tiberious has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips: *dancing lights*, *fire bolt*, *mage hand*, *minor illusion*, *thaumaturgy*  
1<sup>st</sup> level (4 slots, 2 remaining): *alarm* (pre-cast), *burning hands*, *expeditious retreat*, *mage armor* (precast)  
2<sup>nd</sup> level (3 slots): *alter self*, *hold person*, *knock*, *scorching ray*  
3<sup>rd</sup> level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *glyph of warding*, *haste*

**Infernal Legacy.** Tiberious can cast the *bellish rebuke* spell (as a 2<sup>nd</sup>-level spell) and the *darkness* spell. Neither spell consumes a spell slot when cast. Once a particular spell has been cast, it is regained when Tiberious finishes a long rest. Charisma is his spellcasting ability for these spells.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Tiberious makes two melee attacks.

**Dagger.** *Melee or Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft. or range 20/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage.

### BRONZO THE BARBARIAN

Bronzo is a reluctant smuggler, falling into the “occupation” through a series of unfortunate and dimwitted misunderstandings. Along the way he found friends and a place where he can make a difference.

**For the Crew.** Bronzo never fit in, until he found himself in a smuggling gang. Now he sticks by them through good times and bad times, doing his best to prevent the demise of his last two friends.

**Dimwitted.** Bronzo isn’t the sharpest knife in the drawer. He doesn’t understand or remember plans very well, preferring to improvise what he fails to comprehend or recall. His improvisation usually involves swinging his greataxe.

*Medium humanoid (human), chaotic good*

**Armor Class** 13 (*hide armor*)

**Hit Points** 30 (4d8 + 12)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	12 (+1)	17 (+3)	8 (-1)	8 (-1)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +5

**Senses** passive Perception 9

**Languages** Common

**Challenge** 1 (200 XP)



**Reckless.** At the start of his turn, Bronzo can gain advantage on all melee weapon attack rolls during that turn, but attack rolls against it have advantage until the start of its next turn. Bronzo usually shouts something unintelligent as he uses this feature.

## ACTIONS

**Greataxe.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 9 (1d12 + 3) slashing damage.

**Harpoon Ballista.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +5 to hit, range 60/120 ft., one target. *Hit:* 20 (3d10 + 4) piercing damage, and a medium or smaller target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw or be pushed back 10 feet. If the target is adjacent to a wall or similar structure, they are restrained. A restrained character can make a DC 14 Strength (Athletics) check to end the condition. This weapon, once fired, requires an action to reload (allowing Bronzo to fire it every other round). The weapon is stationary and cannot be moved without taking ten minutes to disassemble and reassemble the weapon.

## ENCOUNTER 10: NEW MONSTERS

### LIZARDFOLK

These lizardfolk once lived throughout Caverns Deep. They warred against the cultists from the surface and established trading agreements with the dwarves and smugglers. Graemourna's arrival changed everything, decimating their numbers and forcing them into a singular large cave serving as the shrine for their ferocious warrior-queen, Skiss-Ryssa.

**Cold-blooded.** The lizardfolk are cold-blooded, needing warm waters and hot chambers to thrive. They are vulnerable to cold, which makes them more susceptible to Graemourna's icy magic.

**Skullfeast!** The lizardfolk worship Skiss-Ryssa as if she were a god, believing that the ritual sacrifices she commands grant her immense power. Skullfeast is their favorite ritual, where Skiss-Ryssa shares the brains of a creature with the tribe. The tribe hopes Skullfeast will empower Skiss-Ryssa and the tribe to finally defeat Graemourna.

**Creatures of Ritual.** The tribe respects rites and rituals, even new ones. Challenges to ritual combat must be honored, even if made by creatures from another tribe. The lizardfolk's mightiest wear masks, a symbol of status and battle prowess.

**Identifying Scales.** Lizardfolk scales in this tribe vary in coloration by gender. The males have many small hard green scales and are called toughscales. The females, known as venom-spitting lizardfolk, have larger orange scales and poison sacks on either side of their throats.

### LIZARDFOLK RITUALIST

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), neutral*

**Armor Class** 13 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 30 (5d8 + 8)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
13 (+1)	11 (+0)	14 (+2)	10 (+0)	15 (+2)	8 (-1)

**Skills** Perception +4, Religion +4

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Resistances** fire, poison

**Senses** passive Perception 14

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 2 (450 XP)

**Spellcasting.** The lizardfolk ritualist is a 5th-level spellcaster. Its spellcasting ability is Wisdom (spell save DC 12, +4 to hit with spell attacks). The lizardfolk ritualist has the following druid spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *druidcraft*, *poison spray*, *produce flame*

1st level (4 slots): *faerie fire*, *thunderwave*

2nd level (3 slots): *flame blade*, *hold person*

3rd level (2 slots): *dispel magic*, *wind wall*

**Hold Breath.** The lizardfolk ritualist can hold its breath for 15 minutes.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The lizardfolk ritualist makes two melee attacks.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 7 (1d6 + 4) piercing damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.  
*Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) slashing damage.

### SKISS-RYSSA, LIZARDFOLK WARRIOR-QUEEN

*Medium humanoid (lizardfolk), chaotic evil*

**Armor Class** 14 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 75 (10d8 + 30)

**Speed** 30 ft., swim 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
16 (+3)	15 (+2)	16 (+3)	12 (+1)	12 (+2)	15 (+2)

**Skills** Deception +6, Perception +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Resistances** fire

**Damage Immunities** poison

**Senses** passive Perception 16

**Languages** Draconic

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Hold Breath.** Skiss-Ryssa can hold her breath for 15 minutes.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** Skiss-Ryssa makes two attacks: one with her bite and one attack with either a claw or her halberd, or two attacks with her halberd.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) piercing damage and 3 (1d4 + 1) poison damage.

**Claw.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d6 + 5) slashing damage.

**Virickullis, Magic Halberd.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 15 (2d10 + 4) piercing damage. Once per day when she hits, Skiss-Ryssa can deal an extra 10 (3d6) damage to the target and Skiss-Ryssa gains temporary hit points equal to the damage dealt.

**Poisonous Spittle.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* The target must make a DC 13 Constitution saving throw, taking 27 (6d8) poison damage on a failed save, or half as much damage on a successful one.

#### LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Skiss-Ryssa can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Skiss-Ryssa regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. Skiss-Ryssa can't use the same legendary action twice in consecutive turns.

Each time Skiss-Ryssa spends a legendary action, the tribal totem in her lair flares with crimson light. These legendary actions are lost if her tribal totem is destroyed.

**Skewer.** Skiss-Ryssa makes one attack with her halberd.

**Sacrifice.** One of Skiss-Ryssa's allies that she can see takes necrotic damage up to its current hit point total. For each point of damage dealt, Skiss-Ryssa heals 1 damage.

**Dispel Magic (costs 2 actions).** Any ongoing spell effects of 5th level or lower end if they are within 50 feet of the shamanic stone circle. This does not include spells cast by the lizardfolk ritualists, or those cast by a druid, ranger, or Nature-domain cleric.

## ENCOUNTER 11: NEW MONSTERS

### SENTRY ARMOR

This suit of armor appears to be splattered in blood. Enchanted as a sentry, it watches eternally for intruders.

**Bound in Magic.** The soul that once wore this armor now animates it. An evil creature can command the soul within, binding it into service. Such service is usually confined to a few simple instructions, such as “Kill anyone who approaches within fifty feet who fails to say my passphrase. If possible, push foes into the pit.”

**Offered as Treasure.** Hags, fiends, and other such hateful creatures use sentry armor as guardians. Some even offer the armor to a mortal, waiting until the mortal dies to reclaim them as an undying guardian.

**Forceful Interception.** The animated armor has great strength, able to push creatures away from what it guards. The armor is often paired with dangerous terrain such as spikes or pits, making its pushes far more dangerous.

*Medium construct, unaligned*

**Armor Class** 18

**Hit Points** 80 (10d10 + 25)

**Speed** 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
20 (+6)	14 (+2)	18 (+3)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)	11 (+0)

**Skills** Athletics +11, Perception +7

**Damage Resistances** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical attacks that aren't adamantine

**Damage Immunities** force, necrotic, poison

**Condition Immunities** blinded, charmed, deafened, frightened, paralyzed, petrified, poisoned, stunned

**Senses** blindsight 60 ft. (blind beyond this radius), passive Perception 17

**Languages** understands the languages of its creator but can't speak

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Blood Resistance (2/Day).** If the sentry armor fails a saving throw, it can choose to succeed instead. When it uses this power, it reduces its current hit point total by 10.

**Magic Resistance.** The sentry armor has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

**Sentry's Charge.** If the sentry armor moves at least 10 feet straight toward a target and then hits it with a forceful slam attack on the same turn, the target must succeed on a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be pushed up to 15 feet away.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The sentry armor makes two forceful slam attacks.

**Forceful Slam.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 22 (2d12 + 9) piercing damage and the target must make a DC 15 Strength saving throw or be knocked prone.

#### REACTIONS

**Intercept.** The first time a target moves to within 10 feet of the sentry armor, the sentry armor may move up to its speed to a point adjacent to the target and make a forceful slam attack against the target. Up to two additional triggers can be programmed by the sentry armor's master, so long as the triggering condition is relatively simple (for example, when a creature touches a specific object or when it comes between the sentry armor and a pit).

### HOARD MIMIC

A hoard mimic is created when multiple mimics absorb each other to become one larger entity. The hoard mimic can assume a more complex form and is far deadlier, with multiple pseudopods and mouths.

**Treasure Pile.** The hoard mimic earns its name for its habit of assuming the look of a large pile of treasure, including barrels, chests, bags, and even detailed items such as shields, swords, or helmets within the pile of treasure. The entire hoard is the mimic. Hoard mimics can also assume other forms, such as carts or wagons, wells, or other large structures.

**Cunning.** The hoard mimic often incorporates real objects into its pile. An actual magic item can allow it to radiate as magical, drawing risk-adverse adventurers into its grasp.

**Trained.** A hoard mimic can be reasoned with and even trained by evil creatures to guard actual treasure, conceal a door, or to employ specific tactics.

# HOARD MIMIC

*Large monstrosity (shapechanger), neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 136 (11d8 + 88)

**Speed** 30 ft., climb 30 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
19 (+4)	16 (+3)	17 (+3)	10 (+0)	16 (+2)	10 (+0)

**Skills** Perception + 7, Stealth +8

**Damage Immunities** Acid, poison

**Senses** Darkvision 120 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** —None

**Challenge** 8 (3,900 XP)

**Shapechanger.** The mimic can use its action to polymorph into an object or back into its true, amorphous form. Its statistics are the same in each form. Any equipment it is wearing or carrying isn't transformed. It reverts to its true form if it dies.

**Adhesive (Object Form Only).** The mimic adheres to anything that touches it. A Huge or smaller creature adhered to the mimic is also grappled by it (standard **Escaping a Grapple** and **Moving a Grappled Creature** rules apply). Ability checks made to escape this grapple have disadvantage.

**False Appearance (Object Form Only).** While the mimic remains motionless, it is indistinguishable from an ordinary object.

**Grappler.** The mimic has advantage on attack rolls against any creature grappled by it.

## ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The mimic makes one pseudopod attack and three bite attacks.

**Pseudopod.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +7 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 10 (1d8 + 6) piercing damage and the target may be moved 5 feet from its original position in a direction chosen by the mimic. If the mimic is in object form, the target is subjected to its Adhesive trait.

**Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d8 + 4) piercing damage plus 6 (1d6+3) acid damage.

## Explosion of Mouths and Pseudopods (Recharge 5-6).

The mimic makes two pseudopod attacks and any number of bite attacks against creatures within 15 feet. The mimic may not target the same creature more than once with this action.

**Swallow.** The mimic makes three bite attacks against a single creature it has grappled. If either attack hits, in addition to damage from the bites, the creature is swallowed by the mimic. While swallowed, the creature is blinded and restrained, it has total cover against attacks and other effects outside the mimic, and it takes 18 (3d8+5) acid damage at the start of each of the mimic's turns. Only one creature can be swallowed by the mimic at a time.

If the mimic takes 20 damage or more on a single turn from a creature inside it, the mimic must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw at the end of that turn or regurgitate the swallowed creature, which falls prone in a space within 10 feet of the mimic. If the mimic dies, a swallowed creature is no longer restrained by it and can escape from the corpse using 10 feet of movement, exiting prone.

## REACTIONS

**Snack Attack.** When a creature provokes an opportunity attack, the mimic can use its swallow action against the creature, even if the creature is not grappled by the mimic.

## ENCOUNTER 12: NEW MONSTERS

### EVERFROST ZOMBIE

These zombies have been raised as undead by the power of the runic column and Graemourna the hag's fell frost magic.

**Entombed in Ice.** When she doesn't need experiments for her poisons and diseases, Graemourna entombs her foes in ice created by the powerful artifact known as the runic column. The deep cold infuses them with the power of frost and immunity to cold damage. The zombies move slowly, but their cold nature freezes the ground beneath them and allows them to move across icy terrain unimpeded.

**Enhanced by Chained Crystals.** The chained crystals in Graemourna's lair collect energies from the Shadowfell and Feywild, periodically releasing focused bursts of the energy. This gives the zombies a horrid power related to their origin and terrifying strength.

**Diverse Origins.** Any type of creature could become an everfrost zombie. These statistics represent the most common of Graemourna's foes: humanoid smugglers. Fey yorghrim and lizardfolk are also possible, with alternate statistics.

*Medium undead, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 8

**Hit Points** 16 (3d8 + 3)

**Speed** 20 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
17 (+3)	6 (-2)	18 (+4)	3 (-4)	6 (-2)	5 (-3)

**Skills** Athletics +5

**Damage Immunities** cold, poison

**Condition Immunities** charmed, exhaustion, paralyzed, poisoned

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 8

**Languages** understands the languages it knew in life but can't speak

**Challenge** 1/4 (50 XP)

**Ice Walk.** The zombie's movement is unaffected by difficult or slippery terrain caused by ice or cold. The zombie gains advantage on Strength (Athletics) checks to climb icy terrain.

**Undead Fortitude.** If damage reduces the zombie to 0 hit points, it must make a Constitution saving throw with a DC of 5 + the damage taken, unless the damage is radiant or from a critical hit. On a success, the zombie drops to 1 hit point instead.

#### ACTIONS

**Frozen Fists.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d6 + 1) bludgeoning damage plus 4 (1d6+1) cold damage.

#### VARIANT: EVERFROST YORGHHRIM ZOMBIE

A yorghrim retains the ability to freeze its foes.

**Freezing Gaze.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 60/90 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 1) cold damage and the target must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or be paralyzed for 1 minute. The target can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on itself on a success.

#### VARIANT: EVERFROST LIZARDFOLK ZOMBIE

A lizardfolk retains its hallucinogenic spittle.

**Hallucinogenic Icy Spittle.** *Ranged Weapon Attack:* +4 to hit, range 30/60 ft., one target. *Hit:* 5 (1d6 + 1) cold damage and the target begins to hallucinate. When a hallucinating target next makes an attack, it must succeed at a DC 13 Wisdom saving throw. On a failure, the attack instead targets a creature of the lizardfolk's choice that it can see. On a success, the effect ends, and the attack is resolved normally. A hallucinating target may also spend its action to make a saving throw to end the effect.



# GRAEMOURNA THE HAG

See the **Introduction** of the adventure for Graemourna's tragic tale of how a young girl named Grae became the horrid hag Graemourna, intent on the destruction of Valoria and all of Mythras. Graemourna most closely resembles a green hag in appearance, but she is something different.

**Rhyming Terror.** Graemourna likes to speak as if she were reading from a fairy tale book or poem, often rhyming her words or phrasing things unusually.

**Plays the Long Game.** The hag keeps her focus on her larger goal of destroying the city of Valoria and ideally all of the kingdom of Mythras. She won't jeopardize that for short-term gains.

**Cruel.** Graemourna delights in the suffering of others. Like other hags, she sees disfigurement as beauty and beauty as horrid. She wants to see her diseases and poisons transform the world into what she believes it should be... a terrible future if it comes true.

*Medium fey, neutral evil*

**Armor Class** 18 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 176 (16d8 + 104)

**Speed** 30 ft., fly 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	20 (+5)	16 (+3)	18 (+4)	14 (+2)	16 (+3)

**Saving Throws** Wisdom + 6

**Skills** Deception +7, Insight + 6, Perception +6, Stealth +9

**Damage Vulnerabilities** bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing attacks made with cold iron weapons or ammunition

**Damage Immunities** cold, poison

**Senses** Darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** Auran, Common, Giant, Sylvan

**Challenge** 10 (5,900 XP)

**Driftstone.** Graemourna has enchanted a driftstone, allowing her to fly atop it. If the driftstone is ever more than 50 feet away from her, it instantly vanishes and reappears at her side or under her feet, whichever Graemourna prefers. The driftstone is immune to magical effects or damage from spells

but can be targeted by weapon attacks. It has AC 20 and 50 hit points. If destroyed, it magically reforms eight hours later.

**Ice Walk.** Graemourna can move across and climb icy surfaces without needing to make an ability check. Additionally, difficult terrain composed of ice or snow doesn't cost her extra movement.

**Legendary Resistance (3/Day).** If Graemourna fails a saving throw, she can choose to succeed instead.

**Innate Spellcasting.** Graemourna's innate spellcasting ability is Charisma (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Graemourna can innately cast the following spells, requiring no material components:

At will: *bestow curse*, *misty step*

3/day: *cone of cold*, *ice storm*, *wall of ice*

1/day: *control weather*, *freezing sphere*

**Spellcasting.** Graemourna is a 12<sup>th</sup> level spellcaster. Her spellcasting ability is Intelligence (spell save DC 16, +8 to hit with spell attacks). Graemourna has the following wizard spells prepared:

Cantrips (at will): *chill touch*, *minor illusion*, *poison spray*, *ray of frost*

1st level (4 slots): *expeditious retreat*, *hideous laughter*

2nd level (3 slots): *alter self*, *detect thoughts*, *mirror image*

3rd level (3 slots): *counterspell*, *dispel magic*, *fear*, *stinking cloud*

4th level (3 slots): *arcane eye*, *ice storm*, *fire shield*

5th level (2 slots): *cloudkill*, *dominate person*

6th level (1 slot): *globe of invulnerability*, *mass suggestion*

## ACTIONS

**Claws.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +8 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 13 (2d8 + 4) slashing damage plus 7 (2d6) cold damage.

**Mushroom Cloud.** Graemourna creates a 20-foot-radius sphere of spores centered on a point within 60 feet. The sphere spreads around corners, and its area is heavily obscured. It lasts for 1d4 rounds or until a wind of moderate or greater speed (at least 10 miles per hour) disperses it. When a creature enters the cloud for the first time on a turn or starts its turn there, it takes 10 poison damage and must make an Exposure check.

## REACTIONS

**Bestow Curse (Recharge 4-6).** When a creature successfully hits Graemourna with a spell or weapon attack roll, the hag may cast *bestow curse* on the creature. The spell does not require concentration when cast this way.

## LEGENDARY ACTIONS

Graemourna can take three legendary actions, choosing from the options below. Only one legendary action option can be used at a time, and only at the end of another creature's turn. Graemourna regains spent legendary actions at the start of her turn. Graemourna can't use the same legendary action twice in consecutive turns.

***Freeze the Flesh.*** Graemourna attacks with *ray of frost*, making the attack roll with advantage.

***Poison the Living.*** Graemourna attacks with *poison spray*. The target of the spell has disadvantage on the saving throw. If the target fails the saving throw, they must make an Exposure check.

***Concealed by Spores.*** Graemourna takes the mushroom cloud action centered on herself. The cloud deals double damage for its duration.

***Rotten Mind (costs 2 actions).*** Graemourna may cast the spell *cloudkill* or *stinking cloud*, using an available spell slot. If Graemourna is already concentrating on a spell when rotten mind is used, she may concentrate on both spells without ending either. When Graemourna must make a concentration check, she makes a separate check for each spell. Graemourna may not use rotten mind if she is already concentrating on two spells.

#### LAIR ACTIONS

On initiative count 20 (losing initiative ties), Graemourna takes a lair action to cause one of the following effects; Graemourna can't use the same effect two rounds in a row.

***Aura of Frost.*** The ground around Graemourna radiates body-numbing cold. Creatures within 5 feet of the hag must make a DC 16 Constitution saving throw or be slowed (as the *slow* spell). A creature affected by this effect may repeat the saving throw at the end of each of its turns, ending the effect on a success.

***Mind-Altering Spores.*** Cadaver cap mushrooms sprout and release spores in a 20-foot-radius sphere centered on a point within 60 feet of Graemourna. Creatures in the area must make a DC 16 Charisma saving throw or take 10 (3d6) psychic damage and become charmed by Graemourna. A creature succeeding at the saving throw takes half damage and is not charmed. A charmed creature may repeat the saving throw at the end of its turn, ending the effect on a save.

***Fungal Repair.*** A sickly purple mushroom rises from the ground in or adjacent to the square Graemourna occupies. Graemourna eats the foul mushroom, regaining 15 hit points.

## ENCOUNTER 14: NEW MONSTERS

### ARCTIC FAELYNX

Arctic faelyn timer were once common mounts for the yorghrim but approached extinction as their habitat diminished. When the yorghrim made their bargain with Graemourna, only one faelyn timer was known to remain—the jarl’s steed.

**Winterborn.** As creatures of ice and snow, they are immune to cold and can exhale a freezing breath that surrounds it like a shroud. They are vulnerable to fire and if not mounted will retreat from flame.

**Ethereal Predators.** The arctic faelyn timer can access the Ethereal plane, disappearing and reappearing a short distance away to confuse its prey. Perhaps due to exposure to planar energies, the arctic faelyn timer has developed two spiked tentacles.

**Storm Shroud.** A chilling fog surrounds the faelyn timer, obscuring the faelyn timer from distant foes and freezing foes close to it. Due to this quality, the fur of the Faelyn timer can be used as a material component for the *fire shield* spell.

*Large monstrosity, neutral*

**Armor Class** 15 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 78 (8d10 + 34)

**Speed** 40 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
18 (+4)	22 (+6)	18 (+4)	8 (-1)	14 (+2)	12 (+1)

**Skills** Athletics +8, Perception +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** fire

**Damage Resistances** cold

**Senses** darkvision 60 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** —None

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Storm Shroud Aura.** An aura of frost billows forth 20 feet from the faelyn timer. Attack rolls to hit the faelyn timer or its rider

made from outside the aura suffer disadvantage. Creatures starting their turn within the aura take 7 (2d6) cold damage.

**Ethereal Evasion.** If the faelyn timer is subjected to an effect that allows it to make a saving throw to take only half damage, it instead takes no damage if it succeeds on the saving throw, and only half damage if it fails.

#### ACTIONS

**Multiattack.** The faelyn timer makes one attack with its chilling bite and two attacks with its spiked tentacles.

**Chilling Bite.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target. *Hit:* 8 (1d12 + 2) piercing damage plus 5 (1d6 + 2) cold damage.

**Spiked Tentacles.** *Melee Weapon Attack:* +6 to hit, reach 15 ft., one target. *Hit:* 4 (1d4 + 2) piercing damage plus 3 (1d6) cold damage.

**Ethereal Charge (Recharge 5–6).** The faelyn timer darts into the Ethereal plane and back, appearing along with its rider at a point up to 15 feet away from its initial location. This movement does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The faelyn timer can then either make a chilling bite attack or its rider can take an action.

#### REACTIONS

**Ethereal Escape.** When the arctic faelyn timer or its rider is moved, pushed, knocked prone, teleported against its will, or is falling, the faelyn timer can vanish along with its rider, appearing mounted and standing in a square of its choosing within 30 feet of its originating square.

## ELDRITCH EYE

Graemourna tricked two fire giant partners, Doren and Gondar, promising them they would always gaze upon each other. They grew sick from exposure to the hag's mushrooms, and upon their death the hag took their left eyes and enchanted them, using them as focal points for her horrid ritual in the Underdome.

**All-Seeing.** Graemourna's magic allows the eyes to see into the Ethereal plane, and to perceive invisible creatures.

**Burning Death.** The enchanted eyes have lost much of their former intelligence and memory, but retain the fiery nature of their past, tainted with necrotic energies from the sludge where Graemourna grows her mushrooms.

**Shrouded.** The eldritch eyes are linked to the enchanted basalt below them and have a movement speed of 0 (but can look in any direction). However, the arcane energies radiating from the rock occlude their location, making them hard to target from afar.

*Medium undead, lawful evil*

**Armor Class** 16 (natural armor)

**Hit Points** 80 (10d10 + 25)

**Speed** 0 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
3 (-4)	1 (-5)	16 (+3)	3 (-4)	12 (+1)	1 (-5)

**Skills** Perception +6

**Damage Vulnerabilities** cold

**Damage Immunities** fire, poison; bludgeoning, piercing, and slashing from nonmagical weapons

**Senses** truesight 100 ft., passive Perception 16

**Languages** understands Giant and Common, but cannot speak

**Challenge** 4 (1,100 XP)

**Occluding Haze.** A humid shimmering haze surrounds the eldritch eye. Any creature that is not adjacent to the eldritch eye suffers disadvantage when making an attack roll against it.

**Immutable Form.** The eldritch eye is immune to any spell or effect that would alter its form.

**Magic Resistance.** The eldritch eye has advantage on saving throws against spells and other magical effects.

### ACTIONS

**Eldritch Gaze.** The eldritch eye gazes upon a creature it can see and chooses one of the following:

- **Tainted Gaze of Fire.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 13 Dexterity saving throw or take 10 (2d4 + 5) fire damage plus 10 (2d4 + 5) necrotic damage.
- **Withering Glance.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 13 Constitution saving throw or lose all resistances; they also take 16 (2d4 + 11) necrotic damage, and their speed is halved. The speed and resistance effects last until the end of the target's next turn.
- **Telekinetic Blast.** The eldritch eye chooses one creature within 50 feet of it. The target must make a DC 14 Strength saving throw, at disadvantage if it is flying. On a failure, the creature takes 11 (2d4 + 6) force damage and is pushed 20 feet in a direction chosen by the eye. If the target is not flying or levitating, it must end the forced movement on a solid surface.
- **Baleful Teleportation.** The targeted creature must succeed on a DC 14 Charisma saving throw or take 6 (2d4 + 2) force damage and be teleported up to 30 feet to a position chosen by the eldritch eye within line of sight.

# APPENDIX B: HANDOUTS

ENCOUNTER 7  
HANDOUT 7-1

## MANX'S MAP



### *YRYLAN'S SCIMITAR OF SPEED*

Yrylan the Mage Slayer died defending his friends. As he dealt his last blow, he wished for this weapon to kill Graemourna. Yrylan's soul became locked within this chamber, and a part of his dying wish within this blade.

#### YRYLAN'S SCIMITAR OF SPEED

*Weapon (Scimitar), very rare (requires attunement)*

You gain a +2 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. In addition, you can make one attack with it as a bonus action on each of your turns.

This scimitar imparts its wielder with visions of slaying the horrid hag, Graemourna. Once, when you attack Graemourna and miss, you may turn the miss into a hit. This feature can only be used once, fading forever after use.



### *AMBER CONDUIT CRYSTAL*

#### AMBER CONDUIT CRYSTAL – UNATTUNED

*Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)*

Larger than a human fist, this crystal vibrates with the power of the Feywild and pulses with orange light as if it were alive. Learning more about it and discovering its powers will require attunement.

#### AMBER CONDUIT CRYSTAL – ATTUNED

*Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)*

Once you attune to the crystal, it speaks to you, revealing that bound within is the soul of Yrylan. Yrylan recalls that she was once a warrior in the Gryphon's Wrath adventure company. The company was hired by officials from Valoria to hunt down Graemourna but were defeated by the hag. Yrylan also recalls visions from their explorations through Caverns Deep. You may ask your DM two questions about the caverns, which the DM may answer as they wish. The warrior urges you to be brave, fearless, and to hone your skills for the coming battle against Graemourna.

The crystal grants you 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. Expending a charge does not cost an action.

If you possess the ability to *wild shape*, you may expend a charge to wild shape, without expending one of your daily wild shape uses.

You may also expend a charge to treat your melee attacks as +1 weapons for attack and damage rolls for 10 minutes, or to increase the bonus by +1 if your weapon already has a magical bonus to attack and damage rolls.

Finally, you may expend a charge to gain inspiration.

### *BRONZO'S AXE OF WOUNDING*

*Weapon (greataxe), rare (requires attunement)*

This greataxe is a +1 magical weapon. It has a jagged edge capable of leaving terrible wounds. Its blade and shaft are engraved with the word “wound” in dozens of languages. If the word “wound” is spoken while attuned to the weapon, it gains the wounding quality, as if it were a *sword of wounding*.

**Wounding.** Hit points lost to this weapon's damage can be regained only through a short or long rest, rather than by regeneration, magic, or any other means.

Once per turn, when you hit a creature with an attack using this magic weapon, you can wound the target. At the start of each of the wounded creature's turns, it takes 1d4 necrotic damage for each time you've wounded it, and it can then make a DC 15 Constitution saving throw, ending the effect of all such wounds on itself on a success. Alternatively, the wounded creature, or a creature within 5 feet of it, can use an action to make a DC 15 Wisdom (Medicine) check, ending the effect of such wounds on it on a success.

**Gore.** The weapon also has a minor magical drawback. When the weapon draws blood, the blood always seems to splash onto the weapon's wielder. Over the course of an adventuring day, this can leave the wielder (and their clothes) drenched in blood.

### *RING OF FEATHER FALLING*

*Ring, rare (requires attunement)*

This ring is made of silver, decorated with a band of lapis lazuli along the middle. The ring seems to weigh nothing at all. It will hover in midair, though any weight placed upon it causes it to gently descend to the ground.

When you fall while wearing this ring, you descend 60 feet per round and take no damage from falling.

### *IMMOVABLE RODS*

#### *Rod, uncommon*

These two rods are forged from brass, and when struck with a hard object they produce a pleasing ringing sound.

Each of the iron rods has a button on one end. You can use an action to press the button, which causes the rod to become magically fixed in place. Until you or another creature uses an action to push the button again, the rod doesn't move, even if it is defying gravity. The rod can hold up to 8,000 pounds of weight. More weight causes the rod to deactivate and fall. A creature can use an action to make a DC 30 Strength check, moving the fixed rod up to 10 feet on a success.

### *MACE OF SMITING*

*Weapon (mace), rare*

This mace is crafted from black iron, flecked with silver. Its head is a terrifying screaming dwarven face, the hair and braids descending down to become the handle.

You gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls made with this magic weapon. The bonus increases to +3 when you use the mace to attack a construct.

When you roll a 20 on an attack roll made with this weapon, the target takes an extra 2d6 bludgeoning damage, or 4d6 bludgeoning damage if it's a construct. If a construct has 25 hit points or fewer after taking this damage, it is destroyed.

*CHAINMAIL ARMOR OF RESISTANCE (FIRE)*

*Armor (light, medium, or heavy), rare (requires attunement)*

You have resistance to fire damage while you wear this armor.

The chainmail armor is a masterpiece, the fine links made from enchanted copper that shines like the fire it protects against. It was forged as a gift for a dwarven warrior who loved battle as much as they loved to cook and was therefore given a special quality to honor them. When you first wear the armor, it gives off the strong scent of cinnamon. As a bonus action you can change the scent to be that of any spice or herb you choose.

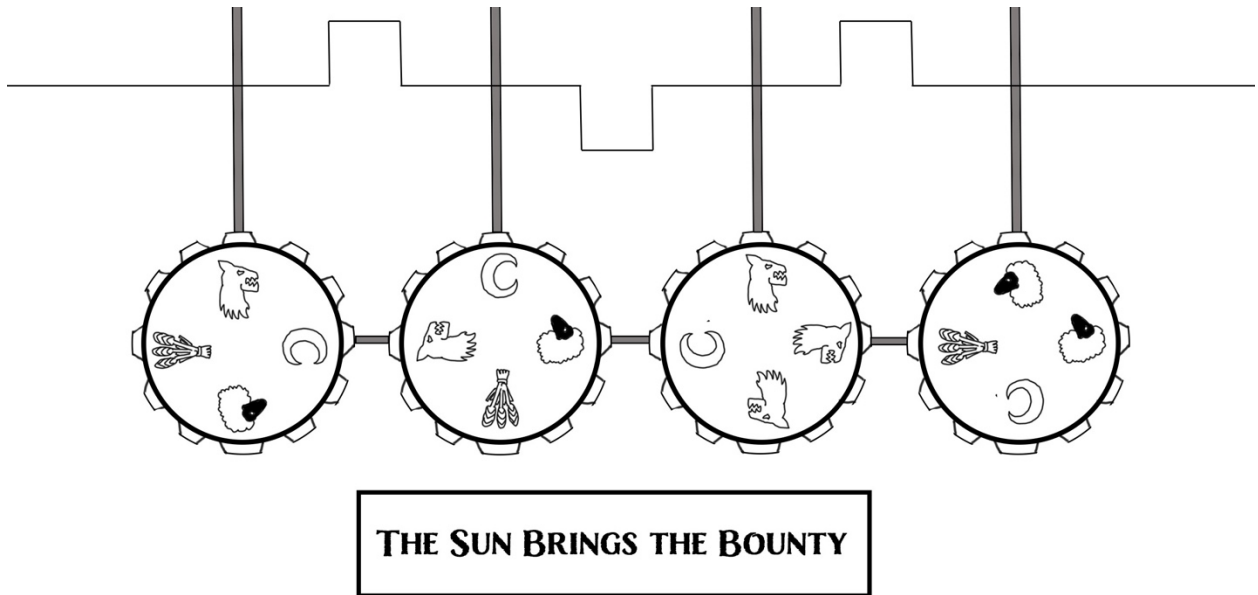


*SPELL SCROLL OF GREATER RESTORATION*

*Scroll, rare*

This spell scroll bears the *greater restoration* spell on one side. The other side bears the signature of Lorm Stonebones, and a recipe for brewing what he called Retirement Stout. The dwarven stout is his secret recipe, which he planned to brew when he opened up a tavern and retired. The recipe is worth 1,000 gp if sold to the right buyer. It could also be a boon for any character wishing to start a tavern or inn of their own.

*MOON LOCKS*



### *TRANSMUTATION ENGINE*

Two complicated pieces fit together to form a semi-spherical 7-inch device with gears and recesses all along the surface. If magical, the magics seem long inert or dispersed. To most observers this would appear to be a complicated-looking toy or bauble, but a Tinker would appreciate the craftsmanship and complexity of the object, but not its purpose. If a conduit crystal touches it, a few of the gears click and then stop. Players can attempt to touch a conduit crystal or all of them but besides the odd clicking noise for a brief time it does nothing.

ENCOUNTER 10  
HANDOUT 10-1

*TOTEM POSSESSION*

You have been possessed by the primal spirits of Dreadhollow Forest! While possessed, you can't willingly attack the tribal totem, so instead you try to kill the nearest living creature you can see. You can repeat the saving throw at the end of each of your turns, ending the effect on a success.

ENCOUNTER 10

HANDOUT 10-2

***Virickullis***

*Magic weapon (halberd), rare*

*Virickullis* is a +1 *halberd* crafted from jagged dinosaur bone. Once per day, when the wielder of this weapon makes a melee attack with the weapon and hits, the target takes an extra 10 (3d6) damage and the wielder gains temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt.

### *WARMASK OF SKISS-RYSSA*

*Wondrous item, very rare (requires attunement)*

This cursed wooden mask is soaked in the blood of warriors who died fighting lizardfolk in ritual combat. While you wear the mask, you gain the following benefits.

- You can hold your breath for up to 15 minutes.
- You gain a swim speed equal to your own speed.
- You gain advantage on saving throws against poison, resistance to poison damage, and immunity to the poisoned condition.
- You gain immunity to disease. If you are diseased when you attune to the mask, the disease is cured.

While you are attuned to the mask, its curse requires you to feast on freshly-killed meat daily or gain a level of exhaustion after your next long rest. When you eat freshly-killed meat, remove any levels of exhaustion you have taken.

The mask's curse also prevents you from willingly removing it. If the mask is forcibly removed, you take 14 (4d6) slashing damage and your maximum hit points are reduced by this amount until the curse is removed. A *remove curse* spell lifts the curse and breaks your attunement to the item.



## CITRINE CONDUIT CRYSTAL

### CITRINE CONDUIT CRYSTAL – UNATTUNED

*Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement)*

Larger than a human fist, this crystal vibrates with the power of the Feywild and pulses with golden light as if it were alive. Learning more about it and discovering its powers will require attunement.

### CITRINE CONDUIT CRYSTAL – ATTUNED

*Wondrous item, unique (requires attunement)*

Once you attune to the crystal, it speaks to you, revealing that bound within is the soul of Cypress, an elven monk. Cypress remembers more than the other members of his adventuring company, Gryphon's Wrath. He recalls visions from their battles with Graemourna. You may ask your DM two questions about the hag's abilities or tactics, which the DM may answer as they wish. Cypress urges you to experiment with change. If something isn't working, be open to trying a different approach; it may be the key to defeating Graemourna.

The crystal grants you 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. Unless noted otherwise, expending a charge does not cost an action.

If you have ki as a class feature, you may expend a charge to regain 2 ki points.

Regardless of your class, you may expend a charge to increase your movement speed by 20 feet until the end of your turn. During this time, you are considered to have a climb speed and gain advantage on any checks related to moving or traversing terrain.

You may expend two charges to reroll a failed saving throw that imposes a condition upon you. You may do this even if the condition would normally prevent you from taking actions. If you succeed at the new saving throw, you end all effects associated with the saving throw.

When you make an attack roll and fail to hit, you may expend two charges to reroll the attack. If the rerolled attack roll hits, the attack deals an extra 1d8 damage.

Finally, you may expend a charge to gain inspiration.

### *SENTRY ARMOR*

*Armor (plate), legendary (requires attunement)*

This suit of exotic plate mail is made of steel reinforced with Dwarvenite. The armor always seems to be sprayed in blood, even after it has been freshly cleaned. When worn by a living creature, fiendish words signifying alertness, guarding, and repelling appear, etched across the armor's surface.

While wearing this armor, you gain a +1 bonus to AC. In addition, the first time a small or medium creature approaches within 10 feet of you, you may use your reaction to move adjacent to the creature and make a melee attack. If the attack hits, you may attempt a Strength (Athletics) check contested by the target's Strength (Athletics) check or Dexterity (Acrobatics) check (the target chooses the ability to use). If you succeed, you may push the target up to 15 feet away from you.

**Curse.** Upon donning this armor, metal clamps within the armor dig into your skin, drawing a portion of your life force. You take 1 hit point of damage per character level, and your hit point maximum is reduced by an amount equal to the damage taken. This reduction lasts until the armor is removed, which cannot be done until a *remove curse* spell or similar magic is cast upon the armor. If you gain a character level while wearing the armor, you immediately take a hit point of damage and your maximum hit point reduction increases by one. If at any point you promise your soul to a devil, the hit point maximum reduction ends and you immediately regain the lost hit points. If you die while wearing this armor and more than twenty-four hours pass without you returning to life, your soul is consumed, and the armor animates (see the monster statistics for Sentry Armor).

## *MANACLES OF BONDING*

*Wondrous item, rare*

This set of rune-inscribed iron manacles has a lock but no key. When the manacles are placed on the limbs of a size small to large creature the manacles resize to fit the creature and lock in place. The person who placed the manacles can unlock them by touching the manacles and willing them to open.

A manacled creature has disadvantage on ability checks and attack rolls and their speed is halved. A creature can break the manacles with a successful DC 25 Strength (Athletics) check. Such an attempt can be made once per day. Breaking the manacles forces the lock open, though the lock repairs magically over the course of an hour.

**Curse.** Each time the manacles are placed on a creature, there is a 20% chance that a psychic bond is created between the captor and the captive. The two become charmed by one another. The curse is not apparent until it manifests.

### *DAGGER OF ENVY*

*Weapon (dagger), rare*

This thin curved magical dagger is fashioned from green-tinged steel. It functions as a +1 weapon if tested outside of combat. In the first round of combat, or whenever it draws blood, it reveals its curse.

**Curse.** Once the curse is activated, the dagger functions as a -1 dagger, inflicting its penalty to any of your attack and damage rolls. As long as you remain cursed, you are unwilling to part with the dagger, keeping it within reach at all times. You refuse to use any weapon other than this one. Additionally, you become greedy and envious, desiring the treasure other creatures near you possess. Such envy is not enough to require combat, but you can't help but let others know how you feel.

## ENCOUNTER 11

### HANDOUT 11-4: MALIFEX, SENTIENT GREATSWORD

#### *MALIFEX*

This greatsword is crafted from shimmering blue-black steel, its pommel a brilliant star sapphire. Master smiths forged the blade long ago in Valoria, hoping to dedicate the blade to the cause of good. One of the smiths was filled with envy over the skill of its companions. He unwittingly inserted his personality and envious nature into the blade as it was crafted.

The blade was given to one of Valoria's knights, Malifex, for a holy quest. When Malifex first felled a foe in battle with this blade, she felt its corrupting influence. Malifex set herself to destroy the blade, but it had other plans. On her way to undoing the blade Malifex was beset by foes and forced to use it. The blade should have healed her wounds. Instead, it pulled the last of her life into the blade. Her will became that of the blade, and it was known as Malifex from that day forward.

Malifex changed hands many times, finally traded to Graemourna by a rakshasa who needed Graemourna's help. Graemourna leaves the blade out in the open, hoping a hero who makes it into her den will be lured to the blade... and its corrupting influence.

*Weapon (greatsword), unique (requires attunement)*

This greatsword appears to be a +2 magical weapon. Spells such as *identify* reveal only that it seems to have additional latent powers, waiting to be revealed. Only a *wish* spell can reveal all of its nature, purpose, and powers.

***Illumination.*** The first time you attack and deal damage to a creature with this weapon, its blade glows a brilliant blue, providing bright light in a 30-foot radius and dim light for an additional 30 feet. Thereafter, you may cause this weapon to illuminate or go dark as a bonus action.

***Life Draining.*** When you attack a creature with this magic weapon and roll a 19 or a 20 on the attack roll, that target takes an extra 3d6 necrotic damage, provided that the target isn't a construct or an undead. You gain temporary hit points equal to the extra damage dealt. The first time this happens, the greatsword speaks to you, revealing its name, true nature, and curse.

***Sentience.*** Malifex is a sentient lawful evil weapon with an Intelligence of 12, a Wisdom of 15, and a Charisma of 15. It has hearing and darkvision out to a range of 120 feet. The weapon communicates telepathically with its wielder and can speak, read, and understand Common and Sylvan. It has an urgent, insistent voice. The weapon can sense the presence of evil creatures within 120 feet of it.

*Cont.*

**MALIFEX.** Page 2 – Cont.

**Personality and Purpose.** Malifex seeks to destroy creatures more powerful than its wielder. Malifex urges its wielder to prove them self in battle and fight the strongest foe possible, no matter the odds. Malifex is not above trying to convince its wielder that foes and even allies are mocking the wielder. If the wielder dies, it naturally comes that Malifex should be wielded by the victor.

**Curse.** Once Malifex has revealed itself to the wielder, a curse is activated. As long as you remain cursed, you are unable to part with the weapon, keeping it within reach at all times. You refuse to use any weapon other than this one. If the weapon is somehow removed from you, you seek it out. If you are within 60 feet of the weapon, you can and will call it to your hand, where it magically appears (assuming the sword also wills this). The weapon's curse is not easy to lift. Each time *remove curse* or similar magic is cast, Malifex makes a Charisma check with advantage, opposed by the caster's spellcasting check. If Malifex succeeds, the spell fails. If the spell succeeds, Malifex goes dormant until the next dawn. If the spell is cast again while Malifex is dormant, and Malifex fails the contested check, the wielder is finally released from the curse and Malifex is forced out of the blade as a wraith and enters combat (see Wraith and Wraith Form).

**Wraith.** The blade contains within it a powerful wraith—the vestige of Malifex. Each time the life draining ability is used, the wraith gains 10 temporary hit points and does 2 additional points of damage with its attacks. It otherwise uses the statistics for a wraith.

**Conflict.** If Malifex and its wielder become opposed, Malifex can do any of the following, usually in order:

- **Disadvantage.** Malifex can impose disadvantage on an attack roll or ability check while it is being wielded. Malifex usually uses this as an incentive system, hoping to turn the wielder to evil.
- **Alignment Shift.** Malifex can make a contested Charisma check against the wielder. It can do so once per day. If Malifex wins the check, the wielder finds themselves having evil thoughts. If Malifex wins the check two days in a row, the wielder's alignment shifts one step closer to evil (good to neutral, neutral to evil). This alignment shift can be reversed with a *greater restoration* spell. Malifex is generally tolerant of a non-evil wielder, so long as it agrees with Malifex's purpose. If conflict is taking place often, it resorts to this power.
- **Reverse Drain.** When the creature wielding Malifex triggers the life draining capability of this blade, Malifex can reverse the effect. The life draining damage and all of the damage inflicted by the weapon is dealt to the wielder instead of the intended target and no temporary hit points are granted. Malifex usually uses this to kill the target, or in preparation for a wraith form attack.
- **Wraith Form.** Malifex can emerge from the blade, attacking immediately with surprise. It then rolls initiative and may act again on the same round. See the wraith information above.



### *MIRROR TACTICS*

You are now in control of mirror duplicate of another player's character. The duplicate has a chaotic evil alignment and exists only to destroy the creature whose body it represents. If it cannot find that creature, it hunts for them and avoids all other threats. A duplicate avoids attacking other creatures unless such foes are caught in an area-effect spell alongside its target.

When the duplicate goes into hiding, you must work in secret with your Game Master to determine where the duplicate is located. As a bonus action, if adjacent to a crystal formation, you can teleport to any other crystal formation in the same cavern. Use a miniature to indicate the duplicate's actual or last known position on the map.

## ENCOUNTER 13

### HANDOUT 13-2: YORGHIRM OATH: HONOR

#### *YORGHIRM OATH: HONOR*

You have sworn on the Heartshard to abide by the yorghrim Oath of Honor:

“Our choices reflect who we truly are. We cannot hide from ourselves.”

You gain inspiration every time you perform a great and honorable deed that benefits your companions. If you act chaotically, shamefully, or deceitfully, you lose inspiration or take 1d6 psychic damage per character level if you have no inspiration to lose.

ENCOUNTER 13

HANDOUT 13-3: YORGHIRM OATH: COURAGE

*YORGHIRM OATH: COURAGE*

You have sworn on the Heartshard to abide by the yorghrim Oath of Courage:

“Nothing is more glorious than to die in battle for the clan. We shall never flee our enemies, nor fail to defend our jarl.”

You gain inspiration every time you perform an act of heroic valor. If you flee from an enemy, refuse a duel, or act in cowardice, you lose inspiration or take 1d6 psychic damage per character level if you have no inspiration to lose.

## ENCOUNTER 13

### HANDOUT 13-4: YORGHIRM OATH: PERSISTENCE

#### *YORGHIRM OATH: PERSISTENCE*

You have sworn on the Heartshard to abide by the yorghrim Oath of Persistence:

“We finish what we start. Like the unyielding glacier, we persist until we are successful.”

You gain inspiration every time you agree to a new quest or begin a strenuous activity that will take an hour or longer to complete. If you fail to complete a task you have started, you lose inspiration or take 1d6 psychic damage per character level if you have no inspiration to lose.

## ENCOUNTER 13

### HANDOUT 13-5: YORGHIRM OATH: REQUITAL

#### *YORGHIRM OATH: REQUITAL*

You have sworn on the Heartshard to abide by the yorghrim Oath of Requital:

“All debts, both of gratitude and of vengeance, must be repaid. Recompense or retribution must be delivered swiftly, before the day is done.”

You gain inspiration every time you repay a debt. If a day goes by without repaying a debt, you lose inspiration or take 1d6 psychic damage per character level if you have no inspiration to lose.

## ENCOUNTER 14

### HANDOUT 14-1: CORAZON'S BULWARK

#### *CORAZON'S BULWARK*

*Shield, legendary (attunes immediately to its wielder)*

This immense heart-shaped shield belonged to Corazon, a famed half-dragon warrior who favored close combat. Imbued with hatred for those who lack the courage to fight in melee, it protected Corazon from many a ranged combatant. The shield was also Corazon's downfall when he threw an axe at an opponent. The mighty throw was drawn back to the shield and struck Corazon down.

If no one is attuned to the shield, it instantly attunes to you when you pick it up. This also curses you. Once attuned, you cannot bear to be without the shield and will seek to regain it and equip it if ever separated from it. The magic shield grants you a +1 bonus to AC. This in addition a normal +2 AC a shield gives its bearer.

Corazon's Bulwark glows with a silvery radiance making you and the shield stand out in a battle. It is impossible to hide while wielding the shield.

You gain resistance to damage from all ranged attacks. However, the shield's curse also attracts ranged attacks. Whenever a ranged weapon attack is made against a target within 20 feet of you, the curse causes you to become the target instead.

If you should ever make a ranged weapon attack, the ammunition or thrown weapon is drawn back to you, making you the target of the attack. Such attacks deal maximum damage to you, and ignore all resistances you may have, including from this shield.

Due to the shield's large size and magical qualities, if you take the Dodge action, you also gain half cover against all attacks (gaining a +2 bonus to AC and Dexterity saving throws).

A *remove curse* or similar spell will allow you to end the curse, so long as you do not again pick up the shield.



### *CRYSTAL BLOODBLADE*

*Weapon (any sword), legendary (attunes immediately to its wielder)*

This weapon is made entirely of translucent rose-colored crystal, with its grip and guard wrapped in strands of copper. Though it is most often encountered as a short sword, this weapon may appear to be any type of sword when first encountered. The origins of the bloodblade are unknown, but it was last seen in the hands of Akia Stormsinger. Akia was a fierce pirate renowned for her bloodlust.

As soon as the crystal bloodblade is first grasped, and as an action thereafter, you may cause the weapon to transform into any type of sword. In all of its forms, the magic weapon grants you a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls.

If no one else is attuned to the sword, it instantly attunes to you when you first grasp it. This also curses you. Once attuned, you cannot bear to be without the weapon and will seek to regain it and equip it if ever separated from it.

The crystal blade thirsts for blood. The more creatures it wounds and slays, the darker red its crystal becomes. It becomes a lighter rose color if it has gone days without drawing blood.

Due to its bloodthirst, the weapon deals an additional 3 (1d6) necrotic damage against any creature that is below its maximum hit point total.

The sword tries to steer you towards killing off wounded creatures. If you attack a creature that is at its maximum hit points, you make the attack roll at disadvantage if there is another creature within 30 feet of you that is below its maximum hit point total.

A *remove curse* or similar spell will allow you to end the curse, so long as you do not again pick up the sword.

## ENCOUNTER 14

### HANDOUT 14-3: CRIMSON CONDUIT CRYSTAL

#### *CRIMSON CONDUIT CRYSTAL*

##### CRIMSON CONDUIT CRYSTAL – UNATTUNED

*Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)*

Larger than a human fist, this crystal vibrates with the power of the Feywild and pulses with crimson light as if it were alive. Learning more about it and discovering its powers will require attunement.

##### CRIMSON CONDUIT CRYSTAL – ATTUNED

*Wondrous Item, unique (requires attunement)*

Once you attune to the crystal, it speaks to you, revealing that bound within is the soul of Thomlin, a wizard defeated years ago by Graemourna. Though Thomlin's soul has lost much of its former memory, he recalls he was a member of the Gryphon's Wrath adventuring company, and that they tried to reach Graemourna's den and laboratory to uncover her plans and stop her. You may ask one question of the DM regarding Graemourna's plots, and the DM may answer these questions in the manner they wish. Thomlin urges you to be studious, perfecting a plan for the coming battle against Graemourna.

The crystal grants you 3 charges, and it regains 1d3 expended charges daily at dawn. Expending a charge does not cost an action.

If you are a sorcerer, you may expend a charge to regain 2 sorcery points.

Regardless of your class, when you roll damage for a spell, you may expend a charge to reroll up to 3 of the damage dice you rolled. You must use the new rolls.

You may expend 1 charge to regain a spell slot of up to 3<sup>rd</sup> level, or 2 charges to regain a spell slot of up to 4<sup>th</sup> level.

When you cast a spell that forces a creature to make a saving throw to resist its effects, you can expend 2 charges to give one target of the spell disadvantage on its first saving throw made against the spell.

Finally, you may expend a charge to gain inspiration.

